



## **Choice of Shopping Outlets for Grocery Products and the Socio-Economic Profile of Female Consumers in Lagos Nigeria**

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**Abstract.** This study is intended to ascertain the impact of socioeconomic variables on store choice for grocery products. Outlet for shopping is an integral choice set of today's modern customer. As a result, retailers' understanding of customers' store patronage behavior is essential. The study employed a descriptive and cross-sectional research design. Respondents for this study were female residents of Lagos State of Nigeria, who by culture shop for their families especially for groceries. Questionnaire served as the study instrument. Copies were administered to the respondents by early part of August, 2013. Respondents were drawn through a convenience sampling technique. Though, 275 copies of the instrument were administered, 220 were successfully completed and returned. Pearson moment correlation coefficient and the Chi square were used to test the hypotheses while SPSS (version 19) aided in analyzing generated data. The results obtained were statistically insignificant with all the null hypotheses having ( $P > 0.005$ ), hence none were rejected. Conclusions were reached that the choice of retail outlet for groceries by Nigerian women is not influenced by their socioeconomic variables such as income, level of education, type of employment, marital status and family size.

**Keywords:** Retailing, Marketing, Socio-economic variables, Store choice, Women, Nigeria

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### **INTRODUCTION:**

No matter how well a product/service is in terms of production, packaging, promotion and pricing, it will be considered a total failure if the product/service is not made available to consumers. It is distribution that makes it possible for goods/services to be available to consumers.

Distribution is therefore, one of the variables that a marketer must consider in crafting a successful marketing programme. Given its potential in conferring a competitive advantage in the market place, it is hardly surprising that the issues of distribution have remained topical among marketing experts and practitioners. Retailing is a major component of distribution and an essential service industry which provides an important service to customers, making products available when and where consumers want them.

Jobber (2009) posits that consumer decision-making involves not only the choice of product and brand but also the choice of retail outlet. Extant literature confirms the evolving state of retailing as it can take both store and non-store forms. Most retailing is conducted in stores such as supermarkets, department stores and in developing countries, in some traditional open markets. Whatever the form, the customer is called upon to make a choice (Oghojafor, Ladipo & Nwagwu, 2012).

The developing nature of retailing and its various forms; and the consequent competitiveness in the sector have always attracted the interest of scholars. Thus, studies show 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 (Sellers 1990; Kaufman & Lane 1996; Frasquet, Gil & Molle 2001; and Parikh, 2006).

Retail choice and patronage are hardly a single factor phenomenon (Verhallen & de Nooij, 1982; and North & kotze, 2004). Thus, studies on retail patronage and store choice have been done from various directions. Morschett et al, (2005) and Ghosh (1990) have studied the effects of store attributes or store images which are fundamentally the marketing mix of the retailer, on retail patronage. Also, retail shopping behavior has been predicted by means of objective variables like distance, traffic patterns, population density and store size (Alpert, 1971). Other studies have

included personality related variables (Dash et al, 1976), personnel interest (Bellenger et al, 1976-1977), media usage (Bearden et al, 1978) and self-ascribed occupational status (Hirschman, 1980). Another line of research employs consumer variables to predict store patronage. Rich and Jain (1968) investigated social class and style as explanatory variables for shopping behavior, while Prasad (1975) studied socio economic product risk.

Though, Arnould, Price & Zinkhan (2002), North & Kotze (2004), and Schiffman & Kanuk (2004) have argued that changes in consumers' natural and social environments; and technology have a huge impact on their buying and shopping behavior as these lifestyles change largely determine what consumers buy, when they buy and how and where they buy, yet the consumers' lifestyle are immensely influenced by their socio economic status. According to Wikipedia, "Socio-economic status (SES) is an economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education and occupation".

As literature reveals, scant studies have centred on the impact of socioeconomic variables on choice of shopping outlets for grocery products of Nigeria women. This gap is now identified in literature and the onus is on this study to establish whether the socio-economic profile of Nigerian women influences their choice of outlets for the purchase of grocery products.

#### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:**

Arising from the issues highlighted in the introduction of this study, the problems thrown up to be addressed are:

1. The problem of identifying the relationship between income and choice of shopping outlet of Nigerian women.
2. The problem of whether level of education influences the preference of Nigerian women between a supermarket and the traditional open market.

3. The problem of whether employment type impacts on the choice of shopping outlet of Nigerian women.
4. The problem of establishing whether a relationship exists between marital status of Nigerian women and where they shop for groceries.
5. The problem of whether immediate family size affects the choice of outlet for grocery goods of Nigerian women.

#### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

1. To identify whether there is a relationship between income and choice of shopping outlet of Nigerian women.
2. To determine whether education attainment influences the preference of Nigerian women between a supermarket and the traditional open market.
3. To establish whether the type of employment impacts on the choice of shopping outlet by Nigerian women for groceries.
4. To find out if a relationship exists between marital status of Nigerian women and where they shop for groceries
5. To determine whether immediate family size affects the choice of outlet for grocery goods of Nigerian women.

#### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS:**

1. Is there a relationship between income and choice of shopping outlet of Nigerian women?
2. Does the education attainment of Nigerian women influence their choice of shopping outlet for groceries?
3. Does type of employment influence the choice of shopping outlet of Nigerian women for grocery products?

4. Is there a relationship between marital status of Nigerian women and where they shop for groceries?
5. Does family size influence choice of outlet of Nigerian women?

## **2.1 THEORETICAL LITERATURE REVIEW**

Earlier studies adopted different theories to explain retail patronage behavior. Bellenger and Moschis (1982) group these theories into intrapersonal or interpersonal theories. Intrapersonal theories highlight the individual's internal and psychological characteristic(s) as the core explanation of patronage behavior.

Intrapersonal theories include personality, motivation, and attitudinal theories. Prior studies, for example, have investigated the relationship between consumer personality variables and store loyalty (Lessing and Tollefsoy 1973, Massey et.al. 1968). In the same vein, a number of studies have investigated patronage motives related to store selection (Blankertz 1947). Finally, attitudinal theories have been used extensively to explain retail patronage behavior using concepts such as store image and consumer attitudes toward stores (Hansen and Bollard 1971, Mackay 1973).

Bellenger and Moschis (1982) note that interpersonal theories, rely greatly on the supposition that the individual's behavior is heavily conditioned by others in his environment; they rely upon sociological rather than psychological perspectives. Interpersonal theories employ social class, reference groups and family to explain retail patronage behavior. For example, researchers have related social class to consumer preference for types of stores (eg., Kelly 1967).

Oghojafor, Ladipo & Nwagwu (2012) equally identified such theories as attribution theory which has brought new ideas to the study of consumer decision making and patronage. Attribution theory provides some explanation for the consumer's shopping intentions. It also explains consumer preferences based on their decision

making, including decisions about product attributes such as product quality which impacts consumers' preferences when buying their desired products.

Furthermore, this theory proposes that consumers' future shopping intentions are anchored 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).

The behaviourist psychologists such as Watson, Hall, Skinner and Pavlov have contributed immensely to the understanding of buyer behavior. This school of thought believes that human 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 cause and the effect of behavior.

On the other hand the cognitive theorists oppose the suggestion that human behavior rests solely on the basis of stimulus-reinforcement. The cognitive school of thought identified various factors such as 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 is the results of perceptive thinking and goal orientation. They postulated that a person's brain and nervous system are significant in forming his/her behavioural pattern (Weilbacker 2003)

## **2.2 EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW**

A number of studies have been undertaken to ascertain the factors that impact on store loyalty. Some of these studies examined factors affecting patronage attitudes (Arnold et al, 1996; Sivadas & Baker-Prewitt, 2000; Oderken-Schroder et al., 2001;

Huddleston et al., 2004; Duman & Yagci, 2006; Merrilees et al., 2007). In some studies, the relationship between store image and loyalty was examined (Akdogun et al. 2005; Atakan & Burnaz, 2007), while other studies focused on the relationship between store image and store choice and loyalty (Gilmore et al., 2001; Koo, 2003; Thang & Tan, 2003).

Store attributes are evaluating criteria that influence consumers' attitudes towards a store (Jin & Kim, 2003). Jin and Kim (2003), argue that the influence of store attributes on customer loyalty is anchored on consumers' purposes for shopping and perceptions of store attributes. Prior 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).

Consumers' fast changing 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 constantly introduced and traditional retail format need to find ways to retain customers (Uusitalo, 2001). Research found that quality, price, availability of new products and product value are the attributes that influence consumer attitude (Miranda, Konya & Havrila, 2005).

Also, some experts have studied loyalty 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). Jones and Reynolds (2006) posit that supermarket loyalty means the stability of repurchase of a certain brand, and to become a patron of a certain retailer or service supplier. 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).

Similarly, Polat and Kulter (2007) establish 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. Again, Duman and Yagci (2006) discovered that customers' patronage intentions are affected by value perception, product quality perception, service quality perception, discount perception and comparable price perception. 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). Yeniceri and Erten (2008) in their study investigated the impact of trust and commitment on store loyalty.

In another study, Yilmaz et al., (2007) found location of the shopping mall, product, price and quality, physical appearance, attitude of store staff as important factors shaping customer outlet selection preferences. 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 addition to the foregoing, Grewal *et al.*, (1998a) found special discounts and promotion to increase customers' interest toward the supermarket. 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).



Grace & O'Cass (2005) further show that perception of value and satisfaction affect customers' attitude and store loyalty and intention to purchase. 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).

Bellenger and Moschis (1982) posit that social structural variables may have direct effects on cognitive and behavioral outcomes that comprise store patronage. Thus, a number of studies have found certain socioeconomic variables that fall in this category to be associated with store selection. Another study reports an inverse relationship between education and loyalty toward grocery stores. Enis and Paul (1970) also found education to be inversely related to customer loyalty to grocery stores. Similarly, in a study of female shoppers, Bellenger, Hirschman and Robertson (1976-1977) found education to be strongly related to the actual store selected to purchase specific categories of merchandise. In another study of the image of the store-loyal customer, education was again inversely related to store loyalty (Reynolds *et al.* 1974).

Occupation and income also appear to be strong predictors of store choice. They have been associated mainly with grocery store patronage (Enis and Paul 1970). Family income was found to be negatively related to store loyalty (Reynolds et.al. 1974). Income was also found to be related to cognitive orientations toward shopping (Cort and Dominguez 1977-1978). Working status per se is also likely to affect a person's shopping behavior (McCall 1977).

Myers and Mount (1973) suggest that income is superior to social class in the consumer store choice for a wide variety of home furnishings, appliances, and ready-to-wear product categories as well as some services. Hisrich and Peters (1972) also found income superior to social class in explaining store choice behavior. Thus, the relative importance of income and social class as predictor variables seems to vary depending upon the type of store patronage under investigation. Also, in a relatively recent study, Yalcin (2005) posit that such demographic factors as age, occupation and number of children affect supermarket loyalty.

As literature reveals a whole lot of studies have been undertaken to unravel store patronage behavior of consumers in the different regions of the world with consumers in the advanced countries of America and Europe enjoying centre stage; however, in recent times there seems to be a growing interest in consumer store preferences in the developing countries of Asia and Africa. For instance, 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.

Also a number of studies have been conducted in Turkey to determine customers' attitudes to 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 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.

In a study to determine outlet attributes that influence Nigerian women's preference between a supermarket and the African traditional open market, Oghojafor, *et al* (2012) found that seven attributes were considered important by Nigerian women in making a choice of outlets. These attributes in order of importance were: quality, price, location of outlet, cleanliness, product assortment, pricing method, and availability of parking space.

Though, there tend to be a recent wave of interest in understanding the store preference behavior of consumers in developing countries, little studies have focused on the socioeconomic variables that influence the store patronage behavior of these consumers in developing countries. Hence, the imperativeness of the present study.

### **2.3 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

*H<sub>01</sub>: There is no relationship between income and choice of shopping outlet of Nigerian women.*

*H<sub>02</sub>: Education attainment of Nigerian women does not affect their choice of shopping outlet for groceries.*

*H<sub>03</sub>: Type of employment does not influence the choice of shopping outlet of Nigerian women for grocery products.*

*H<sub>04</sub>: There is no relationship between marital status of Nigerian women and where they shop for groceries?*

*H<sub>05</sub>: Family size does not influence choice of outlet of Nigerian women for grocery products*

### **3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN:**

In conducting this study, a descriptive and cross-sectional research design was adopted as the variables under investigation are purely descriptive.

### **3.2 POPULATION OF STUDY:**

Respondents used for this study were female residents of Lagos State of Nigeria. Lagos is the former capital city of the country and a converging point for all tribes and ethnic groups of Nigeria. Being a commercial hub, Lagos is still regarded as the commercial capital of Nigeria.

### **3.3 SAMPLE SELECTION AND SIZE:**

Sample size of 275 respondents, employing a convenience sampling approach was involved in the study. Eleven (11) localities were selected from Lagos mainland and 25 respondents obtained from each locality to arrive at 275 sample respondents.

### **3.4 INSTRUMENTATION:**

A questionnaire is used as the instrument for data collection. This instrument was designed with multiple-choice or closed-ended questions and has the property of self administration. Our preference for this design is influenced by the capability of the instrument to generate better response rate than its open-ended counterpart.

### **3.5 VALIDATION OF STUDY INSTRUMENT:**

In order to authenticate the appropriateness of the instrument for data collection, it was subjected to face value validity. After the questionnaire was constructed it was sent to three lecturers in department of Business Administration who are experts in

Consumer Behavior and Marketing Management to critique. Based on their positive comments, conclusion was reached that the instrument is suitable for data collection.

### **3.6 ADMINISTRATION OF THE INSTRUMENT:**

Respondents were physically administered with copies of the questionnaire in early August, 2013, after it was validated and found to be suitable for data collection. This approach was responsible for the high response rate recorded in this study.

### **3.7 DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE:**

275 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents who completed and returned 220 copies, giving a success rate of about 80 percent. The relevant data obtained were subsequently analyzed with SPSS statistical package (version 19).

## **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 FREQUENCY ANALYSIS OF RESPONDENTS' BIO DATA.**

The bio data of respondents show that more than half of participants in the study are unmarried women. While over one third of respondents are married, the remaining respondents who are either separated or divorced make up 1.9 percent of the participants. In terms of immediate family size, a little below sixty percent of respondents have between three and six persons in their family. Those who live alone and those who are only two in their family make up exactly a third of all participants. Respondents whose family size are seven and above represent about twelve percent of those polled. The data on education attainment reveals that about two third of respondents are highly educated possessing either a first degree or its equivalent and post graduate certificates. Those who possess diploma certificates make up fifteen percent of respondents while the remaining one fifth of participants in this study are school certificate holders and below.

In terms of occupation, close to forty percent of respondents are either students or those without a job. Civil servants and those on national service represent about ten percent of respondents. A little more than one third of respondents are private or public quoted company workers while about nineteen percent of respondents are self employed. Finally, data on annual income of respondents reveal that more than one third of them earn five hundred thousand naira and below. About sixteen percent earn between five hundred and one thousand naira, and one million naira. While about twenty one percent earn one million and one naira and above, those who earn nothing are about one third of all those polled. As this analysis (see table 1 below) has shown there is significant diversity across demographic variables used; hence data collected can be regarded as unbiased and dependable for the purpose of this study.

Table 1: Frequency distribution of respondents' bio data.

Response variable	Code	Frequency	Percentage	
Marital Status	Single	1	124	56.4
	Married	2	92	41.8
	Divorced	3	0	0.0
	Separated	4	3	1.4
	Widowed	5	1	0.5
	Total		220	100.0
Immediate Family size	Seven & above	1	27	12.3
	Between three & six	2	127	57.7
	Two	3	31	14.1
	One	4	35	15.9
	Total		220	100.0
Education Attainment	School Certificate & below	1	44	20.0
		2	33	15.0
	National Diploma (OND)	3	80	36.4
	First Degree/ HND	4	63	28.6
	Post Graduate Degree		220	100.0
Total				

Service Occupation Worker	Student/ Unemployed	1	84	38.2
	Civil      Servant/National	2	23	10.5
		3	71	32.3
	Private/ PLC Company	4	42	19.1
	Self-employed		220	100.0
	Total			
Annual Income	N500,000 & below	1	71	32.3
	N500,001 – N1,000,000	2	36	16.4
	N1,000,001 & above	3	46	20.9
	No earnings	4	67	30.5
	Total		220	100.0

Source: SPSS data output (2013)

#### 4.2 TEST OF HYPOTHESES

Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was employed in testing hypothesis  $H_{01}$ . As shown in table 2, the null hypothesis is not rejected as the test result is not statistically significant ( $p > 0.072$ ) hence it is concluded that income of Nigerian women does not influence their choice of outlet for shopping grocery products.

Table 2: Correlation of shopping outlet and income

		Choice of shopping outlet for grocery goods.	Annual income
For your grocery goods which of the outlets will you like to use?	Pearson Correlation	1	.072
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.291
	N	220	220
Annual income	Pearson Correlation	.072	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.291	
	N	220	220

Source: SPSS data output (2013)

In testing  $H_{02}$ , Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was also used. As shown in table 3, the result is statistically insignificant ( $p > 0.207$ ) and null hypothesis not rejected, therefore, conclusion is reached that the level of educational attainment of Nigerian women does not impinge their choice of outlet for shopping groceries.

Table 3: Correlations of choice of shopping outlet and education attainment

	Choice of shopping outlets for grocery goods.	Highest level of education attained
For your grocery goods which of the two outlets will you like to use?	1	-.085
Pearson Correlation		.207
Sig. (2-tailed)		
N	220	220
Highest level of education attained	-.085	1
Pearson Correlation		
Sig. (2-tailed)	.207	
N	220	220

Source: SPSS data output (2013)

Hypothesis  $H_{03}$  was tested with Chi square (see table 4). From the test result the null hypothesis is not rejected as it is statistically insignificant ( $p > 0.00$ ). Thus, conclusion is reached that type of employment or where Nigerian women work does not impact their choice of outlet when shopping for groceries.



Table 4: Chi-Square Tests (outlet choice and marital status)

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.746 <sup>a</sup>	3	.627
Likelihood Ratio	2.053	3	.561
Linear-by-Linear Association	.420	1	.517
N of Valid Cases	220		

Source: SPSS data output (2013)

Chi square was equally used in the test of hypothesis  $H_{04}$ . As the test result in table 5 shows, the null hypothesis is not rejected because the test result is not statistically significant ( $p > 0.627$ ) consequently it is concluded that the choice of outlet for groceries by Nigerian women is not influenced by their marital status.

Table 5: Chi-Square Tests (outlet choice and marital status)

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.746 <sup>a</sup>	3	.627
Likelihood Ratio	2.053	3	.561
Linear-by-Linear Association	.420	1	.517
N of Valid Cases	220		

Source: SPSS data output (2013)

Finally, in testing hypothesis  $H_{05}$ , Pearson product moment correlation coefficient is employed. The null hypothesis is not rejected (see table 6) as the test result is not statistically significant ( $p > 0.056$ ). Conclusion is therefore reached that the choice of outlet for grocery goods is not dependent on the immediate family size of Nigerian women.

Table 6: Correlations between shopping outlet and immediate family size

		Choice of outlet for shopping of grocery goods.	Immediate family size
For your grocery goods which of the two outlets will you like to use?	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1  220	-.129  .056 220
Immediate family size	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-.129  .056 220	1  220

Source: SPSS data output (2013)

Distribution, being one of the components of a marketer's strategic programme, has remained topical given its potential in conferring competitive advantage in the marketing arena. Retailing is a major element of distribution and an essential service industry which provides an important service to customers, making products available when and where consumers want them.

Retailing itself is in a state of constant flux with its evolving nature. As Oghojafor *et al*, 2012, noted, retailing can take both store and non-store forms. Presently, a whole lot of retailing is conducted in stores such as supermarkets, department stores and in developing countries, in some traditional open markets; equally, a growing number of retailing is accomplished in the virtual world. Whatever the form, the customer is called upon to make a choice as experts believe that consumer decision-making involves not only the choice of product and brand but also the choice of retail outlet.

The pressure of globalization and the ever changing expectations of today's modern, classy and demanding customers on retailing have continued to attract the interest of scholars and practitioners alike. As reviewed literature has shown, retail choice and patronage is hardly a single factor phenomenon, hence, studies in this area have been approached from various directions majority of which have focused on store attributes and consumer variables. Some studies on consumer variables have attempted to predict store loyalty from personality, social class and style, income, number of children etc.

In spite of this substantial number of studies in store patronage behavior, literature review shows that little empirical studies exist about Nigerian women and their store patronage behavior. The present study which aims at understanding how socioeconomic variables influence the store choice of Nigerian women when shopping for their grocery products is purposed to fill this gap.

The study was solely descriptive and through the aid of SPSS (version 19) the data obtained were analyzed with the relevant statistical tools. Results of this study reveal that the choice of retail outlet for groceries by Nigerian women is not influenced by their socioeconomic variables such as income, level of education, type of employment, marital status and family size. These results seem to differ from the findings of Peters and Fort (1972) that the extent to which a person is loyal to stores in general is affected by his educational background, level of income, occupation, and number of children living at home. This contradiction can be explained by the difference in the nature and type of product under study. These contradictions support the views of Bellenger and Moschis (1982) that the relative importance of socio economic variables such as income and social class as a predictor variable seems to vary depending upon the type of store patronage under investigation.

## **5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

As the results of this study have shown, such socio economic variables as income, education attainment, type of employment, marital status and family size do not

impinge on store patronage behavior of Nigerian women when shopping for grocery products. Consequently, it is recommended to managers of retail outlets for grocery goods to explore other factors in order to determine relevant factors that will boost/attract and sustain traffic to their outlets.

Additional research should be carried out in the following areas: (1) the influence of socioeconomic variables on store patronage behavior of Nigeria women for fashion products, (2) socioeconomic variables and their impact on store patronage behavior of Nigeria women for luxury products.

### **IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE**

Retailers' understanding of store patronage behavior is one of the keys to success in today's marketing arena. Increasingly, it is necessary that managers know which outlet or customer attributes are important in attracting the requisite traffic for success hence the relevance of this present study to retailers.

As the results of this study have revealed socioeconomic variables have little or no role to play in attracting Nigerian women to outlets for grocery products, therefore, grocery store managers who incorporate socioeconomic factors in their marketing strategies should begin to deemphasize this approach as this is unlikely to produce desired result of improved traffic to their stores.

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