

## **Outlet Attributes as Determinants of Preference of Women between a Supermarket and a Traditional Open Market**

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Supermarket as a shopping outlet is widely documented in marketing literature. This is without any cognizance to African traditional open market as a potential substitute. This gap is now recognized to warrant a comparison between these two outlets. The study was flagged off with an introductory piece and relevant literature reviewed. The methodology was structured to include research design; a specification of relevant population of study; description of sample size and the sampling technique involved; instrumentation and its tests for reliability/validity in ensuring the suitability of the instrument for data collection. SPSS tool was used to analyze data generated from 249 women respondents. Findings showed firstly that seven attributes were considered important in making a choice of outlets and the order of importance is: (i) Quality, (ii) Price, (iii) Location, (iv) Cleanliness, (v) Product assortment, (vi) Pricing method, and (vii) Parking space. Secondly, 62 percent of respondents preferred supermarket over open market as a shopping outlet. Thirdly, the null hypotheses were rejected in favour of the alternate hypotheses. Though, majority of women preferred supermarket, yet the mean scores of most of the influencing variables were equally found to be significant for the traditional open market. Consequently, it is recommended that supermarket operators need not be complacent as respondents could easily switch patronage. Further research should cover the areas of consumer and psychological attributes and their impact on outlet choice of African women.

Keywords: Nigeria, retailing, outlets, supermarket, traditional open market, essential goods, attributes

### **Introduction**

Retailing is an essential service industry as it provides an important service to customers, making products available when and where customers want them. Extant literature shows that retailing can take many forms, both store and non-store forms. Most retailing is conducted in stores such as supermarkets, department stores and in some traditional open markets. Whatever the form, the customer is called upon to make a choice. Thus, consumer decision-making involves not only the choice of product and brand but also the choice of retail outlet (Jobber, 2009).

The evolving nature of retailing and its various forms; and the consequent competitiveness in the sector has frequently held the interest of scholars. Thus, Kaufman and Lane(1996); Frasset, Gil and Molle (2001) and Parikh (2006) observe that today's global retail environment is rapidly changing more than ever before as it is typified by growing competition from both domestic and foreign companies, a rise in mergers and acquisitions, and more classy and demanding customers who have

great expectations related to their consumption experiences. Changes in consumers' natural and social environments; and technology have a huge impact on their buying and shopping behavior. These lifestyle changes largely determine what consumers buy, when they buy and how and where they buy (Arnould, Price & Zinkhan 2002; North & Kotze 2004; Schiffman & Kanuk 2004).

Studies concerning retail patronage and store choice have followed many directions. Retail shopping behaviour has been predicted by means of objective variables like distance (location), traffic patterns and store size (Leszczyc, Sinha & Timmermans, 2000; Achen, 2005; Biba, Rosiers, Theriault, & Villeneuve, 2006). A second line of research employs consumer variables to predict store patronage. Sirgy, Grewal, & Mangleburg, (2000), in their study modeled relationships among store environment (including store atmospherics), store patron image, shoppers' self-concept, self-congruity, functional congruity, and retail patronage. While Koo (2003) examines inter- relationships among store image, store satisfaction and store loyalty. In their study, Poovalingam and Docrat (2011) confirms the significance of the various situational influences, namely, the physical surroundings, the social

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surroundings, time, task definition and antecedent states as they impact on choice of shopping centres. Also, store attributes or store image which are fundamentally the marketing mix of the retailer (Morschett, Swoboda & Foscht, 2005; Ghosh 1990) have been presented as store choice criteria (Mittal & Mittal, 2008). Though store choice and patronage have been widely studied across the world, Mittal and Mittal (2008) posit that most of these studies have been in the developed retail markets of the west.

Unfortunately, studies in the retail sectors of the under-developed countries have been scarce. Again, borrowing from the view point of Mittal & Mittal (2008), the argument is that a lot of modern retail store formats are western adaptations and they may not necessarily reflect the preferences of various store attributes by West African and Nigerian consumers. Consequently, most of the studies have concentrated on these western formats without even recognizing for example, the traditional open market as a possible source of competition to the western store formats such as the supermarket.

Our motivation for this present study therefore, is to empirically ascertain the choice of Nigerian women between a supermarket and the traditional African open market using outlet attributes.

### Research Problem

Arising from the contents of the background of study detailed above, the following research problems can be deduced: i). the issue of the most preferred of the two outlets by women for their essential goods ii). The issue of pricing mechanism applicable in supermarket and traditional market outlets. iii). The issue of price of products in supermarket and traditional market outlets. iv). The issue of outlet location v). The issue of quality of products in the outlets vi). The issue of products assortment in the two outlets vii). The issue of environment in relation to the two outlets. viii). The issue of parking space available in the two outlet locations. ix). The issue of the order of importance of outlet attributes to women in their choice of outlets

### Research Objectives

- To determine the most patronized of the two outlets
- To determine if price mechanism will in any way influence the choice of outlet, that is, a supermarket and a traditional open market outlet.
- To determine if the price of products on offer in the two outlets will in anyway impact the choice of consumers between the outlets

-To determine whether the location of an outlet will in anyway influence consumers' choice between a supermarket and a traditional open market.

-To determine if the quality of products on offer in the two outlets will influence consumers choice between the two outlets.

-To determine whether the breadth of products offered influences the choice of consumers between the two outlets.

-To determine the extent the purchase environment influences the choice of consumers between a supermarket and a traditional open market.

-To determine if availability of parking space is important to consumers in the choice between the two outlets.

-To determine the order of importance of these outlet attributes to women

### Theoretical Literature Review

It will be pertinent to examine the variables of consumer decision making styles and shopping behavior from the perspective of attribution theory. Swanson and Kelley (2001) defined attribution theory as "a collection of several theories that are concerned with the assignment of causal inferences and how these interpretations influence evaluations and behaviour." In his view, Weiner (2000) observe that "Attributions play their role in post-initial outcome decision making; that is, attributions intervene and exert their influence after a product-related outcome and prior to the next choice. Attributions arise when one evaluates the extent to which the initial product performance corresponds to one's level of aspiration vis-a-vis that product, and one then questions the cause of the outcome. It has been definitively documented that attributional search is more likely following failure (dissatisfaction, in this case) rather than after success (or satisfaction). After all, we typically do not ask why we did well on an exam, or why a submitted paper was accepted, but rather why we failed and why our manuscript was rejected. And we do not ask why a product 'worked,' but why it did not function" (p. 382).

Attribution theory has brought new ideas to the study of consumer decision making and shopping behaviour; and provides some explanation for the consumer's shopping intentions. It also sheds more light on consumer preferences based on their decision making, including decisions about product attributes such as product quality which influences consumers' preferences when buying their desired products.

Additionally, attribution theory suggests that consumers' future shopping intentions depend on attributes such as personal budgets, which may restrict the consumer choice and ability to satisfy

their wants and needs. By identifying the vital attributes that influence consumer decision making and shopping behavior, marketers can refer to important attributes that are relevant to each of the market segments. Attribution theory can also be applied in explaining consumer shopping behavior as future patronage intentions is often influenced by both store and consumer variables (Folkes, 1988 & Mowen, 2000). Consumers' shopping behavior can also be explained with micro economic theories propounded by classical economists. Adam Smith in formulating theories for individual firm based on the notion that man is an economic and rational being and that he is at all times acting in his best interest. This theory was refined by classical economists primarily Alfred Marshal. The concept of this theory was the marginal utility theory of value and it assumes that: the consumer is always trying to maximize his satisfaction; the consumer has a complete knowledge of alternative source for satisfying his/her need; and, the consumer is always acting rationally. This theory does not include the psychological and sociological factors that influence behavior. However, for a marketer to control a sizeable share of the market, he has to produce goods and services that have utility with a reasonable price.

The psychologists equally have made contributions towards the study and understanding of buyer behaviour. The classic works of such psychologists like Pavlov, Skinner, Hull and Watson have been extensively applied in the field of marketing. Weilbacker (2003) refers to these psychologists and their followers as 'Behaviorist psychologists' and in his criticism of the behaviourist school, notes that "To the behaviorist all human (and animal) behavior can be explained in terms of external stimuli to which individuals are exposed and the responses that these stimuli evoke. To the behaviorists everything needed to explain behavior occurs outside the individual. Observable stimuli and the responses that follow from them are the whole cause and the whole effect of behavior" (Weilbacker, 2003, pp.230-231). The cognitive theorists reject the proposition that human behavior rest solely on the basis of stimulus-reinforcement. The cognitivists identified various factors like attitudes, beliefs, past experience and an insightful understanding of how to use the current situation to achieve a goal. They concluded that habitual behavioural pattern then are the results of perceptive thinking and goal orientation. They postulated that a person's brain process and nervous system are significant in forming his/her behavioural pattern.

Cognition refers to the mental processes of knowing, perceiving and judging which enables an individual to interpret the world around him. His reactions are influenced by the ways in which he

perceives certain kinds of objects. He develops a personal view of the world surrounding him which is derived from his environment and his frame of references. Really, the environment of the individual is complex and sometimes confusing as many activities resulting in many stimuli compete for his attention. For the individual to interpret meaningfully the world around him, he has to make attempt to build some cognitive structures and this cognition are determined by two factors: the first one is the *stimulus factors* that interact to produce an individual's personal set of concepts which affect his economics, social and cultural activities. The nature of physical stimuli tends to influence the degree of perception. The second factor that affects cognition is *personal factors* and it is this personal factor that modifies the effect of the various physical stimuli which influence perception. Behind every act of perceiving is the individual's past experience and hence perception of the individual is highly subjective. Perception of the physical attributes of products is quite essential to marketers as it influences the marketer's branding efforts.

In a further study on cognition is the cognitive dissonance theory propounded by Leon Festinger, a professor of Psychology at Stanford University USA in 1957 and it has two underlying hypotheses:

- The existence of dissonance being psychologically comfortable will motivate the person to try to reduce the dissonance and increase consonance; and
- When dissonance is present in addition to trying to reduce it, the person will actively avoid situations and information which would likely increase dissonance.

Festinger in his book- A theory of cognitive dissonance analyzed the consequence to be expected following a decision. According to him, a state of dissonance exists in an individual when he has two (or more) cognitions (pieces of information) which essentially contradict each other, that is, when the uncomfortable and the state of discomfort increase as a direct function of the number and importance of dissonance elements. The theory states, therefore, that people are motivated to eliminate the discomfort of dissonance and consequently engage in activities; sometimes cognitive and sometimes behavioural to eliminate the dissonance.

Sweeney, Hausknecht and Soutar (2000, p. 383, cited in Soutar & Sweeney, 2003) observe that 'dissonance includes both cognitive aspects, as the title 'cognitive dissonance' implies, as well as an emotional dimension, as many definitions, including Festinger's original definition, imply'. They included an emotional dimension and two cognitive dimensions, which were termed 'wisdom of purchase' and 'concern over the deal' in their 22-item measurement scale. The emotional dimension, defined as 'a person's psychological discomfort

subsequent to the purchase decision' reflects the anxiety related to the purchase.

Dissonance (disharmony, frustration) is a state of psychological tension which may result when choosing an outlet for shopping. A Shopper is likely to be in a state of anxiety when making a choice out of many shopping outlets. He may experience the rejected alternative outlet through either word of mouth or advertisement. When the chosen outlet fails to meet his expectation, the negative experience may begin to cause him some nagging doubts, a situation referred to as *post decisional dissonance*.

### Empirical Literature Review

Loyalty can be examined from the relationship between customer's attitude toward a product, brand, service, supermarket or store, seller and the customer's patronage behaviour (Dick and Basu, 1994). Supermarket loyalty means the stability of repurchase of a certain brand, and to become a patron of a certain retailer or service supplier (Jones and Reynolds, 2006). Store loyalty is summarized as the dependence which is developed by the consumer upon a store that merchandises many brands. This attitude includes the place in which shopping is done rather than brands or product loyalty. Such a case occurs due to differences that the distribution phase provides rather than the product features. Thus, such a difference can be means of the service, price, or the closeness to the consumer (Salis, 2004).

Several studies have been done to determine the factors that influence store loyalty. Some of these studies examined factors affecting patronage attitudes (Arnold et al, 1996; Duman & Yagci, 2006). There are also studies on the factors that impact store loyalty (Sivadas & Baker-Prewitt, 2000; Oderken-Schroder et al., 2001; Huddleston et al., 2004; Merrilees et al., 2007). In some studies, the relationship between store image and loyalty was examined (Akdogun et al. 2005; Atakan & Burnaz, 2007). Also some studies examined the relationship between store image and store choice and loyalty (Gilmore et al., 2001; Koo, 2003; Thang & Tan, 2003).

A number of studies have been conducted in Turkey to determine customers' attitudes and preferences for supermarkets, and store image perceptions and loyalty. Uslu (2005) found that the approach of the store staff to customers, contents of products, packing space, issues of hygiene, after sales services, variety of products, product price, location convenience, and quality of products on offer are major factors impacting customers' choice of shopping centres.

In India, Sinha and Banerjee (2004) found that store convenience and customer services positively

influence customers' supermarket choices, whilst, entertainment, parking and ambience facilities had a negative influence on consumer outlet choices. Indian consumers were also found to be price sensitive and quality conscious (Tuli & Mookerjee, 2004). Ling, Choo, & Pysarchik (2004) note that Indian customers' attitude towards new products are changing significantly and this can increase their intention to shop in new retail outlets such as supermarkets. Thus, product attributes such as quality, price and availability of new products are important constructs within the Indian context.

Store attributes are evaluating criteria that influences consumers' attitude towards a store (Jin & Kim, 2003). Jin and Kim (2003), state that the influence of store attributes on customer loyalty depends on consumers' purposes for shopping and perceptions of store attributes. Previous research has identified store attributes as multi dimensional construct including location of store, nature and quality of stocks, in-store promotions, sales personnel, physical attribute, and convenience of store, atmospherics and loyalty cards that influence consumer attitude or behavior (Miranda, Konya & Havrila, 2005). Fast changing consumer attitudes about products have encouraged retailers to develop new positioning strategies to enhance customer loyalty (Gwin & Gwin, 2003). New retail formats and stores are being continuously introduced and traditional retail format need to find ways to retain customers (Uusitalo, 2001). Research suggests that quality, price, availability of new products and product value are the product attributes that influence consumer attitude (Miranda, Konya & Havrila, 2005).

Similarly, in another study, Yilmaz et al., (2007) found that for customers, the location of the shopping mall, product, price and quality, physical appearance, attitude of store staff were important factors shaping customer outlet selection preferences. Yalcin (2005) posit that such demographic factors as age, occupation and number of children affect supermarket loyalty. In their own study, Akinci et al. (2007) found that the most important factors that affect supermarket patronage in Istanbul are pricing, quality and waiting time at the cashier.

Again, Polat and Kulter (2007) found that the factors which determine customers' market and supermarket choices include product diversity, product quality, inner atmosphere and appearance, quick shopping facility, attitude and interest of staff, and prices of goods. In another study by Duman and Yagci (2006), it was discovered that customers' patronage intentions are affected by value perception, product quality perception, service quality perception, discount perception and comparable price perception. Yeniceri and Erten (2008) investigated the impact of trust and commitment on store loyalty. The quality of retailer

service is generally assessed by customers to include the appearance of staff and their attentiveness, kindness, politeness, staff level of experience, safe shopping environment etc (Cronin et al., 2000).

In addition to the foregoing, special discounts and promotion were found to increase customers' interest toward the supermarket (Grewal et al., 1998a). These discounts and promotions are considered as a financial sacrifice by the business which attracts customers. This perception has been determined to affect patronage behaviour. It was seen that customers who think that they have profit due to discounts promotions displayed more loyalty to the store (Grace & O'Cass, 2005). Another factor that affects customers' supermarket preferences is the quality of the products offered by the retailer. While evaluating the quality of the products that they purchase, customers use some cues. These are divided into two groups such as internal, exemplified by taste and colour of the product while the external cues consist of price and brand of product (Duman & Yagci, 2006).

In another instance, perception of value and satisfaction were found to affect customers' attitude and store loyalty and intention to purchase (Grace & O'Cass, 2005). Value is the comparison of what customers expect and obtain as a benefit (Grewal et al., 1998b). Again, customers who have high level of value perception toward a store or supermarket for their purchases seem to display higher quality of patronage (Chen & Quester, 2006; Sirdesh-mukh et al., 2002). Satisfaction refers to the personal evaluation as a result of meeting needs or going beyond expectations (Bloemer & Ruyter, 1998).

Satisfaction has been defined in several ways by different experts. In these definitions, there are three common points. First, consumer satisfaction is a mental and emotional response. Second, this response deals with expectations, product and consumption experiences etc. Finally, store satisfaction is a post purchase evaluation (Levy & Weitz, 2004). The consumer will evaluate whether the store meets his expectations. Previous research suggests a retailer can build consumers' loyalty with a positive store image (Bloemer & Odekerken-Schroder, 2002).

Travel hours, number of stores and the variety of merchandise on offer at shopping outlets have also enjoyed relative mention by researchers. Karande and Ganesh (2000) stated that shoppers spend an average of more than two hours at factory outlet in comparison to an hour at traditional malls. Measuring these shopping behavior factors may assist retail managers in predicting future shopping intentions at store outlets. Overall customer satisfaction, the number of shopping trips and the amount of money spent are among the significant factors that influence consumer shopping behaviour (Davies et al., 2001). Kahn and Schmittlein (1989) stated that consumers

usually conduct two kinds of shopping trips, major trips or fill-in-trips. Walters and Jamil (2003) on the other hand examines how major shopping trips, fill-in shopping trips, and shopping primarily for price specials are associated with consumer specials search, purchases of price specials, coupon redemption, and retailer shopping basket profitability. They found that consumers visiting the store primarily to purchase price specials were more likely to read flyers and purchased more advertised price specials than consumers on other types of shopping trips. Major and fill-in shoppers were equally responsive to the retailer's promotions. Unfortunately, there appear to be a dearth of literature on the existence of traditional open market format as obtained in Africa and those factors that make them attractive to customers and how this retail format compete with other retail formats such as the supermarket, department stores, etc. This situation has therefore, made this study imperative.

## Methodology

*Research design:* the research design is purely descriptive since most of the variables under investigation apart from price are non-metric. The descriptive design adopts wholly cross-sectional survey approach to the study.

*Population description:* The population of study consists solely of women resident in the mainland area of Lagos State who by tradition in Nigeria do shopping for the family as part of household chores.

*Sample selection and size:* Three hundred (300) elements of this population are used for the purpose of completing the instrument of study. They were obtained using cluster sampling technique that produced six (6) localities within the mainland population of Lagos. From each locality, fifty (50) respondents were randomly obtained to arrive at a sample size of three (300) hundred respondents. The field work was carried out in early August 2012 by the authors with assistance from nine (9) well trained business students. The questionnaires were physically administered on the respondents at their places of worship, homes and offices as these places usually harbour large number of women.

*Instrumentation:* The instrument put to use for data collection is the multiple-choice questionnaire. The choice of this close-ended questionnaire was necessary because it generates higher response rate than its counterpart, the open-ended type. The instrument was put to reliability and validity tests through a pilot study to determine its suitability for data collection.

The piloted instrument was analyzed using split half technique and data obtained correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistical approach; a coefficient of 0.962 was obtained, On the strength of

this parameter conclusion was reached on the suitability of the instrument for data collection.

*Administration of the instrument:* Having determined the suitability of the instrument for data collection, same was administered on the respondents selected for the purpose of this research.

*Procedure for data analysis:* 249 out of the 300 copies of the administered instrument were completely filled and returned, giving a success rate of 83 percent. Subsequently, the resulting data following the administration of the instrument was subjected to analysis through the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

## Empirical Results

### Demographic data of respondents

Frequency analysis of respondents' demographic data in Table 1 above shows that 54.6 percent of the women that participated in the survey were single, 43.8 percent were married, while a paltry 1.2 percent and 0.4 percent were separated and widowed respectively. The literacy level of the respondents shows that majority (43.8 percent) are first degree

and HND holders, this was seconded by women with post graduate certificates who pulled 25.3 percent. 17.7 percent of these women either had school certificate or something lower while 13.3 percent are OND holders.

The data on the immediate family size reveals that majority (59.1 percent) of the participants have their family size range between three to six. Those whose family sizes are either one or two tied at 14.5 percent while those whose family size are seven and above constituted 11.2 percent of the respondents. On mother tongue, 65.5 percent speak Yoruba, 22.9 percent speak Igbo, and 2.8 percent speak Hausa, while the remaining 8.8 percent of the respondents speak other mother tongues available in Nigeria such as Ijaw, Efik, Urhobo, etc.

Classifying the respondents according to their occupation, shows that 35.3 percent of the women are company workers, 34.1 percent are either students or unemployed, 20.5 percent are self-employed while the rest 10 percent are either civil servants or on national service. The analysis showed considerable diversity across demographic variables employed; hence data collected can be regarded as balanced and reliable for the purpose of this study.

Table 1. Demographic data (frequency distribution).

Descriptive	Code	Frequency	Percentage	
Marital Status	Single	1	136	54.6
	Married	2	109	43.8
	Separated	3	3	1.2
	Widowed	4	1	0.4
	Total		249	100.0
Highest level of education attained	School certificate & below	1	44	17.7
	Ordinary National Diploma (OND)	2	33	13.3
	First degree & HND	3	109	43.8
	Post Graduate	4	63	25.3
	Total		249	100.0
Immediate Family Size	Seven and above	1	28	11.2
	Between three and six	2	149	59.8
	Two	3	36	14.5
	One	4	36	14.5
	Total		249	100.0
Mother tongue	Yoruba	1	163	65.5
	Hausa	2	7	2.8
	Igbo	3	57	22.9
	Others	4	22	8.8
	Total		249	100.0
Occupation	Student /Unemployed	1	85	34.1
	National Service/Civil Servant	2	25	10.0
	Public/ Private company worker	3	88	35.3
	Self employed	4	51	20.5
	Total		249	100.0
Annual income	#500,000 and below	1	82	32.9
	#500,001 - #1,000,000	2	44	17.7
	#1,000,001 and above	3	52	20.9
	No earnings yet	4	71	28.5
	Total		249	100.0

**Descriptive Statistics**

Table 2 is the descriptive statistics showing the attitude of respondents to both supermarket and traditional open market on the basis of outlet attributes. On how they like the price mechanism (i.e. price tag and haggling) adopted in the two outlets, with mean score of 3.9036 for price tag and 3.6707 for haggling, respondents showed preference for price tag. With a mean score of 4.3333, respondents assert that as a price mechanism price tag saves time as against haggling (2.5422 mean score) which wastes time. On the convenience reaching the two outlets from their location, with a mean score of 4.1647 as against 3.3534, respondents believe that it is more convenient to reach supermarket from their location than to reach the traditional open market. Respondents chose supermarket (mean score: 4.0404) as having more parking space available than the

traditional open market (mean score: 2.6506). On the closeness of the outlets to other places of regular visit/shopping, respondents rated supermarket closer than traditional open market with mean score of 3.8755 as against 3.4418. Data shows that scale of products on offer in the supermarket (with mean score of 4.5663) higher than that of traditional open market with mean score of 4.2450. On quality of products merchandized in the two outlets supermarket with a mean score of 4.2731 ranked higher than traditional open market with mean score of 3.3655. With mean score of 4.6948, supermarket environment is seen by respondents to be very clean while the environment of traditional open market is seen to be dirty with a mean score of 2.6908. In the same vein, respondents believe there are more shopping aids/assistants in supermarket (mean score 4.3534) than in traditional open market (mean score 3.3092).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of outlet attributes.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Likeness of the pricing method in supermarkets. (Price tag)	249	1.00	5.00	3.9036	1.01140
Likeness of the pricing method in local open market.(Haggling)	249	1.00	5.00	3.6707	1.16224
Time spent on Price tag	249	2.00	5.00	4.3333	.69367
Time spent on Haggling	249	1.00	5.00	2.5422	.81272
Convenience reaching location of supermarket	249	1.00	5.00	4.1647	.94239
Convenience reaching location of open market	249	1.00	5.00	3.3534	1.13752
Availability of parking space in supermarket	249	1.00	5.00	4.0402	.87896
Availability of parking space in open market	249	1.00	5.00	2.6506	1.11912
Supermarket's closeness to other places of regular visit/shop	249	1.00	5.00	3.8755	.98607
Open market's closeness to other places of regular visit/shop	249	1.00	5.00	3.4418	1.11696
Scale of products offered in supermarket	249	2.00	5.00	4.5663	.66949
Scale of products offered in open market	249	2.00	5.00	4.2450	.84733
Quality of goods on offer in supermarket	249	2.00	5.00	4.2731	.67630
Quality of goods on offer in open market	249	2.00	5.00	3.3655	.74526
Cleanliness of supermarket environment	249	3.00	5.00	4.6948	.50323
Cleanliness of open market environment	249	1.00	5.00	2.6908	.89169
Shopping aids/assistants available in supermarket	249	2.00	5.00	4.3534	.65037
Shopping aids/assistants available in open market	249	1.00	5.00	3.3092	1.15561
Valid N (listwise)	249				

### ***Outlet attributes in order (rank) of importance to respondents***

Table 3 shows the mean score and rank of outlet attributes in which the minimum expected mean is 1 and maximum expected mean is 5 because a 5-point Likert scale was used in the measuring instrument. As can be seen from the table, all the variables measured are significant and therefore important to the respondents in their choice of outlet for essential goods. However, using the mean scores of these

variables, it can be seen that in order/rank of importance, quality of product on offer in the outlet occupies the 1<sup>st</sup> position. Price of products in the outlet is in 2<sup>nd</sup> position. The 3<sup>rd</sup> position, in order of importance is outlet location while cleanliness of shopping environment takes the 4th position. Variety of products on offer (product assortment) is in the 5th position followed by pricing mechanism in the 6th position and finally, availability of parking space is placed in the 7th position.

Table 3. Rank of importance of attributes in choice.

Attributes	N	Mean	Rank
Importance of quality of products in outlet choice	249	4.6867	1st
Importance of Price in outlet choice	249	4.6426	2nd
Importance of Location in outlet choice	249	4.5502	3rd
Importance of Cleanliness in outlet choice	249	4.5181	4th
Importance of variety of products on offer in outlet choice	249	4.3976	5th
Importance of Pricing Method in outlet choice	249	4.1446	6th
Importance of availability of parking space in outlet choice	249	4.0643	7th

### ***The most patronized between supermarket and traditional open market***

From Table 4, 62.2 percent of respondents shop at the supermarket for their essential goods while the rest 37.8 percent patronize the traditional open market.

Table 4. Women's patronage of the outlets for shopping.

Response Variable	Code	Frequency	Percent
Supermarket	1	155	62.2
Open market	2	94	37.8
Total		249	100.0

### **Inferential Statistics**

Apart from H<sub>0</sub>2, the paired t-test was used for other hypotheses in this study (see table 5). H<sub>0</sub>1 was tested on two dimensions of price mechanism which are: likeness of the pricing methods (price tag and haggling), and scale of time spent on the two methods. As the results show both dimensions are significant (for likeness of pricing method P<0.042 and scale of time spent P<0.000). Thus, H<sub>0</sub>1 is rejected and it is concluded that price mechanism will significantly influence the preference of women between a supermarket and a traditional open market. H<sub>0</sub>3 was equally tested on two dimensions of outlet location which are convenience and closeness to other places of regular visit/shopping. As the foregoing results show, both dimensions are statistically significant (convenience reaching location P<0.000 and closeness to other places of regular visit/shopping P<0.000). H<sub>0</sub>3 is therefore rejected and it can be concluded that outlet location

#### ***Test of hypotheses using paired t-test***

will significantly influence the choice of women between a supermarket and a traditional open market. At P<0.000, H<sub>0</sub>4 is rejected and conclusion reached that that the quality of products offered in the two outlets will significantly influence the choice of women between a supermarket and a traditional open market. Scale of products on offer (product assortment) as a determinant of choice of women between the two outlets is significant as H<sub>0</sub>5 is rejected (P<0.000) and conclusion reached that the breadth of product on offer will significantly influence the choice of women between the two outlets. H<sub>0</sub>6 at P<0.000 is rejected and it is therefore concluded that purchase environment will significantly influence women's choice between a supermarket and a traditional open market. H<sub>0</sub>7 at P<0.000 is rejected and conclusion reached that availability of parking space will significantly impact on the choice of women between a supermarket and a traditional open market.



Table 5. Paired samples test.

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Likeness of the pricing methods in the two outlets	.23293	1.80109	.11414	.00813	.45774	2.041	248	.042
Pair 2	Time spent on Price tag & Haggling	1.79116	1.12009	.07098	1.65136	1.93097	25.234	248	.000
Pair 3	Convenience reaching location of the two outlets	.81124	1.68739	.10693	.60063	1.02186	7.586	248	.000
Pair 4	Availability of parking space in the two outlets	1.38956	1.50163	.09516	1.20213	1.57699	14.602	248	.000
Pair 5	Supermarket & Open market's closeness to other places of regular visit/shop	.43373	1.63524	.10363	.22963	.63784	4.185	248	.000
Pair 6	Scale of products offered in supermarket & in open market	.32129	1.16795	.07402	.17551	.46706	4.341	248	.000
Pair 7	Quality of goods on offer in both outlets	.90763	1.01774	.06450	.78060	1.03466	14.073	248	.000
Pair 8	Cleanliness of environment of both outlets	2.00402	1.01002	.06401	1.87795	2.13008	31.309	248	.000
Pair 9	Shopping aids/assistants available in both outlets	1.04418	1.35675	.08598	.87483	1.21352	12.144	248	.000

**Test of hypothesis using one-sample t-test**

One-sample t-test was used to test H<sub>02</sub>. Result show that P<0.000 and thus H<sub>02</sub> is rejected. It is concluded therefore that price of products will significantly

influence the choice of women between a supermarket and a traditional open market.

Table 6. One-sample test.

	Test value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	95% confidence interval of the difference	
					Lower	Upper
Importance of price in choosing an outlet for shopping	42.283	248	.000	1.64257	1.5661	1.7191

**Discussion and Conclusion**

Past studies have shown that consumers' retail choice is influenced by multifarious factors such as store attributes, consumer attributes, psychological attributes etc (Grewal, Baker, Levy & Voss, 2003; Mittal & Mittal, 2008). While attention has been centred on various retail formats such as supermarkets, convenience stores, department stores, factory outlets, etc, little attention if any, has been paid to traditional open market as a possible competitor to the other retail formats. Added to the foregoing is the fact that most studies in this area have hardly recognized the peculiarity of the African environment. This study set out to bridge these twin

gaps. Results obtained in this study are consistent both within themselves and with extant literature as reviewed. As seen in sections 3.7 and 3.8, results are in tandem as both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics are in agreement and often shedding more light on each other.

Nigerian women who are often saddled with the responsibility of shopping for the family frequently patronize supermarket than the traditional open market for the purchase of essential goods. This is further buttressed by the rest of the results which show that women prefer price tag as a pricing method than haggling as haggling which is the pricing mechanism adopted in traditional open market is seen as time wasting while price tag as a mechanism saves

time; supermarket is more wide spread than traditional open market as respondents reported that supermarkets are conveniently located to them and other places of visit than the traditional open market, with availability of parking space and shopping aids/assistance in the supermarket than in traditional open market. On comparative basis it is found that the breadth of product assortment (variety of products on offer) is wider in supermarket than in the traditional open market. Both in quality of products offered and cleanliness of shopping environment, supermarket is found to be better than the traditional open market.

While all the outlet attributes investigated in this study are found to be important to the respondents, they ranked differently in order of importance in their influence on preference of women for an outlet for essential goods. As the results show, the order of importance of these attributes is as follows: quality, price, location, cleanliness, product assortment, pricing mechanism and parking space.

These results hold some implications for retail operators and researchers. In this study, supermarket is relatively ranked higher than traditional open market in the assessment of women on outlet attributes, it should however be noted that apart from time wasting and cleanliness dimensions whose mean scores were insignificant, other attributes for traditional open market were equally significant though lower than the mean scores of supermarket. The implication of this is that supermarket operators should not rest on their oars or become complacent as customers could easily switch patronage. Retailers in the traditional open market should devise means of cutting down time spent on haggling and also endeavour to pay attention to issues of cleanliness and hygiene.

Outlet attributes as determinants of choice are the focal points of this study, and are however, noted as the factors that can and do impact on retail outlet choice of customers, therefore the generalization of the results obtained here should be restricted to outlet/physical attributes while further studies are recommended to cover the areas of consumer and psychological attributes and their impact on outlet choice of African women.

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