

ANALYSIS OF CONSUMERS' CHOICE OF FURNITURE PRODUCTS IN YOLA NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ADAMAWA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study assessed consumers' choice of furniture products in Yola North Local Government Area of Adamawa. Survey research design was adopted for the study. A total of 349 copies of questionnaire were administered to furniture products consumers in Yola North LGA, but a total of 290 were returned fully and appropriately filled. The study used both primary and secondary method in collecting data. A stratified sampling technique was used in the study. Descriptive and inferential statistics such as mean analysis, chi square and OLS regression were employed to obtained result. The result indicates that consumer purchasing behavior has significant impact on consumers' choice of furniture products and the quality of the product in Yola North Local Government in Adamawa State. The study recommends that furniture manufacturing industries should produce quality furniture's at favourable price in other not to discourage customers from purchasing their furniture products. There should also be a shopping fair within the industry; where by furniture of different variety should be displayed for prospective buyers. The study also recommended furniture manufactures should adopted good advertising strategies in marketing their furniture products.

Keywords: Consumer behavior, Consumer purchasing behavior

1. Introduction

Various studies (Aribusala, 1993,) have reported a decline in the performance of the forest industry in Nigeria. The furniture industry is not left out in this regard. Thus, there is the need for constant assessment of the forest industries so as to provide up to date information pertinent to design strategy for their sustainability and improve their outputs. Specifically, for each of the furniture enterprise, the competitive performance was determine through assessment of the strategy for marketing of the furniture, elasticity of production and returns to scale, technical efficiency and inefficiency of furniture production, and constraints faced by each of the enterprises.

However, Bumgardner and Bowe (2002) discovered that most consumers could hardly identify wood species visually and therefore rely on species names when purchasing wood products. Inability to identify wood species visually has led to differences between respondent's name-based and appearance-based evaluation of the same species (Roos et al, 2005). Considering the fact that most consumers could hardly identify wood species used when purchasing wood products, the need arises for an in depth evaluation of the determinants of consumers' choice of furniture. These determinants if known could provide a useful management and decision making framework for furniture manufacturers (carpenters) and marketers (consumers).

Based on the above background, this study assess consumers' choice of furniture products in Yola North Local Government Area of Adamawa State, specifically assessing whether there is significant difference between consumer purchasing behavior and consumer's choice on quality of furniture products, examine the impact of consumer purchasing behaviour (CPB), consumer price perception (CPP) and problems of marketing furniture (PFM) on quality of furniture products within Yola north local government.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Issues

Consumer purchasing behavior

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2013), consumer purchasing behavior refers to the purchasing behavior of the individuals and households who buy goods and services for personal consumption. Consumers around the world are different in various factors such as age, income, education level and preferences which may affect the way they avail of goods and services. This behavior then impacts how products and services are presented to the different consumer markets. There are many components which influence consumer behavior namely; cultural, social, personal, and psychological (Kotler & Armstrong, 2013). Consumer behavior is the

study of when, why, how and where people do or do not buy products (Sandhusen, Richard L; 2000). Kundi et al (2008) stated that consumer behavior refers to the mental and emotional process and the observable behavior of consumer's during searching, purchasing and post consumption of a product or services

Consumer behavior

The researchers and marketers have presented their views on consumer behavior in numerous ways. To conclude, all the researches made about consumer behaviour have resulted in common characteristics; dynamic, constantly changing and evolving over the time. However, consumers' behavior is limited to specific periods of time, products and individual or groups. Therefore few products get successful in particular period or in particular region. Consumer behavior means more than just how person buys products. Marketing efforts therefore also focus on consumers' consumption of services, activities and ideas. The manner in which consumers buy are extremely important to marketers. It involves understanding the set of decisions (what, why, when, how much and how often) that consumer makes over the time (Hoyer 2015). It is important to know how consumer reacts towards different product features, price, and advertisement, in order to ensure strong competitive advantage.

Consumers' Price Perception and Price Attitude

The effect of price on consumers' buying behaviour has been frequently studied for several decades, and price has been considered an information cue concerning products (Monroe & Lee, 1999). However, little is known how and in what form consumers restore, categorize, evaluate and retrieve price information and what can be predicted based on this knowledge. Price has also been widely studied as an extrinsic cue in food choice experiments carried out by sensory, consumer and food scientists (Koster, 2009). However, results concerning the role of price in food choice are somewhat heterogeneous. Buying a product is a complex situation with a great variety of different stimuli to be taken into account before a decision is made. Quite often price is operationalised as a given component in order to get something (Monroe & Lee, 1999). Moreover, price perception has been regarded in previous studies as a one-dimensional construct (Padula & Busacca, 2005) according to which low price is favorably and high price unfavorably interpreted. This is in accordance with the principle of the economic rationality of the consumer. However, several studies have shown that consumers can make irrational choices in buying higher priced products instead of lower priced ones and price can be a multi-dimensional construct including, for example, fairness assumptions (Padula & Busacca, 2005). Consumers' responses to price information can be related to total quality information and information uncertainty (Urbany & Bearden, 2001).

Factors Affecting Consumer Behaviour

Culture factors

Culture is the complex of values, ideas, attitudes and other meaningful symbols that allows human to communicate, interpret and evaluate as members of society (Blackwell et al, 2001). It is the primary reason behind a person's wants and behavior. Although, different societal groups have their own culture that affects consumers buying behavior, the extent to which it influences the behavior might vary from country to country. Each cultural group can be divided into groups consisting of people with common life experiences and situations, also known as subcultures (Kotler, 2001), such as nationality, racial groups, religion, and geographical areas. The third cultural factor is social class, which is constituted of other variables: occupation, income, education, and wealth (Blackwell et al., 2001).

Social factors

The second classification of factors affecting consumer behavior is social grouping, which is composed of small groups, social roles and status. Some of these groups have a direct influence on a person, i.e. Membership groups, groups that a person can belong to (Kotler, 2001), and reference groups which "serve as direct (face-to-face) or indirect points of comparison or reference in forming a person's attitudes or beliefs" (Kotler & Armstrong, 2013).

Groups

Membership groups are group of people that have a direct effect on a person's behavior. Reference groups are groups that have a direct or indirect influence on a person's attitude and behavior. Aspirational groups are groups that a person wishes to belong to. It is important for the marketer to try and identify the different reference groups of their target market since they affect the consumer in different ways. The influence from groups tend to be higher when purchasing an expensive product that stands for luxury and is going to be seen by a lot of friends and other people (Kotler, 2001).

Family

The industry has considerable interest in the family buying behavior. It is one of the most important consumer buying segments of society and it has been reached extensively. Involvement of family person varies from product to product. Foods, household products and clothes purchasing decisions are mostly made by ladies. Purchase of new car or house is complete family decision to fulfill current demands

of all family members. Individual members of families often serve different roles in decisions that ultimately draw on shared family resources (Kotler, 2001).

Role and status

Every person plays multiple roles in their daily life, professional role, family or social role, and each of these roles have a certain effect on consumers buying behaviour,, for instance if someone is a marketing manager in an organisation and at the same time he or she has a particular role in the family. Each role has a particular status in society, and consumer behavior is considerably depended on this status factor, and will choose products which can be part of their status. For example a female marketing manager will buy clothes which reflect her role and status (Kotler, 2001).

Personal factors

Buyer's decision is also influenced by personal characteristics such as buyers' age, occupation, economic situation, lifestyle, personality and self-concept (Kotler, 2001).

A person's demand for products shifts is depending on occupation and financial situation, as well as the stage in the life. A person's lifestyle affects his/her activities, interests, and opinions and also affects the choice of products (Kotler & Armstrong, 2013).

Influence of Family Financial Status on the Choice of Furniture Products

Never before in U.S. history have the combined public and private sectors done so much to encourage consumer financial literacy at every age and life stage. Policy makers, businesses, and communities have created or supported financial literacy educational initiatives. Campaigns, laws, and public service announcements in order to persuade consumers to become more knowledgeable about personal finance and to make more self-enhancing financial decisions. This concerted interest in helping individuals become financially competent is occurring in response to broad, and complex, societal trends. Employment trends are changing traditional patterns of consumer job stability and income security. Retirement and health benefit trends are increasing the amounts that individuals and families must contribute to meet retirement savings need and obtain adequate health coverage, if health coverage is accessible at all. Rising cost across the board, for transportation, housing, medical care, banking, education, and telecommunications), are straining the financial resources of many consumer Social Security (Rafee, 2004).

2.5 Review of Empirical Studies

Sharon (1994) conducted a study on the parental perception of children's financial socialization. In this study, twenty-seven (27) financial items were included in a questionnaire and 182 parents responded to the age they felt most appropriate to be involved in the financial activity. From the findings, the most consensus were among parents as to when the very young ready to learn and that children approximately 18 ready for credit experiences. The items related to knowing about family income, savings and indebtedness had the highest percentage of parents believing children should never know about that information. Most of the parents believed that children between the ages of 12 to 14 and 15-17 years were ready to be involved in family finances. However, it was added that from the results; most parents thought children were not ready to establish their own financial credibility or a credit history and build assets until 18 years or more. The study revealed more of parental perceptions of the response of their children to general financial responsibilities in their homes and this cannot substitute for the behaviour of all age groups in relation to equipment acquisition in their homes. Sharon used a sample size of 182 while the current study used 406 sample sizes.

In the findings of Sharon, the researcher observed that almost half of the parents believed the 12-14 year olds were capable of being responsible for their clothing budget. Only about one-third of the parents believed that same age group should know monthly family living costs, be told family income, or help keep records of family income. Although there was not much agreement among parents about what appropriate for 19-14 year olds as for those 8 years or less, there should be a significant amount of agreement. It was particularly surprising that one-third of the parents thought it was appropriate to tell 12 to 14 year's olds about the family income. In the findings, there was a higher degree of consensus among parents related to what they perceived was appropriate for those children 18 year older more than 51 percent of the parents thought this age group was ready to be fully responsible for their own credit card, apply for a personal loan, make payments on a personal loan, and be fully responsible for a checking account.

In the work of David and Mark (2000) on the role that employed and non-employed teenagers played in family expenditures, it was found that most parents with teenagers agreed that their children between the ages of 14 and 17 received a major portion of family income. A U.S. Department of Agriculture estimated of family expenditure on children indicated that middle-income families spent between \$9,390 and \$9,530 per year on typical teenagers. Children from low-income families may be more likely to contribute to family economic well-being than children from non-low-income families and be more likely to contribute to family economic wellbeing

than children from low-income households. Previous research of teen employment was primarily focused on the incidence and patterns of work, and the effects on the teenager's educational attainment, future employment prospects and other developmental outcomes.

It was found that study results were similar, using teens that had a reported income and teens that had a reported imputed income. They therefore used all teens whether they had a reported or imputed income. In their findings they observed that many of the teens do not seem to work because of economic necessity, because many lived in married couple families with higher household income compared with those of their non-employed counterparts. Thirty four percent of employed teens worked more than 20 hours per week for more than 10 weeks per year. Prior research has showed that working at this level was associated with negative consequences. The differences between the two studies are that David and Mark used interview method to get their data but the present study used questionnaire to get data for the study. The past survey used a sample size of 2,552, while the present survey used a sample of 406 households in Imo State the past worked on children of households while the present worked on heads of households.

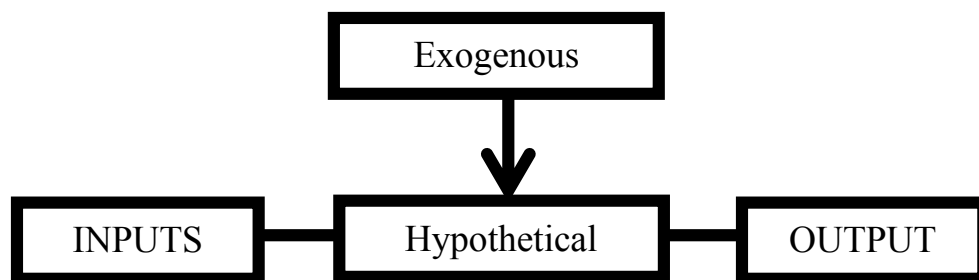
In the work by Martine and Wiaux (2002) on consumer motivations to take back spent batteries and spent electronic and electrical equipment, they employed a qualitative survey in (Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, France) and a Quantitative survey in France. In their qualitative study in B, Bi, and F. two group discussions often participants took place in each country. In their findings, they observed that across all 4 countries there was a general trend in lifestyle largely in favour of cordless appliances, associated to values of freedom and convenience. They observed that there was a growing demand from consumers in all countries. They also found that there was an average of 4 to 5 cordless appliances present in a household. They further observed that in France and Germany primary batteries were perceived as being more harmful to the environment than the rechargeable. Belgians stored their primary batteries and brought them back to the collection point, showing that awareness of the collection system was high, In France people were aware of the existence of collection point but Belgium were clearly the leading country. The communication campaigns for collection and recycling were efficient. In Germany there was a disparity between regions in implementation of the collection policy little awareness of the communication campaigns, no clear information in terms of reminding by the consumers at least about the collection system. In all countries there was an absence of awareness of legal obligation to participate to the collection and recycling of batteries appliances. Their findings suggested that the divide between search and experience goods, in terms of consumers' perceived ability to judge

product quality before purchase, remained in traditional retail environments but erodes in the online environment. Their study of browsing behaviour also supported this idea; in that the total time consumers spent online searching for product information was not significantly different for search and experiences goods. The differences in the two (2) researches is that the past study used a sample of over 50,000 households, while the present research used 406 household heads who purchase household equipment. The latter used descriptive statistics while the present research used descriptive and inferential statistics. Olayide (1990) carried out a study of three hundred and twelve (312) families in Owerri North Local government Area in Imo State and concluded that women did the purchase of household equipment especially in families with higher income, while the present study used 406 household heads in Imo State. Olayide used observation method but this study used questionnaire to collect datas, Olayide's study showed that in 60 percent of families, either men or women who made purchase were considerably influenced by the others. The home maker directed the purchases of other members of the family in 60 percent of the cases.

Theoretical Framework

The theory of buyer behaviour

Howard developed the first consumer decision-model in 1963. This model was developed further in 1969 by Howard and Sheth to become the 'Theory of Buyer Behaviour' (or Howard and Sheth Model) (Howard & Sheth 1969). It provides "a sophisticated integration of the various social, psychological and marketing influences on consumer choice into a coherent sequence of information processing" (Foxall 1990). The fundamental architecture of the model is outlined in Figure 1, with the exogenous variables not appearing in the first publication of the work (Howard & Sheth 1969), but in subsequent publications (Howard & Sheth 1973).

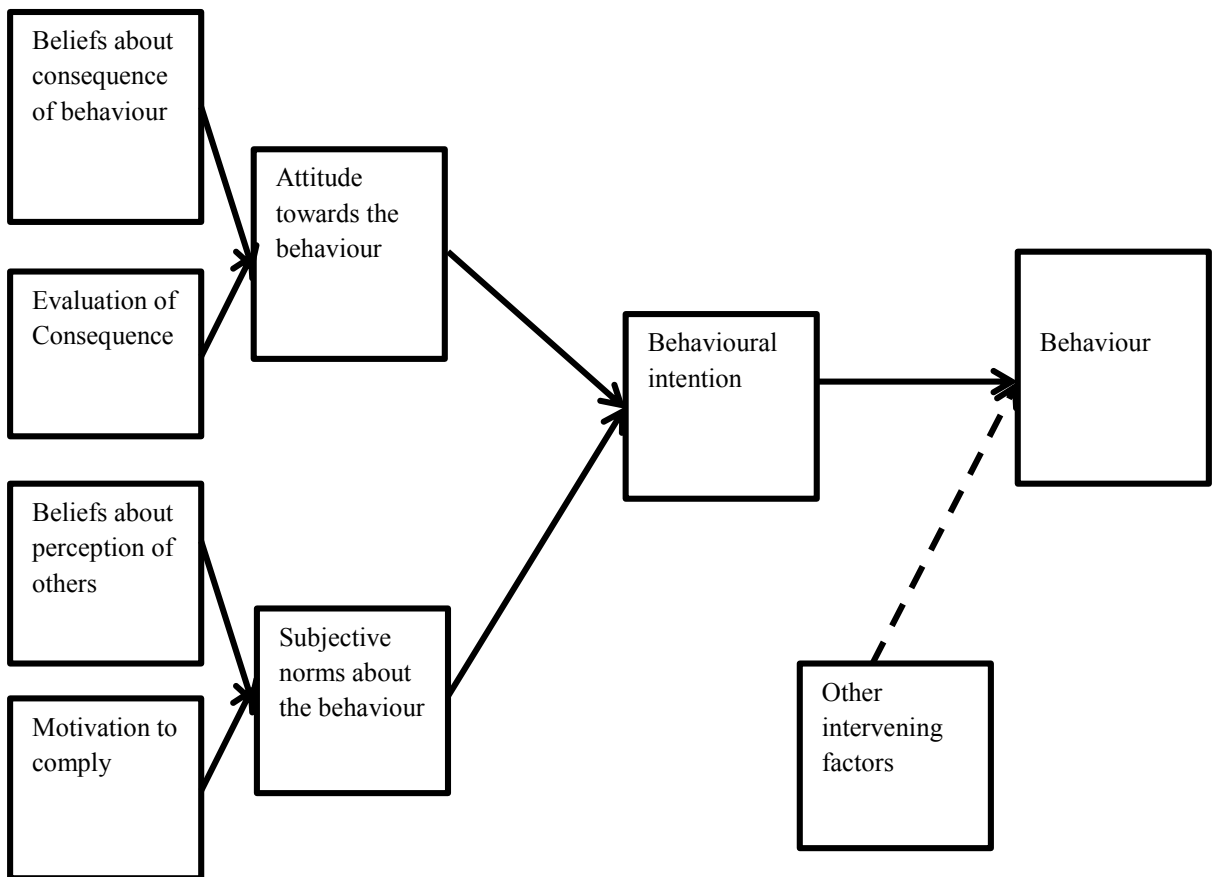


Source: Adapted from (Loudon, Della & Bitta 1993)

Figure 1: Major Components of the Theory of Buyer Behavior

Theory of reasoned action

This revised model became known as the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and is depicted in Figure 2 below. Behaviour is said to be approximately equal to behavioural intention, which can be derived from a combination of the consumer's attitude toward purchasing the product and the subjective norms about the behaviour. Through the concept of 'subjective norm' the theory acknowledges the power of other people in influencing behaviour (Solomon & Bamossy, 2016); explicitly, it accounts for the thoughts of others toward the certain behaviour, and is moderated by the extent to which the consumer is motivated to comply to these views.



Source: (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975, Loudon, Della & Bitta 1993)

Figure 2: Theory of Reasoned Action

3. METHODOLOGY

A total of 349 copies of questionnaire were administered to furniture products consumers in Yola North LGA, from a population of one hundred and twenty eight thousand, nine hundred (128,900) people of Yola North Local government area of Adamawa State (NPC, 2006) using Yamani (1964) formula, but a total of 290 were returned fully and appropriately filled. The study used both primary and secondary method in collecting data. A stratified sampling technique was use in the study. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire. The questionnaire was adapted with modification by the researcher, which consists of two sections; Section A cover respondents demographic information while section B was the main questions. The questionnaire modified using 5-point likert scale starting strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. The research instrument was validated using expert opinion validity. This entails seeking the opinion of expert on marketing and entrepreneurship. The test-retest method was used to check the reliability of the scale in this study. Descriptive and inferential statistics such as mean analysis, chi square and OLS regression were employed to obtained result. *The regression model is formulated as follows;*

$$GOP_{it} = a + \beta_1 CPB_{it} + \beta_2 CPP_{it} + \beta_3 PFM_{it} + u_{it}$$

Where:

CPB_{it} = Consumer purchasing behaviour

CPP_{it} = consumer price perception

PFM_{it} = problem of marketing furniture products

a = Represents the fixed intercept element

u_{it} = the error terms

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study assessed consumers' choice of furniture products in Yola North Local Government Area of Adamawa. It provides the result of empirical research finding, In order to attain these 349 copies of questionnaires were administered to furniture products consumers in Yola North LGA but a total of 290 questionnaires were fully returned and filled appropriately. The socio-economic profile of the respondent were identified by age, gender, qualification and working experience was considered due to the nature of the study and interpreting the data from the field study.

Difference between consumer purchasing behavior and quality of furniture products

In Table 1 below the result indicates that X^2 calculated is greater than X^2 tabulated in all questions at (0.005) level of degree of freedom, we therefore concluded that there is significant different between purchasing behaviour and quality of the product that is the quality of the furniture influences the purchasing behaviour of the customers. This corroborated with the study conducted by Martine & Wiax (2002) on consumer motivations to take back spent batteries and spent electronic and electrical equipment.

Table 1: Chi-square analysis on the significant difference between consumer purchasing behavior and quality of furniture products

Items	X^2	$X^2(0.005)$	DF	Remarks
Q1	86.622	41.10	4	
Significant				
Q2	72.622	41.10	4	
Significant				
Q3	103.615	41.10	4	
Significant				
Q4	53.503	41.10	4	
Significant				
Q5	144.524	41.10	4	
Significant				
Q6	216.832	41.10	4	
Significant				

Decision criteria: Reject H_0 if $X^2_{cal.} > X^2_{tab}$ otherwise accept.

Assessment of the consumers' choice on the quality of furniture products

Table 2 below presents the summary results for the Assessment of the consumers' choice on the quality of furniture products in Yola North local government in Adamawa State. The coefficient of consumer purchasing behavior (CPB), consumer price perception (CPP), problem of marketing furniture products (PFM) and constant inclusive. Precisely, the significance level of consumer purchasing behavior (CPB), consumer price perception (CPP), problems of marketing furniture products (PFM) and constant are obtained as 0.000, 0.042, 0.000 and 0.000 respectively. The coefficient of explanatory variables of consumer purchasing behavior (CPB), consumer price perception (CPP) and constant inclusive are positively signed,

indicating that 1 unit change in consumer purchasing price and consumer price perception would increase the consumers' choice of furniture products by 0.008 and 0.472 unit respectively. This study is in line with the findings of McKenzie (2000) who found that customer purchasing behavior is significant in affecting the behavioral aspect of consumers' choice. While the coefficient of problem of marketing furniture products is negatively signed, indicating that 1 unit change in problem of marketing furniture product would decrease the consumers' choice of furniture products by 0.321 unit respectively.

The coefficient of determination R^2 (0.750) shows that about 75 percent total variation in the dependent variable is explained by the change in the explanatory variables in the estimated model, while the remaining 25 percent has been captured by an error term. The adjusted coefficient of determination (0.741) shows that after taking into account the loss in the degree of freedom, the model has a good fit. The Durbin Watson statistic (1.543) shows the absence of positive serial correlation.

Table 2: Multiple Regression Summary Result on the Assessment of the consumers' choice on the quality of furniture products

Variables Sig.	coefficients	Std error	T-stat
Constant 0.000	11.214	1.314	8.853
CPB 0.042	0.008	0.018	2.497
CPP 0.000	0.472	0.072	6.556
PFM 0.050	-0.321	0.039	1.717
R-squared	0.750	Adj. R-squared	0.741
Durbin Watson	1.543		

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The objective of this study was to assess consumers' choice of furniture products in Yola North Local Government Area of Adamawa and findings therefore revealed that consumer purchasing behavior affects choice of furniture products in Yola North Local Government Area. McKenzie (2000) asserts that customer purchasing behavior is a significant behavioral aspect of consumer behavior. The complex buying behavior refers to when consumers are highly motivated in a purchase and perceive significant differences among the brands. The buyers are associated with expensive, risky, self-impressive product, and purchased infrequently (Kolter & Tan, 2003). Variety-seeking buying behaviors are characterized by low involvement and significant brand differences. Habitual buying behavior occurs when the purchasers have low involvement with low cost and frequently purchased products.

The finding revealed that consumers' price perception and attitude significantly affects the choice of furniture products in Yola North Local Government Area. According to Rosa-Diaz (2004) showed that consumers tended to underestimate the actual price, but only a little of the variance was explained by socio-demographic variables or attitudinal variables, such as a self-reported price importance or a price knowledge certainty. In the previous price research, individual price perceptions are related to the internal (prior prices in the minds of consumers) and external (other prices perceived around the observed price) reference price information (Kumar et al. 2010). However, little is explained what affects the reference price and price estimations. The role of price in product choice has been related to emotions (O'Neill and Lambert 2001), and other affective evaluations may be involved. Also Urbany and Bearden (1997) opined that consumers' responses to price information can be related to quality information and information uncertainty. Consumers are individual in their perception of prices and price-quality relations, and several product attributes are used to explain these differences.

The study further reveals that there are problems associated with marketing of furniture products in Yola North Local Government Area. This finding is in line with Odinaka (2014) who reported the problems in marketing their furniture products, such as; poor advertising, high pricing, poor product quality and difficulty in recruiting and selecting sales personnel. Furthermore, studies have shown that many businesses in Nigeria do not carry out effective product advertisement, the result being that necessary information about the company and its offering is not disclosed to the potential customers, this has a serious negative effect on the sales volume of the organization. Furniture owners are often reluctant when setting price for their products, not bearing in mind the influence of price on their product, these practices

provide a competitive environment for other firms operating in the industry. The quality of most made in Nigeria products are often sub-standard, this usually creates problem for marketers in the course of marketing their products, sometime products are rejected at the introduction stage of the product lifecycle on the round of poor product quality.

Based on the conclusion drawn above, the followings recommendations are made:

- i. Furniture manufacturing industries should produce quality furniture's at favorable price in other not to discourage customers from purchasing their furniture products. There should also be a shopping fair within the industry; where by furniture of different variety was displayed for prospective buyers.
- ii. Furniture manufacturing should use good quality raw materials in other to give their products quality standards. Furniture manufactures should expand their market to other parts of the local Government in the state, which will lead to increased in patronage of their furniture products.
- iii. Furniture manufactures should adopted good advertising strategies in marketing their furniture products. e.g online advertising of products, Distribution Of Pamphlets, Exclusive Events/ functions, Business cards, making use of appealing graphics.

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