

## Consumer Ethnocentrism-Induced Perception and the Patronage of Adire Fabrics among Female Undergraduates in Ogun State

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**ABSTRACT:** *The perception of the origin or place of manufacture of a product could have far-reaching impact on consumers' discriminatory attitudes and behaviour towards domestic and foreign manufactured products, particularly textiles. The Nigerian market is no doubt a washed with imported goods that have almost dislodged locally made products. Therefore, based on the marketing-mix elements, and the country-of-origin paradigm, this study investigated the implication of consumer ethnocentrism on the patronage of made-in-Nigeria products, with particular focus on patronage of adire fabrics among female undergraduates in four selected universities in Ogun State, Nigeria. One hundred and twenty female respondents were interviewed through self-administered questionnaire. Using regression statistical method, the study finds that there is a significant relationship between perception based on ethnocentrism and the propensity to purchase adire fabrics ( $r=0.780$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). Also, the study finds that the contribution of perception based on ethnocentrism to a change in propensity to buy adire fabrics is significant ( $\beta = 0.601$ ,  $t = 5.506$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). The study recommends that marketing strategies such as pricing strategy, brand strategy, promotional strategy, and advertising among others, should be employed to improve the appeals and sales of locally made products including adire fabrics.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Consumer ethnocentrism, Country of origin, Customer patronage, Adire fabrics, Made-in-Nigeria.*

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Date of Submission: 09-07-2020

Date of Acceptance: 25-07-2020

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### I. INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

It is no longer news that the world is facing COVID-19 pandemic with debilitating effect on the world economy and the likelihood of the economies of many developing countries like Nigeria relapsing into a recession. Nigeria was in a recession in the greater part of 2016 and early 2017, and even at the moment there are still conflicting reports and reactions as to whether or not Nigeria will once again go into a recession. One undeniable fact however, is that the twin major causes of Nigeria's potential relapse into a recession are the twin evils of a drastic fall in the country's oil revenue and an unbridled consumption and preference for foreign products over and above products produced in Nigeria. This penchant for foreign goods often exacerbate the country's already precarious foreign exchange position, and one major ways of ameliorating the situation is for Nigerians to develop interest in the patronage and consumption of made-in-Nigeria goods.

Made-in-Nigeria goods are those goods that are produced within Nigeria. As a developing country, Nigeria needs to produce its own goods so that it will help develop its economy in terms of growth and stability. However, Nigerian consumers have access to several products from around the world such that the information regarding the country of origin may be used to evaluate these products. There seems to be a popular belief that the qualities of local products are lower than those of their imported counterparts. Apart from the widespread belief that locally manufactured products are inferior in quality to the foreign ones, complaints about the high prices of locally-made items are also rampant. In addition, consumers want to take advantage of the affluent and latest services that technology and business can offer (Achumba, 1996). They therefore make rational choices (some would say irrational, based on patriotism) by comparing and contrasting product features and performances.

Olakunori (2002) suggests that there is too much preference for foreign-made goods in developing countries such as Nigeria as a result of their citizens' lingering colonial mentality and inferiority complex, which resulted to the importation of manufactured consumer goods. The general notion among some Nigerian women particularly the female undergraduates is that locally made goods, including fabrics, shoes, bags and other fashion accessories, are inferior to imported and foreign-made goods in terms of quality and performance to the extent that some local manufacturers have resorted to claiming a foreign origin or label for their products in a bid to remain relevant.

Some of the other goods that are generally bought from outside the country include; printed fabrics, second hand clothing, footwear, toothpaste, beverages, phones, electrical appliances, etc.; despite the fact that some of these goods are equally produced locally or in domestic factories for a ready market. One major example of made-in-Nigeria goods are the different fabrics that are produced by the Nigerian textile industries and cottage industries including the *aso-adire* that is produced in Abeokuta, Ogun State, as substitute to foreign clothing.

*Àdìrè* is the Yoruba textile indigo dyed-cloth in South-Western Nigeria made majorly by the Yoruba women, using a variety of resist-dye techniques. *Àdìrè* translates as “tie and dye”, and the earliest cloths were probably simple tied designs on locally-woven, hand-spun cotton cloth much like those still produced in Mali today (Ogunnaike, 2010). In the present day simplified designs and some better quality tie and die and stitch-resist designs are still produced, but local taste favours “kampala” (multi-coloured wax cloth, sometimes also known as *adire* by a few people). Today, this local brand of clothing has gained popularity among Nigerians (and even overseas) especially as demonstrated by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo during his reign as the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, being an indigene of Abeokuta himself, who wore varieties of *adire* during his tenure. Despite this popularity however, it appears many young undergraduates see *adire* as a second-rate clothing material suitable for occasional wears. This attitude may have been influenced by their perception of locally made materials (Olagbemi, 2011).

It is noted that over importation and dependence on foreign goods had led to the indirect devaluation of the naira, capital transfer, low per capita income, dumping of goods, among other economic problems. If consumers decide to buy at least reasonable quantities of the locally produced goods, all these may be minimized and the economy could grow and more wealth will be created for capital project, infrastructural facilities, job creation etc. (Ekeng & Ewah, 2013). This study therefore examined the extent to which Nigerian female undergraduates are likely to buy wears made from *adire* textile even when similar foreign substitutes are available.

## II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The objective of the study is to examine the effect of perception based on ethnocentrism on the propensity to buy made-in-Nigeria *adire* fabrics among female undergraduates in Ogun State, Nigeria. Towards this end, the following hypothesis was formulated and tested:

**H<sub>0</sub>:** Perception based on ethnocentrism does not significantly affect propensity to buy *adire* wears.

### 1.2.1 Theoretical Framework

Several theories have been propounded in the area of perception and attitude towards a product. However, the country of origin effect is the most relevant to this study.

### 1.2.2. Country of Origin Effects.

The *made-in* concept, otherwise called the country-of-origin (COO) effect, is considered by some scholars as the fifth element of the marketing-mix, and is defined as the country where the corporate headquarters of the organization doing the marketing of the product or the brand is located (Johansson, Douglas & Nonaka, 1985). The country of origin carries a rhetoric that influences consumers' preconceptions towards the products of a country.

The literature in the field of international marketing supports the notion that information on the country-of-origin of products affects the decision-making process of both final consumers and industrial customers alike. Decision-makers may exhibit biases such that they either favour domestic products over imported ones or view imported products as better than domestic ones simply based on their country of origin. Some studies indicate that there are a number of underlying reasons for the impact of country-of-origin information, ranging from country stereotypes (positive and negative) playing a role in consumer product evaluation process to individuals' outright rejection of foreign-made goods because of their concern for the well-being of the local economy (Bilkey & Nes, 1982; Shimp & Sharma, 1987).

Research has also showed that when consumers are asked directly how they feel about products from a specific country they may express very positive views, yet in the context of actual purchasing decision process they may not act consistently with these positions. In a study by Hon and Terpstra (1988), covering various international markets, results indicate that under normal supply/demand conditions in the market (when a wide range of domestic and foreign-made-brands are available in any given product category), consumers will generally prefer domestic products, primarily due to their patriotic feelings. Consequently, it is not only important how consumers perceive products of a specific country of origin (e.g. Nigeria), but how domestic products are perceived relative to parallel imports within the same product category.

Although, national reputations for technological superiority, product quality, design and value naturally vary from country to country, consumers tend to generalize their attitudes and opinions across a wide range of

products from a given country. This may also result from the attitudes of the consumers towards the people of that country, familiarity with the country and its products, and the background of the consumers, such as their demographic characteristics and their cultural characteristics. Mass media, personal experiences and the views of national opinion leaders, may also shape the reputation of a country as a producer. For instance, when Chief Olusegun Obasanjo was the president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria between 1999 and 2007, he made it a habit to wear adire most of the time, and the 'value' of adire as a made-in-Nigeria fabric improved significantly.

Research has shown that in the developing countries for example, there exists a particularly strong bias against locally manufactured goods (Aire, 2013; Kalegha et al., 1983). Other researchers suggest that the degree of bias towards a range of products from the same country may be very different depending on the product under consideration (Hooley, Shipley & Krieger, 1988; Schooler, 1971; Wall & Heslop, 1986), or perceived quality (Okechukwu, 2004).

### **1.2.3. Consumption Pattern of Nigerian Consumers**

Promotions in various countries often urge the citizens to help domestic workers whose jobs are threatened by imports by buying locally made goods. The Federal government of Nigeria has made several moves towards ensuring that made-in Nigeria goods are promoted. Some of these moves paved way for the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion decree during the military era (Okechukwu, 2004). This decree was mainly promulgated to ensure that foreign control over Nigerian economy was reduced. One of the plans was to encourage the purchase of domestic or locally made goods or the import - substitution strategy. The import - substitution strategy is a means of replacing imported goods with domestic alternatives. Instead of taking to importation, small-scale businesses were encouraged to produce goods locally, which can be used as replacements for the imported products. Import substitution may also include importation of component Parts and assembling them locally. Examples of import substitution industries in Nigeria include Volkswagen Assembly plant, Peugeot Automobile of Nigeria, etc.

In the late 1970s, the apathy of local consumers towards products produced locally for the Nigerian market knew no bounds with consumers preferring foreign products over and above the locally produced ones (Aire, 1973). The deregulation policies of the federal government following the Structural Adjustment Programme in the late 1980 ushered in the collapse of several local industries that could not face the competition from imported products. Consequently, Nigeria became a trading rather than a production based economy. By 1995 with the tight economic situation experienced under Abacha regime, it became a little more difficult for the importation of finished goods into Nigeria as exchange rate hit the roof. 'Elite consumers' that had developed appetite for foreign products suddenly became the leaders of the local ones. Nigeria once again unconsciously started shifting towards local production. Cottage industries started springing up in the areas of pure water packaging, food processing, cosmetics, textiles, shoes, etc., but now they are being discouraged and many are folding up. The advent of civilian administration caused national borders to be wide open as free trade is embraced especially as a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and products like peppermint, toothpaste, soaps, detergents are now being imported from Malaysia, Indonesia and India or smuggled in through many of Nigeria's porous borders. The implication of this is that the attitude of Nigerians toward locally made goods seems to be lowered again.

Studies have revealed that the Nigerian consumers possessed a negative attitude towards made-in-Nigeria goods. For instance, Okechukwu and Onyema (1999) showed that Nigerian made goods were rated lowest by Nigerians when compared with alternatives from overseas countries such as Germany, China, Japan and South Korea. Following this finding, there have been serious moves by the government to reverse the situation, there are many campaigns aimed at persuading the citizenry to look inwards to solve their problems and buy domestic goods. They stressed that buying foreign goods will endanger the livelihood of domestic workers. Many other approaches are being employed to motivate consumers to select domestic goods in place of imports.

### **1.2.4 Product Attributes that Influence Consumers' Choices**

Cordell (1992) in his study in economically underdeveloped countries found that preference for domestic products tends to be weaker in the countries studied. However, Almonte et al., (1995); Bailey and Gutierrez (1997) discovered that upper-income earners in the same country prefer foreign products. Opoku and Akorli (2009) in their assessment of Ghanaians' attitudes towards made in Ghana products and goods with foreign origin discovered that country of origin is more important than price and that other product attributes are at least as important as brand name, in their consumer choice. In addition, Ghanaians hold the 'Made in Ghana' label in low regard relative to foreign labels; also superior quality and consumer taste are the two most important reasons for their preference for foreign products. Similarly, Fianu and Harrison (2007) in their study on Ghanaian workers, reported that 83% of their respondents look out for labels when selecting ready-made clothing to determine the quality, though more than half of the respondents reported incomes below the country's poverty line, most Ghanaians buy second-hand clothes because they are relatively cheaper than new ones. In other studies, clothing is seen as an enhancement of social status (Batra et al., 2000; Zhou and Belk,

2004; De- Witte, 2011) therefore some Ghanaian women make it a point to show up in a new funeral cloth every Saturday although very expensive.

In Nigeria, a survey of consumers in Kano metropolis by Agbonifoh (1995) found that 93 percent of the respondents considered locally-produced textiles inferior to the imported ones. However, Shobowale (1997) claimed that although imported textiles are superior in quality to home-made ones, they are much cheaper. Products from developing countries like Nigeria are further viewed with negative impressions (Okechukwu and Onyemah, 1999). In terms of the evaluation of the product attributes, the most preferred product attribute is quality, followed by branding, style, design, packaging and price in that order. Ogunnaike, 2010 also discovered that the image a person has of himself determines the kind and nature of the product purchased in order to meet up with this perceived image or concept. Also consumers are motivated by such variables as quality, colour, past experience, price and product package. Iwok (1986) also argued that most Nigerians prefer foreign goods to made-in-Nigeria goods, even when the Nigerian products have the same quality or even possess better quality than the foreign goods. Udoekpo (1981) found that between 60% to 75% of the study respondents' preferred imported clothing, shoes, handbags, and other goods. They claim that made-in-Nigeria goods were of lower quality, both physically and in value, than the imported ones.

### **1.2.5 Consumer Ethnocentrism**

Consumer ethnocentrism is defined as "the beliefs held by consumers about the appropriateness, or morality, of purchasing foreign made products" (Shimp & Sharma, 1987). Consumer ethnocentrism is a psychological state of mind representing how consumers view products made in their own country markets as objects of pride and identity versus those from other country markets (Kinra, 2006).

Consumers who are ethnocentric will believe that purchasing imported products is unpatriotic which can lead to damages to the domestic economy and loss of jobs. Ethnocentric ideology could lead to bias in evaluating, but non-ethnocentric consumers will perceive foreign products on their attributes and excellence without the issues of where products are made. In agreement, Sharma et. al (2005) assert that consumer ethnocentrism may result in an over-estimation of the attributes and features of local brands, and an under-estimation of the overall quality of foreign products.

This has to do with the effect of personal feeling and emotions in shaping consumer perception and attitude towards a particular product or brand. It evokes personal emotions such as love for country or feeling for a particular culture that a product is identified with.

## **III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS**

The data required for this study were obtained from primary sources collected through the use of questionnaire. It consists of three parts. The first part of the questionnaire contains structured questions about the demographic variables of the respondents. The second part however consists of structured questions about the respondents' perception of adire textile, while the third part asks questions about the respondents' buying attitude towards adire fabrics.

The population of the study is the female student base (i.e. total number of female students) of the four universities under study. An actual figure could not be put to the total number of female students of the universities because of the non-availability of such data.

The sample size for the study was one hundred and twenty respondents. Since the population cannot be determined, this figure was arrived at using the rule of the thumb. However, the rule of the thumb is one of the acceptable methods of selecting samples in a survey study (Shimp & Sharma, 1987). Also, the number of respondents selected was regarded as adequate for the study such that the outcome of the data analysis can be generalized. The one hundred and twenty (120) respondents were selected using multi-stage sampling technique. As a result, four universities in Ogun state namely: Crawford University, Igbesa, Crescent University, Abeokuta, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, and Covenant University, Sango Ota were purposively selected for convenience. From each university, thirty (30) female undergraduates were randomly selected as respondents using quota sampling method; bringing the total number of respondents to one hundred and twenty.

The techniques used to analyze the data included both descriptive and inferential statistical tools. The descriptive tools included percentages, frequency tables and charts to measure the demographic variables and other components of the questionnaire. The inferential statistical tools included the Chi-square, and Rank correlation coefficient to test the two hypotheses formulated.

## **IV. FINDINGS AND INTERPRETAION**

The data presented and analyzed in this section were those collected in the course of the field survey through the administration of questionnaire. A total of one hundred and twenty copies of the questionnaire were distributed out of which 108, representing 90%, were returned.

**4.2 Analysis of Demographic Data**

The tables below are indicative of the demographic details of the study participants.

**Table 1: Highest Educational Qualification**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	WAEC/SSCE	16	14.8	15.0	15.0
	OND	30	27.8	28.0	43.0
	HND	27	25.0	25.2	68.2
	OTHERS	34	31.5	31.8	100.0
	Total	107	99.1	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.9		
Total	108	100.0			

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 1 above on highest education shows that out of the 108 respondents, 16 (14.8%) were WAEC/SSCE holders, 30 (27.8%) were OND holders, 27 (25%) were HND holders, and 34 (31.5%) have other qualifications. This shows that the female students studied have more of other qualifications than the usual requirements for gaining admission into a Nigerian university.

**Table 2: MARITAL STATUS**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	Married	25	23.1	23.1	23.1
	Single	83	76.9	76.9	100.0
	Total	108	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 2 above shows that out of the 108 participants, 25 (23.1%) were married while 83 (76.9%) were single. This shows that despite being university undergraduates, a relatively small percentage of the respondents were married with a higher number of singles.

**Table 3: AGE of the Respondents**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	15-20 years	22	20.4	20.6	20.6
	21-25 years	51	47.2	47.7	68.2
	26-30 years	24	22.2	22.4	90.7
	31 years and above	10	9.3	9.3	100.0
	Total	107	99.1	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.9		
Total	108	100.0			

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 3 above is on age and shows that out of the 108 participants that took part in the study, 22 (20.4%) were aged between 15 and 20 years, 51 (47.2%) were aged 21-25 years, 24 (22.2) were aged 26-30 years, while only 10 (9.3%) were 31 years and above. This shows that the female students studied were predominantly aged between 21 and 25 years, and in tandem with the study's *a priori* expectation given the regulatory age at which students gain admission into Nigerian universities.

**4.3 Test of Hypothesis**

**H<sub>0</sub>:** Perception based on ethnocentrism does not significantly affect propensity to buy adire wears.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Perception based on ethnocentrism does significantly affect propensity to buy adire wears.

The hypothesis was tested with the use of questions in section B of the questionnaire summed to form the Perception variable since they measured the different aspects of the variable while, questions in section C were

similarly treated to derive the Buying Attitude variable because the questions assessed various parts of the variable. The hypothesis being tested may therefore be stated in an equation/ model format as follows:

$$Y=f(x) \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

Where y is the dependent variable and x is the independent variable.

Therefore,

$$\text{Propensity to Buy Adire (PtBA)} = f(\text{Perception based on Ethnocentrism (PbE)})$$

$$\text{And so, PtBA} = f(\text{PbE}) \dots\dots\dots (2)$$

This can further be expanded as:

$$Y = 0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \epsilon \dots\dots\dots (3)$$

Where

Y= the dependent variable (PtBA)

X = independent variable (PbE)

$\beta_0$ = Intercept (Constant)

$\beta_1$ = Coefficient of x

$\epsilon$  = error term

Therefore,

$$\text{PtBA} = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{PbE}) \dots\dots\dots (4)$$

The regression in equation (4) was computed with the aid of SPSS to generate the following tables: propensity

**Table 4a: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.780 <sup>a</sup>	.609	.601	2.88554

Source: Field Survey, 2019

a. Predictors: (Constant), PbE

b. Dependent Variable: PtBA

Table 4a presents the summary of the model. The adjusted R<sup>2</sup> of 0.60 indicate that 60% of the variation in the dependent variable is accounted for by the independent variable. This means that perception based on ethnocentrism can explain 60% of the propensity to purchase adire fabrics. The remaining 40% is accounted for by other variables not included in this model.

**Table 4b: ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	252.417	1	252.417	30.315	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	840.962	107	8.326		
	Total	1093.379	108			

Source: Field Survey, 2019

a. Dependent Variable: PtBA

b. Predictors: (Constant), PbE

Table 4b presents the ANOVA statistics showing that the F statistics is 30.315 and is significant (F, 107=30.315 p<0.05). The null hypothesis is therefore rejected and the alternative is accepted. This means that perception based on ethnocentrism has significant influence on the propensity to purchase adire wears among the female undergraduate students studied.

**Table 4c: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	22.520	2.126		10.595	.000
	PbE	.609	.052	.601		

Source: Field Survey, 2019

a. Dependent Variable: PtBA

Table 4c above contains the coefficients of the regression analysis. It shows that the constant value (intercept or slope of the regression line) is 22.52 and the contribution of perception based on ethnocentrism to a change in propensity to buy adire fabrics is significant ( $\beta = 0.601$ ,  $t = 5.506$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). It can thus be inferred that the contribution of perception based on ethnocentrism to changes in propensity to patronize adire fabrics is about 60%.

## V. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This research work is based specifically on the assessment of the perception and attitude of female undergraduates towards locally made goods. It focused on finding out whether their perception and attitude towards adire fabrics as against foreign products is significant not only in terms of their possible consequences for government and for the welfare of Nigeria, but in terms of its implication for the local manufacturers of these products.

The study finds that there is a significant relationship between perception based on ethnocentrism or country of origin effect and the desire to patronize adire fabrics.

The study also finds that ethnocentrism or country of origin play a significant role in influencing the female undergraduates' propensity toward adire wears, and by extension other made-in-Nigeria fabrics and fashion accessories. This perhaps reflects that female undergraduate students are not really satisfied with buying adire fabrics.

## VI. CONCLUSION

From the analyzed data and hypothesis tested, it is obvious that perception is a significant factor in consumer purchase decision, and that the way individuals perceive a product affects their product choice and preferences.

It is also deducible from this study that consumers' (female undergraduates') preference for foreign goods over the Nigeria-made counterparts is largely influenced by negative ethnocentrism or negative country-of-origin effect perhaps occasioned by the assumed relative poor quality of locally produced goods in Nigeria.

This research however, opens the way for potential areas of future research to further improve the quality of made-in-Nigeria goods in order to be relevant in the on-going globalization trends across the globe.

## VII. RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendations are relevant for the findings of this study as well as for further research purposes:

- i. The Nigerian government has a lot to do in making the product quality control agencies such as the Standard Organisation of Nigeria to be more alive to their responsibilities, and other agencies to help protect local manufacturers like the adire merchants in Abeokuta from undue foreign competition.
- ii. Also, the Nigerian Government should change its regulatory approach, since the present approaches have been found to be grossly inappropriate. This supports the proposition of other scholars who observed that Nigeria would be an economic force to reckon with in the global arena, if the trading capabilities of its citizens are fully harnessed and exploited.
- iii. The government and its agencies should pay serious attention to borders as they affect the flow and availability of goods from foreign countries.
- iv. Marketing strategies such as pricing strategy, brand strategy, promotional strategy, and advertising among others, should be employed to improve the appeals and sales of locally made products including adire fabrics.

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ELEBODA, Sunday Samuel, et. al. "Consumer Ethnocentrism-Induced Perception and the Patronage of Adire Fabrics among Female Undergraduates in Ogun State." *International Journal of Business and Management Invention (IJBMI)*, vol. 09(07), 2020, pp. 30-37. Journal DOI- 10.35629/8028