



Eco-labeling-on-Eco -Product, Product Advertisement as Correlates of Consumer Buying Behavior –for- Eco- Consumption.

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Abstract

The study empirically examined the correlates of eco-labeling on eco-product, product advertisement and consumer buying decision supporting eco-consumption among young people in a transition economy. This study was the first scientific examination of robust mechanism through which eco-labeling on eco-product for human health was associated with consumer buying behaviour for eco-consumption when advertisement was included in the service dominant logic model. The participants comprised of 120 young consumers, 65 (54.17%) male and 55 (45.83%) female, from Awka Metropolitan urban area within the ages of 19 to 26 years with a mean age of 21.68 years and standard deviation of 4.99 years. Based on service dominant logic model dialectics, the proposed problem of study guided the formation of two hypotheses .Hypothesis 1 stated that eco-labeling will positively and significantly correlate with consumer buying behavior for eco-consumption. Hypothesis 2 stated that product advertisement will positively and significantly correlate with consumer buying behavior for eco-consumption. Consumer buying behavior and product advertisement scales were utilized. The first hypothesis that stated that eco-labeling will positively correlate with consumer buying behavior for eco-consumption was confirmed ($r = .25, p < .01$). The second hypothesis that stated that product advertisement will positively and significantly correlate with consumer buying behavior for eco-consumption was confirmed ($r = .20, p < .05$). Based on these results, it was recommended that firm should engage in promotional advertisement to create product awareness which is believed to draw interest from consumers towards their products. They should also strive to understand the importance of eco-labeling for human health with particular reference to beverages, confectionaries and canned products, as this will help them to plan and strategize production and consumer purchase towards satisfying a target set of eco- consumption centric consumers.

Keyword: *Eco-labeling on eco-product, Product Advertisement, Consumer Buying Behaviour, Eco-consumption, Young Consumers, Nigeria.*



Introduction

Consumer buying behavior is important phenomenon relevant to business success, as well as economic development of any nation. In today's globalization and free competitive business environment, the number of firms producing similar goods and services has increased, giving consumers' opportunity to make informed choice. Today, companies have to face competition in respect to gaining and retaining customers, hence, the need to analyze and understand consumers' buying decisions. Understanding what informed consumer buying behavior can help firms to learn what strategies to apply, that can capture consumers' interest, such as to attract and retain consumers and gain competitive advantage (Ashill & Sinha, 2004). Consumer buying behavior according to Dawson, Findlay and Spearks (2006) is defined as a set of attitudes that characterize the patterns of consumers' choices (as cited in Lawan & Zanna, 2013, p. 519). In other words, it involves a continuous decision processes pertaining selection, purchase, and post purchase experiences of product or service (Solomon et al, 2008). Nnedum (2019) views consumer purchase decision for eco- consumption as an individual attitudinal pattern that characterize consumers' decision based on environmental health beliefs and post purchase health experiences of products or services.

However, consumers have different health reasons why they buy certain product. In recent time, consumers are becoming aware of the damages that some products are causing to human health and their environment. Because of their concern about the environment and their health, consumers somewhat avoid buying those product as a way to control depletion of resources, environmental pollution, depletion of ozone layer, that are all activities associated with manufacturing or production activities of certain products (Hanzaee & Asadollahi, 2012). The very fact of this eco-labeling on eco-product for human health concern has in recent time influence the buying behavior of consumers who are environmentally friendly (Do Paco & Raposo, 2009). Companies are becoming aware of this and are consciously taking into consideration environmentally safety measure in their production processes. The information about these safety measure and function of those product regarding environment and health are indicated in the labeling or logo on the product. This labeling indicating environmentally friendly products are called eco-labeling (D'Souza, Taghian & Lamb; 2006), and those set of product and



services with eco-label are called eco-product (Sulong & Lily, 2014). The eco-label is a logos or word indicating that the products are not harmful but friendly to the environment and /or to human health. Eco-products are differentiated from none eco-product through eco-labeling. In essence, eco-label represents words, signs, logo, and symbols inscribed on the product that often provide information to the consumers about the characteristics of the product in relation to environment and human health. These labeling is certified and issued by trusted authority. In Nigeria, it reflects NAFDAC logos and numbers that show that the product was examined by these agencies and certified to be healthy to environment and to human health. Today, people trust product with NAFDAC number and eco-consumption of such product are high. It also represents agencies logos like Standard Organization of Nigeria (SON), Water Resource and Environmental Agency (WREA) among others. Eco-label acts as a communication instrument to consumers regarding the characteristic of product and safety claim (D'Souza, Taghian, Lamp & Peretiakos, 2006a), serve as information that reduce consumers search, guide consumers decision and influence their buying decision. The overall role of eco-labeling is to reduce negative environmental impact through consumption. In line with this, Nordic Council of Minister (2001a) states that “the goals of eco-labeling are: to guide consumers towards purchasing eco-labeling product, and to stimulate the development of products and services that is associated with a lesser environmental and health burden (p.18)”.

Over the last decade, consumer consumption of goods and services has increased tremendously across the world, leading to severe damage to the environment (Chen & Chai, 2010). Some of the serious repercussions of environmental damage are global warming, increased environmental pollution, and decline in flora and fauna (Chen & Chai, 2010). Various countries across the globe are beginning to realize this threat and have started working towards minimizing the harmful impact of their business activities on the environment. This realization and concern towards the environment and society has led to the emergence of ‘sustainable development’ which emphasizes the need to promote sustainability and advocates that form of development which minimizes negative impact on the environment and society. Sustainable development further encourages eco-labeling. ‘Eco-consumption’, is therefore normally related to environmentally responsible consumption where consumers consider the environmental



impact of purchasing, using, and disposing of various products, or using various eco product or services (Moisander, 2007). Environmentally responsible purchasing is vital as unplanned purchasing of goods can severely damage the environment. Grunert (1995) reported that consumer household purchases were responsible for 40% of the environmental damage. Consumers possess the capability to prevent or decrease environmental damage by purchasing eco-label products.

Awareness of eco-label has been one problem affecting consumers' choice of eco-label product in Nigeria. Researchers have found that awareness of eco-label among consumers is belief to enhance consumer buying behavior of eco-label product (Dangelico & Pontrandolfo, 2010). It is important to also replicate such study here in Nigeria to determine whether people are aware of eco-label, and if they are, whether such awareness influences their buying behavior for eco-consumption.

As content specific, the study concentrated on eco-labeling of milk product. Milk product is one of the commonest stable foods of young consumer such as students, and students probably have different reasons for choosing a particular type of milk product. It is necessary to determine whether student consider eco-labeling, in their milk-product as a result of having NAFDAC number which represent eco-labeling in this context. On the premises of past researches, awareness of eco-label correlate with consumer buying behavior by providing two important roles; (1) it guide consumers buying decision by providing important information to reduce search of such information by consumers (e.g., Okada & Mais, 2010), and (2) it stimulates the development of product and service that are associated with lesser environmental burden (Du, 2010).

Observation of patterns of consumer buying behavior in Nigeria points to the direction that consumers go for product that they know much about. Among others, advertisement serves as powerful tool to create such popularity. The researcher in regard argued that not being able to effectively introduce product or service to the consumers to create awareness of such product and service can limit consumers' knowledge about them. It is only when consumers are aware of a product and understands the features and quality that they can think of giving it a trial. Effective advertisement can serve as a promotional mix in the sense that creating awareness about product



availability and indicating its distinctive qualities can induce consumers to take purchase decisions in favour of the product.

Today, different milk companies advertise their product in Nigeria using different media. Such as television, billboard, and through various form of social media like mobile phone, A good experience of its trial may turn consumer likeness to the product and lead to repeat purchase. Previous research findings conducted in developed countries have consistently found a positive correlation between advertisement and consumer buying (Naizi & Hujra, 2012; Rehman, Nawaz, Khan & Hyder, 2014).

Advertising effectiveness associated with way the consumer subsequently processes the content of the advertisement (Ducoffe, 1996). If the procession is positive, it influences the consumer buying behavior. This study therefore positions to examine the relationship between eco-labeling, advertisement and consumer buying behavior of milk product.

Background to the Study

Unlike what is practice in developed countries, consumption pattern in Nigeria has no strict policy regulation. Consumers have little or no knowledge of the consequences of their consumption decision. Nigerians are carefree in their buying attitude probable because they are less knowledgeable of the awareness of what the producers do in terms of how they go about in the production of the product, and how their production activities affect our environment and our health. As a result of this, our naturally endowed rich resource environment has continued to deplete, with total non-recyclable oriented practices like pure water bags. Production of high inorganic food products are on the alarming rate with little or no regulation, and continuous depletion of ozone layer as a result of indiscriminate pollution-prone production activities, all to the detriment of our economy and our health.

Lack of environmental minded production and consumption policy have been negatively affecting not only the economy but the health of large number of Nigeria population. Eco-labeling which reflects concerns for environmentally friendly product lacked attention in Nigeria. Yet, issues of environmental degradation, pollution, depletion of mineral resources are



on the increase in areas with high industrial concentration in Nigeria, causing economic, social and political problems. However, owing to lack of eco-labeling studies from Nigerian perspective in the literature, this study tends to explore relationship between eco-labeling and consumer buying behavior in Nigeria cultural context.

With respect to advertisement, unfortunately virtually all these studies from psychological perspective were mainly done in foreign countries. No such study to the best of the researcher's knowledge has been conducted in Nigeria based on review of the industrial, environmental, and consumer psychology as well as sociological literatures. Hence, there is virtually lack of such knowledge in respect to eco-labeling relationship with consumers buying behavior from Nigeria context. This study therefore aims to compress the gap in knowledge. This study aims to examine the following:

- (1) To ascertain the relationship between eco-labeling- on- eco-product and consumer buying behavior for eco-consumption of milk among young consumers.
- (2) To examine the relationship between advertisement and consumer buying behavior among young consumers.

The study attempts to answer the following questions:

- (1) Will there be significantly positive association of eco-labeling-on-eco-product with consumer buying behavior for eco-consumption of milk product?
- (2) Will there be a significantly association of advertisement with consumer buying behavior for eco-consumption?

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

Consumer Buying Behavior

A consumer is the one who consume the goods and services offered by a firm (Babalola, 2003). According to Dawson et al (2006), consumer buying behaviors are set of attitudes that characterize the patterns of consumers' choices (cited in Lawan & Zanna, 2013). Similarly, Kardes (2002) define consumer behavior as the study of human or consumer responses to product, services and the marketing of products and services. Consumer behavior might be the



following: The mental, emotional and physical activities that people engage in when selecting, purchasing, using and disposing of products and services so as to satisfy needs and desires (Priest, Carter, & Statt, 2013).

Consumer buying behavior has been viewed in different perspectives by scholars. Baumgartner and Steenkamp (1995) identified two dimension of consumer buying behavior that include exploratory acquisition of product (EAP) and exploratory information seeking (EIS). Exploratory acquisition of product (EAP) reflects a purchase to seek sensory stimulation in product purchase through risk and innovative product choice. EAP involves changing purchase and consumption experience. Consumers who are high in EAP enjoy taking chances in buying unfamiliar product. Such consumers are low in brand loyalty, hence they try out new innovative products. Exploratory information seeking (EIS) on the other hand reflects a tendency to obtain cognitive simulation through the acquisition of consumption-relevant knowledge out of curiosity (Baumgartner & Steenkamp,1995). Consumers who are high on exploratory information seeking (EIS) like to go browsing and window shopping. They also are interested in advertisements, and other promotional materials that provide marketing information. They also enjoy talking to other consumers about their purchase and consumption experience.

From psychological view, consumer purchase decision involves a continuous cognitive consumption process (Katiyar & Katiyar, 2014). A rich body of research has suggested that consumers generally go through a five-stage of decision-making process whenever they make a purchase (Furaiji, Latuszynska & Wawrzyniak, 2012; Katler & Keller, 2006). These stages are: need recognition, pre-purchase / information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase and post-purchase evaluation.

Need recognition - (perceiving a need)

This is the first stage of buying decision. During this stage, consumer realizes that he has a need. This need can be caused by internal or external stimuli. Internal stimuli include normal personal needs like need in food, shelter, water etc External stimuli can come to a person through discussion with a friend (Kotler, Armstrong, 2008).



Pre-purchase / information search – (seeking values)

This is the second buying decision making stage. At this stage, consumers try to gather information relevant to what he / she need. Information search come to play only when a consumer perceive a need that might be satisfied by the purchase and consumption of a product. Here, a consumer tries to find as much information about a product to able him make rightful purchase decision (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008). The amount of searching consumer can do varies along side with the motivation level, the primary information that he has, and value of information. This information could be provided through advertisement, product labeling, discussion with friends, internet browsing and so on (Kotler & Keller, 2006).

Evaluation of alternatives stage (assessing values)

The evaluation of alternative occurs when the buyer uses the information he got to evaluate different brands in the same product category (Kotler, Armstrong, 2008). Product category here means having many product of the same kind that serves same purpose. In such situation, consumers do careful evaluation before deciding what brand to buy. Evaluation is more serious when the product involve is an expensive one, or is a new product that consumer do not have pro knowledge or experience of. But when they make habitual buying, they don't pay much attention to this phase (Michael & Solomon, 200). The essence of evaluation is adopts a particular brand that meets his needs. Yet, there are some situations that evaluation may be less emphasized; attitudes of others and unexpected situational factors (Kotler, Armstrong, 2008).

Purchase Stage (buying value)

This is the fourth stage, where consumer makes actual purchase decision. The ultimate decision may be based on factors which may be environmental (e.g culture, family, peer relation, social influence) or personal (e.g, needs, awareness of brand identity and attitude toward brand identity), or psychological (cognition, perception, emotion, motivation etc). This environment, individual and psychological characteristic are known to influence emotional responses that in turn affect consumer behavioral responses (Zhu & Guo, 2004).



Post Purchase Evaluation (value in consumption or use)

There is a stage where consumers decide whether the purchase actually satisfies his / her needs, which can make him / her to either continue with the product (product loyalty) or change to another product (product switching). This is basically dependent on perceived product use experiences. If experience is favourable, consumers will tend to repeat purchase. This is called product or brand loyalty. However, researchers have stated that buying behavior is influenced by brand loyalty (D'Souza, Taghian & Lamb, 2006) which is referred to as the ability to repeat purchase of a particular of same brand without minding other alternatives, even when another company that offers same brand offers cheaper price.

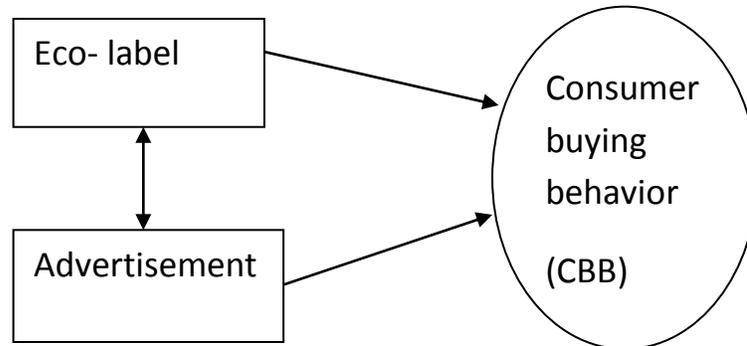
Model of consumer behavior

Having looked at the various stages of consumers' buying behavior processes that consumers undergo during purchase, it is more useful to explain the models. The study of consumer buying behavior is generally divided into two different approaches: the consumer processing model (CPM) and the hedonic and experiential model (HEM). Dawson, Bloch, and Ridgway (1990) contend that consumers are motivated by three broad categories of needs that are (a) utilitarian or product-related, (b) hedonic or recreational, and (c) a combination of both utilitarian and hedonic.

According to the consumer processing model (CPM), information processing and choice are seen as rational, cognitive, systematic, and reasoned (Leigh & Martin, 1990). This is in tandem with the views of traditional psychologists (Ajzen, 1991) who propounded the theory of planned behavior. According to the planned behavior perspective, consumer behavior is a reasoned action, which goes along with information search. When consumers are provided with information from advertisement and labeling, they reason the information and base their buying decision on it (Bettman, 1979). With the consumer processing model, consumer behavior is highly cognitive, rational, systematic, and reasoned. In trying to satisfy these needs, consumers process information and ultimately use this information to choose from close substitute goods and services offered for sale in the marketplace. Hence, eco-labeling and advertisement help consumers make decisions since the major contributions of these concepts is to provide adequate

information about product quality, product availability and so on. Based on this, the present study draws its model as below:

Model of the relationship of Consumer buying Behavior, Eco-labeling and Advertisement



Theories that explain consumer buying behavior

Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) joined with model of consumer behavior

Theory of planned behavior was propounded by Ajzen (1991). A central theme in the theory of planned behavior is that the individual’s intention to perform a given behavior is based on reasoned action. Individual has to reason before acting because they want to get justification of their actions. In the context of consumer buying behavior, consumers are rational beings who would want to reason their buying decisions so as to get satisfaction for their needs at reduce risk. Hence, they prioritize their needs and plan based on planned-based information and reasoned actions. In line with buying decision process, consumer passes through six cognitive process stages in their purchase decision. From the lens of planned behavior theory, each of this stage involves planning. Through planning and reasoning, consumer will identify a need, search for information, evaluate the information in accordance to his or her needs, and make purchase based on his or her conviction; after which he continue or discontinue to adopt the product depending on experience.

One of the tenants of planned behavior theory is that intentions are assumed to control the motivational factors that influence buying behavior. In view of this, consumers’ intention could be to reduce risk of trying different product, or risk associated with the product propensity to



health and environmental hazards (Eco-labeling). However, planned behavior is indications of how hard consumers have sought for information and how much of an effort they exert to know about a product. Thus, the stronger the intention to engage in plan behavior, the more likely a consumer will be motivated to perform actual purchase behavior (Ajzen, 1991). This information can easily be gathered through advertisement, hence the above model.

Theory of Trying (Bagozzi, and Warsaw, 1990)

The theory of trying is the opposite of planned behavior theory. The Theory of Trying advocated by Bagozzi and Warsaw (1990) focuses on the assessment of trying to act. In other words, in theory of trying an attitude toward a reasoned action is replaced by an attitude toward trying, and an intention is restricted to an intention to try (Carsrud, 2009). It simply means that consumers have not enough information about the intending product to buy. In case of new product, trying theory thrives. Relating this theory to eco-labeling and consumer buying behavior of eco-product, an experienced eco-label user may feel that the risk of trying a new one is low and may therefore employ a low-effort adoption process where he or she jumps directly from awareness of the label to trial without attempting to achieve a deeper understanding of it first (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2006).

Utility theory

Utility is the ability of a product or service to satisfy consumer's need. Every consumer want to get maximum satisfaction from the money spend on the product. They want to get high utility value in their purchase, and therefore they seek out for detailed information about a product. According to Arnould, Price, and Zinkhan (2004), "decision makers are rational and have complete information; that is, consumers are assumed to have complete information about the probabilities and consequences attached to each alternative course of action". Consumers are expected to understand this information and be able to calculate the advantages and disadvantage of each choice. Thus, consumers make decisions that maximize expected utility. Having incomplete information, rather than having sufficient information, is what characterizes the majority of consumers. Thus, utility theory is more an idealized model for consumer decision



making, and companies need to align their strategic marketing choices with the reality of consumer behavior and choice modeling. (Arnould, Price & Zinkhan, 2004)

Utility from product or service is assumed to be a function of the attributes of the product or service including; the attribute of the product certification, the cost of the product to consumers, and the characteristics of the consumers. Within this framework, the utility information from eco-labeling and advertisement are assumed to be the function of consumer buying behavior.

Eco-label concept

From the literature review, one could associate reason for eco-label with the increasing concern for environmental protection by governments, businesses, and the general public. The origin and idea can be traced back in the late 1960s (D'Souza Taghian, Lamb & Peretiakko, 2007) when the increasing and dangerous pressure of the production systems on the environment were recognized, and compelled people to move towards a more sustainable and environmentally friendly approaches by means of eco-label that identify green product and increase green consumerism, and green marketing. Purchasing and consuming products that are beneficent for environment are called environmental friendly or green buying (Mainieri et al, 2001). Many researchers used different terms such as green product, green marketing, ecological product, to reflect eco-labeling. In this study, there used interchangeably. Consumers who concern more for the environmental issues are more possible to buy ecological products (Yeonshin Kim & Sejung Marina Choi, 2005). Ecological marketing or green marketing or green consumerism is term that reflects environmental impacts associated with producing, distributing, consuming and/or disposing of a product just like eco-labeling. Eco-label provides information to differentiate between more or less environment friendly products and sustainable consumption. It is assumed that if consumers are presented with appropriate eco-label information, their purchases or buying behaviors will change and more sustainable eco-product purchasing will result (Horne, 2009). Most likely, consumers whose are concerned about environment consider eco-labeling product as prominent in their choice decision (Cherian & Jacob, 2012). Thus, a 'eco-label conscious



consumer is one who acts, purchases and consumes, in accordance with the need to protect the environment (Akehurst et al., 2012).

Eco-label is a certified label in form of logo, symbol, terms and descriptions on the product that describe, inform and educate the consumer about the product in relation to its environment characteristic. These labels included such claims as “recyclable”, “eco-friendly”, “low energy”, and “pure organic”. Such labels attracted consumers who were trying to find ways in which they could reduce depletion of the environment and health related product through purchasing choices. Eco-label can act as a guiding instrument only if consumers are aware of their existence and what they use for.

Eco-labeling has been conceptualized differently in the literature by different scholars. The Global Eco-labeling Network (GEN) defines an eco-label as ‘a label which identifies overall environmental preference of a product (i.e., good or service) within a product category based on life cycle considerations’ (GEN, 2004). In this regard, products with eco-labels are expected to pose no or an acceptable level of damage to the environment through their production, distribution, use or disposal whereas similar products without eco-labels may cause unacceptable damage to the environment (Anderson and Hansen, undated).

Tang, Fryxell, and chow (2004) define eco-label as a mean of information tool that usually utilized logo to convey information to consumers on the environment implications of buying eco-product. Rex and Baumann (2006) describe it as a means for consumers to make choices that will reduce environmental impact and enable them to influence how products are made. Similarly Sonderskov and Daugbjerg (2011) define eco-label as a product claim to furnish consumers with credible and easily accessible information on the environmental attributes of a product. Sammer and Wustenhagen (2006) advocate that eco-label is an important marketing tool to overcome market failure due to information asymmetries between sellers and buyers of environmental friendly products. In a more encompassing definition, an eco-label is a label or logo indicating that a product meets high environmental and performance standards and has less impact on the environment. It addition, it also shows that a company is socially responsible (Ghauri & Cateora, 2005: p. 475).



One common debate among scholars over eco-label pertains the awareness level, the knowledge, the motivational influence and the availability as well as whether body that certifies eco-label are trusted enough to build confidence in the consumers. Based on this, Du (2010) conceptualizes eco-labeling as a four domain construct model to include: eco-label awareness, environmental motivation, and eco-knowledge and eco-product availability. Similarly, Taufique, Siwar, Talid, Sarah and Chamhuri (2014) proposed nine conceptual model of eco-labeling that access awareness, involvement, trust, design and visibility, credibility of the source, types and level of information, clarity of meaning, persuasiveness and private benefits. Leire and Thidell (2009) grouped eco-labeling effectiveness into three main steps: consumer awareness, consumer acceptance and consumer behavior change. The present study follows Du (2010), Elham, Rahbar and Nabsiah Abdul (2011) and Kong, Harun, Sulong and Lily (2014) eco-label model, which conceptualized eco-label in terms of eco-label awareness, eco-label knowledge, and environmental motivation

Relationship between eco-labeling and consumer buying behavior

Drawing the lens of planned behavior, consumers will always reason to get maximum satisfaction of the product or service they pay for. In order not to make mistake, they will look for sufficient information. Eco-label provided environmental information on product label that serve as a clue that consumers look at and be motivated to buy the product (Carlson et al., 1993). D' Souza et al., (2006b) stated that once consumers gained sufficient knowledge about the environmental consequence, their awareness level would be increased, and their purchase behavior towards green products would be potentially stimulated. However, the type of message poses on label effect consumers' perception on health and environmental risks of product, and thus affect consumer's acceptances with these products (Roe & Teisl, 2007 p.51). According to Johnson, Wessells, Donath and Asche (2001), consumer who value sustainable environmental resources as attribute of eco-label product will have greater demand for eco-labeled product than for unlabeled product just to create incentive for sustainable management.



Empirical Review on Eco-labeling and Consumer Buying Behavior

A considerable amount of literature has been published on the relationship between eco-label and consumer buying behavior. Kong, Harun, Solung and Lily (2014) conducted a study on “the influence of consumer’s perception of green products on green purchase intention” using 159 consumers above 18 years old in Sabah, Malaysia. In the study, green product was conceptualized as a multidimensional variable comprised of green corporate perception, eco-label, green advertising, green packaging, and green product value. Regression result demonstrated that within consumer perception; green corporate perception ($\beta = 0.188, p < .01$), eco-label ($\beta = 0.354, p < 0.01$), and green product value ($\beta = 0.333, p < 0.01$) had positive significant influences on consumers’ green purchase intention. The findings also revealed that eco-label and green product value made the largest contribution in influencing green purchase intention among consumers. In contrast, both green advertising ($\beta = .014, p > 0.05$) and green packaging ($\beta = 0.073, p > 0.05$) had no significant impact on consumer intention to purchase green products (p.924).

In the study of Du (2010), title effectiveness of eco-label; a study of Swedish University students choice on ecological food, a sample of 242 students was selected and regression analysis was applied to examine the relationship between attention to eco-label and students purchase behavior, as well as the effect of attention to eco-label and students’ purchase behavior. In the study, Du (2010) conceptualized attention to eco-label behavior as a four factor construct comprised; eco-labeling awareness, environmental motivation, eco-knowledge and eco-availability. The findings showed that attention to eco-label (combined eco-awareness, environmental motivation, eco-knowledge and eco-availability) significantly predict student purchase behavior ($\beta = .573, t = 10.83$), all at $P < .001$. When attention to eco-label factor domains were examined in relation to purchase behavior; Pearson correlation results indicated that purchase behavior significantly correlated with awareness ($r = .268, p < .001$), environment motivation ($r = .598, p < .001$), and eco-knowledge ($r = .355, p < .001$), but did not had significant correlation with eco-availability ($r = -.040, p > .05$) (p.50).

D’Souza, Taghian, and Lamb (2006) study title “an empirical study on the influence of environmental labels on consumers using 155 consumers of telephone. A Pearson correlation



results indicate that there is no association between “Always reading labels” and purchase intention even if the product is somewhat lower in quality, therefore ($r=0.10, p>0.05$). According to the authors, this result may indicate that those customers who always read product labels are, arguably, more environmentally concerned and demonstrate a higher tendency to be, less forgiving in respect of somewhat lower quality of products. It may be suggested that consumers' expectation of quality remains unchanged. However, they find that a significant relationship existing between “always read labels” and purchase intention even if the product is somehow more expensive ($r=0.27, p<0.01$). This implies that customers appear to be more forgiving in terms of somewhat higher prices, while not being compromising in relation to quality. Finally they found no significant association between “Satisfied with the information on product labels” and purchase intention if the product is somewhat more expensive. Based on this result, the authors suggested that providing satisfactory product labels will result, potentially, in more informed customer decision and product selection, but will not overcome consumers' price sensitivity. In the descriptive analysis, consumers appear to be somewhat less inclined (31.6 per cent) to consider known brands as being environmentally safe and seem to rely more on their own experience (66.5 percent) in selecting environmentally safe products.

Vlosky, Ozanne and Fontenot (1999) examined the relationships between intrinsic environmental motivations like environmental consciousness, the importance of environmental certification, involvement in certification, and the willingness to pay a premium for environmentally certified wood products in USA. In the study, it was found that consumers with high involvement or high expectation in environmental certification had high willingness to pay a premium for environmentally certified wood products.

A study by D'Souza (2000), which examined the impact of “Dolphin-Safe” eco-label on four brands of consumers’ canned tuna choice in Australia, reported that consumers were favorably influenced by the presence of “dolphin-safe” eco-label on their tuna brand preference. Similarly, Sammer and Wustenhagen (2006) conducted a choice-based conjoint analysis involving 151 potential washing machine buyers in Switzerland. The study analyzed the relative importance of EU energy-labeled products compared to other product attributes, such as brand, water and energy consumption level, energy efficiency rating, and price factor on consumer



buying decision for a washing machine. The research findings indicated that the energy label positively influenced consumers' buying decisions for washing machines.

Advertising

According to Rehman, Nawaz, Khan and Hyder (2014), advertising is defined as sharing of information about products in a non-personal way usually paid by a sponsor through different media. These media could be television, billboard, newspaper, radio, internet website, and so on. Advertising is done to create likeness, attraction and influence buying behavior in positive way (Rehman et al., 2014). Similarly, Ayanwala, Alimi and Anyanbimipe (2005) defines advertising as "a non-personal paid form where ideas, concepts, products or services, and information are promoted through media (visual, verbal, and text) by an identified sponsor to persuade or influence behavior".

Advertisement is one means that companies apply to get their products and services known to consumers. Consumers are scattered all over, and have little or no knowledge of all the products in the market. The role of advertisement is to carry message to these far distance consumers, and to disseminate information about the product to create consumer awareness, and attract their attention to choose their product over alternative products. However, companies have freedom to advertise goods. The freedom to advertise promotes the existence of more sellers, and that gives consumers wider choices (Arens, 2002). Quality of individual choices is usually influenced by information about the available options. Therefore, the information that advertisement passes on can be appealing to consumers' emotion and stimulate intention to buy the product. Advertising enhance the extent and quality of choices that consumers make by providing regular and quality information on available products and their uses. However, in some respects, it tends to limit the scope of consumer choice especially in situations where only few of several alternative products are advertised and given prominence over other alternatives (Onyenyili-Onuorah, 2005).

Advertisers aim is to spread maximum information about products in target market. Therefore, popularity is the aim of advertising (Ramaswami & Namakumari, 2004). Companies use advertisement to inform the consumers about the product quality, and differentiate their



product from other competitors (Onyenyili-Onuorah, 2005). In essence of this, advertisement is seen as a mediated form of communication from an identifiable source, designed to persuade the receiver to take some action, now or in the future (Richards & Curran, 2002). Advertisement on a product creates consumers awareness about the product, and possibly change their perception. As espoused by Keller (2008), advertisement is a powerful means of creating strong, favorable, and unique brand associations and eliciting positive judgments and feelings. Advertisement is a psychological mean of attracting the customers in the sense that it affects their perception, feelings, emotions and intention. Advertisement is carried out primarily to influence the consumers and convince them to buy the product. Some researchers (Fitima & Lodhi, 2015) stressed that advertisement is useful in coating the awareness among the consumers. According to the author, advertisements shape the behaviors of the people through cognition. Cognition is the perception of a person towards the information communicated through advertisements. These cognitions are observed by the individual through his senses, perception, attention, memory, reasoning, language.

On the contrary, advertisement influence on consumer behavior could be limited by rural factors like lifestyle, education; unemployment that reduces the consumer purchasing power and more serious factor is limited access to communication source like TV, newspaper and so on. Rehman et. al found a negative influence of rural factor on consumer buying behavior, and explained that people in rural area have limited access to communication or advertisement medium.

Researcher (Cavill & Bauman, 2004; Grover & Vriens, 2006) have propounded a series of steps involved in assessing effectiveness of advertisement called hierarchy of effect model (cited in Rehman et. al. (2014). This steps includes:

Awareness

Awareness is the first step of hierarchy of effects model, where people get awareness about products. At this stage, advertisers introduce their products, services and information about the usage of products. Initially, advertisers create awareness about products in their target market and its benefits to use (Baca et al., 2005). According to Ashcroft and Hoey (2001) awareness is the cognitive stage to attract customers and is the first step of communication process.



Interest

Advertisement of a product or service is run with the aim to create interest among target viewers because creating interest is the priority of advertisers (Rowley, 1998; Broeckelmann, 2010). Continues buying of a particular product shows consumers' interest (Ghirvu, 2013).

Desire

It is the third step of hierarchy of effects model that deals with the aspiration of target customers to buy a product or service. From advertising view point, desire is said to be the intense level of wanting a product. Creating desire is the precedence of advertisers, where they explain the features and benefits of their products that how much value you have here (Richardson, 2013). At this level, advertisers try to give greater exposure of a product to the customers (Rowley, 1998).

Action

At the fourth level of hierarchy of effects model action on the part of a customer is taken i.e. actually purchasing a product or service. At this stage, customers are ready to pay for the products to fulfill their intense desire for a particular product or services. A number of incentives offered may persuade a customer to take action (purchase). For example discounted prices often entice customers to take action i.e. buy something (Rawal, 2013). As mentioned by Ashcroft and Hoey (2001) action is the behavior stage involving actual purchasing.

Relationship between advertisement and consumer buying behavior

Consumers buying behavior is the products purchase decision (Adelaar Chang, Landchnderfor & Morimoto, 2003). Advertising on the other hand is a way using different techniques to effectively convey commercial messages to create purchase decision.

On one hand, many companies provide products and services ready to sell to consumer that are far and wide. On the other hand, consumers are not readily aware of these products. Therefore, companies need to inform the consumers. As products are produced and introduced



into the market, advertising helps get the new product off the ground by giving more people more complete information thereby stimulating primary demand for the entire product class. Thus, advertising messages are directed toward informing consumers about a product and influencing consumers' beliefs, attitudes, emotional reactions, and choices toward the product (Shimp, 2007). Effective advertisement influences the attitude towards brand and finally leads to purchase intention (Goldsmith & Lafferty, 2002). According to Rehman et. al (2014), advertising is done to create awareness, likeness and attraction which in turn influence buying behavior in positive way (p.409). According to Hoyer and Macinnis (2009) effective advertising creates positive feelings that lead to actual purchase of advertised products. Therefore, on the basis of above arguments there is the likelihood that advertisement will significantly relate to consumer buying behavior. In an empirical finding, Rehman, Nawaz, Khan and Hyder (2014) found a positive correlation between advertisement and consumer awareness which in turn increase consumer buying behavior.

Empirical Review on advertisement and Consumer buying behavior

Fitima & Lodhi (2015) conducted a study title "Impact of advertisement on buying behavior of the consumers: study of cosmetic industry in Karachi city". A sample of 200 male and female cosmetic consumers participated in the study. Pearson correlation result indicated that advertisement had positive significant relation with consumer buying awareness. Further, a regression analysis was also conducted to examine to impact of consumer awareness on consumer buying behavior, and the result demonstrated that consumer awareness had significant impact on consumer behavior ($\beta = .598$, $p < .05$) and contributed 39% increase in consumer buying behavior.

In another study by Rehman, Nawaz, Khan and Hyder (2014) title "How advertising affects the buying behavior of consumer in rural areas: a case of Paskistan". The sample used was 416 participants comprise made up of students, teachers, and professionals. A pearson correlation result demonstrated a significant negative correlation between factor of rural area (educational level and buying power) and consumer behavior ($r = -.637$) and a significant positive correlation between advertisement and consumer buying behavior, all at $p < .001$).



Further regression analysis was conducted to determine the effect of advertisement on consumer behavior. The result indicated that advertisement had significant effect on consumer buying behavior. Ehman et. al (2014) explained that the reason for the negative correlation between factor of rural areas and buying behavior was due to the high ration of unemployment in the rural area. The positive correlation was due to awareness that advertisement created on the consumers.

Russo and Chaxel, (2010) also conducted a study that examined influence of persuasive message (advertising) on consumer choice. The study employed an experimental design consisting of 203 participants divided and placed under five conditions; two uncontrolled and three controlled; in verifying the ability of a specific, observable process to explain the influence of a persuasive message on choice. The study indicated that although people are aware of advertising's direct effect on their choice, they are not aware of its indirect effect through biased evaluation of the product information.

Hypotheses:

Based on the literature review, the following hypotheses are stated:

- There will be a significant relationship between eco-labeling of product and consumer buying behavior of the product among university undergraduate students
- There will be a significant relationship between product advertisement and consumer buying behavior of the product among university undergraduate students.



Method

Participants

A total sample of 120 undergraduate students comprised of 65 male students (54.17%) and 55 female students (45.83%) from Nnamdi Azikiwe university participated in the study. Simple random sampling was adopted in the selection of three faculties and six departments (two from each faculty) from which the participants were drawn. The faculties include social Sciences (46), Management science (38) and Arts (36) and the departments were political Science (21) and psychology (25) from Social Sciences faculty, marketing (21) and business administration (17) from Management Sciences faculty, and vocational (20) and guidance and counseling (16) from Educational Faculty. However, a non probability convenient sampling was applied in selecting the participants. The participants' age was ranged from 19 to 26 years, with mean age of 21.68 years and standard deviation age of 7.99 years. They were all Christians as indicated in their Responses. In respect to their state of origin, 43 were from Anambra, 49 came from Imo state, 18 hailed from Enugu, 8 were from Ebonyi, 2 were from Edo.

Selection criteria

Only students who were in 300 level and above were selected. It is assumed that majority of this level of students are more exposed to market, more specific in what they need and are most likely to buying things that they use by themselves. Thus, they are more likely to be exposed to eco-label.

Instruments

Three instruments were used. They include consumer buying behavior scale, Eco-label scale and advertisement scale.

Consumer buying scale

A 15 item scale of consumer buying behavior developed by Nnedum (2006) was used to measure consumer buying behavior of milk product. The scale has a Likert response ranged from 1



(strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The items are all directly stated. The validity and reliability of the scale has been well established by Nnedum (2006). The present study yielded a Cronbach alpha coefficient reliability score of .78 for consumer buying behavior scale. Thus the reliability score indicate that the consumer buying behavior items has high internal consistency, and it is reliable for the present study.

Eco-label Scale

An Eco-label scale developed by Du (2010) was used in the student. The scale has 21 items that assess consumers' level of eco-awareness (example: "I am aware of eco-label on a food product when I shop"), eco-knowledge (example: "I know that eco-label acts as an informative policy instrument with the purpose of guiding consumers about sustainable consumption"), eco-availability example: "I can always find the desired ecological food in the supermarket"), eco-label acceptance (example: "I will always purchase ecological food), and environmental motivation (example: "I believe my purchase of eco-label can actually protect environment. The scale is a likert-response type ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). All the items were directly stated. Regarding, the validity and reliability measure of the scale, a face validity was carried out by the two experts lecturers from psychology department who give independent evaluation with similar remarks and correction on adaption and rewording. Thus, some items were reworded to suit our culture. However, a cronbach alpha coefficient reliability score of .724 was obtained on the present data.

Advertisement scale

A 9 item advertisement scale developed by Obermiller (1999) was used in this study. The scale has a likert response format ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Phase validity was done by lecturers from psychology department. A cronbach alpha coefficient reliability score of .91 was obtained.



Procedure

The researchers obtained an official letter of identification from the Department of Psychology, Research Ethics Committee. This letter was used to get approval from the various heads of departments allowing the researcher to conduct the research with their students as young consumers. 150 copies of questionnaire were printed and distributed 150. A non-probability convenient random sampling was adopted in the selection of the students. Convenience sampling is a sampling technique in which interviewers are asked to find respondents who happen to be conveniently accessible (Kent, 2007). In essence, the questionnaire was administered to students who volunteered to participate. But to ensure that a shared number of male and female students participated, a quota sample selection system was applied. Here, the researchers used their discretion to share the questionnaire to accommodate good shared number of both gender. For the sake clarification, the meaning of eco-label was explained to the respondents. The survey normally took place between 10:15 am and 10 45am for the first class, and 11am to 11:40am for the second class. The field survey lasted for six days corresponding to with the six departments that were randomly selected. At the end, out of 150 copied of questionnaire distributed, 142 were returned. When scrutinizing the questionnaire, it was discovered that 22 were not properly filled, and they were discarded. The remaining 120 copies were used in the analysis. That gives a return rate of 93.3% and a response rate of 83.3% respectively.

Design / Statics

The study was a cross – sectional survey. A correlation research design was adopted. Based on the design, a Pearson Moment Product correlation statistics with SPSS version 21 was used in the data analysis that tested the hypothesis.



Result

This chapter deals with the presentation of summary results of the correlation analysis. The correlation results tested the hypotheses.

Test of Hypothesis

Hypothesis one: there will be a significant relationship between eco-labeling and consumers buying behavior.

Table 4.2: Relationship between Eco-Labeling and Consumer Buying Behavior (CBB)

Variables	N	Mean(M)	SD	r	p	sig
Eco-label	120	5.61	1.57			
				.251	.008	**
CBB	120	7.66	2.13			

*N = No of participants, SD = standard deviation, r = correlation coefficient, p = probability level sig = level of significant, ** = P < .01*

Correlation finding presented in table 2 indicated that eco-labeling (M = 5.61, SD = .50) and consumer buying behavior (M = 7.66, SD = 2.10) had a significant positive relationship (r = .251, p < .01). Based on this finding, hypothesis one was accepted.

H2: There will be a significant relationship between Advertisement and consumer buying behavior (CBB)

Table 2: correlation result of Relationship between Advertisement and CBB

Variables	N	Mean(M)	SD	r	p	sig
Advertisement	120	4.87	.98			
				.201	.014	*
CBB	120	7.66	2.13			

*N = No of participants, SD = standard deviation, r = correlation coefficient, p = probability level sig = level of significant, * = P < .05*

As shown in table 2 above, correlation finding demonstrated that advertisement (M = 4.87, SD = .98) and consumer buying behavior (M = 7.66, SD = .213) correlated significantly in a positive direction (r = .201, p < .05). Thus, hypothesis 2 was also confirmed.



Discussion of Findings

The result indicated that a positive relationship exist between eco-labeling and consumer buying behavior. This finding is in consistent with the previous findings by Kong, et. al. (2014) conducted in Malaysia, Du (2010) conducted in Sweden, D'Souza et.al. (2006) conducted in Norway, and Akehurst, Afonso, Goncalves (1012). The finding implies that as eco-labeling increases, consumer buying behavior also increases. Based on the model adopted, the finding can be explained reflecting that people are not only aware, or have knowledge of eco-label, but also choose to buy eco-label product because of their concern for the environment. In addition, consumers believe that their purchase of eco-label products will help to protect the environment and promote environmental sustenance. The finding also suggested that consumers trust and believe in eco-label. Thus, consumers' positive perception of eco-label motivates them to buy eco-label product.

The second variable which is advertisement was also found to be significantly related to consumer buying behavior, and it confirms our assumption stated in the second hypothesis that eco-labeling will have a significant relationship with consumer buying behavior. The finding support those previously found by Fitima and Lodhi (2015), Rehman et.al. (2014), Russo and Chaxel (2010). By implication, the finding implies that advertisement and consumer's buying behavior increases concurrently, meaning that increase in advertisement result in increase in consumer buying behavior. Through advertisement, consumers are meant to be aware of the new or unfamiliar products service that the advertised firm have. Perhaps, they are informed about the product quality, and availability which consumers often search for. Based on the trying theory, the design, graphics, the word contents of the advertisement may be so appealing that consumers watching, reading, or listing to the advertisement may decide to give the product a trial. The post purchase experience relating to perceived taste, quality, and satisfaction made consumers to repeat purchase.

Conclusion

Based on the result, it is conclude that eco-label is important factor influencing consumer behavior, and advertisement is also essential means through which companies could influence



consumers to buy their product. The study contributed good knowledge of eco-labeling relationship with consumer buying behavior, as well the advertisement relationship with consumer buying behavior from Nigeria cultural perspective. This knowledge will serve as an important guide for instituting policy regarding sustenance of natural resources, and could help managers to make best marketing policy and strategies that will enhance businesses and maximize profit.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the scientific evidence provided by the study:

- Organizations whether manufacturing or servicing companies should take eco-labeling serious and probably made it one of the important marketing mix in their marketing strategies as such would attract them more customers.
- Managers should make sure that the symbols or signs or word used as eco-label is well simplified for consumers easy recognition and understanding.
- More eco-label awareness campaign should be carried out both by the government, NGOs, and companies to educate consumers about eco-labeling.
- Various advertisement medium should be made available and accessible to the public, as the result of Kong et.al indicated that consumers in rural areas has limited communication medium.
- Companies should ensure that what they portray in the advertisement actually reflect in the product so that consumers post experience of product use will be positive to continue with the product or service.

Limitations of the study

One of the short-comings of this study is the scope. The study only surveyed young consumers from only one Metropolitan urban city. Therefore, the sample size may not actually reflect true representation of the larger population of consumers. Thus, making generalization from this finding may not be ideal. The second problem is finance. As team of researchers,



money was the major challenge in the course of this study. Inability to expand the scope, and difficulties in transportation was as a result of financial impediment.

Suggestion for further study

Based on the limitation, the researcher suggests that future researchers in this area should increase the scope to cover different level of consumers, not just the student but also the working class.

Secondly, university management should endeavor to provide research grant to research students to enable them conduct take all necessary logistics that will facilitate good research.



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