CONSUMER EDUCATION, FAMILY AND REFERENCE GROUP INFLUENCE IN ASO EBI SELECTION IN SOUTHWEST NIGERIA

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Abstract

In Nigeria, the selection of aso ebi, a traditional attire worn for special occasions, is influenced by various social and familial factors. This study examined the relationship between family influence, reference group influence, and consumer education in the selection of aso ebi in Southwest Nigeria. Two research questions were posed, and two hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance. A correlational design was employed to collect data from 1200 adult individuals (aged 18 years and above) in the Southwestern geopolitical zone of Nigeria, covering Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, and Oyo states. A validated, reliable, self-structured questionnaire titled "Consumer Education and Behaviour in the Choice of Aso Ebi Questionnaire (CEBCAQ)" was used for data collection. Data analysis was conducted using Pearson's r and Fisher's Z statistics. Findings revealed a positive but low correlation between consumer education and both family ($r = 0.10$) and reference group purchasing behaviour ($r = 0.14$) in aso ebi selection. The relationship between consumer education and consumer behaviour was significantly stronger among male adults than female adults ($r_{males} = 0.62$, $r_{females} = 0.49$, $Z_{cal} > Z_{tab}$); and significantly stronger among older adults than younger adults ($r_{old} = 0.59$, $r_{young} = 0.48$, $Z_{cal} > Z_{tab}$). The study concludes that the complex interplay of social pressure, family dynamics, reference groups, and economic factors influencing aso ebi choices aligns with consumer behaviour surrounding clothing articles globally. Future research could explore how consumer education programs may be tailored to target families and address social influences in aso ebi selection.

Keywords: Aso ebi selection, consumer behaviour, consumer education, family influence, reference group influence

Pengaruh Edukasi Konsumen, Keluarga, dan Kelompok Referensi dalam Pemilihan Aso Ebi di Nigeria Barat Daya

Abstrak

Di Nigeria, pemilihan aso ebi, pakaian tradisional yang dikenakan pada acara-acara khusus, dipengaruhi oleh berbagai faktor sosial dan keluarga. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji hubungan antara pengaruh keluarga, kelompok referensi, dan edukasi konsumen dalam pemilihan aso ebi di wilayah Barat Daya Nigeria. Penelitian ini mengajukan dua pertanyaan penelitian dan menguji dua hipotesis pada tingkat signifikansi 0.05. Dengan menggunakan desain korelasional, data dikumpulkan dari 1200 responden dewasa (usia 18 tahun ke atas) di zona geopolitik Barat Daya Nigeria, yang meliputi negara bagian Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, dan Oyo. Instrumen pengumpulan data yang digunakan adalah kuesioner terstruktur dan telah divalidasi dengan judul "Consumer Education and Behaviour in the Choice of Aso Ebi Questionnaire (CEBCAQ)." Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan korelasi Pearson (r) dan statistik Fisher's Z. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya korelasi positif namun rendah antara edukasi konsumen dengan perilaku pembelian yang dipengaruhi oleh keluarga ($r = 0,10$) dan kelompok referensi ($r = 0,14$) dalam pemilihan aso ebi. Hubungan antara edukasi konsumen dan perilaku konsumen ternyata lebih kuat pada laki-laki dewasa dibandingkan perempuan dewasa ($r_{males} = 0.62$, $r_{females} = 0.49$, $Z_{cal} > Z_{tab}$); serta lebih kuat pada orang dewasa yang lebih tua dibandingkan yang lebih muda ($r_{old} = 0.59$, $r_{young} = 0.48$, $Z_{cal} > Z_{tab}$). The study concludes that the complex interplay of social pressure, family dynamics, reference groups, and economic factors influencing aso ebi choices aligns with consumer behaviour surrounding clothing articles globally. Future research could explore how consumer education programs may be tailored to target families and address social influences in aso ebi selection.

Keywords: Pemilihan aso ebi, edukasi konsumen, pengaruh keluarga, pengaruh kelompok referensi, perilaku konsumen

INTRODUCTION

Clothing serves as more than a necessity for survival; it acts as a canvas for self-expression, cultural identity, and a sense of belonging (Tajuddin, 2019). Our sartorial choices, while influenced by personal taste, are also woven into a complex tapestry of social factors. In Southwest Nigeria, the concept of aso ebi adds another vibrant layer to this dynamic. Translating literally to "family cloth" in Yoruba, aso ebi refers to matching attire worn by family members and close associates during social celebrations. Traditionally, aso ebi symbolized unity and unwavering support within the family unit. However, its significance has evolved, blossoming into a widespread fashion phenomenon embraced not only by families but also by friends, social groups, and even individuals without direct familial ties (Tyitelle, 2017). This surge in popularity, however, has sparked debate, particularly in light of Nigeria's current economic challenges, as the pressure to adhere to this tradition can result in significant financial strain, potentially affecting access to basic necessities.

To navigate this complex social practice, it is essential to understand the factors influencing aso ebi selection. The desire to showcase group affiliation and solidarity is a key factor. Wearing the designated aso ebi signifies belonging to a specific social circle, fostering camaraderie and shared identity during celebrations. This is particularly important in a society that places high value on family and community. The chosen fabric, often brightly colored and richly patterned, serves as a visual representation of collective spirit (Byfield, 2012). Furthermore, aso ebi elevates social status; its quality and exclusivity increase the perceived importance of an occasion and convey affluence, especially for the host, who often selects a more elaborate design for themselves and their immediate family (Ukpo, 2015).

Nevertheless, the pressure to conform to social expectations can have adverse impacts. The financial burden associated with purchasing aso ebi, particularly for elaborate designs or imported fabrics, can be substantial. This can lead individuals to prioritize aso ebi over essentials such as food or healthcare, especially for those with limited incomes or those expected to participate in multiple celebrations (Akinsanya, 2018). Furthermore, the evolving nature of aso ebi, influenced by social media and fashion trends, means individual preferences increasingly play a role, often leading to disagreements within families or groups. This study, therefore, focuses on two key social influences: family and reference groups, examining how consumer education shapes consumer behavior in the context of aso ebi selection.

The family unit provides a foundational influence on consumer behavior, particularly in clothing choices. Parents play a significant role in influencing their children's tastes, values, and purchasing habits (DDL Resources, 2021). Early exposure to family clothing preferences and shopping habits can have a lasting impact on individual choices. For instance, children raised in families that prioritize practicality and affordability may develop budget-conscious habits, while those exposed to luxury brands may carry these preferences into adulthood (Meena, 2018). The family life cycle stage also influences clothing needs and budget considerations, as young adults may prioritize trendy and affordable aso ebi options, while parents may value durability and versatility (Adeyanju & Kolawole, 2019).

Beyond the family, reference groups serve as powerful social influences. These groups provide benchmarks for behavior, with norms often transmitted through opinion leaders, such as celebrities or influencers, who impact aso ebi trends. This influence, amplified by social media, can create a sense of competition and pressure to maintain social standing through expensive aso ebi, potentially distorting perceptions of luxury items as more prevalent than they are (Solomon, 2017; Zhao et al., 2022). Social media algorithms can reinforce these patterns by exposing users primarily to content that aligns with their existing preferences.

Consumer education plays a crucial role in equipping individuals with the knowledge and skills to navigate these social pressures, including understanding fabric quality, pricing, and responsible consumption. Such education can help consumers make informed choices within budget constraints and reduce the influence of social pressures, enabling balanced decision-making (American Public Health Association, APHA, 2013; Saanvivmd, 2021). Additionally, this study explores how factors such as gender and age influence consumer education's impact on aso ebi choices, as women and younger consumers tend to be more trend-sensitive and socially influenced, while older consumers may prioritize comfort and durability (Zhao et al., 2022).

The present study fills a research gap in consumer education and aso ebi selection, extending insights from previous studies. For instance, while Chiwendu and Shedrack (2018) examined social class's effect on shopping behavior in Nigeria, finding a link between social class and outlet choice, this study specifically investigates aso ebi, examining how various social and economic factors, along with consumer education, influence this unique cultural practice. Similarly, Ciasullo et al. (2017) identified a gap between sustainable intentions and consumer choices, which this study investigates by assessing how consumer education can empower aso ebi buyers to bridge intentions and actual behavior, especially considering sustainability.

Further, Dreyer et al. (2016) studied South African consumers' eco-label usage, noting that environmental concerns did not always translate into action. The present study replicates this framework in Nigeria, focusing on aso ebi selection to examine if consumer education promotes sustainable choices. Similar to Oshio and Ihensekhien's (2019) focus on general consumer skills in adolescents, this study examines adult aso ebi selection, offering a specific application in the Nigerian context.

Moreover, Shen et al. (2013) explored demographic roles in sustainable fashion awareness, and this study applies similar methodologies to assess demographic factors influencing aso ebi selection. By building on prior work like Shu'ara's (2022) study on consumer education's impact on entrepreneurship, the present research shifts the focus from business to consumer decisions, examining how educated consumers influence aso ebi choices. Finally, extending Williams' (2021) findings on sustainable apparel choices in educational contexts, this study not only explores intentions but also investigates how consumer education translates into actual purchasing behavior.

This research, therefore, aims to provide a deeper understanding of the socio-economic dynamics shaping aso ebi choices, offering insights into the cultural, social, and educational factors that influence this practice.

METHODS

This study utilized a correlational survey design to explore the relationship between consumer education as the independent variable and consumer behavior as the dependent variable in the context of aso ebi selection, considering gender and age as intervening variables. A correlational design was appropriate to measure the strength and direction of relationships between these variables. Conducted in the Southwest geopolitical zone of Nigeria, the research encompassed the states of Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, and Oyo, and spanned a period of six months, with data collection completed over four weeks.

The study targeted adults aged 18 and above across Southwest Nigeria, a group comprising 54% of the region's total population of approximately 38.783.554 people (National Bureau of Statistics, 2018). Initially, the sample size was calculated as 400 respondents using Yaro Yamane's formula, but to increase representativeness, this figure was expanded to 1,200 respondents (Oribhabor & Anyanwu, 2018). This increase in sample size was limited to three times the original number to avoid potential Type II error, where findings may be incorrectly accepted (Sekaran, 2013).

A multi-stage sampling approach was employed, combining Cluster Sampling, Simple Random Sampling, and Purposive Sampling to ensure a diverse representation. Cluster sampling was applied to select 200 adults from each state, while random sampling captured participants from various backgrounds. Purposive sampling verified that all respondents were at least 18 years of age at the time of the study.

The primary instrument used in this study was a self-structured questionnaire titled Consumer Education and Behaviour in the Choice of Aso Ebi Questionnaire (CEBCAQ), which measured and assessed variables across three sections. Section A collected demographic information about the respondents, such as age and gender, while Section B measured consumer education by evaluating respondents' knowledge, attitudes, and skills related to consumerism and making informed purchasing decisions. Section C then assessed consumer behavior in aso ebi selection, specifically focusing on spending habits, decision-making processes, and the social and economic influences impacting aso ebi choices.

The questionnaire was validated by two consumer education experts and one Measurement and Evaluation expert from the University of Benin. Their feedback was used to improve the instrument's content and face validity. To determine the instrument's reliability, it was tested on a sample of 12 respondents from Nigeria's South-Eastern geopolitical zone. The resulting Cronbach's alpha score of 0.86 indicated a high level of internal consistency and reliability.

Data collection was carried out by the researcher along with six trained assistants, who were briefed on the study's objectives and procedures. The team distributed and collected the questionnaires over a four-week period, with a retrieval rate of 96%, resulting in 1,150 successfully completed responses.

Two statistical methods were employed in analyzing the collected data. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson's r) was used to measure the relationship between consumer education and both family purchasing behavior and reference group behavior. Correlation coefficients were interpreted based on the scale: low correlation (0.00-0.30), moderate correlation (0.31-0.60), and high correlation (0.61 and above). Fisher's Z statistics were applied to test hypotheses regarding gender and age differences, with calculated values above the critical value of 1.96 leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Fisher's Z was particularly useful in this context as it provides more robust correlation results by reducing the effect of

skewed sampling distributions.

RESULTS

This section presents the findings from the analysis of data collected to examine the relationship between consumer education and consumer behavior in the selection of aso ebi within Southwest Nigeria. The analysis explored two main relationships: the influence of family purchasing behavior and reference groups on consumer education in aso ebi selection. Furthermore, two hypotheses were tested to investigate the significance of differences in these relationships across gender and age groups.

The Relationship between Family Purchasing Behaviour and Consumer Education in the Choice of Aso Ebi in Southwest Nigeria

The analysis of the relationship between family purchasing behavior and consumer education in *aso ebi* selection in Southwest Nigeria, as shown in Table 1, indicates a positive but weak association, with a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.10. The mean values for family purchasing behavior and consumer education are 2.87 and 2.67, respectively, with standard deviations of 0.57 and 0.48. This positive relationship suggests that as consumer education levels increase, there are only minimal adjustments in family purchasing behavior related to *aso ebi*. The limited strength of this relationship aligns with previous findings that emphasize cultural traditions and family expectations as primary drivers in purchasing choices, with consumer education exerting a comparatively minor influence.

Table 1 Pearson's r of the Relationship between Family Purchasing Behaviour and Consumer Education in the Choice of Aso Ebi

Variables	$\overline{x}$	SD	r	Remark
Reference Groups Purchasing Behaviour	2.87	0.57	0.10	Positive relationship
Consumer Education in the choice of aso ebi	2.67	0.48		

Note: $\overline{x}$ = mean, SD = Standard deviation, r = correlation coefficient, α = 0.05

The Relationship between Reference Groups' Purchasing Behaviour and Consumer Education in the Choice of Aso Ebi in Southwest Nigeria

Table 2 presents the relationship between reference groups' purchasing behavior and consumer education in aso ebi selection, revealing a positive but low correlation with a coefficient (r) of 0.14. The mean values for reference group purchasing behavior and consumer education are 2.91 and 2.67, respectively, with standard deviations of 0.56 and 0.48. This slight positive association suggests that reference groups exert some influence on aso ebi purchasing behavior, although consumer education does not strongly modify this impact. These findings imply that while consumer education may increase awareness, it does not significantly alter the influence of social groups on aso ebi choices, which are likely rooted in cultural and social identity.

Table 2 Pearson's r of the Relationship between Reference Groups' Purchasing Behaviour and Consumer Education in the Choice of Aso Ebi

Variables	$\overline{x}$	SD	r	Remark
Reference Groups Purchasing Behaviour	2.91	0.56	0.14	Positive relationship
Consumer Education in the choice of aso ebi	2.67	0.48		

Note: $\overline{x}$ = mean, SD = Standard deviation, r = correlation coefficient, α = 0.05

Hypothesis one examines the significance of the difference in the relationship between consumer education and consumer behavior in aso ebi selection by gender. As shown in Table 3, for male respondents, the correlation coefficient is 0.62, indicating a moderate positive relationship, while for female respondents, the coefficient is slightly lower at 0.49. The calculated Z value of 3.60 exceeds the critical value of 1.96, confirming a statistically significant difference between the genders. This suggests that consumer education influences aso ebi purchasing behavior more substantially among men than women. One possible explanation is that men may prioritize factors such as quality and cost, while women might place more importance on social conformity and fashion trends when selecting aso ebi. This highlights the different roles consumer education plays in purchasing decisions across gender.

Table 3 Fisher's Z for the Significant Difference in the Relationship Between Consumer Education and Consumer Behavior in the Choice of Aso Ebi by Gender

Group	N	r	Zr	Z.Cal	Z.Tab	Decision
Male	459	0.62	0.72	3.60	1.96	Significant
Females	691	0.49	0.54			

Note: N = number of respondents in group, r = correlation coefficient, α = 0.05

Hypothesis two tests whether there is a significant difference in the relationship between consumer education and aso ebi purchasing behavior between older and younger consumers. Table 4 shows that among older consumers, the correlation coefficient is 0.59, while it is slightly lower at 0.48 for younger consumers. The Z-calculated value of 2.67 surpasses the critical threshold of 1.96, indicating a statistically significant difference between the two age groups. This finding suggests that consumer education has a greater impact on purchasing decisions among older consumers, who may prioritize informed choices and factors such as quality and durability in aso ebi selection. In contrast, younger consumers, influenced more by social media and peer pressures, may be less impacted by consumer education. These insights point to the importance of tailoring consumer education programs to meet the needs of specific age demographics, particularly for younger consumers who may benefit from guidance on sustainable choices and resisting social pressures.

Table 4 Fisher's Z for the Significant Difference in the Relationship Between Consumer Education and Consumer Behavior in the Choice of Aso Ebi by Age Group

Group	N	r	Zr	Z.Cal	Z.Tab	Decision
Old	524	0.59	0.68	2.67	1.96	Significant
Young	626	0.48	0.52			

Note: N = number of respondents in group, r = correlation coefficient, α = 0.05

The findings from both hypotheses and research questions underscore the nuanced role that consumer education plays in aso ebi selection across different social influences, gender, and age demographics in Southwest Nigeria. While consumer education appears to have a measurable but limited impact on family and reference group influences, it shows significant variation across gender and age groups, with males and older consumers displaying stronger associations. These insights highlight the importance of developing culturally and demographically tailored consumer education programs that address the unique influences of family, social groups, gender, and age in shaping purchasing behaviors specific to aso ebi.

DISCUSSION

The findings in response to the first research question reveal a positive yet low correlation between family purchasing behavior and consumer education in the choice of aso ebi. This indicates that while consumer education has some influence on family decisions regarding aso ebi, it is not the only determinant. Clootrack (2021) identifies established family purchasing habits as a significant factor in clothing choices. Similarly, Koca and Koc (2016) found that family purchasing behavior impacts clothing selection, particularly concerning fashion trends and brand awareness. Consumer education can empower families to make informed decisions about aso ebi purchases that align with their collective budget and values. For example, a family prioritizing practicality and long-term value might opt for classic aso ebi styles and durable fabrics that can be worn on multiple occasions (Adeyanju & Kolawole, 2019). Conversely, a family that values self-expression through fashion may prioritize trendy aso ebi styles, even at the cost of practicality (Meena, 2018).

The low correlation suggests that consumer education is just one factor influencing family decisions about aso ebi. Other significant aspects, such as family dynamics, negotiation processes, and individual preferences within the family unit, also play a crucial role (DDL Resources, 2021). This complexity highlights the importance of fostering open communication within families, as shared values can significantly impact purchasing decisions. Thus, educational initiatives focusing on budgeting, price comparison, and value for money can equip individuals to negotiate more effectively within the family regarding aso ebi purchases (American Public Health Association, APHA, 2013).

In response to the second research question, the findings indicate a positive, albeit low, correlation between reference groups' purchasing behavior and consumer education in the choice of aso ebi. This aligns with the perspective of DDL Resources (2021), which suggests that reference groups play a significant role in how individuals apply consumer education to aso ebi selection. Reference groups can influence consumer behavior by establishing social norms and the impact of opinion leaders (Solomon, 2017). For instance, a

social circle that prioritizes luxurious aso ebi fabrics might exert pressure on its members to conform, even if this conflicts with their individual budgets or preferences. Additionally, a social media influencer showcasing an extravagant aso ebi design can significantly sway the choices of their followers, potentially leading them to prioritize certain fabrics or styles despite budgetary constraints (Zhao et al., 2022). However, the low correlation indicates that consumer education can serve as a mitigating factor. Individuals equipped with knowledge about responsible consumption practices, budgeting strategies, and fabric quality might be more resistant to social pressures that could lead to financially irresponsible aso ebi purchases (Saanvivmd, 2021).

The findings in testing the first hypothesis indicate a significant difference in how men and women apply consumer education when selecting aso ebi in Southwest Nigeria. This aligns with the report by Zaman and Lovšin-Kozina (2021), which highlights that female students place a higher value on the relevance of consumer education in clothing choices. Women tend to exhibit a deeper interest in clothing materials, fashion trends, and overall aesthetics (Koca & Koc, 2016). This heightened interest may translate into a greater willingness to utilize knowledge gained through consumer education when selecting aso ebi. However, it is important to acknowledge that focusing solely on brand names might not provide a sufficient basis for aso ebi selection. In this study, men appeared to prioritize brand recognition over other factors. While brand awareness can be a component of consumer education, a holistic approach that considers quality, price, and ethical production practices is crucial (Saanvivmd, 2021). Understanding the specific aspects of consumer education that resonate most with men and women regarding aso ebi selection can enhance the effectiveness of educational programs. Tailoring these programs to address gendered preferences could empower both men and women to make informed and responsible choices.

The findings from testing the second hypothesis depict a significant difference in how younger and older consumers utilize consumer education when selecting aso ebi. This observation aligns with Burghelea and Aceleanu (2014), who identified age as a crucial factor influencing consumer behavior. The results suggest that as individuals age, their attitudes towards fashion trends and impulsive purchases may shift. Older individuals often prioritize factors like practicality, value for money, and responsible consumption practices more than younger individuals, who are typically more susceptible to the allure of trendy aso ebi styles (Shen et al., 2013). This underscores the necessity of developing age-appropriate consumer education programs. Younger individuals could greatly benefit from educational initiatives emphasizing budgeting strategies, resisting social pressures, and understanding the environmental impact of the fashion industry.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

In conclusion, this study delves into the intricate social influences shaping aso ebi selection in Southwest Nigeria. While the research focused on a specific cultural context, its findings offer valuable insights applicable to a broader audience. The complex interplay of social pressure, family dynamics, reference groups, and economic considerations influencing aso ebi choices resonates with consumer behavior surrounding clothing articles worldwide. The concept of social pressure to conform to group expectations and maintain social standing through fashion choices is a universal phenomenon, amplified by the pervasiveness of social media. Similarly, the influence of family dynamics and reference groups on clothing decisions transcends geographical boundaries. Understanding these factors empowers consumers globally to make informed and responsible choices when it comes to clothing purchases. Educational initiatives promoting responsible consumerism, budgeting strategies, and an awareness of the true costs associated with fashion trends can equip individuals to navigate social pressures and prioritize their well-being. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of gender and age considerations in consumer education strategies. Tailoring educational programs to address the specific needs and information gaps of different demographics can maximize their effectiveness.

Based on the findings of this study, the following suggestions are made. Government agencies and NGOs that specialize in consumer protection should expand their advocacy drives to include educational programs tailored to address the distinct clothing knowledge and decision-making processes of men and women. Educational institutions should incorporate age-appropriate financial literacy modules within their curriculum to equip younger consumers with budgeting and responsible spending habits. Consumer protection agencies can collaborate with social media influencers to promote ethical fashion choices and responsible spending habits related to aso ebi selection. Fashion design schools and cultural organizations should host workshops to educate consumers about sustainable fabric choices, garment care techniques, and pre-owned aso ebi options. Research institutions should investigate the long-term effectiveness of consumer education in influencing aso ebi purchase behavior. Tech companies and social media platforms can use research to understand how algorithms shape aso ebi trends and explore ways to promote diverse and budget-

conscious options. The National Bureau of Statistics, in conjunction with Economic Development Agencies in Nigeria, should study the economic impact of the aso ebi industry in relation to job creation, fabric production, and potential challenges on consumer choices to open new markets in the textile industry sector. Family counseling centers and NGOs should guide families in setting realistic budgets and using effective communication regarding aso ebi purchases. Financial institutions, in collaboration with cultural organizations, should explore the use of micro-finance loans in aso ebi purchases to promote responsible borrowing and financial planning. Domestic and foreign Environmental Protection Agencies should partner with fashion designers to explore sustainable production practices and responsible disposal methods for aso ebi garments.

The present research lays the groundwork for further exploratory studies that may investigate the influence of social media platforms on clothing choices across cultures, delve deeper into the long-term impact of consumer education initiatives, or explore regional variations in social pressures associated with fashion trends. Arising from this study, future research may explore how consumer education initiatives can empower individuals to navigate the social influences surrounding aso ebi selection in other geopolitical zones of Nigeria. It may focus on entire families and the use of open communication to improve consumer choices and decision-making regarding aso ebi purchases in Nigeria as a whole. Additionally, research into consumer choices in aso ebi selection may empower consumers worldwide to make informed clothing choices that celebrate individuality, foster cultural connection, and prioritize responsible consumption practices.

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