VIRTUAL SERVICE SCAPE AND CUSTOMER PURCHASE INTENTION OF TELECOMMUNICATION FIRMS IN BAYELSA STATE

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K E Y W O R D S	A B S T R A C T
Virtual Servicescape, Aesthetic Appeal, Layout, Functionality, Customer Purchase Intention..	*This study examined the relationship between virtual servicescape and customer purchase intention of telecommunication firms in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The virtual servicescape was conceptualized through aesthetic appeal, layout, and functionality. Anchored on the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Theory, the study adopted a correlational research design to determine the strength and direction of the relationships among the variables. Data were collected from 40 managers from four (4) telecommunications companies in Yenagoa. The study used census sampling and studied the entire population. The data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC). The findings revealed that aesthetic appeal, layout, and functionality each have a strong positive and statistically significant relationship with customer purchase intention. This implies that customers are more likely to engage in purchase behavior when telecommunication websites and applications are visually appealing, logically structured, and technically efficient. The study concluded that virtual servicescape is a critical determinant of customer behavioral intention in the digital marketing environment. It recommended that telecommunication firms in Bayelsa State should enhance the aesthetic quality, navigational layout, and functional performance of their online platforms to improve customer experiences and drive stronger purchase intentions.*

Introduction

Businesses' interactions with clients throughout the world have been revolutionised by the fast digitisation of service delivery. Derived on Bitner's physical servicescape paradigm, the virtual servicescape encompasses the whole of the online environment that influences users' thoughts and feelings. The rise of digital technology has put a premium on virtual platforms as a means for businesses to interact with, and ultimately keep, consumers. This is particularly true in the telecommunications sector. The virtual servicescape is all about how a company's

digital interface looks, feels, and works. When these components are well-made, they boost confidence, encourage customers to buy, and improve user experiences. Investing in virtual servicescape optimisation has paid off for businesses across the world. More interaction and purchases have resulted from this, proving that a user-friendly and visually attractive digital environment is a key factor in online behaviour (Ananda et al., 2023; Zhani et al., 2022).

According to Harris and Goode (2010) and Ananda, Hanny, and Hernández-García (2023), the virtual servicescape is all about the design, layout, and technology aspects of a digital interface that influence how consumers feel, think, and behave while interacting with it online. Virtual servicescapes are the digital environments that customers engage with, learn about, and form opinions about companies; this is especially true in sectors like telecoms where customers seldom see or touch the products (Chiou & Chen, 2012). The three most important aspects were design, organisation, and practicality. A computer interface's aesthetic appeal is a reflection of its sensory and visual attractiveness; it influences initial impressions and emotional involvement (Ananda et al., 2023). Digital materials are logically organised and arranged in a layout to improve cognitive fluency and navigation ease (Yeo et al., 2021). The ease with which users may do tasks like browsing and completing transactions is determined by the platform's functionality, which includes its responsiveness, interactivity, and usability (Zhani et al., 2022). Consumers' perceptions of the digital world are influenced by each factor in their own unique way. For instance, according to research by Ananda et al. (2023), users are more satisfied and likely to make a purchase in an online place that is both aesthetically pleasing and responsive to their needs.

The probability that a customer would choose to buy a service or product after engaging with a business's online offerings is known as customer purchase intention. In a cutthroat online marketplace, consumers' perceptions of the space where items are shown have a significant impact on their propensity to make a buy. Customer satisfaction with the visual and practical features of online platforms highly correlates with their desire to buy, according to a research by Yeo, Moh, and Low (2021). Similarly, Zhani et al. (2022) found that trust, ease of navigation, and the overall user experience of the web interface affect consumers' desire to purchase in digital contexts. Due to the intangible nature of services and their reliance on digital interactions, the telecommunications sector finds virtual servicescape management to be a valuable strategic tool for influencing purchaser intentions.

The inequalities in customer involvement between enterprises and the increasing digital revolution in the Nigerian telecommunications industry inspired this research. The growth of telecommunications services in Bayelsa State has prompted fierce competition among businesses, who are now vying for customers based on digital service interface quality in addition to price and network speed. Limited empirical study has investigated the influence of virtual servicescape on consumer purchase intention in Nigeria's telecommunication setting, despite the worldwide acknowledgement of virtual servicescape efficacy. Therefore, this research

intends to address that knowledge gap by investigating the impact of design, layout, and functionality on customers' intents to buy telecommunications products in Bayelsa State.

Statement of the Problem

As the Nigerian telecommunications industry adapts to the new digital world, more and more companies are moving their service delivery and customer interaction operations online. Customers in Bayelsa State are still unhappy with the service they get from telecom firms when they contact with them online, even though the industry is undergoing digital transformation. Problems with ugly design, inefficient layout structures, sluggish system response, and restricted functionality of service portals have made it difficult for users to have pleasant experiences. Customers' first impressions and purchasing choices are significantly impacted by their interactions in these virtual spaces, therefore this scenario is reason for worry. Companies risk losing consumers who interact digitally but don't end up being committed buyers and consumers who quit online purchases when their expectations aren't satisfied.

A mix of technological, managerial, and strategic issues has resulted in this problem's continuance. When it comes to influencing consumer perceptions and actions, many Bayelsa State telecom companies pay little attention to the virtual servicescape, instead concentrating on product offers, pricing tactics, and network coverage. Weak online consumer engagement has been caused by a lack of investment in user-centred digital design, insufficient focus on aesthetics and navigational layout, and ineffective system functioning. The challenge is made worse by the fact that there is no empirical knowledge on how aesthetic appeal, layout, and functionality—three aspects of virtual servicescape—influence customer purchase intention in the context of regional telecommunications. Digital platforms may be powerful tools for marketing and building relationships with customers, but there is a lack of understanding and expertise when it comes to using them.

Up until now, responses to these issues have been disjointed. Mobile applications and online self-service portals have been developed by telecom companies to enhance accessibility and convenience. However, when it comes to optimising the user experience, these innovations often fall short. Digital experience design that takes into account the emotions, trust, and ease of contact of customers has been mostly neglected in favour of technology advances. So far, this has only led to a little increase in consumer happiness and purchase intent. As a result, this research in Bayelsa State aims to fill that knowledge gap by investigating the interplay between the virtual servicescape's visual appeal, layout, and functioning and the purchase intention of telecommunications customers.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship Between Virtual servicescape and customer purchase intention of Telecommunication Firms in Bayelsa State. The specific objectives of the study included to:

1. determine the relationship between aesthetic appeal and customer purchase intention of telecommunication firms in Bayelsa State.
2. assess the relationship between layout and customer purchase intention of telecommunication firms in Bayelsa State.
3. examine the relationship between functionality and customer purchase intention of telecommunication firms in Bayelsa State.

Literature Review
Conceptual Review
Concept of Virtual Servicescape

For the purpose of marketing and service management, the virtual servicescape is an essential idea, especially when trying to decipher how customers act while interacting with brands online. The concept of the servicescape, first used to describe the actual setting in which service interactions take place, is central to Bitner's (1992) work and is the inspiration for the word. Researches have taken the idea and applied it to the virtual domain, seeing it as the digital servicescape's counterpart to the physical one, in light of the trend towards digital business models (Ardley & Chen, 2017). According to Harris and Goode (2010) and Ananda, Hanny, and Hernández-García (2023), it includes the technical aspects, layout, and design of a digital interface that influence how people feel, think, and behave while interacting with it online. Virtual servicescapes are especially important in sectors like telecoms where customers have little opportunity for face-to-face engagement; they provide a digital environment for customers to explore, assess, and engage with businesses. Different academics have placed more emphasis on certain parts of the digital landscape when defining the virtual servicescape. As an example, "the sum of all online environmental cues that influence customer trust and purchase intention" was one way it was described by Harris and Goode (2010). According to them, the virtual servicescape is the most important factor in determining the quality of digital relationships, and it puts the psychological processes behind online consumer decision-making in the spotlight. On the other hand, according to Lee and Jeong (2012), the virtual servicescape is a multi-faceted notion that includes visual design, interaction, and navigability. Each of these aspects has its own impact on how customers perceive the value and quality of the service. Ananda et al. (2023) widened the focus by include offline servicescape components as well, stating that consumers' digital experiences are often impacted by hybrid encounters that blend human service signals with technical ones.

Nevertheless, there are academics who warn against seeing the virtual servicescape as an exact replica of the physical one. Online environments, according to Wu, Quyen, and Rivas (2017), are more than just static spaces; they are interactive, dynamic, and personalised, with two-way communication and user-induced changes. In order to explain the malleability and adaptability of digital systems, they suggest seeing the virtual servicescape as an independent entity. Similarly, Yeo, Moh, and Low (2021) argue that users actively participate in the value creation process in digital

settings, as opposed to just absorbing environmental stimuli, which is a key difference between digital and physical locations. According to this view, the virtual servicescape is dynamic and changes over time as a result of user activity, new technologies, and tailored experiences.

Dimensions of Virtual Servicescape
Aesthetic Appeal

Consistent with previous research, visual attractiveness is a key component of the virtual servicescape. Colour scheme, images, typography, animations, and general creative composition all contribute to a digital platform's sensory and visual appeal (Yeo, Moh, & Low, 2021). The visual attractiveness of an online platform establishes its first impression and fosters an emotional connection with the consumer. Cyr, Head, and Larios (2010) state that customers are more engaged and likely to make a purchase from a company whose website is aesthetically pleasing because it increases the perceived credibility and professionalism of the business. This is in line with the claims made by Park and Kim (2021), who state that in very competitive service marketplaces, consumers often associate trustworthy brands with well-designed products.

Nevertheless, there are academics who feel that digital marketing research places too much focus on aesthetics. According to Robins and Holmes (2020), visual complexity may be a hindrance to usability, thus it's important to keep things simple and clear without sacrificing visual attractiveness. Similarly, Reinecke and Bernstein (2021) discovered that to maintain engagement, visual appeal has to be in line with cultural and contextual expectations, even when it boosts initial attraction. According to the S-O-R model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), users' approach behaviour may be influenced by the pleasure and arousal triggered by aesthetic design. That is why aesthetics have a purpose beyond simple decoration: it leads attention, maintains brand identification, and increases the chance of purchase via emotional stimulation.

Digital platforms in the telecom industry are more often used for business transactions and service enquiries than for recreational purposes, making aesthetic design an important factor. Customers express more satisfaction and greater buy intents when telecoms websites integrate harmonising colour schemes, professional images, and consistent branding (Yoon and Park, 2020). Aesthetic enhancements, however, should be governed by usability considerations to avoid distracting users with superfluous images that undermine work effectiveness (Khalid and Lee, 2022). Hence, to create a virtual space that is both attractive and practical, good aesthetic design strikes a balance between the two.

Layout

Another important aspect of the virtual servicescape is the design of a digital interface, which is generally described as the spatial arrangement and structural organisation of items inside an online environment. Layout dictates how easily users may move about, find what they need, and accomplish their goals (Zhani, Mouri, and Ahmed, 2022). Reduced cognitive effort, increased user pleasure, and improved

purchase intention are all results of a well-organised and easy-to-navigate layout. Consumers' ability to absorb information and make choices while interacting with a service online is impacted by its layout, according to Keng and Ting (2021). What makes for the best layout, however, is a matter of opinion. Liu and Zhang (2021) and Hassan and Li (2020) argue that dynamic and interactive layouts provide more experience value and encourage emotional engagement, whilst others, like Liu and Zhang, stress the significance of simplicity and hierarchical structure in enhancing navigability. Layout design has a double purpose: to provide functional efficiency while preserving aesthetic coherence, which is a delicate balancing act between usefulness and engagement (Aubert-Gamet & Cova, 1999).

Layout is important in influencing behavioural reactions, according to empirical research. One study indicated that mobile consumers were more likely to make a purchase from a site with easy navigation and less cognitive friction (Yeo et al., 2021). In a similar vein, Ananda, Hanny, and Hernández-García (2023) shown that, particularly in service-based sectors such as telecoms, consumers' trust is enhanced and perceived uncertainty is reduced via organised digital layouts. In contrast, consumer retention suffers when websites are badly designed due to the annoyance, cognitive overload, and desertion that result (Suh & Lee, 2022). From a critical perspective, there are academics who contend that choices for layout rely heavily on context. Park and Kim (2021) found that users' perceptions of spatial organisation are impacted by factors such screen size, cultural norms, and device type. Thus, for various industries and demography, universal design principles may not always provide the best outcomes. If telecommunications companies in Nigeria want to reach their engagement and conversion targets, they must tailor their layout designs to the local digital literacy levels and consumer expectations.

Functionality

Technical performance, interaction, and responsiveness make up a virtual platform's functionality, which in turn determines how efficient user experiences are. The virtual servicescape relies on functionality, which turns design into activity, as its backbone. Zhani et al. (2022) states that the functionality of an online platform is indicative of how well it enables users to carry out their intended duties, including browsing, making payments, and managing their accounts. When the system's functionality is good, consumers see it as dependable and easy to use, which boosts their happiness and likelihood to buy. In the context of digital services, functionality is defined by Suh and Lee (2022) as the availability, integration, and use of features. According to their research, consumers are more inclined to make a purchase from a website if it is easy to use, loads fast, and has engaging elements like live chats or individualised dashboards. When things go wrong, such when replies are slow or links don't work, it damages confidence and makes people think twice about buying. In a similar vein, Yoon and Park (2020) note that functional dependability is a factor in how good a service is regarded to be, especially in industries like telecoms where users' ability to receive services is highly dependent on the efficiency of the

underlying system. Customers rely on digital interfaces for crucial services like purchasing airtime, renewing data, and resolving complaints, making functionality especially important in the telecommunications industry. Therefore, consumer happiness and spending habits are severely impacted by any system slowness or outage. Reliable online support services, mobile adaptability, and responsive systems may increase conversion rates and user confidence, according to Ananda et al. (2023). Zhani et al. (2022) argues that functionality, when combined with dependability and usability, may be a powerful tool to increase the likelihood that a user would make a purchase in a digital service setting.

Customer Purchase Intention

Researchers in the fields of marketing and consumer behaviour have long been interested in the idea of customer purchase intention, which connects buyers' subjective assessments of a product or service with their subsequent decision to buy. It is the subjective likelihood that a consumer would choose to purchase a product or service in response to a combination of internal and external factors (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Yeo, Moh, & Low, 2021). Zhani, Mouri, and Ahmed (2022) explain that in digital contexts, buy intention involves more than just being ready to make a transaction; it includes the consumer's motivational state, which is influenced by their judgements of the platform's usefulness, trustworthiness, satisfaction, and value. A customer's emotional investment in a brand or service, as well as their rational evaluation of that brand's quality, are reflected in this indication of future behaviour.

Customer confidence in the security of their data, finances, and expectations is crucial to the success of any online business, say Pavlou and Gefen (2004). Ananda, Hanny, and Hernández-García (2023) found that consumers' propensity to transact is directly impacted by the perceived legitimacy of an online platform, which is in accordance with this viewpoint. But there are academics who contend that faith alone isn't enough. For example, according to Yoon and Park (2020), in highly competitive and related product sectors like telecoms, the emotional happiness that comes from design aesthetics and usability is just as essential as the rational gratification that comes from features when it comes to encouraging purchase intentions.

Emotional reactions like joy, enthusiasm, and brand loyalty are captured by the emotional component of purchase intention, while the logical appraisal of functional advantages, price, and perceived value constitute the cognitive part. Emotional connection impacts logical evaluations, and vice versa, according to Kotler and Keller (2016). When a digital interface is appealing and simple to use, for instance, customers have a good time and don't have to think as much, which improves their opinion of the service provider. In contrast, dissatisfaction and a lack of desire to buy are the results of an interface that is either badly designed or malfunctioning.

Theoretical Review

This research on virtual servicescape and consumer purchase intention is well-grounded in the 1974 Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Theory, which was

created by Mehrabian and Russell. A product of environmental psychology, the idea seeks to explain how external factors impact people's mental and behavioural states. Within the S-O-R paradigm, an individual's exposure to environmental cues or factors is represented by the stimulus (S), their internal processes and emotional or cognitive states are symbolised by the organism (O), and the behavioural action that follows from these states is represented by the response (R). Using virtual design aspects to elicit emotional reactions and, eventually, behavioural intents like buying, this model offers a formal explanation of how customers respond to online settings in the context of marketing and digital environments. Environmental inputs that elicit emotional and cognitive responses are just as important as logical assessment in determining human behaviour, according to the S-O-R theory's fundamental principles. Aesthetics, structure, and the functional performance of digital platforms are examples of such stimuli in the context of online consumer behaviour. A customer's behavioural intentions, such as whether to buy or return to a website, are influenced by these factors, which impact their internal states, such as pleasure, trust, contentment, and perceived control. Positive emotional experiences increase engagement and purchase probability, according to the hypothesis, because consumers constantly perceive and react to environmental signals in both real and virtual places.

Although the S-O-R theory has many uses, others think it simplifies and oversimplifies complicated human behaviours. The concept has its detractors who claim it fails to account for important factors including cultural variances, situational settings, and individual differences that could alter the stimulus-response link. Further difficulty arises from the fact that social and cognitive elements including past experience, reputation of the brand, and perceived danger have a significant influence in determining behaviour. Despite these caveats, it remains a powerful explanatory tool in the context of digital services, because the design of the physical space has a direct impact on the user's journey and the actions they do.

This research finds use for the S-O-R theory because it clarifies how customers' internal perceptions and emotions are impacted by virtual servicescape aspects (organism), which in turn impact their purchase intentions (response). In Bayelsa State, telecommunications companies pay attention to how their web platforms look, how they are organised, and how well they work since these factors are environmental stimuli that might make consumers happy, trusting, or angry. Gaining insight into these mental processes lays the theoretical groundwork for studying the ways in which thoughtfully designed digital spaces might inspire desirable actions, including more likely purchases. Customer experience mediates the relationship between virtual design components and marketing performance results in digital service delivery; the S-O-R theory offers a strong foundation for this investigation.

Empirical Review

"Aesthetic interface design and online purchase intention in the mobile service industry" was the title of a South Korean research by Park and Kim (2021). Aesthetic

appeal in digital interfaces and its effect on consumers' propensity to make purchases on mobile and telecommunications platforms was the intended focus of this research. The data was analysed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The study used a survey approach and targeted 312 internet users of SK Telecom and KT Corporation. Both the reliability and validity of the test were validated by doing confirmatory factor analysis and Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.92$). Customers' emotional involvement, perceived trust, and purchase intention were all improved in virtual service settings with visually appealing, symmetrical, and color-balanced designs. Consumers' propensity to interact with and buy telecommunications services is influenced by visually attractive virtual interfaces, according to the research. The study's authors urged businesses to put money on digital aesthetic optimisation in the hopes of eliciting favourable reviews from clients.

Focussing on customers in Bayelsa State, Okoro and Ebiware (2023) examined "virtual servicescape and consumer retention in Nigerian telecommunication firms" with a particular emphasis on Globacom and MTN. The goal was to find out how much the design and usability of online platforms impact consumers' propensity to buy and their likelihood to return. Two hundred and fifty mobile phone users in the Yenagoa metropolitan area were the subjects of a cross-sectional study. A validated questionnaire was used to gather data ($\alpha = 0.89$), which were then analysed using multiple regression. The results showed that there was a strong positive correlation between the virtual layout structure and the logical sequencing of online menus and the purchase intention of customers. When websites had attractive, user-friendly design, customers were more likely to make a purchase. In order to improve perceived usability and brand experience, the research found that telecom companies should prioritise intuitive virtual layouts. In order to maintain consumer engagement and repeat purchases, the authors suggested constantly improving the design of user interfaces (UI) and user experiences (UX).

A research conducted by Nguyen, Le, and Tran (2022) examined "the role of website functionality in shaping online purchase intention among digital service users" within the context of Vietnam's internet sector. This research set out to determine if and how responsiveness, interaction, and page load speed affect customers' propensity to make a purchase on a website. Using a quantitative approach, 385 participants from three prominent telecommunications companies (Viettel, MobiFone, and Vinaphone) were surveyed. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) confirmed validity, and reliability testing yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.91. According to regression research, consumers' buy intention was moderated by their perceptions of the website's utility and trustworthiness, which were in turn affected by the website's functioning. The research found that customers' ability to convert their browsing behaviour into actual purchases is influenced by usefulness rather than looks. As part of their virtual servicescape initiatives, the authors suggested that telecom companies boost online conversions by investing in technical performance and making their platforms mobile-friendly.

Looking at "virtual experience and customer purchase intention of telecommunication subscribers in South-South Nigeria," Adams and Okon (2024) analysed the following: The purpose of this research was to examine the relationship between visual appeal, usability, and intent to buy in the Nigerian telecommunications industry, with a particular emphasis on the states of Bayelsa and Rivers. Four hundred participants were chosen at random from among those who use mobile internet on MTN, Airtel, and 9mobile. A validated instrument ($\alpha = 0.93$) was used in the investigation, which included a quantitative survey methodology. Hierarchical regression was used for data analysis. The results showed that functionality was the most important of the three virtual servicescape variables in predicting customers' propensity to buy. Customers are more likely to trust and commit to a purchase in a unified digital environment that combines attractive design, user-friendly navigation, and effective functioning, according to the research. In order for telecom companies in Bayelsa State to be competitive in the digital age, the authors suggested that they use customer-centred digital experience models.

Methodology

The research used a correlational survey methodology, and forty managers from four(4) Yenagoa-based telecom businesses (MTN, GLO, AIrtel, and 9moblie) made up the population. The whole population was analysed using census sampling. By sending out questionnaires, we were able to collect the main data. The instrument's reliability was assessed using the Cronbach's alpha test in SPSS version 27, which yielded a value of 0.78, above the benchmark of 0.70. After collecting data for this research, descriptive and inferential statistics were used to the data. A number of hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Method within the context of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27.0.

Data Analysis and Presentation
This was done using the PPMC and the Partial Correlation
Test of Hypothesis one (1)
Ho$_1$: There is no significant relationship between aesthetic appeal and customer purchase intention of telecommunication firms in Bayelsa State.

Correlations

			aesthetic appeal	customer patronage
Pearson (r)	aesthetic appeal	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.738[*]
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.037
		N	35	35
	customer patronage	Correlation Coefficient	.738[*]	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.037	.
		N	35	35

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
SPSS output, 2025.

Results showed that there was a correlation between the visual attractiveness of telecommunications companies' products and the likelihood that customers in Bayelsa State would make a purchase. The two variables are strongly related, according to the Pearson correlation coefficient (pr = 0.738).The null hypothesis, which asserts that telecommunication enterprises in Bayelsa State do not have a significant association between aesthetic appeal and consumer purchase intention, is rejected by the test of significance with a p-value of 0.037<0.05. So, in Bayelsa State, consumers were more likely to buy from telecommunications companies with greater degrees of aesthetic appeal.

Test of Hypothesis Two (2)

Ho$_2$: There is no significant relationship between layout and customer purchase intention of telecommunication firms in Bayelsa State.

Correlations

			layout	customer patronage
Pearson (r)	layout	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.857**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.007
		N	35	35
	customer patronage	Correlation Coefficient	.857**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.
		N	35	35

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
SPSS output, 2025.

Results showed that telecommunications companies in Bayelsa State had a strong correlation between after-layout and consumer propensity to buy. The high Pearson correlation coefficient (Rs=0.857) between the two variables suggests a robust relationship between them.With a p-value of.007<0.05, the significance test allows us to reject the null hypothesis that claims there is no significant correlation between the layout of telecommunication enterprises in Bayelsa State and their customers' inclination to buy. Customers' desire to buy from telecommunications companies in Bayelsa State increased in direct correlation with the degree of layout.

Test of Hypothesis Three (3)

Ho$_3$: There is no significant relationship between functionality and customer purchase intention of telecommunication firms in Bayelsa State.

Correlations

			functionality	customer purchase intention
Pearson (r)	functionality	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.857**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.007
		N	35	35
	customer purchase intention	Correlation Coefficient	.857**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.
		N	35	35

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
SPSS output, 2025.

There was an examination of the correlation between functionality and consumer intent to buy in the results. With a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.857, there is a very strong relationship between the two factors. The significance test result shows that the null hypothesis, which claims that there is no significant association between functionality and consumer purchase intention, may be rejected with a p-value of.007< 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that customers' purchase intention was positively correlated with the amount of functionality.

Discussion of Findings

This research found that among telecommunications companies in Bayelsa State, there is a robust and statistically significant correlation between virtual servicescape aspects (i.e., visual appeal, layout, and functioning) and consumer purchase intention. Customer purchase intention was favourably and substantially impacted by visual appeal (r = 0.738, p < 0.05), layout (r = 0.857, p < 0.05), and utility (r = 0.857, p < 0.05), according to the correlation data. This finding is in keeping with previous research that has shown that consumers' impressions of a website's or mobile platform's operational effectiveness, structural design, and digital aesthetics have a significant impact on their online purchasing behaviour (Ananda et al., 2023; Zhani et al., 2022).

Customers are more satisfied and make better purchases when they use visually appealing platforms, according to the results on aesthetic appeal. This lends credence to the findings of Yoon and Park (2020), who found that consumers are more likely to make a purchase after experiencing pleasant feelings and trusting the product's authenticity as a result of clean, well-balanced design. In contrast, people are less likely to interact with designs that are ugly or too complicated. Therefore, telecommunications companies may increase purchase intent and maintain consumer engagement by providing more enticing digital interfaces.

This layout finding is in line with what Yeo, Moh, and Low (2021) found: that users are more likely to make a purchase when the site is easy to use and has an understandable structure. According to the current finding, customers are more likely

to make a purchase after a positive online experience due to less irritation, more efficiency, and an improved overall layout. Conversely, individuals are less likely to engage in online transactions when they are confused and distrustful due to poorly organised design.

Similarly, Suh and Lee (2022) argue that technological dependability and usability are crucial to online behavioural outcomes, and the substantial positive link between functionality and consumer purchase intention supports this thesis. Customers have a better positive impression of a system and are more inclined to buy from it when websites or applications work well, which includes reacting fast, giving intuitive interaction, and loading swiftly. The combination of user control and perceived service quality suggests that functionality influences consumer behaviour on an emotional and logical level.

Conclusion

According to the research, telecommunications companies in Bayelsa State may learn a lot about their customers' purchasing intentions from the virtual servicescape. In particular, the quality of the customer's experience and their choice to buy are mutually determined by the attractiveness, layout, and usefulness of the product. Having a visually appealing platform makes people feel more connected, having an intuitive structure makes it easier to navigate and make decisions, and having solid functionality guarantees reliable interactions and seamless navigation. When used together, these components provide an online setting that encourages contentment, trust, and readiness to buy. The results showed that telecom companies may strengthen consumer engagement, increase conversion rates, and become more competitive in the market if they plan and execute their virtual environments strategically. So, the virtual servicescape is more than just a piece of hardware; it's a crucial marketing tactic for shaping online customer behaviour.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that telecommunication companies engage in expert interface design services that place an emphasis on a consistent brand aesthetic, visual simplicity, and colour harmony. An aesthetically pleasing digital platform attracts more customers, who are more likely to make a purchase after establishing trust.
2. To make content easily accessible and navigation smooth, businesses should create layouts that are clear, logical, and engaging.
3. In order to make sure that virtual servicescapes are up to snuff, telecom companies should make consumer input a part of their digital design processes. To stay up-to-date with client demands and technology advancements, organisations should regularly conduct usability tests and redesign based on data.

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