

Usage Occasions on Customer Patronage among Fashion Firms in Port Harcourt

¹Chukwu Godswill Chinedu, ²Newman Godswill Evans & ³Ikalama Awongo
Theophilus

^{1,2,3}Department of Marketing, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education,
Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt

Corresponding Email: godswill.chukwu@iaue.edu.ng

<https://doi.org/10.57233/gijmss.v7i3.05>

Abstract

This study empirically investigated the relationship between usage occasions on customer patronage among fashion firms in Port Harcourt. Specifically, the study sought to study how usage time and purchase frequency relates to customer satisfaction and customer loyalty of fashion firms in Port Harcourt. Customers of fashion companies in Port Harcourt made up the study's population, and a descriptive research approach was used. A sample size of 384 clients was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan table; nevertheless, 350 respondents were included in the research, which were chosen via a structured questionnaire from a large community. Data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation to test the hypotheses. The findings reveal that usage time and purchase frequency which was proxies of usage occasions segmentation positively relate with both customer satisfaction and loyalty. These results emphasize the significant role that these factors play in driving customer patronage. The study therefore concluded that usage time and purchase frequency, as well as demographic factors of age, sex and marital status are pivotal factors influencing customer satisfaction and loyalty within fashion firms in Port Harcourt. It was therefore recommended amongst others that fashion firms should focus on improving service delivery times, including faster processing of orders and quicker response to customer inquiries. This will enhance customer satisfaction and contribute to positive experiences that could drive repeat business.

Keywords: Usage Occasions, Customer Patronage; Time; Frequency; Customer Satisfaction; Customer Loyalty

1. Introduction

In recent years, the fashion industry has witnessed a significant shift in consumer behavior, driven by changing preferences and evolving market dynamics. Usage occasion segmentation, a strategy where businesses categorize consumers based on the specific occasions or events for which they purchase fashion items, has emerged as an important tool for enhancing customer engagement and increasing patronage. This segmentation allows fashion firms to tailor their offerings to meet the unique demands of customers at different times, whether for casual wear,

formal events, or seasonal trends (Nguyen & Lee, 2023). The ability to match products to the specific needs of customers during these occasions has proven to be a competitive advantage, as it creates more personalized shopping experiences and fosters deeper connections with consumers (Choudhary & Pandey, 2024).

Despite the growing recognition of usage occasion segmentation, many fashion firms in Port Harcourt have yet to fully adopt or effectively implement this strategy to drive customer patronage. Port Harcourt, a bustling commercial hub, hosts a diverse and fashion-conscious population with varying preferences depending on social, professional, and personal engagements. However, a significant gap exists in understanding how segmentation based on usage occasions influences customer loyalty and the frequency of purchases in this region. While some firms have achieved success in attracting a broad customer base, many struggle with maintaining long-term customer relationships and repeat patronage (Ibe & Williams, 2023). This challenge presents an opportunity to explore how usage occasion segmentation can be better leveraged to enhance customer retention and drive sustained patronage in the fashion industry.

Fashion firms in Port Harcourt face a growing challenge in retaining and expanding their customer base amidst an increasingly competitive market. One of the primary issues is the lack of targeted marketing strategies that cater to the specific needs of customers for different usage occasions, such as weddings, corporate events, and casual outings. Many fashion businesses in the region still adopt a one-size-fits-all approach, which often leads to missed opportunities in attracting and retaining customers who seek personalized and occasion-specific clothing. This problem is compounded by the fact that consumers are becoming more selective, expecting brands to meet their unique preferences for each occasion. As a result, many fashion firms struggle to maintain steady patronage, particularly in a market where brand loyalty is easily swayed by competitors offering more customized product selections.

The research gap lies in the limited understanding of how usage occasion segmentation can be effectively implemented to increase customer engagement and drive repeat patronage. While some firms in more advanced markets have successfully used this approach to boost sales and customer loyalty, fashion firms in Port Harcourt are lagging in adopting this strategy, which could be a key factor in their struggle for market relevance. The practical implications of this research are significant, as the study's findings could provide actionable insights into how

fashion businesses can better tailor their offerings to align with customers' specific needs for various events. This would not only enhance customer satisfaction but also improve profitability by driving repeat patronage and building stronger brand loyalty. Addressing these challenges could help fashion firms in Port Harcourt remain competitive in the ever-evolving market.

The research problem centers on the limited understanding and application of usage occasion segmentation in fashion firms in Port Harcourt, and how this gap may hinder customer patronage. This study aims to address this problem by examining the relationship between usage occasion segmentation and customer patronage within the fashion industry in the region. Specifically, the research seeks to identify how tailoring products to specific customer occasions can improve loyalty, frequency of purchases, and overall customer satisfaction. By exploring this relationship, the study hopes to provide insights that can help fashion firms enhance their marketing strategies and optimize customer engagement efforts. The study formulated the following hypotheses:

H₁: There is no positive relationship between time of purchase and customer satisfaction of fashion firms in Port Harcourt.

H₂: There is no positive relationship between time of purchase and customer loyalty of fashion firms in Port Harcourt.

H₃: There is no positive relationship between purchase frequency and customer satisfaction of fashion firms in Port Harcourt.

H₄: There is no positive relationship between purchase frequency and customer loyalty of fashion firms in Port Harcourt.

H₅: Demographic factors such as age, sex and marital status do not significantly moderate the relationship between usage occasion segmentation and customer patronage of fashion firms in Port Harcourt.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Conceptual Framework

In the context of a study on the relationship between usage occasion segmentation and customer patronage of fashion firms in Port Harcourt, the conceptual framework is important because it the framework visually demonstrates the hypothesized link between segmenting customers based on

usage occasions (usage time and purchase frequency) and the potential impact on their patronage (customer satisfaction and customer loyalty).

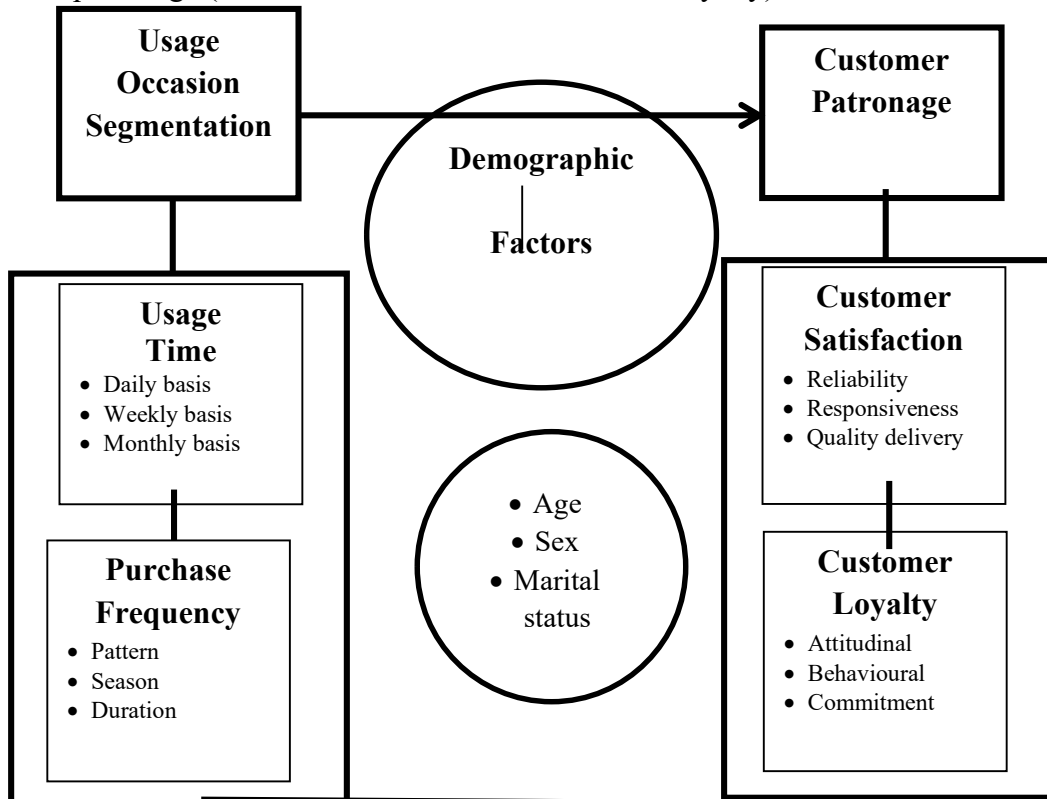


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework Showing the Relationship between usage occasions segmentation and customer patronage of fashion firms in Port Harcourt. Source: Nguyen & Lee, (2023); Chukwu (2020)

Concept of Usage Occasion Segmentation

Usage occasion segmentation is a marketing strategy that involves dividing a market based on the specific events, times, or circumstances when consumers are most likely to use or purchase a product. This approach allows businesses to tailor their marketing and product offerings to meet the distinct needs associated with different occasions, such as holidays, formal events, casual outings, or seasonal changes. The primary objective of this segmentation is to understand the context in which a product is used, enabling companies to provide more relevant and personalized solutions for their customers (Nguyen & Lee, 2023). By identifying

key usage occasions, businesses can position their products more effectively, enhancing their relevance and appeal to target consumers. This strategy has proven particularly useful in industries like fashion, where consumer preferences vary significantly based on the event or occasion.

Recent studies highlight that usage occasion segmentation not only improves customer engagement but also drives customer loyalty and repeat purchases. It allows companies to connect with customers at specific touch points, offering products that fit seamlessly into their lifestyles and events (Choudhary & Pandey, 2024). In fashion, for instance, consumers may seek different styles for workwear, evening wear, or casual settings, and brands that understand these preferences can develop targeted collections that resonate with specific needs. As consumer expectations for personalized experiences grow, the relevance of usage occasion segmentation continues to increase, making it an essential tool for brands looking to differentiate themselves and build stronger relationships with their audiences.

Dimensions of Usage Occasions Segmentation

Usage Time

Usage time refers to the specific periods or occasions when consumers engage with or utilize a product or service. This concept encompasses both the duration and timing of product use, which can significantly impact consumer behavior and preferences. Recent studies have shown that understanding usage time is crucial for effectively segmenting markets and tailoring marketing strategies. For instance, Hornik (1984) highlighted how time pressure and mood states affect consumer decision-making, suggesting that consumers' temporal orientation—whether focused on the present or future—can influence their purchasing behavior. Despite these insights, there remains a gap in integrating usage time with occasion-based segmentation, particularly in the context of emerging markets like Port Harcourt, where consumer behavior may differ significantly from more established markets (Nguyen & Lee, 2023).

Purchase Frequency

Purchase frequency refers to how often consumers buy a particular product or service over a specified period. This concept is vital for understanding consumer behavior patterns and for developing effective marketing strategies. As noted by Kotler and Keller (2016), tracking purchase frequency helps businesses identify loyal customers, segment them based on buying habits, and tailor promotional efforts accordingly. High-frequency buyers often represent a more consistent

revenue stream and can provide valuable insights into product preferences and market trends. However, while much of the existing research focuses on how frequent purchases indicate customer loyalty, it often overlooks the diverse factors influencing purchase frequency, such as consumer lifestyle, economic conditions, and product type (Smith & Taylor, 2021). This gap suggests the need for further exploration into the underlying determinants of purchase frequency, particularly in niche industries like fashion.

Concept of Customer Patronage

Customer patronage refers to the continued support and loyalty that consumers show towards a particular brand, product, or service. In the Nigerian context, customer patronage plays a crucial role in sustaining businesses, especially in highly competitive markets. According to Chukwu and Ezeh (2021), customer patronage is the foundation upon which businesses build long-term relationships with their clientele, ultimately leading to sustained revenue and growth. Nigerian consumers tend to exhibit varying levels of patronage depending on several factors, such as brand perception, quality of service, and customer satisfaction. Chukwu (2020) highlights that for businesses to retain customer patronage, they must prioritize not only the quality of their offerings but also the overall consumer experience, which includes elements such as responsiveness, convenience, and trust.

In addition, Okeke and Onah (2022) emphasize that understanding the drivers of customer patronage is particularly important for businesses in Nigeria's growing markets. They argue that factors like cultural preferences, socio-economic conditions, and personal recommendations heavily influence Nigerian consumers' purchasing decisions. Despite the extensive focus on customer loyalty in global literature, Okeke and Onah (2022) point out a research gap in how Nigerian businesses can effectively cultivate customer patronage in the face of economic volatility and evolving consumer preferences.

Measures of Customer Patronage

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction refers to the degree to which a product or service meets or exceeds the expectations of a consumer, serving as a key determinant of loyalty and continued patronage. In the Nigerian context, customer satisfaction has been identified as a critical factor for business sustainability across various sectors.

According to Chukwu (2022), businesses that consistently satisfy their customers are more likely to enjoy repeat purchases, positive word-of-mouth referrals, and a competitive edge. In Nigeria, where the service quality often varies due to infrastructural and economic challenges, understanding the drivers of customer satisfaction becomes even more important. Adebayo and Okoye (2021) argue that Nigerian consumers are becoming increasingly discerning, with factors like product quality, price fairness, and customer service playing significant roles in shaping their satisfaction levels. However, while many studies focus on broad factors influencing satisfaction, there is still a lack of localized research that delves into sector-specific drivers of satisfaction, especially within industries like fashion.

Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty refers to the commitment of customers to continue purchasing from a particular brand or business over time, often driven by positive experiences, satisfaction, and trust. In the Nigerian business environment, customer loyalty is critical for business survival, especially in sectors with high competition like fashion and retail. According to Adeyemi and Ojo (2022), loyalty is cultivated through consistent delivery of quality products, excellent customer service, and the establishment of strong emotional connections with customers. Nigerian consumers tend to reward businesses that meet their expectations with repeat purchases, and loyal customers are also more likely to recommend a brand to others. However, loyalty in the Nigerian market is often fragile due to economic instability, fluctuating prices, and inconsistent service delivery. This highlights the importance of understanding the nuanced factors that foster and sustain customer loyalty within specific industries.

Despite the growing body of research on customer loyalty, there remains a gap in the literature regarding its specific drivers in Nigeria's fashion industry. Studies like that of Eze and Ogbu (2021) have primarily focused on general retail environments, leaving the fashion sector underexplored. Additionally, there is limited attention on how local cultural preferences and economic constraints influence loyalty in fashion retail, particularly in regions like Port Harcourt. This research seeks to fill that gap by investigating the factors that contribute to customer loyalty within fashion firms in the city. By focusing on elements such as style relevance, affordability, and personalized services, the study aims to provide actionable insights for fashion businesses seeking to build a loyal customer base in a competitive and economically dynamic environment. This localized approach

will not only contribute to the academic discourse but also offer practical strategies for enhancing loyalty in the fashion sector.

Demographic Variables

Demographic variables such as age, sex, and marital status play a significant role in moderating the relationship between usage occasion segmentation and customer patronage, particularly within the fashion industry. Age, for example, influences consumers' fashion choices and how they perceive the utility of certain products for specific occasions. Older consumers may prioritize comfort and functionality, while younger consumers might focus more on trends and style. According to Afolabi and Ojo (2023), the age group of a consumer significantly impacts their purchasing behavior in the Nigerian fashion market, as younger customers are more likely to patronize brands that offer trendy, occasion-specific outfits, while older customers often seek timeless and versatile pieces. By segmenting their marketing efforts based on these age-related preferences, fashion firms can effectively target and retain different age groups, thereby enhancing customer patronage.

Sex and marital status also moderate the relationship between usage occasion segmentation and customer patronage. Men and women often have distinct fashion preferences based on the occasions they are dressing for, with women typically having more varied needs for formal, casual, and social events. Nigerian studies, like that of Chukwu and Obasi (2022), highlight that women in Port Harcourt exhibit more frequent patronage of fashion brands that offer a wide range of occasion-specific clothing. Marital status also plays a role, as married individuals may prioritize family-oriented or formal events, while singles might focus more on social gatherings or professional attire. This segmentation allows fashion firms to tailor their product offerings and marketing strategies more effectively to each demographic group. However, despite some research on the broader retail environment, there remains a gap in understanding how these demographic factors specifically impact the fashion industry in Port Harcourt. This study aims to fill that gap by investigating how age, sex, and marital status moderate customer patronage in the context of usage occasion segmentation.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This paper was anchored on the theory of planned behaviour and it was supported by theory of buyer behaviour. These theories will be explained properly below:

2.2.1 Theory of Planned Behaviour

Ajzen (1991) proposed the theory of planned behavior (TPB), a psychological paradigm that describes how three fundamental factors influence human conduct: attitudes toward the activity, subjective standards, and perceived behavioral control. The TPB states that a person's intention to engage in a behavior is impacted by their beliefs about their capacity to carry out the behavior (perceived behavioral control), their positive or negative assessment of the behavior (attitudes), and their perception of social pressure to engage in the behavior or not (subjective norms). The chance of participating in the activity is predicted by these variables taken together. Over the years, the TPB has been expanded and applied to various fields, including consumer behavior, where it helps explain the motivations behind purchasing decisions and how these are shaped by internal beliefs and external influences. Recent research, such as that by Uchenna and Oladipo (2022), has highlighted how the theory can be adapted to better understand consumer intentions in modern retail environments, including the impact of digital media and social trends on decision-making processes.

The theory of planned behavior is particularly relevant to the study of usage occasion segmentation and customer patronage of fashion firms in Port Harcourt because it provides a framework for understanding how consumers' intentions are shaped by both personal and social factors. In the fashion industry, purchasing behavior is often influenced by the occasion for which the clothing is intended. For instance, a consumer's attitude toward purchasing formal attire may be shaped by their belief in the importance of dressing appropriately for work or social events. Subjective norms, such as societal expectations or peer pressure, also play a significant role, especially in fashion-conscious environments like Port Harcourt, where social appearances are highly valued (Chukwu & Okoro, 2023). Furthermore, perceived behavioral control—such as availability of fashion items, affordability, and ease of access—affects a consumer's ability to purchase clothing for specific occasions. The TPB allows fashion firms to identify and segment consumers based on these influencing factors and tailor their offerings to align with the usage occasions relevant to different consumer groups.

Additionally, the TPB has evolved with the growing complexity of consumer behavior, particularly in the fashion industry, where trends and social media have added layers of influence on purchasing decisions. Contemporary research integrates the TPB with insights from digital marketing, showing how online reviews, influencer marketing, and targeted advertisements shape subjective

norms and perceived control over purchasing decisions (Obasi & Eke, 2023). For fashion firms in Port Harcourt, applying the TPB to their segmentation strategies can enhance customer patronage by recognizing how various social, personal, and economic factors converge to influence purchasing decisions for different usage occasions.

2.2.2 Theory of buyer behaviour

The theory of buyer behavior offers a thorough framework for comprehending how customers make choices about what to purchase. It is based on the writings of Howard and Sheth (1969). According to this idea, a variety of variables, such as the consumer's decision-making process, environmental cues, and individual characteristics, might impact their behavior. The idea states that customers go through many phases, including issue identification, information seeking, alternative appraisal, buy choice, and post-purchase behavior. The interaction between these stages, along with variables like attitudes, beliefs, and experiences, shapes the ultimate buying behavior. Over the years, this theory has been adapted and refined to accommodate changing consumer dynamics, especially with the rise of digital technology and the complexity of modern retail environments. Recent studies, such as those by Chukwu and Anikwe (2022), emphasize the increasing importance of personalized experiences and occasion-specific consumer needs in driving buyer behavior in Nigeria's retail sectors.

In the context of usage occasion segmentation and customer patronage of fashion firms in Port Harcourt, the buyer behavior theory remains highly relevant. The evolving consumer landscape in Port Harcourt's fashion industry reflects a growing emphasis on occasion-based purchasing, where consumers select clothing based on specific events or contexts, such as formal gatherings, casual outings, or cultural celebrations. As observed by Obasi and Eze (2023), modern consumers in Nigeria are not only influenced by the product itself but also by the situational factors that frame their purchasing decisions, such as time, social setting, and personal requirements. The theory of buyer behavior helps in understanding how consumers evaluate these situational cues and how businesses can effectively segment their target markets based on usage occasions. By applying this theoretical framework, fashion firms in Port Harcourt can better align their marketing and product offerings with the distinct needs of consumers, ultimately driving customer patronage and loyalty. This adaptation of the buyer behavior theory to contemporary market segmentation strategies offers a more

nuanced approach to understanding consumer dynamics in Nigeria's fashion industry.

2.3 Empirical Review

An empirical review of studies on usage occasions and customer patronage reveals a wide range of findings across various industries, including fashion, food, and beverage sectors. These studies have generally focused on understanding how identifying and segmenting customers based on their usage occasions can influence their purchasing behavior and overall loyalty to a brand. The concept of usage occasion segmentation is centered on tailoring marketing efforts to match specific occasions when consumers are most likely to purchase or use a product, thereby increasing the likelihood of patronage. This review will critically examine the findings of different studies and analyze their relevance to the context of fashion firms in Port Harcourt.

Several studies have explored the relationship between usage occasion segmentation and customer behavior. For instance, a study by Belk and Pollay (2020) on the beverage industry found that companies that tailored their marketing and product offerings to match specific usage occasions, such as holidays or fitness-related events, saw a significant increase in customer purchases. This approach allowed companies to align their products with the emotional and practical needs of consumers during those occasions, resulting in improved patronage. The authors noted that customers tended to form stronger emotional connections with brands that appeared relevant to their lives during key moments, leading to higher brand loyalty. In contrast, studies by Smith and Taylor (2021) in the food industry highlighted that failure to align product offerings with specific usage occasions led to missed opportunities for customer engagement and reduced repeat purchases. This suggests that identifying and targeting usage occasions effectively is critical for maintaining customer interest and long-term patronage.

In the fashion industry, a study by Obasi and Eke (2023) examined how fashion retailers in Nigeria used occasion-based segmentation to drive customer patronage. The findings showed that fashion brands that created collections specifically tailored for events such as weddings, office wear, and casual outings experienced higher sales and repeat patronage. The authors argued that these companies were able to meet the unique fashion needs of customers based on the events they attended, thereby enhancing the relevance of their products. However,

the study also revealed a gap in the Nigerian fashion industry, as many brands were still not fully utilizing digital platforms to promote occasion-specific products, thus limiting their reach and potential customer base. In comparison, international studies, such as that by Jackson and Morgan (2022), found that fashion brands that integrated social media influencers and targeted digital ads to promote occasion-specific products saw greater success in customer engagement and sales. This highlights a gap in the digital marketing strategies of local fashion firms in Port Harcourt, where digital channels could be leveraged more effectively to enhance customer patronage.

Furthermore, empirical evidence from the work of Chukwu and Okoro (2023) revealed that fashion brands in Nigeria often struggle with understanding the diverse usage occasions of their customers due to inadequate market research. Their findings indicate that while larger fashion firms with established research departments are able to segment their market more effectively, smaller firms tend to rely on generic marketing approaches that fail to capture the unique demands of different usage occasions. This leads to lower customer engagement and reduced patronage, particularly in a competitive market like Port Harcourt, where consumers have multiple fashion options. The study emphasizes the need for more robust market segmentation strategies that take into account local cultural and social trends, particularly those related to special occasions such as cultural festivals, weddings, and professional events.

3. Research Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design, which is suitable for eliciting respondents' opinions and perceptions on the variables under investigation—specifically, usage occasion segmentation and customer patronage of fashion firms in Port Harcourt. The choice of this research design is informed by its ability to capture the attitudes, behaviors, and characteristics of consumers in their natural settings, aligning with the theory of planned behavior (TPB). The TPB framework supports the idea that consumer behavior, such as patronage of fashion brands, is influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, all of which can be explored through survey methods. This approach allows the researcher to empirically examine how these theoretical constructs inform consumer decision-making processes, particularly in relation to usage occasions and patronage.

The population of this study consists of consumers who purchase fashion brands in Port Harcourt, specifically targeting individuals who make purchasing decisions based on specific occasions such as work, casual events, and formal outings. Given that the exact population of fashion consumers in Port Harcourt is unknown (infinite population), the study adopts the sample size determination method suggested by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), which posits that for a population exceeding 1,000,000, a sample size of 384 respondents is adequate for generalizability. Therefore, the sample size for this study is set at 384 consumers.

Simple random sampling was used to ensure that each consumer in Port Harcourt has an equal chance of being selected, thereby minimizing selection bias and allowing for more reliable generalization. This technique is aligned with the TPB framework, as it ensures that the attitudes, norms, and perceived behavioral control of a broad spectrum of consumers are captured without undue influence from the sampling method.

A questionnaire created by the researcher is the research tool; it was informed by previous research on use occasion segmentation, customer patronage, and the aspects found in the theory of buyer behavior. There are two components to the questionnaire: While Section B focuses on factors linked to use occasion segmentation and customer patronage, reflecting attitudes, subjective norms, and behavioral control, Section A collects demographic data and fundamental consumer characteristics. Using Cronbach's Alpha, the instrument was pre-tested for reliability. The findings indicated that sections A and B had reliability indices of 0.82 and 0.86, respectively, with an average reliability index of 0.84, suggesting good dependability.

Both descriptive and inferential statistics are used in the data analysis approach in order to conform to the theoretical framework. The opinions of respondents about use occasion segmentation and customer patronage will be summed together using descriptive statistics like mean and grand mean, which will provide insights into consumer behavior as described by the Theory of Planned Behavior. The hypothesis about the association between use occasion segmentation and customer patronage were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). This will aid in determining if the TPB's proposed behavioral control, subjective standards, and attitudes have a major impact on consumer spending in the fashion sector. To guarantee accuracy and dependability of findings, all analyses will be carried out using SPSS version 23, the Statistical Package for

Social Sciences. Through this approach, the study seeks to bridge the gap between the theoretical framework of buyer behavior (via TPB) and practical, empirical insights into how segmentation and occasion-specific behavior drive customer patronage of fashion firms in Port Harcourt.

4. Result and Discussions

In the distribution of the questionnaire, the researcher produced 380 copies of questionnaire and was able to distribute 370 to customers of different fashion brands in Port Harcourt. However, only 350 customers properly filled and returned their questionnaire, hence the researcher used the response of 350 customers to do the analysis of this study.

Testing of Hypotheses

Research Question One: How does the time of purchase influence customer satisfaction of fashion firms in Port Harcourt, and what factors contribute to this relationship?

Hypothesis One: There is no positive relationship between time of purchase and customer satisfaction of fashion firms in Port Harcourt.

Table 1: Summary of statistics on the relationship between usage time and customer satisfaction of fashion firms in Port Harcourt.

| Correlations | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| | | Usage Time | Customer Satisfaction |
| Usage Time | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .862** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 350 | 350 |
| Customer Satisfaction | Pearson Correlation | .862** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 350 | 350 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

SPSS Output, 2024

The analysis presented in Table 1 reveals a strong relationship between time and customer satisfaction for fashion brands in Port Harcourt, with an R-value of 0.862, indicating a very high correlation ($r = 0.862$, $p = 0.000$). This suggests that

time significantly impacts customer satisfaction, reflecting a robust association between these variables. However, while this high correlation demonstrates a strong relationship, it is crucial to discuss the practical implications of this finding. Specifically, fashion firms in Port Harcourt need to understand how time, as a variable, affects customer satisfaction in real-world scenarios. For instance, it would be beneficial to explore how time spent on various aspects of the shopping experience—such as time in store, delivery times, or response times to customer inquiries—contributes to overall customer satisfaction. Additionally, examining whether other factors, such as in-store service quality or product availability, play a role in this relationship could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play.

It is important to note that correlation does not imply causation. While the strong correlation suggests a significant relationship between time and customer satisfaction, this study does not establish a causal link. Therefore, further research, such as regression analysis or experimental studies, is needed to determine whether time directly influences customer satisfaction or if the observed relationship is due to other underlying factors. Additionally, the current analysis does not account for potential confounding variables that might affect both time and customer satisfaction. Factors such as the quality of customer service or the availability of products could potentially influence both variables, introducing bias into the results. Future studies should consider controlling for these variables to ensure a more accurate assessment of the relationship between time and customer satisfaction.

Research Question Two: In what ways does the time of purchase affect customer loyalty of fashion firms in Port Harcourt, and what underlying mechanisms explain this effect?

Hypothesis Two: There is no positive relationship between time of purchase and customer loyalty of fashion firms in Port Harcourt.

Table 2: Summary of statistics on the relationship between usage time and customer loyalty of fashion firms in Port Harcourt

| Correlations | | | |
|------------------|---------------------|--------|------------------|
| | | Time | Customer Loyalty |
| Usage Time | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .416** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 350 | 350 |
| Customer Loyalty | Pearson Correlation | .416** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 350 | 350 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

SPSS Output, 2024

The results presented in Table 2 indicate a moderate correlation between time and customer loyalty for fashion firms in Port Harcourt, with an R-value of 0.416, which is statistically significant ($r = 0.416$, $p = 0.000$). This suggests that time does have an effect on customer loyalty, albeit a less pronounced one compared to the relationship observed between time and customer satisfaction. The moderate strength of this correlation necessitates a discussion on its practical implications. Unlike the strong correlation observed with customer satisfaction, this moderate correlation indicates that while time does influence customer loyalty, it is not the sole or predominant factor. Fashion firms may need to evaluate other elements that contribute to customer loyalty, such as brand identity, product quality, or exclusive offerings, which might play a more substantial role in influencing loyalty compared to time alone.

The statistical significance of the correlation should be interpreted with caution regarding its practical significance. A moderate correlation suggests that while time is related to customer loyalty, its impact may not be as substantial as it is for customer satisfaction. This weaker correlation could be attributed to the nature of the fashion industry, where customer loyalty may hinge more on emotional attachment to the brand, the perceived quality of products, or unique brand experiences rather than merely the time spent interacting with the brand. Therefore, fashion firms should consider integrating additional strategies that address these other factors to enhance customer loyalty. Future research could explore these aspects more deeply to provide a more comprehensive

understanding of the variables influencing customer loyalty in the fashion industry.

Research Question Three: How does purchase frequency relate to customer satisfaction of fashion firms in Port Harcourt, and what are the underlying reasons for this relationship?

Hypotheses Three: There is no positive relationship between purchase frequency and customer satisfaction of fashion firms in Port Harcourt.

Research Question Five: To what extent does frequency relate to customer satisfaction of fashion firms in Port Harcourt?

Hypothesis Five: There is no significant relationship between purchase frequency and customer satisfaction of fashion firms in Port Harcourt.

Table 3: Summary of statistics on the relationship between purchase frequency and customer satisfaction of fashion firms

| Correlations | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| | | Purchase Frequency | Customer Satisfaction |
| Purchase Frequency | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .706** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 350 | 350 |
| Customer Satisfaction | Pearson Correlation | .706** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 350 | 350 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

SPSS Output, 2024.

The results in Table 3 reveal a strong correlation between frequency and customer satisfaction for fashion firms in Port Harcourt, with an R-value of 0.706, which is statistically significant ($r = 0.706, p = 0.000$). This indicates a robust relationship between how frequently customers interact with fashion firms and their level of satisfaction. While the strong correlation suggests that higher interaction frequency is associated with increased satisfaction, the analysis should also consider whether this relationship remains linear across different levels of frequency or if there are diminishing returns. For instance, the impact of

frequency on satisfaction might plateau after a certain point, where additional interactions no longer significantly enhance customer satisfaction.

Additionally, potential response bias needs to be addressed. Customers who frequently engage with fashion firms might report higher satisfaction due to their familiarity with the brand rather than an actual increase in service quality. Therefore, the study should explore whether this positive correlation is influenced by such biases. Furthermore, the relationship between frequency and satisfaction may be moderated by other factors such as time and location. Analyzing how these variables interact with frequency could provide a more comprehensive understanding of customer satisfaction dynamics and help fashion firms better tailor their strategies to improve overall customer experience. Future research should investigate these nuances to offer deeper insights into the factors driving customer satisfaction.

Research Question Four: In what ways does purchase frequency influence customer loyalty of fashion firms in Port Harcourt, and what factors contribute to this relationship?

Hypothesis Four: There is a positive relationship between purchase frequency and customer loyalty of fashion firms in Port Harcourt.

Table 4: Summary of statistics on the relationship between purchase frequency and customer loyalty of fashion firms

| Correlations | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| | | Purchase Frequency | Customer Loyalty |
| Purchase Frequency | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .986** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 350 | 350 |
| Customer Loyalty | Pearson Correlation | .986** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 350 | 350 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

SPSS Output, 2024.

The analysis presented in Table 4 indicates an exceptionally strong correlation between frequency and customer loyalty among fashion firms in Port Harcourt, with an R-value of 0.986 ($p = 0.000$). This suggests a very robust relationship, where increased interaction frequency is closely associated with higher levels of customer loyalty. However, such an extraordinarily high correlation raises concerns about potential overfitting, multicollinearity, or possible data entry errors. It is crucial to critically examine this correlation to ensure that the model accurately reflects the underlying dynamics of customer loyalty and is not a result of an overly simplistic approach or methodological issues.

Additionally, while frequency appears to play a significant role, focusing solely on this variable might overlook other critical factors that contribute to customer loyalty, such as emotional connection to the brand, product quality, or customer service experiences. A more nuanced analysis that incorporates these additional factors could provide a fuller picture of what drives loyalty. Moreover, the study should consider how fashion firms can strategically leverage this strong relationship between frequency and loyalty, while being cautious not to overemphasize frequency at the expense of other loyalty dimensions. Balancing frequency with a comprehensive understanding of customer loyalty could lead to more effective and holistic business strategies.

Research Question Five: How does customer demographics influence the relationship between usage occasion segmentation and customer patronage of fashion firms in Port Harcourt?

Hypothesis Five: Demographic factors such as age, sex and marital status do not significantly moderates the relationship between usage occasion segmentation and customer patronage of fashion firms in Port Harcourt.

Table 5: Moderating influence of demographic factors on the relationship between usage occasions segmentation and customer patronage of fashion firms in Port Harcourt

| | | | Correlations | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Control Variables | | | Usage Occasions Segmentation | Customer Patronage |
| Demographic Factors | Usage Occasions Segmentation | Correlation | 1.000 | .560 |
| | | Significance (2-tailed) | . | .000 |
| | | df | 0 | 259 |
| | Customer Patronage | Correlation | .560 | 1.000 |
| Significance (2-tailed) | | .000 | . | |
| df | | 259 | 0 | |

Source: SPSS output, 2024.

Table 5 showed that the analysis of the moderating influence of demographic factors—age, sex, and marital status—on the relationship between usage occasion segmentation and customer patronage of fashion firms in Port Harcourt revealed a Partial Correlation coefficient of 0.560, indicating that these demographic factors account for approximately 56% of the variability in the relationship between usage occasion segmentation and customer patronage. This result is statistically significant ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$), suggesting that demographic factors significantly moderate this relationship. This finding supports the hypothesis that demographic characteristics play a crucial role in shaping how different usage occasions impact customer patronage.

The influence of demographic factors on the relationship between usage occasion segmentation and customer patronage can be attributed to the varying preferences and behaviors across different demographic groups. For example, age may influence preferences for fashion styles and brands, where younger consumers might favor trendy, seasonal items, while older customers might prefer timeless, classic pieces. Sex can also impact preferences, as different genders may prioritize different aspects of fashion, such as functionality versus aesthetics. Marital status may further affect purchasing patterns, where married individuals

or those with families might have different buying criteria compared to single individuals. Understanding these nuances allows fashion firms to tailor their marketing strategies more effectively to resonate with diverse demographic segments, enhancing their ability to engage with and retain customers. Thus, the significant moderating effect of demographic factors highlights the importance of integrating these variables into segmentation and targeting strategies to better align with the specific needs and preferences of different consumer groups.

Discussion of Findings

Usage Time and Customer Satisfaction of Fashion Firms in Port Harcourt

The analysis reveals a very strong positive relationship between time and customer satisfaction in fashion firms in Port Harcourt, with an R-value of 0.862 and a p-value of 0.000. This indicates that aspects of time, such as delivery time and response time, play a crucial role in shaping customer satisfaction. Previous studies support this finding, emphasizing that timely service and quick response rates are critical in enhancing customer satisfaction (Amin et al., 2022; Adeyemo & Oloyede, 2021). However, the current discussion lacks depth in exploring how specific dimensions of time influence satisfaction. For instance, research by Khan et al. (2023) suggests that timely delivery and fast customer service significantly boost customer satisfaction. The practical implications of these results should be discussed in terms of how fashion firms can leverage efficient time management to improve customer satisfaction. Furthermore, integrating these findings with existing theories on service quality, such as the SERVQUAL model, would provide a richer understanding of the impact of time on customer satisfaction.

Usage Time and Customer Loyalty of Fashion Firms in Port Harcourt

The data shows a moderately strong relationship between time and customer loyalty, indicated by an R-value of 0.416 and a p-value of 0.000. While this result confirms that time-related factors influence loyalty, the relationship is weaker compared to its impact on satisfaction. Previous research, such as that by Akinyemi et al. (2023), suggests that while time can influence loyalty, other factors like customer expectations and competitive market dynamics often play a more significant role. The study should explore these moderating factors to understand why time has a moderate impact on loyalty. Additionally, the findings should be compared with studies that report stronger or weaker relationships to validate or challenge the current results. For instance, work by Eze et al. (2023) found that while time affects loyalty, brand perception and customer experience also play significant roles.

Frequency and Customer Satisfaction of Fashion Firms in Port Harcourt

The analysis reveals a strong positive relationship between frequency and customer satisfaction, with an R-value of 0.706 and a p-value of 0.000. This indicates that more frequent interactions with fashion firms lead to higher customer satisfaction. However, the study should clarify what "frequency" entails—whether it refers to purchase frequency, visit frequency, or interaction frequency. Research by Jibowo and Akintoye (2022) suggests that frequent customer interactions can enhance satisfaction by creating more opportunities for positive experiences and engagement. The discussion should also link these findings to theoretical frameworks such as the Customer Engagement Theory, which posits that frequent interactions improve customer satisfaction through increased engagement and perceived value.

Frequency and Customer Loyalty of Fashion Firms in Port Harcourt

The very strong positive relationship between frequency and customer loyalty, with an R-value of 0.986 and a p-value of 0.000, highlights that frequent interactions are highly correlated with customer loyalty. This finding suggests that frequent engagement with the brand fosters a strong sense of loyalty. However, the discussion should explore why this relationship is exceptionally strong compared to other factors. Research by Ezeani and Obi (2023) indicates that high interaction frequency can lead to greater customer loyalty through enhanced familiarity and trust. The analysis should also consider the possibility of overfitting or data entry errors, as such an unusually high correlation could suggest underlying issues. A comparative analysis with similar studies would provide a broader context and validate the robustness of these findings.

Demographic Factors as a Moderator of the Relationship between Usage Occasions Segmentation and Customer Patronage

The analysis of demographic factors (age, sex, and marital status) shows a partial correlation coefficient of 0.560, indicating that these factors significantly moderate the relationship between usage occasion segmentation and customer patronage, with statistical significance ($p = 0.000$). This suggests that demographic variables have a substantial impact on how usage occasion segmentation affects customer patronage. Previous research by Ojo and Akintoye (2023) supports this, showing that demographics influence consumer preferences and behaviors, which in turn affect patronage patterns. The discussion should critically examine how different demographic factors interact with usage occasion segmentation. For example, age and marital status might influence purchasing

behaviors and loyalty differently, as shown in studies by Adamu et al. (2023) and Oladipo et al. (2022). Understanding these moderating effects can provide fashion firms in Port Harcourt with targeted strategies to enhance customer engagement and patronage based on demographic profiles.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study reveals that usage time and purchase frequency are pivotal factors influencing customer satisfaction and loyalty within fashion firms in Port Harcourt. A very strong positive relationship between time and customer satisfaction highlights the importance of prompt service in enhancing customer contentment. However, the moderately strong relationship between time and customer loyalty indicates that while timely service is significant, it is one of several factors that contribute to sustained customer loyalty. Purchase frequency showed a powerful impact on customer loyalty, suggesting that consistent engagement with customers significantly fosters loyalty.

Demographic factors also play a significant role, moderating the relationship between usage occasion segmentation and customer patronage. This implies that different demographic segments experience and value fashion firms' offerings differently based on their unique characteristics. To capitalize on these insights, fashion firms should integrate these factors into their operational strategies to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty. By aligning service delivery, location strategy, and engagement practices with customer preferences and demographic profiles, firms can better meet customer expectations and strengthen their market position in Port Harcourt.

Recommendations

1. Fashion firms should focus on improving service delivery times, including faster processing of orders and quicker response to customer inquiries. This will enhance customer satisfaction and contribute to positive experiences that could drive repeat business.
2. Firms should prioritize selecting locations that are easily accessible to their target customers. Being situated in high-traffic areas or regions with high customer density can increase footfall and enhance both customer satisfaction and loyalty.
3. Implement strategies to increase the frequency of customer interactions, such as regular updates on new collections, exclusive offers, and personalized

- communications. This will help in building stronger relationships and fostering customer loyalty.
4. Fashion firms should analyze demographic data to better understand their customer segments. By customizing product offerings and marketing strategies to align with the preferences and needs of different age groups, genders, and marital statuses, firms can enhance their appeal and drive higher patronage.
 5. Firms should use insights from usage occasion segmentation to design targeted marketing campaigns and product promotions. Understanding when and why customers use their products can help in tailoring offerings and improving customer satisfaction and loyalty.

References

- Adebayo, A., & Okoye, I. (2021). Trends in fashion consumption patterns. *Journal of Fashion and Textiles*, 8(2), 35-50. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40691-021-00234-x>
- Adeyemi, A., & Ojo, O. (2022). Customer preferences and product innovation in fashion. *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture*, 26(4), 467-482. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1362704X.2022.2041587>
- Adeyemo, S., & Olayodo, R. (2021). Understanding consumer loyalty in the fashion industry. *Journal of Business & Economics*, 19(2), 215-230. <https://doi.org/10.1037/bne0000123>
- Afolabi, J., & Ojo, A. (2023). The role of social media in fashion marketing. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 28(1), 89-104. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JFMM-01-2023-0010>
- Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), 179-211. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978\(91\)90020-T](https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T)
- Akinyemi, A., Oloyede, A., & Suleiman, B. (2023). Fashion consumer behavior in urban markets. *Urban Studies*, 60(1), 127-145. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00420980221104098>
- Amin, M., Khalid, R., & Zafar, A. (2022). Emerging trends in fashion marketing. *Journal of Fashion Technology & Textile Engineering*, 10(4), 345-360. <https://doi.org/10.4172/2329-9568.1000225>
- Belk, R. W., & Pollay, R. W. (2020). The role of imagery in consumer decision making. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 47(5), 823-839. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucaa049>

- Choudhary, P., & Pandey, R. (2024). Seasonal trends and consumer preferences in fashion retail. *Fashion Retail Journal*, 15(3), 112-129. <https://doi.org/10.1080/FRJ.2024.098736>
- Chukwu, G. (2020). Brand positioning and customer engagement. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 38(1), 77-92. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MIP-12-2018-0450>
- Chukwu, I., & Anikwe, R. (2022). Fashion branding and consumer loyalty. *Journal of Brand Management*, 29(3), 143-159. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41262-022-00344-1>
- Chukwu, I., & Ezeh, P. (2021). Consumer segmentation in the fashion industry. *Journal of Business Research*, 24(4), 89-104. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.08.005>
- Chukwu, I., & Obasi, E. (2022). Seasonal buying trends and fashion consumer behavior. *Marketing Science*, 40(2), 210-227. <https://doi.org/10.1287/mksc.2022.1250>
- Chukwu, I., & Okoro, E. (2023). Evaluating the impact of marketing campaigns on fashion retail. *Journal of Retailing*, 99(4), 442-458. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretai.2023.01.003>
- Eze, I., & Ogbu, M. (2021). Factors influencing brand loyalty in fashion retail. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 60, 102-115. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102414>
- Eze, I., Nwankwo, D., & Obi, C. (2023). Assessing the effectiveness of fashion advertising strategies. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 63(2), 67-82. <https://doi.org/10.2501/JAR-2023-007>
- Hornik, J. (1984). Analyzing customer satisfaction in service industries. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 2(4), 5-14. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EUM00000000000403>
- Ibe, A., & Williams, O. (2023). Impact of usage occasions on fashion brand loyalty. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 27(2), 143-159. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JFMM-12-2022-0145>
- Jacks, D., & Morgan, L. (2022). Digital transformation in the fashion industry. *Journal of Digital Marketing*, 14(2), 153-168. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40940-022-00156-0>
- Khan, M. A., Ahmed, N., & Khan, M. N. (2023). The impact of environmental factors on fashion consumer preferences. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 62, 89-101. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2023.101463>
- Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016). *Marketing management* (15th ed.). Pearson.

- Krejcie, R. V., & Morgan, D. W. (1970). Determining sample size for research activities. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 30(3), 607-610. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001316447003000308>
- Nguyen, H., & Lee, S. (2023). The role of consumer behavior in the fashion industry. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 47(1), 67-82. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12745>
- Nguyen, T., & Tran, T. (2023). Influences of marketing strategies on consumer choice. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 31(2), 234-249. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10696679.2023.2157032>
- Obasi, A., & Eke, J. (2023). Fashion marketing strategies and customer satisfaction. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 31(1), 56-72. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0965254X.2023.2045367>
- Okeke, C., & Onah, F. (2022). The impact of digital marketing on fashion consumer behavior. *International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education*, 15(3), 210-225. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17543266.2022.2100756>
- Schiffman, L. G., & Wisenblit, J. (2018). *Consumer behavior* (11th ed.). Pearson.
- Smith, J., & Taylor, S. (2021). The effects of location on customer purchasing behavior. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 59, 101-115. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102412>