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EXPLORING MEDIA THEORIES AND APPLICATION TO CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR IN NIGERIAN MARKET

*****Nwaezeihenatuoha, Peter Chukwughalum
Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Arts and the Humanities, University of Nigeria Nsukka
*Correspondence: peter.nwaezeihenatuoha.93049@unn.edu.ng

ABSTRACT
This study examined the various theories of the mass media in relation to consumer behaviour, applying them to the Nigerian market situation. The design was thematic content analysis. Media effects and consumer behaviour theories were the frameworks. The census sampling enhanced the selection and study of the relevant media theories coded thematically according to their categories and levels of effects. The implications of understanding consumer behaviour were also explored. Findings revealed a plethora of media effects and consumer behaviour theories influencing the buying decisions of the Nigerian final consumers; the limited media effect and all-powerful media theories opposed each other on the issue of the rationality of the Nigerian final consumer. The paper recommended that the Nigerian producers, advertisers, politicians, and sellers should study and understand the final consumers for effective production and exchange.
Key words: Consumer Behaviour, Consumer Theory, Final Consumer, Media Effects, Buying Decisions

1. INTRODUCTION

Understanding human behaviour and the forces that drive man's actions is not an easy task. There are reasons for this impossibility: firstly, the complexity of human nature is a serious factor. Human beings are made of different aspects, and they display eclectic attitudes, dynamic characteristics, and erratic behaviours. Secondly, there is usually limited information about other people. This makes it difficult to have complete access to all the factors influencing the behaviour of man. Thirdly, our biases and predictive assumptions can obscure our understanding of others around us. However, efforts must be made to understand human behaviour, at least to an extent. This is not only for effective social relations but also business interactions. For instance, for effective business interactions, it is imperative that the media, manufacturers and sellers should understand the final consumers as this will improve production (i.e. what to produce, for whom, at what quantity, and cost?) (Khegay & Aubakirov, 2021).

In addition, understanding the behaviour of the final consumer will also enhance advertising and the sale of goods and services. In their advise, Khegay and Aubakirov (2021) aver that "obtaining detailed information on consumers behavioral factors can significantly improve services of an organisation". The Nigerian final consumers change their behaviours and attitudes erratically due to the mediating factors or intervening variables between them and their intending purchase actions or decisions. The Nigerian final consumers are not passive in the process of communication, persuasion, choice making, and purchases. They reason, think, criticise, analyse and evaluate a piece of information such as advertising before rejecting or accepting (Murray, 1938).

The aims of this study are as follows: to show that there is a plethora of media effects and attitude change theories in Mass Communication and other social sciences; to demonstrate the relationship between the theories and the behaviours of the Nigerian final consumers; to reveal the difference between the two theory categories; to survey the benefits of identifying and understanding the behaviour of the Nigerian consumers.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

i. Conceptual Review

Consumer

A consumer may or may not be the user of a product. He may or may not pay for the products or services he consumes; and he may not consume what he buys. If he is the user of a product, he is the final consumer (Okafor, 1995). A retailer or wholesaler belongs to the kind of consumer called industrial, business or institutional consumer. This

is because he is only a consumer to the producer or wholesaler not a final consumer. Furthermore, every user of media content is a consumer of the media content. For instance, people consume news, drama, sports, adverts, etc.

Consumer theory

Consumer theory is the study of how people decide on what to buy and how to spend their scarce resources based on their individual income, choices, preferences, and prices of goods and services (Liberto, 2024). Understanding how consumers behave will make it easier for advertisers, manufacturers and sellers to predict which of their products will sell well, or otherwise.

Consumer Behaviour

Consumer behaviour is any rational decision or action a consumer takes towards a producer, a product, service, a brand, that is, buying or not buying, expressing favourable or unfavourable words of mouth about it, etc
(Busch & Houston, 1985). Rani (2014) adds that "consumer behavior refers to the selection, purchase and consumption of goods and services for the satisfaction of their wants".

Rani (2014) observes that the end product of consumer behaviour is satisfaction. In other words, the image of the product and that of the producer, the expectant satisfaction and or harm, the cost, the seller, social issues, consumer's taste and fashion, are the determinant factors that will define the behaviour of a consumer towards a given product or service. Another factor is the product's SWOT analysis which evaluates its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (Okoro, 2013, p. 112).

Different consumers behave differently to the same product, service or corporate organization. This is why (Cox, 1961, p.160) advises that "the art of advertising strategy would be considerably advanced by abandoning belief in the undifferentiated market and the notion of universal appeal". Martin and Colburn (1972, pp.69-70) concur that "individuals respond to a communication or commercial in a variety of ways depending on their individual dispositions".

ii. Empirical Review

Final Consumer at the Centre of the Market

Approaching the study of consumer behaviour from a marketing perspective, Ateke and Akekue-Alex (2017) investigated the "Perspectives to the Study of Consumer Behaviour: An Overview". Seeing the final consumer as the king of the market, they mentioned the following perspectives to the study of consumer behaviour: positivist, interpretivist, behaviourism, cognitive school of thought, motivational school of thought, attitudinal school of thought, value, sociological, and multi theoretical.

Ateke and Akekue-Alex (2017) concluded that all the approaches to the study of consumer behaviour, especially the positivist and interpretivist, should be accommodated, "if a holistic appreciation of the construct must be achieved". Drawing their conclusion, they inferred that "as the market-place becomes more complex and fluid, consumers become more sophisticated and fickle". Like this present work, the thematic content analysis was adopted for the study. However, the scholars were silent on the theoretical basis and methodology of the study.

Consumer Behaviour Models

Using secondary data and the consumer behaviour models as frameworks, Khegay and Aubakirov (2021) studied the different theories and models of consumer behaviour to expose the patterns, types, necessity, and the application. They mentioned psychological, economic, and sociologic models as the basic frameworks for the study of the behaviour of the consumer. They also compared e-commerce and offline consumer behaviours. They concluded that "consumer behavior analysis can positively affect a company's revenue". However, this work by Khegay and Aubakirov (2021) lacked research design and literature review. These gaps and omissions were filled by this present study. See also Theories and Models of Consumer Buying Behaviour: A Descriptive Study by Roy and Datta (2022).

Buying Decisions Models

Roy and Datta (2022) further elaborated on the consumer behaviour models that tend to describe their buying decisions. They were stimulus response, Sheth family decision making model, Howard-Sheth model, Nicosia model, and Engel Kollat Blackwell model. Finally, the scholars explored the factors that influenced the consumers' buying behaviour (e.g. personal, social, cultural, and emotional factors).

There is a point of intersection between the reviewed works and this current study. For instance, secondary data were used in the articles. This had issues with accuracy, relevance, reliability, or were prone to bias and errors. However, this present work used secondary data because they were readily available.

Despite the foregoing points of convergence, there were points of divergence, where the reviewed works and this current study disagreed. For example, the reviewed articles claimed that the Nigerian consumers could not be influenced in any way because, as rational beings, they could reason

and make decisions by themselves without external forces. But this study disagreed with this notion. It discovered that, under the all-powerful media effects, without opinion leaders, the Nigerian consumer would directly be influenced by the media through its persuasive products (e.g. advertising, movies, political narratives, articles, etc).

In addition, this current work proved that, apart from the mass media, sociocultural factors could also directly influence the Nigerian consumers' behaviour; for instance, demographics, close allies, family members, norms, religion, etc.

The theoretical frameworks used in the evaluated works were purely psychological while the current study used consumer behaviour theories from both the fields of Psychology and Mass Communication.

Finally, while the earlier studies above viewed consumer behaviour from only the economic point of view, this present work viewed it from both the economic and communication perspectives.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study utilised thematic content analysis to explore the 19 media effects and attitude change theories of human behaviour in relation to the buying habits of the Nigerian final consumers. These theories were selected due to their relevance to the activities of the Nigerian media on attitude change. The thematic content analysis aided the researchers to identify, analyse, and interpret patterns of meanings (i.e. themes) within the qualitative data. The approach was flexible enough to allow the researcher to explore the diverse media effects theories for nuanced understanding of the data by identifying recurring ideas and experiences.

Census sampling enhanced the selection and study of the relevant media theories in relation to consumer behaviour. Due to the inclusion of the entire population of the relevant media effects theories, the process yielded a high degree of accuracy and reliability for the collected data.

The research employed secondary data. Although the secondary data had issues with accuracy, relevance, reliability, and prone to bias and errors, they were also readily available. They did not pose any problem in collection and coding. In addition, the secondary data aided the researchers by providing access to large datasets and a wider range of variables than might be feasible to collect independently. In the article, the analysis of the secondary data revealed patterns, issues, trends, and relationships that were not originally the focus of the original data collection thereby revealing new research insights and questions.

The media effects and attitude change theories were coded openly according to their categories and levels of effects. Open coding enhanced the breaking down of the raw data into smaller units and examining them for meaningful concepts.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

All-Powerful Media Effects Theories

We found nine related theories that claimed that the media directly exerted total influence on the Nigerian consumers thereby rendering them passive in the decision process. Below are the analysis of the theories and the findings:

Hypodermic Needle Theory: This theory is also called the Magic Bullet. The media is assumed to have a direct effect on the Nigerian final consumers. That is, what a bullet or an injection needle does to the body of a human being is what media products do to the Nigerian consumers' psyche. In this case, the message does not pass through interpersonal channels such as opinion leaders but directly to the final consumers. Due to its hypothetical direct effect, the Nigerian consumers, for instance, are assumed to be passive, not taking a decision, not performing any active role in the whole process of communication and message analysis (Wogu, 2008, pp.93-97).

Identification theory: This aspect of the all-powerful media effects theory explores how the Nigerian final consumers emotionally and cognitively connect or identify with characters or players in the media, leading to a temporary loss of self-awareness and a heightened connection with the characters. This process involves putting themselves in the same circumstances with the media characters, internalizing their thoughts and feelings, and mimicking their lifestyles. At the end, the media characters will gradually disappear into and reproduce themselves in the Nigerian final consumers. For example, many Nigerian home video consumers usually identify with their role models in Nigerian Nollywood.

Observation theory: This is an example of Albert Bandura's Social learning process. The theory holds that, through media representation, Nigerian consumers observe media personalities and characters and tend to behave like them through attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. The Nigerian consumers learn about products and brands by observing advert models and marketing messages.

Aggressive and Violent Cues: Like the observation model, the aggressive and violent theory suggests that frequent exposure to media violence can increase violence in individuals and

society. That is, as Nigerian media consumers expose themselves to media products such as violent and aggressive movies, for example, the crime thrillers **The Trade** (2023) and **Suspicion** (2025), those that are not aggressive and violent will tend to become aggressive and violent by copying the characters of Adesua Etomi, Stan Nze, Shaffy Bello, and Omowunmi Dada. The consumers that are already aggressive and violent will tend to become more aggressive and violent.

Dependency theory: This all-powerful effects media theory was propounded by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur in 1976. They posit that the more dependent individuals are on media to meet their needs and goals, the more influential media becomes in their lives. Individuals rely on the media to satisfy their different needs and goals.

If a consumer has access only to radio for advert, he is more likely to be influenced by radio framing of adverts. That is, the more Nigerian consumers of media products rely on the media for information, entertainment, news, adverts, education, etc, the more the media exerts influence on their choices, preferences, beliefs, attitudes, and buying behaviours. This is because the final consumers do not have alternative information sources.

In Nigeria, many Muslims and Northerners, even Fulani nomads, depend so much on their radio that they carry it about. This means that the radio on which they largely depend exerts powerful influence on them, controls their behaviour, and thought process.

Value Change theory: This theory suggests that media can contribute to wider social transformation by influencing public opinion and attitudes towards various social ills. For example, media campaigns can create awareness about social prejudices (e.g. rampant domestic violence or obnoxious widowhood practices) and encourage people to advocate for change. This can reduce the ugly social trends to the nearest minimum.

Again, the media may want to campaign against a sitting political leader believed to be corrupt or incompetent. To convince the electorate, the media rolls out strong convincing reasons and evidence. This may influence the opinion and voting decisions of the electorate or the media consumers as proposed by the media. This was exactly what happened in Nigeria during the 2023 presidential election.

Agenda setting theory: Agenda setting is a Mass Communication theory that was propounded by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Lewis Shaw in a study on the 1968 presidential election of the United States of America (Rösler, 2017). The framework selects salient events in society and makes them public issues. By doing so, it determines what should be reported and what should be hidden from the consumer. In its selective presentation, agenda setting chooses what should go into the media and what should not (Blanton & Kegley, 2017).

Gate-keeping theory: This theory was initiated by Kurt Lewin, a social psychologist, in 1943. Shoemaker (2020) elucidates that in gate-keeping, "some bits of information are selected and others rejected" by the media through "culling and crafting countless bits of information into the limited number of messages that reach the consumers every day, and it is the center of the media's role in modern public life" (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). Unlike observation, aggressive and violent Cues, dependency and identification, gate-keeping was originally designed as a function of the print media, not electronic.

Spiral of Silence theory: The spiral of silence theory was developed by Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann. This results when the Nigerian consumers are afraid or ashamed to speak out about their lack of resources, dislike for a given product, producer or media, loss of utility, and so on. The fear to speak out may be orchestrated by inferiority complex, isolation, separation, or fear of rejection of the complainant or their opinions by those around them.

Limited Media Effect Theories (Active consumers)

In the second category of media effects theories, we discovered ten limited media effects paradigms (Active Consumers). These frameworks rejected the propositions of the all-powerful media effects theories that rendered the Nigerian consumers passive and the media totally influential. They are discussed below.

Two-Step Flow Paradigm in Consumer Behaviour:

The two-step flow framework was initiated by Hazel Gaudet, Bernard Berelson and Paul Lazarsfeld in 1940. They published "the results of their analyses of the decision-making processes of voters during the 1940 election for President of the United States" (Lazarsfeld et al, 1944). The two-step flow involves mediation by opinion leaders or middlemen. Opinion leaders are important in the chain of distribution of information. They are usually heavy and regular media users with first-hand information from the media and then share it with the final consumers. Therefore, there is no direct media influence, for example, on the Nigerian final consumers.

Psychodynamic Theory in Consumer Behaviour: This is one of the behavioural theories in the social sciences, propounded by Sigmund Freud. The psychodynamic theory, Vinery (2019) explains, is a collection of psychological theories which emphasize the importance of drives and other forces in human functioning, especially unconscious drives or motivations. These unconscious drives are "forces outside of a person's awareness explain why they behave a certain way" (Vinery, 2019).

To bring it home, this theory explains that the mass media must control these forces and then alter the mental, cognitive and affective processes of the Nigerian final consumers to be able to make them patronize the products advertised. Failure to do this, the media may not induce attitude change in the Nigerian final consumers. Individual differences are important factors in psychodynamic behavioural theory. Individual differences explain that the Nigerian final consumers differ in terms of motivation, drive, and norms.

Phenominstic Theory in Consumer Behaviour
In this theory, Joseph Klapper explains that the media does not just effect a change, for instance, in the attitude of the Nigerian final consumers without encountering certain mediating factors and intervening variables. These intervening variables can be social issues such as influence from age, sex, marriage, financial status, close friends, culture and religion. The culture of the Nigerian final consumers can also hinder advertising from influencing them.

Uses and Gratifications Theory in Consumer Behaviour
Uses and Gratifications theory by Elihu Katz explains that different Nigerian final consumers, for instance, have different gains each media platform offers them. Each Nigerian final consumer therefore selects the media that serves his needs and solves his problems. The media form that a consumer selects may therefore not change his behaviour because he carefully selects the contents to which he exposes himself, the same way he selects media. For instance, if a Nigerian consumer prefers television to newspaper, he still goes ahead to select the programmes shown on the screen. His need may be sports news. He uses a remote to switch channels until he sees what he needs.

Selectivity Theories in Consumer Behaviour
Nigerian final consumers are so active that they select the media content to which they expose themselves. They also select what they want to retain or reject. This theory has given birth to four models that I have summarized using the acronym "RAPE":
R = Retention (Selective Retention)
A = Attention (Selective Attention)
P = Perception (Selective Perception)
E = Exposure (Selective Exposure)

Nigerian final consumers "rape" (overpower) the media and its so-called persuasive contents and become the people to determine what they use the media to do. They also decide when, where and how this happens. The selection continues even after the initial choice. This is termed post selection decision. For example, the retention aspect of the selection theory usually comes after exposure to a media product, or after patronage.

Individual Differences in the Behaviour of Nigerian Consumers
This is one of the theories that have dismantled the all-powerful media effects. The theory therefore holds that media content such as advert will certainly produce divergent effects on different Nigerian final consumers. They respond differently to the same media content due to their unique psychological characteristics, social categories, social factors, experiences, culture, and backgrounds. For instance, the religious beliefs of the cultures of some Nigerian consumers prohibit attempts to control the birth of babies. Therefore, any advert promoting family planning will not be acceptable in these cultures.

Reinforcement Theory in Consumer Behaviour
Joseph Klapper formulated this theory in 1960. He argued that "the media are more likely to reinforce than to change". Klapper simply dismisses the media as "a reinforcing agent" (Journalism University, 2023, November 24). Lazarsfeld et al (1944) argue that the media hardly changes consumers' behaviour but rather reinforces their pre-existing behaviours, attitudes, opinions, beliefs or norms. In Nigeria, no amount of media persuasion will influence a real Muslim to buy or eat pork meat or alcohol. Many Christians are also teetotalers, and do not consume alcohol. Any advert promoting the sale or consumption of these items will rather fortify abstinence than lure them.

Socio-cultural Theory in Consumer Behaviour
Socio-cultural theory is a combination of social and cultural factors. Indeed, these factors influence the Nigerian final consumers' behaviours through social relations (close friends, family members), social categories (age, sex, occupation, etc), and cultural issues (beliefs, norms, etc).

Play theory: This theory presents an interaction between the media and the Nigerian consumers. According to William Stephenson, the Nigerian

consumers develop individual fantasies and see their favourite characters in the media playing out the consumers' emotions. As the consumers relate and compare their characters with what they see in the media, they are greatly affected by them and the behaviours the media portrays.

In order words, the Nigerian media does not impose behaviours and choices but presents opportunities and allows consumers to choose. Akinjogbin and Kayode (2011) argue that the play theory includes that the media cannot be harmful, for example, to the Nigerian final consumers because they use it for entertainment, but not imposition of roles. For example, advertising offers plenty of opportunities for free choices of products, not imposing them on the Nigerian final consumers as when only one product is available. This theory fortifies the uses and gratifications, and promotes selectivity functions.

Persuasive Consistency Theories in Consumer Behaviour

Bradley (1984) sees persuasion as a process whereby an attempt is made to induce a change in the attitude and behaviour of the consumer through involvement of a person's cognitive and affective processes. The preoccupation here is to reveal the link between consistency theories and the behaviour of the Nigerian final consumers. They are listed below as: (i). Cognitive Dissonance (Leon Festinger); (ii). Cognitive and Affective Balance (Fritz Heider); (iii). Cognitive Congruity (Charles Osgood's & Percy Tenenbaum); (iv).Cognitive Symmetry (Theodore Newcomb).

Festinger's (1963) explanation reveals that no Nigerian final consumer feels comfortable when faced with or exposed to any information (e.g. advert) that is not in consonance with his reasoning. He discards it because of the discomfort. Heider (1958) says there must be a balance and equilibrium in the norms, social and cultural beliefs of the Nigerian final consumers and the message they are exposed to. Osgood and Tenenbaum (1955) recommend that the two must be congruous. Cognitive Congruity results when the media and the Nigerian final consumers agree on the same thing. Newcomb (1953) advises that marketers, producers and advertisers should try to establish attraction with their target audience, especially on the interpersonal levels.

Summary of the Difference Between All-Powerful Media and Limited Media Effects Theories

ALL-POWERFUL MEDIA EFFECTS THEORIES	**LIMITED MEDIA EFFECTS THEORIES**
Consumers are deemed passive	Consumers are deemed active
Consumers seen as irrational	Consumers are rational
Media has absolute power	Media has no absolute power
Media opinion is absolute	Consumer opinion is absolute
Undemocratic principles absent	Democratic principles present
Consumer rights not protected	Consumer rights protected

Choice/preference imposed on consumers	Choice/preference not imposed on consumers
Direct media effects	Indirect media effects
Faster process of message passage/delivery	Message passage/delivery delayed
Message distortions absent	Message distortions present
Mediating factors and intervening variables absent	Mediating factors and intervening variables present

Discussion of Findings on the All-Powerful Media Theories

All-Powerful Media Paradigms opine that the media directly communicates with the Nigerian final consumers without the hindrance posed by intervening variables and mediating factors.

However, the all-powerful media effects paradigms see the Nigerian final consumers as inactive and people that do not know what they want. They do not also represent the true characteristics of the Nigerian consumers' complexities and dynamism. The theories (Observation, Identification, Dependency, Spiral of Silence, Value Change, Agenda Setting, and Gate-keeping, etc) rule out mediating factors and intervening variables such as opinion leaders, social factors, individual differences of the consumers, their personal needs and drives. These theories have been dismissed because of their imposition of passivity on the Nigerian final consumers. This is because they are rationally active, not irrationally passive.

To further demonstrate this rational behaviour, a Nigerian final consumer goes through the five stages of decision making processes such as problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post purchase decisions. He first recognises that he needs toothpaste. He goes searching for where and how to get it. When he finds a particular toothpaste, he further compares it with other alternative toothpastes in the market, especially based on the price, USP, producer, the composition, and anticipated utility.

Having considered all these factors and more, he pays for the toothpaste that satisfies his desired expectations. The final decision he takes is after purchase and consumption. At this stage, he tries to find out if he really derives utility or not. If he is satisfied, then he may make a decision for adoption and loyalty for the product or service; if not, he drops the product.

However, through their assumed direct effects, the media has isolated the average Nigerian final consumers from their traditional and social institutions that protect them from social vices, and then made them vulnerable to the media manipulative and destructive products such as anti socio-cultural contents that destroy society.

With their hypodermic needle, most of the all-powerful media frameworks (Observation, Aggressive and Violent Cue, Dependency, Value Change) have not only injected crime and corruption into the Nigerian society but into the minds of the consumers. Today, in Nigeria, the television, through its home videos and foreign movies, has polluted society with prostitution and other acts of sexual promiscuity, abduction and kidnapping, burglary, banditry, high rate of divorce, domestic violence, and get-rich-quick mentality that leads to money rituals.

In agenda setting, repeated presentation and representation are techniques adopted to ensure that the Nigerian final consumer constantly receives and internalises the messages. A consumer may not take an advert seriously until he reads, hears or views it often in the media, and then begins to readjust his mindset to align with that of the newspaper. The more these media products are constantly released the more the Nigerian final consumer considers them significant.

The selective representation adopted by agenda setting and gate-keeping keeps the Nigerian consumers in the dark concerning the hidden information about a given product. For instance, in personality and corporate advertising, agenda setting and gate-keeping hide the unfair aspects of a politician or a firm from the electorate and consumers. This practice of information asymmetry may lure them into making wrong choices of media products, candidates, political parties, or manufacturing firms. We therefore infer that the major dysfunction of agenda setting and gate-keeping is information asymmetry - a serious bias and imbalance in information acquisition, transfer and exchange between the seller (e.g. the media) and the buyer (i.e. the Nigerian final consumers).

We therefore conclude that it is not what the Nigerian consumers wish to know that the Nigerian media presents; rather, it is what the Nigerian media wishes to present to the Nigerian consumers that they receive. In an advert, the Nigerian media can hide a product's weaknesses and present only its strengths to the consumers. For instance, most adverts promoting Nigerian drugs, the adverse side effects of the drugs are usually hidden from the final consumers. The intention may be that the manufacturers, the sellers, and the media do not wish to scare the final consumers whereas the consumers have been denied the right to useful information for their life security.

Discussion of Findings on the Limited Media Effects Theories in Consumer Behaviour

The limited media effects theories deny that the media is all-powerful. They rather maintain that the media has limited influence on the Nigerian final consumer. They see the final consumer as one critical of media contents such as advert messages, news, propaganda, movies, etc. Theories of attitude change explain that there are obstacles and factors which aid the Nigerian final consumers to evaluate a product's selling message, brand components, product utility, before accepting or rejecting the message.

The two-step flow paradigm is a framework that emphasises the role of interpersonal communication in influencing public opinion. That is, media influence is usually on the interpersonal relations leading to interpersonal influences. Our practical observation reveals that the Nigerian final consumers are influenced by trusted information sources (neighbours, friends and relations) rather than directly by the media (Perera et al, 2024).

In the Nigerian market environment, the opinion leaders are middlemen who have acquired better education and information than others around them. This makes them have social influence and advantage over others. The opinion leaders receive political campaign messages, propaganda, news, adverts, and other information directly from the media, and then communicate them to the final consumers through interpersonal means.

However, hoard information through uncontrolled gate-keeping, biased agenda setting, and selectivity factors. They do not release all the information from the media. They only present what they want the final consumers to know. With this information asymmetry, there will be bias and imbalance in message transactions leading to possible distortions, misunderstandings, inefficiencies, and potential exploitation (Bloomenthal, 2024).

The interpersonal approaches have an advantage over the media message because it obliterates the bullet effect syndrome which renders the Nigerian final consumers passive. The interpersonal medium also enhances immediacy in feedback through interaction between the opinion leaders and the final consumers.

During the 2023 presidential election in Nigeria, the opinion leaders, through interactive interpersonal relations, influenced many citizens within the voting age, and won them over to the choice parties of the opinion leaders. They were persuaded to patronise two media products: a particular political party and a given candidate. For instance, the Obedient Movement was propagated mostly by the opinion leaders that supported the Labour Party and Peter Obi.

Another strategic interpersonal methodology adopted by the opinion leaders before the election was door-to-door, grass-root campaigns, especially in the areas with little or no media penetration, media literacy, and formal education.

The two-step flow theory helps the Nigerian opinion leaders to interpret and simplify media messages for easy comprehension by the final consumers. Apart from physical contact, letters and phones are also means of conducting personal selling (Patel, 2024; Rensburg, 2024). The opinion leaders, through personal selling strategies, are able to induce a change in the consumers' choice of political candidates, political parties, media programmes, goods and services.

Discussion of Findings on the Drawbacks of the Limited Media Effects

The limited media effects theories have their own drawbacks. Firstly, the presence and activities of the opinion leaders in the "two-step flow" in the Nigerian business and communication environments are time-consuming and can lead to delay in information transfer. Unlike the traditional media messages that travel faster, the messages of the opinion leaders may expire on the way before they reach the final consumers.

Secondly, Haron et al (2019) observe that opinion leaders (especially online bloggers) exploit the final consumers (including the Nigerian consumers) by manipulating the prices of goods and services at will for personal aggrandisement. The Nigerian final consumers face this on both the online and offline platforms. The Nigerian opinion leaders frequently use propaganda as machinery to control and manipulate the electorate on voting decisions and choice of candidates or political parties. Finally, Panwar et al (2019) quip that the consumers' attitudes towards the opinion leaders also determine the consumers' level of deference.

Discussion of Findings on the Effects of Sociocultural and Interpersonal Relations on Consumer Behaviour

Social and interpersonal relations play significant roles in influencing the Nigerian consumers' buying habits. Their close friends and beloved family members influence their thoughts and perception of things – including media contents, and buying habits. For instance, a friend or family relation may influence the buying decision of a consumer, especially when the friend or relative is a strong opinion influencer. A husband who financially sponsors his wife in everything can influence her attitude and prevent her from buying a toothpaste of her choice, if he so desires.

This theory fails in the absence of meditating factors and intervening variables such as opinion leaders, subgroups, and those who pay for patronage of goods, services, and media products. On certain occasions, if a wife wins bread for the family, she may also be in control of purchase decisions. In this case, the children's and husband's choices and preferences are lost to the woman's buying decisions. Opinion leaders receive media products such as adverts, and pass them on to the final consumers. The opinion leaders may decide to distort the advert messages for a purpose thereby passing deceptive information with the aim of

inducing a change in the behaviour of the final consumers.

On the contrary, when the opinion leaders are out of the way, the Nigerian final consumers will have direct access to media products. This time, if other factors remain constant, the usual media products will now flow directly to the final consumers without distortions, potential biases, misinterpretations, and misinformation. This time, the induced change in the final consumers will certainly be quite different from what usually obtains through the opinion leaders. Finally, the social theory of consumer behaviour is not reliable because it still works without the opinion leaders and subgroups.

Among the social categories that influence the Nigerian consumers' buying decisions are demographics like gender, age, occupation, location, education, marital status, social class, and religion. These factors can affect the Nigerian consumers towards choices for goods, services, media product choices. There are products that are gender-based; for instance, men cannot be the final consumers of women's items nor women the final consumers of things strictly meant for men.

Age also influences buying decisions. For instance, there are products and services for old people, and there are also products and services patronised only by younger people in the Nigerian market. Baby items, for example, are for babies, not for old people. In addition, among the Nigerian final consumers, young adults usually prioritize career-related purchases or entertainment, while older adults may focus on healthcare or comfort-related products and services.

Occupation is one of the social categories of socio-cultural theories of consumer behaviour which also affects the buying decisions of the Nigerian consumers. For example, profession determines tools and attires. A Nigerian banker can buy suits and ties while a Nigerian crop farmer will not go for suits and ties while on duty. A Nigerian farmer, on the other hand, will buy farm implements, but a banker will not. In summary, these social categories control the perceptions of the Nigerian final consumers towards their needs and wants thereby influencing their choices and purchase habits.

Cultural considerations can affect the behaviour of Nigerian consumers either positively or negatively, favourably, or unfavourably. Among these are language, religious belief, norms, traditional issues, and so on. Imagine an Igbo consumer who doesn't understand the Yoruba language. He walks to the news stand and picks a copy of the newspaper in Yoruba. What do you think will happen next? Language is really a barrier to communication generally, and consumer patronage in particular.

Again, advertising and selling pork meat and alcohol in Nigeria is not only anti-culture but anti-religious ethnics among the Islamic adherents. The advert will attract little or no consumer loyalty or patronage. Again, Christianity does not permit polygamy. Therefore, if a member of the born again group switches on his radio and hears a guest speaker or presenter promoting polygamy with passion, and supporting it with reasons outside the consumer's own belief, the consumer will not only selectively expose himself to the polygamy narrative but also select or withdraw his attention. To end this dissonance, he may switch to other stations, if possible.

Note that the most important aspect of the behaviour of the Nigerian final consumers is how to maximise utility by spending little. The ultimate consumer gains when utility is greater than purchasing power, not when the opposite becomes the case, or when the two are equal.

Festive seasons usually destroy most Nigerian consumers' rationality and render their rational purchase decisions almost impracticable. During festivals and other cultural celebrations in Nigeria, there is usually an increase in purchases no matter the high cost of essential goods and services. For instance, food, sacrificial animals, gift items, footwears, and clothes are mostly expensive during festivals like Christmas, Easter, Eid al-Fitr, Eid al Adha, etc. During these periods, the rational Nigerian final consumers find themselves spending much on little. This amounts to high inflationary trends.

The evolution and revolution of the internet has created a lot of opportunities for the Nigerian consumers who now use the internet for different reasons other than entertainment. In addition to Stephenson's entertainment, the Nigerian final consumers use the internet for business, education, information, sporting, etc. The world is indeed no longer a global village but a global bedroom.

Different Nigerian consumers therefore do not see a particular media content, product, or service the same way. For example, an advert on alcohol may be understood by a religious fanatic as immoral while the consumer who is always inebriated would like to buy and taste the drink – even if it is not his usual brand. To this religious adherent, there is no message treatment or other message manipulation that can lure him into patronising the product. The reason is that he has developed mental and psychological immunity to alcohol or any advert on it. In addition, even among

those users or nonusers influenced by the alcohol advert, the effects it produces will still vary.

However, the theory of individual differences can have negative effects on social relationships among Nigerian social units. For example, in the absence of a family menu, a family may disagree on the choice of what to eat. The man may prefer pounded yam, the wife beans, while the children may opt for rice. Even among the children, some may prefer rice and stew while others may choose jollof. The problem is aggravated when this family has limited purchasing power which must be put into one type of food at a particular time, so that other options will be alternatives forgone.

Benefits of identifying and understanding the behaviour of the Nigerian final consumers

(i). Understanding how the Nigerian consumers behave will make it easier for advertisers, manufacturers and sellers to predict which of their products will sell well, or otherwise.

(ii). By identifying and understanding the factors that influence their customers, producers will know the direction to improve their brands.

(iii). It will also help the media, marketers, and providers of goods and services to have the opportunity to plan and develop a strategy, a marketing message (Unique Value Proposition) and advertising campaigns more efficiently, and more in line with the needs and ways of thinking of their target consumers.

(iv). The needs of the Nigerian consumers will be well met and addressed thereby increasing their patronage and loyalty for the product and the producer

(v). It enhances market segmentation. This is because the producers have full understanding of the final consumers' behaviour, and will be able to group them according to their geographical locations and demographic characteristics.

(vi). Finally, understanding the Nigerian final consumers will certainly lead to well-planned production, distribution, exchange, increased sales, and profit maximisation.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

i. Conclusion

We demonstrated that attitude change is a herculean task. Again, this article revealed a plethora of theories that try to explain why the Nigerian final consumers behave the way they do in terms of buying habits and choices. We analysed the All-Powerful Media Effects Theories (Observation, Identification, Dependency, Spiral of Silence, Value Change, Agenda Setting, Gate-keeping) and the Limited Effects Theories or the two-step flow (Socio-Cultural, Persuasive Consistency, Individual Differences, Selectivity Theories, Interpersonal Approaches). The analysis of these theoretical perspectives has thrown more light into the buying habits of the Nigerian final consumers and the factors that initiate their peculiar idiosyncrasies.

Finally, we hereby submit that these media effects theories, in relation to consumer behaviour, are based on situational considerations and hypothetical assumptions amenable to refutation or affirmation. Lastly, these theoretical perspectives merely tend to predict or explain the intricacies of the behaviours of the Nigerian consumers - not a total panacea to the problem.

ii. Recommendations

The paper recommended as follows**:**

(1). The Nigerian producers of goods and services, the mass media, and advertisers, and marketers should study and understand all the available media and consumer behaviour theories for proper application to the Nigerian market environment.

(2). They should study, understand, and be sensitive to the social and cultural values, norms, and traditions of the Nigerian cultural and social environments. This culturally sensitive marketing will help them to understand their target consumers for effective marketing engagements.

(3). Nigerian Nollywood and movie producers should be conscious of their productions so as to use them to promote Nigeria's cultures and norms rather than destroy them with foreign elements.

(4). The Nigerian political parties and politicians as products should study the political environment, voters, and trends and produce favourable manifestos and policies that will attract the electorate's deference and votes.

(5). Finally, there should be a future research direction to address the areas where this work keeps silent. Therefore, researchers should indulge in future investigations that will explore the impact of interpersonal communication, social media, or traditional media on consumer behaviour in Nigeria.

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