

## **Effect of Exposure to Media and Materialism among Nigerian Consumers' Purchasing Intentions**

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### **Abstract**

In an active competitive marketing environment, information is one of the keys for the consumer decision-making process and products rapidly become known to consumers via the mass media through information obtained from advertisements. When consumers try to memorize product messages via adverts that tend to be materialistic, and this can influence their purchasing intention. Recent studies have shown that consumers' consumption is influenced by the media in relation to their level of materialism. The motive of this particular study was to ascertain the effect of exposure to mass media and materialism on the intention to purchase global brands among Nigerian consumers. A convenience sample of 318 respondents living in Lagos state participated in this study. Questionnaire surveys were designed for collection of data and distributed to respondents. A simple random sampling method was used to measure the effect of exposure to global mass media and materialism among Nigerian consumers. The collected data were analyzed by using regression analysis. The findings showed that exposure to mass media and materialism positively affect the intention to purchase global brands. This indicates that a high level of materialism as a positive value was promoted by the mass media via advertising. Consumers' believe that acquiring material goods brings forth happiness, self-fulfillment and also is a way of achieving success. It is suggested that local companies need to improve on the quality of their products which can attract consumers, and also produce good media adverts that can inspire consumer intentions to purchase local products. Additionally, there may be differences in purchase intention by gender.

**Keywords:** Exposure to Mass Media, Materialism, Purchasing Intentions, Nigerian consumers

## Introduction

The significance of owning goods in one's life, and the value placed on acquiring and using material things are seen as a measure of one's rank in society and accomplishment in one's life which has led to a trend of materialism (Fitzmaurice and Comegys, 2006). According to Richins and Dawson (1992), materialism could be seen as an individual mind-set or attitudes towards the prestige that comes with owning goods in one's life. With this interest, possession of material things is no longer a new thing in the field of consumer research because the theme of materialism has grown popular (Fitzmaurice and Comegys, 2006; Richins 2004).

In recent decades, research on the theme has shown that concern with materialism's relationship to consumption and related factors, such as global brand image and advert appeal strategy is limited. The image of a global brand is usually considered to be the bond that links or influences consumers to purchase that particular global brand (Batra & Homer, 2004), and due to high emotional and quality values, purchasing a global brand or luxury products could be a natural choice for materialists (Wiedmann et al., 2009). Therefore, materialistic people like to purchase brands that exhibit their success and status which can be noticed by the society in general (Richins et al. 1992).

Companies use the image of their global brand to differentiate it from their rivals, allowing them to create global brand equity. In fact, they engage the mass media via advertisements with the intention to create brand awareness, and persuade their existing customers to continue purchasing their product (Smith and Zook, 2011; Weber, 2009; Weinberg, 2009). Along with the relevance of one's feelings and individuality, global brand image as a product is frequently used to construct and convey one's genuine ideal self-concepts (Escalas, 2004).

The construction and protection of a global brand image is done through approaches like media advertisements, endorsements of the product by a well-known celebrity, placement of products etc. For a product to be well known to customers it must depend on advertisements in the media to make consumers learn about the product's efficacy. The evidence proliferates in a large body of unique advertisements seen across all media such as television, Internet, billboards, magazines, and newspapers, and companies' use different kinds of advertisement appeals like humor, sex, fantasy and romance in an attempt to differentiate their brands through expressing the characteristics and ultimately to influence consumers to purchase their products (Huang, 2004).

As a result, consumers may watch a lot of advertisements, but the question is which advertising approach can increasingly motivate consumers to have an interest in purchasing that particular brand. Product advertisement and consumers' preferences are relevant to companies before producing the advert (Kotler & Keller, 2009).

Information is one of the concepts used by consumers to make decisions and the speed with which information spreads through advertisements for example on television, in articles, and on the internet can expose consumers to various brands globally. These can further influence their purchase intention or decision (Yang, 2009). Companies have to create a good advertisement about the services or their products, if such adverts can link well with a product, it can inflate customers' memories of an image of the product and create brand awareness, which can also influence the intention of consumers to purchase the brand.

With this, exposure to mass media and materialism explicates the reasons underlining purchase intention that justify consumer action of making decisions via information obtained from television, the internet etc. As a matter of fact, when a consumer tries to exhibit the information obtained from the media, they become materialistic. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to investigate if materialism and exposure to mass media has an effect on the purchase intention of a global brand among Nigerian consumers.

## **Review of literature**

### **Materialism and purchase intention**

Past studies have shown that the value of materialism differs in terms of the way people interpret it in particular situations because branded products convey different meanings to many individuals and materialism influences people's intention to purchase particular global brands (Cleveland, Laroche & Papadopoulos, 2009). According to Solomon (2009) and Liao and Wang (2009), consumers who are highly materialistic tend to be more extravagant in spending money to enhance their social status. Their desire is to possess expensive material goods in order to avoid losing social prestige, and the symbolic value of luxury goods can satisfy such desires for materialists.

Research has shown that the value of goods stems not only from their ability to indicate status but from their ability to project a desired self-image and recognize one as a member in an imagined perfect life (Kamineneni, 2005). Materialism is seen as a part of self-impression due to the fact that people use material goods to construct their identity of a person. According to Peter and Olson (2008) study has shown that materialistic people believe that the number and quality of goods accrued can be used to show their own and others' success, which is why people show so much desire to acquire and keep goods as well as objects in their memories. Today, people who are too materialistic are influenced to like and purchase luxury products that are public and prestigious (Rindfleisch, Burroughs, & Wong, 2008), and materialism has a vital influence on people's intention to purchase global brands.

Nowadays, changes are made in considerations about people's lifestyles on materialism, due to the influence of global brands and for this reasons one needs to search whether materialism directly influences people's intentions to buy global brands, which are viewed as a signs of treasure (Schiffman et al., 2010). In fact, individuals who are money-oriented see brands as having a vital position in their lives. This is because they believe in those goods are the source of personal pleasure, happiness, success, and are symbols of kindness (Peter and Olson, 2008; Schiffman et al., 2010).

Researchers have revealed that material things have a direct positive influence on people's social status or success-oriented intake. This implies that people who really like material things are more likely to value expensive and publicly displayed items, which are signs of success and social status as well. Obviously, when consumers like global brands as status-oriented goods, then material things will have a major influence on their purchasing intention with regards to global brands (Jia Chen, and Soyoung Kim, 2013).

### **Exposure to Mass Media**

Exposure to mass media has an influence on individual intention to purchase global brands as well as connecting individuals all over the world (Kotler, Keller, and Kelvin, 2008). Individual exposure to mass media can broaden views with strong messages, which also influence our society today. For instance, television, radio, and internet have been shown to have

an effect on people's daily lives and routines, and as a result viewers are happy and have time to listen and watch what is happening on television.

Kotler, et al. (2008) have also argued that the media have three vital roles to play: to inform, to educate and to influence opinion. Current studies have shown that the mass media provide consumers and companies with new way to engage with each other. For example, companies pick 'courage' to engage with 'reliable' consumers and influence individuals' perceptions about their products, spreading information that can help them learn about their audience (Brodie, Ilic, Juric, & Hollebeek, 2013).

Exposure to mass media has been known to influence people in terms of their intention to purchase global brands (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). This implies, that consumers can get closer to the product if they experience certain feelings or information from watching the product on television via adverts, and this will make them aware of that particular brand name after watching the advert (Teng, 2009). The function of mass media is to offer pictures which support identities and provide images of situations of groups that fit their group characteristics.

In fact, mass media help to advertise products to people with higher status that can change people's intentions to purchase a product. According to Panda (2004) and Cebrzynski (2006), advertising a product on television engages viewers to get exposed to brands and products that look natural in any program. Similarly, a study conducted by Chi, Yeh, and Huang (2009), has shown that advertising advocate's acceptance, knowledge, and desirability that can in turn change consumer preferences and attitudes, and at the same time promote purchase intentions.

Today, television shows issues that exposes people and also shows brands that are being used by people in their natural settings which can influence their purchase intentions (Stephen & Coot, 2005). It is also clear that television helps business and allows them to have a conversation directly with consumers, which in turn engages consumers in their intentions to purchase any brands (Hanlon & Hawkins 2008). Besides that, mass media help consumers to select best movies/or channels on television, as do magazines from overseas that potentially increase their knowledge and develop positive attitudes towards purchasing global brands, or alternatives from outside their local environment (Appadurai, 1990). Generally, marketing can help people accept a new product with a good image that may influence individuals' intentions to purchase global brands (MacInnis, Rao, & Weiss, 2002). In other words, mass media play a vital role in consumers purchasing intentions, but few studies have explored their influence over consumers' purchasing intentions.

### **Concept of Consumers Purchase Intention towards Global Brands**

Intention to purchase is a way that helps consumers consider methods relating to their readiness to buy, and use a particular brand of products they like (Lin and Lin, 2007; Changa et al., 2009; Shah et al., 2012). This implies that consumers' intention of purchasing certain brands of products could be seen as their desire to purchase that brand of products after watching adverts on television. This might also influence or trigger consumers' interest about certain global brand.

Researchers have shown that if consumers' intentions are high, this can persuade consumers to purchase their choice of brands (Lin, Chen & Hung, 2011; Chen & Huang, 2012). According to Turney and Littman (2003), purchasing intentions can be seen as consumers' forecasting which brand of product is more suitable for them to choose or to purchase and also

acknowledges the genuine consumer intention to purchase that brand, the greater the intention, the greater the desire is to purchase the products (Chi, Yeh, & Huang, 2009).

Interestingly, research has also shown that individual intention to purchase a specific brand requires overall assessment of all brands that are available in the market before deciding on a particular product to buy (Teng, Laroche & Huihuang, 2007). However, consumers' decisions to buy a particular product are very complex, and their intention to purchase brands is linked to consumers' behavior, buyer's perception and consumer attitudes. Therefore, a global brand that is strong could be used as an influential tool to attract consumers' attention towards global brands their quality. This is the prime feature that could influence intentions of consumers to purchase global brands.

### **Effect of Materialism and Mass Media on Nigerian Consumers**

In recent times, globalization of world markets has tremendously inflated levels of materialism in many places. In the past decades, Nigeria has successfully developed into a global financial centre. As a multinational country with prominence given to consumption and life style, not a large percentage of Nigerian consumers' orientation towards materialism is based on wealth.

However, many past studies have revealed that material things have a direct positive influence on people's social status. For example, a study by Schiffman et al. (2010) found that consumers who are materialistic view brands as having a vital position in their lives. They believe that those products are the source of personal pleasure, happiness and success (Peter & Olson, 2008). Nigerian consumers are not exempted; they behave like other consumers from less developed countries who prefer to buy products from advanced countries because they rate those products to be of the best quality compared to those ones produced in their own country. Consumers use such products as an avenue to exhibit their prestige and personal importance in relation to other people within the society (Kawabata, 2009).

The influx of adverts in society today, which encourages overconsumption, also leads to an increasing 'vogue' of materialism among Nigerian consumers. Companies use different kinds of advertising strategies to influence consumption. They use famous celebrities to support a brand name which is a common and effective advertising strategy. Chi, Yeh, and Huang (2009) noted that many companies are eager to invest huge amounts of money to link their brands to attractive media celebrities as well as their qualities such as trustworthiness and likeability.

Indeed, consumers are exposed to different kinds of mass media for information and entertainment purposes. Stephen and Coot (2005) argue that they learn consumer behaviors from the media and Nigerian consumers are not exceptional. In line with this, mass media and materialism have a great impact on Nigerian consumers' purchasing intention of global brands, which also explain that substantial media viewers via television, internet, magazine etc learn to purchase global brands or opulent objects with prestige and social status. This implies that they act according to the result of those images' media portrayals and they tend to be more materialistic by purchasing global brand products in order to keep up with the affluent lifestyles exhibited on television (Yang, 2009). However, consumers' consumption of media relates to their level of materialism, and materialistic' people believe that possessing global brand products and opulent objects is a way to achieve success, happiness and well-being.

### **The Effect of Gender Difference in Purchase Intention**

There is evidence indicating that gender can influence purchase intention positively and females are significantly more influenced when it comes to the decision making process or their

intention to purchase global brand products than their fellow male counterparts. This is because females may be easily influenced or affected by families, colleagues and friend they keep (Safiek & Hayatul, 2009).

An understanding of such findings may depend on some factors. For instance, Chiao and Yang's (2010) study indicated that females are less experienced with purchasing online due the level of education and information they acquired. This implies that they rely more on information from their peer groups/ friends and also on other recommendations such as media adverts than their male counterparts when making purchasing decisions. Besides that, some studies show that women and men behave in different ways or variations in terms of their purchasing intentions or decision making. For instance, young males are more pragmatic and practical, whereas young females are more social, and like to spend money on luxury goods (Cathy & Vincent, 2006).

Other studies by Ahasanul, Ali and Sabbir (2006) and Safiek (2009b) have indicated that women care more about those categories of products that are directly related to the house because of their status as housewives, and for them quality of those products is more relevant compared to males. This implies that environment can also affect consumers' purchasing intentions among males and females due to the fact that the knowledge they have could increase consumers' thoughts of benefits and the sense of inspiration for both female and male consumers at that particular time are different (Shao et al., 2004).

### **Methodology**

Quantitative research methods were used in this study and questionnaire surveys were distributed to respondents in their respective local government areas that represent the three senatorial districts. All the respondents were randomly selected and invited to participate in the study. Prior to conducting the formal survey, 41 sample sized surveys were used for a pre-test. Subsequently, 400 surveys were distributed and after eliminating incomplete surveys, valid surveys returned were 318.

### **Measurement**

#### **Purchase Intention towards Global Brand**

The measurement for purchasing intention towards global brands was adopted from Zeithaml (1998), and Richardson et al. (1996). The scale consisted of six items, while 4-point Likert scales ranged from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 4 ("strongly agree"). The actual result Cronbach alpha scale had a value of 0.796, indicating that it had a high degree of reliability.

#### **Exposure to Mass Media**

Exposure to global mass media was based on Appaduria (1990). The six questions adopted utilized a four Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 4 ("strongly agree"). However, the actual result of the Cronbach alpha value scale shows 0.797 and which indicates a high degree of reliability.

#### **Materialism**

The five items scale used in this study to measure materialism was adopted from Richins and Dawson (1992). The items were a four Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 4 ("strongly agree"). Based on the actual result scale, it showed a Cronbach alpha value of 0.892, and this degree of reliability is also high.

Variables			Pre-test (n=41)	Actual study results (n=318)
Purchase intention towards global brand	global	6	.860	6 .796
Exposure to global mass media		6	.742	6 .797
Materialism		5	.735	5 .892

Table1: Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Result

The result in Table 1, shows that the reliability Cronbach alpha scale pre-test and the actual study from the construct had an acceptable level of internal consistency (i.e. more than 0.5, as suggested by (Ling and Piew, 2010). The items exceeded the desirable score of 0.70 indicating that scales of the measurement constructs were stable and consistent, the variables were also found to be of good reliability.

### Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS, version 20) program was used to analyze the data collected such as computing the descriptive statistics and performing the reliability test. Additionally, multiple regression analysis was used to analyze the effect of exposure to mass media and materialism on the purchasing intention towards global brands.

### Multiple Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was used to decide the relative contributions of each independent variable towards dependent variables to detect how much of the variance on dependent variable can be interpreted by independent variables.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients b	Standardized Coefficients $\beta$	t
(Constant)	9.485		8.132
Exposure to global mass media	.128	.139	2.507*
Materialism	.152	.146	2.669**
<b>F =20.362, p =0.000, R=0.454, R<sup>2</sup>=0.206, Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>=0.196</b>			

Dependent Variable: Purchasing intentions towards global brands, \*\*  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*  $p \leq 0.01$ .

Table 2 Regression analysis for purchasing intentions towards global brands

Regression analysis results used to test the hypothesis are presented in Table 3. This explained the parameter estimates of the regression for purchasing intentions towards global brands, which represents the regression coefficients or slope of each predictor variable. The results show that the F value is significant at ( $F= 20.362$ ) at p level of .000. This shows that the model was valid.

Subsequently, the results indicate that the two predictors, namely: exposure to mass media and materialism, explained 20.6% of the variance in purchasing intentions towards global brands ( $R^2 = 0.206$ ). The two predictors have a significantly positive effect on purchasing intentions towards global brands, with exposure to mass media ( $\beta = 0.139$ ;  $t=2.507$ ;  $p \leq 0.05$ ), and materialism ( $\beta=0.146$ ;  $t=2.669$ ;  $p \leq 0.05$ ). These indicate that an increase in the two predictors would also increase the dependent variable according to the contribution by each independent variable respectively.

The two predictors have a high positive t-value. This implies that exposures to mass media and materialism have a positive impact on consumers' purchasing intentions of global brands, although materialism has a stronger effect than exposure to mass media. The findings corresponded with Chi, Yeh, and Huang's (2009), who proposed that an advertisement that uses consumers' favorite or well-known celebrities could bring attractiveness, and also could change a consumer's liking or taste and their behavior in relation to purchasing intentions.

In the same view, Argan, Velioglu and Argan (2007), Russell and Stern (2006), and Pokrywczynski (2005) found that consumers take their favorite celebrities as references when buying brands. Like marketing, media are relevant because they create room for the conversation between companies and consumers, which directly attracts consumers to company brands (Hanlon & Josh, 2008). To some extent, if consumers choose the kind of mass media they prefer to watch or listen to such as television, movies, and magazines from western countries, they are more likely to adopt western or foreign culture.

Obviously, materialistic people are influenced by information obtained from the media through advertisements or by others, to use products that are highly respected and admired in society (Rindfleisch, Burroughs, & Wong. 2008). Materialistic consumers believe that acquiring material things has a vital position in their lives. They feel that acquiring material things is a source of personal happiness, pleasure and satisfaction and also symbolizes affluence (Peter and Olson 2008; Schiffman et al., 2010).

In addition, gender positively affects purchasing intentions and previous studies have indicated that females are more significantly influenced when they are making decisions about purchasing global brands. According to Chang's (2007) study, information is handled differently among males and females, and it evokes different decision making processes in terms of purchasing intentions.

This implies that the ways information is handled differently among genders are based on their respective behavior objectives. Although men are more ambitious due to their self-esteem, they like to portray a good status, have a need to be identified and praised in society, and at the same time position themselves as rational. Thus, a male's intention to purchase is influenced heavily because they want to be a social identity, while a female's attention is geared towards the pursuit of love, happiness, caring and togetherness of the family. Previous studies found that females easily respond or react to any change and can be influenced more easily than males (Shao et al., 2004).



## Conclusion

Owing to the fact that consumers' exposure to mass media has a positive impact on their intention to purchase global brands, this should be of help also for local brand companies to emulate, and it could be carefully based on the importance of making use of a communication channel strategy to improve their products through the use of local channels to promote local programs, which could enhance local brands to be realistic for consumers, as well as having the benefit of placing or positioning local brands as global brands. Another solution would be featuring local celebrities in events such as concerts for advertisements, which can promote more awareness for local products.

Materialism was found to be one of the factors influencing consumer's intention to purchase foreign products, and consumers believe in acquiring material things. Materialism can be a source of personal happiness or pleasure and satisfaction and also symbolizes affluence. Meanwhile, local companies should provide quality products with more interesting packaging that can enhance and be more attractive to consumers, since consumers are persuaded by others to consume products that are public and prestigious, thus can enhance self-esteem.

Additionally, separation of market differences has always been a main issue in marketing, and gender is a vital element of segmentation used to access the market. However, men and women behave in different variations in terms of their purchasing intentions. For instance, environment and atmosphere influence consumers' purchasing intentions among males and females. Some research shows that when music is being played in a restaurant it could have more effect on women than men, and men are more risk bearers than women. This implies that men are more confident when deciding on their purchasing intentions than women. In spite of that a well-known marketing product can inflate consumers' purchasing intentions and marketers should make sure that divergent plans have been used among different genders.

The regression analysis result shows that exposure to mass media and materialism have a positive impact on intentions of consumers to purchase global brands. This may be because consumers' attraction to their favorite celebrities' via media advertisements has motivated them to purchase global brands for them to exhibit their success and status, and they tend to be more materialistic. This implies that media celebrities exhibited glamorous clothing and expensive possessions during the advert in media. Affluent spending and purchasing of opulent goods as suggested by advertising with media celebrities is strategy to promote consumption.

Meanwhile, consumers who are more concerned with their favorite icons trend to be easily influenced by the glorified picture of media celebrities depicted in adverts. Consumers are inspired to purchase and use the advertised product messages for self-enhancement. More especially, in developing countries like Nigeria, there is no alternative for consumers to make a choice rather than relying on information they get from brand adverts (Reardon, Miller, Vida & Kim 2005). The results indicate that there is a positive impact created by the media that suggested that for consumers who are more materialistic, their intention to purchase increases.

This previous study has found that sensitivity and related experiences can influence consumers' purchasing intentions. Furthermore, gender can influence purchasing intentions. Female consumers were more easily persuaded to become conscious of the atmosphere and good lighting, and this positively strengthened their appraisal of a product and affected their intention to purchase. Meanwhile, well known marketing products can bring new values for consumers and at the same time create room for consumers to be conscious of the product benefits which can facilitate their purchasing intentions.

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