Evaluation of Socio-Cultural Factors Influencing Consumer Buying Behaviour of Clothes in Borno State, Nigeria

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Abstract – This study assesses cultural factors influencing consumer buying behaviour of clothes in Borno state, Nigeria. It was specifically carried out to examine consumer buying decision making process and assess cultural, economic as well as personal factors influencing clothes buying behavior. Data for the study were gathered through structured questionnaire administered by the researcher with the help of two research assistants, on a sample of 192 clothes buyers, out of which, 174 were duly filled and returned. The data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics, chi square, Analysis of variance and multi-stage regression. Findings revealed a highly significant influence of cultural factors (T=14.83, P<0.000) on consumer buying behaviour of which the relative regression coefficient influences equivalence of societal norms (24.6%) was the highest. The findings also indicated a highly significant influence of economic factors (T=11.89, P<0.000) factor on consumer buying behaviour with the highest relative regression coefficient influence equivalence exerted by income (20%). The study further revealed that age was the sole personal (endogenous) factor variable influencing buying behaviour with the highest relative regression coefficient influence equivalence of over 65%. The study concluded that culture, either acting independently or in conjunction with economic and personal factors significantly influences buying behaviour of clothes. It was recommended that marketing managers should take cognizance of the fact that socio-cultural factors are some of the fundamental determinants of a person’s want and behavior and should therefore be considered when designing clothes for their markets.

Key Words – Consumer behaviour, Culture, Socio-Cultural factors, Clothes, Borno State

1 Introduction

Buying behaviour according to Dawson et al (2006), are set of attitudes that characterize the patterns of consumers' choices. Apart from the essential internal factors, which are recognized as influential to buying behaviour, there are a number of external situational contexts that affect consumer choices. Consumer behaviour is a combination of customers' buying consciousness and external incentives which are likely to result in behaviour remodeling. The society’s culture such as norms, convention, customs religion, festivity, class, lifestyle and other subculture influence how individual consumers buy and use products, and help explain how groups of consumers behave.

Culture is that complex whole, which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by humans as members of society. Culture influences the pattern
of living, consumption, and decision-making by individuals. Culture can be acquired from the family, from the region or from all that has been around us while we were growing up and learning the ways of the world (Kotler, 2000). Culture forms a boundary within which an individual thinks and acts. When one thinks and acts beyond these boundaries, he is adopting a cross-cultural behaviour and may be considered by his immediate society or group as deviant. Culture is an extremely critical and all pervasive influence in our life.

Given this broad and pervasive nature of culture, its study generally requires a detailed examination of the total society; it encompasses all aspects of a society such as its religion, knowledge, language, laws, customs, traditions, music, art, technology, work patterns, products, plus all other artifacts that gives a society its distinctiveness.

However, because the objective of this study is to understand the influence of culture on consumer buying behaviour, greater emphasize will be on the specific dimensions of culture that make it a powerful force in regulating consumer purchase behaviour. Culture in this narrow sense is defined by Schiffman and Kanuk (1997) as the sum total of learned beliefs, values, attitude and that serve to guide and direct the consumer behaviour of all members of a society. Thus, culture consists of traditional ideas and in particular the values, which are attached to these ideas. It includes knowledge, belief, art, morale, law, customs and all other habits acquired by man as a member of society. This view was also shared by Page (1995), who defined human culture as a group of complex belief and value system, and artifacts handed down through generations as determinants and influences upon human buying behaviour within a given society” He added that much of our behaviour is determined by our culture, but it may require contact with another culture, with different beliefs and value systems in order to understand the extent to which it influences us. An accepted concept about culture is that it includes a set of learned beliefs, values, attitudes, habits and forms of behaviour that are shared by a society and are transmitted from generation to generation within that society. The beliefs and values components of these definitions refer to the accumulated feelings and priorities that individuals have about things and possessions. More precisely, beliefs/or values are descriptive thoughts that an individual holds about something. They are standards, rules and/or principles that direct our specific behaviours, which include a person’s particular knowledge and assessment of products and/or brands.

Cultural beliefs and values can therefore be said to be mental images that affect a wide range of specific attitudes, which in turn influence the way a person is likely to behave in a specific situation e.g. purchasing a new clothes; the evaluation, choosing among alternatives and finally paying for a particular type of clothes is largely a function of core cultural beliefs and values because Kotler, (2000) core beliefs and values in a society have high degree of persistence, they shape and colour more specific attitudes and behaviours found in everyday life. Cultural beliefs and values are passed on from parents to children and are reinforced by the major institutions of society, schools, business and government, the mass media, reference groups etc.

It is against this background that this study seeks to examine socio-cultural factors influencing consumer buying behaviour of clothes. The specific objectives are to examine how cultural, economic and personal factors influence clothes need recognition, information search, and evaluation, patronage and post-purchase behavior (buying stages)

2 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Consumer Buying Process

At any one time, we make decisions concerning every aspect of our lives; these decisions are generally made without stopping to think about how we make them and what is involved in the particular
decision-making process itself. Behind the visible act of making a purchase is a decision process divided into three major components: input, process and output. (Schiffman and Kanuk, 1997)

The input component comprises the external stimuli that serve as sources of information about a particular product and influence a consumer’s product-related values, attitudes, and behaviour which include the marketing four Ps and the socio cultural influences, which when internalized, affect the consumer’s purchase decision. At the heart of these socio-cultural inputs, which are the focus of this study, is culture. The influence of culture although less tangible are important input factors that internalized and affect how consumers evaluate and ultimately adopt (or reject) products. Kotler (2000) added that the unwritten codes of conduct communicated by culture subtly indicate which consumption behaviour should be considered right or wrong at a particular point in time. Thus, its influences on consumer purchase behaviour can never be over-emphasized.

The process component, which is concerned with how consumers make decisions considering the psychological field, is subdivided into five stages; Need Recognition, pre-purchase/information search, evaluation, purchase and post purchase behaviour. Need recognition is likely to occur when a consumer is faced with a problem. The problem/need recognition can be viewed as either simple or complex. The simple problem refers to needs that occur frequently and that can be dealt with almost automatically, such as becoming thirsty and purchasing a sachet of pure water where as the complex problem recognition is characterized as a state in which a problem develops overtime as the actual state and desired state gradually move apart. Pre-purchase search come to play when a consumer perceive a need that might be satisfied by the purchase and consumption of a product. The consumer’s past experience might provide adequate information on which to base the choice. Where the consumer has had no prior experience a more extensive search has to be made, which would extend to the consumers psychological field and external sources where cultural beliefs and values play key role. This is followed by evaluation, purchase, and post purchase activities. The process above is designed to tie together many ideas of consumer buying decision making and consumption Behaviour shared by most marketing authors.

2.2 Cultural Factors and Consumer Buying Behaviour

Every group or society has a culture, and cultural influences on buying behavior may vary greatly from place to place. Failure to adjust to these differences can result in ineffective marketing or embarrassing mistakes. International and National marketers must understand the culture in each of their markets and adapt their marketing strategies accordingly. Marketers are always trying to find cultural shifts in order to discover new products that might be wanted. For example, the cultural shift toward greater concern about health and fitness has created a huge industry for exercise equipment and clothing, low-fat and more natural foods, and health and fitness services. The shift toward informality has resulted in more demand for casual clothing and simpler home furnishings. The increased desire for leisure time has resulted in more demand for convenience products and services, such as microwave ovens and fast food.

Culture can be acquired from the family, from the region or from all that has been around us while we were growing up and learning the ways of the world. Culture forms a boundary within which an individual thinks and acts. When one thinks and acts beyond these boundaries, he is adopting a cross-cultural behaviour and there are cross-cultural influences as well. The nature of cultural influences is such that we are seldom aware of them. One feels, behaves, and thinks like the other members of the same culture. It is all pervasive and is present everywhere. Norms are the boundaries that culture sets on the behaviour. Norms are derived from cultural values, which are widely held beliefs that specify what is desirable and what is not. Most individuals obey norms because it is natural to obey them. Culture outlines many business norms, family norms, behaviour norms, etc. How we greet people,
how close one should stand to others while conducting business, the dress we wear and any other patterns of behaviour. Generally, how we perceive things, how we think, how we believe, are determined by our cultural environment and by the different people with whom we interact.

In an attempt to explain how a societal culture influences consumers’ buying behaviour Hofstede (1980) came up with a useful cultural dimension. He saw culture as the interactive aggregate of common characteristics that influence a group’s response to its environment. His cultural dimensions according to (Nokata and Silva Kumar, 2000) serve as the most influential culture theory among social science research. (Sondergaard, 2001) added that these cultural framework has received strong empirical support Hofstede (1980) separated cultures on the basis of the following dimensions: Masculinity-feminity, Power distance, uncertainty avoidance and Individualism-collectivism. By Individualism-collectivism, He refers to the basic level of behaviour regulation, whether by individuals or groups. People high on individualism view self and immediate family as relatively more important than the collective. He defines collectivism as a social pattern that consists of individuals who see themselves as an integral part of one or more collectives or in-groups, such as family and coworkers or settlement. People who are more collectivist are often motivated by norms and duties imposed by the in-group, they give priority to the goals of the in-group and try to emphasize connectedness with the in-group. These social patterns are expected to influence buying behaviour through their affect on a person’s self-identify, responsiveness to normative influences, and the need (or lack of need) to suppress internal beliefs in order to act appropriately.

The ability to focus on group preferences and group harmony in collectivist cultures leads to an ability to repress internal (personal) attributes in certain settings. Accordingly, people in collectivist cultures often shift their behaviour depending on the context of what is “right”. Among collectivist a person is generally seen as more mature when he/she puts personal feelings aside and acts in a socially appropriate manner rather than in a way consistent with personal attitudes and beliefs. This pattern is likely to affect the buying behaviour of clothes. (Triandis, 1995). In individualist cultures, for instance, people would often ignore the potential negative consequences of their buying and consumption behaviour, preferring to focus on the positive consequences of their actions and on their own feelings and goals. This may not be true for people from collectivist cultures, which are more likely to focus on the potential negative consequences of their behaviour and the effect of their actions on in-group members.

Empirical research on the influence of culture on consumer buying behaviour, conducted by Kacea and Lee (2002) revealed that there is a powerful and consistent influence of culture at both ethnicity level and the individual level. The study added that among many aspects of consumer buying behaviour which cultural factors moderate include self-identity, normative influences, the suppression of emotion, and the post pavement of instant gratification. The study was based on individualism collectivism as cultural dimension. Highly individualist countries such as U.S.A. and Australia and highly collectivist countries such as Malaysia and Hong Kong were examined. It was concluded that although collectivists posses the buying tendencies in equal measure with the individualists, they suppress the negative tendencies and act in manner that is consistent with cultural norms, beliefs and values, in this case reducing their purchases for self fulfillment, which has been characterized as highly individualistic behaviour.

Other specific cultural-dimensions that make culture a powerful force in determining consumer buying behaviour according to Hofstede (1980) are the masculinity/ feminity, power distance, uncertainty avoidance and long term orientation dimensions. Power distance represents the extent to which formal authority is adhered to and the degree to which the lesser powerful accept the prevailing standard in the society. High power distance cultures have members who are much more comfortable with those at the top and often being influenced to behave in certain conforming manners. Uncertainty avoidance refers to how much people in a given society feel threatened by ambiguity, and orientation low on
uncertainty avoidance prefer situations that are free and not bound by rules and regulations governing their behaviours short term orientation involves the tendency toward consumption and maintaining materialistic status Feminity versus masculinity deals with different cultural beliefs held by male and female in a particular society (Pavlov and Chai, 2002).

2.2.1 Norms and Custom as Components of Culture

Social norms are rules or expectations through which a society guides the behavior of its members and often reflect social values. Social norms are mechanisms of social control which promote conformity. They can be both proscriptive, regulating what we should not do and prescriptive, establishing an expectation of what we should do. Particularly buying and consuming. Norms may be formalized in law or other types of institutionalized regulatory strictures, or they may be informal behavioral regularities or customs. Societal norms regulates the kind of cloth we buy and not adhering to it, even those which are informal, and often result in significant consequences, because an underlying social value or moral standard is violated. Individuals develop the capacity to evaluate their behavior by experiencing the consequences of having acted in ways that violate social norms of the society in which they live (Dandaneau 2008)

2.2.2 Religion: A Key Component of Culture

The significance of religious value systems has long been recognized in sociology and psychology but is not yet fully acknowledged in consumer research. Studies in the marketing literature suggest that religion is a key element of culture, influencing both behaviour and purchasing decisions (Essoo And Dibb, 2004).

Religion is an abstract concept that challenges scholars in defining the term (Guthrie, 1996). Nonetheless, many scholars would agree that a religion represents a unified systems of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, religiosity is viewed as the degree to which beliefs in specific religious values and ideals are held and practiced by an individual, which according to Delener (1990), affect buying consumption pattern in so many ways

Understanding the influence of religion on consumer behaviour is complicated. Earlier religious psychology studies tended to focus on one’s commitment to his or her religion as the main indicator for a religion’s influence. Almost all factors related to religion are aggregated to form a religious commitment concept, thus complicating efforts to unravel the components of religion’s influences (Himmelfarb, 1975). These scholars however concluded that influence of religion on clothes buying behaviour is found to be mediated through several factors including an individual’s religious affiliation, commitment to religious beliefs and practices, the extent of consumers religious knowledge, views and perceptions on societal issues, and the motivation in following their religion Religious affiliation and commitment. These factors are mostly used in marketing to explain religion influences in the marketplace.

2.3.3 Other Sub-cultural Influences

Subcultures are distinctive groups of people in a society whose life patterns differ in part from the dominant cultural patterns of an overall culture. Although most sub cultural groups do share cultural meanings with the greater society, sub cultural meanings are unique and distinctive. Members of sub cultural groups can share emotional reactions, values, beliefs, and goals, and they can have similar customs, traditions, attachment to objects, languages, lifestyles, and rituals. Often sub cultural
characteristics represent artifacts of a group’s adaptation to their historical social experience within the larger society. Sub cultural groupings can be based on multiple combinations of localized and specific group memberships and/or broad demographic categorical distinctions, such as gender, race, and country of origin, religion, age, geographic region, and community.

2.3 Economic Factors and Buying Behaviour

Consumer economic situation has great influence on his/her buying behavior. The smaller the consumer’s family size or dependents, the higher the income and savings of such consumer, this will in turn influence the consumer to favour more expensive products. On the other hand, a person with low income and savings will purchase inexpensive products (Shah, 2010). (Myers, Stanton, and Haug, 1971) also provided support for the predictive power of economic factors such as income, family size and consumer budget over other social factors in explaining expenditure patterns for low-priced goods. They concluded that economic factors are a major determinant of buying behaviour and can be used to predict the type of clothes consumer is likely to buy. Keiser and Kuehl (1972) also shows the influence of economic factors on buyer behaviour, when it comes to brand identification. Their study revealed that adolescents with high earnings and in the upper class were able to identify more brands than other adolescents. A very comprehensive and valuable research was conducted by Schaniger (1981) in the analysis of both usage/non-use criteria as well as frequency of use data for a large variety of products, where it was concluded that economic factors are the most important factors in explaining the consumption of low social value products and services that are not related to class symbols, he opined that it is irrational and wrong to deny the influence that income has over buying behavior, both on type and prices of clothes purchased

2.4 Personal Factors and Buying Behaviour

Etzioni, (1988) believes that all human life is experienced at two levels: The Internal and the Collective. The internalized level of experience includes biological, psychological, and social factors that are more or less complex and are unique to the individual. This experience includes the formation of personal values which are the ideals or standards that guide human preferences and decisions. In collective terms, social values surround the person and represent the standards and principles of what in the greater society is generally considered “good” and “desirable.” Personal values can, and often do, conflict with social values and norms. Interaction with parents and significant others within the social environment results in personality development, the acceptance (or rejection) of social norms, and the formation of personal values. Personal values in turn shape our beliefs, attitudes and ultimately our buying behaviors, which usually bear some basic similarity to those around us and reflect the collective cultural and other social influences to which we are exposed. Some of these personal or internalized variables that uniquely influence our clothes buying behaviour include; education, lifestyle, intuition, ostentations etc.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

The consumer is governed by social and cultural norms which the society has and in which he is living. Man is primarily seen as a social animal conforming to the general forms and norms of the culture surrounding him and to the more specific standards of the sub-culture to which his life is bound. Thus, man’s attitudes and behaviour are influenced by several levels of society’s culture, sub-culture, and other factors like social classes, reference groups and family. The challenge to marketer is to determine which of these social levels are most important in influencing the demand for his product. This framework was derived from the field of social psychology is found suitable to guide this study
because it explains the rational behind consumers and their buying behaviour. More so, it help marketers to understand why consumers act as they do, which goes beyond a basic measure of what consumers expects to do; rather, the underlying or salient beliefs that produce the behaviour. It is on this basis that this study seeks to examine whether cultural factors are some of the major underlying forces behind the way people behave in clothes/dress buying situations.

3 Methodology

The area of study is Borno State. The State was created in 1976 out of the defunct North-Eastern State, although Yobe State was later (1991) curved out of Borno State, and the largest in the Federation in terms of land mass, covering a total of 69,436 Sqkm (BOSEEDS, 2005). Borno state lies between latitudes 10°N and 13°N and longitudes 11.4°E and 14.4°E. The state shares international borders with Cameroun to the East, Niger to the North, and Republic of Chad to the North-East. The state is a multi-ethnic one with about thirty different languages.

Structured questionnaire comprising of check list and four-point likert scale was employed to elicit responses on factors influencing consumer buying behavior. The population for the study comprised inhabitants of three local government areas, one from each of the three senatorial districts of Borno state, selected using purposive sampling technique. The researcher utilized both primary and secondary sources of data. Data obtained were subjected to descriptive statistics, chi square, and multiple regression analysis using a statistical package; Stata version 8.

4 Results and Discussion

The present study investigated socio-cultural factors influencing consumer buying behaviour of clothes. Analysis using descriptive statistics and chi square revealed that consumers’ clothes need recognition were mostly influenced by income and the society (opinion leaders, gate keepers, friends, family,) served as the main awareness window through which information and knowledge about clothes are obtained. This may partly be due to the fact that the audiences targeted for this study were mostly resident in villages and hardly have access to such other media (prints, broadcast, and bill boards), and the trust they have built over time with these people. This result agrees with Kotler, (2000), that people rely heavily on opinion leaders and gate keepers in the society for information on new product innovation even after exposure to advertisement.

The study further revealed that quality was the main clothes evaluation (choice) criteria and most consumers patronized native clothes. This may also be due to need to drive the maximum value for their limited resources, which is also in line with theoretical economics as reported by Schiffman and Kanuk (1997) that consumers, especially low income earners are always economical in their purchase decision and always consider functional (quality) aspect of a product in order to make a purchase that is not just satisfactory but a perfect one (maximum value for money)

The influence of gender and marital status was invariably not significant on consumer buying process. Gender insignificantly influences clothe buying behaviour. This may be due to the fact that buyers of clothe pass through the same process of buying decision making irrespective of gender. This agrees with Goldsmith (2002) who found consistency for both men and women while examining personal characteristics of frequent clothing buyers. Occupation of respondents had bi-variate significant influence on clothes need recognition process and patronage as well.
Table 1: Tobit regression analysis showing the relative influences of cultural, economic and personal variables on consumer buying behavior of clothes

| Variable          | Coeff. | %     | Std error | T     | P>|t|   | 95% Conf. | Interval | Log Likelihood |
|-------------------|--------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|----------|----------|--------------|
|                   |        |       |           |       |       |          |          |              |
| **Exogenous (Cultural)** |        |       |           |       |       |          |          |              |
| Constant          | 3.616879 | .2438289 | 14.83 | 0.000 | 3.135452 | 4.098306 |
| Class             | -.0012541 | 0.3 | .0406257 | -.03 | 0.975 | -.0814674 | .0789591 |
| Fashion           | -.0650657 | 17.6 | .035239 | -1.85 | 0.067 | -.1346312 | .0044997 |
| Norms             | -.0908846 | 24.6 | .0402518 | 2.26  | 0.25  | .0114095  | .1703596 |
| Style             | -.0674981 | 18.3 | -.0424942 | -1.59 | 0.114 | -.1514006 | .0164045 |
| Religion          | -.0532275 | 14.4 | .0420609 | -1.27 | 0.207 | -.1362744 | .0298195 |
| Festivity         | .0415083 | 11.2 | .036931  | 1.12  | 0.263 | -.0314099 | .1144265 |
| Custom            | -.052352 | 14.2 | .0336371 | -1.64 | 0.102 | -.1216498 | .0111793 |
| Conventional      | -.0288539 | 7.7 | .0380063 | -0.75 | 0.453 | -.1036254 | .0464575 |
| Dress code        | -.0521895 | 14.1 | .0550935 | -0.95 | 0.345 | -.1609687 | .0565897 |
| **Instrumental (Economic)** |        |       |           |       |       |          |          |              |
| Constant          | 2.964843 | .2493376 | 11.89 | 0.000 | 2.472604 | 3.457081 |
| Income            | -.0395744 | 23.9 | .0460472 | 0.41  | .231  | -.1046264 | .0254776 |
| Budget            | .0053954 | 3.3 | .042789  | 0.13  | 0.90  | -.0790779 | .0898688 |
| Family size       | -.0339803 | 20.6 | .0366098 | -0.93 | 0.355 | -.1062547 | .0382942 |
| Supply            | .018221 | 11.0 | .0357046 | 0.51  | 0.610 | .0522664 | .0887085 |
| Basic needs       | .0491556 | 29.8 | .0534706 | 0.92  | 0.351 | -.0564052 | .1547164 |
| Wardrobe          | .0189177 | 11.7 | .0329513 | -1.20 | 0.682 | -.0719879 | .1098234 |
| **Endogenous (Personal)** |        |       |           |       |       |          |          |              |
| Constant          | 3.418618 | .2121059 | 16.12 | 0.000 | 2.9999  | 3.837336 |
| Age               | .419948 | 65.9 | .0345129 | -1.22 | 0.225 | -.1101269 | .0261372 |
| Education         | -.0776068 | 12.2 | .0395276 | -.196 | 0.051 | -.1556383 | .0004246 |
| Life style        | -.017758 | 2.8 | .0408304 | -0.43 | 0.664 | -.0983613 | .0628454 |
| Intuition         | -.0633371 | 9.9 | .034956  | -1.81 | 0.072 | .1323437 | .0056695 |
| Ostentatious      | .05830 | 9.2 | .0455577 | 1.28  | 0.202 | -.0316267 | .1482441 |

Field survey, 2012

Tobit regression analysis was also employed to show the relative influences of cultural, economic and personal variables on consumer buying behavior of clothes in the state. (See appendix). The results indicates a highly significant influences of cultural (T=14.83, p<0.000), economic (T=11.89, p<0.000), and personal (T=16.12, p<0.000) factors on clothes buying decision process. Societal norms (24.6%) had the highest relative regression coefficient influence equivalence among cultural variables. This can be explained by the fact that the study investigated consumers who are largely collectivist in nature and are bound to be highly culture conscious; such people would expectedly exhibit behaviours
(dressing mode) acceptable by the larger society for fear of being labeled deviants in the society. They belong to what Smka (2004) called Meso-culture; groups, communities sharing common buying behaviour within a macro-culture. This finding agrees with Hofstede (1980), whose study showed that people who are more collectivist are often motivated by norms and duties imposed by the in-group, they give priority to the goals of the in-group and try to emphasize connectedness with the in-group, they suppress internal beliefs in order to act appropriately. It also concurs with Dandaneau (2008), whose study revealed that societal norms are the major cultural factor that regulates the kind of clothes we buy and not adhering to it, often result in significant consequences, because an underlying social value or moral standard is violated.

Basic needs and income (29.8%, and 23.9%) were found to have the most influences on consumer buying decision process among economic factors because they topped the relative regression coefficient and percentage influence equivalences across the stages in the buying decision process; this may probably be due to the fact that consumers studied are low income earners who may want to prioritize their spending to satisfy basic needs. This result concurs with a study conducted by Myers, et al. (1971) who found income to be a major factor determining consumer’s propensity to spend and the lower it is the higher the need to carefully share it among basic needs.

Age was found to have overwhelming influences on buying decision process as revealed by high relative regression coefficient influences equivalence (65.9%) across the buying decision stages among personal factors. This may probably be due to our tendencies to learn and adapt to ways of the society as we pass through our lifecycle stages, and particularly because of physical development, which affect the kind clothes we buy. This finding agrees with Rocha et al (2005) and Dilworth-Anderson and Boswell, (2007) who all experienced different requirements for clothing and fashion products based upon age or stages in the lifecycle and sizes, followed by education (12.2%). This could be attributed to the fact that highly educated people are generally seen as problem solvers and are likely to seek for information. This corroborate with series of empirical studies which revealed that persons with high education have greater contact with mass media (Katz, Lazarsfeld 1955) and that these persons read more advertisements than others.

5 Conclusion and Recommendations

Socio-cultural factors made up of cultural, economic, and instrumental variables are key factors affecting consumer buying behaviour, it is therefore concluded that socio-cultural factors, either acting independently or in conjunction with other personal or demographic factors have significant influences at each stage (need recognition, information search, and evaluation, patronage, and post purchase behaviour) of the consumer clothes buying decision making process.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

a. It is recommended that in designing marketing strategy for clothes, managers should take cognizance of the fact that the society’s culture is one of the most fundamental determinants of a person’s want and behavior

b. As part of their efforts to convince customers to purchase the kinds of clothes they sell, marketers are recommended to use Socio-cultural representations, especially in promotional appeals. The objective is to connect to consumers using socio-cultural references that are easily understood and often embraced by the consumers. This would make the consumer feels more comfortable with or can relate better to the product since it corresponds with their cultural values.

c. In order to maximize relevance and effectiveness, business and marketing programs of any type, but particularly those that relate directly to the clothes buying behaviour of
consumers, must take into account the social, and economic positions of the people they intend to serve in order to enhance target marketing.

d. Marketers in the clothing business are recommended to continuously scan their socio-cultural environment and assess its influence on consumers’ behaviours both at the personal and societal levels with a view to enhancing their capacity to recognize, resist as necessary, and make intentional decisions that will both be beneficial to them and their customers.

e. It is also recommended for marketing managers to adopt market segmentation strategy and segment their clothes markets on the bases of demographic variables such as age, income, and gender since they were all found to have great degree of influences on clothes buying decisions.

f. Finally, marketing managers are recommended to stimulate opinion leadership in some key members of the society by encouraging favourable word-of-mouth about their products since clothes consumers are found to heavily rely on them for information. And also ensure that their products are adequately labeled with important features and attributes to satisfy the educated ones who are found to be problem solvers and would deliberately seek for information in that direction.

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The buying behavior may be affected by cultural, social, personal and psychological factors as mentioned above. But due to limitation of time and resources available to the author, the author has done the research on only two of them, i.e., social and personal factors. The research will be limited up to two focus groups under the age group of 20-30 in the Helsinki region. Being really conscious about the clothes that he wore, perfume, and watches but a teacher will never bother about those things and accessories. This is all because of importance of one’s designation.