

**INFLUENCE OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ON CONSUMER
PREFERENCE OF LARGE SUPERMARKETS IN NAIROBI**

BY

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENT FOR AWARD OF MASTERS DEGREE OF BUSINESS
ADMINISTRATION, SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI.**

DECEMBER 2018

DECLARATION

I declare that this research is my original work and has not been submitted to any other university for assessment or award of a degree.

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This project has been submitted with my approval as the University supervisor.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the lecturers and academic staff school of business university of Nairobi; I appreciate your support and encouragement to make this project a reality. I particularly thank my supervisor Professor Mary Kinoti for her proper guidance and dedication of her time to enable me complete my project. I sincerely thank my parents and entire family for their support financially, morally and socially to enable me complete my M.B.A (Master of Business Administration Degree). I also sincerely thank those who enabled me to achieve all these success without mentioning them individually.

DEDICATION

I dedicate my project to my family, my parents and my friends who have given me the encouragement to finalize my studies. This work is also dedicated with much love and due care to my husband Paul Nzuve and children who have dedicated their time to encourage and support me during my studies.

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ABSTRACT

Majority of firms excel in customer interactions but fails to pay sufficient attention to customers' comprehensive experience on the buying procedures and post purchase evaluations. Firms that have perfected customer journeys benefit enormously in terms of rewards, improved customer satisfaction, condensed churn, amplified revenues, reduced costs and an improved collaboration across the company. The objective of the study was to investigate the influence of customer experience on customer preference for the large supermarket in Nairobi County. Study utilized primary data as the main source of information and questionnaires as the key instrument to collect required data. The findings indicated various patterns of customer journey in various supermarkets highlighting various similarities. The findings of the study indicated that demographic factors played a significant role in the results obtained. It was noted that gender factor contributed greatly towards preference of particular outlets, income, age and occupational playing a significant contribution towards the customer experience noted consisted of satisfied, excited shoppers who had great emotional, social sentiments during their full shopping period which developed and shaped their experience in different dimensions. The study identified various elements of the customer experience like courteous services, enjoyment aspects while shopping, feeling of goodness, good ambience and self-reputation, recommendation of friends and likelihood to purchase from the same outlet was highly rated. The study also noted various preference-oriented factors like convenient, attractiveness, reliability, fast process of checkout, modern, and existence of good and reputable brands and competitive prices as key to preference of particular supermarket. The study found strong relationship between experience and preference. The study indicated that future research need be undertaken using a case study approach focus on one supermarket to get detailed insights into the nature of customer experience and preference factors. The study also noted that similar studies be undertaken in other retail outlets other than large supermarkets, like middle sized and small sized supermarkets to identify their customer experience and preferences.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Understanding customer experience is critical for firms' success and contributes to high patronage and consumer preferences. Changing lifestyles and environmental influences have enabled customers to interact with organizations through a series of touch points in multichannel and media hence making customer experience more social in context. Companies are confronted with fast-tracking media and channel fragmentation and Omni channel management (Kannan and Inman, 2015). Customer experience contains of individual contacts between the company and the customer at discrete points in the experience known as touch points (Homburg et al., 2015). Customer experience encompasses of every service exchange involving the customer emotional, cognitive, sensory, spiritual and social responses to all dealings with the firm (Bolton et al 2014). Various contributions have notable contributions towards development of customer experience, these include customer purchasing behavior process models, customer loyalty and satisfaction, service quality to the firm's offerings, especially the customer attitudes and perceptions, through customer satisfaction surveys (Verhoef & Lemon, 2015).

The following theories will be used to support this study: the Fishbein model theory, consumer behaviour and Nicosia theory. The theory of buyer behaviour is an upgrade of the customer decision making model, developed by Howard and Sheth (1969). The theory has various main elements referred as inputs, the perceptual constructs, learning constructs and outputs: The second theory is the Nicosia Model developed by Nicosia (1966) explaining the three stages sequence which a consumer undertakes starting from consumer awareness, purchase, post purchase evaluation and feedback.

The third theory Fishbein model hypothesizes that attitude towards objects, products, services as a function of attributes and the person's evaluative aspects of these beliefs dictate the outcome of the decision.

The retail sector locally is dominated by a wide variety of establishments undertaking, retailing practices. The retail trade subsector retail in goods and services without transforming the physical nature of the product except bulk breaking. These enterprises comprise of small, medium and large enterprises. The modern retail trade includes hypermarkets, grocery stores, convenience stores and independent specialized stores. The local retail subsector has great potential employment creation due to its relative ease of entry. Retailing accounts for 4% of all sales within the economy (vision 2030 Kenya October, 2013).

1.1.1 Concept of Customer Experience

Customer experience involves every service exchange, irrespective of its form and nature (Zorantonello, 2015). Customer experience incorporates customers' emotional, cognitive, sensory, spiritual and social responses to all dealings with a business organization (Bolton et al., 2014). Customer experience is a broad view of human behavior as related to our emotional feelings and decision making and experience. Customer experience is contained of the cognitive emotional sensorial, physical, social and spiritual elements that mark the customers indirect or direct interactions with other actors in the market; raw information through these encounters combine to create an experience. Other elements that enable customers to elaborate on technology as an experience include the carnal, the emotional, the compositional and the spatial-temporal (De- Keyser et al., 2015).

An experience can relate to particular aspects of the offering such as technology or brand and it contains of individual contacts between the company and the customer at discrete points in the experience known as touch points (Homburget et al., 2015). Roots of customer experience in marketing is integrated in multiple marketing philosophies and tends to depreciate or disregard strong recognized concepts in marketing like service quality, relationship marketing, customer satisfaction, and customer equity.

Critical understanding of the customer experience is better understood through identification of contributions of established research and scholarly works to customer experience. Including customer purchasing process models, customer loyalty and satisfaction, service quality relationship marketing, customer relationship management (CRM), customer critic and focus, customer engagement. The process model for customer experience consist of pre-purchased stage whereby need recognition consideration and search is predominant, purchase stage whereby choice, ordering and payments take place and finally the post purchase stage characterized by consumption, engagement, usage, service requests (Baxendale et al., 2015).

The common measure of customer quality is Servqual which evaluates the functional delivery of service during a lone episode, this conceptualization enables service improvement based on traditional quality management principles. The customer experience exposure EXQ Scale measures the customer experience. EXQ explains better and in detail behavioral intentions and recommendation than customer satisfaction (Rawson et al., 2013).

1.1.2 Consumer Preference

Consumer preference has been defined as the subjective views of individual consumers, assessed by their gratification with products they have bought. This gratification is often considered. Consumer value is computed by comparing utility between various items. Consumer preferences may be evaluated by their gratification with a particular item, related to the opportunity cost of that item since whenever you purchase one item, you forfeit the opportunity to purchase a competing item. The preferences of particular consumers are not included in the economics field (Duncan, Rawson and Jones, 2013).

These preferences are influenced by personal culture, taste, education as well as other factors like external pressure from neighbors and friends. For instance, an individual who prefers to purchase a particular brand of a phone because all his friends own the same type of a phone. This means that the customer buying behavior has been influenced by his friends. Quality products, wide range of products and provided out of stock goods attracted lots of customers who later patronized the store. Surprisingly home delivery of goods and delivery of goods to the parking area did not capture the attention of many customers in the Town (Karumba & Ngigi, 2018). It was established that a significant association between all the shopper characteristics with attitude towards store brands existed. All the shopper characteristics had a large and positive magnitude of association with attitude toward store brand (Ogutu & Peter, 2017).

Customer preferences originates from the evaluative criteria utilized by the consumer's perceptual process; the outlet and individual attributes contributes towards development of the 'image', image is a complex of meanings, relationships serving to characterize the store for people. A number store preference. Mostly

utilized techniques include semantic differential, multi attribute, attitude measures, and dimensional scaling. Semantic differential involves repeated measurements of a concept such as (store / outlet) on a series of descriptive adjectives such as friendly / unfriendly. Semantic differential for patronage research using general characteristics of the campaigns comprises of general characteristics of the company. Physical characteristics of the firm, convenience of reaching the store from customer's location, and products offered. The method is simple to administer and simple to tabulate using mean and medians(s). Multi-attribute attitude measures focus on the importance of perceived characteristics of a store as well as perceived characteristics (Robert et al., 2013).

A semantic differential like old fashioned store / outlet, management might embark on renovation exercises to make it look modern. The approach could be mistake if the outlet has a reputation of low priced or valued for nostalgia or because shoppers feel comfortable in the store. Multi attribute uses various attributes, like price, assortment, personnel, atmosphere, service, quality (James, Durand & Robert, 2013). Results of the survey can enable management of the store to improve, and take care of important attributes and the strengths or weaknesses of competitors; it has been successfully adopted in measuring patronage behavior in restaurants. Multi-dimensional scaling measures techniques is useful in studying store choice; it examines store relationships as compared to a single outlet attribute. The basic hypothesis is that two similar to each other, the greater the likelihood that the individual behavior towards each will be similar. The approach is useful for competitive advantage (know which are direct competitors) (Doyle & Fenwick, 1994).

1.1.3 Retail Sector in Kenya

The retail sector in Kenya is characterized into public and private retail Markets, others operate as retail outlets, some as retail and wholesale. While others are as informal basis and structures such as small and medium scale (SMEs) and some on individual basis including (hawkers). Formal wholesalers and retailers comprise of three (3) large key players (Tuskys, Carrefour, Choppies.). These firms occupy 30% of the Market share and have streamlined supply chains. The micro small enterprises are quite informal in nature and offer better quality and prices, most of these businesses operate from markets or makeshift kiosks. Finally, the Hawkers who sell goods in the street, their products are generally identical and charge low prices as they are not taxed (National SME Survey, 2013). Public retail markets are operated and managed by county governments, in designated and non-designated areas such as tenant purchase stalls, rental public stalls, open air markets, and self-constructed markets.

Private retail Markets operate as supermarkets, hypermarkets and specialty stores, vending machines, light industries. These establishments deal in non-agricultural products and nonfood items. They include Tuskys, Naivas, Chandarana, Eastmatt, Mathais. Rapid growth of these sectors is attributed to the changing lifestyles of the customers, the globalization wave of change, and liberalization policies. Challenges and constraints within the local retail sector includes policy and legislative framework, infrastructure, management systems and processes, financial management and access to business finance, resource management in terms of poor records management and absence of effective information systems (Government of Kenya Vision 2030, 2013).

1.1.4 Supermarkets in Nairobi

There are approximately 125 independent supermarkets operating in Nairobi (Nairobi County Government, 2017). The supermarkets are classified according to a tier category, depending on its branch networks and operations. Tier one was composed of Uchumi and Nakumatt supermarket, both currently under financial problems affecting their operational efficiencies. Tier two comprises of Naivas, Tuskys, Choppies, targeting low- and middle-income segments. Third tier super markets include Mathais, Eastmatt, Tumaini, Clean Shelf, these supermarkets target low level income Market segments. The tier classification keeps changing due to growth factor and high rate of customer patronage.

1.2 Research Problem

Majority of firms excel in customer interactions but fails to pay sufficient attention to customers' comprehensive experience on the buying procedures and post purchase evaluations. Firms that have perfected customer journeys benefit enormously in terms of rewards, improved customer satisfaction, condensed churn, amplified revenues, reduced costs and an improved collaboration across the company. Creating strong customer experience is a critical management objective. Kumar and Reinarts (2016) held that focus on customer management need to be grounded on creation of customer value for business which include concentration on customer lifetime value but no creating value for consumers. Increasing attention on customer experience and preference has arisen because consumers now are interacting with companies through many media and multiple channels, creating a more multifaceted customer journey(s) (Hu & Rahman 2013, Verhoef, Kannan & Inman, 2015).

The local retail sector has tremendously undergone major transformation and change since the mid-eighties to date. The local retail sector undertakes various functions

including breaking the bulk, assortment of goods and services, maintaining the inventory(s) and provision of services. Local retail stores offer wide selection of goods and merchandize giving consumers great shopping experience, through a wide selection of brands, colors, sizes, and prices in one location. Local retailing practices encompasses of hypermarkets, supermarkets, superstores, main merchandizers, departmental stores, convenient stores. The growth of the local retail sector can be attributed to the following factors, the rise in purchasing power of buyers, more choice to consumers, economy of scale enabling selling at competitive price (s) and advent of technology offering supply and distribution management solution(s). All the above factors combined has enabled better services and comfortable ambience aimed at making each shopping a memorable experience for the consumer. Competition being on the verge of rise will compel smaller retailers cease to exists as the populace/ consumer are opting for supermarkets form of outlets as they provide daily family need requirements of milk vegetables, fruits to expensive electronics and clothing as well as textiles (Vision, 2030 & GOK, 2013).

International studies undertaken in the field of customer experience and preferences in the retail sector is quite diverse. Melis et al. (2015) examined the impact of multichannel retail mix in consumer behavior in online store. The findings outlined the various influences of online purchases including the psychographics and social influences, costs, perceived benefits, marketing mix tools and post buying behavior. Husson Thomas et al. (2015) researched on mobile trends for marketers, the findings indicated that competitors influenced customer experience, the customers dynamic external environment have major impacts on customer experience, the economic and circumstances including secession expansion, influence customer experience across companies and the influencers of customer experience are contingent to the economic

situations, thrilling crises have a sturdy negative and lasting effect on the consumer experience.

Klesse et al. (2015) investigated the impacts of preference manifestation modality on self-control; the outcome of their research indicated how customers express their favorites affects their self-control. However, the researchers recommended the following: that mobile device channels interact and can interfere with prevailing channels, mobile device channels provide new location used time sensitive opportunities to develop company-initiated touch points, mobile devices direct touch interface meaningfully influence the customer journey. (Klaus, 2015) undertook a study on measuring customer experience” the findings indicated that customer experience is an outcome of various inputs and variables which shape the destiny of each different customer(s). Dettaan et al. (2015) analyzed the place of mobile devices in the online purchasing.

The various knowledge gaps identified in the various international studies and local studies have contributed to further research and refinement of customer experience and preference. The studies undertaken have demonstrated that each service exchange result in customer experience irrespective of form and nature of interaction. The current expansive approach and perspective considers the holistic nature of customer experience encompassing the customers, emotional, cognitive, social, sensory, and spiritual responses to all dealings of with the company (Bolton et al., 2014). The current study tries to consider customer experience to include all aspects of firm’s offering, customer care quality, service and product features, advertising packaging, reliability and ease of use, all these include subjective and internal responses customers develop to any indirect or direct contact with the firm.

Locally, Toili (2017) studied customer satisfaction and perceived quality of services offered in Supermarkets located in Nairobi County. The findings of this study indicated that consumers of Nairobi supermarket were highly satisfied by service offered by these outlets, the study also revealed high quality aspects of the practices. The results fully indicated that consumer satisfaction of Supermarkets in Nairobi County was highly influenced by tangible, reliability, responsiveness and empathy. Kamau (2014), researched on effectiveness of supermarkets as retail outlets of fast-moving consumer goods in Nairobi County, the results indicated that supermarkets were kept fault or outlets in the sale of fast-moving consumer products, locally the study also revealed that variety of goods gave supermarkets competitive edge among other retail partners. An analysis of those previous undertaken research indicates that none of the studies has focused on the influence of customer experience on consumer's preference of larger supermarkets in Nairobi County. The research question is what is the effects of the customer experience on consumer preference for larger supermarkets in Nairobi?

1.3 Research Objective

The objective of the research was to determine the influence of customer experience on consumer preference for large supermarkets in Nairobi.

1.4 Value of the Study

The research was to evaluate the market participants, both retail leaders, challengers and nichers to find out various ways and means to improve their service offerings with the aim of improving customer loyalty, retention hence increasing their customer base and market segment. The study will facilitate positive reinforcement; positive reinforcement increases the likelihood of repeat behavior as it elicits a reward in terms of customer experience. The findings from the study will enable the acquisition of

customer loyalty since it's based on emotional attitudes which other firms will find difficult to replicate.

To the government, the study will assist in formulating policies touching on consumers with focus on enhancing customer experience. To the supermarkets the study will increase their skills awareness as well as knowledge to understand the issues of customer capability relative to the service environment. Customer compatibility management by these supermarkets involves, the influencing of customer interacts largely to elicit and faster desirable behaviors towards purchase and positive post purchase evaluations.

To the academia the research will be of great value towards publishing relevant study materials for different categories of educational institutions to increase knowledge to both primary, tertiary and post tertiary institutions. The academic may also litigate knowledge and related approaches for training of managers of retail outlets on ways and means of enhancing customer experience.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This part of the research paper introduces the relevant theories supporting the study including the Nicosia theory, the theory of buyer behavior and the Fishbein Model. It also comprises of customer experience management and consumer preference.

2.2 Theoretical Foundations of the Study

The study is based on these theories. The Nicosia model; the theory of buyer behaviour; and the Fishbein Model.

2.2.1 The Nicosia Model

This model was developed by Nicosia (1966). The model has a three-stage structure which starts with the consumer having information on the existence of particular product or outlet. The model also examines the decision process from purchase to post purchase evaluations and feedback. This process of decision making encompasses the consumer experience and preference. The awareness is created by marketing communication processes (s). The perceptive element is influenced by attributes of both the company and consumer. The consumer finally searches for alternatives which are evaluated by past experiences, beliefs and attitudes. The search process leads to the purchase or not purchase of the product. This ultimately contributes to the consumer experience and finally provides feedback which will influence repeat purchase or dismiss the predictor services.

The Nicosia theory had strong impact when it was published. The theory has never had necessary elaborations and empirical support; it has not been revised to reflect changes in the consumer behavior discipline as the Howard Seth Model and Eugel

Kollat. Model. Jagdish Seth collaborated with Howard John to strengthen the theory of buyer behavior through the publication of the theory of buyer behavior in 1969. Models can be evaluated in two different but related aspects, metatheoretically (in terms of internal structure of the theory itself) and empirically (in terms of its utility in describing and predicting the real-World behavior).

Metatheoretical evaluation is the investigation, analyses and description of the technology of building theory, the theory itself, and utilization of theory hence the metatheory focuses on the conceptual procedures of science by raising fundamental philosophic questions (Zaltman et al., 1973).

There are fifteen (15) separate formal criteria to evaluate the Nicosia Model, the Howard Seth Model (1969) and Eugel Kollat Model (1973). The criterion used was as follows, well-formed (the theoretical structure conforms to the rules of elementary logic), evaluation was very good; internal consistency (the theory doesn't have logical contradictions); strength, (the theory encompasses other relevant theories); conceptual unity (components referring to same set of behavior phenomenon); linguistic exactness (Minimum Vagueness, in terms); Empirical interpretability (ease of operationalization in empirical terms); Representativeness (relationships explained at very fundamentals level); feasibility (the theory as comfortable with facts and reality); methodological simplicity (the theory is easy to test and build); confirmation (the theory is consistent with facts). Originality (the theory upsurges reality by deriving novel propositions); external consistency (the theory as reliable with existing knowledge); unifying power (the theory joins previously unconnected substances); Heuristic power (the theory suggests new directions for research); stability (the theory is able to integrate new evidence through variations and modifications (Zaltman et al., 1973).

2.2.3 The Theory of Buyer Behaviour

The theory of buyer behaviour was pioneered by Howard and Sheith (1983). The buyer model has four main ingredients; the inputs which stimulate the buying process these include product related factors like price, quality and distinctness, symbolic features like image, arising from mass media and sales people, social factors like family, reference social class and group influence. The others ingredient includes the perceptual constructs which explains the consumer cognitive activity in terms of information processing. The learning constructs reflects the information processing and output including the purchase perception and learning. The theory of consumer behaviour accounts for serves of factors including significant stimulus, social stimuli and symbolic stimuli, all are relevant in customer experience.

The Howard Seth Model has undergone various tests, using various methodologies like multiple regression, cross lagged correlation, simulation and longitudinal analysis. Halbook (1997) came up with the following conclusions, that most studies undertaken considered only small part of the total equations adopted earlier, the Howard Model is based on bivariate relationship (two variables) even though the hypothesis warranted multiple variables; due to above limitations and conclusions, Farley et al (1977) came up with various variables unlike the 1969 version of the model. Zaltman et al. (1973) pointed out that the theory is consistent with present knowledge.

2.2.4 Fishbein Model

The Fishbein Model developed by Fishbeins (1980) hypothesizes that attitude towards the object, brand, store outlet is a function of a person's beliefs about the object in terms of its characteristics and attributes, and the customers' evaluative aspects of those beliefs and characteristics enables one to arrive at a reasonable conclusion about

the product/ service. The same understanding for marketers will enable them to gauge relevant strategies to adopt. Perceived attributes can be attractiveness, brand reputation, affordability, special features according to Fishbein Model, these attributes are then weighted for each brand to arrive at their respective importance. This Fishbein Model enables marketers to determine the brands strengths and deficiencies in the Market relative to the competition.

The theory has been criticized by leading researchers in customer behavior, these including Terence Shimp and Alican Kavas (1984); Michael J. Ryan and Bonifield (1980); They argued that Fishbein model tends to assume that when consumers hold positive feelings towards most of these product attributes will translate to purchase. Adzen and Fishbein (1980) later changed the approach of the model from study attributes towards objects and focused on attitudes towards actions, these new approaches focused both on product/ object attributes and consequences of the purchase. When considering purchase of personal computer, a consumer will ponder on factors like increased productivity, time, saved, time required to learn, and many other factors relevant to the individual. It makes sense to understand the buyers' attitude towards the consequences of purchase and owning the product rather than mere attitude towards its features. Due to these concerns Ajzen and Fishbein developed the theory of reasoned Action to address these limitations (Adzen and Fishbein, 1980).

2.3 Measures of Customer Experience

Customer experience is conceptualized as customers' journey, which encompasses of the buying cycle involving numerous touch points and as a dynamic practice. The customer experience process starts from the pre-purchase (search) to purchase to after purchase, the process Is alterative and evolving as it involves past experiences as well

as external factors. Pre-purchase includes of the customer relations with the product and the environment where the transaction is undertaken, this stage signifies the customers experience from need, impulse recognition, need and theory. Purchase moments cover customer interaction with the brand and its immediate environment characterized by selection, making an order, and paying (Kotler & Keller, 2015). Post purchase as the third stage which includes customer relations with the brand / product / services in a particular environment, notable behaviours in this stage encompasses of consumption, and usage, after purchase engagement and service requests. In such case, the commodity itself becomes the touch point (Kotler & Keller, 2015).

Current customer experience touch points include partner owned, brand owned, social external touch points. Partner owned touch points include consumer interactions with the experience that is jointly managed, designed, or controlled by the company or its agents, this include marketing departments, multi-channel distribution partners, communication partners and vendor loyalty program partners. Customer owned touch points are actions that constitute the complete customer experience, includes owed desires or needs, in the pre-purchase stage (Mogenson, 2015). Social external touch points reflect the immediate environment where the customer operates. These include the presence of other customers, peer influence, independent information sources, and general environment which influences the processes. Third party information sources as social media and review sites also contribute to the influence of customers (Baxendale, 2015).

Understanding customer experience is of great concern to markets and business practitioners. Brand equity can influence brand development, brand preference, purchase, (intention and the willingness of the customers to adopt high prices). Brand preference leads to the acquisition and purchase intention. Brand association, brand

loyalty and distribution intensity significantly influence brand preference. Consumer based brand equity and creating brand preference for selection are recognized when consumer have a high level of brand awareness and acquaintance as well as desirable, unique and strong associations in their lands (Shamim & Bett, 2013). Customer self-concept and experience has a positive impact on product preference if brands, products and services enable the customer define, promote and maintain self-concept, it will eventually affect the consumers while choosing products. A strong congruency between self-concept, brands and experience promotes preference for as well as satisfaction with a particular product (Tsai, Chang & HO, 2015).

Customer to customer relations through social media is providing important opportunities and major challenges to companies. According to Leeflang et al. (2013) peer customers influence buying behavior. Nevertheless, companies have limited control, overall of customer experience and the customer journey, resulting in behaviors as show rooming (Hu and Rahman, 2013; Rapp et al., 2015). Firms are facing complex challenges in trying to create, control and manage customer experience (Edelman & Singer 2015, Rawson, Duncan & Jones, 2013). Management of consumer experience is a complex process that include strategic management of consumer experience with company or brand which involves five stages, including building an experimental customers world, building the experimental platform, conniving the brand experience, constructing the customer experience and engagement in unceasing innovation, its critical to manage customer experience across customer touch points (Eldelman and Singer, 2015).

2.4 Measures of Consumer Preferences

Quantitative research on consumer behavior utilizes various concepts and numerical scales including attitude research, image and self-concept measurements, multi attribute attitude models, and perceptual and preference mapping. The attitude research undertakes evaluations on objects such as brands or persons. Using a semantic differential scale to rate the objects in terms of pairs of traits, office equipment's may be evaluated on elements of poor, effective, economical, good, low quality in terms of excellent, among other positively related variables. The customer opinion can be liked to favourable or unfavourable, negative vs positive, dislike vs liking for the brand. Kumar (2016) indicates that customers put high value on various products provided, quality specifications and availability of these quality brands.

The image self-concept measurement can measure customer own self-image of specific products and brands. Using various semantic differential scales, with such elements as modern, economic, pleasant, feminine, masculine, traditional, Uneconomic to measure psychographics that's the values, self-concepts, and lifestyles, researchers present a series of statements about possible activities and interests and opinions, respondents indicate their agreement and disagreement with these statements. The multi attribute attitude model examines the consumers preferences or attitude towards a product or service, which is weighted, against a sum of own beliefs and degree to which the item or service processes a set of attributes or characteristics (Mittal & Seth, 2004).

Perceptual and preference mapping measures is used to measure the attributes and criterion consumers use to judge and evaluate alternatives, brands, products, services, retailers, or vendors. The analytical techniques provide visual map in multidimensional nature which shows how similar or different brands are considered

to be by the consumer perceptual and preference maps are critical in identifying new product concept in perceptually repositioning a brand, and identifying Market segments best suited to own's brand (Maghnati et al., 2013).

2.5 Relationship between Customer Experience and Consumer Preference

The Customer experience has considerable association with customer preferences. Multiple factors including location, goods assortment, quality of service influence patronage of clients to particular outlets hence regulating their behaviour. Consumers great emphasis on variety and wide goods assortments, availability of quality brands quality Merchandise and clean service scape all the factors increases customer loyalty, high level of trust, In the service personal include positively reflects on great Patronage behaviour (Kumar, 2016).

Customer experience of perceived value associated with malls and supermarkets affects patrons to a large extent as well as influencing their level of satisfaction and patronage. The element of value is closely related to the services scape and perceptual interpretations (Sadachar, 2014). Customer experience has positive impacts on customer preferences and affection. Cognitive experience is said to include knowledge and beliefs which create memory, perception, information and learning, through the touch point of customer.

Customer affection has positive influences on customer satisfaction and preference. There is close relationship among the customer experience, and reference in terms of products/ service and outlets (Blocker, 2013). Social experience and emotional experience have noteworthy positive effects on buying intention and preference. Customer experience creates instant and askew effect on buying intention. Purchase

and preference intentions are influenced by levels of customer experience; experience does affect the customers' preferences which successively affect their purchase decisions (Yang and He, 2013).

Consumer preference for no choice option involves purchase of alternatives and postponement of the purchase intentions. Consumer preferences is dependent on multiple attributes including product attributes, store convenience, patronage and emotional motives, brand preferences. Firms utilize use of brands as experiential and symbolic resources from which customers connect their identity (CI) and consumer ethnocentrism (CE) have different focus and different sentiments towards preference for particular brands. (Wang & He, 2017) consumer identification with particular culture influences for particular brands or products symbolically related with their culture. Behavior intention is a critical variable between consumer preference, attitude, and final purchase behavior (Chandon, Morwitz & Reinartz, 2015). Symbol benefits like prestige, modernity and association with particular lifestyles create one of the principal motivating forces of buyers' preference (Wang, Barns and Ann, 2013).

2.6 Empirical Review

Consumer experience is being utilized to forecast the purchaser purchase intention, and utilize the knowledge in experimental marketing. The critical components of consumer experience encompass of the sensory experience, social experience and emotional experience. The results from various studies have established that emotional, social experience have substantial positive effects on purchase intentions (Maghnatti et al., 2013). Analytical observations indicate that consumers had a propensity to give advanced importance to store layout, store location, shopping hours, atmospherics, and pleasing units to chatting stores especially when purchasing

cloths and apparels (Vera 2017). Retail environments play a critical role in the time undertaken to shop in particular outlet(s) and influences consumer perceptions on consumption. Yang and He (2013) asserts that experience does affect customers' preference(s), which ultimately affect the purchase intention. Sensory, emotional and social element dominate the customer experience.

A study by Naumi Ngumo (2014) found out that brands, price, store location, apparent quality and products' prices influence customer loyalty towards particular outlets. Sachar (2014) established a positive relationship between education level, entertainment, and prior experiences on store loyalty, also noted was store attributes and norm store features plays a significant role in patronage and repurchase. Kumar (2016) finally notes that there is a positive relationship patronage between store decision, other factors which contributed to patronage including the diversity of services and products.

The influence of promotion on consumer preference involving traditional and modern marketing tools currently practiced have been characterized as cost effective and have speed and ability to reach wide market audience hence enabling product to be fairly priced. The trend of communications has accelerated the concept of awareness in terms of influencing consumer decision making. According to the studies undertaken it revealed that awareness impacts heuristically on perceived quality of the brand preference(s) (Foxal, 2013). Customer experience management in retailing sector has received great response. Kamaldevi (2012) indicates that in terms of finance and marketing perception, company-controlled factors such as merchandise, price, promotion and location had an impact on customer experience and behavior.

Peter and Olson (2012) notes that consumer experience development and behavioral customer analysis can be studied by affective experience and cognitive experience, consumer behavior and consumer environment. To achieve sales volume and profit. The impact and importance of brand experience on customer brand-based equity have elaborately effect towards individual customer experience and purchase intention (Bhatt and Shamin, 2013).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section highlights the research methodologies the research adopted. It involves study design, study population, and method of collecting and analyzing data.

3.2 Research Design

Kothari (2004) describes a research design as an arrangement of requirements for collections and analysis of the data in a way that it combines relevance to the research objective and significance of the study. Research design comprise of decisions concerning what, where, how and when regarding a research or inquiry design (Sekaran, 2011). This particular study adopted a cross sectional survey design. Cross sectional survey was undertaken to describe the current situation, what respondents believe, what is currently undertaken (Baumgartner, Strong & Hensley, 2002). The adoption of the design was due to its complete inclusiveness of the entire population.

3.3 Population of Study

Burns and Groove (2003) indicated that population include all the elements that achieve the criteria to be included in the study. Basically, population include individual objects and events that have common observable characteristics. For the purpose of this study the population constituted of shoppers of five large supermarkets operating in Nairobi County (Nairobi County Licensing Department, 2018).

3.4 Sample Size

The respondents of the study consisted of 2,000 customers who daily patronage these big supermarkets. Most of these supermarkets operate on a 24-hour basis. A sample for this study must be specific enough to provide researchers with a clear understanding of the applicability to particular situation. Mwangi (2015) adopted Krejcie and Morgan sampling technique for small sample population while identifying the sample size of average T.V viewers in Nairobi county- Ngumba estate. For the purpose of this study, the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formulae was adopted to ascertain the number of Shoppers sample size as indicated below.

$$S = \frac{X^2 NP(1-P)}{d^2 (N-1) + X^2 P(1-P)}$$

S= required sample size.

X^2 = the table value of Chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (1.96 x 1.96= 3.8416)

(3.841)

N= the population size.

P= the population proportion (assumed to be .50 for maximum sample size)

d= the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (.50)

The sample size for this study index will be 322.

3.5 Data Collection

The study utilized primary statistics which was collected by use of questionnaire. A questionnaire included a formulated question through which participants gave their responses. A Five-point Likert scale questionnaire was utilized. Likert scales constitute of interval scales that specially utilizes five anchors of strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. Likert scale is better in measuring; Perception, attitude, values, behavior; The questionnaire was subdivided into five

sections, section A constituted of customer demographics, section B consisted of customer experience, Section C constituted of customer preference. Respondents were the customers patronizing particular supermarkets.

3.6 Data Analysis

Hyndman (2008) indicates that data processing includes changing the responses in questionnaires in a form that may be worked on to give statistics; this includes editing, coding, monitoring and data entry that constitute data processing process. Descriptive statistics of mean, frequency and Percentages was utilized to analyze demographic characteristics of participants; Correlation analysis and regression analysis was applied to measure and predict the influence of customer experience on consumer preference.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS RESULTS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and interpretations of results obtained from the study. The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of customer experience on customer preference for large supermarkets in Nairobi County. The section covers the background demographic information, customer experience, customer preference. Descriptive statistics was utilized to analyze the data.

4.2 Response rate

Response rate is the number of successfully administered questionnaires. The study targeted an estimated sample size of 322 participants of which 236 were successfully administered which comprises of a response.

Table 4. 1:Response Rate

Supermarkets	Sample Size	Respondents	Response rate
Carrefour	65	50	77%
Naivas	65	45	69%
Tuskys	64	40	63%
Food Plus	64	55	86%
Choppies	64	46	72%
Total	322	236	

Source: Research Data, 2018

The response rate of 73.3% is considered satisfactory and is quite a true representation of the population. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) articulates that a response rate of 50% is adequate, 60% is good, and 70% is very good. The same view is shared by

Barley (2000) who indicates that a response rate of 50% is adequate, while any higher percentage signifies a very impressive response.

The high response rate can be attributed to the cooperativeness of participants and the long hours of operation which most of these stores operate. A non-response rate of 27% is quite low and will not affect the result(s) outcome. In a study by Lamb et al (2012) indicates that most customers find quality products and services, prices being competitive and brand availability being the key contributor for high turnout of shoppers in these supermarkets.

4.3 Demographic Information of Respondents

The study sought to describe the demographic of customers who patronage those supermarkets in terms of their gender, Age, Marital Status, Level of education, duration of patronage to their particular outlet(s) and the employment status. The findings are presented in the following sub section.

4.3.1 Gender Distribution

The study sought to analyze the gender categories of the sampled segment of respondents, with a view to understand which gender represents a high percentage of customers. This analysis of gender can be utilized while developing marketing strategies targeting particular market segments customers.

Table 4.2: Gender Distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	108	46%
Female	128	54%
Total	236	100

Source: Research Data, 2018

The results in 4.3.1 revealed that 54% of the respondents were female whereas 46% comprised of Male respondents. These percentages revealed an even dispersion of gender. The current lifestyle has precipitated an even balance of shoppers across the customer market segments. Thus, results indicate soft active gender participation in household and consumer decision making processe(s). The study concurs with Vera (2017) on the findings of consumer patronage towards shopping malls in Nairobi, indicated high patronage of Lady shoppers.

4.3.2 Age Distribution

The study sought to establish the age groups of these respective customers who frequent particular supermarkets as in indicated in Table 4.3.2.

Table 4.3 : Age Distribution

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-25	40	17%
26-35	54	23%
36-45	58	24%
46-55	45	19%
Above 55	39	17%
Total	236	100%

Source: Research Data, 2018

The result in Table 4.3.2 indicates that a majority of respondents fall under the age group of 36-45 years, 24%, 26yrs -35yrs, 23% 46ys -55yrs, 19% above 55 years and 18-25 years 17% respectively. The results clearly indicate that category of 36-45 and 26-35 constitute of the largest shoppers in these big five supermarkets in Nairobi. The large number of these respondents are working category or young professionals who

run their own businesses or engaged in particular trade or business ventures. A low percentage of 17% for age group above 55yrs indicates that that age bracket is not quite active in daily purchases as the young generation. Family unit shoppers will constitute of the adult children and mothers/ ladies who also constituted a his/her turn out on their brackets.

4.3.3 Marital Status

The study sought to investigate the marital status of their respondents' findings indicated at table 4.3.3.

Table 4.4 : Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	73	31%
Married	106	45%
Others (Specify)	57	24%
Total	236	100%

Source Research Data, 2018

The study findings indicate that the married persons constitute the large numbers of buyers/ customers 45%, followed by single status persons at 31% and others at 24%. The pattern can be attributed to the traditional roles and duties of married person's responsibilities to family requirement

4.3.4 Level of Education

The study sought to describe the respondents' level of Education findings indicated on Table 4.3.4.

Table 4.5 : Education

Education	Frequency	Percentage
Secondary	26	11%
Diploma	51	22%
Degree	94	40%
Masters	55	23%
PhD	10	4%
Total	236	100%

Source: Research Data, 2018

Findings of table 4.5 indicates that majority of respondents were degree holder constituting of 40% followed by master level of education 23%, Diploma level 22% Secondary level 11% and Ph.D level 4. The results indicate that a modern shopper an educated and well-informed customer. The lowest number of Ph.D respondents clearly indicate, that these level of academic attainment are not frequent shoppers as most of them shopping is done by those employed by them or family members who compose of the other bracket(s). The studies also indicate that these categories of shoppers have their own preferences in terms of choice and related decisions. It also means that their responses and feedback were quite informed.

4.3.5 Employment Status

The study sought to investigate the relationship of employment status and the purchase habits of various respondents as indicated in Table 4.3.5.

Table 4.6 : Employment Status

Employment Status	Frequency	Percentage
Business	65	28%
Employment	67	28%
Unemployment	24	10%
Retired	13	6%
Home maker	52	22%
Student	15	6%
Total	236	100%

Source: Research Data, 2018

From the results analyzed, the respondents who are in business profession and employment accounted for 28% respectively. This is because these are financially capable customers with strong finance base and have a high tendency towards shopping activities; the home maker category which constituted of home maker accounted for 22% of the total respondents. Thus, is also due to the fact that this category of respondents is active in house hold purchases. They also have a higher bond in home items decision making practices.

The unemployed respondents accounted for also 10% while retired and students accounted for 6% respectively. The low rate percentage can be attributed in the return of their status, for the retired group, they are not frequent shoppers as most of the shopping is done by those in active daily business endeavors. Students also consisted of low percentage shoppers due to their nature of status. They have no income and, in most instances, they are in schools or colleges.

4.3.6 Income Level

The study sought to analyze the income level of respondents as shown in Table 4.3.6.

Table 4.7 : Income Level

Income Level (Kshs)	Frequency	Percentage
0-10,000/=	18	8%
10,001-18,000/=	32	14%
18,001-25,000/=	53	22%
25,001-45,000/=	66	28%
45,001 and above	67	28%
Total	236	100%

Source: Research Data, 2018

Findings from the table indicate that those respondents with an average income of upto and above 45,000/= constitute 28%. This is a clear indication of their strong purchasing power. Those with income of Ksh. 18,000/= and above to Ksh. 25,000 were 22%, those respondents with up to Ksh. 18,000 constituted 14% of the total respondents while the least income bracket of Ksh. 10,000 comprised of 8% only. The pattern of income and corresponding percentage indicates that those with average and good disposable income are the large number of respondents who shop from various supermarkets. The studies are similar with those of Acholla (2017) on consumer patronage towards shopping malls in East of Nairobi.

4.3.7 Frequency of Supermarket Visits

The study sought to determine the nature and frequency of visits to the supermarkets with a view to analyze their patronage rate as indicated in Table 4.3.7.

Table 4.8 : Frequency of Supermarkets Visits

Frequency of Supermarket Visits	Frequency	Percentage
Once a week or more	37	16%
Once every two weeks	25	11%
Three times a year	15	6%
Every Month	150	64%
Rarely/ first time	9	3%
Total	236	100%

Source Research Data, 2018

From the results its noted that the monthly shoppers account for 64% of the total respondents, this is due to the fact that most people undertake their shopping activities at the end of every month. Which is a true characteristic of employed persons. Those respondents who shop every week account for 16%, those who undertake shopping after two weeks 11% least percentage were noted on those who shop three times a year accounted for 6% while those who rarely visited these outlets and those visiting for the first time accounted for 3%. The study findings are I line with Mistri & Bhatt (2014) who found that physical store aspects of the Retail services quality scale (RSQS)) model have positive impacts on customer perception of retail outlets in India. Nhat and Hau (2007) using RSQS concluded that service personnel have the highest impact of customer perception in retail service quality in Vietnam.

4.3.8 Supermarket Preference

The researcher sought to understand supermarket preference of various respondents. The results are indicated at Table 4.3.8.

Table 4.9 : Supermarket Preference

Supermarket	Frequency	Percentage
Carrefour	49	21%
Naivas	55	23%
Food Plus	50	21%
Tuskys	51	22%
Choppies	31	13%
Total	236	100%

Source: Research Data, 2018

The results of the investigation Carrefour is located in Westlands and city centre hence commanding their percentage indicated. Food plus is quite popular because is located in densely populated Highridge, Parklands Westlands and Lavington areas of Nairobi.

This study reveals a uniform pattern of preference as far as individual respondent choice of supermarket is concerned. The pattern of preference reflects the location of the particular supermarket. Naivas, Tuskys and Food Plus have location in city urban residential areas hence commanding a high and uniform rate of shoppers. Leading choice is Naivas with 23% of respondents, Tuskys with 22% Food Plus with 21%, Carrefour 21% and Choppies Supermarket 13%. Choppies supermarket does not have branches or outlets in respective urban residential areas of Nairobi. The findings concur with Reardon, Chege and Waug 2006 who indicated that the two great motivations for shopping at supermarket is the variety of goods and fair prices.

4.4 Customer Experience

The study sought to establish the experience on the non-store aspects of the Large Supermarket in Nairobi. The results are indicated in table 4.8 below

Table 4.10 : Customer Experience (Non-Store aspects)

Customer Experience	N	Mean	Std
The supermarket offers Customer Service	236	4.2	1.06
I enjoy Visiting this supermarket.	236	4.2	1.06
I feel good when buying from this supermarket	236	4.2	1.06
I feel satisfied with the services of this supermarket due to its friendly staff	236	4.3	1.06
Visiting this supermarket makes me feel socially accepted because of the kind of people who shop here	236	4.3	1.16
I will recommend friends to this supermarket since it offers variety of goods and has attractive environment.	236	4.3	1.16
The likelihood to purchase from this supermarket is high since its convenient.	236	4.2	1.06
The supermarket setting is very attractive	236	4.3	1.16
I like every aspect of this supermarket	236	4.3	1.16
Average Score	236	4.23	1.10

Source: Research Data, 2018

The research findings indicate that the majority of respondents strongly agreed that the supermarket offers courteous services (M=4.2, S.D=1.06), they enjoyed visiting the supermarket (M=4.2, S.D=1.06), they feel satisfied with the service of these

supermarkets (M=4.2, S.D = 1.05), they will recommend others (M=4.3, S.D=1.16), they are likely to purchase from the same supermarket (M=4.2, SD= 1.057), they liked every aspect of the supermarket (M=4.2, SD=1.16). The respondents agreed that they felt good when shopping from their respective supermarket (M=4.2, SD=1.16), that the supermarket is very attractive (M=4.2, S.D=1.16).

4.5 Customer Preference

The following customer preference were considered in the survey.

4.5.1 Store Aspects

The study sought to establish the level at which participants agreed with the statement about preference for particular supermarkets. The participants were asked to rate the statement in table 4.10 on the five scale where

Five = Extremely favourable, Four=Favourable, Three= Neutral, Two= Unfavourable, One= Extremely unfavourable.

Table 4.11 : Customer Preference

Store Aspect	N	Mean	Std
Attractive	236	4.12	1.02
Convenient	236	4.15	1.06
Likable	236	4.13	1.11
Competent	236	4.15	1.06
Courteous	236	4.23	1.07
Reliable	236	4.09	1.36
Fair Prices	236	4.11	1.02
Modern	236	3.72	0.81
Easy to find items	236	4.09	0.91
Fast check out	236	4.22	1.10
Convenient	236	4.05	1.13
Wide selection	236	4.23	1.10
High quality products	236	4.22	1.10
Has known brands	236	3.9	0.93
Dependable	236	4.33	1.14
High prices	236	3.82	0.81
Advertises	236	3.81	0.96
Known to friends	236	3.8	0.91
Average Score	236		

Source: Research Data, 2018

Table shows that respondents agreed that the supermarkets were dependable (M=4.33, SD=1.12); they also agreed that the supermarkets , had made selection of merchandise and had courteous employees (M=4.23, SD=1.10), they also agreed that the supermarket had competent employees (M=4.23, SD=1.07),they also agreed that the supermarket was conveniently located (M=4.15, SD=1.06) they also agreed that this supermarket was attractive (M=4.12, S.D=1.06)

Large number of respondents agreed that the supermarkets were likable (M=4.13, S.D 1.11) while some respondents agreed that supermarket(s) was reliable and easy to build items (M=4.09, S.D=1.36) other respondents agreed that the supermarkets were conveniently located) M=4.05,SD=1.13). Finally, some respondents were neutral on issues relating to the supermarket having known brands and charged high prices for products (M=3.09, SD=0.93, M3.82, SD=0.81). Other respondents were not sure whether the supermarket advertises their products, and some didn't understand whether the supermarket was modern in terms of what they benchmarked against (M=3.72, SD=0.81). Finally, some respondents were not sure whether the supermarket was known to friends (M=3.8, SD=0.91). The findings concur with Reza and Barua (2013) who concluded that assurance. Physical attributes influence customer satisfaction and reliability among local supermarkets.

4.5.2 Preference Multi Attribute Factors

The study sought to investigate the extent to which the underlisted Multi attribute factors contributed to the supermarket preference in a scale of one to five. The respondents indicated the extent to which various multi attributes factors contributed to their current choice of supermarket. Table 4.5.2 indicates preference measures.

Table 4.12 : Preference Multi Attribute Factors

Preference Measures	Mean	SD
Products		
➤ The Store has adequate variety of goods	4.3	1.06
➤ The quality of products is high	4.4	1.18
➤ The store has numerous brand	4.12	1.11
➤ The store is fully stocked	4.0	1.04
Preference Measures		
➤ The supermarket currently located	4.13	0.920
➤ Supermarket has good ambience and environment.	4.09	0.94
Price		
➤ The prices are low compared and other stores	4.42	1.20
➤ Price are competitive	4.22	1.23
➤ Products have value for the money spent	4.09	0.94
Promotion		
➤ The store has informative advertisement	4.27	1.09
➤ The store advertisement is appealing	4.21	1.05
➤ The store adverts are easy visible	4.3	1.16

Source: Research Data, 2018

The researcher findings indicate the following patterns in terms of respondent preferences. The respondents agreed that the supermarket had high quality goods (M=4.4 SD= 1.18), they also agreed that the prices were low compared with other supermarkets (M=4.42, SD=1.20).

They agreed that some supermarkets had adequate variety of goods (M=4.3, SD=1.06) while others noted and agreed that the supermarkets were fully stocked (M=4.2, SD=1.04). Further to that they also agreed that the supermarket had numerous brands. The respondents agreed that supermarkets advertised their services and business (M=4.3, SD=1.05).

Further analysis indicated that some respondents agreed that ambience and value of goods was quite good (M=4.09, SD=0.94). The respondents also agreed that the supermarkets were conveniently located and the increased their preference ego. Some respondents identified the supermarkets through their being visible in the Market place and competition (M= 4.3, SD= 1.16). Finally, the respondents agreed that these supermarkets had competitively priced products which also increased their preference option. Bojanic and Rosen (1994) posit that supermarket offers quality services and products of value to customers.

4.6 Correlation Analysis

A Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the customer experience and the consumer preference of large supermarkets in Nairobi county County, Kenya. Table 4.6.1 presents the findings.

Table 4.13 : Correlations

		Consumer preference	Customer experience
Consumer preference	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.585
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.	.000
	N	236	236
Customer experience	Correlation Coefficient	.585	1.000
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.
	N	236	236

Source: Research Data, 2018

It indicates that there was a strong positive correlation between the customer experience and consumer preference of large supermarkets in Nairobi county County, Kenya. where $r = 0.585$, $p = 0.000$, $n = 236$. The results also revealed that the p-value was 0.000, which is less than 0.05. This implies that statistically there is a significant relationship between the two variables. A positive correlation means that an increase in one variable leads to an increase in the other variable. In this case, an increase in customer experience would lead to an increase in the consumer preference of large supermarkets in Nairobi county County, Kenya. The findings concur with Shamim and Bett (2013), that customer self-concept and experience has a positive impact on product preference if brands, products and services enable the customer define, promote and maintain self-concept, it will eventually affect the consumers while choosing products. A strong congruency between self-concept, brands and experience promotes preference for as well as satisfaction with a particular product.

4.7 Regression Analysis

The research conducted regression analysis to determine whether there is a relationship between customer experience and consumer preference of large supermarkets in Nairobi County, Kenya.

4.7.1 Model Summary

The model summary in table below was utilized to determine whether there is considerable variation between dependent variables and independent variables. Furthermore, it was utilized to determine the proportion variation of dependent variables on independent variable.

Table 4.14 : Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.843821	0.712034	0.654441	3.341166

- a. **Predictors:** customer experience
- b. **Dependent variable:** consumer preference

Source: Research Data, 2018

The adjusted R squared was established to be of 0.654 this means that the independent variable (customer experience) studied in this study contributes 65.4% of supermarkets consumer preference. Other factors and random disparities not studied in this study led to a measly 24.6 percent of the of supermarkets consumer preference in Nairobi County.

4.7.2 Anova

Table 4.15 : Anova^a

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	11.173	1	11.173	4.121	.000 ^a
Residual	634.60	234	2.712		
Total	645.773	235			

- a. **Predictors:** customer experience
 b. **Dependent variable:** consumer preference

Source: Research Data, 2018

The ANOVA results in table 4.7.2 show F-value of 4.12, which is significant at $0.000 < 0.05$. This signifies a model fit and implies a match between the regression model and the data, which means that the use of regression analysis in this study was justified.

4.7.3 Coefficient Analysis

From the findings on table below, $\beta_0 = 3.546$ signified the constant that predicted value of supermarkets consumer preference in nairobi county Kenya while customer experience is held constant at zero (0).

Table 4.16 : Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.546	0.461		7.691974	.000
Customer experience	0.345	0.091	0.301	3.791209	.001

- a. **Predictors:** customer experience
 b. **Dependent variable:** consumer preference

Source: Research Data, 2018

The optimal regression model is therefore:

$$Y = 3.546 + 0.345X_1 + \varepsilon$$

Regression outcomes showed that customer experience have significance and positive influence on consumer preference of large supermarkets in nairobi county as indicated by $\beta_1=0.345$, $p=.001$. This means that an increase in customer experience would lead to an increase in the consumer preference by $\beta_1= 0.345$. The findings are in line with Kumar (2016), indicates that customers put high value on various products provided, quality specifications and availability of these quality brands. The findings indicated that the quality of the service given had positive impact on consumers trust level in the sales personnel, which in turn impacted positively the perception towards a particular outlet. The findings are in line with Blocker (2013), that customer affection has positive influences on customer satisfaction and preference. There close relationship among the customer experience, and reference in terms of products/ service and outlets

4.8 Discussion of the Findings

The customer experience references to the interactions between customers and a product a form of part of the organization, which cause to a reaction by customers. The experience affects customers engagements in different purchase transactions. Batt and Shamin (2013) notes that the importance of brand experience on customer-based equity is critical in understanding a particular customer journey and experience. Boyle and Martinez (2013) believe that brand equity can influence brand development, brand preference and choice of outlet. It also increases the element of patronage and buyer behaviours.

The study reveals that large supermarkets in Nairobi exhibit similar demographic characteristics reflected in previous studies. In the current study there is an even distribution of participants across the two genders group. Thus, findings are in line with Rosseal and Venter (2014) and Nahari and Kuvad (2017), similarly the present study indicates a balanced number of patronage among the employed group of respondents and the business oriented individuals, there was less number of elderly customers and school going respondents. Sohail (2013) found similar results with malls patrons in Saudi Arabia. A unique pattern emerged that most patrons/customers of large supermarkets were similar in education level, marital status, and employment status. Similar studies have been undertaken locally by Acholla (2017) who investigated customer patronage and perceptions towards shopping Malls in Nairobi. The research utilized descriptive statistics by calculating mean, median and standard deviation. Age factor of 25-35 years were noted as majority of patrons in malls. Other outcomes were that there was strong and significant relationship between customers' experience with store choice or preference with minimal variance of non-store and store aspects.

Nyongesa and Kuloba (2015) in their findings of factors influencing consumer preference for retail outlets in Kisii town identified similar variables which contribute to store choice, these included prices of merchandise, location, promotion, prices and in store management and audience. Thus, concurs with the current study which found same characteristics and factors contributing to preference for particular outlet (supermarket). Wornchanok and Suksa-ngom (2013) identified various factors which influenced store patronage in Bangkok Thailand. The findings concur with the current findings which highlighted the nature of products, being of quality, reliable brands,

the place factor in terms of location, ambience and environment, and price being competitive low products having value for their money spent.

Thank and Tan (2013) in their research on linking consumer perception to preference of retail stores using a multi attributes of store image concurs with the findings of the current study, whereby the multi attributes factors are similar encompassing of products, places, price and promotion. Factors relating to preference like attractiveness, convenient, reliability, competent, dependability wide choice of merchandise. Klause and Maklan (2012) notes that customer experience is a key determinant of customer behavior and a critical objective for service firms. Customers perceptions of their experience are generally associated with the nature on how service is delivered rather than exploring what is delivered and how customer experience relates to important marketing out comes. The research findings concur with Dang (2014) who asserts that it's understandable that consumers usually refer fast delivery, large assortment and varieties add on services etc. There is need to balance service outputs and consumer's needs. There is a strong indication that gender factor is important in choice of retail outlet. The female participants estimated of 54% which was quite good compared with Men respondents of 46%. Women undertake traditional roles of being in charge of household shopping and food purchases hence the great turnout in various supermarkets. This concurs with Ravilochanan and Devi (2012) women shoppers take time to compare quality choose among alternatives hence spend more time in the supermarket. This trait also implies that they patronize those outlets with variety and choice.

Supermarket need to take account of the women buyer behavior and improve the store layout to attract them, and promote the store through positioning strategies using various variables such as price, fashion, decency rare reliable dependability and self-

image for those wish to acclaim their society status. Thus, sentiments are supported by Choi et al. (2004) then indicate that the retail product and service quality at the point of purchase influencing consumer perceptions of value and willingness to buy. Support services attract customers to certain retail outlets which allow them convenient and pleasure of shopping at preferred outlet(s). Support services encompasses of identifications of customers' needs in the outlets, delivery of the products to customers premises, warranties and guarantees, financial arrangement and payment flexibility, product usage, training convenient shopping hours, loyalty programmes and adequate parking. Management of service quality and the service personnel are the corner stone of any business the personnel are the first contact point with customers in their encounter moments during their visits to particular supermarkets. Service personnel are always in best position to evaluate customer experience (Hesket et al., 2007).

Store promotion and communication enhances choice and preference studies indicate a strong relationship between patronage number of customers and the level of communication in the store adopts. Grunig and Hunt (2013) indicates that communication environment via internet occurs in various ways. The emergence of social media is a two-way symmetric environment has provided a balanced interactive communication between target groups and retail outlets without time and location constraints.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the summary of Key results of analysis of the influence of customer experience on customer preference of large supermarkets in Nairobi. It consists of summary of findings, conclusion, recommendations, study Limitations and recommendation for further research.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

The objective of the study was to establish the influence of customer preference for large supermarkets in Nairobi County. The respondents were customers who patronize those outlets. Questionnaires were distributed to them for their participation. The response Rate was quite good. (A total of 322 respondents were targeted and only 236 successfully participated in the exercise).

The response rate from the large five supermarket was encouraging, these supermarkets comprised of Food plus, Carrefour, Choppies, Naivas, Tuskys. The findings indicated that gender classification was quite even but the female respondents were high of all respondents while the male counterparts was relative. The findings further indicated that most customers comprised of ages of twenty-six to thirty-five (26-35 yrs) respectively, this is because most of these respondents are in employment or in business. The age bracket had a low turnout, this is a mature customer segment who are not very active purchase but have diverse responsibilities at family level, while those above fifty-five years, and eighteen years to twenty-four years were fewer. The findings further indicated that married persons had a higher percentage while singles were relatively less. In the area of educational level, a higher

percentage of respondents had degree level of education, this is possible due to large number of colleges and universities in Kenya today. Those with master level of education, and diploma holders were of good numbers and finally secondary school level of education were fewer. The study findings indicated that those respondents in employment and business was higher, home maker, unemployed and students were relatively less.

On the level of income of respondents, the highest percentage of shoppers were those who have a monthly income of Ksh. 25,000-45,000 and, followed by those with a monthly income of Kshs. 25,000, and least percentage was that category of Ksh. 10,000. The study revealed that most of the respondents shop once a month due to their occupation level, employment or business, those who shopped once a week relatively fewer. The study findings indicated that most customers preferred supermarket, which are close to their respective residence or work place, that's why the percentages are almost similar with slight differences, Naivas, Tuskys, Food plus, Carrefour had a high turnout. Choppies is relatively low due to its presence in the city centre and has no branches in the residential areas or on the outskirts of the central business District.

The findings of the study noted the following as regards the customer experience, that customer felt socially satisfied while shopping from particular outlets (mean= 1.9 SD =0.95) others indicated that supermarket are very attractive others suggested to recommend friends to the supermarket, majority indicated enjoying the shopping experience (M=1.9 sd=0.90) while a good number indicated that the service of these outlets was customers. A good number of respondents indicated a likely good of shopping again due to the good experience noted. The study findings registered the following as far as store or supermarket preference was concerned. A number of

respondents indicated that they preferred the supermarket because it was dependable (M=4.23, SD=1.14), others indicated the courteous staff and service (M=4.23, SD=1.07) they checked out fast, (M=4.22, SD=1.10) the store had wide selection of merchandise (M=4.23 SD= 1.10) supermarket had high quality products, convenient easy to find items, attractive.

Some respondents indicated that the supermarket was well known to friends (M=3.82, SD= 0.84) and had known brands of products (M=3.9, SD=0.93) while a some noted the element of modernity (M= 3.72 SD= 0.81) as factors encouraging preference. The study noted that various multi attribute factors were utilized to measure the element of preference these included the price, the promotion, the place and the products.

5.3 Conclusion

The study analysis and findings identified simultaneous customer demographic factors across five large supermarkets. It revealed that the gender factor played a significant role in purchase activities, was indicated that income played a significant factor in choice of supermarkets, those respondents who frequent those outlets have similar characteristics as far as their incomes is concerned. The age factor was quite significant factor identified across the large five supermarkets. The study concludes that gender, income, age, should be given more consideration while investigating the influence of customer experience for preference of choice of supermarkets.

The store/ supermarket elements seemed to have a significant impact on customer preference the location, ambience, layout and general assortment of high-quality merchandise and good and courteous staff. The study concluded that supermarkets should invest more in store aspects to increase the level of patronage as well improving their overall shopping experience.

5.4 Recommendations from the Study

The study recommends that supermarkets invest in store related features and facilities to increase the conclusiveness of the service scope where shopping operation are undertaken. The study also recommends that supermarket chain of stores to adopt online shopping trend as the current lifestyle and shopper expectations are changing from the previous Brick and Motor establishments. The study also recommends that supermarkets invest in more on social media communication as an effective two-way communication channel of the current century and lifestyles.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

Challenges of time and resources were greatly experienced. Data collection and movement was quite challenging. Element of confidentiality made to affect the outcome as most respondents were not willing to indicate their deep details like incomes, age, marital status. However, those who participated were a group representation.

5.6 Recommendations for Further Research

The research notes that there is need to undertake further Research on other types of Supermarkets the Medium sized, small sized to analyze whether the experience and preference issues are similar to the large supermarkets. The study should also undertake a case study of at least one supermarket to deeper insight of experience and preference which signifies that a case study approach could yield more insight information.

The study recommends that the same studies be undertaken to other retail sector establishments not necessarily supermarket types. This could give a better understanding of various customer experience and shopper preference information. Finally, the study could also be undertaken on service related organizations to assert the experience and preference factors.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I : Questionnaire

TOPIC: THE INFLUENCE OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ON CONSUMER PREFERENCE OF LARGE SUPERMARKETS IN NAIROBI.

The questionnaire is designed to collect data on the **influence of customer experience on consumer preference for large Supermarkets in Nairobi County.**

Your participation will be highly appreciated and results will be used purely for academic purposes and treated confidentially.

PART A PERSONAL BACKGROUND AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

[tick where appropriate]

1. (a) Name of Supermarket

Choppies [] Food plus(formerly Chandarana) []

Tuskys [] Carrefour [] Naivas []

(b) What is your gender? Male [] Female []

2. What is your age?

18-25 [] 26-35 [] 36-45 [] 46-55 [] Above 55 []

3. What is your marital status? Single [] Married []

Other specify.....

4. What is your level of Education?

Secondary [] Diploma [] Degree [] Masters [] PhD []

5. For how long have you been shopping from this particular super market?

i) Less than one month []

ii) 2-6 months []

- iii) 1-2 years []
- iv) More than 2 years []

6. Kindly tick your status

- (i) Business []
- (ii) employment []
- (iii) Un employment []
- (iv) Retired []
- (v) Home maker []
- (vi) Student []

7. How often do you Purchase Merchandize from this particular Supermarket?

- i. Once a week or more []
- ii. Once every two weeks []
- iii. Three times a year []
- iv. Every month []
- v. Rarely or first time []

8. Which supermarket do you prefer shopping from? (specify)

9. Tick your monthly income (in Kshs)

- 0-10,000 []
- 10,001-18,000 []
- 18,001- 25,000 []
- 25,001-45,000 []
- 45,001 & Above []

PART B: CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Please indicate the extent to which the following contribute towards your experience with this supermarket.

5- Strongly Agree, 4- Agree, 3- Neutral, 2 – Disagree, 1- Strongly Disagree

Customer experience	1	2	3	4	5
The supermarket offers courteous services					
I Enjoy visiting this supermarket due to its Convenience					
I Feel good when buying from this supermarket because of its ambience					
Shopping in this supermarket enhances my self-image due to its reputation					
I Feel satisfied with the services of this supermarket due to its friendly staff					
Visiting this supermarket makes me feel socially accepted because of the kind of people who shop here.					
I will recommend friends to this supermarket since it offers variety of goods and has attractive environment					
The likely hood to purchase from this supermarket is high since its convenient					
The supermarket setting is very attractive					
I like every aspect of this super market					

PART C: CUSTOMER PREFERENCES

a) Please indicate with a tick (✓) the perception rating that best describes preference for your particular supermarket

Extremely favourable (Positive)	5	4	3	2	1	Extremely unfavourable (Negative)
Attractive						un-attractive
Convenient						inconvenient
Likable						un likable
Competent						incompetent
Courteous						uncourteous
Reliable						un reliable
Fair prices						un fair prices
Modern						out dated
Easy to find items						not easy find items
Fast check out						slow check out
Convenient						un convenient
Wide selection						limited selection
High quality products						low quality products
Has known brands						has un known brands
Dependable						un dependable
High prices						low prices
Advertises						does not advertise
Known to friends						un known to friends

(b) Preference multi attribute factors

To what extent do you agree with the following factors in relation to your preferred super market? Use a scale of 1-5

Where 1- Strongly disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Neutral, 4- Agree, 5- Strongly Agree.

Preference Measures	1	2	3	4	5
<p>Products</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The store has adequate variety of goods ➤ The quality of products is high. ➤ The store has numerous brand ➤ The store is fully stocked. 					
<p>Place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The supermarket is hereby ➤ The supermarket currently located. ➤ Supermarket has good ambience & environment 					
<p>Price</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The prices are low compared and other stores. ➤ Prices are competitive. ➤ Products have value for the money spent. 					
<p>Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The store has informative advertisement. ➤ The store advertisement is appealing. ➤ The store adverts are easy visible. 					

Appendix II: List of large supermarkets in Nairobi, Kenya.

1. Carrefour Supermarket.
2. Food Plus (formerly Chandarana) Supermarket.
3. Tuskys Supermarket.
4. Choppies Supermarket.
5. Naivas Supermarket.

Source: Nairobi County Government Licensing Department (2018).