# Store Layout Strategy and Customer Expansion of Upscale Dining Restaurants in Port Harcourt

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between store layout strategy and customer expansion of upscale dining restaurants in Port Harcourt. The dimensions of store layout strategy are product mapping and customer flow while the measures of customer expansion are upselling and cross selling. The study focused in Port Harcourt metropolis which comprises of two major local governments, Obio/Akpor and Port Harcourt city. The population for this study consists of the ten restaurants that are registered with the Association of fast food and confectionaries of Nigeria (AFCON) and the Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (PHCCIMA) Rivers State Branch. The study adopted the ten registered restaurants since is small as its sample size. The simple random technique was utilized to arrive at five sample elements each of the ten registered functional upscale dining restaurants operating within Port Harcourt and Obio/Akpor local government Areas making fifty respondents for the study. Fifty copies of questionnaire were distributed. 36 which represent 72% of the distributed questionnaire were retrieved and used for the analysis. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's rank-order correlation with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences for Windows version 20. The finding of the study showed that the relationship between product mapping and the measures of upselling and cross selling was (r) = 0.975 while that of cross selling was r = 0.962. It shows that store layout strategy dimensions relate with customer expansion. The study concluded that there is a relationship between store layout strategy and customer expansion. The study recommended that upscale dining restaurants should make sure customer get product they want at ease and, they should create good relationship with their customers to make customer happy. This approach will foster effective and efficient relationship and understanding as they will be using that means to explain more about the products to the customers and give them the reason and satisfaction they will derive from the product. Also, Restaurants should strive to design store layouts strategy that entice customers to move throughout the restaurant and buy more than they expected. This activity will improve store performance, influence consumer impressions of service providers, and assist customers in categorizing service businesses.

**Keywords:** Store Layout Strategy, Customer Expansion, Upscale Dining Restaurants, Store Layout Strategy, Product Mapping, Customer Flow, Upselling, Cross Selling.

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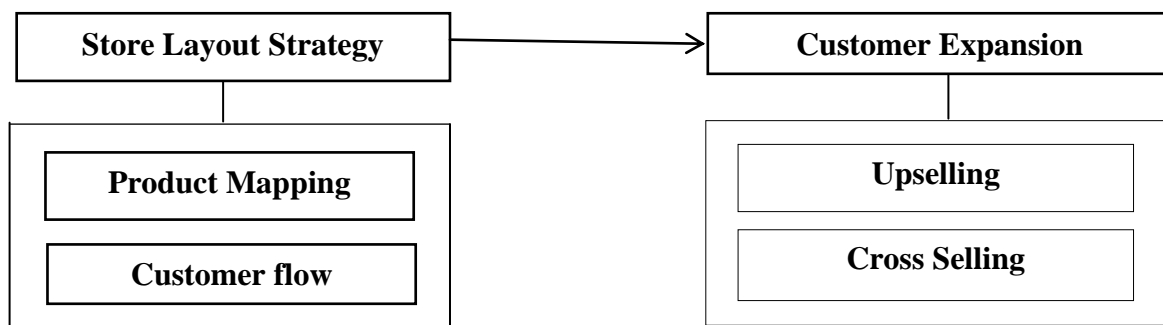
## Introduction

Store layout strategy is an important factor affecting consumer behaviour and a critical determinant towards the creation of store layout and image of the restaurant. When an inconsistency occurs, some consumers will abandon that establishment in search of another one which offers fast, convenient and better services (Andersen, 2005). Taking a more strategic approach to store layout can reap big rewards by boosting sales, increasing customer loyalty and ultimately increasing turnover thereby increase customers (Clark, 2003). While considerable attention has focused on store layout in relation to brick and mortar retailing, the layout of a restaurant can significantly impact on the overall performance through its influence on information processing, purchase intentions and attitude towards the establishment. Store layout strategy can result in greater consumer elaboration and more positive consumer outcomes (Griffith, 2005). The restaurant environment is changing more than ever before due to customer ways of experienced with developed countries. It is characterized by intensifying competition and more sophisticated and demanding customers who have greater expectations related to their consumption experiences. A well layout restaurant experience involves more than a no restaurant services experience in terms of customers negotiating their way through a store floor, finding the meal they want, interacting with several employees along the way, all of which influence customers" evaluations of service quality (Dabholkar, 1993; Pal, & Byrom, 2003).

Being aware of the competition in this industry, the restaurant business owners must maintain the competitive advantage they have, that is a distinguishing factor from competitors (Azuma, & Fernie, 2001). One of ways to achieve the competitive advantage is through differentiation. It is conducted by giving a pleasant eating experience in order to encourage the transaction or purchase decision (Schmidt, & Hollensen, 2006). The eating experience is a strategy of differentiation conducted by various approaches; either through the services, personals, layout patter, appearance of the restaurant or images. The differentiation through the image approach is an approach related to the physical space design of a restaurant (Kotler & Keller, 2009). The store layout can influence how long the customers stay in the restaurant and how many products can be seen through the visual contact and route by which customers have to experience. The store layout also can be a strategy of differentiation which gives more shopping experiences to the customers (Berman & Evan, 2007). Besides, the interior displays also give the eating experience to the customers. A good interior display can significantly have an influence against the customers to do a purchase or not. Even if the quality of a product (Meal) is not equivalent to the competitor, a good and complete interior display can influence the customers to do the purchase (Turley dan Milliman, 2000).

According to Berman and Evan (2007), Brown, and Lam, (2008) an interior display provides all information to the customers that can give an additional value for the store atmosphere and it also provides a very important promotion role in a store. The interior displays consist of assortment displays, theme-setting displays, ensemble displays, rack and cases, cut cases, poster signs and cards. All these attract customer to continue to patronize the restaurant. Restaurants depend on the proper management whose education and training system is becoming increasingly important in order to meet the wants, needs and guest expectations, and thus ensure their satisfaction. Despite the importance of food service quality, managers know relatively little about how the combined effects of restaurant service quality (physical environment, food, and service elicit restaurant image, guest perceived value, and satisfaction, which in turn, affect guest behaviour. Restaurant guests decide upon the quality standards which are fulfilled managers who do not recognize this will experience decrease in volume of business and their clients will go to competitors. Customer expectations are very important because, in case they are not met, guests will leave the

premises quietly or spread negative rumors about the restaurant. With this in mind, it may be concluded that satisfaction is created by delivering additional values (Berman & Evan 2007).

According to Vrechopoulos (2004), well-designed layouts are extremely important because they strongly influence in-store traffic patterns, shopping atmosphere, shopping behaviour, and operational efficiency. The questions that these arguments provoke for the present study are whether restaurant recognize store layout as a strategy and whether they actually incorporate store layout as strategic management/marketing and acknowledge that it can increase their customers or entice customers as they visit their restaurant to eat. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between store layout strategy and customer expansion in upscale dining restaurant in Port Harcourt.

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│  Store Layout Strategy  │─────────────▶│   Customer Expansion    │
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│   ┌─────────────────┐   │              │   ┌─────────────────┐   │
│   │ Product Mapping │   │              │   │    Upselling    │   │
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│   │  Customer flow  │   │              │   │  Cross Selling  │   │
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**Source: Desk Research, 2023.**

Thus, the following research question guided this study:

1. Is there any significant relationship between product mapping and customer expansion in upscale dining restaurant in Port Harcourt?

2. Is there any significant relationship between customer flow and customer expansion in upscale dining restaurant in Port Harcourt?

**Literature**

**Concept of Store Layout Strategy**

Store layout strategy is the ease of user movement through the store to provide maximum exposure of goods and attractive display. This includes doors, merchandise placement, shelf orientation, music, check-out counters, interior decorating, staff attitude, lighting and location of the loading facilities. Store layout strategy serves as the foundation for retail operations. Retailers utilize store layout strategy to guide customers through the store and improve sales (Levy & Weitz, 2012). Retail store layout strategy designing is a difficult task. The overarching goal is to maximize sales while maintaining customer satisfaction and minimizing overall costs. Many elements influence store layout strategy planning, including customer arrival patterns, building design, desired service level, merchandise mix, adjacency requirements, and many more (Singh, 2014). The layout of a store has been found to have a major impact on consumer behaviour in both traditional and online settings (Krasonikolakis, 2018), and it has the ability to enhance shopper traffic, average transaction values, profitability, and optimize consumers' shopping experiences to boost revenue and profitability (Hwangbo, 2017).

Vrechopoulos, (2004) also discovered that store layout strategy is a major predictor in the construction of the retail image. The importance of well-designed layouts cannot be overstated

because they have a significant impact on in-store traffic patterns, shopping atmosphere, shopping behaviour, and operational efficiency. Restaurants should strive to design store layouts strategy that entice customers to move throughout the restaurant and buy more than they expected (Levy & Weitz, 2007). This activity will improve store performance, influence consumer impressions of service providers, and assist customers in categorizing service businesses (Baker, 2002). The work of Tlapana (2021) provides the foundation for much of our understanding of store layout strategy. In a series of studies, he identified two primary strategies as store layouts strategy which involves product mapping and customer flow.

## Product Mapping

Product mapping is a process of designing product with the needs of target consumers in mind and to be easy to use or trace. Products are designed and manufactured with the needs of target consumer's in mind. The very purpose of design is to take a set of needs and to transform it into full instruction for customer easy use and identification of a product (Eder, 1995). When customers buy products, they expect them to function well, to meet their needs, and be easy to use. Many commonly used products, however, are difficult and confusing to use and lead to user frustration (Nussbaum & Neff, 1991). Despite the best efforts of everyone involved, the mapping process often leads to products that fail to meet the expectations of customers (Bailetti & Litva, 1995). It is no longer sufficient for firms to deliver products that have technical excellence. Products must also be easy to use and fit in with the work practices, activities and context of the consumer (Bevan, 1999).

Rosenman and Gero (1998) pointed to the fact that humans exist in the natural physical environment and operate in a socio-cultural environment of their own conception. The socio-cultural environment together with the physical environment shapes the needs, goals and expectations of people. Products are created to satisfy human needs. The creation and introduction of user-friendly products that meet the needs of intended users require mapping or designers and manufacturers to understand that a user's experience with the product in use is an outcome of interacting elements from the natural, socio-cultural and techno-physical environments. However, the predictions mapping makes about the product's usage and performance do not always match the expectations of the user and actual usage of the product. Such mismatches between the mapping' predictions and actual, the relation of products to users has become a central theme of mapping product in restaurant (Margolin, 1997; Hanet, 2000). The emphasis on user-centered mapping can be considered a logical extension of the quality movement, as users begin to consider ease-of-use as being central to product quality. Manufacturers are beginning to see this as a new competitive space and are increasingly incorporating human factors throughout the mapping process. When features are designed into a product, careful consideration must be given to the vital aspect of product usability and to its implications for customer satisfaction, delight and retention.

## Customer Flow

Customer flow is effectively guiding and overseeing the customer's movement through the shopping experience. Customer Flow helps companies or restaurant adopt a consumer-centric perspective and begins when a customer makes an appointment for a visit or enters a restaurant, bank, hospital or a public sector service center. It stresses the importance of planning and monitoring the customer's entire visit, possibly also capturing data and information at each point of contact with a member of staff or self-service point. Furthermore, it can link all the service points together, helping managers understand the dynamics of the customer's visit and ultimately their experience. In short, customer flow can link the vast amount of customer information in customer

databases to the real-time activities targeting and influencing the customers present in the service provider's premises. In the short-term it can increase sales and productivity by up to 30% and decrease costs by up to 30% by ensuring that the right customer is at the right place, at the right time and is serviced by the most appropriate staff member. It also increases customer and staff satisfaction by reducing the actual as well as the perceived waiting time and creating a relaxed environment characterized by a controlled and fair waiting process. It can also generate data and insights to drive ongoing business improvements with a mid-to long-term perspective.

Today there is a well-developed understanding about how customer flow can be monitored and managed as well as technological solutions developed to support this. Hence, just like the production-oriented companies who started to manage the flow of material and products 20-30 years ago, it is possible for service providers today to start managing the flow of customers to a far greater extent than is currently common practice. And the reward for those who do is as obvious as desirable they gain a competitive advantage (Tlapana, 2021).

### Concept of Customer Expansion

With the increasingly evolving competitive environment, understanding and managing customer expansion is fundamental to fuel growth (Du & Mitra, 2021). Companies are increasing their investment in customer expansion in an exponential manner, with the expectations that these investments will promote relationship growth, which ultimately provide positive financial returns or profit. Indeed, as emphasized by Forbes (2020), by 2027, global investment in customer relationship is expected to reach $114.4 billion, in effort to expand the relationship with the existing customers. Equally, how to effectively sustain profitable customer expansion has been featured as one of the top research priorities by MSI (2020-2022) while the importance of expanding the established relationships to successfully enhance customer value is well acknowledged (Shamsollah & Kachouie, 2020). There is significant ambiguity surrounding this topic, since many times empirical practice ends with unprofitable financial returns (Du, 2021) due to various reasons. One fundamental reason is that, capturing customer expansion process is a significant challenge task for firms (Dant, 2016), requiring firms to take into account numerous types of customer expansion strategies.

Customer expansion simply means the growth of customers by the firm. Prior research, however, tends to consider on a single type either choices toward cross-selling or upselling offerings (Bolton, & Verhoef, 2008), thereby resulting in a fragmented view on this topic (Zhang, 2016). More complicated is, to accurately uncover such process, firms are required to consider the impact of attitudinal measures in a long-time range (Luo & Kumar, 2013; Urmetzer, & Neely, 2019), in particular the role of customer expansion, and most importantly of their different measures. Customer expansion has been increasingly considered as a means of increasing sale growth and profit. Kwiatkowska (2018) stated that to measure the effectiveness of customer expansion restaurants that adopt these two strategies of upselling and cross selling will expand their customers.

### Upselling

As per the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) defines upselling in the context of telemarketing as "soliciting the purchase of goods or services following an initial transaction during a single telephone call," the same thing was explained by (Kwiatkowska, 2018) and (Sharma & Sharma, 2015) who defined Upselling as a technique offering the customer an opportunity to purchase additional product after the recent purchase for a better experience. Upselling is also seen as a

reversal of decision from original to superior service option in many industries as pointed out by (Wibke, 2017).

Singer (2015) stressed upon that up-selling is the promotion of a higher-level product or service than the one the customer is thinking of buying. On similar ground, Stephan Schiffman defines up-selling as what happens when you take the initiative to ask someone who already has purchased something you offer to purchase more of it or more of something else. Superior option suggests moving up the ladder as (Kubiak, & Powel, 2010) mentioned up-selling means moving "up" to a more expensive product or Service. Many researchers have also stressed an importance of sales persons' role in upselling like, (Shen, 2015) defined upselling as strategy wherein the seller makes special efforts and induces the customer to buy an upgradable version, new meal or an expensive additional item aiming to make a profitable deal for the firm. Profitability aspect was addressed by (Shen, 2015) as well as it can lead to customer expansion and high profit margin. But he also gave an indication that upselling is negatively correlated with customer satisfaction. Because many times allegations have been made that upselling is nothing but inflating the price with a new extension as cited by (Steele, 2013).

**Cross Selling**

Cross-selling involves the sales of additional items related (or sometimes unrelated) to a previously purchased item. As tools for personal selling, cross selling required perception and intervention by the salesperson to suggest the meal that matched the drink chosen by the customer, or the lamp that complemented the sofa. In traditional retailing, the bank clerk would look at the customer's record while fishing a transaction and immediately suggest another service that suited her needs. Similarly, a gas-station attendant would offer to check the tires, oil and windshield wipers, and create opportunities to cross-sell services that met the driver's needs at that moment. Unfortunately, many services transaction are now mediated by information technology, eliminating direct human communication, thereby reducing the opportunities of cross-selling as practiced in the past. For this reason, cross-selling had to evolve by complementing human intuition and reasoning with information technology. Rather than relying on a sales or services representative to decide whether to cross-sell and which item to offer, modern cross-selling utilizes analytical tools to study the customer's past behavior, correlate this information with similar customers, and then identify potential cross-selling opportunities at each contact with the customer. Because modern cross-selling is not necessarily done in a context with frequent person-to-person interactions, it has to be more event and value-driven than the more persuasive cross-selling of the past.

This information advantage, added with the higher costs of switching, produces a virtual local monopoly for the firm, which is then better able to compete for its customers than other firms that do not have an established relationship or access to the same information about their needs and preferences. Many customer-focused enterprises are taking advantage of cross-selling as a tool for customer expansion. While implementing these cross-selling strategies, firms realized that cross-selling is more effective in inbound than outbound customer contacts. In other words, it is better to cross-sell when the customer calls the firm than to call the customer for the purpose of cross-selling.

**Methodology**

This study adopted the survey method. The study focused in Port Harcourt metropolis which comprises of two major local governments, Obio/Akpor and Port Harcourt city. The population for this study consists of the ten restaurants that are registered with the Association of fast food and confectionaries of Nigeria (AFCON) and the Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and

Agriculture (PHCCIMA) Rivers State Branch. The study adopted the ten registered restaurants since is small as its sample size. The simple random technique was utilized to arrive at five sample elements each of the ten registered functional upscale dining restaurants operating within Port Harcourt and Obio/Akpor local government Areas making fifty respondents for the study. Fifty copies of questionnaire were distributed. 36 which represent 72% of the distributed questionnaire were retrieved and used for the analysis. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's rank-order correlation with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences for Windows version 20.

**Analysis**

**Correlations Analysis between Product Mapping and Upselling**

Table 1: Correlations Analysis showing the relationship between product mapping and upselling

| Correlations | | | Product Mapping | Upselling |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Product Mapping | | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | .975 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | 000 | |
| Spearman's rho | | N | 36 | 36 |
| Upselling | | Correlation Coefficient | .975 | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | | N | 36 | 36 |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.07 level (2-tailed).
**Source**: Field Survey, 2023

Table 1 revealed the Spearman's correlation coefficient (r) = 0.975. This value is high, which indicate that a strong relationship exists between product mapping and upselling in upscale dining restaurant in Port Harcourt.

**Correlations Analysis between Product Mapping and Cross Selling**

Table 2: Correlations analysis showing the relationship between product mapping and cross selling

| Correlations | | | Product Mapping | Cross Selling |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Product Mapping | | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | .962 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | 000 | |
| Spearman's rho | | N | 36 | 36 |
| Cross Selling | | Correlation Coefficient | .9621.000 | |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | | N | 36 | 36 |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.07 level (2-tailed).
**Source**: Field Survey, 2023

Table 2 shows the Spearman's correlation coefficient (r) = 0.962. This value is high, which indicate that a strong relationship exists between product mapping and cross selling in upscale dining restaurant in Port Harcourt.

**Correlations Analysis between Customer flow and Upselling**

**Table 3: Correlations analysis showing the relationship between customer flow and upselling**

| Correlations | | | Customer Flow | Upselling |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Product Mapping | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | .975 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | 000 |
| Spearman's rho | | N | 36 | 36 |
| | Upselling | Correlation Coefficient | .975 | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | |
| | | N | 36 | 36 |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.07 level (2-tailed).
**Source**: field survey, 2023

Table 3 shows the Spearman's correlation coefficient (r) = 0.975. This value is high, which indicate that a strong relationship exists between customer flow and upselling in upscale dining restaurant in Port Harcourt.

**Table 4: Correlations Analysis showing the relationship between customer flow and cross selling**

| Correlations | | | Product Mapping | Cross Selling |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Product Mapping | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | .944 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | 000 |
| Spearman's rho | | N | 36 | 36 |
| | Cross Selling | Correlation Coefficient | .9441 | .000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | . |
| | | N | 36 | 36 |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.07 level (2-tailed).
Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 4 shows the Spearman's correlation coefficient (r) = 0.944. This value is high, which indicate that a strong relationship exists between customer flow and cross selling in upscale dining restaurant in Port Harcourt.

## Discussion of Findings

### Product Mapping and Customer Expansion

There is no significant relationship between product mapping and customer expansion was tested using Spearman's rank order correlation coefficient with a significant level of 0.05. Customer expansion was measured to be upselling and cross selling. The analysis in Table 1 and 2 indicated a very strong and positive relationship existed between them. That is, product mapping relates with customer expansion which contradicts the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between product mapping and cross selling. The above finding is in line with Khairani Ratnasari Siregar (2013) study. Khairani Ratnasari Siregar (2013) carried out a study on the effect of Store

Layout and Interior Displays against a Purchase Decision. The study showed that the percentage of KFC Bandung customer's responses related to store layout is 79.1%, which is included into a high category. Thus, there is an influence between store layouts strategy against the purchase decision.

Furthermore, Berman and Evans (2007) corroborate this study finding. They studied store layout strategy and purchase decision. He opined that a good store layout strategy should divide the floor with the allocation of floor space, the classification given by the store, the determination of traffic flow, the determination of space needs, the mapping of location in a store, and the arrangement of individual product. The study of Clark (2003) also corroborates this study finding. According to him taking a more strategic approach to store layout strategy can reap big rewards by boosting sales, and ultimately increasing turnover thereby increase their customers. Furthermore, Levy and Weitz (2007) study affirms this study finding that a good product mapping should entice customers to move around the store to purchase more merchandise than they may have not planned originally

## Customer Flow and Customer Expansion

There is no significant relationship between customer flow and customer expansion was tested using Spearman's rank order correlation coefficient with a significant level of 0.05. Customer expansion was measured as upselling and cross selling. Table 3 and 4 indicated a very strong and positive relationship between customer flow and the measures of customer expansion. The finding above relates with the finding of Tlapana (2009), who carried out a study on Store Layout Strategy and its impact on Satisfaction at Convenience Stores in Kwa Mashu. Stores layout dimension of customer flow can also improve the communication of their values by memorable window displays, strong departments using better point of sale (POS), personal touches and relationship with customers to encourage customer loyalty (Cowles, 2002). Consumers anticipate that the above satisfaction should be seen in the restaurant which leads to experience of shopping pleasure, as this will create customer expansion (Wagner, 2007).

Onuoha and Nnenanya, (2017) studied also affirms this study finding. They studied Store Layout Strategy and Customer Loyalty of Supermarkets in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. 400 respondents were selected from ten supermarkets in Port Harcourt. The outcome of the study revealed that there is positive relationship between each of the dimensions of store layout strategy and customer loyalty. The research conducted by Noviawaty and Yuliandi (2014) argues that an interior display is very crucial for the situation of the store due to it provides clear information to the customers.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the finding of this study, the study concluded that there is a relationship between store layout strategy and customer expansion. On the basis of this, the study recommended that upscale dining restaurants should make sure customer get product they want at ease and, they should create good relationship with their customers to make customer happy. This approach will foster effective and efficient relationship and understanding as they will be using that means to explain more about the products to the customers and give them the reason and satisfaction they will derive from the product. Also, Restaurants should strive to design store layouts strategy that entice customers to move throughout the restaurant and buy more than they expected. This activity will improve store performance, influence consumer impressions of service providers, and assist customers in categorizing service businesses.

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