THE INFLUENCE OF GENDER AND SELF-ESTEEM ON ATTITUDE OF NIGERIANS TOWARDS FOREIGN AND MADE IN NIGERIA PRODUCTS

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the influence of gender and self-esteem on the attitude of Nigerians towards foreign and made in Nigeria products. One hundred and fifty randomly drawn respondents from the Faculty of Business Administration, University of Lagos Student population were involved in the study. The respondents were made up of 86 males (representing 57.3%) and 64 females (representing 47.7%). Their age ranged from 18 - 30 years. The mean age was 21.19 with a standard deviation of 5.39. Four hypotheses were tested using analyses of variance and Pearson correlation statistics.

Attitude towards foreign and made in Nigeria products was measured using Ajzen & Fishbein's (1980) thirty-one item attitude questionnaire which was modified and revalidated by the authors. Self-esteem was measured using Adaranijo and Oyefeso's (1986) self-esteem scale. The result of the first hypothesis revealed that consumers' gender had no significant effect on Nigerians' attitude towards foreign and made in Nigeria products. In hypothesis two, it was revealed that consumers' self-esteem had a significant effect on foreign made products $F(1, 146) = 4.14; P < 0.05$. Similarly, findings of hypothesis three showed that consumers' sex and self-esteem had significant joint effect on consumers' attitude towards foreign and made in Nigeria products. Lastly, results indicated that there was significant positive relationship between participants' attitude towards foreign products and participants' attitude towards Nigerian products. The implication of findings was that marketers should as a matter of necessity continually research into customers' attitudes towards their products. Discussion of the study's findings was based on the centrality and dynamism of attitudes in marketing research. Recommendations and suggestions were, on the basis of the research's findings, also made.

INTRODUCTION

Attitude may be defined as an enduring predisposition to respond positively, negatively or ambivalently to a person, thing

situation or object. From a motivational point of view, an attitude represents a state of readiness formative arousal. Attitude for the purpose of this study, refers to the relatively lasting manner whereby the perceptions and motives of consumers are organized toward certain market objects, events or situations. The formation of attitude is widely influenced by the social environment surrounding the individuals.

Attitudes predispose people to react favourably to products or avoid some situation by market action. It is in this wise that Nigerian consumers' attitudes have been characterized by preference for and purchase of goods manufactured in western countries (Ehigie & Ramon, 1994). The consequence is that home made goods are less purchased than foreign goods just as indigenous producers of products are highly discouraged. Importantly too, a lot of foreign exchange is lost and the values of currencies of importing countries depreciate. The formation of individual attitude is affected by external authorities, including friends, authors, teachers, parents and co-workers. The extent to which one authority is believed over another depends on the feeling of trust and respect the consumer has for the authority.

An individual's taste for products is shaped by quite a number of factors. One such factor is a person's gender. Being a man or a woman does not stop at the physical or biological compositions; it is influenced by the cultural and psychological experiences, which a person goes through on the basis of his being a man or a woman. Gender, therefore, refers to the definition which socialization gives to biological sex. It is equally argued that self-esteem, an aspect of personality, also shapes taste for products. Gross & Helpman (1991) found people with high self-esteem to be more favourably disposed to expensive as well as imported products than people with low self-esteem.

Typically, the desire to have foreign products among Nigerians emanates from the need to have value for money, belong to a certain group or class as well as avoid some degree of psychological risk that the product holds. As noted by Ehigie and Ramon (1994), Nigerian consumers are characterized by expensive

goods or goods manufactured in western countries for the purpose of prestige and sometimes to create social class of distinction for themselves. This cultural orientation has now become part of their personality and is shown in their buying behavior.

Different countries are known for their relative advantage in the production of goods and services. Consumers, therefore, get attracted to a product when it bears the label of a respectable place or country of production. Gross & Helpman (1991) proposed that every product exists on a quality ladder and that product quality varies vis-a-vis their place of production. In developing countries especially, much value is attached to products manufactured in the developed countries, and judged as superior to those manufactured in the developing countries.

This study aimed at investigating the effect of gender and self-esteem on consumer attitude towards foreign as well as made in Nigeria goods. This is based on the assumption that an individual's self-esteem as well as gender influences his or her attitude towards a product. It has thus been hypothesized that:

1.   There will be significant difference between male and female consumers' attitudes towards foreign products.
2.   There will be significant difference between attitudes of high self-esteem and low self-esteem consumers towards foreign products.
3.   There will be significant difference between attitudes of high self-esteem and low self-esteem consumers towards foreign products.
4.   There will be significant positive relationship between attitudes of high self-esteem and low self-esteem consumers towards foreign products.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design: The study made use of correlational and 2 x 2 factorial designs. The correlational design was used to determine the relationship between attitude towards foreign products and attitude towards made in Nigeria products. The 2 x 2 factorial design was used to determine the main and interaction effects of

gender and self-esteem on the consumers' attitude toward foreign and Nigerian products.

Subjects: Subjects were 150 randomly selected undergraduates of the Faculty of Business Administration, University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos. They comprised of 86 males and 64 females aged between 18 and 30 years. The mean age of the subjects was 21.19 while the standard deviation was 5.39.

INSTRUMENTS

Attitude towards imported and made in Nigeria products: This was measured using a thirty-one item attitude questionnaire originally developed by Ajzen & Fishbein (1980) and modified by the authors. Section A of the questionnaire tapped demographic information about subjects while sections B and C respectively measured subjects' attitudes towards imported and made in Nigeria products. Whereas attitude towards imported products sub-scale had 9 items, the attitude towards made in Nigeria product sub-scale had 13 items.

Self-esteem Scale: This is a 15-item scale developed by Adaranijo and Oyefeso (1986). It has a Likert-type response pattern and was originally reported to have a coefficient alpha of 0.74.

Procedure: Rapport was established with the participating students through some of their course lecturers a week before the study. A total of two hundred and ten (210) questionnaires were administered on two hundred and ten (210) students. Out of this number, only 165 questionnaires were returned. Fifteen (15) of the 165 returned questionnaires were improperly completed. This led to the coding and subsequent analysis of only 150 questionnaires.

Statistical Design: Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 were tested using 2 x 2 analysis of variance (ANOVA) while hypothesis 4 was tested using Pearson correlation statistic.

RESULTS

The first hypothesis of the study stated that there will be significant difference between male and female consumers' attitudes

towards foreign products The result in respect of the hypothesis is presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: A 2 x 2 ANOVA showing the effects of gender and self-esteem on attitude towards foreign products

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	X	F	P
A(Gender)	11.52	1	11.52	0.408	P > 0.05
B(Self-esteem)	117.70	1	117.70	4.164	P < 0.05
A x B	70.03	1	70.03	2.478	P < 0.05
Residual	4126.84	146	28.27		
Total	4341.39	149	29.14		

The result in Table 4.1 showed that there was no significant effect of gender on consumers' attitude towards foreign products $F(1, 146) = 0.41; P > .05$. Thus, hypothesis 1 was not confirmed.

It was stated in hypothesis 2 that there will be significant difference between attitudes of high self-esteem and low self-esteem consumers towards foreign products. The result in Table 4.1 showed that consumers' self-esteem had significant effect on consumers' attitude towards foreign products $F(1, 146) = 4.16; P < .05$. Thus hypothesis 2 was accepted.

In hypothesis 3 it was stated that there would be significant interaction effects of consumers' gender and consumers' self-esteem on consumers attitude towards foreign products. The result in Table 4.1 showed that consumers' self-esteem had significant effect on consumers' attitude towards foreign products $F(1, 146) = 4.16; P < .05$. Thus hypothesis 2 was accepted.

In hypothesis 3 it was stated that there would be significant interaction effects of consumers' gender and consumers' self-esteem on consumers' attitude towards foreign products. The result as shown in Table 4.1 indicated that there was significant interaction effects of consumers' gender and consumers' self-esteem on consumers' attitudes towards foreign products $F(1, 146) = 2.48; P < .05$.

Hypothesis 4 stated that there will be significant positive relationship between attitude towards foreign products and attitude towards made in Nigeria products. The result in respect of the hypothesis is presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Pearson's product moment correlation showing the relationship between attitude towards foreign products and made in Nigeria products

Product	N	Mean	SD	r	Df	P
Foreign Products	150	21.19	5.40	.35	148	<.05
Nigerian Products	150	33.49	7.98			

As could be seen in the result of Table 4.2, there was significant relationship between attitude towards foreign products and attitude towards made in Nigeria products (r = .35; df = 148; P < .05).

DISCUSSION

Hypothesis 1 stated that there will be significant difference between male and female consumers' attitude towards foreign products. The hypothesis was not confirmed. The non-confirmation of the hypothesis is an indication that gender on its own may not be a very important factor in determining whether a person is favourably or unfavourably disposed to foreign products. The indication is that marketers should not spend time and resources towards satisfying consumers of their foreign products based on gender differentiation alone. These findings are in line with those of Ajzen & Fishbein (1980) and Gross & Helpman (1991).

In hypothesis 2 it was stated that there will be significant difference between attitudes of high self-esteem and low self-esteem consumers towards foreign products. The significant effect which self-esteem has on attitude towards foreign products points to the importance of self-esteem as a factor in Nigerians' disposition to

high quality products especially highly priced foreign products.

Hypothesis 3 stated that there will be significant difference between attitudes of high self-esteem and low self-esteem consumers towards foreign products. Results indicated that gender and self-esteem had significant interaction effects on consumers' attitude towards foreign products. This is also in line with findings of Gross & Helpman (1991). It implies that it is necessary for marketers who wish to know their consumers' attitude towards products (be they foreign or made in Nigeria) to take into cognizance the consumers' gender together with consumers' self-esteem.

It was stated in hypothesis 4 that there will be significant relationship between attitudes of high self-esteem and low self-esteem consumers towards foreign products. The hypothesis was accepted. This means that attitudinal predispositions of consumers are related to consumers' locus of control and should be so recognized by marketers in their marketing policy formulation and execution.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study are significant for a number of reasons. First, they stress the importance and centrality of attitude concept in marketing. Secondly, the study's results have stressed the relationship between the psychological characteristics of a consumer and his purchase behavior. Lastly, the results of this study have confirmed the assertion that attitudes are a kind of early warning bell that changes are likely to occur in purchase.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The dynamic nature of attitudes makes it obvious to marketers to realize that a good service or idea favoured today may be unfavoured tomorrow. In the world of competitive market system, an individual is exposed to different products and different brands of the product.

Thus, recommendations and suggestions to marketers in the light of the foregoing are that:

(a) To both producers, and consumers, the ultimate goal is to maximize profit and satisfy organizational goals or needs.

(b) Economic and psychological needs of consumers should be the hallmark of all marketing and/or productive activities.

(c) Manufacturers and marketers should consciously seek to obtain some degree of their customers' loyalty in terms of providing the needed brand and quality. In addition, after-sales services such as maintenance, repairs and spare parts and quality guarantees need to be provided by manufacturers and marketers.

(d) Since attitudes are amenable to change, producers and marketers should seek to influence the behavior of their customers through advertising campaigns and other promotional activities.

Further research is indicated in the areas of attitude change and Nigerians' tendencies to embrace made in Nigeria products and reduce the consumption of foreign products.

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