

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN IMAGE AND CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR IN ENUGU HYPERMARKETS

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Abstract

The aim of the study was to examine the effect of country of origin image on consumer buying behaviour in Enugu Hypermarkets. Specific objectives were to investigate the effect of product attributes image on consumer buying behavior, examine the effect of product communication image on consumer buying behavior in Enugu hypermarkets. A cross-sectional research design was employed in this study. The population of the study was unknown and convenience sample technique was adopted in this study for selecting respondents that completed the questionnaire. The study found that product attributes image had significant positive effect on consumer buying behaviour in Enugu hypermarkets since the p-value of $0.013 < 0.05$ and product communication image had significant positive effect on consumer buying behaviour in Enugu hypermarkets since the p-value of $0.020 < 0.05$. The study suggested that hypermarket management should emphasize product attributes such as satisfaction, taste, weight, and nutritional value to attract and encourage customers to maintain long-term loyalty.

Keywords: Country of origin image, consumer buying behavior and hypermarkets

Introduction

The global economy is expanding quickly, exposing customers to a wide range of foreign goods. Thus, the perception of the country of origin (COO) is very important in determining the purchasing decisions of consumers. A product's "country of origin" (COO) image is a reflection of the attitudes and opinions that consumers have about products of that nation. These opinions have the power to greatly affect customers' purchasing decisions, particularly in a globalised market where they are competition and exposed to a wide range of foreign goods (Chukwumah & Emahe, 2020; Odhiambo & Busolo, 2021). There are numerous hypermarkets in Enugu, a significant city in South East, Nigeria, that provide a broad selection of goods from other nations. Businesses and marketers could benefit greatly from an understanding of how consumer purchasing behaviour at these hypermarkets were influenced by the COO image. Research on the impact of Country-of-Origin (COO) on consumer perception has been a longstanding area of study in international marketing, and a wealth of empirical evidence substantiated the COO's influence on consumer impression. Therefore, it was evident that COO influences consumers' perceptions of products and their purchasing decisions (Mai, 2011, De Nisco *et al.* 2022). The strength and valence of COO's influence on consumer purchasing behaviour, however, varies across different product groups and influenced by the moderators and antecedents of the COO construct, much like other factors that affect consumer purchasing behaviour (Ahmed & D'astous, 2012).

The COO comprises of the degree to which customers are involved in the decision-making process and their familiarity with the product and the county (Fauser & Agola, 2021). In the end, each of these variables affects how favourable a buyer feels about a nation and, consequently, the nation of origin of the goods. Despite the theory's widespread acceptance in academia and the substantial body of study it has generated, it is important to highlight those previous studies examined the idea of the country of origin as a homogenous national construct. Recent research, however, has demonstrated that regional variations and tendencies exist in a nation's image and could affect how consumers view its products (Latusiet *al.*, 2020).

In view of the above discussions, this research centered on contributing to the understanding of regional disparities in county-image; by assessing how different component of regional image and their respective economics influenced the behaviour of consumers. Sapic, *et al.* (2021), states that one of the most well-known ideas in the social sciences was the idea of the nation of origin image. This idea came as a result of manufacturers choosing to expand their operations internationally and sold their goods in other markets. In so doing, they had to abide by local laws which required the name of the nation their products were assembled or manufactured. Certain details served just as a means of determining a product's place of origin for certain markets. This is because the consumers' nation information served as a barometer for the acceptability, excellence, and quality of the product. Consequently, the perception of

the nation where these items are made will probably affect their viewpoint and cause people to view things differently when they are forced to choose between several alternative products. In any case, it's important to know that how and where consumers use information about the image of the country of origin for a product they wish to buy will depend on a variety of factors, such as, their past experiences with the product in question as well as other products that come from the same nation, the particular type of product, and other factors. Positive or negative preconceptions about particular nations may also have an impact on the products that come from such nations (Aichner, 2014).

However, consumer behaviour has been altered due to changes in the economic environment brought about by globalisation and the growth of the internet. In today's business environment, consumers have an abundance option and a notable rise in the variety of brands to select from. More specifically, customers could select from a wide range of goods that came from any nations (Usunier, 2011). As a result of these choices, they acquire associations with particular goods, nations, and brands, which unavoidably affect their opinions and purchasing patterns. COO, often known as the "made-in" image, denotes the nation where the goods are produced or put together. It can also be explained by customers' propensity to generalise about other nations. For example, goods from France may be seen as opulent, but goods from developing countries are typically seen negatively (Cordell, 1992; Coudounaris, 2018, Karimov & El-Mrad, 2019).

One of the first studies on the Nigerian retail industry was done by Business Day Intelligence (2022). The study showed that organised retail has grown significantly in Nigeria over the past 20 years. Data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) indicated that the wholesale and retail sectors grew by 10% between 2001 and 2004. This industry made up sixteen percent of the GDP of the nation as of 2006. The respective contributions to the country's GDP by the first half of 2011, 2012, and 2013 were 15.58 percent, 17.05 percent, and 18.44 percent (Business Day Intelligence, 2022). Mwamba and Qutieshat (2021) noted that the entry of notable players (Shoprite, Roban Stores, Spar, Next, etc.) into the Nigerian market has attracted the attention of international hypermarkets. These players were drawn to Nigeria due to its projected 400 million populations by 2050. This suggests that, after China and India, Nigeria may be the third-highest population in the world. Since this industry is expanding so rapidly, it is essential that new studies evaluate its potential in several fields.

Therefore, by examining the impact of COO image on consumer purchasing behaviour in Enugu hypermarkets, the existing gap will be closed. This study will offer important insights into consumer attitudes and views about various nations of origin, as well as the characteristics and communication tactics that influence these impressions, through the use of a mixed methods approach. Businesses and marketers could create more effective tactics to cater to the demands and tastes of their different

clients base by comprehending the intricate relationship between COO image and consumer behaviour.

Statement of the Problem

The increasing globalization of markets and the vast array of international products available in hypermarkets present a complex problem. It is often asked, how does country of origin image influence consumer buying behaviour in these retail spaces? Despite the growing recognition and the importance of country of origin (COO) image in consumer decision-making, limited research has been conducted in this area, especially within the specific context of Enugu hypermarkets. This lack of knowledge has implications for businesses and marketers seeking to effectively target and engage with their customers. It is crucial to understand how COO image shapes consumer behaviour in Enugu hypermarkets. This knowledge will not only help marketers tailor their messaging and branding strategies to resonate with local consumers, but also assist policymakers in developing policies that support the competitiveness of Nigerian products in the global marketplace. Despite the importance of COO image, there is limited research focusing on its impact on consumer buying behaviour in Enugu's hypermarkets. Therefore, there is an urgent need to investigate the factors that influences COO image and how they impact consumer buying behaviour in Enugu hypermarkets. The present study aimed to fill this gap by examining how consumers' perceptions of different countries influence their purchasing decisions in this specific market.

Objective of the Study

The general objective of the study was to examine the effect of country of origin image on consumer buying behaviour in Enugu Hypermarkets. The specific objectives were to:

- i. Investigate the effect of product attributes image on consumer buying behavior in Enugu hypermarkets.
- ii. Examine the influence of product communication image on consumer buying behaviour in Enugu hypermarkets.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Conceptual Framework

Country of Origin Image

Nagashima (1970) was a pioneer in the study of the country of origin effect. He defined the country of origin image as the perceptions, reputation, and stereotypes that consumers, both individually and collectively, associate with products from a particular country. It is claimed that elements such as the nation's history, customs, representativeness of the products and political and economic climate all contribute to the formation of this image. When consumers acquire goods from a certain nation,

their decisions are influenced by their unique, descriptive, and informative ideas about that nation. According to Suh et al. (2016), it refers to the impact that a country's preconceived notions about its ability to produce high-quality goods and services have on a consumer who is contemplating purchasing goods or services from another (Katsumata & Song, 2015). From a broad standpoint, the image of the country of origin is a multifaceted category that influences consumers and compels them to develop an opinion about things they are aware could originate from a specific nation; this opinion was then extended to other products that originate from the same nation. In essence, the country of origin information provides customers with an overview of the attributes of the real product, and it is well-known to have a substantial impact on how well customers evaluate products and behave in general (Cilingir & Basfirinci, 2014).

The term "country of origin" refers to the location where a product is manufactured or assembled (Parkvithee & Miranda, 2022). In modern global trade, many products consist of parts sourced from different countries, but they are typically assembled in a single nation. In this way, producers can take advantage of the impact that the country of origin's reputation has on consumer perceptions and their buying decisions when it comes to foreign products. Images are typically generated from firsthand experiences that consumers have had (or have heard from others who have had) with the nation, whether via travel or past purchases, as well as through word-of-mouth, research, readings, and other sources (Iloka, et al., 2023). In any event, due to variations in economic, socio-cultural, and other aspects, the influence that a country of origin has on consumer behaviour varies from nation to nation.

Product Attributes Image

Product attributes are characteristics or features that define a product and influence the consumer's buying decision. These attributes can be categorized into various types, such as, intrinsic attributes and extrinsic attributes. Understanding product attributes is crucial for marketers as it helps in positioning the product effectively in the market and tailoring it to meet consumer needs (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Intrinsic attributes are inherent qualities of the product, including its physical features such as design, color, size, shape, and performance, for example, the fuel efficiency of a car or the processor speeds of a laptop. While **extrinsic** attributes are not part of the physical product that relate to its consumption or purchase. They include brand name, packaging, price, warranty, and customer service (For example, the reputation of a car brand or the aesthetic appeal of a product's packaging) (Mahdy & El-Hakim, 2016).

Knowing what makes a product unique has the following benefits:

Targeted marketing: Businesses can modify their marketing tactics to highlight specific traits that are valued by their target market by recognising these attributes (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Product Differentiation: Gaining a competitive edge by distinguishing a product from rivals requires an understanding of and utilisation of distinctive product qualities (Porter, 1985).

Increased customer satisfaction: Goods created and promoted with the right qualities can either match or beyond consumers' expectations, which increases contentment and loyalty (Oliver, 1999). Understanding attributes facilitates the development of effective pricing strategies because, according to Nagle and Müller (2017), consumers may be prepared to pay more for qualities that they deem to be of higher quality or more attractive. On the other hand, concentrating on product attributes has drawbacks.

Complexity in Management: Keeping track of a large number of product attributes can be difficult and time-consuming. Research and adaptation must be ongoing (Levitt, 1980).

Overemphasis on Features: Organisations may occasionally place an excessive amount of emphasis on particular features at the expense of other crucial elements, such as the overall user experience (Christensen, 1997).

Subjectivity: It can be challenging to develop a product that appeals to everyone since consumers' perceptions of the value of particular features can be quite subjective and differ much from one another (Sheth, Newman & Gross, 1991).

Risk of Obsolescence: Changing customer tastes and quick technical improvements could make some product features outdated, necessitating ongoing innovation (Rogers (2003).

Okonkwo and Obiekeze (2018) found the effect of product attributes on consumer behavior, as follows: physical characteristics, such as color, size, and packaging, can influence consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions; Functional characteristics, such as features and performance, can impact consumer satisfaction and loyalty; Image and symbolic characteristics, such as brand name and logo, can create emotional connections and loyalty.

Product Communication Image

Product communication is a crucial aspect of marketing that involves conveying information about a product or service to potential customers. It encompasses all forms of communication used by a company to inform, persuade, and remind customers about its offerings. Product communication refers to the strategies and tactics businesses use to communicate information about their products or services to consumers (Kapoor, *et al.*, 2023). It refers to the ways in which a product's features, benefits, and characteristics are conveyed to potential customers. It involves a range of marketing activities, such as advertising, public relations, and personal selling. It encompasses various elements such as advertising, public relations, sales promotions, direct marketing, and digital marketing (Cho, *et al.*, 2023).

Kotler and Keller (2016), states that product communication is a part of the broader integrated marketing communications (IMC) approach, which aims to ensure consistency in messaging across all channels and touch points. It involves crafting messages that resonate with the target audience and selecting the most effective communication channels to reach them. It plays a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions and influencing purchasing decisions by highlighting the unique aspects of a product or service (Ziaee, *et al.*, 2020).

Advantages of product communication include (Gounaris & Duncan, 2021) effective product communication can increase consumer awareness and understanding of a brand and its offerings. Through interactive and engaging product communication, businesses can foster stronger connections with their target audiences. Product communication can drive sales by creating a positive perception of a product in the minds of consumers, leading to increased demand.

Disadvantages of product communication include (Hara & Huang, 2021) if product communication is inaccurate or misleading, it can damage brand reputation and lead to consumer distrust. Excessive or poorly targeted product communication can result in customer annoyance and decreased effectiveness. Product communication is an integral part of marketing because it (Nayak & Mishra, 2019) provides information: Customers need to understand what a product is, how it works, and why it is beneficial. Effective communication can generate interest in a product and persuade customers to make a purchase. Product communication can reinforce a brand's values and characteristics, helping to establish a distinct identity in the market.

Product communication is essential for businesses to effectively reach and engage with their target audience (Hung, *et al.*, 2022). By carefully crafting messages and selecting appropriate channels, companies can enhance brand visibility, educate consumers, and ultimately drive sales. However, it requires strategic planning, investment, and adherence to ethical standards to achieve desired outcomes while mitigating potential drawbacks (Alias, *et al.*, 2023).

Consumer Buying Behaviour

Consumer buying behaviour refers to the decision-making process that consumers engage in when purchasing goods or services. It involves various psychological, social, and economic factors that influence how consumers search for, evaluate, select, and purchase products or services (Liu, Pfeffer & Zheng, 2021). Consumer buying behaviour is the psychological, social, and personal factors that influence a consumer's decision-making process when purchasing products or services. These factors include attitudes, beliefs, preferences, and cultural influences, among others (Lee & Kim, 2023; Kotler & Armstrong, 2021; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010; Kotler & Keller, 2016; Kotler & Armstrong, 2021; Solomon, 2019).

Theoretical Framework

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) was adopted for the analysis of this work. It was developed by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen in 1975. It states that people's behaviour Product communication is determined by their beliefs and intentions. According to TRA, the intention to perform a behaviour is influenced by the person's attitude toward that behaviour and their perceptions of social norms. This theory aims to predict and understand the motivational factors influencing behaviour that are beyond an individual's volitional control, with a particular focus on the intention to engage in a behaviour. According to the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), behaviour is primarily determined by the intention to perform it, which is shaped by the individual's attitude toward the behaviour and the subjective norms they perceive. TRA suggests that if a person intends to carry out a behaviour, they are likely to follow through with it. This intention is influenced by both their attitude toward the behaviour and the social norms they perceive as relevant. The image of a product's country of origin can significantly influence consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. COO can shape perceptions about product quality, reliability, and status, thus affecting the buying behaviour. In the context of consumer buying behaviour in Enugu Hypermarkets, the TRA could be applied to explore how consumers' attitudes toward products or services from a particular country, known as "country of origin image" (COI), influence their purchase intentions.

Empirical Review

Studies around this topic abound. For instance, Ofoegbu (2020) whose study was centered on country of origin and brand equity in the Nigerian Market in Enugu, Nigeria. Structural equation modelling on survey data from 600 consumers COO significantly contributes to brand equity and consumer trust was the findings of the study. Brands be supposed to integrate COO into their brand positioning strategies, the study concluded. Eze (2020) also assessed country of origin effects on purchase decisions in Enugu's retail sector. Experimental design with 300 participants exposed to various product ads was employed. COO information significantly influences brand preference and purchase intention. It concludes that marketers should emphasize COO in their advertising strategies. Okafor (2021) on the hand examined country of origin and consumer perceptions of new products in Enugu, Nigeria. Qualitative study with focus groups and thematic analysis was applied. The findings show that new products from well-regarded countries are quickly adopted. COO is a key factor in the success of new product introductions. Ogbonna (2021) also conducted a study the role of country of origin in consumer purchasing decisions in Nigeria. Survey of 500 consumers using stratified sampling. the findings indicate COO plays a crucial role in consumer decision-making, especially for electronics. As a result, emphasis on COO can be a competitive advantage for marketers.

In a further study carried out by Umeh (2022) on perceptions of country of origin and its impact on buying behaviour. Case study approach focusing on hypermarkets in Enugu was used. The findings show that consumers perceive products from developed countries more positively. It was emphasized that retailers highlight the origin of products to influence buying behaviour. Eze (2022) looked into country of origin effects on consumer evaluation of products. Quantitative survey with 500 participants and it was found that consumers use COO as a heuristic for quality evaluation. COO information ought to be strategically utilized in marketing. Obiekwe (2023) examined the impact of country of origin image on consumer loyalty in Enugu, Nigeria. Longitudinal study tracking purchasing behaviour over 12 months was utilized. The findings indicate a positive COO image fosters consumer loyalty and repeat purchases. Consistent positive COO image is essential for long-term consumer loyalty.

Gaps in Empirical Review

The existing literature on country of origin image (COI) and consumer buying behaviour in Enugu Hypermarkets reveals several gaps. Although numerous theoretical studies on COI and consumer behaviour exist, there is a lack of empirical research focusing specifically on these topics within the context of Enugu Hypermarkets, particularly in relation to variables such as product attributes, product communication, and marketing strategy components influencing consumer buying behaviour. This study aims to address these gaps identified in the literature.

Methodology

Cross-sectional research design was employed in this study; data was gathered from respondents within a given point in time. The study was carried out in Enugu State. This method was chosen in preference to other methods like content analysis because of its capacity to measure human attitudes and opinion. The data was gotten through the research instrument of questionnaire administered to selected respondents. Statista (2021), the population of Enugu State aged 20 years old and above is 73% of a total estimated population of over 4 million people. That is, over 2.92 million. However, out of this figure, only about 1.8 million have access to internet, a prerequisite necessary for participating in this research. However, the population of the study is unknown because there is no existing record of the number of peoples that visit or shop from hypermarket in Enugu. Cochram (1963) developed the formula for determining sample size with value of 384. Convenience based sample was adopted in this study. Structured questionnaire was the major instrument used for data collection. This research adopted two stages of analysis: the descriptive and inferential analysis. The analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 23. Also, the simple regression technique was adopted because of its simplicity as well as minimizes the squares of the residuals.

Data Presentation and Analyses

Table 1: Analysis of Response Rate of General Respondents

S/NO.	Distributed Questionnaire	Returned questionnaire	Percentage %
1	Completed and returned	350	91.15
2	Not returned	34	8.85
TOTAL	-	384	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 shows questionnaire distributed and return rate of respondents, 350 out of 400 respondents representing 87.5% completed and returned their questionnaire while 50 representing 12.5% did not return their questions. The analysis for the study is based on returned copies of the questionnaire. The researcher presented data in both textual and tabular forms for easy reading and understanding of the presentation.

Data Relating to Research Questions

Table 2: Responses on the effect of product attributes image on consumer buying behavior in Enugu hypermarkets

S/N	Product Attributes	No. of Respondents/ Percentage (%)					Total
		SA	A	U	D	SD	
1	Consumers often associate the quality of a product with its country of origin	185 53%	113 32%	35 10%	17 5%	-	350 100%
2	Consumers in Enugu may prefer products from countries perceived to offer better value for money.	170 49%	101 29%	32 9%	32 9%	15 4%	350 100%
3	Products from countries with similar cultural traits or values might be more appealing.	155 44%	107 31%	20 6%	59 17%	9 2%	350 100%

Source: field survey, 2024

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics effect of product attributes image on consumer buying behaviour in Enugu hypermarkets whereby in accordance with the table, a significant majority (85%) of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that consumers often associate the quality of a product with its country of origin. A substantial proportion (78%) of respondents agrees that consumers in Enugu prefer products from countries perceived to offer better value for money. A majority (75%) of respondents agreed that products from countries with similar cultural traits or values are more appealing.

Table 3: Responses on the effect of product communication image on consumer buying behaviour in Enugu hypermarkets.

S/N	Product Communication	No. of Respondents/ Percentage (%)					Total
		SA	A	U	D	SD	
1	Products from countries known for their expertise in specific industries are often perceived as high-quality.	190 54%	108 31%	35 10%	10 3%	7 2%	350 100%
2	Consumers in Enugu are likely to favor these products when evaluating alternatives, associating the COO with superior craftsmanship and innovation.	171 49%	100 29%	32 9%	32 9%	15 4%	350 100%
3	Consumers in Enugu may show a strong preference for these products, associating them with safety and reliability.	160 46%	102 29%	20 6%	59 17%	9 2%	350 100%

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 3 shows the statistics effect of product communication image on consumer buying behaviour in Enugu hypermarkets which reveals that a significant majority (85%) of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that products from countries known for their expertise in specific industries are often perceived as high-quality. A substantial proportion (78%) of respondents agreed that consumers in Enugu favor products associated with superior craftsmanship and innovation, attributing these qualities to the COO. A majority (75%) of respondents agreed that consumers in Enugu show a strong preference for products associated with safety and reliability, often attributed to the COO.

Table 4: Responses on consumer buying behaviour in Enugu hypermarkets

S/N	Consumer Buying Behaviour	No. of Respondents/ Percentage (%)					Total
		SA	A	U	D	SD	
1	Consumers may trust products from countries more than those from less developed nations.	178 51%	100 29%	50 14%	15 4%	7 2%	350 100%
2	Consumers may associate products from certain COOs	150 43%	105 30%	35 10%	50 14%	10 3%	350 100%

	with higher safety and reliability, leading to a preference for these products.						
3	Middle to high-income consumers might be more influenced by COO due to their ability to afford premium products.	125 36%	105 30%	45 13%	50 14%	25 2%	350 100%

Source: field survey, 2024

Table 4 above indicate a significant majority (80%) agreed or strongly agreed that consumers tend to trust products from more developed countries, while a small minority (6%) disagree or strongly disagree. A majority (73%) agreed or strongly agreed that consumers associate products from certain COOs with higher safety and reliability, indicating a strong preference influenced by COO and a notable minority (17%) disagrees or strongly disagreed. Majorities (66%) agreed or strongly agreed that middle to high-income consumers are more influenced by COO due to their ability to afford premium products, while 16% disagree or strongly disagree.

Test of Hypotheses

Test of Hypotheses One

H₀₁: There is no significant positive effect of product attributes image on consumer buying behaviour in Enugu hypermarkets.

Table 5: Result of hypothesis one

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-69.800	28.992		-2.408	.095
	product attributes	46.600	8.741	.951	5.331	.013
R = 0.951 R ² = 0.905 AdjR ² = 0.873 DW=1.451 p = 0.013						

a. Dependent Variable: consumer buying behaviour

The result of hypothesis one tested shows that the R correlation coefficient is 0.951 signified that there is a very strong significant positive effect of product attributes image on consumer buying behaviour. The degree to which the independent variables explain the dependent variables called coefficient of determination which is represented by R² shows that 90.5% of the variation in consumer buying behaviour can

be explained by product attributes. Hence, the Adjusted R^2 is 0.873. This show that the independent variables specified in the model can explain only about 87.3% of the variations in the dependent variable. With the linear regression model, the error of estimate is low with a value of about 28.419. However, the significance value (p-value) of $0.013 < 0.05$, the model is statistical significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. We therefore conclude that there was significant positive effect of product attributes image on consumer buying behaviour in Enugu hypermarkets.

H_{02} : Product communication image does not have significant positive effect on consumer buying behaviour in Enugu hypermarkets.

Table 6: Result of hypothesis two

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-69.200	33.760		-2.050	.133
	Product communication	46.400	10.179	.935	4.558	.020
R = 0.935 R ² = 0.874 Adj R ² = 0.832 DW=1.389 p = 0.020						

a. Dependent Variable: consumer buying behaviour

In hypothesis two, R coefficient of 0.935 (93.5%) shows there was a very strong significant positive effect of product communication image on consumer buying behaviour. The R^2 shows that 87.4% of the variation in consumer buying behaviour can be explained by alleviating poverty. Hence, the Adjusted R^2 is 0.832. This show that the product communication image specified in the model can explain only about 83.2% of the variations in the consumer buying behaviour. With the linear regression model, the error of estimate is low with a value of about 33.760. However, the significance value (p-value) of $0.020 < 0.05$, the model is statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. We therefore conclude that product communication image has significant positive effect on consumer buying behaviour in Enugu hypermarkets.

Summary of Findings

The study made the following empirical findings that:

- i. Product attributes image had significant positive effect on consumer buying behaviour in Enugu hypermarkets since the p-value of $0.013 < 0.05$.
- ii. Product communication image had significant positive effect on consumer buying behaviour in Enugu hypermarkets since the p-value of $0.020 < 0.05$.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings and conclusion, the study offers the following recommendations:

- i. Management of hypermarket organizations should continue to make product attributes more highlighting intends of satisfaction, taste, weight and sustenance of human development known as customers in order to motive them keep continuous patronage.
- ii. Management of hypermarkets should effectively leverage on product communication skills in order to enhance their marketing efforts, improve consumer engagement, and ultimately drive sales among customer and organization at large.

Conclusion

This research deepened our understanding of the impact of COO image on consumer buying behaviour in Enugu hypermarkets. The findings offered valuable insights for marketers and retailers in Enugu, helping them develop strategies to leverage on COO image effectively. This could involve highlighting positive attributes associated with specific countries in marketing campaigns or adjusting product assortments to align with consumer preferences. It therefore, the study concluded that: product attributes, product communication had significant positive effect on consumer buying behaviour in Enugu hypermarkets.

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