

Determinants of Consumer Patronage of Fashion Products in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: This research investigated the determinants of consumer patronage of fashion products in Nigeria with a particular reference to Anambra State. The study assessed the influences of fabric design, perceived product quality, fabric material, perceived pleasure as well as perceived symbolic meaning on consumer patronage of fashion products in Anambra State of Nigeria. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design. The target population of this study consists of the consumers of fashion products in Anambra State of Nigeria. The sample size was 384 while 330 valid copies were used in the analysis. Partial least squares structural equation modeling technique was used to test the five alternative hypotheses at 5% level of significance. The findings of the study show that fabric design, perceived quality, fabric material, perceived pleasure as well as perceived symbolic meaning had positive significant influences on consumer patronage of fashion products in Anambra State of Nigeria. The study recommended among others that manufacturers and marketers of fashion products should continue to invest more on the fabric design, quality, materials and other attributes of fashion products in Nigeria for improved and sustained consumer patronage. In addition, fashion designers and manufacturers of fashion products should ensure that they always use appropriate fabric designs, durable fabric quality materials that will resist constant wears and tears when fashioning and designing their products especially clothing in Nigeria.

KEY WORDS: Determinants, Consumer Patronage, Fashion Products, Anambra State, Nigeria.

I. INTRODUCTION

Every blossoming business has its challenges. This is arguably true of the fashion industry in Nigeria. Although the fashion market in Nigeria is growing rapidly, so also is the increasing rate of competition among designers and marketers. Apparently, fashion and designing industry in Nigeria harbors creative, lucrative and talented designers with motivated expertise and skills. Agu and Onuoha (2015) captured that local fashion stylists are seen with newer and attractive styles on periodic basis. Interestingly, the local designers have the skills to fabricate at affordable prices of luxurious designs of international acclaimed fashion markers. Although many Nigerians are yet to embrace using locally made fashion products coupled with the fact that some people are yet to fully embrace locally made designs of fashion products. Stiff competitions exist among products of local designers and their foreign counterparts. In reality, many Nigerians have preference for foreign fashion products over the domestically produced ones. Olaleke (2010) observed that the preference among Nigerians for foreign goods is both disquieting and disturbing especially when considered in the lights of its influence on local industries.

Interestingly, the wide-ranging impression among some Nigerians is that locally made goods are inferior to imported and foreign made goods in

terms of quality and performance; to the extent that some local manufacturers engaged in importation activities in a bid to remain relevant in the fashion and designing business (Okechukwu & Onyemah, 1999). Without any doubt, the beliefs and practice of giving special preference to foreign products among some Nigerian consumers have resulted in misconception and wrong impression of inferiority to locally made products. Although many local designers and manufactures of fashion product have adopted marketing strategies such as advertising, sales promotion and branding to given competition advantage over the local and foreign counterpart, they have not fully exploited the influence of consumers characteristics factor such as perception to gaining competitive advantage (Patrick, Kadipo & Agada, 2016). However, to effectively serve the high sensitive consumers in Nigeria, there is need to understand and appreciate the determinants of consumer patronage frequency towards locally made fashion products in Nigeria. Unfortunately, Udegbe (2016) discovered that some Nigerian consumers have preference for foreign fashion products based on country of origin and perceived superiority of products quality. Agu and Onuoha (2016) found that product fitting is valued as one of the important factor influencing the purchase of fashion products. However, this study sought to investigate the determinants of consumer patronage of fashion products as well as the extent to which they influence consumer patronage of locally-made fashion products (clothes) in Anambra State of Nigeria. The study is an attempt to bridge the gap in the literature and also to contribute to existing knowledge.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to investigate the determinants of consumer patronage of fashion products in Anambra State of Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Ascertain the influence of fabric design on consumer patronage of fashion products.
2. Determine the influence of perceived quality on consumer patronage of fashion products.
3. Assess the influence of fabric material on consumer patronage of fashion products.
4. Evaluate the influence of perceived pleasure on consumer patronage of fashion products.
5. Establish the influence of perceived symbolic meaning on consumer patronage of fashion products.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to address the objectives of this study;

1. How does fabric design influence consumer patronage of fashion products?
2. To what degree does perceived quality influence consumer patronage of fashion products?
3. To what extent does fabric material influence consumer patronage of fashion products?
4. How far does perceived pleasure influence consumer patronage of fashion products?
5. To what extent has perceived symbolic meaning influence consumer patronage of fashion products?

Research Hypotheses

H1: Fabric design has a positive significant influence on consumer patronage of fashion products.

H2: Perceived quality has a positive significant influence on consumer patronage of fashion products.

H3: Fabric material has a positive significant influence on consumer patronage of fashion products.

H4: Perceived pleasure has a positive significant influence on consumer patronage of fashion products

H5: Perceived symbolic meaning has a positive significant influence on consumer patronage of fashion products.

Scope of the Study

The study is limited to investigating the influence of the determinants of consumer patronage of fashion products in Anambra State of Nigeria. The enablers are the fabric design, perceived quality, fabric material, perceived pleasure and perceived symbolic meaning which were the independent variables for this study while consumer patronage was the dependent variable for this study. Fashion consumers formed the unit of analysis for the study using Awka, Onitsha and Nnewi areas in Anambra State of Nigeria. The rationale for using these towns is because they are the major commercial cities of the state with teeming population that are seemingly large to present what seemed to be the substantial markets for both producers and consumers of apparel products. Also, the fashion products surveyed were limited to locally made cloths in Nigeria.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Framework

Consumer Patronage

Consumer patronage refers to the extent to which a customer exhibits repurchasing behavior and possesses a positive disposition toward a

particular product or brand (Gremler & Brown, 1999). Consumer patronage is a predisposition to be purchasing a particular brand of a product (Yuen & Chen, 2010). Consumers could equally be made to buy a particular brand of product at a higher price than it is worth. Product perceived quality and pleasure have positive influences on consumer patronage. Product design and the symbolic impression of fashion products like cloth have positive influences on consumer patronage. Importantly, the measures of consumer patronage include; repurchase intention, price tolerance, recommending to others (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Nevertheless, additional measures of consumer patronage consist of consumer commitment to re-purchase a particular brand or what is called brand loyalty (Oliver, 1999); number of repeated purchases (Kotler & Keller, 2009); intention to buy the brand as the first choice (Yoo & Donthu, 2001); and lastly, willingness to pay higher price for a particular brand in relation to other alternatives.

Fabric Design

Design is totality of features that affects a product appearance and functions in terms of customer requirements. In recent times, fierce competition rages in the fashion market in Nigeria. Notwithstanding, there are talented designers that are striving to carve a niche by having competitive advantages over others in the fashion industry. Obviously, there are also some designers and marketers that are struggling for their business survival. The end result is of every designer is to achieve a competitive advantage and remain in business. On a serious note, understanding how a product is designed creates an avenue for increase marketability and perhaps distinguishes one from others. Furthermore, the fabric design of a product is apparently critical in product identification, differentiation as well as when taking strategic management decisions. In addition, Rashid et al. (2013) maintained that as competition intensifies, fabric design offers a potent way to differentiate and position a company's product and services. He confirmed the importance of fabric design to users, producers and marketers. Kotler and Keller (2009) maintained that in increasingly fast-paced markets, price and technology are not enough; the design and style of the product are inclusive. Convincingly, fabric design is the feature that will often give a company its competitive edge over others striving in the same industry. However, the designer has to outline how much to invent in product form, product feature development, performance, conformance, durability, reliability,

reparability as well as the style of a particular cloth of fabric. Pertinently, a well-designed product is one that is easy to manufacture and distribute by the company. In addition, in the minds of the customers, a well-designed product is one that is pleasurable to look at and easy to open, put in, use, repair and predisposed of. Importantly, the designer has to take all these attributes into consideration for increased users' patronage.

Perceived Quality

Perceived product quality refers to consumer's judgment about a product's overall excellence and superiority. It is a consumer's assessment of a product brand or a product's overall excellence, based on performance, durability, brand name (Kirmani & Baungartner, 2000). Consumers rely on how well the target brand satisfies internal quality standards in their assessment of a brand's overall excellence with regards to their consumption experience (Wong & Zhon, 2005). Quality is the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs. It is a fitness for use as well as conformance to requirements, (Kotler and Keller, 2009). Quality is one of the most important factors influencing the consumer purchase of products. For instance, an exciting brand with trendy style would be perceived to possess high quality. Accordingly, if a consumer perceives an apparel product to be of high quality, the likelihood of buying such product remains equally high. On the other hand, if a consumer perceives the product to be of a poor quality, there is high tendency of not purchasing the product. Convincingly, a seller delivers quality when he sells a product or product brand that meets or exceeds customers' expectations (Kotler & Keller, 2009).

Fabric Material

Ling, Hivang and Salvendy (2007) put forward that physical material is one of the most essential determinants of consumer patronage of a product. Fabric material should be sturdy and strong in order to attract consumer's patronage. Obviously, many fashion products have embroideries and stitches that made them highly attractive to customers. Undoubtedly, to some consumers, what matter most are the physical features of the product. Mack and Sharples (2009) maintained that features of a product are among the important determinants of consumer's choice of product. Seta (2013) maintains that fabric material is very essential and also valued by consumers when they make purchase choices. Similarly, fabric

material is a basic as well as an important distinguishing characteristics cherished by consumers. It is also a considerable factor while making brand strategic decisions. Kotler and Keller (2009) maintained that most products can be offered with varying features or basic function of a product. Undoubtedly, company can identify and select appropriate new material by surveying recent buyers and then calculating customer value versus company cost for each potential feature. Each company must decide whether to offer feature customization at a higher cost or a few standard packages at a lower cost.

Perceived Pleasure

Barsya and Das (2008) observed that the design of a product inherently involves aesthetics. Fashion products give consumers pleasure (Desmet, 2012). People can experience joy when a product is pleasurable to use, fulfills its functions well, or facilitate joyful activity. Fashion products evoke emotions of joy, happiness, pride, contentment, admiration, desire, relief, hope or amusement (Desmet, 2012; Desmet and Schifferstein, 2008). Apparently, there is a positive relationship between pleasure and consumer patronage of fashion products. Importantly, pleasure is an effective component that influences consumer evaluation of product offering. Pleasure as an affective component plays a crucial role on consumer patronage of fashion product such as cloth. Undoubtedly, pleasure is a significant antecedent to product attitudes formation by consumers for both utilitarian and hedonic products. Pleasure is also an emotional component that helps in attitude formation. Pertinently, consumer patronage of fashion products can be attributed to perceived pleasure (Micu, 2012).

Perceived Symbolic Meaning

Research has shown that visual elements such as shape, color, logo and typeface are perceived in terms of their formal or symbolic connotations (Von Rompay, Pruyn and Tieke, 2009). Obviously, some people express themselves through the dress they wear. Some consumers buy products to enhance their self-image as being cosmopolitan, sophisticated and modern (Udegbe, 2017). Von Rompay, Pruyn and Tieke (2009) opined that symbolic meanings are in various forms such as pride, dominance, modern or trendy. Nevertheless, regardless of the type of the symbolic meaning, on a more general level, symbolic meaning reflects those properties consumer discern in products that are not literally part of product appearance. Some products also offer the

symbolism of authenticity and prestige. Many consumers view some products as opportunity to demonstrate high level of material achievement which helps them to create good impression of themselves within their social public. In addition, Yuli et al. (2014) found that a product symbolic meaning in terms of freedom, uniqueness, dominance and pride is critically essential for consumers purchasing frequency. On a similar note, fabric colors and patterns and art drawings on cloths and apparels holds some symbolic meaning to consumer. Shapes styles and colors of dresses and apparels portend social or religious meanings other than their functional values. Accordingly, consumers identify themselves with particular product which implicitly carries a status symbol. Some products are perceived by consumers as expressive, pride or dominance. Research has shown that product symbolism and self-concept is rich and varied. Perner (2010) have also explored possible mechanism through which product symbolism contributes to the formation and change of the consumer's self-concept which ultimately leads to purchase of preferred products or a particular product brand.

Proposed Conceptual Model for the Study

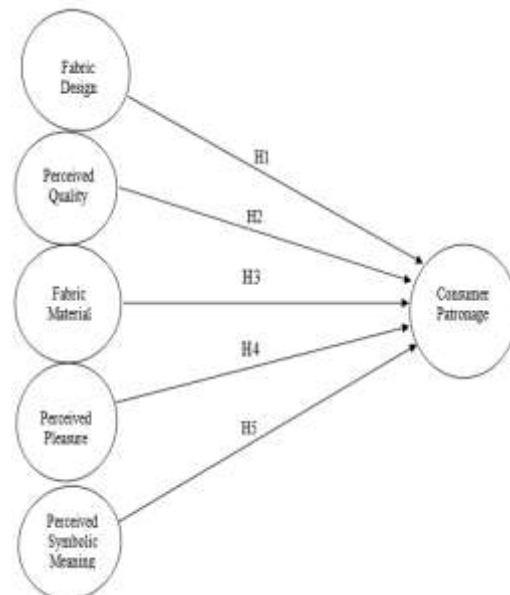


Figure 1: The Proposed Conceptual Model
 Source: Researchers' Schematics, 2020.

III. METHODOLOGY

The cross-sectional survey research design was adopted for the study. The area of the study was Anambra State of Nigeria. The target population of the study comprises the consumers of fashion products in Awka, Nnewi and Onitsha. The

fashion products under investigation were limited to locally made cloths produced in Nigeria. The population size was difficult to obtain as there was no sampling frame the specified the total number of fashion consumers in the areas under investigation. The sample size of 384 was determined using Cochran formula for unknown population size. The study used primary data source using a self-administered questionnaire. Prior to the main survey, the reliability of the instrument was sought. A five-point Likert scale type of the questionnaire was designed ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The questionnaire items were extracted from the literature while the measurement scales were adapted from previous researches and tailored to suit the context of this research. The reliability alpha coefficient average value of 0.752 and composite reliability average value of 0.766 confirmed the internal consistency of the instrument suitable for the main survey. Also, the content validity of the instrument was checked by three research experts. Significantly, the average variance extracted values ranged from 0.504 - 0.692 which confirmed the convergent validity of the study constructs based on threshold suggested by Hair et al. (2014) as shown on table 1.

Table 1: Reliability and Validity of the Instrument

Construct	Cronbach alpha	Composite reliability	Average Variance Extracted
Fabric design	0.722	0.822	0.547
Perceived quality	0.818	0.866	0.628
Fabric material	0.702	0.645	0.512
Perceived pleasure	0.721	0.719	0.504
Perceived symbolic meaning	0.709	0.712	0.528
Consumer patronage	0.842	0.837	0.692

Source: PLS-SEM Algorithm Output, 2020.

In addition, copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents using purposive sampling selection technique. Pertinently, only adult consumers of fashion products (locally-made cloths) of age 18 years and

older were used in the survey. The rationale for choice of only adult respondents is to get informed responses. The Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling was used to test the hypotheses formulated for the study at 5% level of significance. This was facilitated using Smart PLS-SEM version 3. The decision rule stipulated for the acceptance or rejection of the formulated hypothesis is as follows: if the p-value is > 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is accepted. Also, if the p-value is < 0.05 level of significance, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis.

IV. RESULTS

Assessment of the Structural Model

The researchers reported that out of 384 copies of the questionnaire distributed, only 330 valid copies (85.9% response rate) were used for the analysis while 54 copies representing (14.1%) were not returned for analysis. However, the hypotheses were tested using structural equation modeling technique and facilitated through bootstrapping procedure in Smart PLS version 3.0. The study used the standardized root mean square residual (SRMS), the root mean square residual covariance (RMS_{θ}) as well as normed fit index (NFI) for the assessment of goodness of fit of the model. The three models fit measures results indicated that the SRMR value is 0.024, RMS_{θ} value is 0.0323 and the NFI value is 0.925 signaled a well-fitting model. The coefficient of determination (R^2) captured the total variance explained in the endogenous construct as a result of changes in the exogenous variables. The model explains the positive significant variance of 0.703 (70.3%) for consumer purchase. The R square value result showed the substantial power of the exogenous constructs to explain the endogenous construct which clearly met the threshold given that the R^2 values of 0.75, 0.50 and 0.25 are substantial, moderate and weak respectively as suggested by (Hair, et al., 2017). Also, the significance of the structural model was assessed based on the values of the path coefficients, statistical t-values and the p-values. Table 2 presents the Partial least squares structural equation modeling result for the tested hypothesized relationships earlier formulated to guide the study. In addition, figure 2 shows the path coefficients of the structural model showing the relationships between the dependent and independent variables.

Hypotheses	Hypotheses paths	Path coefficients	T-values	P-values	Decision
H1	Fabric design -> CP	0.313	7.233	0.001	Supported
H2	Perceived quality -> CP	0.411	9.121	0.000	Supported
H3	Fabric material -> CP	0.248	5.628	0.024	Supported
H4	Perceived pleasure -> CP	0.209	3.734	0.030	Supported
H5	Perceived symbolic meaning -> CP	0.227	2.862	0.041	Supported

Table 2: Bootstrapping results of the structural model and path analysis

Path is significant at 5% level of significance; if the t-value is ≥ 1.96 , or p-value ≤ 0.05 .

Note: CP = Consumer patronage
 Source: PLS-SEM Output, 2020.

The structural model showing the path coefficients results

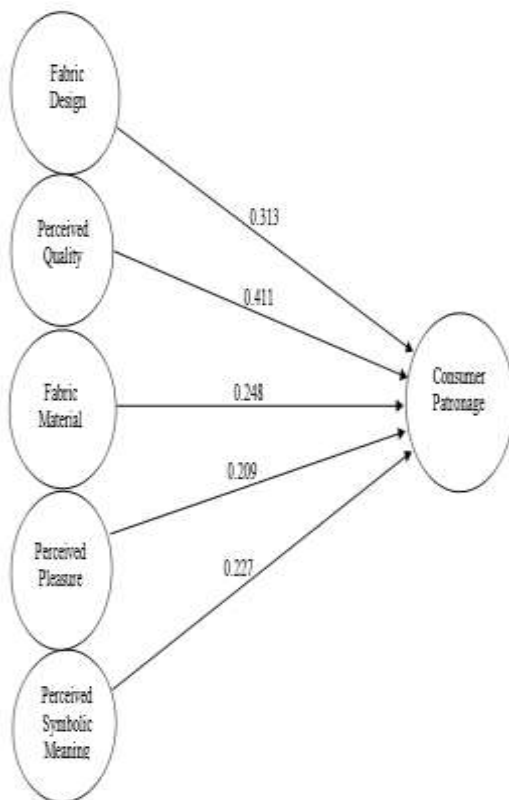


Figure 2: Structural model results. Note: $\beta \geq 0.20$; $t \geq 1.96$ and $p \leq 0.05$ (to be significant*).
 Source: PLS-SEM Bootstrapping Output, 2020.

Taking cognizance of the fact that the path coefficient should be equal to or greater than 0.20 to demonstrate its significance; the t-value should

be ≥ 1.96 while the p-value should be ≤ 0.05 to be significant as proposed by (Wong, 2013). An

examination of the path coefficients, t-values as well as the p-values of the structural model as presented in table 2 and figure 2 show that fabric design had a positive significant influence on consumer patronage of fashion products in Anambra State of Nigeria ($\beta = 0.313$, $t = 7.233$ and $p < 0.05$). In addition, perceived quality had a positive significant influence on consumer patronage of fashion products ($\beta = 0.411$, $t = 9.121$ and $p < 0.05$). Similarly, fabric material had a positive significant influence on consumer patronage of fashion products ($\beta = 0.248$, $t = 5.628$ and $p < 0.05$). Furthermore, perceived pleasure had a positive significant influence on consumer patronage of fashion products ($\beta = 0.209$, $t = 3.734$ and $p < 0.05$). Lastly, perceived symbolic meaning had a positive significant influence on consumer patronage of fashion products ($\beta = 0.227$, $t = 2.862$ and $p < 0.05$). Accordingly, all the hypothetical alternative hypotheses (H1, H2, H3, H4 and H5) earlier postulated were supported.

V. DISCUSSION

A cursory assessment of results as shown on table 2 and figure 2 revealed that fabric design had a positive significant influence on consumer patronage of fashion products in Anambra State of Nigeria. This finding is consistent with the findings of (Rashid et al., 2013, Seta, 2013 and Kotler & Keller, 2009) that found that fabric design significantly and positively influence consumer patronage of fashion products. Additionally, product perceived quality had a positive significant influence on consumer patronage of fashion products in Anambra State of Nigeria. Our finding corroborates with the findings of (Kenyon & Sen, 2012, Wong & Zhon, 2005 and Kirmani & Baungartner, 2000) that discovered that perceived quality positively and significantly influence consumer patronage of fashion products. Furthermore, an examination of results as depicted

on table 2 and figure 2 portrayed that fabric material had a significant positive influence on consumer patronage of fashion products in Anambra State of Nigeria. The study finding agrees with the findings of (Seta, 2013; Mack & Sharples, 2009 and Ling et al., 2007) that found that fabric material and features positively and significantly influence consumer patronage of products. Furthermore, perceived pleasure had a positive significant influence on consumer patronage of fashion products in Anambra State of Nigeria. This finding affirms the findings of the following researchers (Desmet, 2012 and Micu, 2012) that found a positive significant influence of perceived pleasure on consumer patronage of products. In addition, perceived symbolic meaning had a positive significant influence on consumer patronage of fashion products in Anambra State of Nigeria. This research finding is in line with the findings of (Udegbe, 2017; Yuli et al., 2014 and Perner, 2010) that found that perceived symbolic meaning has a positive and significant influence on consumer patronage of fashion products.

VI. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study has provided a comprehensive understanding that fabric design, perceived quality, fabric material, perceived pleasure and perceived symbolic meaning positively and significantly influence consumer patronage of fashion products in Nigeria. The research findings have both managerial and practical implications to the manufacturers, managers, marketers and other stakeholders in fashion and designing industry in Nigeria. Management and managers are expected to use the findings of this study while making brand management and strategic decisions concerning fashion products especially clothes. The study exogenous variables have proved to be important and significant drivers of consumer patronage of fashion products. Conceptually, this study has contributed to knowledge by conceptualization the propellers that influence consumer patronage frequency. The findings of this study have contributed in identifying the extent to which fabric design, perceived quality, fabric material, perceived pleasure and perceived symbolic meaning influence consumer patronage of fashion products. Practically, the findings from this study are expected to be of great significance to the manufacturers, manager and marketers. It will provide as an information repository source to the management of fashion and designing industry in Nigeria for appropriate management decisions as well as strategic policies formulations and implementations. In conclusion, this research

work has supplied empirically, documented evidence that there are significant and quantifiable relationships and influences between the predicting variables and consumer patronage of fashion products in Nigeria as reflected by the findings of this research. Conclusively, perceived quality was found to be the most important determinant of consumer patronage of fashion products in Nigeria.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Designers and manufacturers of fashion products should ensure that they put into consideration appropriate and good fabrics designs that will attract consumer patronage.
2. Manufacturers, designers and marketers of fashion products should invest more towards improved quality for consumer sustainable patronage of fashion products in Nigeria.
3. Designers and manufacturers of fashion products should ensure that their fabrics possess attractive and unique materials in order to attract continual patronage by consumers.
4. Manufacturers and other stakeholders should keep abreast of consumers' expectations concerning fashion products that offer pleasures to them as this will enhance their continual patronage.
5. Designers and manufacturers of fashion products should ensure that their products are perceived as being capable of giving symbolic values for enhanced consumer patronage.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

The present study was limited to investigating the determinants of consumer patronage of fashion products in Anambra State of Nigeria. Therefore, further study may expand the geographical scope by investigating the drivers of consumer patronage of fashion products in other parts of Nigeria in order to broaden the scope and contribute to knowledge. Secondly, since this study used partial least squares structural equation modeling statistical technique, future researchers may use covariance based structural equation modeling technique or maximum likelihood structural equation modeling technique so that their results will be compared with the findings of this research.

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