IMAGE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME AS A STRATEGIC GROWTH TOOL FOR SUPERMARKETS: A CASE STUDY OF LEVENTIS STORES PLC AND BANADEEN STORES, Z A R I A

by

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A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE POST-GRADUATE SCHOOL AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (MBA)

DEPARTMENT: BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

FACULTY: ADMINISTRATION

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APPROVAL SHEET

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that all information used in this Research project were obtained by me from data collected through personal interviews, observations of the operations of the two supermarkets, and the administration of questionaires. All references are duly acknowledged.

All mistakes in thought or sequence that may be found in this Research Project are entirely my responsibility.

S. A. Adetuyi

DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to the oppressed.

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T

In conducting this Research Study various persons and institutions have come to my aid either directly or otherwise, hence the need to acknowledge them.

My special thanks is due and is hereby accorded my supervisor, Mr. A. B. Akpan for his continous and meticulous guidance throughout the period of this research study despite his very tight schedule. I wish to thank the entire staff of both Leventis Stores Plc, Zaria and Banadeen Stores, Zaria, and their customers too numerous to mention here individually. They provided the relevant data for this study.

I am also grateful to my dutiful wife Omolade and my children Olumuyiwa, Olusegun and Oluyemisi for their endurance and for cheerfully putting up with the partial neglect which usually typifies this type of venture. I am indebted to Mrs. Suzie Joseph-Makpu for typing the manuscript. I thank my brother Mr David Ola Adetuyi for his moral and financial support and particularly for allowing his Secretary to tidy up the final typing of the project. I am much grateful to each and everyone whose contributions have enabled me to complete this project.

Lastly, but most importantly, I register my thanks to God Almighty for all He has done for me which are beyond human expression.

November, 1992 S. A. Adetuyi

A B S T R A C T

Despite the popularity of the marketing concept which regards the customer as the king and the proliferation of retail outlets like markets, shops, supermarkets etc., all over the country, there seems to be an ever-increasing gap between the yearnings of customers on one hand with regards to obtaining satisfaction from each business transaction and the ability of these retail outlets on the other hand, to cope with these need satisfactions.

The tenents of the marketing concept which makes the customer the king, are applied almost everywhere in this country, more in the breach than in observance. Customers are exploited and treated with a kind of take-it-or-leave-it approach due to the limitation in choice which is a common feature in a seller's market forced on consumers as a result of our culture characterised largely by shortages. However, only less-sighted business organisations will imagine that this ugly trend would continue for ever.

Supermarkets as business organisations cannot operate in a vacuum. Rather, they are surrounded by a complex environment involving many factors. Of course, these factors present opportunities and threats to the successful business operations. Therefore, supermarkets' survival and growth can be positively related to the extent to which they enjoy their customers' continous patronage. Thus the importance of the customer to the achievement of organisational goal cannot be over-emphasised.

This Research Project therefore attempts to critically assess the performance of supermarkets in Nigeria along the line of customer satisfaction by taking a look at the operations of Leventis Stores Pic, and Banadeen Stores, Zaria. Thereafter appropriate recommendations based on the findings would be made as to why and how supermarkets as retail outlets can adopt image enhancement programmes in their business operations to improve their competitive position thereby enhancing their survival and growth.

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INTRODUCTION

1.1. PREAMBLE

Supermarkets like other business organisations are established to provide goods and services required to douse the burning desire associated with consumers felt need-deprivation. Of course, this function to society is carried out at a level that ensures some reasonable margin of profit for the organisation. This is necessary to keep the organisation afloat and ensure it remains continously in business.

Before one can really appreciate the impact of the image enhancement programmes on business activities it would be essential to thoroughly analyse the "behind the scene" reasons for the choice of a particular retail outlet where the consumer buys goods and services each time he/she has to make a purchase. This is important because although fundamental marketing reasoning holds that the key to consumer satisfaction lies in an adequate marketing mix for the product or service under consideration, this key is not a master one. This is so because the concept of marketing mix presupposes that once its elements are in the right dosage, the consumers' decision to purchase a product or service anywhere it is first available would be a foregone conclusion. In line with this thought, for instance, it can be assumed that once the elements of the marketing mix viz., price, product, promotion and place are adequate, then consumers would make a purchase at any point of the retail outlet. In practice this belief does not always hold as evidence abounds of rational consumers making decisions to purchase items not necessarily at the first point of availability. The consumer'schoice of point of purchase goes beyonc' the product's attributes.

Rarely does a consumer merely buy a physical product. Instead, the consumer purchases a package that fulfils some need, that provides a psychological pride of ownership and/or consumption, that involves a minimum of anxiety about breakdown or damage, that is considered a good buy at the price, that can be acquired without great financial upset, that will be delivered when wanted and so forth. An essential part of an organisation's marketing plan therefore is to conceive of a practical package of satisfactions that will appeal to a significant number of consumers. In the final analysis, what a consumer buys in a product does not end with the adequacy of the elements of the marketing mix as put together by the producers, but rather it includes the gamut of activities that get the product or service completely delivered to the consumer to his/her satisfaction. This includes, for instance, the retail outlet's location, services rendered therein, availability of the product etc. The decision to make a purchase again and again from a particualr retail outlet to a large extent is a function of the manner in which the initial or previous sale was carried out and how the consumer perceives the seller's cumulative scores of the component sales activities. Unless the consumer has no choice, he/she may very unlikely come back to make another purchase where he/she perceives that he/she has had a raw deal. The converse is also true. A situation where after selecting the items to be purchased, the consumer is confronted by the cashier who rudely compels him/her to look for change for the transaction or merely keeps the customer waiting unduly while she chats with a friend or colleague does not help the image of the organisation as perceived by the customers and such might provoke a negative assessment leading to a subsequent non-patronage of the store as the customer is now compelled to realise that afterall, the item to be purchased can be found at another store. This effect may not be limited to the affected customer only as this perception might be passed on to other potential customers.

The above scenario leads to the concept of image enhancement and its contribution to organisational growth. The concept attempts to demonstrate the sovereignty of the consumer.

This implies that the customer should be treated with kid gloves if his/her continued patronage is to be guaranteed. Implicit in this idea is the fact that in any business transaction, the consumer is the king. Of course, this position cannot be rebutted. For in the final analysis, if goods are not sold or sold up to a reasonable level, sooner or later *the organisation will find that it is curting its exit from the business* world.

Government parastatals are mostly guilty of poor treatment to their customers. The general attitude engendered by the widely held belief that government business is nobody's business is largely responsible for the laissez-faire attitude of those dealing with the members of the public. The fact that work and remuneration are not necessarily positively related has not helped matters either. Although most business organisations particularly the commercial and merchant banks have of recent through their aggresive advertisements on the television, try to convince their numerous potential customers that the days of improved banking services are here, it is unfortunate that efficient banking services are limited only to the advertisements on television screens as customers are daily subjected to poor services by hostile and ineffcient bank officials. In the retail stores, the performances are equally poor. Many organisation are yet to imbibe the right attitude towards their customers. They really do not have to, so they assume, albeit erroneously. This ugly situation has continued because business organisations take advantage of the perenial shortages characteristic of the Nigerian society.

Each time Nigerians are subjected to that monstrous scourge - fuel scarcity, for instance, petrol attendants at fuel stations throw decency to the dogs and consumers are forced to be at their mercy and are subjected to all sorts of maltreatment. Most often, they are treated with the arrogance of take whatever is available or leave it. Their consolation being that something is better than nothing.

However, it might be myopic to think that this unfavourable situation would continue forever. There is therefore, an urgent need for a change and a change there will be. As in all dynamic environments, change is the only permanent feature, this being the essence of the environment in which a business enterprise operates.

It therefore behoves purposeful executives to take advantage of the likely business environmental changes. For modern business literature abounds in several examples of organisations and individuals in different parts of the world who made fortunes by seizing on opportunities engendered by enviromental changes. At the same time, less sighted ones operating in the same environment lost their fortunes and in some cases were faced with virtual extinction as a result of their inability to anticipate and adapt their operations to changes brought about by the latent forces at work in the society. Here in Nigeria, during the last twenty five years and particularly within the last decade, the business environment has undergone rapid and spectacular changes which created manifold opportunities capitalised upon by dynamic and forward-looking orgaisations. The less fortunate ones on the other hand precariously between survival and liquidation having been badly battered by the assault of changes which they failed to anticipate and hence for which they were not prepared. Yet these forces which continually modify the whole of the environmental fabric within which every firm operates will become more accentuated in the years ahead, producing enormous threats for inward looking organisations but manifold opportunities for

dynamic enterprises.

No organisation or individual, however big can continue to hold a place of leadership unless its top managers recognise that modern business operates in a world of galloping change which creates new problems, risks and opportunities and for which they have to mobilise the organisations' resources before the impact of such changes are felt. To do this succe-ssfully requires that top managers, particularly chief executives, know where their organisation is going and how it wants to achieve its objective. This in turn requires a proper definition of the organisation's business which will enable it to continually adapt operations to the realities of the market place, the very corner-stone of survival and growth.

In recognition of the above facts and of the steps being taken by other progressive organisations abroad to avert future ordeals arising from environmental changes, it is here advocated that Nigerian businesses must begin to place increasing emphasis and specialised attention on long range strategic planning in order to meet future challenges by systematizing such planning activities under appropriate individual and /or committees.

One of the current changes in the Nigerian business enviroment is that brought about by the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) which is gradually restoring the consumer to his rightful position as the king of the market place. The introduction of the Second-tier Foreign Exchange Market and of late the deregulation of the Foreign Exchange Market as the main thrust of the programme has given the Naira a thorough bashing resulting in the high cost of locally produced and imported goods. Inflationary dampers such as the liquidity squeeze imposed by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and the cost-cutting measures introduced by the Government and employers in the private sector have reduced the real income and consequently the purchasing power of cosumers.

This situation as they become more accentuated would enhance the consumers' position as the king, because the ability to buy would be limited.

1.2. PROBLEM DEFINITION:

Despite the popularity of the marketing concept which puts the customer in a regal position, what obtains generally in most supermarkets and other retail outlet does not conform with its tenents. It is not uncommon for customers to be confronted with hostile and in-efficient sales staff. Usually, customers are made to forfeit their change or else take items which they never required in the first instance. This is due to the fact that checkout counter staffs usually claim that they do not have enough change. The list of negative treatment meted out to customers can be endless. It is as if customers have to patronise the stores even if their services are not adequate. However, customers have the final decision to make as regards the supermarket to patronise and the decision of the customers can largely be conditioned by the way and manner they perceive the store to be. This perception is a function of the image of the store as registered in the mind of the customer.

The problem of these stores is further compounded because of the ease of new entrants into the retail industry. A prospective retailer does not require huge capital outlay to start the operation of a supermarket and this accounts for the proliferation of retail outlets all over the country. The consequence of this trend is that the competition within the industry is becoming stiff and only organisations that can retain their customers and attract new ones may hope to survive and grow. As the country faces the global economic recession several economic measures are being introduced within the framework of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP).

The consequence of these measures have been the reduction in the real income of consumers as a result of the inflation and other outcomes of the SAP instruments.

The spill-over effect of the above situation is that consumers' purchasing power is gradually being reduced and this reduction has imposed rationality on them. Consumers do not just buy any commodity anywhere. The need to maximise the satisfaction they derive from each purchase is now compelling. When one marries this situation with increasing number of retail outlets mushrooming, the problem facing the retail outlets becomes apparent. They now have to compete with others for the ever reducing patronage of the consumers. In the face of this trend and rising overheads, those in retail business have to formulate strategies to ensure their survival and growth or else curt their exit from the business.

1.3. ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY:

The formation of the research design has been based on the following assumptions:-

(a) It has been assumed that the researcher, a graduate of Business Administration is competent to assess the behaviour of supermarket customers.

(b) It has also been assumed that the information to be obtained from the supermarket customers through the questionnaire and personal observation will reveal the respondents' buying behaviour.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY:

There is currently no comprehensive study of the supermarket customer behaviour in Zaria. This lack of local research in such an

important field is regrattable. The existing interature in the field is largely the work of western scholars whose work are based on their unique environment and hence little applicability to the Nigerian consumers and business environment. Their findings are based essentially on their cultural background which is alien to Nigeria.

On the basis of the above reasoning, the primary purpose of this study is to make systematic knowledge available about the impact of image enhancement programme on the business results of supermarkets. This knowledge should assist the supermarkets' management in formulating store policies and plan their strategies for survival and growth in the face of stiff competition. The researcher hopes that this humble attempt will stimulate more competent researchers to carry out further investigation into this area of study.

1.5. SCOPE OF STUDY:

The study is essentially descriptive in nature. It does hope to subject its data to rigorous statistical analysis. It only attempts to identify similarities, if any between the findings and the existing consumer behaviour theories. In any case, it is not thought that rigorous statistical analysis is essential because human behaviour is very difficult to predict on the basis of past behaviour. Therefore, the areas examined in the study centre on factors that bear on supermarkets customer's decisions regarding store preferences. The study would be confined to the operations of the Leventis stores Plc and Banadeen Stores, Zaria.

1.6. LIMITATION OF STUDY:

The purpose of this subsection is to point out the major limitations and weaknesses of this study, and advance possible reasons that are respo-sible for this shortcomings.

The importance of retailing institutions in developing economy cannot be over-emphasised. Thus, a research on the supermarket operations vis-a-vis the satisfaction of customers should have a wider coverage because it is a phenomenon that affects the whole country. However, such an extensive study may not be feasible considering some major constraints such as limited financial resources of the researcher and his desire to complete the assignment within a target time of less than three months. This however, should not be construed to mean that the findings and recommendations of the study cannot be applied to other parts of the country. Since the Nigerian business environment to some extent is homogenous, the findings and recommendations can be applied universally to the country.

Another weakness of this study is the assumption that the researcher is competent to assess the behaviour of supermarket customers. By implication, it is apparent that the study may be deficient to the extent to which the researcher's subjective assessment may be deficient.

Another major weakness is attributable to the disadvantage associated with one of the methods of data collection. The use of personal observation is highly susceptible to observer's variability and bias. However, personal observation by a person aware of such possibilities may reduce the likelihood of such errors to the barest minimum.

In view of the fact that sales figures in a competitive industry as the retail stores are guarded and regarded as very top secret, it was difficult to obtain this aspect of the data required to be able to make a more meaningful comparative analysis over the years to see the impact of the image enhancement programmes on sales.

1.7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This research study intends to examine the impact of image enhancement programme on the level of business activity in a supermarket. The finding would undoubtedly be useful to supermarket management in drawing up strategic programmes that would enhance survival and growth. The fact that supermarkets and other competitive retail outlets are mushrooming daily while the poorly managed ones find their exit at the same rate underscores the importance of this phenomenon in business management.

1.8. RESEARCH DESIGN:

The study would adopt the Survey Research Method and data would be collected from primary and secondary source as indicated below:

(i) Primary Source

(a) personal interview of the Supermarkets' management and staff,

(b) observation of the operation of the Supermarkets, and

(c) customers' response to questionnaires.

(ii) Secondary Source

(a) relevant literature on the topic

(b) sales and other operational information from the stores over a period of time.

1.9. ADMINISTRATION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

A total of 240 questionnaires would be given to customers to fill and return through the assistance of the stores' management. 120 copies would be given to each of the two stores and they would be distributed to the customers on a random basis. 20 questionnaires would be given out daily for six days in the week.

10 would be given for the first ten customers in the morning while the remaining 10 would be for the first 10 customers on resumption after the break. The questionnaire would be given out to customers at the check-out counter to facilitate distribution to genuine stores' customers. By this spread, it is anticipated that respondents would be adequately representative of the entire customer population.

1.9.1. NATURE OF QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionaire content is divided into two sections as follows:

(a) SECTION 'A' - PERSONAL INFORMATION

This section deals with the personal information about respondents. Names of respondents were deliberately omitted to allow them free atmosphere to answer questions objectively without fear of being identified with an opinion. Questions were however asked about the respondents' sex, age, income, marital status and number of children. Where the range of alternative answers were more than four, these were grouped together e.g. age has been conveniently grouped into four categories thus: below 25 years, 25-40 years, 41-55 years and above 55 years. The instructions about the mode of completing the questionnaires were clearly indicated. The data collected from this section would highlight the socio-cultural background of the respondents.

(b) SECTION 'B' - SERVICE DATA

The bulk of the data required for this study lies in this section. Questions would be asked to reveal the extent to which customers patronise a particular supermarkets as against other competitive retail outlets and the frequency.

Questions would also be asked to reveal the extent to which the respondents' buying behaviour is affected by the existing image enhancement programmes of the stores and what improvement they would prefer the stores to embark on. For example, the question would be asked "to what extent do you agree that the location of the supermarket has affected your choice of store?" The following alternative answers are provided:

To a large extent

To some extent

To a little extent

Not at all.

Each respondent is required to tick any of the alternatives mostly preferred. A sample of the questionnaire is attached as Appendix 'A'.

1.10. METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

No rigorous statistical method of data analysis is evoked in this research study.

This is due, in the main, to the fact that the research centres on customers' choice of supermarkets which is largely behavioural and unique. Rather, a non-quantitative method involving simple percentage scoring technique is employed. This will attempt to identify similarities, if any, between the findings and the existing consumer behaviour theories. In any case, it is not thought that rigorous statistical analysis is essential because human behaviour is very difficult to predict on the basis of past behaviour.

The analysis would be strengthened by the researcher's personal interview of supermarkets' management and observation of the supermarkets' operations to arrive at a finding which should be consistent with acceptable standards.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the years, people have come to associate store patronage with several factors. Such factors range from purely objective attributes of individual stores to basically psychological oriented factors as well as traditional beliefs of individual customers. In Nigeria, the effect of traditional beliefs is towering.

Undoubtedly, the factors most generally chosen as major determinants of stores' patronage are more often than not influenced by the consumer's cognitive structure. Thus in most societal setting, it is not uncommon for people to associate stores patronage with supernatural forces - a phenomenon that is totally at variance with the marketing concept. Whether supernatural forces play a role in selling is not the concern of this research, rather the focus is on the fact that whether a consumer patronises a store depends both on the evaluative criteria of the consumer and the perception of how the store's characteristics compare with these criteria. In other words, consumers are always armed with standards which they use in evaluating sellers and their outlets. This evaluation is both instinctive and circumstantial in nature and consumers actively indulge in its application to arrive at a desired result. This result is always an impression on a general perception about a seller and his store. This impression is very crucial to sellers and customers alike because it constitutes the store image which could make or mar an organisation's growth or even survival strategy particularly in an environment characterised largely by stiff competition.

This chapter attempts to conceptualise terms related to image enhancement programmes by supermarkets vis-a-vis the consumer in order to elicit its importance as a growth strategy by retail outlets.

The following components would be examined:

(i) Stores' image

(ii) Consumer needs and need satisfaction,

(iii) Consumer buying behaviour,

(iv) Supermarkets and its relevance,

(v) Image enhancement, and

(vi) Need for growth

2.1. STORES IMAGE

People's attitudes and actions towards an object are highly conditioned by their beliefs about the object. Although these beliefs are usually subjective, no business organisation can thrive successfully without being concerned about their relevance to the customer's choice. Image has been given various definitions. Philip Khotler[1] defines image as the set of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person holds of an object. Martineau[2] goes further with his thought of image as the personality of the store and defines it as the way in which a store is defined in the shopper's mind, partly by its functional qualities and partly by an aura of psychological attributes. Scott[3] defines image as a complex of meanings and relationships serving to characterise the store for people. The list of definitions is endless. In summary, however, one can look at image as the impression personality or mental picture generally called to mind when the organisation's name is mentioned.

This impression makes the customer to react with a lot of excitement at an invitation to visit the store or recoil and a turn down invitation with excuses such as "that place is good for nothing" or "that the place is good only for pigs". These descriptions express the customers feeling about the store based, of course, on an earlier experience. Since feelings like these may be shared by a great majority of other customers, it becomes necessary for stores to embark upon programmes of action capable of erasing this negative impression.

A store's image is more complex than for example, the image or personality of an individual, because it includes the cummulative effect of all the impressions made by all the organisation's employees either directly or indirectly. — Each time a sales clerk attends to a customer, each time a store advertises, each window or interior display, each assortment of goods , each remark about the store made by an employee (or someone else for that matter), even the store location etc., all contribute to the store image. The fact that the need and satisfaction of customers are as varied and dynamic as they are subjective complicates an already complex issue. Since customers are aware of the image variables and their decisions to patronise the stores or not depend on whether the image is good or bad, management has a responsibility of fine-tuning their policies to guide employees to strive to achieve a positive image for the organisation. However, at any given time, the current image of an organisation is likely to lag behind the reality of its mission. For this reason, management has to continually assess the visibility favourability position as well as the content of the organisation's image.

2.2. CONSUMER NEEDS AND NEED SATISFACTION:

It is important to note that no person is an island to himself/herself. This presupposes that people rely on others for their needs and wants on exchange of goods and services basis. Those things they produce are exchanged for money which in turn is used to acquire goods and services they require. People need food, air, water, clothing and shelter to survive. Beyond this, people have a strong desire for recreation, education and other services.

They have strong preference for particular versions of basic goods and services. There is no doubt that today, people's needs and wants are staggering.

These needs and wants are satisfied by products produced by manufacturers through varied technologies and these get to the final consumer through the various marketing channels. One of the retail outlets through which goods and services get to the final consumer is the supermarkets.

2.3. CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR THEORIES AND MODELS

The supermarket customers, like any other consumers, buy products to satisfy a variety of needs: psysiological, social and psychological. Economists are never tired of reminding us that consumers are utility maximizers. In other words, consumers use their limited resources to acquire a bundle of goods that will put them on the highest utility curve.[4] Th consumer sees a particular product as a combination of attributes. Thus, a toothpaste offers a combination of dental protection and breath refreshing.

The importance of consumers in all marketing activities cannot be over-emphasised. Realising this fact in the 1960s[5] a new discipline known as consumer behaviour emerged and occupied the minds of marketing students. However, it is important to note that interest in consumer psychology is not a new phenomenon as leading authors often cite Walter Dill Scott as the outstanding consumer psychologist of the early 1960s. Scott used the experimental method to investigate the problems of consumer behaviour with particular reference to advertising.[6] The marketing researchers tried to understand how people act in their role as consumers by probing into the findings of psychologist, sociologists and anthropologists.

2.4. COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

A theory of cognitive dissonance has been proposed by Leon Festiger[7] to explain one aspect of consumer behaviour. This theory states that it is normal for individuals to behave in a manner that is consistent with their

strongly held beliefs or attitudes and to avoid situations where their potential actions would be inconsistent or dissonant with these attitudes. However, individuals may change their beliefs or attitudes so that they become consonant with their behaviour. In the words of Festinger:

> "In short, I am proposing that dissonance, i.e. the existence of non-fitting relations among cognitions, is a motivating factor in its own right. By the term cognitions, I mean any knowledge, opinion or belief about the environment, about oneself, or about one's behaviour. Cognitive dissonance can be seen as an antecedent condition which leads to activity oriented towards dissonance reduction, just as hunger leads to activity towards hunger reduction."

Festinger asserts that it is not unusual to find consumer behaviour that is inconsistent with an individual's attitudes and beliefs. For instance, a person may sincerely believe that smoking cigarretes is harmful to one's health yet the person still indulges in smoking. In this situation, if he is uncomfortable about the dissonance, he may take steps to reduce it. The ultimate step is to stop smoking which is a change in behaviour. However, the person may find the addiction difficult to break, so he may switch to a filtered cigarrette or others low in tar, in order to reduce the dissonance. Alternatively, the smoker may avoid those source of information that tell him about the perils of smoking.

2.5. LEARNING THEORIES

Most buying decisionsare function of learning experiences acquired in previous problem-solving situations. consumers repeat the purchase of a product and brand if they have learned that this product and brand is best for them. The same goes for the point of purchase of the product or service. The learning pattern is quite complex. However, to understand behaviour, one must understand how consumers learn. There are several learning models developed by psychologists. Two of these models are discussed below:

(a) The Parlovian Learning Model

One of the most popular models frequently used to explain learning behaviour is Parlovian learning model, named after a Russian Psychologist called Parlov. Parlov was famous for his experiments with dogs.[8] In one of his experiments, he would ring a bell while feeding a dog. After repeating this experiment several times, he observed that the dog would salivate whenever the bell rang even though no food was present. This means that the dog had learned to associate the ringing of the bell with feeding time. This type of learning is called the stimulus-response model and is used to explain consumer behaviour.

This stimulus-response (Parlovian) model is frequently referred to as behaviorism because of the attention paid to stimulus-response syndrome. The retailers follow the behaviourist school. For example, supermarkets generally have similar architectural designs in order to present a familiar face to customers regardless of the city in which they are located. To understand this (Parlovian) model, one must have the knowledge of such concepts as drives, Cues, responses and re-inforcement.

(i) Drives

Khotler[9] defines drive as "a strong internal stimulus impelling action". In other words, a drive is an individual's motivation to take some action because the individual is aware of an un-filled need that is causing tension or discomfort.

(ii) Cues

Cues are those stimuli that direct the individual to respond to his or her drives in some suggested manner. Advertisement messages are external stimuli that are usually used as cues.

For instance, store fronts and window displays may provide cues to consumers with respect to the nature of a retailer's business, the quality of products, prices and services offered. Conversation with friends may provide information about the relative merits or demerits of a nearby supermarket. These cues may be stored in the individuals' memory and could be retrieved when it appears useful.

(iii) Response

According to Wrightsman and Sanford[10], response is "any organic event set off by a stimuli". This means that response is the action taken by the individual to satisfy a drive.

(iv) Reinforcement

Reinforcement occurs when an individual repeats his or her performance under similar conditions and is again "rewarded" as before. For example, some people repeatedly purchase the same product and brand because they have found it to be consistently satisfactory. The same is applicable to point of purchase.

Philip Khotler summarizes the behaviourial model for analysing buyers in a diagram as shown in fig. 1. This behaviourial model for analysing buyers shows how consumption patterns emerge as output from the individual's psyche.

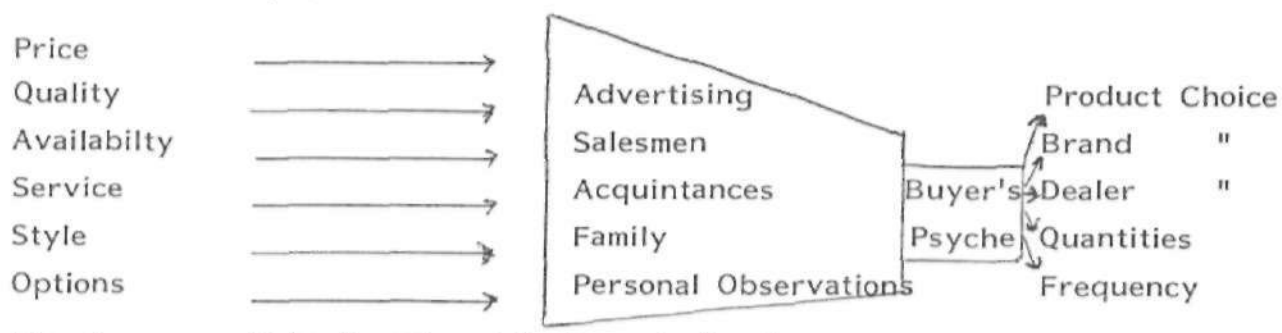


Fig. 1. Behavioural models for anlysing buyers

Source: Phillip Kotler, Behavioural Models for Analysing Buyers, Journal of Marketing (October 1965)

2. The Psychoanalytic Model of Learning

Critics of the Parlovian behaviourist model claim that the model over-emphasizes the stimulus and response elements but neglects other phenomena such as perception, the subconsious and interpersonal relationship. The critics' view is that Parlocian behaviourist concentrated too much attention on the decision and paid little attention to the thinking process that leads to the decision.

Sigmud Frend, the leading psychologist whose name is often associated with the psychoanalytic model of consumer behaviour opines that every individual has a psyche that is divided into three parts viz., id (primitive, instinctual, infantile drives), ego (the conscious, organising self in contact with reality) and supergo (the conscience, the source of guilt feelings).[11] Explaining the above division, Larson et al[12], say that the the id is the part of the psyche where instinctive drives such as hunger, thirst and sex reside. The ego is the part of the psyche that govern the id according to some intelligent plan. The super ego is the conscience of the psyche, that channels the individual's drives in a morally approved manner, thereby helping the individual to avoid quit or shame.

The most important application of Feudian psychoanalytical model as far as this study is concerned lies in its postulation that buyers are often motivated to buy a product because of its symbolic meaning. The same reasoning goes for the point of purchase.

3. Personality

It is desirable to briefly discuss personality and its role in consumer behaviour. Personality is the relatively enduring ways of behaving that characteris each individual.

It refers to all factors that cause an individual to behave in a unique manner. Recent trend shows that marketers are becoming increasingly more interested in using personality measures to predict consumer buying behaviour. These trends are called psychographic studies. Four distinct consumer personalities are identified thus:

(a) The Economic Shopper

This shopper judges both the store and the shopping process using economic criteria. He/she is aware of price, quality and the selection of goods available. This shopper demands efficiency from the store personnel if it is to receive his/her continued patronage.

(b) The Personalising Shopper

This shopper seeks out the store which places value on an individual's personality because he/she likes a warm, intimate and friendly relationship. This shopper identifies easily with store's personel.

(c) The Ethical Shopper

This shopper has a strong sense of ethics, often favouring the small independent store over the large chain store. The reasoning is that he/she should help the small stores regardless of price, brand, or other criteria, rather than give business to the cold, impersonal chain.

(d) The Apathetic Shopper

This shopper actually dislikes to shop hence he/she makes it as easy as possible. In as much as these shoppers are chiefly interested in their conveniences, prices, selection of merchandise and warm relations with store personnel are of little concern to them.

2.6. CONSUMER PURCHASE CYCLE

The purchase cycle of a product by a consumer depends upon the rate of his/her consumption of the product. For instance, house holds with children of primary or secondary school age consume beverages at a much faster rate than childless households. The purchase cycle can also be influenced by seasonal factors. Seasonal fluctuations in the weather conditions, for example, affect the demand for soft drinks and dairy products.

Consumers also vary as to the time during the day or week they make their purchases. The current increased influx of women into the labour force has made some consumers to shop after office hours or on weekends. This might be the reason why some supermarkets in Zaria close their business at 5.00 p.m. or even later (one and half hours or more after the close of most government offices to allow workers time for shopping). The consumer purchase cycle affects the point of purchase depending on the frequency. Where purchases are made, for instance, daily, the issue of location may become very relevant because of cost and convenience of transportation.

2.7. CONSUMER CHOICE BEHAVIOUR

Several variables have been proposed as factors that affect the choice the consumers make. One of the leading authorities in marketing Research. Kristian S. Palda[13], lists attitudes, preferences, and images as common variables in consumer choice behaviour. However, when several alternatives among brands, products or stores exist, the consumer simply repeats a response that provides the greatest satisfaction in previous similar situations. No real choice is made, no conflict is experienced and no intervening variables are at work.

Consumers choices are made in various ways, ranging from complex conscious decision-making processes to easy, quick judgements.

But generally consumers make choices that fall between these two extremes. Often, two sets of factors are at work. These are:-

(i) values, goals or motives by which alternatives are evaluated, and

(ii) attitudes about the alternatives that relate them to the values[14].

The importance of value in consumer choice manifests itself in decision-making. For instance, in a choice between two supermarkets, the concept of time (time taken to reach the supermarket and/or time taken for checking out) may consciously or unconsciously be salient. The supermarket may be evaluated positively or negatively depending on the past experience(s) of the customer. If the customer has had pleasant experiences with the supermarket, the effect will be positive and unpleasant experiences will undoubtedly evoke a negative effect. In other words, the effect depends on the amount of positive or negative reward previously associated with the value.

2.8. CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR

The preceeding sections have attempted to reflect technically on the various theories and models related to consumer behaviour in order to assist in really finding out why consumers behave in a unique way as regards the direction of choice of goods they buy and the outlets from where the goods are purchased.

However, because of the behavioural nature of buying decisions which are taken based on various and complex elements, it is difficult to find an exact formula for consumer buying behaviour which will be universally applicable over a wide range of consumers. The situation is made more complex due to the fact that very little is known about what goes on in a consumer's mind before, during and after each purchase of an item.

Sometimes the explanation for the customer's behaviour is not discernable even to the consumer himself. If we add to this complexity the countless variations occuring because each consumer is a separate individual with a unique personality, then our task of understanding consumer behaviour may seem to be an impossible one. To understand this phenomenon is a must, however, because an understanding of the buyer's behaviour is critical to the success of any marketing programme. In the face of all the individuality and complexity, marketers must search for the behavioural threads that are common to each market segmet, so that they can appeal to wide group with one marketing programme. Fortunately, marketing people, working with behavioural scientists have been able to develop some generalisations about the individual and group factors that influence consumer buying behaviour. Producers have been able to design marketing mix policies to ensure that the product on a general basis meets the demand of the consumer and therefore enhances the possibility of its acceptance on a continous basis. However, this adequacy of the product does not guaratee a regular patronage from the consumer for any given retail outlet. This is so because there are several retail outlets through which the products get to the final consumer. Because of their numbers, there is a tendency for competition to exist as to which of the retail outlets should have the consumer's patronage. This burden on the marketer at the retail level is increased by the fact that the reasons behind where the consumer makes his purchase is usually hidden within the consumer. In order to crack this problem, therefore, an organisation should consider two salient factors with respect to where people buy - where the buying decision is made and where the actual purchase occurs.[15] For many products and services, for instance the decision to buy is made at home. For example, a man may leave his house with the intention of buying shaving blade at a particular supermarket.

For others, the decision is often made in whole or in part at the point of purchase. A man shopping in a sporting goods store for tennis balls may see tennis shoes displayed for sale. Remembering that he needs one badly at home, he may decide on the spot to buy a pair. A woman may decide at home to buy a birthday gift for her husband but waits until she gets to the store before deciding whether it will be a tennis racket, a shirt, or a book.

An organisation's entire promotional programme and in many cases, its product display must be geared to carry the greatest impact at the place where the buying decision is made. Therefore, if the decision to buy is made in the store, then attention must be devoted to packaging and other point-of-purchase display of materials, particularly in self-service stores. A shopper may decide at home to buy cold cereal, but the key decision regarding where to buy may be made along the line between the house and the store.

Although some of the reasons behind the decision to buy from a particular outlet are varied and may usually be unknown to the retailers, there are certain basic significant factors that influence consumer behaviour. Chief among them are the following:Social class, Cultural, Religious, economic group and stores image.

(i) Social Class

Social classes are divisions of the total society into which individuals and families can be placed. Membership in any particular social class is determined by factors such as:- occupation, wealth, income, education, power, prestige etc.

Generally, members of each social class tend to be homogenous in attitudes and behaviours. In other words, people of the same social class tend to dress in the same manner, live in the same neighbourhood, have similar attitudes and opinions and may shop in the same stores.

In his article, "social classes and spending behaviour". Martineau[16] pointed out some major charateristics found among the middle class of America. They include:-

(a) more urban identification,

(b) stresses rationality,

(c) greater sense of choice making,

(d) self confident, willing to take risks, and

(e) sees himself/herself tied to national happenings.

(ii) Reference Groups

A reference group is a group in which an individual holds membership or to whcih he aspires. Larson et al[17] define reference group as any collection of people that help to shape the attitudes and behaviour of an individual.

Reference group influence is an important force in making decisions as to the store to patronise. Information from reference group members normally enjoys more credibility than information from mass media such as radio, television, magazines and newspapers.

People collect themselves into a group because they have similar values and they are prepared to accept the norms that influence its behaviour. The group may be formal such as schools or informal such mere friends.

All products have either positive or negative qualitites depending on the decision maker. For example, while the muslim views pork as a taboo of the highest order, christians see same as excellent delicacy. In other words, while christians (reference group) would patronise a store that sells regularly pork, muslim (another reference group) would never do so. Frequently each group has an opinion leader and all other group members tend to conform to his ideas and behaviour.

Some of the reference groups are called "primary group" while others are called "secondary groups".

The primary include the family, intimate friends and neighbours while the secondary group may include professional associations. People can also be influenced somehow by groups they do not belong.

A person is influenced by his reference group in various ways. The group exposes him to possible new behaviours. The group also influences his attitudes and self-concept because of his desire to fit in as he is compelled to behave according to the group's norms. Thus the pressure by the group for individual conformity may affect the individuals choice of stores. For instance, a high income person may be reluctant to make purchases at outlets which may be considered inferior to his status. Each time he has to make a purchase he goes to a high class supermarket.

Culture

Culture is the sum total of behaviour response made by large groups of people when they are faced with similar problems. Culture represents ideas, values, attitudes etc., governing the behaviour of a member of the group. The growing new baby soon learns the set of values, preferences and behaviours in a society through the process of socialisation involving the family and neighbourhood.

Each culture contains sub-cultures which provide specific indentification and socialisation for its members. These sub-cultures may be nationality groups, religious groups, racial groups, geographical groups etc. [18] It is important to note that in our present day Nigeria, religious and geographical groups play significant role in most of our activities and decisions.

Religion

Most Nigerians embrace one of the following religious beliefs viz.,christianity, islam or traditional religion. There are just a few, generally the elites, who claim to be athiests. The religious beliefs of Nigerians, especially the muslims, have a lot of influence on their behaviour. Most muslims prefer to buy their meat from open market because of their religous injunctions with the respect of animal slaughtering.

2.9. SUPERMARKETS AND ITS RELEVANCE

One of the most distinctively American retailing institution is the supermark The operating methods of the supermarket epitomize mass distribution, and have been widely adopted in many parts of the world, with or without some modifications[19]. It has revolutionized the distribution of food and has had a pervasive influence upon the marketing of various classes of consumer goods.

Although supermarkets vary greatly, they have certain characteristics that distinguish them from other retail institutions. A supermarket must among other things:

(a) carry a complete line of food products such as dry groceries, meats, fresh fruits and vegetables, diary products, and bakery products,

(b) have self-service at least in the dry grocery department, and

(c) be a large store with some departmental organization.

Graham Buxton asserts that the principle of supermarket trading is "high turnover of low unit value products displayed in large shopping areas in order to facilitate customer movement"[20].

There is still some confusion as to what a supermarket actually is. One sees different stores of various sizes being labelled supermarket all over Zaria. For example, we have Haske Supermarket in Gyellesu, Rahama Mart in Samaru, Chellarams Supermarket in Sabon Gari, and a host of others.

Although the actual definition of supermarket varies in different parts of the world, all have one thing in common. That is, a supermarket is a shop in which the housewife can buy all her weekly food household requirements The accepted definition in Great Britian is the one laid down by "Self-Service and Supermerket". The definition insists that a store must fulfill the following requirements before it is termed "supermarket":21

(i) has a selling area of at least 2,000 square feet,

(ii) sells a complete range of foodstuffs, including fresh meat, fresh fruit and vegetables grocery and provisions and a basic range of household preparations, such as soaps, detergents and polishes. The definition does not include the sale of fresh fish,

(iii) operates on a checkout system, even though there may be some service departments, and

(iv) has at least three checkouts.

Other countries of the sorld vary this definition in detail, though not in principle. For instance, the Americans are more insistent on volume of business than on size. This manifests itself from the definition offered by the American Supermarket Institute[22] which requires a supermarket to turn over at least 1,000,000 dollars a years.

In Germany, like the United States of America, the emphasis is on sales rather than size and turnover must be 3,000,000 Deutschmarks per year.[23] Contrary to Germany and the United States of America, France considers the size to be the most important factor. Towsey tells us that the selling area of a supermarket in France must be at least 400 squaremetres which is approximately 4,000 square feet.[24]

At this juncture it may be appropriate to point out that the supermarket is not just a different type of shop, or a shop which falls within some specific definition, but it is a new concept in retailing. It is primarily a technique for more efficient distribution, so that a wide range goods, i.e. the complete weekly household requirement, is sold under one roof.

In view of the unique situation of Nigeria where no information about size and volume of sales of supermarket are readily available, coupled with the fact that the supermarket management are not willing to assist researchers[25] in their (researchers') effort to systematise knowledge about the retailing system of the country, this study will neither emphasize size nor volume of sales in its definition. Rather emphasis will be on the basic and universal charactaeristicts of supermarkets. Hence, the following definition will apply to this study:

A supermarket is a store that has the following characteristics:

(i) sell a complete range of foodstuffs including fresh meat,

(ii) sell a basic range of household goods such as detergents, and

(iii) operate on self-service and chckout system.

2.10. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF SUPERMARKET

Before the coming of supermarket, food retailing was carried on in very small stores. Most of these stores were owned and operated by family members with few, if any, paid employees. In fact, many of the very small establishments had the manager as the only full-time employee. For instance, some early Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company cash-and-carry food stores were so small that they were closed down when the manager went for lunch.[26]

The idea of supermarket was very common in certain localities before it burst into the national marketing picture with a blaze of spectacular profits. For instance, Southern California was the area in which such institutions developed as grocery coliseums. Ralph's Grocery Company, one of the pioneers in the food business since 1873, developed supermarkets that operated successfully in 1930.[27]

The first true supermarket appeared in early 1930s when Michael Kullen opened his first market in an abandoned Long Island garage with empty ginger-ale cases for display tables.[28] However, some authors are of the opinion that supermarkets appeared in the United States of America earlier that 1930s. For example, Butcher and McAnelly assert that:[29]

> The first supermarkets in the United States appeared in Southern California in about 1925. These markets were primarily large, open-air, self-service stores with drive-in facilities. One of the most advanced of the early supermarkets was the Chapman Park Drive-In Market of Los Angeles. Chapman offered a wide assortment of foods, and its facilities included and enclosed parking lot with a capacity of 500 cars.

The pioneer supermarkets had crude fixtures and offered a minimum of customers.[30] Self-service, the most distinguishing feature of supermarket, required the housewife to locate and select her groceries and bring them to a check-out cashier.

The first supermarkets were open by independent merchants but as soon as the principles upon which they were based became clearly established,

chains entered into active competition with pioneer independents.[31] This led to the rapid growth of the supermarket institution in the United States of America.

However, this growth was interrupted by World War II. After 1945, there was a period of expansion. An average of 2,400 new supermarkets were opened each year between 1960 and 1969. By 1970 there were about 37,000 supermarkets in operation[32] in the United States of America.

The supremarkets built in the 1950s and 1960 differed considerably from those of the 1960s. Perhaps the most conspicous change was in store size. Most of the supermarkets opened in the late 1960s had an overall floor area of around 20,000 square feet.[33] This increase in size was due to the tremedous expansion in products hadled by supermarkets.

Unlike the pioneer supermarket of 1930s which were located in low-rent districts with very inexpensive fixtures and little personal service, the late 1960s supermarkets were modernised. They were located in the best shopping centres and they became larger and more elaborate, with some even featuring carpeting, music, more convenient ways of delivering products to customer's car, and other extras to make shopping more pleasant.[34] The consequence of this progressive movement in store size was the involvement of supermarkets in scramble merchandising. According to one of the leading authorities in Marketing, Phillip Kotler:[35]

> A typical supermarket hadled three thousand items in 1946, and this had increased to around eight thousand . The most significant increase has been in the number of non-food items carried - items such as nonprescription drugs, beauty aids, housewares, magazines, books, toys - which now account for 8% of total supermarket sales. This scrambled merchandising is continuing, and many supermarkets are moving into prescriptions, appliances, records, sporting goods, hardware, garden supplies, and even cameras, in a further effort to find some high-margin lines to improve profitability.

Other authorities also recorded similar view with respect to supermarket merchandising. For example, Weinrauch and Pinland[36] observed that the mordern supermarket stock softwear goods (shirts, pants, socks, and so forth), small appliances, toys, and even jewelery. This scrambled merchandising was beautifully summed up by Zimmerman[37] when he remarked:

> Like the trading post of old, the supermarket draws no lines in possible wares. It features anything from radios to canned peas. Its aisles may be lined with hardware, softwares, toothpaste, produce, even wearing apparel. But the very diversity of the products, as with the village counters of old, provides allure. And when these heaping counters also appeal to customers' saving instincts because of their good values, the combination is irresistible.

2.11. FACTORS THAT FAVOUR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND GROWTH OF SUPERMARKET IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

One of the most important reasons that contributed to the establishment of supermarkets in the United States was the Great Depression of the 1930s which gave birth to economic crisis. The economic conditions made it possible for operators to get large buildings at low rental charges as well as large quantities of merchandise at very low prices from distressed sources.[38] They had an almost inexhaustible market, consisting of price-conscious consumers with depleted purchasing power.

Another significant factor that aided the establishment of supermarket was the technological developemt in the field of automobile which broke the housewife's dependence on neighbourhood store. The existence of automobile made distance a less important factor in shopping decisions, thus, the housewife could travel for some considerable distance to buy household needs.

Advances in refrigeration technology made it possible to store perishables with a hig degree of certainty that the temperature would be as desired (as opposed to the uncertainty when perishables had to be stored in ice-cooled boxes)[39]. This has encouraged the housewife to make bulk purchases of perishables that would last the house for a period of time. As a result of this, daily trips to grocery stores were reduced to once or twice in a week. Household grocery storage made the cost of trip to more distant stores worth-while when balanced against price savings offered by the new supermarkets. Food products were vecoming available in consumer-size packages (cans and boxes) rather than distributor containers (barrels and crates).[40]

The growth of supermarket has been due largely to its methods of operation and its merchandising policies. It has the advantage of convenience of shopping, permitting the consumer to purchase all fo the family's food needs at one store. It provides free automobile parking space. It provides convenience

for the customers in terms of time of obtaining a wide range of products under one roof or in one location, and the price advantages created by an emphasis on self-service and high -turnover.[41] The needs for clerks was greatly reduced by manufactures' extensive use of advertising to presell their products and brands.

2.12. IMPACT OF SUPERMARKET ON RETAIL INSTITUTION

Buzzell, et al[42] recount the impact of supermarket methods on retail institution in these words:

> Self-service, one of the distinguishing features of the supermarket, has been widely adopted, to varying degrees, by stores selling general merchandise, drugs, hardware, and other types of products. In most lines of trade, too, the trend toward larger stores has reflected a movement toward "mass merchandising" - larger store buildings, more diverse product higher rates of capital turnover.

This remarkable innovation has not only revolutionized the distribution of food in the United States of America, but also in recent years supermarket techniques have been applied to all segments of the retail trade.[43]

Supermarket methods have also been adopted in many parts of the world. For example, by the early 1960s, it was estimated that there were some 2,000 supermarkets in Western Europe. Japan, Latin America and other countries have also opened supermarket-type stores.[44]

2.13 IMAGE ENCHANCEMENT

As outlined earlier in this chapter, there are myraid factors that influence the decision of a consumer to make purchases at a particular retail outlet. Most of these factors are entirely outside the socpe of the outlet. Management no matter how resourceful can do little or nothing to influence the consumer's social class may determine where he makes his purchases. A high- class customer may find it embarrasingly difficult to purchase items from a local store. However, one factor which plays a decisive role in continued stores' patronage is its image because each time a consumer has to make a purchase, there is a likely play back of previous transaction(s) within the consumer's cognitive structure.

The most important components of image enchancement programme which

a business organisation can embark upon are as follows:

(i) Store location

(ii) Store design

(iii) Product Assortment

(iv) Store Services

(v) Store Personnel

2.14. STORE LOCATION

Store location refers to the physical placement of an enterprise in its environment from where prospective customers can have access to satisfy their need felt deprivation. Today, many owners and management have realised the fact that the location of their establishments influences the way consumers perceive them and their operations and are consequently taking the required precaustions to choose sites that would enhance the maximisation of the business oppotunities. For example, several eating, drinking places and other recreational facilities are intentionally located at remote, obscure corners of the town to depict the get-away image. Here individuals as well as their partners can spirit away from the watchful eyes of spouses and parents and this important factor compensates for the obscurity and the difficulty and cost of getting to such places. In contrast, drug stores, grocery stores and hardware stores that are located close to their prospective buyers get more customer traffic than those located el sewhere. A drug store location for example would be regarded as operationally expedient where such is located near a hospital or in the centre of the town. Locating a drug store in an obscure area which is difficult to locate would not make any business sense from the point of view of store location, as customers would not find such store's location as offering convenience.

Another way of enchancing a store image is by locating it among others. A store that is located among others that emphasize quality is likely to be associated with high quality merchandise. For example, stores located along the Allen Avenue in Lagos are seen as high-class stores because of the popularity of the street among the elites in Lagos metropolis. Such a location has a sort of trading effect on the store.

Due to psychographic tendencies, some consumers prefer hotels, home and offices that overlook peculiar natural features such as lakes, sea and mountain because of the air of freedom and relaxation these locations communicate. On the whole, it is a matter of consumer preference. Consequently, a location that meets consumer preference creates a positive and lasting image of the store on the consumer and such positive postures can be passed over to tohter prospective customers and the ripple effect on business position is quite over-bearing.

Accessibility is another angle to this component of image enchancement. When a seller makes his store accessible to shopper, he is communication convenience. Shoppers consider such factors as traffic flow and convenience of parking as important criteria of store choice. Some sellers locate their stores in busy downtown arears without adequate parking facilities and expect customers to beat a path to them. These stores sooner or later become victims of poor store locations. It is generally believed that no amount of advertising ot other promotional gimmicks can completely off-set the effect of poor location. Promotion can help to reduce the poor image, but that is all it can accomplish. Some business organistions, conscious of the need for parking space for their customers, include this requirement in their building plan by allocating one or more floors in the building for parking of cars and although warnings about the non-liability of store owners for any theft fo vehicles parked are displayed conspicously in the parks, such organisations put in place secutity outfits to protect the customers' properties. The impact of this arrangement on the customers' psyche is tremedous when one considers the ordeal of finding a parking place in places like central La gos where unathorised parking of vehicles can attract the towing away of such vehicles to be redeemed with fees ranging from ₦100.00 and above. Apart from such costs, the impact of the inconvenience to the customer may be detrimental to the business so poorly located.

2.15. STORE DESIGN

The store design create indelible impression in the customer's mind.

Indeed, the most obvious of the physical qualities of a store is the store design itself. The type of fixtures, arrangement of fixtures and equipment and store decoration should all be meticulously planned to enchance a particul image. The customer is likely to feel that the stores's mission is reflected in these facilities. As a result, the store should always be designed around a theme. a men's store may want to stress a manly and athletic image. By the use of solid wood fixture, natural colours, a few autographed photos of local and national sports personalities, the store has the basic for the desired image. Some stores convey the children store image by using light colours, balloons, pictures of clowns, wild life and story book characters on the wall.

If the stores's exterior and interior are old fashioned, people tend to view the company as traditional and conservative and this could have detri consequences depending on the nature of business the store is engaged in. Mordern facilities convey liberal images, and are viewed as willing to change and adopt new methods. Any management that allows its facilities to become run down, is conveying a message of incompetence and poor quality. For this raseon, most business organistions located within high-rising buildings make sure the lifts function at all times. Apart from the direct inconvenience customers who get trapped inside poorly maintained and operated lifts are exposed to, the damage on the image of such business organisation is enormou

Recently, the use of burnt bricks in buildings has brought the rural theme into prominence. Most recreational facilities are also enhacing the rural theme by emphasising traditional or local menu, accompanied by the use of local eating and drinking implements. For example, sellers of "Isi-ewu", atraditional delicacy now use traditional wooden mortars to popularise the theme. Sellers of palm wine use both local calabash cups and filter for the same purpose. Usually, the roofing of such building where these items are sold are made with local materials like rafia palms grasses etc. to properly communicate the rural theme.

Display fixtures in a store aid in creating the desired atmosphere or

impression on a consumer. If the policy of the store is to make an economy appeal and to handle merchandise at moderate prices, the fixtures should be simple and not expensive when the policy is to handle top quality merchandise, and to extend considerable personal services, the fixtures should be in keeping with the theme. This means that the finish and construction of such fixture should suggest quality and service.

Several aspects of store design can go a long way to inhibit the store image. A store entrance with steps inclined and columns is a useful example. These features are hazards for the unwarry, the elderly and the customer who is in hurry, hence they do not create any positive image. Store owners are now capitalising on this convenience factor by providing automated doors and escalators. In some communities, things like candles in restaurants create an atmosphere. However symbols like crosses, triangles as well as certain colours are considered offensive as they are closely related with personal issue such as religion and they should be avoided while planning the store design. This is even move important in a country like Nigeria where the issue of religion has already dichotomised almost all daily activities. Once a business concern is directly associated with a particular religion, members of the other would almost invarably have nothing to do with it.

2.16. PRODUCT ASSORTMENT

This refers to the different classification of goods such as clothing, furnishing, groceries, building materials etc. The term can also be used to refer to the range of the variations of a single product as for example the different kinds of light bulbs that may be carried. Laboratory experiments and surveys indicate that stores offering either a deep assortment or a wide variety of product lines are preferred to stores having medium depth or breadth of assortment. Alaba market in Lagos has successfully enhanced its image through its assortment of electrical and electronic products. However, as consumer continued to look for saving through one-stop shopping, the completeness of product assortment becomes an important evaluation criteria. It takes a little time for a restaurant owner who offers only okro soup to realise that

he is losing business to a competing restaurant that happens to have more three types of soup on its menu list. In the same manner, a bar owner who sells almost all available brands of beer is likely to get more patronage than his competitor who sells only one or two brands. A wider assortment encourages suggestive selling, explanation and service, all of which give completeness to the product.

Related to the product assortment is the product's package. The product's package is considered a stimulus factor and has the ability of shaping consumer's perception of the product. Each time a supermarket or store uses toilet paper to wrap its meatpie for customers, they are more or less associating their meat-pie with the kind of human wastes that go with toilet papers. This is an unconscious reaction. An appropriate packaging evokes good impression and aids the store's image.

The price of the product from the store is another image enhancer. However, the improtance of price in this area depends on the type of product, the outlet and the customers. If a seller emphasizes low prices and is appealing to the low income group, discount pricing is recommended. To many customers, high prices are sorrugate indicators of high quality particularly items of jewelleries and others used by women. Seller can therefore use high prices to appeal to a particular market segment. However, as the current economic trend continues to make what erstwhile are necessities to become luxuries for most customers, the importance of discount prices as an image factor is bound to increase as consumers becomes more rational in their choice(s).

2.17. STORE SERVICE

This can suscintly be defined as the non-price devices used to help the retailer differentiate his offerings in order to achieve high sales and thereby maintain a certain segment of the market. Larson et al[45] sees servicees as those non-price activities undertaken by a retailer to assist him/her in carrying out the mission to achieve the twin objectives of customer satisfaction and increase sales volume. For instance if a customer enters a store and cannot

find where a particular product he intends to buy is dispalyed in the store and he/she meets a sales clerk to ask. The reply which invariably helps the customer to locate the product would satisfy the customer and also increase sales if the customer makes the purchase. Even where the customer does not, the awareness created in his/her mind is very useful. Unfortunately most Nigerian Stores do not seem to consider service as an important aspect of their image. In most of these stores, service are either not existing or provided on preferential basis. There is no questioning the fact that firms that offer similar merchandise use service to make unique and specialised appeal to customers. A seller who wants to increase his product satisfaction can employ such service as credit, alterations, installations and performance checks at no extra cost to the customer. Delivery, parking and wrapping can also be employed to enhance convenience. Special benefit services such product return, handling of complaints and repairs, all add up to create positive impressions in the minds of consumers. It is sad to realise that many stores in Nigeria do not provide shopping baskets and carriers for shoppers. How then would they expect people who buy in bulk to patronise them? Shopping baskets provide convenience, while the provision of carriers communicate appreciation, warmth and friendliness. The cummulative effect of this on the psyche of the customers is positive. Installation and alteration are types of services that usually cannot be separated from the product, as they are necessary to complement it. As a result, sellers of heavy equipments and apparels can effectively enhance their images if they make these services available to customers. The magnitude of embarrassment in trying a pair of trousers for fitting in a general apparel store which has no fitting room can be best imagined.

Another component of this image enhanced is the availability of clean basic conveniences. Most of our stores especially drinking places provide only make - shift urinaries. They forget about other important facilities like toilets and their related fixtures. The problem is compounded by the death of basic infrastructures like water and light as the problem of making these facilities functional in the absence of a regular supply of water and

light may create further problems particularly in a store that records heavy customer traffic. On the whole, while the provision for service may appeal to either the real or whimsical needs of many customers, the reduction of services may be converted to positive selling tool since it infers that a retailer is pursuing a policy of low price particularly where the target market is composed of the very low income group. Invariably, however, a point will be reached when the need for these services cannot be dispensed with if the business is to retain its customers.

2.18. PERSONNEL

Store personnel are the living symbol of the store. All the good effects of product assortment, location, design and service offered by a store can be destroyed by ineffective, hostile and indolent personnel. Many customers consider the attitude of employees as the best guide to the true personality of the business. It can therefore be deduced that failure of stores to make sales is a direct result of the negative attitude of store employees. It can be argued that an estimated 70% of customers who stop patronising a particular store do so because of employee attitude. In order, therefore, to create a favourable image of their company, employees have to treat their customers fairly. They have to show interest and attention rather than focus on the sales. Part of the expectation from customers is for employees to be able to direct, be friendly, courteous, helpful and knowledgeable in the area of product features. Personnel personal appearance is very important. Management can build on this by stressing employee personal cleanliness and dress codes. In fact some of the big stores have uniforms for their sales staff and these are usually fashioned in a manner that is not too complex and flambouyant. This is as a result of the great emphasis that is placed on consumer contact. Excessive make-ups, unacceptable dress styles, unkempt hair and nails, coupled with offensive body odour can communicate a negative image of a store. To avoid this, management must prescribe dress codes and proper lenght of hair for both male and female employees. Obsevation shows that

several personnel actions like chewing gum, sleeping on duty, staying on the phone, throwing customer's change on the counter, picking of certain parts of the body especially the nose, using offensive language and exihibiting preferential treatment can be very detrimental to a store's image.

2.19 NEED FOR GROWTH

Except for a company that enjoys absolute monopoly in the area of business it is engaged in, no company that wishes to remain continously in business can fold its hands without taking steps to ensure its growth. This is even very important particularly in retail business where entry into the industry do not require substantial capital outlay outside the scope of many entrepreneurs. This has probably accounted for the proliferation of stores. This situation undoubtedly creates stiff competition within the industry to win over and retain customer's continued patronage. It therefore becomes imperative for stores to put in place strategies that would enhance its ability to effectively compete with others and thereby ensure its growth. Lack of foresight on the part of management has accounted for the high mortality rate of most of the retail outlets that daily spring up.

CHAPTER III

BACKGROUND STUDY OF THE STORES [46]

3.1. LEVENTIS STORES Plc., ZARIA

Leventis Stores, Zaria is one of the branches of Leventis Stores, a division of A. G. Leventis & Company (Nigeria) Plc, a multi-national Company with its head office in Lagos. The store enjoys the good-will of customers built over the years through excellent service. The store is located at 6/7 Park Road, Zaria and draws its customers mostly from the elite class in the town and the neighbourhood.

The Store is managed by Mr. H. Asotie Enaholo whose position designated as Store Manager. He has a sales supervisor who reports to him and is responsibl for supervising the sales staff. The personnel strength of the store is 27. This figure includes the checkout operators, clerical staffs, security and sales staff. The store has 14 departments as follows: groceries, fish and meat, fresh foods, provisions, cosmetics, clothing, books, fancy, hardware and glassware, electrical, home sales, beer and soft drinks, bata and international cards. The department are grouped together under 4 sectional heads who are responsible to the sales supervisor for the efficient operation of the sales assistants. The organisation structure of the store is given below:

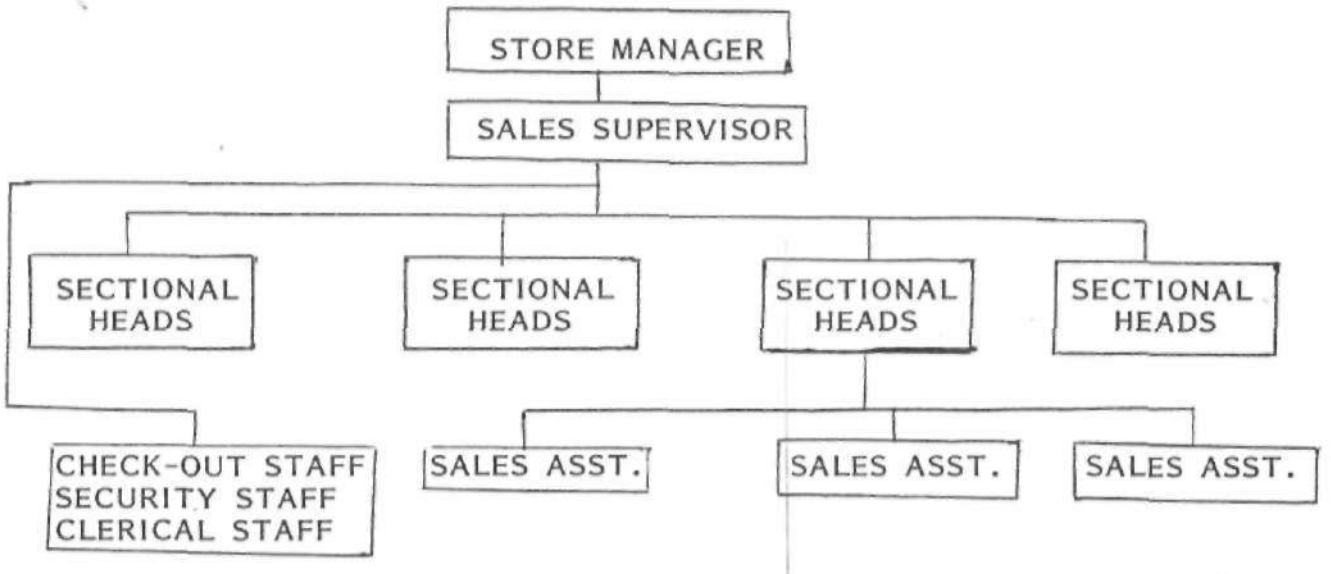


Fig 2. Organisation structure of Leventis Stores Plc., Zaria.

The stores is opened for business during the following periods:

Mondays - Thursdays:	8.30 a.m.	-	5.30 p.m.
Fridays:	8.30 a.m.	-	1.00 p.m. 3.00 p.m.- 5.30 p.m.
Saturdays:	9.00 a.m.	-	4.00 p.m.
Saturdays: (environmental Sanitation days)	12.00 Noon	-	5.00 p.m.

The store has car park that can convenietly take up to 25 cars at every point in time and this is considered adequate to accomodate the parking requirements of the customers.

Complaints from customers are routed through the sectional heads, the sales supervisor to the Manager. Such complaints are handled in that order and may only get to the manager where this cannot be effectively handled by the lower level supervisors. However, where a customer still chooses, complaints can be made to any of the levels indicated above.

Each product carries a price tag so that customers can easily identify them them. The store operates three check-out counters which are computerised and each product coded. This makes it easy for a transaction to be traced particularly when there is a complaint in respect thereof. The stock level of goods on sales is similarly computerised so that at the end of the day's sales, the computer print-out of the stock level is available to the manager so that the need for periodic stock-taking is rendered unnecessary. Stock is then replenished as and when due. Goods are periodically moved from one point to another within the store to create the impression of newness to customers.

The sales staff on duty wear the Leventis Stores uniform which makes for easy identification among the numerous customers. They are trained for the special clientele it serves. Most of the policy decisions on the store are centrally taken from the head office and the store Manager's discretion is limited to the operational duties of the stores. In order to motivate the staffs, bonuses are awarded periodically where the stores attain a particular level of sales.

Security in and around the stores is not compromised and there is an inbuilt checks and balances on the gate and check-out counter staffs. This is to reduce, if not eliminate the incidence of pilferage which may be detrimenta to the profit motive of the store.

(ii) BANADEEN STORES, ZARIA

Banadeen Stores, Zaria is located at old Jos Road, Gelesu, Zaria directly opposite the Institute of Administration, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. It's location is strategic as it draws its bulk of customers from lecturers an students population of the mini-campus and the Federal College of Education which is located less than a kilometer away from the stores. Residents of Gelesu area of the town and others from the neighbourhood complement the customer population.

The store is a sole proprietorship, owned by Alhaji M. B. Ahmed. The stores established 18 years ago presently managed by Mallam Bala Miko with a staff strength of 4. The manager is assisted by a supervisor who takes charge of the check-out counter clerk, a sales clerk and a sales assistant. The organisation chart is given below:-

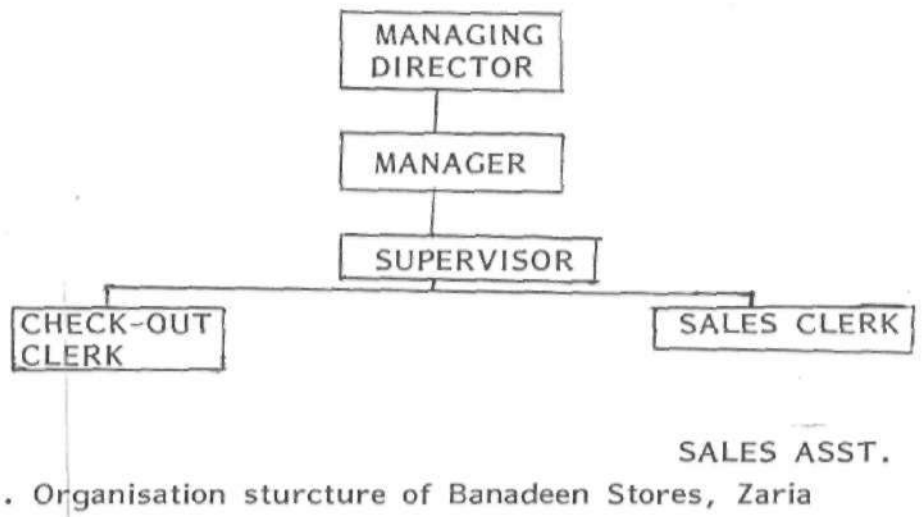


Fig. 3. Organisation sturcture of Banadeen Stores, Zaria

The store is opened for business during the following periods:

Mondays - Saturdays:	10.00 a.m.	-	1.00 p.m.
	3.00 p.m.	-	6.30 p.m.
	8.00 p.m.	-	10.00 p.m.
Sundays:	2.00 p.m.	-	6.00 p.m.

The working period is specially selected to suit the cultural demands of the proprietor and majority of the customers who normally require the break periods to attend their religious obligations.

The store has a car park which can conveniently take up to 20 cars at every point in time and this is considered adequate to accomodate the parking requirements of the customers, particularly as most of them are students from the nearby institutions who do not require vehicle to visit the stores to make their purchases.

The store has the following departments clearly indicated for customers to see viz., cosmetics, food and beverage, toileteries and accessories. The goods are arranged in a manner that ensures normal flow from one need to the other and as one moves around the store, it is easy to appreciate the smoothness of the product assortment range.

Product prices are conspicuously marked on the shelves for customers to see. The store operates only one check-out counter and this seems adequate for its volume of business. Complaints, where they occur are normally made to the supervisor and promptly rectified usually to the customers' satisfaction.

The staffs do not wear any uniform and this may usually make it difficult for customers to identify them in case of need. However, this disadvantage is duly compensated for by the fact that anonimity of the staffs is a security advantage against the kleptomaniac tendencies of some customers.

The management rents parts of the store to the Nanet shops, a producer of meat-pie and other fast foods. The stores also has a whole sale store and petrol station.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1. PRESENTATION OF DATA

The tables in this chapter are the outcome of the analysis of the data collected via the questionaire.

The sample size of the population is 240 supermarket customers selected randomly (120 each from the two supermarkets under study) on no criteria other than they patronise the two supermarkets. The respondents were selected over a period of one week. This single criterion was chosen in order to make the findings of the study more representative of the entire customer population.

The cut-off point for significant factors is 20%. In other words, any reason that attracts the response of 20% or more of respondents will be treated as a significant factor that influences the supermarket customers' behaviour. It may be necessary to point out that 20% was chosen arbitrarily, hence no attempt is made to offer any logical explanations. All numbers in brackets in the tables are percentage distribution of respondents and these are rounded up to the second decimal points to reduce the level of error.

Altogether, 221 questionaires were returned out of which 6 were improperly completed and consequently discarded hence only 215 questionaire response rate. The breakdown of the number shows that 110 were returned by Leventis Stores Plc, customers while 105 were received from Banadeen Stores' customers. These figures respectively represent approximately 91.67% and 87.5% response rate. Table I - IV shows the socio-economic distribution of the respondents. These have been drawn from the first section of the questionaire. The purpose of the tables is to highlight the background of the respondents - an important factor in considering consumer behaviour. Table IV shows the frequency of customers patronage of the supermarkets while Tables VII - XII considers the impact of image enhancement programmes on customer choice behaviour.

4.2. DISCUSSION PROCEDURE

The tables are taken and discussed one by one using the following format:

(i) point out the significant and/or insignificant factors that influence supermarket customers' behaviour,

(ii) possible explanations on both significant and insignificant factors,

(iii) and relations of findings, if any, to existing theory.

4.3. ANALYSIS OF DATA

TABLE I

Age Distribution of Respondents

	Below 25 Years	25 - 40 Years	41 - 55 Years	Above 55 Yrs.	Total
Leventis Stores Plc Zaria	23	47	35	5	110
Banadeen Stores Zaria	57	29	11	8	105
Total	80	76	46	13	215
Percentage of sample	(37.2)	(35.35)	(21.4)	(6.05)	(100)

Table I shows that the caregories of customers in the above 55 years age bracket are insignificant as they amount to a mere 6.05% of the total customer population. The other three age brackets are almost uniformly distributed. The reason for this may be linked to the cultural influence of individuals taking care of their aged parents and/or relations, which reduces the need for this category of people to fend for themselves.

TABLE II

	Male	Female	Total
Leventis Stores Plc Zaria	47	63	110
Banadeen Stores Zaria	51	54	105
Total	98	117	215
Percentage of Sample	(45.58)	(54.42)	(100)

Table II shows that both male and female are significant as customers of the supermarkets. The fact that the supermarkets deal in goods and services required almost equally by both sexes may be a reason for this.

TABLE III

Income Distribution of Respondents

	Below ₦5,000.00 P. A.	₦5,000.00 - ₦10,000.00	Above ₦10,000.00	Total
Leventis Stores Plc Zaria	21	35	54	110
Banadeen Stores Zaria	47	27	31	105
Total	68	62	85	215
Percentage of Sample	(31.63)	(28.84)	(39.53)	(100)

Table III shows that the three categories of the sample are significant factors. One important reason for this is the fact that more and more customers are begining to see the need in making their purchases from a neat and hygenic source. Moreover, the stores' stock of goods cover a wide range that can satisfy the need and ability to pay by the different categories of customers. A further explanation for the high number of respondents in the below 5,000 p.a. income bracket is the prepoderance of students as respondents from Banadeen Stores.

TABLE IV

MARITAL DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

	Single	Married with no Child	Married with one Child	Married with many Children	Total
Leventis Stores Plc Zaria	27	13	23	47	110
Banadeen Stores Zaria	35	15	23	32	105
Total	62	28	46	79	215
Percentage of Sample	(28.84)	(13.02)	(21.4)	(36.74)	(100)

Table IV shows that the category of respondents who are married with no child form an insignificant factor among supermarket customers. The reason for this may be premised on the fact that their level of daily requirements may not be as much as in the other categories. The high number of single respondents particularly at Banadeen Stores, Zaria may be due to the student population the store services, are largely made up of unmarried persons.

TABLE V

MODES OF TRANSPORTATION OF RESPONDENTS TO SUPERMARKETS

	Private Vehicle only	Public Vehicle	Both Private and Public Vehicles	On Foot	Total
Leventis Stores Plc Zaria	54	15	29	12	110
Banadeen Stores Zaria	19	15	12	59	105
Total	73	30	41	71	215
Percentage of Sample	(33.95)	(13.95)	(19.07)	(33.02)	(100)

From Table V above, the category of people who go to the Supermarkets with public transport and those who go with either the public and private vehicles are insignificant. Those who use their private vehicles and those

who go on foot are predominant. The reason for this may not be far fetched. Banadeen Stores draws the bulk of its customers from students from two institutions earlier mentioned and to make their purchases, they only need to walk across to the stores. However in the case of Leventis Stores, more people patronise the stores in their private vehicles because of the elitist nature of the customers.

TABLE VI

RESPONDENTS' FREQUENCY OF PURCHASES FROM THE SUPERMARKETS

	Daily	Twice of Thrice Weekly	Weekly	Monthly or less	Total
Leventis Stores Plc Zaria	21	69	17	3	110
Banadeen Store Zaria	30	66	8	1	105
Total	51	135	25	4	215
Percentage of Sample	(23.72)	(62.79)	(11.63)	(1.86)	(100)

Table VI indicates that those who patronise the supermarkets only on a weekly or monthly basis are insignificant. These may probably be those in transit or whose need satisfaction are not towards the supermarkets. Those who patronise the supermarkets regularly at least twice a week are significant. the fact that those who patronise the stores in their private cars (Leventis Stores) and those who walk to the Stores (Banadeen Stores) find it convenient to make as many trips to the supermarkets as possible because of the advantage of mobility and proximity respectively is worthy of note.

TABLE VII

IMPACT OF STORE LOCATION ON CHOICE OF SUPERMARKETS

	To a great extent	To some extent	To a Little extent	Not at all	Total
Leventis Stores Plc, Zaria	40	50	13	7	110
Banadeen Stores Zaria	80	15	8	2	105
Total	120	65	21	9	215
Percentage of Sample	(55.81)	(30.23)	(9.77)	(4.19)	(100)

Two significant factors emerged in Table VII. Here respondents contend that the location is a significant factor in their choice of supermarkets. Those who strongly agree i.e. "To a great extent" is 55.81% of the sample while 30.23 agree "to some extent". This is more relevant in the case of Banadeen Stores where most of the customers are students who have limited time because of the volume of studies and who would prefer to make their shopping at nearby locations instead of going far thereby wasting precious time and incuring more costs in form of transportation costs. Even in Leventis Stores, respondents still assert that they choose the stores they patronise on the basis of location. However, this is contrary to the findings of Stern and El-Ansary[47] who claim that location no longer plays any prominent role in the customer's store selection. This contradiction could be explained in addition to the earlier one offered, in terms of the imbalance of technological development of Nigeria and the United States of America in the field of automobile. Although Table V shows those who patronise the supermarkets in their private vehicles as significant factors, choosing a store off the main roads or far into difficult or inassessible locations may land such customers into transportation problems.

TABLE VIII

IMPACT STORE DESIGN ON CHOICE OF SUPERMARKETS

	To a great extent	To some extent	To a Little extent	Not at all	Total
Leventis Stores Plc, Zaria	30	35	30	15	110
Banadeen Stores Zaria	20	25	50	10	105
Total	50	60	80	25	215
Percentage of Sample	(23.26)	(27.9)	(37.2)	(11.63)	(100)

Table VIII shows the reaction of respondents to the effect of store design on the choice of supermarkets. Those who believe that this componet of image enhancement programme is not important form an insignificant propotion, a mere 11.63%. However all other respondents believe that the store design has a degree of impact on their choice of supermarkets. However, those who believe that the impact is of little extent has the highest number of respondents with 37.2%.

TABLE IX

IMPACT OF PRODUCT ASSORTMENT ON CHOICE OF SUPERMARKETS

	To a great extent	To some extent	To a little extent	Not at all	Total
Leventis Stores Plc, Zaria	85	20	3	2	110
Banadeen Stores Zaria	79	23	2	1	105
Total	164	43	5	3	215
Percentage of Sample	(76.28)	(20)	(2.33)	(14)	(100)

Table IX shows the feeling of respondents to the effect of product assortment on their choice of supermarkets. There is almost an overwhelming belief, (76.28%) of the sample) agree that the element has a great deal of impact on their choice of supermarket. Those who agree that the effect is to some extent also form a significant part of the respondents with 20% of the sample. Those who agree to a little extent and not at all form insignificant factors with 2.33% and 1.4% respectively. The result is not surprising as customers desire to patronise a particular Supermarket on a continuous basis would be killed where products required are constantly out of a stock. Availability of goods and their effective display with prices also saves the customers from the hardship of the tiring bargaining which characterise Zaria open markets, and serves as a strong reason for a customer's choice of a particular supermarket.

TABLE X

IMPACT OF STORES SERVICE ON CHOICE OF SUPERMARKETS

	To a great extent	To some extent	To a Little extent	Not at all	Total
Leventis Stores Plc, Zaria	92	14	3	1	110
Banadeen Stores Zaria	87	16	2	0	105
Total	179	30	5	1	215
Percentage of Sample	(83.26)	(13.95)	(2.33)	(0.47)	(100)

Table X shows that the significant proportion (83.26%) of the respondents believe that the service provided by a supermarket is an important factor in the customers' choice of supermarkets. This is in consonnance with earlier theories that consumer's choice is tailored towards factors that would maximise the satisfaction derived from each transaction. The three other factors all put together form an insignificant proportion of the respondents with 13.95%, 2.33% and 0.47% respectively.

TABLE XI

IMPACT OF STORE PERSONNEL ON CHOICE OF SUPERMARKETS

	To a great extent	To some extent	To a Little extent	Not at all	Total
Leventis Stores Plc, Zaria	97	10	2	1	110
Banadeen Stores Zaria	26	53	21	5	105
Total	123	63	23	6	215
Percentage of Sample	(57.21)	(29.3)	(10.7)	(2.79)	(100)

Table XI shows the impact of supermarket personnel on customer's choice of supermarkets. Those who feel that the impact on the customers' psche is to a great extent form a significant propotion of 57.21%. Another significant proportion are those who feel the impact is to some extent. Those who hold that the impact is little or not at all are insignificant with 10.7% and 2.79% respectively. This finding is still consistent with earlier literature on this topic, that personnel of supermarkets are important determinants for customers in their choice of supermarkets to patronise on a continuous basis.

TABLE XII

PRIORITISING THE ELEMENTS OF IMAGE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME

	Store Location	Store Design	Product Assortment	Store Services	Store Personnel	Total
Leventis Stores Plc, Zaria	3	5	32	34	36	110
Banadeen Stores Zaria	9	3	27	31	35	105
Total	12	8	59	65	71	215
Percentage of Sample	(5.58)	(3.72)	(27.44)	(30.33)	(33.02)	(100)

In order to determine the relative importance of the element of image enhancement programme, respondents were required to pick one element they would want the supermarket of their choice to embark upon as a matter of priority in order to improve the level of satisfaction they derive from their transactions.

Two elements - store location and store design have insignificant proportion of the respondents with 5.58% and 3.72%. However, store personnel has the largest proportion with 33.02% while stores services and product assortment in that order have 30.23% and 27.44% and are considered significant.

This finding shows the relative importance of store personnel, stores services and product assortment to the customer in their choice of supermarkets. For instance inefficient check-out service, which is a combination of the service and personnel attributes of a supermarkets normally results in long queues, and this could discourage some customers who want to make their transaction snappy, from patronising the particular supermarket.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter contains three sections. In the first section, a summary of the report will be given. This is followed by conclusion and recommendations in that order.

5.1. SUMMARY

Chapter one gives a general over-view of the topic by highlighting the role of supermarkets as part of a long chain that gets goods and services from the manufacturersto the consumer. Of course, they perform this role at a profit to ensure their relevance in business. In order to enhance this profit motive of supermarkets, it is important to consider the impact of their customers, since supermarkets cannot expect to remain in business without them.

The problem definition tries to highlight the shortcoming of supermarkets and the need to re-adjust in view of the increasing number of new entrants to the industry in a period characterised by continuous reduction in the real income of consumers brought about by the effects of the instruments of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), a corrective economic programme by the present military administration. The major limitation of the study lies in its narrow coverage of the population due to financial and time constraints, and the difficulty in obtaining sales information from the supermarkets.

Chapter one also contains the method of data analysis adopted which is a nonquatitative method involving simple percentages. The choice of percentages was made because the focus of the study is on human behaviour which may not require rigorous statistical method of analysis to arrive at a valid and acceptable findings.

In chapter two, a theoretical framework for the study, extensively based on consumer behaviour literature was developed. Existing theories of consumer behaviour were reviewed. The psychological factors that influence

consumer behaviour were also examined. They include such theories as cognitive disonance of Festinger, the stimulus-response of Parlovian Learning Model of Parlov, and the Phsychoanalytic Learning Model of Feud. All these theories were developed to explain the psychological factors that come to play any time consumers desire to make buying decisions.

Furthermore, the historical development of supermarkets was discussed. In this discussion, an attempt was made to point out the significant factors that led to the establishment of supermarkets in the United States of America. This consisted of such factors as the Great Depression of the 1930s, and the technological advancement in the fields of automobile and refrigeration. This part was closed with a brief observation of the impact of supermarket techniques on retail institution.

Finally, chapter two attempted to conceptualise the various image enhancement programme components and their importance to the supermarkets. The need for growth as a strategy for supermarkets was also highlighted.

Chapter three gave a background of the two stores under study.

Data for the study were obtained through personal observation of the personnel of the supermarkets on duty, interview with the managers of the supermarkets and response to questionaire administered on a sample of customers of the supermarkets selected at random.

Chapter four analysed the data collected.

5.2. CONCLUSION

It is apparent from the finding in the data analysis in the preceeding chapter that for an organisation in the retail business to grow, its strategy must include most importantly an endeavour to satisfy the consumer at all times. This management can do by embarking on image enhancement programmes as highlighted in chapter II of this research project. In fact the exercise should be a continuous one as human requirements are dynamic.

With competition becoming very stiff in the sector, only supermarkets

with superior quality service and who can come to term with the nitty-gritty of the distributive trade will be relevant in the 1990s and as the world moves towards the magic year 2000 A.D. The country is currently implementing the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). the consequence of the policy's instruments has placed consumers in a tight economic reality. The cummulative effect of this trend is that customers are more than ever before adjusting their buying behaviour to ensure the maximisation of the benefits derivable from their limited finacial resources. What they buy and where they buy are constantly decided based on variables which are multi-farious and dynamic. No longer can supermarkets' management expect that customers will continue to patronise them no matter the extent to which they (customers) derive satisfaction from each transaction.

It is therefore operationally expedient for management of supermarkets to draw up programmes that would enable them retain their customers while attracting new ones. Management therefore needs to constantly brainstorm in areas of development programmes with the sole aim of finding solutions to new problems and ways to achieve the objective for which the business is set up. Any business which does not plan adequately for the future is planning to fail. Inward looking for any business will have to start from the business own internal systems by reviewing and correcting inadequacies and distortions while strenghtening areas of competitive advantage.

It is an irrebuttable fact that dissatisfied customers would change their shopping centres unless they have no choice. They will keep on changing until they find a suitable outlet. Therefore, purposeful management must identify their lapses and continue to fine-tune their strategies to meet the high expectations of their customers. Since these needs are multi-farious and dynamic, management has an onerous task in this regard. They have to constantly monitor the pulse of their external enviroment. These include the economy, government policies and guidelines especially as they affect the sector, needs, fashions, taste etc. Management and staff must always

be prepared to meet the challenges ahead if they hope to achieve and sustain excellence in their service delivery system. Image making is not the responsibility of the public relation outfit only but of every staff in the organisation.

5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The bottom line for the existence of any economic venture is profit. Therefore, managers and owners of businesses have interest and obligation, not only to respond to changing circumstances but also to anticipate such changes and prepare for them. Hence the need for corporate entities to practise strategic planning to develop options and alternatives in order to adequately respond to all eventualities.

In Nigeria today, changes in business environmental factors are highly volatile and will become more accentuated in the years ahead. There is no doubt that these environmental factors would produce enormous threats for inward-looking supermarkets but manifold opportunities for dynamic ones. Enterpreneurs will have to adopt strategic remarketing approach which is the process of analysing opprotunities, choosing appropriate objects, developing right strategies, formulating plans based on feasible alternatives and carrying out implementation and control to ensure the overall satisfaction of the customer. The following areas of attention are recommended:

(i) The starting point for any meaningful action is with the personnel. Management has to re-orientate the personnel about the essence of satisfying the customer at all times. It is only when they (the personnel) realise the importance of the following causal relationships that they can easily go along with management views:

(a) sales cannot increase unless customers patronise their store,

(b) the level of profit is positively related to the volume of sales,

(c) without appreciable level of profit, the organistation cannot remain in business, and

(d) personnel cannot retain their jobs when the organisation is out of business.

(ii) Image enhancement programmes can be capital intensive. A lot of capital outlay is required to create the expected impact on customers. Management must be prepared to vote substantial amount periodically. Several firms, especially the smaller ones may find it difficult to acquire the necessary credit to do this. However, many owners are finding a way out of this situation by emphasizing the traditional theme. This way, they can use local materials at affordable prices to create the desired impression. Management can also reduce cost by carrying out projects through direct labout rather than through contracts that merely increase cost without any added beneficial effect.

(iii) Management should introduce the customers' complaint box where they (customers) can report complaints in the course of their business transaction. Such complaints should be looked into promptly and the necessary corrections effected. Where necessary, contact should be made with the complainant, intimating him/her of the corrective measures taken.

(iv) Floor supervisors should be available to look into complaints and redress them promptly. Even where customers are apparently wrong, supervisors should show sufficient tact in handling the situation. The following two rules would help supervisors in this regard:

(a) Rule 1: The customer is always right.

(b) Rule 2: Where the customer is wrong, Rule 1 applies.

(v) The choice of location of supermarkets should be such that will make image enhancement programme meaningful. It may

not make any sense afterall trying to have a face-lift to a one-room store which has mechanics, vulcanisers, corn and tomato grinders as well as beggars etc. as its immediate neighbours. The collective negative image of these neighbours may make nonsense of the whole exercise.

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Appendix 'A'

QUESTIONAIRE

Topic:- Image enhancement programme as a strategic growth tool for supemarkets A case study of Leventis Stores Plc and Banadeen Stores, Zaria.

(INSTRUCTION - Please tick appropriate box)

SECTION 1 - PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. SEX MALE /____/ FEMALE /____/

2. AGE: Below 25 Yrs. /____/
25 - 40 Yrs. /____/
41 - 55 Yrs. /____/
Above 55 Yrs. /____/

3. INCOME: Below ₦5,000.00 p.a. /____/
₦5,000.00 - ₦10,000.00 p.a. /____/
Above ₦10,000.00 p.a. /____/

4. MARITAL STATUS: Single /____/
Married with no Child /____/
Married with one Child /____/
Married with many Children /____/

SECTION 2:

5. MODE OF TRANSPORTATION TO SUPERMARKETS:
By Private Vehicle /____/
By Public Vehicle /____/
By both Private and Public Vehicle /____/
On Foot /____/

6. FREQUENCY OF PURCHASES FROM THE SUPERMARKETS:
Daily /____/
Twice or Thrice weekly /____/
Weekly /____/
Monthly of less /____/

7. TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU CONSIDER LOCATION AS AN IMPORTANT DETERMINANT OF THE CUSTOMER'S CHOICE OF SUPERMARKET.

To a great extent /____/

To some extent /____/

To a little extent /____/

Not at all /____/

8. WHAT IMPACT DOES STORE DESIGN HAVE IN YOUR CHOICE OF SUPERMARKETS

To a great extent /____/

To some extent /____/

To a little extent /____/

Not at all /____/

9. DO YOU CONSIDER PRODUCT ASSORTMENT AS IMPORTANT IN YOUR CHOICE OF SUPERMARKET:

To a great extent /____/

To some extent /____/

To a little extent /____/

Not at all /____/

10. WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF STORE SERVICE ON YOUR CHOICE OF SUPERMARKET:

To a great extent /____/

To some extent /____/

To a little extent /____/

Not at all /____/

11. DO STORE PERSONNEL AFFECT YOUR CHOICE OF SUPERMARKET? IF SO TO WHAT EXTENT?

To a great extent /____/

To some extent /____/

To a little extent /____/

Not at all /____/

12. IF YOU WERE TO ADVISE THE SUPERMARKET OF YOUR CHOICE ON EMBARKING AN IMAGE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMMES, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS WOULD YOU ADVISE THE MANAGEMENT TO CONCENTRATE ON? YOUR ANSWER SHOULD BE BASED ON THE ELEMENT WHICH WOULD ENHANCE YOUR CONTINUED PATRONAGE OF THE SUPERMARKET.

Store Location /_____/

Store design /_____/

Product Assortment /_____/

Stores Services /_____/

Stores Personnel /_____/

13. WOULD YOU CHANGE YOUR CHOICE OF SUPERMARKET IF THE MANAGEMENT NEGLECTS YOUR ADVICE?

Yes /_____/ No /_____/ Don't know /_____/

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INSTITUTE OF ADMINISTRATION
P.M.B. 1013
ZARIA, NIGERIA.

Your Ref: _____

Our Ref: _____

23rd NOVEMBER, 1992.

The Manager,
Leventis Stores Plc,
6/7, Park Road,
Zaria.

Dear Sir/Madam,

This letter serves to introduce Mr. Samuel Ayodele ADETUYI who is a Registered Post-Graduate Student (MBA) in the Department of Business Administration, Ahmadu Bello University , Zaria.

He/She is currently working on a Project which is a requirement for the fulfilment of the MBA Degree award.

We are therefore seeking your permission to conduct research for the project using your organisation.

We would be very pleased if permission is granted and the above named student given as much assistance as possible.

Thankyou.

Your sincerely,

Mal. M.N. Maiturare
MBA Co-ordinator.

AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY

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