

LOCUS OF CONTROL AND CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTION OF FABRIC MATERIALS IN ABIA STATE

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ABSTRACT *This study established the relationship between locus of control and consumer purchase intentions of fabrics in Abia state. Locus of control is a psychological concept that points where a consumer's source of control is located. An individual's source of control accounts for the differing purchase decisions made even for the same product. The study was anchored on attribution theory. The independent variables were search effort, product knowledge, chance and significant others. The dependent variable was purchase intention. The study adopted a correlational research design. Study population was made up of all adult buyers of fabric material in Aba. Sample size was 350 using purposive sampling technique. Data generated through questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC). Result showed a strong positive relationship between search efforts, product knowledge and consumer purchase intention. Result also showed a strong negative relationship between chance factor, significant others and consumer purchase intention. It was therefore recommended that marketers should recognize the influence of locus of control on their customers' choice decision as the knowledge will help them know what marketing strategy to adopt in order to serve the customers better. They should endeavor to provide necessary product information and make it accessible to consumers.*

KEY WORDS: locus of control, search effort, product knowledge, chance factor, purchase intention

INTRODUCTION

Individuals seek to control important aspect of their lives. This also includes controlling their purchase decisions. Khan (2011) defined locus of control as the type of attributions we make for our successes or failures in task. Seifert and Sutton (2009) opined that the attributions an individual give for his behaviours reveal his source of control. Consumer locus of control is therefore defined as the tendency of an individual to be in control of his life as a consumer or to depend on luck, fate, or significant others to decide what he consumes. The ability to control events can emanate

either within the individual or outside the individual. In other words, control can be located within the individual or outside the individual. Purchase intention on the other hand, is the deliberate decision of a customer to purchase a particular brand of product (Shah, et al, 2012). Jaafar, Lalp and Naba(2018) observed that once the consumer decides to purchase a particular product, he will be driven by their intention. A consumer's intention to purchase a particular brand of fabric is determined by internal and external impulses..

Statement of the Problems

It has been observed that individuals make differing purchase decisions even for the same need. Some make impulsive decisions while others do not. Some may depend on other people to help them decide what to buy and when the purchased product fails to perform, they blame the people that introduced the product to them. All these as a result of not being in control of their purchase decisions. The Attrition Theory has been used to validate studies relating to locus of control in behavioral expressions. Confirming this theory in a study of purchasing intention of fabric materials in Abia State, Nigeria deserves attention. There is also lack of literature on consumer locus of control in Abia state as informed by the available literature to the researcher Therefore, what could be the relationship between locus of control and purchase intention among consumers in Abia state?

Objectives of the Study

The major objective of this study is to establish the relationship between the locus of control and the consumer purchase intentions of fabric materials in Abia State, Nigeria. The study specifically seeks to:

1. To determine the relationship between search effort and consumer purchase intention.
2. To ascertain the relationship between product knowledge and consumer purchase intention.
3. To determine the relationship between chance factor/significant others and consumers purchase intention.

Hypotheses

- H₀1: There is no significant relationship between search effort and consumer purchase intention.
H₀2: There is no significant relationship between product knowledge and consumer purchase intention.
H₀3: There is no significant relationship between chance factor/significant others and consumer purchase intention.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Locus of Control

Locus of control describes the degree to which individuals perceive that outcomes result from their own behaviours, from behaviours of others or from fate. Locus of control can also be described as an individual's belief that events or antecedents in ones' life are under or outside of ones' control. In other words, who or what is responsible for what happens. Locus of control is an individual's belief system regarding the causes of his or her experiences and the factors to which that person attributes success or failure (Chiang, Fang, Kaplan and Ng2019; Majzub, Bataineh,

Ishak&Rahman, 2009). Some individuals take responsibilities for life occurrences. These individuals are labeled 'internals' or said to have internal locus of control. However, some believe that forces beyond their control are responsible for their life occurrences and as such, blame the environment or other people. This group of individuals was labeled 'externals' or said to have external locus of control (Schunk, 2012). Locus of control manifests in both male and female consumers alike. It shows that locus of control is about the individual and not gender.

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is a preference that a consumer will purchase a particular brand of product (Younus, Rasheed and Zia (2015). Hawkins and Mothersbaugh (2010) defined purchase intention as the antecedents that stimulate and drive consumers' purchases of products and services. Purchase intention is therefore the consumer's willingness and readiness to purchase a particular product from a given retail shop. Before a consumer could arrive at the point of having the intention to purchase, he would have gone through some of the stages of decision-making. According to Stankevich (2017), the challenge faced by marketers today is how to influence the purchase behaviour of consumers in favour of their products or services. Therefore, the knowledge of buying behaviour sheds the light on the psychology of how consumers think, feel, argue and select among existing alternatives. Accordingly, Munthiu (2009) suggests that when purchasing an item, the buyer actually passes through five stages of the buying process namely: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post purchase behavior.

Attribution Theory

This study was anchored on attribution theory. According to Weiner (1984), most of the causes to which individuals attribute their successes or failures can be categorized along three different dimensions – internal or external (i.e., within or outside the individual), stable or unstable (i.e., the causes can stay the same or change over time), and controllable or uncontrollable (i.e., the causes can be under the individual's control or beyond his/her control). Luck, for example, is an external, unstable and uncontrollable cause for success and failure. Luck is external because it is not within the individual; it is unstable because it is changeable; it is uncontrollable because it is not within the individual's control. Effort on the other side is considered to be internal, unstable and controllable. Effort is internal because it is within the individual; unstable because the individual can increase or decrease it; it is controllable because the individual has control over it.

Empirically, previous study such as Pedersen and Nysveen (2018) found a relationship between search effort and purchase intention. Younus, Rasheed and Zia (2015), Pedersen and Nysveen (2018) and He, Duan, Wang and Fu (2019) found a strong relationship between the customer knowledge of the product and purchase intention. Hoffman, Novak and Schosser (2003) found that chance is negatively related to product use. Chiang, Fang, Kaplan and Ng (2019), He, et al. (2019) found that internal locus of control have significant effect on purchase intention.

RESEARCH METHODS

The study adopted a correlational research design. The study took place in Aba, Abia state. Aba is one of the major cities in Abia state. It has one of the largest markets where fabrics are

predominantly sold. Aba was made up of Aba North and Aba South local government areas. Study population was made up of all adult buyers of fabric while a sample size of 350 was selected using purposive sampling technique. Samples were equally selected from Aba North and Aba South. Instruments for data collection were Locus of Control Scale by Mueller and Thomas (2000) Locus of Control Scale by Rotter (1966) and Willingness to Buy Scale by Dodds, Munroe and Grewal (1991). An internal consistency of 0.68, 0.76 and 0.94 alpha coefficient had been established for the respective instrument. Data was analyzed using simple percentages and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient.

RESULTS

Characteristics of respondents were analyzed using simple percentages while Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) was used to test hypotheses 1 – 4.

Table 1: Demographic Distribution of Participants

Parameter	Frequency	Percentage
Location		
Aba North	175	50%
Aba South	175	50%
Gender		
Male	190	54%
Female	160	46%
Age		
Less than 21	46	13%
21 – 30	92	26%
31 – 40	98	28%
41 – 50	77	22%
51 and above	37	11%
Education		
SSCE and below	97	28%
OND/NCE	104	30%
BSC/HND	115	33%
MSC and above	34	9%

N=350, Source: Field work 2019

From table 1 above, respondents from Aba North and Aba South LGA were 50% (175) each. Male respondents were 190 (54%) while female respondents were 160 (46%). Respondents less than 21 years of age were 46 (13%), those between the ages of 21 – 30 were 92 (26%), between the ages of 31 – 40 were 98 (28%), between 41 – 50 were 77 (22%) while 51 and above were 37 (11%). Respondents whose level of education are SSCE and below were 97 (28%), those with OND/HND were 104 (30%), BSc holders were 115 (33%) and those with MSc and above were 34 (9%).

Correlation Analysis**Table 2: Relationship between Locus of Control and Purchase Intention**

		SE	PI	Remark
SE	Pearson Correlation	1	.871	S
	Sig (2-tailed)		.003	
	N	350	350	
PI	Pearson Correlation	.871	1	
	Sig (2-tailed)	.003		
	N	350	350	
		PK	PI	
PK	Pearson Correlation	1	.603	S
	Sig (2-tailed)		.000	
	PI	N	350	
	Pearson Correlation	.603	1	
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	350	350	
		CF	PI	
CF	Pearson Correlation	1	-.899	S
	Sig (2-tailed)		.000	
	PI	N	350	
	Pearson Correlation	-.899	1	
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	350	350	

Source: Field Survey, 2019, SE= Search Effort, PK= Product Knowledge, CF= Chance Factor/Significant Others. N=350, Level of significance = .05, S = Significant

A Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between locus of control and purchase intention. Result showed a positive correlation between the variables. Result showed $r = 0.871$, $n = 350$, $p = 0.003$. Overall, there is a strong, positive correlation between search effort and consumer purchase intention. With $r = 0.603$, $n = 350$, and $p = 0.000$, it indicated a strong positive correlation between product knowledge and consumer purchase intention. Result showed also $r = -0.899$, $n = 350$, $p = 0.000$ indicating a strong, negative correlation between chance factor/significant others and consumer purchase intention.

DISCUSSIONS

The study found a strong positive relationship between search effort and consumer purchase intention. Therefore the null hypothesis was rejected showing that there is a significant relationship

between search effort and consumer purchase intention. This finding was supported by Pedersen and Nysveen (2018) who found a relation between search mode and purchase intention. Hoffman, Novak and Schosser (2003) also supported this finding as it found that an internal LOC was positively related to acquiring product information. The study found a strong positive relationship between product knowledge and consumer purchase intention. This finding was confirmed by Younus, Rasheed and Zia (2015) and Lee (2017) who found a strong relationship between customer knowledge and purchase intention. Pedersen and Nysveen (2018) also found a positive effect of product knowledge and internet experience on purchase intention in online environments. This finding was contradicted by He, et al (2017) who found that knowledge factors do not have significant effect on purchase intention. A strong negative relationship was found between chance factor and significant others; and consumer purchase intention. This finding was supported by Hoffman, Novak and Schosser (2003) who found that chance is negatively related to product use.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Locus of control is an important aspect of human development. It manifests in every individual irrespective of gender and challenges them to be in charge of their lives. Based on the study findings, it is concluded that locus of control are the same for both male and female in terms of purchase intention. Consumers with internal locus of control are more willing than the external to engage in purchase decisions. Marketers should recognize the influence of locus of control on their customers' choice decision as the knowledge will help them know what marketing strategy to adopt in order to serve the customers better. They should endeavor to provide necessary product information and make it accessible to consumers for choice decisions.

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Appendix**Research Instruments**

S/n	Item Description <input type="checkbox"/>	SA	A	U	D	SD
	Locus of Control Scale					
	Effort					
1	My life is determined by my own actions					
2	When I get what I want, it is usually because I worked hard for it					
3	Whether or not I am successful in life depends mostly on my ability					
	Chance					
4	My success depends on whether I am lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time					
5	To a great extent my life is controlled by accidental happenings					
6	When I get what I want, it is usually because I am lucky					
	Knowledge					
7	It is wise for me to plan too far ahead, because things turn out to be a matter of knowledge					
8	I feel in control of my life					
9	It is one's experiences in life which determine what they're like					
	Willingness to Buy Scale					
	Purchase Intention					
10	The likelihood of purchasing fabric material is high					
11	The probability that I would consider buying the fabric material is high					
12	My willingness to buy a fabric material is high					

Location: Aba North Aba South

Gender: Male Female

Age: Less than 21 21 – 30 31 – 40 41 – 50 51 and above

Educational Level: SSCE and below OND/NCE BSC/HND MSC and above