

# Ethical Consumerism on Consumers Purchase Intentions and Actual Purchase Behaviours

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## Abstract

The study main objective is to investigate the effect of ethical consumerism on consumers purchase intentions and actual purchase behaviours using the Igbemo Rice processing company limited in Irepodun/Ifeolodun Local Government in Ekiti State as the case study. The research adopted a descriptive quantitative survey design in examining the research topic. The study data was sourced from primary sources utilising questionnaires to acquire the opinions of respondents. The sample consisted of 120 respondents selected through simple random and purposive sampling techniques. The study findings indicated that 93.3% of respondents opined that they are aware of ethical consumerism and people who drop product package anywhere pollute the environment, 76.7% of respondents indicated that the rice produced from the mill are easily accessible in the market, 81.7% of respondents indicated that the rice mill is producing eco-friendly goods to protect consumers, while 87.5% of respondents indicated that the significant level of transparency in the Igbemo rice mill business production ensures they purchase their products. Based on findings, it was recommended that manufacturing companies and industries should keep to ensuring high regard and respect for consumer needs and labour roles in their respective organisations. In addition, manufacturing companies should invest in new technologies to control the amount of waste introduced into the environment and to enhance the production of goods with ethical values for consumers' consumption.

**Keywords:** Ethical consumerism, consumer purchase intentions, actual purchase behaviours.

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## INTRODUCTION

Ethical consumerism, a growing trend in contemporary markets, emphasizes the influence of moral and ethical considerations on consumer decision-making processes. It involves consumers consciously choosing products and services that align with their personal values,

such as environmental sustainability, social justice, fair trade, and animal welfare. This phenomenon is driven by a heightened awareness of global issues, such as climate change, human rights violations, and corporate responsibility, leading consumers to prefer brands that reflect their ethical stances.

As consumers become more informed, their purchase intentions increasingly reflect these ethical considerations. The intention to support companies with ethical practices is often influenced by the desire to make a positive impact on society and the environment. However, there is often a gap between consumers' purchase intentions and their actual purchase behaviors. While consumers may express a strong preference for ethical products, factors such as price, convenience, and availability can hinder the translation of these intentions into actual purchases.

Consumers' awareness of green, ethical, and sustainable products has grown as a result of global warming and environmental concerns (Bhutto, Zeng, & Soomro, 2019). As a result of social and economic problems, societal ethical consumerism has grown over time. Today, lot of arguments have been debated on the ability of companies in effecting changes limited with ethical consumerism. Large companies have often been targeted and criticized, with these affecting infant organizations.

Consumers play a crucial role in promoting a sustainable and healthy society by choosing a variety of foods that are produced in accordance with social and environmental ethical standards. Small companies have been identified as influencing ethical consumerism, while it has been argued that information is scarce as regards to purchasing outcomes, thereby preventing consumers from making desired ethical choices (Micheletti, 2016).

Ethical consumerism is a behavioural model shaping consumers to revisit their daily consumption choices from a moral perspective (Dogarawa, 2019). Ethical consumption is a type of purchasing behaviour in which customers can communicate their opinions about society (Pinto, Borges, Herter, & Ferreira, 2020). An ethical consumer is someone who purchase and consumes product that are not dangerous to the environment. Thus, ethical consumption involves consumers seeking out and purchasing products that are ethically manufactured, sourced from natural materials, have no negative costing, are not hazardous to use with easy recycling (Bello, Suleiman & Danjuma, 2012). Ethical consumption indicates measures a consumer adopt in their purchasing choice to boycott products conflicting with personal ethical principles (Cho & Krasser, 2017)

Consumers are becoming aware of the negative impact of consumption and are paying close attention to environmental consequences of their actions (Paul, Modi & Patten, 2016). Purchasing ethical products are based on personal moral issues and the desire to protect the environment (Langen, 2011). Challenges with ethical consumption of goods are manifested in consumer's acceptance of the channel and production of commodities with a specific alignment where "ethics" and "consumption" are mediated. Manufacturing companies due to the need of increasing profitability have resorted into placing their workers in a bad working condition (Anigbogu, Onwuteaka, Edoko & Okolo, 2014). This has empowered consumers to pursue a healthy lifestyle and encouraged ethical consumption of goods, ensuring that producers avoid

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causing harm to people and society. For producers and service providers, ethical consumerism is a broad sticky tag to entice the public's better selves.

Nowadays, people are more inclined to consider purchasing ethically, since the concept of mixing shopping and ethics has emerged as a new perception. All of this could be attributed to growing awareness about the environmental impact of purchasing behaviours. In this social dilemma, consumers are increasingly concerned about the manufacturing content of the products they plan to purchase. Some are researching the sources of materials, while others are focusing on the production network, seeking greater ethical practices and transparency (Carrington & Neville, 2010).

Several factors contribute to this discrepancy between ethical purchase intentions and actual behavior. Price sensitivity, product availability, and a lack of trust in ethical claims are common barriers (Auger & Devinney, 2007). Moreover, empirical research by Shaw and Shiu (2003) highlights that ethical consumerism is often influenced by situational factors, such as convenience and habit, which can override ethical considerations at the point of purchase.

Despite these challenges, the growing body of literature suggests that businesses can play a crucial role in closing the intention-behavior gap by fostering trust and transparency, improving the accessibility of ethical products, and enhancing consumer education (Bray, Johns, & Kilburn, 2011). As ethical consumerism continues to gain traction, understanding the nuances of how it influences both intentions and behaviors is essential for marketers and policymakers aiming to promote sustainable consumption practices.

The objectives of the study are to examine what product consumers know about ethical consumerism pertaining to the Igbemo Rice in Ekiti state; identify the perception of consumers in Ekiti State towards the Igbemo Rice Processing Company Limited strategies in promoting ethical consumerism; investigate what the management of Igbemo Rice Processing Company Limited do to promote clean and green environment in their location and ascertain how ethical consumerism affect the purchase intentions and actual purchase behaviour of consumers in Ekiti State in regard to the production process of the Igbemo Rice Processing Company Limited.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Conceptual Review**

**Ethical Consumerism:** The concept of consumerism has been characterized as a social movement aimed at enhancing the rights and capabilities of consumers (Perreault & McCarthy, 2017). It is a powerful political force that originated in the United States but has since extended to many other nations (Arndt, Barksdale, & Perreault, 1980), and has become a force that organizations and businesses must compete with. It is worth noting, though, that initiatives to decrease the power imbalance between consumers and sellers aren't restricted to consumer and activist groups. The principle of consumerism birthed the development of ethical consumerism or ethical consumption in the world today. Ethical consumerism or likewise ethical consumption has been defined as the conscious and deliberate choice to make certain consumption choices due to personal and moral beliefs (Crane & Matten, 2016). It is referred to

as an expression of an individual's moral judgment in his or her purchase behaviour. According to the Ethical Consumerism Report (2017), ethical consumerism refers to how much customers prioritize their own ethical concerns when it comes to product selection. Most definitions of ethical consumption, however, contain a mention of environmental concerns. While many studies cover a wide range of environmental issues and behaviours (Kim & Choi, 2015), nearly all focus solely on recycling (Sudbury-Riley, 2014), possibly because recycling of household waste is becoming a common daily practice for many people as a result of various recycling policies and programs in many countries (European Commission, 2014). Social justice and human rights issues, as well as worker exploitation, are all aspects of ethical consumerism or consumption (Ethical Consumerism Report, 2017). Beyond these common concerns, broader definitions focusing on animal welfare and local community activities have been proposed (Carrigan & Attala, 2017).

According to Langen (2017), the motivations for purchasing ethical products are always based on personal moral concerns and the need to safeguard the environment. Furthermore, existing literature asserts that ethical consumerism is a behavioural paradigm that forces consumers to reconsider their daily buying decisions in light of moral considerations (Pecoraro & Uusitalo, 2014). Bello, Suleiman, and Danjuma, (2018) opine that ethical consumerism entail the consumers only seeking and purchasing only products that were ethically produced, made from natural material, do not have harmful external and internal costs, are not dangerous to use and discarding the waste properly. Cho and Krasser (2017) express measures a consumer take to communicate their ethical perspective through their purchasing decisions to shun products that conflict with their personal ethical principles. Arguably, ethical consumption encompasses a broader range of issues than green consumerism the ensuing consumer decision-making process is more complex.

Many consumers understand that businesses have some moral accountability to the society in which they live and produce, and thus when it comes to ethical vote power, customers consider moral standards and directions in accordance with various righteous ideologies and suppositions (Yoganathan *et al.*, 2019). The environment in which the business operates, as well as the customer's awareness, insights, and understanding of the organisation. Furthermore, prior experience and general success of a company in the past have an impact on individual buying decisions. All of these criteria combine to produce a judgement about whether to buy or boycott a company's products or services (Kiker, Fugate, Kiker, & Callahan, 2015). The purchasing behaviour of the consumer is being enhanced by the study and the research studies, which are conducted in favour of ethical consumers. The study indicates that the organization has established two objectives to achieve what is considered socially right (Dickson, 2000), and what are the possibilities which will affect the environment in a better way, and it will make the positive impact on the consumer purchasing behaviour (Cetindamar & Husoy, 2017).

According to their individual needs, each person interprets the other in a different way. According to Solomon and Stuart (2015), there are three key elements that influence how consumers perceive things: exposure, perceptual selection, and interpretation.

**Consumers purchase intentions and Actual purchase behaviours:** Consumers will select a set of determinant attributes to employ while comparing various options after they have enough information. Before making a purchase, a consumer may, for example, consider features, price, and value. They would then utilise these attributes as well as other factors to assess the criteria. They may therefore be persuaded to buy the superior items with high ethical standards based on their perception and belief of the relative relevance of those features of ethically produced products as compared to those of non-ethical products. When deciding on whether to purchase or use organic food products, consumers typically consider a variety of product qualities. Following their purchase, the customer will either be happy or unhappy with their purchase and will act in certain ways.

Customers' propensity to express preferences for particular goods and services is influenced by a number of variables, including the product's packaging, origin, pricing, branding, and quality of goods and services (Agyekum *et al.*, 2015). Consumers often go through five steps in the decision-making process when contemplating buying ethical standard products: need recognition, information search, alternative appraisal, purchase choice, and post-purchase behaviour (Armstrong & Kotler, 2016).

### **Theoretical Review**

The theory of planned behaviour and the moral theory of Unitarianism are explicitly utilised to create a model for understanding the study variables in order to explain the factors that influence consumers' actual and intended purchase behaviour as a result of the impact of ethical consumerism. The theoretical framework of ethical consumerism is deeply rooted in the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which posits that an individual's behavioral intentions are influenced by their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). When applied to ethical consumerism, TPB suggests that consumers who hold strong ethical values are more likely to form intentions to purchase ethically sourced products. However, the intention-behavior gap remains a critical issue, as numerous studies have shown that while consumers often express a desire to engage in ethical consumption, their actual purchasing behaviors do not always align with these intentions (Carrington *et al.*, 2014).

While Unitarianism's moral theory indicates that customers consciously consider the advantages and worth of the products they buy and use before making a purchase. It also suggests that companies and manufacturers comprehend and apply every manner their product adds value for customers, as customers examine product packaging and branding and determine that they have all the necessary additional benefits. Conversely, the theory of planned behaviour highlights the role of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control in shaping consumers' intentions, which in turn shapes their purchase conduct.

### **Empirical Review**

Ethical consumption is a prerequisite for sustainable global development (Li *et al.*, 2021). The older generations, who lived decades ago, led very different lives from ours; they were closer to organic materials and more dependent on the natural environment. The rise of industrialization and urbanisation has upset *all* of these antiquated habits. Modernism has brought us numerous

conveniences and substantially lightened our lives, but it has also had some negative effects. A number of these repercussions have significantly harmed the economy, the environment, and society as a whole. Humanity must discover new routes out of the current vicious cycle if it is to bring about social transformation on a global scale. This also suggests that patterns of production and consumption will change (Kossmann, Veloso, & Suárez, 2021). Customers' growing worries have led them to gravitate more towards environmentally friendly items, which are referred to as ethical products. Products that are classified as ethical range from organic to recyclable, sustainable to eco-friendly (Tezer & Bodur, 2020). Finding the elements that affect consumers' attention, decisions, and choices has become crucial for marketers (Mondol, Salman, Rahid, & Karim, 2021). Researchers have conducted a thorough analysis of the effects of consumerism on the organisation chain involved in marketing and distribution as well as on the manufacturing process of specific products.

Ayozie (2019) investigated business activities in Nigeria's context of consumerism and the shame of marketing. The study uncovered and examined the historical roots, causes, and contributing factors of consumerism as well as its increasing significance and the various responses from the government, individuals, organisations, journalists, and marketers to Nigeria's rising consumerism. He claimed that many businesses trade on the inherent values of their brands and that customer complaints are an essential component of doing business because they benefit the company and its products by exposing wrongdoing and enabling them to start fixing issues that customers have pointed out. He came to the conclusion that because the government has not made a strong commitment to improving consumer education, less developed societies like Nigeria are going through an awakening phase.

Iweama, Ogbunankwor and Ifediba (2020) investigated the demographic analysis of consumerism in the Nigerian rural setting. The study used demographic analysis to assess consumerism in a rural context. We used both primary and secondary data. The core data was gathered through a survey. The study's developed questionnaire was provided to a sample size of 400 respondents. Only 292 people took the time to fill out the survey. The data was examined using percentage tables that displayed the means and standard deviations. The t-test and one-way ANOVA were used to examine the hypotheses. Honesty, correct labelling, safe products and services, quality information on products, provision of good quality products, honest-advertising, moderate prices, establishment of Consumer Protection Agencies, and abundance of goods and services are among the factors that could restore consumer satisfaction, according to the study. The findings show that strict application of consumer protection agency functions, as well as adequate consumer education, aid in the progress of consumerism in rural Nigeria.

Bello, Suleiman, and Danjuma (2018) examined the perspectives of consumerism and consumer protection acts in Nigeria. Their research focuses on the concerns and challenges of consumerism and consumer protection in Nigeria, with a special focus on the Consumer Protection Council (CPC) Act of 2019. Despite the prevalence of unwholesome business practices, evidence from existing literature suggests that consumerism in Nigeria, like in most less developed countries, has remained at a low ebb. The analysis concludes that simply having legislation is insufficient. For each infringement of a consumer's right, specific protective and

compensation actions should be explicitly mentioned. In Nigeria, this will reinforce the CPC Act.

Ekanem (2017) examined the institutionalised framework for consumer protection in Nigeria. The study looked at the administrative and regulatory procedures in place to safeguard consumers, as well as the attitude of the courts in consumer-related cases. The findings of the study revealed that there are multiple regulatory entities set up to help consumers, with functions that sometimes overlap. The survey also revealed a lacklustre approach by judges in consumer protection matters, which has a negative impact on consumers. It was found that if consumers are to benefit from whatever legislative structure is put in place in Nigeria to protect them, judicial activism is essential.

Carrigan and Attala (2017) reviewed an article on the myth of the ethical consumer- do ethics matter in purchase behaviour. The essay studies whether customers care about ethical behaviour and the impact of good and negative ethical behaviour on consumer purchasing decisions. The study used a focus group discussion to confirm today's customers' sophisticated lifestyles. The essay finishes with some suggestions for how marketers might encourage consumers to engage in ethical marketing by encouraging positive buying behaviour.

Rustam, Wang and Zameer (2020) investigated the environmental awareness, firm sustainability exposure and green consumption behaviours. Primary and secondary data were used in the investigation. The primary data was gathered through a survey, while secondary data on sustainability reporting was gathered from yearly reports and the database of worldwide reporting projects. To evaluate the data, multiple regression techniques were used. The findings of the study show that a company's sustainability exposure and environmental responsiveness are game changers for green consumption habits, and that they are ultimately the threshold for shifting rationality and customers' green choices. The findings of the study add to the body of knowledge in the field of sustainability by changing a company's environmental exposure into greener consumption practices in order to mitigate environmental damage caused by human activities. The study recommends that policy guidelines are needed for the intervention of firms into environmental activities and that persistent sustainability policy helps to stimulate green consumption behaviour.

Udoka, Chigbata, and Dickson (2020) examined factors influencing ethical consumption behaviour among consumers in Nigeria. To collect data from respondents, a descriptive study design was used. Using data acquired from 193 Nigerian homes, four hypotheses were explored. Multiple regression analysis is a statistical tool for examining the relationship between independent and dependent variables. Subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, and environmental awareness all have a significant favourable impact on ethical consumption behaviour, according to the research. The impact of one's attitude on ethical consumption is negligible. The study's findings offer guidance to the beverage industry on how to encourage ethical consumption in the context of their commercial operations. The study's findings reveal that Nigerian consumers are now aware of the advantages of ethical consumption. It was recommended that Non-Governmental organizations (NGO) can assist in ensuring that consumers in the study area imbibe and maintain ethical consumption behaviour.

Moisander (2017) examined the motivational complexity of green consumerism. Using a simple motivation model as an analytical tool, this research explores the motivational complexity of green consumption. The goal is to shed light on the problems that environmentally conscious green customers may confront in the marketplace, as well as the constraints of framing and targeting environmental policy initiatives in terms of individual motivation and morally responsible decision-making. Overall, the article contends that green consumerism is far too hefty a responsibility to undertake as a private lifestyle goal of a single individual. As a result, the author joins a rising number of academics who claim that focusing on individual consumers in environmental policy is limited and so needs to be problematized.

Dogarawa (2019) studied the overview of the socio-economic liquidations and management of product faking and adulteration. From Asia to Europe, the study looked at product falsification and adulteration as a global threat. The article presents an overview of product faking and adulteration's sources, causes, volume, repercussions, and control. To provide a global picture of product faking and adulteration, the study used a comprehensive literature survey, which was supplemented by interviews and personal observations. It uses logical reasoning to determine the socioeconomic effects of counterfeiting as well as available regulatory strategies. The report suggests, among other things, an integrated institutional approach to dealing with the global difficulties of product faking.

Oko and Osuagwu (2019) reviewed a study on consumerism in the Nigerian experience on food and drink industries from 1980 to 2018. The study considered the growth and challenges to consumerism and its impact on the health and environmental standard of the nation. Data for the study was collected using questionnaire and was examined with the use of the analysis of variance statistical tool. The inactive nature of consumerism in Nigeria, according to the findings, contributes significantly to manufacturers' exploitative attitudes, both explicitly through high product prices and implicitly through environmental degradation through improper residue or waste management, resulting in poor health and environmental standards. The study recommends that persuading businesses to adopt marketing idea philosophies, principles, policies, and tactics is important in maximizing company goals and consumer welfare or satisfaction.

Langen (2017) assessed whether ethical consumption and charitable giving substitutes or not with an insight into consumers' coffee choice in Germany. The study highlights that the effectiveness of various systems matters to customers has received little consideration in the literature thus far. A latent class model for discrete choice analysis was used in the study and reveals five consumer segments with well-defined preferences and willingness to pay metrics. The study indicated that out of the 27% of the 484 people polled, ethical consumption comes at the expense of other ethical behaviours like charity giving.

Sener and Hazer (2015) conducted a study to test the impact of values on women's sustainable consumption behaviour. A sample of 600 women was selected in Ankara, Turkey. The study used a list of 23 values from five value types from Schwartz's model. Sustainable consumption was measured using a five-point scale for 14 environment-friendly behaviours. The study findings revealed that the values of the Turkish women on their consumption are related to their

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behaviours. The study also reported that price, quality, habit, brand strength and consumer lifestyles are factors motivating companies to increase positive consumer attitudes.

Halliru (2018) examined the development of consumerism in Nigeria, the prospects and challenges. The study assesses the performance of agencies in charge of consumer rights protection on the basis of their statutory functions, the study was conducted in Kano state, Nigeria. The study adopted a judgemental sampling to draw participants from the population. A total of 50 respondents of both male and female participated in the study. The main instrument of the study was interview. The findings of the study revealed that agencies are below par in performance with very poor level of awareness among Nigerian consumers who are reluctant to enforce their rights. The study recommend that the government should ensure immediate establishment of Consumer Protection Council committees in all states of the federation as provided by the Act, enforce the use of warranties, and direct other agencies to vigorously create awareness and bring defaulting organizations to book.

### **Gaps in the Literature**

The study reviewed the literature on the ethical consumerism on consumers purchase intentions and actual purchase behaviours. It discussed various important concepts such as ethical consumerism, consumers' perception and purchase behaviours, ethical decision-making of consumers and factors affecting the perception of consumers towards products with a view of understanding it impact on consumers in the Nigerian society. The research was modelled on the moral theory of utilitarianism and the theory of planned behaviour. The empirical review of the study led to the conclusion that there are not many publications or research articles looking at the connection and impact between ethical consumerism and consumers' actual and intended purchasing behaviours in Nigerian society.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This research employed descriptive survey design to gather information from a sample of individuals to describe the characteristics, behaviors, and opinions and inferential statistics via simple percentages expressed in frequency distribution tables. Inferential statistics was used to analyse the research hypothesis developed for the study.

Data information for the research are sourced from both primary, the primary source of data for the study were through surveys administered to respondents to acquire their opinions.

The population of study comprises of all consumers in Igbemo-Ekiti, Ekiti State. The population of people in Irepodun/Ifelodun Local Government Area of Ekiti State is estimated at 196,700 (Source: citypopulation.de).

The sample size is a term used in defining the number of subjects or individual samples in any setting. It is the number of participants chosen from which data were gathered. Thus, the sample size for the study was 120.

Participants for the study were purposively sampled from among the population of rice consumers in Irepodun/Ifelodun Local Governmen Area, Ekiti State. A random sampling was employed by researchers to ensure participants have an equal chance of being represented in

the study. In using a purposive sampling technique, the researchers selected their samples based on knowledge about the concentration of rice consumers in Irepodun/Ifelodun Local Government. However, a random sampling were employed by the researchers to ensure participants have an equal chance of being represented in the study. This way, there is a control for other variables that may want to interfere with the findings of the study.

The research instrument was through a questionnaire survey, measuring the context of the research study. The information on the questionnaire were formulated and structured using the research questions and objectives as a guide in identifying suitable statements that best reveal the constructs for the study. The first part of the questionnaire present the demographic information of respondents, while other parts of the questionnaire measure each research questions objectively. Questionnaire items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, where respondents indicated their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement.

**DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

**Respondents’ Socio-Demographic Characteristics**

As shown in the Table 1, this section contains a descriptive analysis of the socio-demographic data drawn from the sampled respondents. The socio-demographic variables include the respondents’ age, sex, educational background, and religion, including behavioral characteristics regarding purchases and income level.

**Table 1: Respondents Demographic Characteristics**

<b>Demographic Characteristics</b>	<b>Categories</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Age</b>	18-20 years	27	22.5
	21-25 years	49	40.8
	26-30 years	16	13.3
	31 years and above	28	23.3
	Total	120	100
<b>Sex</b>	Male	46	38.3
	Female	74	61.7
	Total	120	100
<b>Educational Background</b>	SSCE	18	15
	Diploma/NCE	13	10.8
	B.Sc./HND	76	63.4
	Postgraduate	13	10.8
	Total	120	100
<b>Religion</b>	Christianity	104	86.7
	Islam	11	9.2

	Traditional	5	4.1
	Total	120	100
<b>Are you a regular shopper/product buyer?</b>	Yes	99	82.5
	No	21	17.5
	Total	120	100
<b>How often do you shop or purchase Igbemo rice?</b>	Once a week	24	20
	Twice a week	28	23.3
	Every day of the week	68	56.7
	Total	120	100
<b>Income Level</b>	< ₦70,000	26	21.7
	₦71,000 - ₦100,000	40	33.3
	₦101,000 – 150,000	33	27.5
	> ₦150,000	21	17.5
	Total	120	100

**Source:** Authors’ Field Survey, 2024.

#### **Age of Respondents**

The age distribution in Table 1 shows that most respondents were young people aged 21-25 years old, with a frequency count of 49, representing 40.8% of the respondents, while 22.5% of respondents are within the age range of 18-20 years, 13.3% of respondents were between 26-30 years, and 23.3% are 31 years and above.

#### **Gender of Respondents**

The gender distribution above shows that most respondents were female, with a frequency count of 74, representing 61.7% of the respondents, while 46 (38.3%) were male.

#### **Religion of Respondents**

The study data revealed that the majority of respondents totaling 86.7% are Christian, while respondents who practice Islam are 9.2% and those with the traditional form of religion are 4.1%.

#### **Behavioral Characteristics of Respondents**

The distribution regarding behavioral characteristics shows that 82.5% of respondents affirmed being regular shoppers or product buyers, while 17.5% are not frequent shoppers or buyers of products. Likewise, most of the study respondents totaling 56.7% approved they purchased goods every day of the week, 20% of respondents confirmed purchasing goods once in a week, while 23.3% responded to purchasing goods only twice in a week. In addition, 33.3% of respondents indicated their income level to be between ₦71,000 – ₦100,000, 21.7% affirmed their income level to be less than ₦70,000, and 27.5% chose the income level between

₦101,000 – 150,000, while respondents accounting for 17.5% indicated their income level to be between ₦101,000 – 150,000.

**Table 2: Product consumer’s knowledge about ethical consumerism in Igbemo-Ekiti.**

S/N	Statements	SA	A	UN	D	SD
1	I know how to challenge a manufacturer when their products lack the quality needed.	42 (35%)	48 (40.0%)	7 (5.8%)	18 (15%)	5 (4.2%)
2	I am aware that some manufacturing companies produce unhealthy products.	44 (36.7%)	48 (40.0%)	7 (5.8%)	14 (11.7%)	7 (5.8%)
3	Many manufacturers pollute their environment with their by-products.	41 (34.2%)	58 (48.3%)	5 (4.2%)	8 (6.7%)	8 (6.7%)
4	Most of the wastes in our area are as a result of poor ethical consumerism.	34 (28.3%)	55 (45.8%)	3.3 (3.1%)	14 (11.7%)	13 (10.8%)
5	I know the government agency to report product manufacturers to when there is an error in a product.	24 (20%)	39 (32.5%)	13 (10.8%)	32 (26.7%)	13 (10.8%)
6	I properly dispose of product package after use.	61 (50.8%)	43 (35.8%)	2 (1.7%)	5 (4.2%)	9 (7.5%)
7	People who drop product package anywhere pollute the environment.	75 (62.5%)	37 (30.8%)	2 (1.7%)	4 (3.3%)	2 (1.7%)
8	I have a good knowledge of products I want to purchase.	45 (37.5%)	52 (43.3%)	7 (5.8%)	5 (4.2%)	11 (9.2%)
9	I know what to do when my consumption right is being	34	52	6	7	21

	infringed upon.	(28.3%)	(43.3%)	(5%)	(5.8%)	(17.5%)
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**Source: Author’s Field Survey, 2024.**

Table 2 presents information on product consumer’s knowledge about ethical consumerism within this study's context. The variable was evaluated through nine (9) distinct dimensions or categories of statements. Examination of the data revealed that the majority of the respondents totaling 40% of the sample positively indicated that they know how to challenge a manufacturer when their products lack the quality needed, while 35% strongly agree, 5.8% are neutral, 15% disagree, and 4.2% strongly disagree.

For the second question, 40% of respondents express agreement, indicating they are aware that some manufacturing companies produce unhealthy products, while 36.7% strongly agree, 5.8% are neutral, 11.7% disagree, and 5.8% strongly disagree.

Regarding the statement "Many manufacturers pollute their environment with their by-products," 48.3% of respondents agree, 34.2% strongly agree, 4.2% are neutral, 6.7% disagree, and 6.7% strongly disagree. This indicates that respondents are aware that many manufacturers pollute their environment with their by-products.

The outcomes for the fourth set of questions showed that most respondents, precisely 45.8%, agreed with the items within that dimension, while 28.3% of respondents strongly agree, 3.1% are neutral, 11.7% disagree, and 10.8% strongly disagree.

When asked whether they know the government agency to report product manufacturers to when there is an error in a product, 20% of respondents strongly agree, 32.5% agree, 10.8% are neutral, 26.7% disagree, and 10.8% strongly disagree. This suggests that a large percentage of the population study knows the government agency to report product manufacturers to when there is an error in a product.

Furthermore, data reveals that when asked about whether they properly dispose of product packages after use (as outlined in 'question 6'), 50.8% of respondents strongly agree, 35.8% agree, 1.7% are neutral, 4.2% disagree, and 7.5% strongly disagree. These results indicate a positive noteworthy consensus among the respondents.

Also, the responses to 'question 7' demonstrated that, on average, 63.5% of respondents strongly agree, 30.8% agree, 1.7% are neutral, 3.3% disagree, and 1.7% strongly disagree. This indicates that a larger percentage agreed with the statement saying that the people who drop product packages anywhere pollute the environment.

Similarly, the results for the statement concerning having a good knowledge of products to purchase revealed that 37.5% of respondents strongly agree, 43.3% agree, 5.8% are neutral, 4.2% disagree, and 9.2% strongly disagree. The results signify a strong level of acceptance among participants regarding this statement.

Lastly, 43.3% of respondents strongly agree that they know what to do when their consumption right is being infringed upon, while 28.3% agree, 5% are neutral, 5.8% disagree, and 17.5% strongly disagree.

**Table 3: How consumers in Igbemo-Ekiti perceive Igbemo Rice Processing Company Limited strategies in promoting ethical consumerism**

S/N	Statements	Yes	No
1	I appreciate the effort of the company in reducing stones found in their rice.	87 (72.5%)	33 (27.5%)
2	I purchase the rice efficiently without having to worry about its scarcity in the market.	64 (53.3%)	56 (46.7%)
3	I'm substantially okay with the product value of the rice mill.	76 (63.3%)	44 (36.7%)
4	My consumption experience of product from the rice mill is poor.	68 (56.7%)	52 (43.3%)
5	I doubt the credibility of the rice mill production before entry to the market.	72 (60%)	48 (40%)
6	I can gladly recommend product of the rice mill to people	81 (67.5%)	39 (32.5%)
7	The rice produced from the mill are easily accessible in the market.	92 (76.7%)	28 (23.3%)

**Source: Author's Field Survey, 2024.**

Table 3 presents information on how consumers in Igbemo-Ekiti perceive Igbemo Rice Processing Company Limited strategies in promoting ethical consumerism with seven (7) different statements.

The data showed that 87 respondents accounting for 72.5% of the sample positively indicated that they appreciate the effort of the company in reducing stones found in their rice.

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Also, the information provided when researching if they purchase the rice efficiently without having to worry about its scarcity in the market, 53.3% of respondents were positive, 46.7% answered in the negative.

Likewise, 76 respondents accounting for 63.3% of the sample positively indicated that they are substantially okay with the product value of the rice mill while 36.7% responded in the negative.

Furthermore, when asked whether their consumption experience of the product from the rice mill is poor, 56.7% responded “Yes” while 43.3% answered “No.”

Similarly, 72 respondents accounting for 60% of the sample positively indicated that they doubt the credibility of the rice mill production before entry to the market but 40% responded otherwise.

While 81 respondents accounting for 67.5% of the sample positively indicated that they can gladly recommend product of the rice mill to people, the other 32.5% gave negative responses.

Conclusively, majority of the respondents totalling 92 accounting for 76.7% of the sample positively indicated that the rice produced from the mill are easily accessible in the market while 23.3% responded otherwise.

**Table 4: Efforts of the management of Igbemo Rice Processing Company Limited in promoting ethical consumerism.**

S/N	Statements	SA	A	UN	D	SD
1	They are changing from using diesel/petrol engine to solar and inverter.	44 (36.7%)	35 (29.2%)	7 (5.8%)	18 (15%)	16 (13.3%)
2	They are investing in renewable energy.	49 (40.8%)	32 (26.7%)	11 (9.2%)	14 (11.7%)	14 (11.7%)
3	They are investing in new technology to reduce waste.	28 (23.3%)	66 (55%)	2 (1.7%)	10 (8.3%)	14 (11.7%)
4	They are cultivating their raw materials locally to reduce foreign waste.	26 (21.7%)	69 (57.5%)	4 (3.3%)	6 (5%)	15 (12.5%)
5	They are producing eco-friendly goods to protect consumers.	36 (30%)	62 (51.7%)	5 (4.2%)	5 (4.2%)	12 (10%)

S/N	Statements	SA	A	UN	D	SD
6	They control and prevent their workers from dumping refuse anywhere.	53 (44.2%)	30 (25%)	11 (9.2%)	16 (13.3%)	10 (8.3%)

**Source: Author’s Field Survey, 2024.**

Table 4 presents information on efforts of the management of Igbemo Rice Processing Company Limited in promoting ethical consumerism. This variable was evaluated across six (6) distinct dimensions or categories of statements.

Examination of the data in the first statement aiming to discover whether they’re changing from using diesel/petrol engine to solar and inverter revealed that 36.7% of respondents strongly agree, 29.9% agree, 5.8% are neutral, 15% disagree, and 13.3% strongly disagree.

Similarly, in response to the second set of queries, 40.8% of respondents strongly agree, 26.7% agree, 9.2% are neutral, 11.7% disagree, and 11.7% strongly disagree.

The outcomes for the third set of questions showed that most respondents, precisely 55%, agreed with the items within that dimension, while 23.3% displayed strong disagreement, 1.7% were neutral, 8.3% disagreed, and 11.7% strongly disagreed.

Furthermore, data reveals that when asked whether they were cultivating their raw materials locally to reduce foreign waste (as outlined in 'question 4'), 21.7% of respondents strongly agree, 57.5% agree, 3.3% are neutral, 5% disagree, and 12.5% strongly disagree.

Also, the responses to 'question 5' demonstrated that, on average, 51.7% of participants agreed with the statement probing whether they were producing eco-friendly goods to protect consumers. In comparison, 30% of respondents strongly agree, 4.2% are neutral, 4.2% disagree, and 10% strongly disagree.

Similarly, the results for the statement on whether they control and prevent their workers from dumping refuse anywhere, 44.2% of respondents strongly agree, 25% agree, 9.2% are neutral, 13.3% disagree, and 8.3% strongly disagree.

**Table 5:** impact of ethical consumerism on the purchase intentions and actual purchase behaviour of consumers as relating to rice production at the Igbemo Rice Processing Company Limited

S/N	Statements	SA	A	UN	D	SD
1	The significant level of transparency in their business production ensures I purchase their products.	71 (59.2%)	34 (28.3%)	3 (2.5%)	8 (6.7%)	4 (3.3%)
2	The respect for consumption needs by the company influences my commitment to buying the product.	25 (20.8%)	62 (51.7%)	3 (2.5%)	22 (18.3%)	8 (6.7%)
3	The improved quality of their	35	43	7	17	18

S/N	Statements	SA	A	UN	D	SD
	products despite the high demand rate increases purchase of the products.	(29.2%)	(35.8%)	(5.8%)	(14.2%)	(15%)
4	The convenience with their products makes me want to purchase more of it constantly.	24 (20%)	62 (51.7%)	3 (2.5%)	16 (13.3%)	15 (12.5%)
5	The regard and respect for labour roles in the company motivates my purchase decisions of the products.	24 (20%)	58 (48.3%)	7 (5.8%)	18 (15%)	13 (10.8%)

**Source:** Author’s Field Survey, 2024.

Table 5 delves into the impact of ethical consumerism on the purchase intentions and actual purchase behaviour of consumers as relating to rice production at the Igbemo Rice Processing Company Limited. This variable was assessed across five (5) distinct dimensions or sets of statements.

The evaluation of the statement, "The significant level of transparency in their business production ensures I purchase their products" revealed that, on average, 59.2% of respondents expressed strong agreement with the statement, while 28.3% agree, 2.5% are neutral, 6.7% disagree, and 3.3% strongly disagree. The results indicate a strong consensus among the participants regarding this statement in the research question.

Similarly, in response to the 'question 2' in this segment, 20.8% of respondents strongly agree, 51.7% agree, 2.5% are neutral, 18.3% disagree, and 6.7% strongly disagreed with the statement, "The respect for consumption needs by the company influences my commitment to buying the product." This highlights the significant level of agreement among the respondents concerning these questionnaire items.

Furthermore, the results from the statement, "The improved quality of their products despite the high demand rate increases purchase of the products," revealed that a majority of respondents, precisely 35.8%, agree with the item. In comparison, 29.2% of respondents strongly agree, 5.8% are neutral, 14.2% disagree, and 15% strongly disagree. This indicates that improved quality of products despite the high demand rate further increases purchase of the products.

Similarly, the feedback from the fourth question reveals that, on average, 85.7% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "The convenience with their products makes me want to purchase more of it constantly." In comparison, 2.5% are neutral, 13.3% disagree, and 12.5% strongly disagree. The results suggest a strong level of acceptance among the participants.

In the last statement to get an insight on the research question, the results pertaining to the statement "The regard and respect for labour roles in the company motivates my purchase decisions of the products." indicate that 20% of respondents strongly agree, 48.3% agree, 5.8% are neutral, 15% disagree, and 10.8% strongly disagree. This implies that there’s a robust level

of acceptance among the participants regarding how regard and respect for labour roles in the company positively influences purchase decisions of the products.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The research findings present and imply a large quantity of information regarding the effect of ethical consumerism on consumers purchase behaviours and actual purchase intentions. Firstly, the study findings revealed that product consumers are very aware and knowledgeable about ethical consumerism in Igbemo-Ekiti. This finding clearly supports the research investigation of Bello, Suleiman, and Danjuma (2017), who discovered in their study that consumers have sufficient knowledge of their surroundings, and that this information influences their ethical consumption behaviour. This understanding has influenced how they utilize and dispose of products. However, the study of Udoka, Chigbata, and Dickson (2020) negate the research findings as they argued that consumers in Nigeria appears to be unaware of ethical consumerism given that organisations such as the Consumer International and Consumer Awareness Organization, both of which exist in Nigeria, have been non-functioning over the years due to the citizens being unaware of their existence.

Secondly, the research revealed that consumers have a positive perception towards the strategies of the Igbemo Rice Processing Company Limited in promoting ethical consumerism. The findings demonstrated from consumer opinions that the majority appraise the company's effort in reducing stones from their rice, having their products readily accessible in the market, and can gladly recommend products of the rice mill to people. The finding supports that of Agyekum et al (2015) who claimed that consumers' propensity to express preferences for particular goods and services is influenced by a number of variables, including the product's packaging, origin, pricing, branding, and quality of goods and services. Also, the research investigation of Wulandari and Kodrat (2015) supports the study findings as they revealed that factors such as attention, exposure and interpretation of products shapes consumers' preferences towards certain goods.

Thirdly, the research indicated that the efforts of the management of Igbemo Rice Processing Company Limited in promoting ethical consumerism is not unnoticed by the consumers. Majority of respondents demonstrated that their products are eco-friendly, the products are cultivated locally to prevent foreign waste, and investing in new technologies to support their operations by acquiring machinery that reduces the stones from the rice. The study findings agree with that of Rustam, Wang, and Zameer (2020) who reported that companies' interventions in environmental activities related to consumption and sustainability drive consumer behaviour, which is compatible with the study's premise. However, the findings of Shayakhmetova and Chaklikova (2018) revealed that by redressing the technology and services companies utilise in their supply chain, as well as the development of materials to address environmental challenges, they motivate consumers and induce their preferences in positive ways.

Lastly, the research revealed that the impact of ethical consumerism on the purchase intentions and actual purchase behaviour of consumers as relating to rice production at the Igbemo Rice Processing Company Limited is somewhat positive. Majority of consumers attest to the

transparency in the rice mill operations, their respect for consumption needs, convenience of their products, and regard for labour roles in the companies. The research finding is consistent with the investigation of Oko and Osuagwu (2019) who argued that the operations of business in adopting marketing idea philosophies, principles, policies, tactics and consideration of consumer preferences and satisfaction are important in maximising the company's goals in the long term.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In comparing the study findings, some conclusions were drawn based on the data and discussion of the study. The study concluded that:

Product consumers are aware of ethical consumerism and the rights that they have as consumers. Also, some consumers appear to be ignorant of the existence of government agencies such as the Consumer International and Consumer Awareness Organization which promote ethical consumerism.

Consumers have a positive perception towards the strategies of the Igbemo Rice Processing Company Limited in promoting ethical consumerism. This perception centres towards appraising the company's effort in reducing stones from their rice, having their products readily accessible in the market, and can gladly recommend products of the rice mill to people.

The efforts of the management of Igbemo Rice Processing Company Limited in promoting ethical consumerism are well noticed by consumers. Majority of their efforts are towards making their products eco-friendly, cultivating from local sources to prevent foreign waste, and investing in new technologies to support their operations by acquiring machinery that reduces the stones from the rice.

The impact of ethical consumerism on the purchase intentions and actual purchase behaviour of consumers as relating to rice production at the Igbemo Rice Processing Company Limited is positive. Majority of respondents attest to the transparency in the rice mill operations, their respect for consumption needs, convenience of their products, and regards for labour roles in the companies.

Based on the study findings and the given conclusions, the following recommendations were proffered.

Manufacturing companies and industries should keep to ensuring high regard and respect for consumer needs and labour roles in their respective organisations.

Non-governmental agencies (NGO's) and governmental agencies can support ethical consumerism by ensuring widespread awareness in the Nigerian society so as to allow consumers imbibe ethical consumption and behaviours.

Manufacturing companies should invest in new technologies to control the amount of waste introduced into the environment and to enhance the production of goods with ethical values for consumer consumption.

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# Consumer Buying Decision Drivers of Seasoning Cube Brands in Aba Metropolis

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## Abstract

This study examined the critical success factors of brand among consumers and those factors that influenced brand preference or choice. It ascertained the level at which some seasonings cubes were preferred over others and determined how much brand name, brand quality / taste, price, brand loyalty, past experience with brand, packaging and media advertisement influenced consumers on their brand preference and choice. The study used quantitative approach of data collection. The survey which dwells on the use of questionnaire was used to collect data from 300 households. We analyzed brand among consumers and factors that influenced brand preference from the perspective of Engel, Kollat and Blackwell Model, which describes a consumer's decision process and how decisions are made when choosing from a list of alternatives. The study found out that Knor and Maggi are leading relatively among households. Of all the factors that influenced a consumer's brand choice, it was found out that there was a more significant relationship between consumer brand preference of seasoning cube and brand quality/taste and past experience with the brand. It was recommended that both companies should continue in their struggles to stay afloat in the competitive market by continuous use of various tools including advert, pricing, personal selling, activation, distribution network, quality control and sales promotional activities.

**Keywords:** Brand Preference, Brand Equity, Brand Loyalty, Brand Name, Consumer Buying Behavior

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## INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian seasoning market is growing very fast with new products making their way into the market. Food seasoning is an essential part of cooking in Nigeria. Before now, local seasonings such as OGIRI, and AYIAH IRU AND DAWADAWA were used in our kitchens to spice up menus but now it has been replaced with Maggi, Knor, Royco, Onga and a whole lot of seasonings trending in our markets today. The influx of different kinds of seasoning cubes in our retail outlets has become worrisome as to who buys what and why. The competition in the seasoning cube industry cannot be over emphasized as new seasoning products make their way into the market every day. Many consumers are seen purchasing seasoning cubes for their