



## Cultural Perception Effects on Customer Experience and Customer Patronage of Branded Alcoholic Bitters Beverage

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**ABSTRACT:** Under the impact of globalization, consumers from different culture might hold different information processing tendency towards certain concepts and different perception since cultural orientation affects their perception and expectation. Firms are increasingly using the framework of customer experience to define their offering since differentiating one's product or service is to create memorable customer experience. The purpose of the study is to assess cultural perception in relation to customers' experience and customer patronage of branded alcoholic bitters beverage. All the consumers of branded alcoholic bitters beverage in Lagos State and who visited the designated place within the four (4) weeks period made up the study population. 1153 usable research instrument were retrieved based on the researchers' judgment through convenience sampling technique and data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools. T-test of multiple regression analysis were used to analyze factors in the independent variables and their effects on the dependent variable. The study revealed that cultural perception, customer experience and customer patronage have a very strong and positive relationship therefore, concluded that there is strong positive relationship between cultural perception, customer experience and customer patronage based on the consumers' cultural perception as they try to experience the product. It is therefore, recommended that Organizations, Marketers, and other stakeholders in relation to marketing of alcoholic bitters beverage understands how to play along cultural perception by building and creating a strong attributes of perception of the product in mind of consumers. Also, conduct customer experience survey from time to time in order to monitor and obtain information on how to sustain and improve the consumers' feels about their product by focusing on those factor that will help build a long-lasting and mutually profitable relationship with its' customers.

**KEY WORDS:** Culture, customer, perception, customer experience, patronage

### INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is home to a multicultural population with a wide range of regional preferences. However, these differences are disappearing now due to greater education and cultural mixing among individuals from various regions, tribes, and ethnic backgrounds. Due to the effects of globalisation, customers from various cultural backgrounds may have distinct information processing inclinations towards particular concepts (Lin, 2004) and differing perceptions since their cultural backgrounds influence their expectations and perceptions (Liu, Furrer & Sudharshan, 2001). Furthermore, research indicates that consumers from western cultural backgrounds are more prone than their counterparts to base their judgements on concrete indicators (Liu et al 2001). Thus, organisations must concentrate on comprehending customers' cultural perspectives in order to obtain a comprehensive, durable competitive edge in the market and to keep and sustain a greater market share over time. Experience-based organizations whether they be tangible or intangible have replaced product-based organisations in recent years (Koci & Sidark, 2014). These organisations place a holistic emphasis on feelings, perceptions, impressions, and emotional connections (Garg, Rahman & Qureshi, 2014). According to Walter, Edvardsson, and Ostrom (2010), customer experience encompasses both direct and indirect encounters with the product or service, interactions with representatives of the organisation, and interactions with other customers in the surrounding area. According to Garg, Rahman, and Qureshi (2014), customer experience is the outcome of a series of interactions between a product's service provider and the customer that cause a reaction. Each customer experience is highly unique to them and has an impact on their rational, emotional, physical, and sensory faculties. Consequently, clients that have a great experience tend to buy more often and become loyal (Maitlo, Jugwani & Gilal, 2017). According to Dey and Sethi (2017), customer experience is the cornerstone of customer happiness, retention, and patronage in any organisation. They also employed the Pareto analysis to divide the literature-based antecedents of customer experience into two groups: "useful many" and "vital few". According to the Pareto principle of 80/20, the antecedents who account for 80 percent of the cumulative proportion are referred to as the "vital few," while the remaining 20 percent are referred to as the "useful many." Convenience, the physical environment, personnel, interpersonal service, the service process, speed, trust, the presence of other customers, incentives (benefits, rewards), the marketing mix, pricing, usefulness,

obstacles, and the emotional element are the 14 “vital few” factors that this investigation discovered. The “useful many” antecedents were identified as twenty (20) factors: age, courtesy, choice, facilities available, encouragement, security, tangibles, credibility, presence, product variety, technology, behavioural intention, involvement customisation, problem resolution, novelty, recovery, and courtesy (Dey & Sethi, 2017). Traditional marketing, according to Bjorkman, Egardsson, and Tengstrom (2015), differs from experience marketing in that it primarily emphasises the features and benefits of the product, guiding the consumer through a logical decision-making process when selecting a product based on the utility’s overall satisfaction. Experience marketing, on the other hand, goes beyond the useful features, benefits, and quality of a product. Instead, it focuses on communicating with customers about items and creating campaigns that captivate their emotions and encourage them to make a purchase. The business focuses on how each marketing channel interacts with consumers and crafts all-encompassing experiences that arouse their feelings, thoughts, and actions. According to Dziewanowska (2015), experience marketing aims to create an exceptional and memorable customer experience, rather than just convincing customers to buy a product. This can potentially result in increased brand awareness, customer loyalty, and customer satisfaction. Drawing from the aforementioned, research has attempted to create various instruments to gauge customer experience. These include the pleasure-arousal-dominance scale (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), the customer shopping experience scale (Grewal, Monroe, & Krishnan, 2009), the brand experience scale (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009), the customer experience index (Kim, Cha, Knutson & Beek, 2011), the customer experience quality for bank scale (Maklan & Klaus, 2011), and experience quality in tourism (Fernandez & Cruz, 2016). In order to account for various customer circumstances and consumer behaviour, these customer experience scales were created. Take general shopping (Keng, Huang, Zheng & Hsu, 2007) and consumer sentiment (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) as two examples. According to Kenttamua (2014), there are seven elements that make up the customer experience index: environment, benefits, convenience, accessibility, usefulness, incentive, and trust. Patronage from customers is defined as the consistent use of a certain organisational product, which frequently leads to happiness from the consumption experience. Recurring purchases show that customers assess a product’s or service’s real performance based on their interactions with it. Because organisations are increasingly using the framework of customer experience to define their offering, it is necessary to differentiate one’s product or service in order to create a memorable customer experience (Verheof, Lemon, Parasuraman, Roggeveen, Tsiros & Schlesinger, 2009). This is because organisations need to seek out those customer experience scale and attributes that consumers are seeking and provide them in their offering (Ponnam, Sahoo & Balaji, 2011). Many studies have covered the aggregated cultural customer experience constructs as well as the previously mentioned relationship between cultural perception and customer experience and patronage in various nations and industry sectors (Voon, 2011) Africa; DiPietro & Campbell, 2014). The majority of research done up to this point has used Hofstede’s (2001) scale to compare country cultures. A few examples of these studies include Petkova (2006), Seo (2012), Thitthongkam (2013), Alsharhan (2013), Guibault & Omanwa (2014), and Koci & Sidark (2014). Furthermore, due to the presence of control variables employed in their studies, conflicting conclusions have been drawn about the relationship between cultural perception and customer experience as well as customer patronage in the sector. Furthermore, the majority of these studies’ methodologies vary in terms of design, demographic, coverage region, sampling strategy, and analytic method (DiPietro & Campbell, 2014; Koci & Sidark, 2014). Some researchers contended that the interference of various mediators in the study caused distinct and occasionally indirect impacts on the dependent variable. Also, due to respondent profiles, attitudes towards research instruments, and the surrounding environment, the majority of examined studies’ findings might not apply to transition economies.

Therefore, the statement of the problem arises from the fact that the majority of studies on the relationship between cultural perception and customer experience and patronage in developed countries across various sectors, aside from the bitters beverage sub-sector industry, have different methodology in terms of design, population, area of coverage, sampling technique, and analysis method. Due to the significance of the topic, the acceptance and consumption rate, the popularity and spread of bitters products on the market, and the need to evaluate the impact of cultural perceptions on consumer experiences and brand-name alcoholic bitters beverage sub-sector sales, it is necessary to do so.

### **Objectives of the study**

The objective of the study is to assess the cultural perception effects on customer experience and customer patronage of branded alcoholic bitters beverage sub-sector of beverage industry in Nigeria based on the rate of consumptions in the Nation. Thus, on this the research hypothesis is that cultural perception has no significant relationship with customer experience and customer patronage of branded alcoholic bitters beverage sub-sector of beverage industry.

## **CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION**

### **Cultural Perception**

According to literature, social scientists cannot agree on a definition of culture (Alas, Kaarelson & Niglas, 2008). According to Terpstra, Sarathy, and Russow (2006), culture is an integrated model of behaviour and the way that most people spend their lives. According to Thitthongkam (2013), culture can also be described as the shared and accepted ideas, practices, beliefs, and other

human thinking of a specific group of people. As a result, culture is the collective mental programming that sets one group of people apart from another. Culture is defined as society's way of life, encompassing expected behaviours, beliefs, values, languages, and practices (Guibault & Omanwa, 2014). In addition, culture is defined as the intricate system of values, beliefs, practices, and other talents and habits that humans develop as members of a community and that are essential to social interactions and the general well-being of the populace (Ogbechi, 2019). Because culture is made up of ideas, values, beliefs, religious practices, and artefacts, it is at once primarily human, primarily spiritual, and primarily materialistic. Values, rituals, traditions, even attitudes and spiritual characteristics are examples of taught and ever-changing cultural diversity, according to Petkova (2006), who also claims that culture is made up of material objects and codes that are assigned specific meanings. As a result, culture defines a group's social identity through their interactions and way of life, helping them to define themselves in relation to others (Alsharhan, 2013). Since culture refers to a people's ways of living and overall outlook on life, it can be either simple or complex depending on the individual.

### **Customer Experience**

Today's global market is more competitive, and consumers believe that all products and services are the same. As a result, manufacturers and service providers are under pressure to find cues that set their offers apart from the competition (Petermans, Van-Cleempoel, Nuyts & Vanrie, 2009). Experience marketing differs from traditional marketing in that the former emphasises the advantages and functional aspects of products, while the latter requires customers to make logical decisions that maximise utility overall (Bjorkman, Egardsson & Tengstrom, 2015). But because customers desire product communication that captivates their senses, touches their emotions, and piques their intellect, experiential marketing transcends the qualities of traditional marketing (Petermans, et al 2009). In order to encourage customer behaviour intention, businesses should concentrate on how their marketing effort will offer a comprehensive experience. Experience marketing seeks to establish a meaningful and memorable consumer experience, which in turn promotes increased awareness, patronage, loyalty, and satisfaction (Dziewanowska, 2015). Creating an unforgettable customer experience is one method to set one's offering apart (Verheof et al., 2009). Prior to Holbrook and Hirschman's (1982) formulation of the concept of customer experience, consumers were thought to be rational decision-makers who seek to acquire the best product from a range of options at a fair price (Petermans et al., 2009). In contrast to this logical utilitarian perspective, an experiential perspective provides a better explanation for some consumption behaviours, and a customer's contact with an offering can be really fulfilling even in the absence of consideration for the offering's utilitarian qualities (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). The idea of customer experience was introduced to management and marketing by Pine and Gilmore (1999), which created a new economic opportunity in the experience economy as opposed to the economy of commodities, goods, and services. Customer experience, according to Walter, Edvardsson, and Ostron (2010), is the sum of a customer's direct and indirect interactions with a company's procedures, organisational structure, and other customers as well as how they interact with company representatives. These interactions enable the customer to form behavioural, emotional, and cognitive reactions that serve as reminders of the experience. Additionally, customer experience was described by Garg, Rahman, and Qureshi (2014) as the outcome of a series of encounters that take place between a consumer and the providers of services and elicit a response. An individual's experience is deeply individualised to them in terms of how it impacts their emotional, cognitive, physical, spiritual, and sensory domains. While Mailto, Jugwani, and Gilal (2017) argued that customer experience is the facet that creates brand offering and channels trustworthiness for organisations that will be difficult for competitors to imitate, Dey and Sethi (2017) stated that customer experience is the foundation for customer satisfaction and retention in any organisation. Experience, then, is the internal and subjective reaction that clients have to any given offering and/or direct or indirect interaction with a company (McLean & Wilson, 2015).

### **Customer Patronage**

Patronage is defined as the consistent use of specific organisational goods or services, which frequently leads to the enjoyment that these goods or services provide. In the current state of the market, customers are not returning to a brand they were first drawn to because the previous brand did not live up to their expectations, nor are they receiving a favourable experience or attitude from the brand (Malesevic, Kojic & Savic, 2014). In addition to purchasing goods or services from businesses, a customer also purchases the business's experience (Haery, Ghorbani & Farahmand, 2014). According to Akekue-alex and Kalu (2016), there is a wealth of research on the factors that precede consumer patronage that evaluates several categories. Purchase intention predicts customers' purchasing behaviour (Maitlo, et al 2017). According to Jere, Aderele, and Jere (2014), the actual behaviour, or a conceptualised construct of customer patronage, depends on the client's attitude and behavioural goals, which can be either positive or negative. As a result, loyalty to a business stems from a desire to be dedicated to its offerings (Adiele & Nweke, 2015). Additionally, sales volume, profit margin, and customer retention can all be used to gauge customer loyalty.

### **Previous Empirical Studies**

In a cross-cultural investigation involving Asians and Americans, Alsharhan (2013) looked into retail lighting and consumer impression of products. The results imply that the disparities in how these two cultures view products may be caused by aspects of

lighting. In order to evaluate consumers' visual assessments of a retail setting across cultural variances, Garip and Unlu (2012) conducted a comparative study on intercultural differences. The findings demonstrated the beneficial relationship between shopping behaviour and cultural differences in visual preferences. Thitthongkam (2013) investigated the relationship between language and culture and customer satisfaction in the competitiveness of the Thai tourism sector. She discovered that the relationship between language and culture is crucial in creating and preserving the sector's competitiveness. In a cross-cultural study, Koci and Sidark (2014) examined how cultural variations impact employee behaviour, convenience, and the environment in relation to customer experience in banks, comparing Sweden with the United States of America. The results demonstrated a positive substantial relationship between culture and customer experience. When measuring customer emotions in a retail setting, Petermans et al. (2009) discovered that the majority of customers returned as a result of their positive experiences there. The Finish ice cream bar chain was used in a study by Kenttamaa (2014) to gauge various aspects of the consumer experience. The outcome demonstrated the customer experience index's value as a tool for experience measurement. Ramseook-Munhurrun (2012) investigated how service dimensions affected customer satisfaction and behavioural intentions. The findings showed that the service dimensions significantly affected both behavioural intentions and customer satisfaction. The impact of dining experience qualities on customer satisfaction and behavioural intentions was assessed by Canny (2014). The results of the study showed that both customer satisfaction and behavioural intentions are positively influenced by experience qualities. In Port-Harcourt, Akekue-Alex and Kalu (2016) looked into the connection between client patronage of food businesses and positioning techniques. The two variables had a favourable association, according to the study. In order to investigate how ambient variables affect consumer patronage at three different food outlets, Basera, Mutsikiwa, and Dhliwayo (2013) conducted a comparison study. The results of the study demonstrated that all three ambient variables had a beneficial impact on customer patronage.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The study's theoretical foundations are the Reasoned Action (TRA) and Customer Experience (CX) models. By elucidating the relationship or relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable under investigation, this model offers a solid theoretical foundation. As a result, Verhoef et al.'s (2009) research is predicated on the idea that consumer experiences are holistic in nature and are linked to their responses and experiences in social, cognitive, emotional, and physical domains. Because it clearly depicts a managerial perspective and considers a variety of aspects that influence experience formation, the model is relatively adaptable. Additionally says that satisfied customers have a good impact on marketing through things like recurring business and consumer loyalty. Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), which Fishbein introduced in 1963, is a model of attitude formation. According to the Fishbein model, a person's beliefs and emotions regarding an object's many aspects determine their overall attitude towards it. The concept states that behaviour is roughly equivalent to behavioural intention, which is determined by the consumer's attitude towards making a purchase as well as the subjective norm around the behaviour. As a result, the TRA approach measures behaviour rather than the attitude towards the object.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In order to combine quantitative and qualitative analysis into a single study, the descriptive research design was used employing mixed-method research (Balakrishnan, 2017). The population of Lagos State, Nigeria, is defined as all users of branded alcoholic bitters beverages and visitors to the designated location during a four-week period. A total of 1400 people are included in the study, of whom 1153 were considered significant. Because of the short timeframe for data collection, convenience sampling techniques were used, and respondents were chosen by chance of being in the proper location. Experts reviewed the instrument validation in order to adjust the questionnaire items based on the study's applicability. The constructs' respective Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients fall between 0.79 and 0.89. Statistical tools for inference and description were used to analyse the data. The factors in the independent variables and their impacts on the dependent variable were examined using multiple regression analysis.

## **RESULTS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Table 1's analysis revealed that, of the total study participants, 964 (83.7%) were men and 188 (16.3%) were women. Moreover, 148 (12.8%) of the participants were single, 773 (67%) were married, 212 (18.4%) were divorced, and the remainder 20 (1.7%) were widowed. This suggests that the majority of respondents were married. Of the total respondents, 509 (44.1%) were between the ages of 26 and 35, 454 (39.4%) were between the ages of 36 and 45, 137 (11.9%) were between the ages of 46 and 55, 53 (3.0%) were within the ages of 46 and 55, and 18 (1.6%) were older than 56. Thus, it would seem that it affects people of all ages. Additionally, the analysis showed that 469 (40.7%) had a good 16–20 year experience, 309 (26.8%) had an 11–15 year experience, 175 (15.2%) had an experience of over 21 years, 121 (10.5%) acknowledged having a 6–10 year experience, and the remaining 71 (6.9%) had a 1–5 year experience. The table analysis suggests that the respondents are not novice users of the product; rather, they have long-term experience with it. Finally, the examination of the table demonstrated the respondents' greatest level of education, with 565 (49%) having graduated from a postsecondary institution, 324 (28.1%) having a postgraduate degree, 235 (20.4%) having

a professional degree, 22 (1.9%) having completed secondary school, and the remaining 7 (0.6%) having completed primary school. This suggests that the majority of respondents have a good education and are capable of making informed decisions about their purchases.

**Table 2: Demographic Distribution of the Respondents**

S/N	Demographic variable	Grouping	Frequency	Percentages
1.	Sex	Male	964	83.7
		Female	188	16.3
2.	Marital Status	Single	168	14.5
		Married	773	67.0
		Divorce	212	18.4
3.	Age	16-25	35	3.0
		26-35	509	44.1
		36-45	454	39.4
		46-55	137	11.9
		56 years and above	18	1.6
4	Highest Educational Qualification	Primary	7	0.6
		Secondary	22	1.9
		Graduate	565	49.0
		Postgraduate	324	28.1
		Professional	235	20.4
5.	Years of Experience on the product	1-5	71	6.9
		6-10	121	10.5
		11-15	309	26.8
		16-20	469	40.7
		21 years and above	175	15.2

A strong linear association between the dependent variable (customer patronage) and the independent variables (cultural perspective and customer experience) can be seen in Table 2’s model, which has an R-value of 0.703.  $R^2 = (0.494; p < 0.05)$  showed that the independent factors (customer experience and cultural perception) explained 49% of the changes in the dependent variable (customer patronage). The real contribution of the independent factors (customer experience and cultural perception) to the dependent variables (customer patronage) is displayed by the adjusted  $R^2$ . The substantial F-value of 223.717 at .000 indicates that the independent variables have a considerable explanatory power. This demonstrates that specification bias is not present in the model.

**Table 3: Model Summary of Regression Analysis of Cultural perception in relation to Customer Experience and Customer Patronage among Consumers of Branded Alcoholic Bitters Beverage**

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	.703 <sup>a</sup>	.494	.492	.733

a. Predictors: (Constant), Cultural perception, Customer Experience

The standardised beta co-efficient of customer experience and cultural perception, as determined by an analysis of the regression coefficient displayed in Table 3, demonstrated the relative contributions of each independent variable to the dependent variable. Table 3 shows that customer experience ( $\beta = .293, p = 0.000$ ) and cultural perception ( $\beta = .526, p = 0.000$ ) are related. The outcomes demonstrated that the use of alcoholic bitters beverages by consumers is significantly influenced by both cultural perception and customer experience.



**Table 4: Regression Coefficient of Cultural Perception in relation to Customer Experience and Customer Patronage among Consumers of Branded Alcoholic Bitters Beverage**

Co-efficients<sup>a</sup>

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.715	.140		5.122	.000
Cultural perception	.526	.030	.407	17.420	.000
Customer Experience	.293	.022	.342	13.360	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Patronage

The results of the ANOVA in Table 4 aid in highlighting the model’s advantages and disadvantages. A weak regression model is indicated by an insignificant F-test value, according to Belle (2008). Based on the results presented in Table 4, the F-test value is 223.717, and at the 0.05 level of significance, the significance value is 0.00. The F-test is significant because the computed p-value of 0.00 was less than 0.05, indicating that the regression model fit the data well.

**Table 4.9: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Cultural Perception in relation to Customer Experience and Customer Patronage among Consumers of Branded Alcoholic Bitters Beverage**

ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	600.910	5	120.182	223.717	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	616.173	1147	.537		
Total	1217.082	1152			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Patronage

b. Predictors: (Constant), Cultural perception, Customer Experience

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings showed that there is a substantial and positive correlation between cultural perception, customer experience, and customer patronage—a link that passed the significance test ( $p = < 0.05$ ). This suggests that there is enough data in the sample to conclude that customer experience and cultural perception are related to customer patronage. This was consistent with a study by Koci and Sidark (2014) that evaluated the customer experience outcomes for Swedish and American customers and found that the replies were noticeably better. Furthermore, Kastaanakis and Voger (2014) examined consumer perception and cognition in relation to Eastern and Western in-store behaviour and discovered that cultural differences exist in the ways that Eastern and Western consumers receive information. Additionally, there is a considerable positive correlation and connection between cultural perception, customer experience, and consumer loyalty.

Consequently, the research findings indicate a robust positive correlation among cultural perception, customer experience, and consumer patronage. This is a result of consumers trying to experience the goods taking into account their cultural perception.

Based on the study’s findings and conclusions, it is advised that organisations, marketers, and other stakeholders involved in the marketing of the alcoholic bitters beverage sub-sector learn how to leverage cultural perception by creating and implementing a strong attribute of the product’s perception in customers’ minds based on that perception. Additionally, marketers should periodically conduct customer experience surveys to track and gather data on how to maintain and enhance consumers’ perceptions of the product by concentrating on those elements that will support the development of enduring and mutually beneficial relationships with customers. A worthwhile experience is one that can be had again and again since drive is the source of ultimate fulfilment and enthusiasm. As a result, consumers with excellent experiences likely to buy regularly and develop a strong client base that will result in brand loyalists. With commitment and happiness through customer loyalty as a competitive advantage, the

information gathered can also help close the gap and aid in better placing the product in the minds of consumers and the market at large.

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