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## Customer Relationship Management Strategies Embedded in Grocery Shopping: An Observational Study of Grocery Store Customers of Dutse, Nigeria

**Dr. Babandi Ibrahim Gumel**

Alumni, School of Business, California Southern University, Costa Mesa, CA, USA  
Chairman/CEO, Babsa Global Concept Ltd. Dutse, Jigawa State, Nigeria

### **Abstract:**

*There was a general problem of retaining customers and attracting new ones by start-up grocery stores. There is not enough information for managers and owner's groceries stores to develop customer relationship management strategies to retain and attract customers. The participant observations which includes an interview with major actors in the management and transactions of the grocery store provides me with a concise view of the features, actors, activities, and interactions in the store. Using the twelve stages developed by Spradley (1980) of conducting and reporting participants observation, three broad shopping stages which were divided into 28 different sub-units were revealed. Within the three broad shopping stages, management of grocery stores embedded various customer management strategies that made shopping a pleasant experience for their customers. Ten dominant themes emerge as information that can be used by owners and managers of grocery stores to develop customer relationship management strategies that will retain customers and attract new ones. Retaining customers by grocery store will provide word of mouth ads which will attract new customers to the stores.*

**Keywords:** *Ethnography, customer relationship management, grocery shopping, grocery shoppers, CRM, Dutse, Nigeria.*

### **1. Introduction**

The story is the description of the culture exhibited in a selected grocery Stores Dutse, Jigawa State, Nigeria which revealed the culture of grocery customers in the City. The store's name is concealed to protect its identity and provide privacy. The selected Store is a low-priced multiproduct grocery store that opens its doors to the people of Dutse city particularly the inhabitants of the Dutse Central City. Dutse is the state capital of Jigawa state one of the thirty-six states in the West African country, of Nigeria. The story described the social scene called Grocery Stores where a reader can be able to picture the events, features, actors, physical situation, and activities in the store. The selected Grocery Store is a Nigerian multi-products groceries mall with branches in many cities across the country. The Branch of the stores in Dutse is one of the stores spread across the country which is along a busy road in the central business area of Dutse city, the capital of Jigawa state. Dutse is one of the thirty-six states of Nigeria. Modern shopping in Africa continues to get acceptance with the rise in new shopping malls across major cities in Sub-Saharan Africa. A recent study suggested that the Sub-Saharan African market is one of the largest mature shopping centers in the world (Mail & Guardian Africa, 2016). The rise in modern shopping culture in the Sub-Saharan Africa results in more shopping malls across the countries including Nigeria. The various stages used to observe the social situation will be highlighted as the methodology of compiling the project. The methodology includes the numerous visits to the store as participant observer to record the activities, actors, features, and objects and also the steps used to analyze the data recorded to discover the cultural theme and cultural inventory to describe the culture in the store. The story will give a reader an insight on the interactions between customers, and between customers and employees of the store to describe the culture of the store about managing the customer relationship. The story will be in Seven parts:

- 1.1 Location and physical features of the Grocery store
- 1.2 Nature of Employees and Customers of the grocery store
- 1.3 Interactions between customers
- 1.4 Interaction between customers and employees of the store
- 1.5 Shopping stages
- 1.6 Identified customer relationships with the employees of the stores
- 1.7 Problems of the store identified during the research.

Studying the behavior of the grocery store customers helped me identified the connection between the customers and the shopping environment, product displayed, and employees of the store. Identifying the connection between customers and the various components of the grocery store enabled me to understand the strategies employed by the managers of the grocery store to manage their relationship with their customers and retain their loyalty (Kim, 2015).

## 2. Thesis of the Study

The thesis I selected for the observation study was “customer staff relationship strategies in the shopping stages of the grocery Store.” The essence is to identify the customer relationship management strategies managers of a grocery store in Dutse Nigeria employed to retain their customers, and attract new ones.

## 3. Objective of the Study

The general problem for the study was most start-up grocery stores in Dutse Nigeria fail to retain their customers and attract new ones. The problem identified for this study was there is not enough information for managers and owner’s groceries stores to develop customer relationship management strategies to retain and attract customers. The objective of the study is to present customer relationship management strategies that are appealing to the various segments of customers of a shopping store in Dutse, Nigeria. The information presented in the study may be used by shopping mall managers to develop customer relationship management strategies to satisfy their customers and retain them as loyal customers. Loyal customers will create long-term value for their businesses. The identity of the grocery store observed in this study is concealed to ensure the privacy of the store.

## 4. Literature Review

Customers and organizations tend to drive value from each other. A firm always tries to create new customers, maintain existing ones, and establish loyalty of customers to their products or services. The process of establishing a personalized relationship between organizations and customers for mutual benefits of value is what is referred to as customer relationship management (Kumar, 2010). Organizations achieve the personalized relationship through the combination of technology, people, and the process of coordination (Chen & Popovich, 2003). Firms that are customers centric benefits from two values: profitability in the long run and loyalty of customers (Chen & Popovich, 2003). For firms to successfully manage their relationships with customers on an individual basis, the process must be across the whole firms transcending into the various functions of the firm where all employees must be customer focused (Chen & Popovich, 2003). Chen and Popovich concluded that for employees to be customer-centric, a firm must manage its CRM implementation by establishing and synchronized approach to the technology, the process, and the employees.

Shopping malls “are forms of disorganized capitalism, which followed arcades and department stores (and in more complicated ways, world exhibitions, and medieval carnivals), and yet displayed basic differences. Carnivals, world exhibitions, shopping malls and more recently theme parks have been spaces of display and consumption, devoted to pleasure, defined by their difference from workspaces, and everyday life” (Iseri & Yardimci, 2016, p. 1).

Marketing managers use market segmentation to reach out to customers. Customers may be segmented based on age, sex, ethnicity and other demographics. Baby Boomers are much more concerned with the experience they drive during shopping than generation Y (Parment, 2013). Parment stated while generation Y starts purchase by choosing a product, Baby Boomers commence purchase when they get advice on choosing the right product. The Search for the product when a customer visited a shopping store is a critical component of shopping, and customer emotions play an important role when a customer is making an economic decision (Gentina, Butori, Rose, & Bakir, 2014). Gentina et al. (2014) found that the global teen market has developed significantly with a huge purchasing power. Despite the huge impact on teenagers in the global shopping, researchers cannot determine what social motivations do teenagers have, and the cultural differences that exist among teenagers in different countries. Gentina found low power distance and low avoidance of uncertainty among U.S. teenagers, while France teenagers are more independent, high avoidance of uncertainty with a huge power distance. It was also discovered that teenagers shopping in France are influenced by peers (Gentina, Butori, Rose, & Bakir, 2014). Another important grocery shopper’s demographics is the male, females, and couple shoppers. A study indicated a trip metrics differences between male, female, and couple shoppers, and the difference is huge between male and female shoppers (Tariq, D'Souza, & Allaway, 2016).

Many factors influence customer shopping behavior. The customer's distance from home to store, the mode which customer will use to travel to the store for shopping, and customers attitude towards food play a role in influencing the customer shopping behavior (Jiao, Jiao, Vernez, Moudon, & Drownowski, 2016). Infrequent customers of shopping stores usually drive longer distances to do shopping, while frequent shoppers use available transportation mode to reach stores that are closer to their homes (Jiao et al., 2016). There are two segments of consumers who visit grocery stores: major shoppers and fill-in shoppers (Nilsson, Gärling, Marell, & Nordvall, 2014). The mode of shoppers falls within five categories: flexible, dwellers of cities, shopping socially, suburban, and pedestrians (Nilsson et al., 2014). Each of the five categories must either be a major shopper or a fill-in shopper (Nilsson et al., 2014). Similarly, a study found five categories of shoppers: shoppers with economic considerations, shoppers that consider convenience, shoppers that consider promotional prices, social shoppers, and hedonic shoppers (Jayasankaraprasad & Kathyayani, 2014). Among shoppers, those that do not have a car of their own utilizes carsharing to shop for less frequently with few visits to stores where they spend less time in-store shopping (Vine, Adamou, & Polak, 2014). Carsharing shoppers choose to travel to stores with less travel time (Vine et al., 2014).

A study shows the child initiated most of the request for interactions between child and parents during shopping with only 24% of the interactions initiated by parents (Calderon et al., 2017). It was discovered that children and their parents influence each other during shopping in grocery stores, and the involvement of children in shopping particularly at checkout point resulted in spending with purchases outcome (Calderon et al., 2017). A study of grocery shopping behavior of Latinos indicated the physical building structure and socio-cultural consideration in the shopping environment as factors that influence their shopping pattern (Sanchez-Flack et al., 2016).

The issue of price knowledge is important to the grocery shopping behavior of customers where the knowledge of price may either be before, during, or after the shopping experience (Jensen & Grunert, 2014). Most of the reference prices are before store visits, while customers learn about prices whether consciously or otherwise during the shopping (Jensen & Grunert, 2014). The knowledge of prices during grocery visits influences the shopping behavior of customer particularly if it is a promotional price (Jensen & Grunert, 2014).

The literature review revealed good management of relationship of organizations and customers benefit a business by establishing loyal customers and eventual profitability of the business. The review also indicated many factors that influences the behavior of shoppers of grocery stores. The factors include those related to the travel time of customers to the store, the location of the grocery store, the atmospheric condition within the store, and the ability of the employees of a grocery store to interact with the customers and maintain excellent relationship. Good customer relationship management resulted in grocery store loyal customers which might help in the use of word of mouth to attract new customers.

## 5. Methodology of Collecting Data and Analysis

I conducted a qualitative study of the Grocery Store located in Dutse. An ethnographic study was conducted using participant observations following Spradley's (1980) Development Research Sequence.

The taxonomy analysis of the shopping stages was conducted after making a selected observation to fill in the gaps in the smaller units in the domain. The identified taxonomy was simple to enable remembering the domain (Rouse, 2016). The project reached the componential analysis stage, using the eight steps of componential analysis. I organized and presented all the discovered contrasts which revealed all the cultural categories with their attributes (Spradley, 1980). Componential analysis revealed significant aspects of cultures in the grocery store. I used the steps used by Spradley (1980) to discover the cultural themes in the store using the method of writing a summary overview of the cultural scene at the identified Dutse Nigeria Grocery store. The themes identified after the summary enables me to develop the story of cultural components that influence grocery shopping in Dutse Nigeria. The identified cultural theme is specific to Dutse City Nigeria setting.

The cultural themes guided the identification of customer relationship management (CRM) strategies embedded in the shopping stages of the store. The identified CRM strategies will serve as information for owners and managers of grocery stores to develop strategies that will retain and attract customers. Retaining customers will result in loyal customers which might use word of mouth to attract new customers. Repeating customers and starting new one might increase the profitability of the grocery store and maintain its competitiveness.

## 6. Results of the Participant's Observation

At the end of about twenty participant's observation visits of the identified grocery store for this study, I compiled the cultural situation in the store involving customers, the employees of the store and both internal and external environment of the store. Using the twelve stages of participants observation by Spradley (1980), I categorized my observations into the following dominant themes:

### 6.1. Location, Physical Structure, and Internal Environment of the Grocery Store

It was revealed that the store is located along a centrally located street in Dutse city. The location of the store gives customers convenience. Most of the customers of the store reside in nearby housing estates and trek to visit the store which increased their access to their store because of reducing expenses in traveling to the store. The location of the store along a centrally located major road coupled with the availability of free parking space for customers enabled car-owning customers to visit the store often. The identified customer relationship strategies regarding location are two: locating the store close to housing estates and provision of free parking space to customers of the grocery store as a strategy of attracting and retaining grocery customers in Dutse Nigeria. From the adverts of the store, I observed that the managers of the store used the store location as their selling point.

### 6.2. The Building and Its Internal Features

According to Jubinarosa (2016), the Shopping mall is described as space that will give a maximum view of goods displayed. Space should be attractive enough to ignite visitors desire, thus making the space a site for gazing and later a site for shopping (Jubinarosa, 2016). The building structure of the store occupies about half of the store's premises with the other half carefully planned as parking area in front of the building. The color of the building is Brown with red roofing with a red frame to the glass window matching the red roof. Two gates of the store face centrally located Road, the first one at the extreme east side of the store is a pedestrian gate leading directly to the entrance of the building. While the second gate, at approximately the center of the premises with the large double swinging door, always hanged to allow vehicles entry into the parking area. At the extreme west side of a dwarf wall demarcating the parking lot with a space separating it from the building of the store is a gate that leads customers to the entrance of the building. The external environmental features of the store showed that pedestrians access to the store facilitated the movement of customers in and out of the store. It was also observed that the parking space arrangement of the store enabled customers easy and quick access to the store.

Within the premises of the mall, there is a "suya spot," where traditionally made barbeque beef and chicken is offered for sale to customers. The building of the store has two large glass doors; the entry door is marked located in the east, and the exit door is to the west facing the main road leading to the store. Within the store, products are on counters running from north to south with items placed on the counters at either side. The shopping carts are adjacent to the entry door, while the promotional items are displayed just opposite the entry gate to give customers' an excellent view. Customers walk in the store via three routes, two large routes one on

entry running from east to west and the second one located on the northern side of the store, while the third routes are small walkways demarcating the counters. Major counters include those marked as cosmetics and beauty, food and beverages, children and toys, educational items, garments and apparel and electronics products. The check-out area is located close to the exit door by the southern wall of the store with check-out facilities each manned by a check-out cashier dressed in uniform. The internal arrangement of the store is observed to be acceptable to the customers of the store as most customers enjoyed the space and atmospheric condition of the store. A unique air conditioned internal environment is observed which motivate customers to take their time and search for products across the length and breadth of the store. One key strategy identified as a customer relationship management strategy in the internal cultural setting of the store are two: provision of enough movement space, and the conditioning of the space to provide a pleasant shopping experience to the customers. These strategies influence the customers long stay in the store which will enable them to sort out products for possible purchase. The experience makes customers loyal with likely use of word of mouth to convince new customers to visit the store.

### *6.3. Employees of the Store Involved in the Stores Daily Activities*

Like any other groceries Malls, the identified store had a good number of security personnel spread within and outside the store. At the premises entrance of the store, there is security personnel. On entering the building, there is additional security personnel. Another set of security personnel man the shopping areas of the store. Sales attendants are smartly dressed moving around the counters looking for a customer needing their assistance. During the study, I concluded that there are more male check-out cashiers than female cashiers. All the security personnel manning the store were males during the eight observations I conducted for this study. The study shows the culture of Dutse Nigeria about the ratio of male and female employees in groceries stores.

### *6.4. Types and Nature of Customers of the Store*

Mall shopping is increasingly becoming a way of life where people express their values, and shopping malls are becoming a “social and recreation meeting place to attract youngsters and seniors” catalyzing interacting in the suburbs (Michon & Chebat, 2002, p. 884). The patronization of malls by shoppers depends on their values and the manipulation of the atmospheric conditions of the store which is usually embedded in the culture of the customers (Michon & Chebat, 2002). Customers visit the store often, the time when the store is most crowded is between 7:30 p.m. and 9:00 p.m., the store is less crowded between 3:30 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. The store has both male and female customers. Mostly the female customer’ visit the store at the evening hour, between 7 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. Customers of the store are of varying ages from children, teenagers, and adults. Female customers usually wear Hausa traditional dress with Muslim hijab to cover their head. Teenagers that are educated wears a western dress. This indicated how the global youth phenomenon is shaping the culture of youth around the world. Most women usually visit the beauty and cosmetics product category area on entry into the store. Male customers wore Hausa traditional Doguwar Riga with a few either wearing Babbar Riga to match with a cap, either “Zanna Bukar” or “Damanga.” Zanna Bukar and Damanga are the names of the cap that Hausa community uses. All the females I observed use the Muslims hijab to cover their head which runs down to their legs except two wearing local Akara dress, and three teenage girls in western dress. During one of my participant observations sessions, I noticed two girls in their early twenties in a low tone mixing Hausa and English during their conversations. Hausa is the native Language of Dutse Community. There are also three girls, two of them wearing a skirt and shirt, while the third one was wearing a tight blue Jeans with a short sleeve blouse to match. A closer look at the three females in western dress confirm to me that the girls are not Hausa by a local tribe, they are part of the minority tribe of Nigeria residing in Dutse. I cannot confirm their tribe as I heard them discussing the price of items in English which is the official language of Nigeria. I assumed that the three girls in western dresses are not from one tribe but rather from different tribes where they can only communicate in official language rather than their local languages. The use of major local language by most of the shopping assistants of the store facilitated the cordial relationship I observed between customers and shopping store staff. Most male customers conduct their shopping activity fast, while females took time than male customers to choose products and check-out. Most of the shopping assistants concentrate on assisting female shoppers during shopping than male shoppers. Some customers also visit the store in groups, sometimes all males group, at times all females group and usually teenagers. There are instances I observed couples shopping together in the store. Mostly, female shoppers are either in groups or accompanied by children.

### *6.5. Customers Interactions in The Store*

The interaction between customers shopping in the store was minimal. Their instances where children accompanying parents interact to influence their parent’s shopping behavior. There is interaction in the store in such situation where customers that have prior knowledge of each other interact when they meet in the stores particularly among women and children shoppers. Customers that visit the store in groups do interact among themselves. Female groups discuss issues at a lower voice than male group shoppers. The interaction of customers with employees is usually in all the three broad shopping stages usually providing shopping assistance to customers.

### *6.6. Shopping Stages in Grocery Store*

#### 6.6.1. Point of Entry Activities

The shopping starts from entering the store and ends when a customer exits the store premises. On entry, customers are faced with two activities: the monitoring of displayed promotional items and the selection of shopping cart. Customers usually stand for between one to ten minutes to watch the displayed promotional items facing the entry door. Customers then faced the challenge of selection of

shopping cart from the three different sizes displayed at the grocery store entry gate. When a customer selects the shopping cart, the point of entry procedure is complete. Female customers usually end up selecting the trolley cart because of its ease of handling of products. Male customers usually select from the shopping carts based on the size of their shopping in the store. The employees of the store usually help customers with sorting out of the shopping cart they desire to use in the store.

#### 6.6.2. Selection of Groceries

Selection of Groceries is the next most challenging and important stage of shopping in the store. When a customer selected a shopping cart, the next thing is to select the route leading to the product category based on the shopping list, where some customers have written shopping list while other customers have the list in their mind. Three things happen at this stage: some customers that frequent visiting the store do not have a problem selecting a route, customers that are mostly new to the store either are offered help by sales assistants or customer ask sales assistants for help at strategic places in the store. When a customer selects a route, it leads the customer to one of the products category areas of the store. The customer uses the spaces between counters to move across and locate the products they desire to purchase. Customers select the product and place it in the shopping cart and move to the next product selection. After the customer completed the selection of the products desired for purchase and placed them in the shopping cart, the shopper moves to the checkout area of the grocery store. Customers are assisted by sales assistants to move trolley carts to the check-out area. The security personnel were moving around the store observing the activities in the store.

#### 6.6.3. Check-out Procedures

When customers completed their selection of groceries, they move with the cart to the check-out area and join the line where they waited for their turn to be attended by the check-out personnel. As earlier indicated, the store has check-out counters manned by check-out cashiers. Each of the check-out counters has a computerized check-out facility where barcode check-out scanners were used to identify products and load the price on to the check-out system for billing. Customers wait in line for a minimum of three minutes and a maximum of six minutes depending on the time of the visit by a customer to the store. An early evening and morning visits to the store will result in less wait time in the check-out line of between two to three minutes. The check-out process is so past as the facilities are so good when billing a customer. During one of my visits to the store, I noticed a situation where the check-out facilities were faulty, the staff quickly acknowledged the fault and moved the customers waiting for check-out from the facility to another line that was short. The check-out lines are usually even due to the past nature of the check-out process; customers do not usually have the dilemma of selecting a shorter line.

The check-out cashier helps customers to upload the products from the shopping cart to the check-out counter. The cashier uses the barcode scanner to load the price into the check-out system. The customer can then choose to pay the bill electronically with a credit or debit card or pay cash for the bill. The check-out cashier loads the products into a nylon bag or nylon bags that will accommodate the products purchased by a customer. The process continues for all the customers that visit the store for purchases. One of the many sales attendants located behind the check-out cashiers helps the customers to carry the load of products purchased and escort them to exit the store. During my visits, I noticed that the sales assistants that waited behind the cashiers usually escorted the customers up to the parking lot. The checkout process of the store shows the commitment of the managers of the store to provide shopping support to customers. This will increase the loyalty of customers to the store.

#### *6.7. Identified Customer Relationships with the Staff of the Stores*

The employees of the Dutse grocery store are cordial and are trained to help customers to have pleasant shopping experiences while in the store. An interview I conducted during my final observations visit for this project revealed to me how the customers enjoyed the freshness, air conditioning, and cleanliness in the store during shopping. At any shopping stage, the sales assistants are located to provide the necessary assistance to customers. When a customer enters the store, sales assistants help customers to sort out the desired shopping cart and direct them to the category area of desired shopping products. Secondly, the employees of the store are always available to help customers when they either requested help, or when they feel they need help in the following activities in the store: locating the right route in the store, locating a product category area, locating a product that customers were not able to locate, help customers with their load including their needs for additional shopping cart, to move their loaded shopping cart to the check-out area, help customers to upload products from shopping cart, and to movement of purchased products out of the store. The smartly dressed security personnel located across the store do not interfere with the shopping activities in the store rather are being vigilant to secure the products from theft.

The customers of the store seem to be repeat customers that visit the store regularly with few exceptions I noticed where customers are new and require employee's help at every stage of their shopping. Most of the females that visit the store appreciated the service rendered by the sales assistants more than males, where more help to the female customers at most of the shopping stages.

#### *6.8. Customers' Interactions in the Store*

The gossips and conversations in the store are usually among group customers usually on product selection and prices of products. Most of the conversations are among female group customers. Most female customers visit cosmetics and beauty, and the children and toy product category areas, while men visit the food and beverage area and the garments area. Young customers visit the children and toy area; and the educational material area. Conversations in the store are mostly in the local native language of Hausa being the predominant language of Dutse city. Indicating the need for staff speaking the local language in the store. The minority tribe visits the store to make purchases, some of them have assimilated to the Dutse city culture to the level of communicating in the local Hausa

language, while a few communicate in English. Customers do interact with other customers in the store apart from the group customers that visit the store. Most customers that interact are familiar with each other before they met in the store.

## 7. Findings and Discussions of Findings

Based on the report of the participant's observation I conducted, I used thematic analysis and identified ten strategies used by the managers of the grocery store to manage their relationship with their customers and retain their loyalty. The information identified can be used by grocery store owners and managers to develop customer relationship management strategies that will retain customer loyalty and attract new customers. The identified information is as follows:

7.1 The grocery store is located close to most of the shoppers where most of the customers trek to the store to make purchases. This culture serves as a strategy of providing proximity to shoppers by reducing cost and time of travel to the store for the customers. This finding aligned with the findings of Vine et al. (2014) which stated among shoppers, those that do not have a car of their own utilizes car sharing to shop with few visits to stores where they spend less time in-store shopping. Car sharing shoppers choose to travel to stores with less travel time (Vine et al., 2014).

7.2 The physical building structure of the grocery store is attractive to the shoppers with adequate internal space to allow movement within the shopping areas. The space provided for pedestrians to move within the premises with access to the store influences their desire to visit the store. It aligned with a study of grocery shopping behavior of Latinos which indicated the physical building structure and socio-cultural consideration in the shopping environment as factors that influences their shopping pattern (Sanchez-Flack et al., 2016). Therefore, grocery store managers should consider providing an attractive physical building structure as a strategy of influencing the behavior of shoppers in favor of the store.

7.3 The arrangements of products according to categories of products allow customers easy identification of their desired products. Easy identification of products in the store will influence repeat visits by customers. Repeat visits will make customers loyal to the grocery store.

7.4 The provision of air-conditioning in the store enabled customers to relax and take their time during shopping. Provision of conducive internal environment influences customers of the grocery store to explore products offered by the store. Favorable internal atmospheric conditions are necessary for customers to have a pleasant shopping experience and induce repeat shopping in the store. Jensen and Grunert (2014) found the knowledge of prices during shopping influences the behavior of shoppers. Therefore, managers of grocery must provide a conducive internal environment that will influence customers to explore more products during their shopping visits so as have knowledge of the products prices which might end in a purchase.

7.5 The Pleasant shopping experience in the grocery store makes customers loyal thereby enjoying their word of mouth in attracting new customers to the grocery store.

7.6 It was discovered that most of the customers of the store visit the store in the evening hours, and all demographics living in the city visit the store. It was also discovered that customers of the grocery store are mostly Hausa by the tribe and enjoy transaction in the local language of Hausa in the store. New grocery stores most embrace the employment of workers speaking the local language in the city. This finding aligned with that of Chen and Popovich (2003) which found for firms to manage their relationships with customers on individual basis successfully, the process must be across the whole firms transcending into the various functions of the firm where all employees must be customer focused.

7.7 It was also found that customers of the store recognize the use of their traditional dresses when visiting the grocery store. Managers of grocery stores in this kind of community must embrace the use of traditional dress by their workers to impress the customers that visit the store.

7.8 There were limited interactions between the customers and staff of the grocery store. There is a need for increased interaction between employees and customers to increase familiarity.

7.9 Display of promotional items at the entry of the store introduces new products to the customers and inform customers about sales with reducing prices. This practice helps the grocery store influence customers to make a purchase.

7.10 The sales assistants of the grocery store were friendly and supported shoppers throughout their visits with special attention mostly paid to children and women. Sales assistants were helpful in maintaining the good customer relationship enjoyed by the management of the store. Interactions are important to influencing customer purchases. The involvement of children in shopping particularly at checkout point resulted in spending with purchases outcome (Calderon et al., 2017). This shows how important managers of the grocery store should develop strategies that will increase the interactions between employees and customers in the store.

## 8. Recommendations

The findings of this study will be shared with similar groceries that are facing the challenges of customer relationship and cultural conflicts to develop strategies that will move the business forward. The findings can be used by new ventures entering into the groceries market in similar cities like Dutse Nigeria.

I recommend a similar study covering all the groceries stores in Dutse to unveil the different cultural considerations of the managers of the stores to enable developing the best options available in Dutse Nigeria. I also recommend similar research in new Cities to enable generalization of the findings.

## 9. Conclusion

The selected store in Dutse is among the National chain of groceries stores in Nigeria. Dutse is a city located in the northwestern part of Nigeria and is the capital of Jigawa State, one of the 36 States in Nigeria. Most of the inhabitants of Dutse city are Hausa/Fulani,

one of the three major ethnic groups in the country. Modern shopping continued to be part of the city, with customers trooping into the store in numbers. Both female and male inhabitants patronize grocery shopping in the city.

The customer relationship management strategies in the shopping stages of the store, the cleanliness, freshness, and air-conditioning in the store provides the customers with a pleasant shopping environment. The customers' traditions and religion are prevalent in the way they shop and interact in the store, most importantly their mode of dressing and conversations. Customers of the store usually communicate in the local language of the city (Hausa). The store remains a key source of groceries in the city, and management of the store continues to provide the customers with better customer service throughout the shopping stages. The identified grocery store is a modern store that embedded traditions and religion into the shopping process where customers enjoy the blend of tradition and modernity.

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