

*An Appraisal Of The
Relationship Between
Consumerism And
Housing Delivery
In Jos Metropolis*

Achoru Afam Mike

*Department of Estate Management, Faculty of
Environmental Sciences, University of Jos, PMB
2084, Jos Nigeria*

ABSTRACT

Consumerism is defined as a program to promote consumer interest as it relates to continuous consumption of goods. This research work aimed at appraising the relationship between consumerism and housing delivery in Jos metropolis by looking at the consumption rate of houses by capable consumers and the extent to which the construction industry responds to this demand by supplying houses. A purposive sampling method was used to select the class of construction firms and Estate management firms for the questionnaires administration. All firms were located within Jos metropolis and had wide practical experience/knowledge. The data analysis tools used for analysis includes the Chi-Square method of analysis, percentage score method of analysis, correlation analysis and hypothetical framework. The study indicated that Consumerism is advantageous to the construction industry depending on quite a lot of factors which includes; personal interest of a consumer, location of house, infrastructural amenities within, quality of house/service, available funds, class/style of houses and available security. High income earners consume houses the most at a rate of 64.7%. This research also indicated that the house type consumed through sale the most are residential houses due to the nature of Jos metropolis at a frequency rate of 64.7%.

Keywords: Consumerism, Consumers, Housing Delivery, Estate Management, Construction Management

1. INTRODUCTION

According to Encyclopaedia Wikipedia (2009), consumerism is defined as the equation of personal happiness with consumption and the purchase of material possessions. Kotler (2009) also defined consumerism to mean the promotion of consumer interest or alternatively, “the theory that an increasing consumption of goods is economically desirable”. In economics, consumerism refers to economic policies placing emphasis on consumption. Collins (2003) defined consumerism to be the belief that it is good to buy and use a lot of goods. Lastly, Llewellyn (1992) defined consumerism as a program to promote consumer interest as it relates to continuous consumption of goods. From all definitions given above, it will not be wrong to say that consumerism is the promotion of an increasing consumption of goods by consumers.

Tilford (2000) explained that consumerism has strong links with the western world, but actually it is multi-cultural and non- geographical. People purchasing goods and consuming materials in excess of their needs is as old as the first civilization (Tilford, 2000). The industrial revolution created an unusual situation; for the first time in history products were available in outstanding low prices, being that available to virtually every body and thus began the era of mass consumption, the only era where the concept of consumerism is applicable.

In some critical contexts, Llewellyn (1992) explained that consumerism is used to describe the tendency of people to identify strongly with products or services they consume especially those with commercial brand names and perceived status symbolism appeal such as luxury automobiles, jewellery, designers clothing and so on. This culture is known as consumer culture or market culture. Tilford (2000) also described consumerism using the concept of 'conspicuous consumption'.

Consumerism is negatively characterised with excessive over- possession of materials (mass consumption); transportation and importation of less quality goods; environmental pollution; wasteful spending on unnecessary luxury goods, loss of valuable time; excessive advertisement for branded goods; emulation and imitation of the rich by the poor.

Despite all the short-comings of consumerism, it still plays a vital role to the society as a whole especially to the Construction industry as outlined by Betsy (2000). Betsy (2000) also explained that excessive consumption consequently leads to mass employment of labour and professionals in the Construction Industry which encourages international Construction/trade; brings about construction research and innovation; improves quality of goods/services produced, due to competition in the Construction Industry etc. The public and private sectors of the economy play a vital role in determining the ways in which the construction industry responds to demand resulting from consumerism as explained by Alan (2005).

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The aim of this study is to appraise the relationship between consumerism and housing delivery in Jos metropolis, with the following objectives:-

- To determine if a relationship actually exists between consumerism and housing delivery.
- To ascertain the extent to which the construction industry tries to respond to consumers demand for houses
- To determine the type of houses most consumed in Jos metropolis.
- To determine the best ways by which consumer satisfaction can be met by the construction industry in Jos metropolis.
- To determine the problems which affect the rate of consumption of houses in Jos metropolis by both the construction industry and capable consumers.
- To propose solutions or remedial measures required to enhance better consumption of houses in Jos metropolis.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

The construction industry is an important sector and plays a vital role in a national economy due to the usage of its end products such as roads, buildings and dams (Bamisile, 2004). It is also used as an economic regulator by government who is a major client of the industry by intervening to regulate performance through financing, legislation and provision such as:

- Intervention in the market through finance by grant, benefits, subsidies and taxation.
- Grant for construction of industrial or commercial premises in areas of high unemployment.
- Incentives for the construction of certain types of project such as private housing.
- Influence construction activity through the development, repair or maintenance of projects (Ashworth, 1999).

Further to these, it contributes significantly to the nation's gross domestic product (GDP) which is a measure of the volume of national output and input.

Zick (2009) stated that the process of constructing a project produces neither a pure product nor a pure service but may be considered a hybrid process consisting of both product and service components. He further stated that the concept is at the core of the construction process and is the reason the client initiates the process.

Bamisile (2004) outlined the major end products of the construction industry to include amongst others:

1. Housing, mostly residential
2. Factory buildings and warehouses
3. Roads within and outside housing units
4. Dams and water treatment plants
5. Public buildings such as schools, hospitals, colleges and so on.

Tilford (2000) outlined that for consumption to occur, there must be willing and able consumers. This in turn means that the end product to be consumed must be supplied adequately. Consumerism has a lot of effects. For the purpose of this study, the appraisal of consumerism and its relationship with housing delivery is viewed from the willingness of consumers to continuously consume houses and the effects or rate with which the construction industry responds to the continuous needs of these houses for consumption.

Consumption of houses can either be through sale or lease (Zick, 2009). Kuroshi and Bala (2005) stated that at the inception of a project by a construction company, the purpose for which the end product ought to be

consumed is known. This depends a whole lot on the client. For the construction industry to respond to the continuous consumption of houses, a number of professionals play vital roles. Odusanmi (2003) expressed that these professionals are categorised into two categories namely production professionals and marketing professionals. Those who are into production of construction end products (houses) are Architects, Civil/Structural/Electrical/ Mechanical Engineers, Builders and Quantity Surveyors. The professionals involved in marketing of houses are the sales agents and Estate Surveyors and valuers. Roberta and Sassateli (2006) indicated that the general public could also serve as end product marketers in their various capacities.

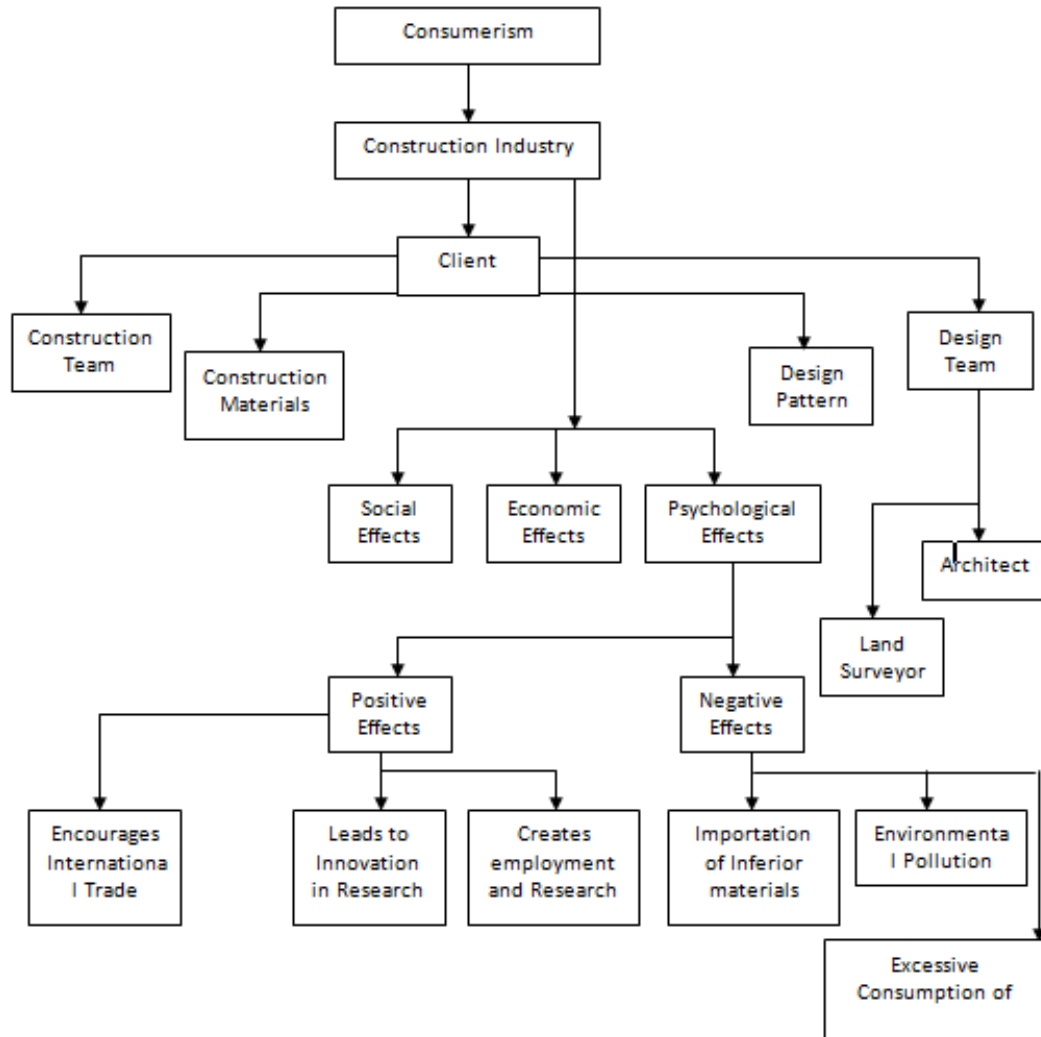


Fig. 1: A Diagrammatic representation of the relationship between Consumerism and the Construction Industry.

Source: Shiftman (2000)

3.2 THE CONSUMERS EXPECTATION FROM THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

An expectation is a belief or anticipation of what will happen as a result of an action as stated by Weisen (2003). A consumer makes a decision to select a particular contractor to provide construction services. In

making that selection decision, the consumer formulates expectations as to what will happen as a result of that decision. According to Weisen (2003), the consumer's expectations of service are a function of three factors: word of mouth about the contractor or similar contractors, the consumer's past or direct experience with the contractor or similar contractors, and the consumer's personal and corporate needs. If a firm has a need for construction services and has little knowledge of the contractors that are available to do such work, the individual in the firm responsible for procuring such services may talk with similar individuals in other firms to gather information on firms that could provide the services Haskell (2004).

The information obtained may be about specific firms or groups of firms such as union or nonunion contractors. An example by Simon (2001), it may be determined that XYZ contractor provides outstanding quality work at a good price but that it is very difficult to get XYZ to complete work in a timely manner, or that union contractors have a well trained workforce but are continually embroiled in jurisdictional disputes with other construction companies. Weisen (2003) stated that it is important to recognize that word-of-mouth information is based upon someone else's experience and is therefore subject to some distortion. Even so, word-of-mouth information provides a basis for the establishment of expectations.

3.3 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONSUMERISM, THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY AND HOUSING DELIVERY

Kotler (2009) defined consumerism to mean the promotion of consumer interest or alternatively, "the theory that an increasing consumption of goods is economically desirable". According to Litman (2004), Construction has typically been viewed as a production process, with the end product being the completed facility. Litman (2004) further stated that construction is examined in terms of the service product, service delivery, and service environment. The concept of service encounters is examined in the context of perceived quality and consumer satisfaction.

Why do consumers want what they want? Why do they buy what they buy? The standard marketing view draws on a wide variety of research concerning individual motivations and social influences to answer these questions. Psychological theories of motivation can shed light on why people come to desire certain things. According to Taylor (2000), one frequently used categorization breaks down human perceived needs into five categories:

1. Physiological needs, such as hunger and thirst.
2. Safety needs, for security and protection.
3. Social needs, for a sense of belonging and love.
4. Esteem needs, for self-esteem, recognition, and status.
5. Self-actualization needs, for self-development and realization.

Weisen (2003) outlined that for consumption to occur, there must be willing and able consumers. This in turn means that the end product to be consumed must be supplied adequately. Consumerism has a lot of effects. For the purpose of this study, the appraisal of consumerism and its relationship with housing delivery is viewed from the willingness of consumers to continuously consume houses and the effects or rate with which the construction industry responds to the continuous needs of these houses for consumption.

Consumption of houses can either be through sale or lease (Zick, 2009). Kuroshi and Bala (2005) stated that at the inception of a project by a construction company, the purpose for which the end product ought to be consumed is known. This depends a whole lot on the client. For the construction industry to respond to the continuous consumption of houses, a number of professionals play vital roles. Odusanmi (2003) expressed that these professionals are categorised into two categories namely production professionals and marketing professionals. Those who are into production of construction end products (houses) are Architects, Civil/Structural/Electrical/ Mechanical Engineers, Builders and Quantity Surveyors. The professionals involved in marketing of houses are the sales agents and Estate Surveyors and valuers. Roberta and Sassateli (2006) indicated that the general public could also serve as end product marketers in their various capacities.

3.4 THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS

Litman (2004) explained that the relationship between consumerism and product consumption portrays consumers as going through a five-step decision making process:

- **Post-Purchase/Consumption Behaviour.** After the purchase, the consumer will decide whether he or she is satisfied or dissatisfied with the goods or service. Consumption, in construction view, is seen as something of a trial-and-error process. Construction professionals are interested in all aspects of this process, since each step gives them opportunities to try to sway consumer choices toward their buildings/estate. They may try to create new desires, for example, or try to better inform the public about the strength of their structure. They may improve websites, to make sure consumers aren't frustrated in making their intended purchases or they may inform their own organization of changes in design that could improve consumer satisfaction (and thus bring more repeat business).
- **Evaluation of Alternatives.** After gathering information, the consumer compares the various alternatives about which he or she has gathered information. Goods and services are said to have attributed (or characteristics) that are the real items of interest to the consumer. The consumer will lean towards the alternative that has the bundle of attributes that most meets his or her desire (Caroline, 2004). For example, the consumer might be interested in the total number of rooms available in a particular structure, nature of finishing, accessibility, availability of social and structural amenities, security e.t.c.
- **Information Search.** In this stage, the consumer seeks information about how this want might be met. She may search her own experience, looking for ways she has satisfied it. Standard marketing gazettes

also usually include a similarly extensive discussion about marketing to organizations such as businesses and governments. One might consult external sources of information like friends, family, newspapers, advertising, packaging, etc. For example, she might be attracted to photos on the available housing units. These packages give full information about the structures in question. Since humans have limited availability to absorb information and can only assess a limited number of options, this process is likely to be very incomplete – the consumer will generally move on to the next stage knowing only some things about some housing alternatives.

- **Problem Recognition.** In this stage, the consumer perceives that he has a want or need. The consumer compares his situation to some situations he would consider to be better, and his desire to move to the better situation is aroused. For example, the consumer might feel hungry or feel unsatisfied with her current house, with outdated facilities compared to those being built newly.
- **Problem Decision.** Having developed an intention to buy something, the consumer will (barring interference or unforeseen events) follow through and make the purchase.

4. DATA ANALYSIS/FINDINGS

Four different analytical tools were used in analyzing the responses from the survey. These are the Chi square method of data analysis, percentage score method of analysis, correlation analysis and hypothetical framework.

4.1 CHI- SQUARE METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The Chi-square of independent statistics was used as a data analysis tool for this study. This data analysis tool was actually used to determine if there actually exists a relationship between consumerism and housing delivery in Jos metropolis using questions directly relating to consumerism and housing delivery in both sets of questionnaires. The followings applied where;

N = Total number of questionnaires

χ^2 = Chi-Square value

df = Degree of freedom calculated with formula:- $(C-1) \times (R-1)$ where C = Columns and R = Rows

P-value = Probability Value (Required for decision making).

4.2 PERCENTAGE SCORE METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The percentage score method of data analysis was used to obtain the degree of significance and acceptability of factors in the relationship between consumerism and housing delivery in Jos metropolis. The average rating of the respondent is converted into percentage of actual scores. This is done by calculating the possible scores.

This is simply illustrated mathematically as follows:-

Maximum Possible score = $N * R_{max}$ where

N is the total number of respondent in each group and where R_{max} is the highest rating scale for example if 5 is on a five point scale, the actual score = $5n_1 + 4n_2 + 3n_3 + 2n_4 + 1n_5$ where;

n_1 = the number of respondents who answered strongly significant

n_2 = the number of respondents who answered significant

n_3 = the number of respondents who answered strongly insignificant

n_4 = the number of respondents who answered insignificant

n_5 = the number of respondents who answered invariably

4.3 CORRELATION ANALYSIS

Correlation (Bivariate) was employed to determine the level of significance in the relationship between consumerism and housing delivery to meet consumers demand in Jos metropolis. Below is the mathematical determination of pierson rank coefficient "r".

$$r = \frac{n\sum xy - \sum x \sum y}{\sqrt{[n\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2] [n\sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2]}}$$

Where; y = Consumerism

x = Housing delivery

n = Number of Questionnaires

r = person rank coefficient.

"r" above ranges between -1 and 1 i.e. $-1 < r < 1$. The nearer and positive the value of r , the stronger the influence the independent variable (frequency index) have on the dependent variable (important index) positively. On the other hand, the opposite of the above explanation occurs when r is negative. A scatter diagram with a line of the best fit was used to illustrate this relation appropriately.

4.4 HYPOTHETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to provide direction to the research, hypothesis was formulated in consonance with the research problem. This hypothesis assisted in guiding the research towards key aspects of the research problem, enabling and influencing the procedures and methods used in solving the problem, and aided in the interpretation of data collected. In addition, it is a link between the world of reality and the world of theory and explanations (abstraction).

Since the study concentrated on appraisal of the relationship between consumerism and housing delivery, the null hypothesis was mainly employed. This is because the null hypothesis is central to the research and it is the hypothesis that is tested. It is stated in the negative assertion form by the use of the words “NO” or “NOT”. The null hypothesis is the H_0 , and its alternative is H_1 . The statistical test of the null hypothesis, H_0 may suggest the rejection of H_0 at a particular level of significance and degree of freedom as the case may be. However, the rejection of the null hypothesis signals an automatic acceptance or non rejection of the alternative hypothesis H_1 .

The following hypothesis was tested using the correlation analysis;

- Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant relationship between consumerism and housing delivery.
- Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is a significant relationship between consumerism and housing delivery.

Table 1: Item 1 (Housing Delivery) against Items 11 -18 (Consumerism)

Variables	N	χ^2	df	P-value	Decision
Item 11	17	1.87	4	0.758	NS
Item 12	17	2.906	6	0.821	NS
Item 13	17	5.405	6	0.493	NS
Item 14	17	0.697	2	0.706	NS
Item 15	17	8.137	4	0.087	NS
Item 16	17	0.697	2	0.706	NS
Item 17	17	4.904	4	0.297	NS
Item 18	17	1.744	4	0.783	NS

From Table 1, items 11 – 18 indicated no significance in the opinions of respondents. This implies that there is a significant relationship between consumerism and housing delivery.

Table 2: Item 2 (Housing Delivery) Against Items 11-18 (Consumerism)

Variables	N	χ^2	Df	P-value	Decision
Item 11	17	0.069	2	0.968	NS
Item 12	17	0.593	3	0.204	NS
Item 13	17	2.988	3	0.393	NS
Item 14	17	1.236	1	0.266	NS
Item 15	17	1.309	2	0.520	NS
Item 16	17	1.236	1	0.266	NS
Item 17	17	2.222	2	0.392	NS
Item 18	17	1.674	2	0.433	NS

From Table 2, items 11 – 18 also indicated no significance in the opinions of respondents. This equally implies significance in the relationship between consumerism and housing delivery

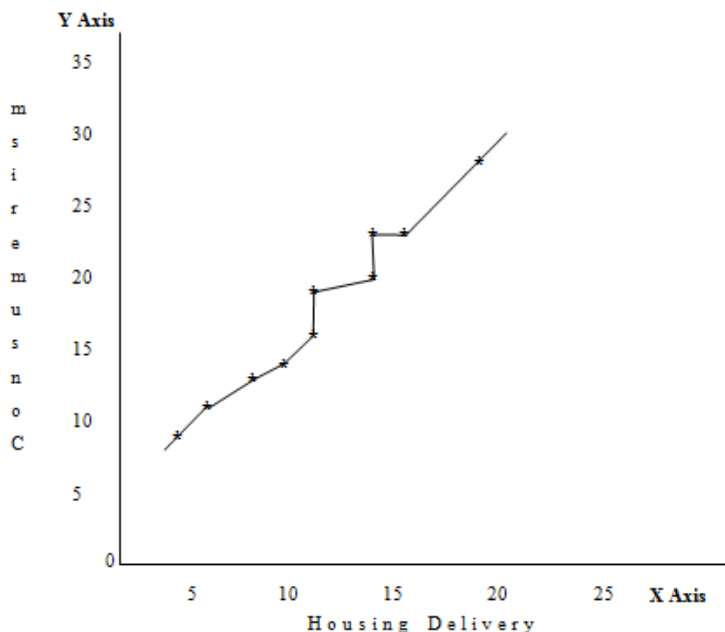
Table 3: Result of Correlation Test on Relationship between Consumerism and Housing Delivery

		Consumerism	Housing delivery
Consumerism	Pearson Correlation	1	.868(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	n =	17	17
Housing delivery	Pearson Correlation	.868(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	n =	17	17

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4: Correlation

S/N	Y(CONS)	X(HOU.DL)	XY	X^2	Y^2
1	15	3	45	225	9
2	20	4	80	400	16
3	20	5	100	400	25
4	19	5	95	361	25
5	18	6	108	324	36
6	19	7	133	361	49
7	20	7	140	400	49
8	18	7	126	324	49
9	20	7	140	400	49
10	21	8	168	441	64
11	22	8	176	484	64
12	22	8	176	484	64
13	22	9	198	484	81
14	22	9	198	484	81
15	22	9	198	484	81
16	24	11	264	576	121
17	25	11	275	625	121
S.TOTAL	349	124	2620	7257	984



4.5 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The summary of findings for the research is presented below as follows;

- Housing delivery could be advantageous to consumerism depending on quite a number of factors which includes; personal interest of consumers, location of houses, infrastructural amenities within, quality of product/service, available funds and available security.
- Housing delivery could be disadvantageous to consumerism depending on quite a number of factors which includes; inadequate capital/funding, unskilled labour, poor state of the economy and religious/political instability in Jos metropolis.
- Consumerisms relationship with housing delivery has enhanced; better/timely funding of the construction industry, creation of employment for construction workers, creation of security and incentives for construction workers, aids competition in the construction industry and helps in setting standards for quality of work to be delivered.
- Construction professionals in the Construction industry play a vital role in supplying houses for consumption. Estate Surveyor and Valuers see to the sale of these houses on demand by capable consumers.
- The Consumption rate of houses in Jos metropolis has been slow due to some of the factors mentioned in (2) above and the Construction industry responds better to demand provided all factors of production are adequate.
- Residential houses are most consumed in Jos metropolis.

5. CONCLUSION

This study focussed on appraising the relationship between consumerism and housing delivery in Jos metropolis by looking at the rate of consumption of houses and the resultant response to supply by the Construction industry. The major factors which encourage continuous consumption of houses in Jos metropolis have been analyzed. Also, some factors which deter continuous consumption of houses by the consumers have also been identified.

The study established that there exists a relationship between consumerism and housing delivery in Jos metropolis. It also established the extent of this relationship. Consumption of houses through sale in Jos metropolis has been on a low scale via sales transaction and on a high scale via lease transaction which can be attributed to the civil service nature of the area of case study.

This work also indicated that the relationship between consumerism and housing delivery in Jos metropolis has presented far more positive than negative impacts which is quite favourable. Houses remain in the market for long periods of time before being purchased due to some of the factors as represented.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on observations, findings and analysis of results from the research work, the following recommendations were proffered;

- The Government, Consumers and the Construction industry should make adequate provision for capital, skilled labour and an enhanced economy in their various capacities to ensure a reduction in problems which affect the rate of production and consumption of houses.
- The Construction industry should enhance at inception of construction; the location of houses, infrastructural amenities within, quality of product/service, available funds and available security to ensure consumer satisfaction with housing quality.
- Factors such as ; better/timely funding of construction projects, creation of employment for construction workers, creation of security and incentives for construction workers, better standards for quality of work to be delivered should be maximized by the Construction industry to improve on the relationship between consumerism and housing delivery.
- The Government should go into full implementation of residential housing schemes in Jos metropolis to encourage consumers to purchase their own houses either by long or short term plans. This further encourages the relationship between consumerism and housing delivery.

7. REFERENCES

- Ashworth, O.R. (1999) "Ethical Consumption in the Construction Industry", the Moral Universe London, p.p. 117-124.
- Betsy, O.N. (2000) "Articulating the Subjects and Spaces of ethnical consumption in Construction", Antipode, p.p. 24-32.
- Collins, K.L. (2003). "European Survey of Consumers Attitude towards Corporate Social Responsibility and Country Profiles", Cambridge London, p.p. 131-138.
- Haskell, W. L. (2004) "Economics of the Construction Industry", McGraw-Hill, p.p. 169-173.
- Kotler, B.N. (2009) "Re-thinking the "Good Life: The Citizenship Dimension of Consumer Disaffection with Consumerism" , in *African Journal of Consumer Culture*, vol 17 no 2, p.p. 205-213.
- Kuroshi, P.A and Bala K. (2005) "Development of Housing Finance in Nigeria", *Nigerian Journal of Construction Technology and Management*. Vol 6, no1, p.p. 7 – 14.
- Litman, M.O. (2004) "Consumer satisfaction with the construction industry, a case study of Wales Building and Environment", KLMO, p.p. 131-141.
- Llewellyn, B.S. (1992)"Consuming Global Justice in Fair Trade Shopping and Alternative Development", Pluto Press, Sydney, Australia, p.p. 38-42.
- Odusanmi, et al. (2003) "The relationship between leadership, team composition and construction project performance in Nigeria", *Nigerian Journal of Construction Technology and Management*, vol 4, no1, p.p. 2 – 5.
- Roberta, W.A and Sassatelli, S.D. (2006) "Virtue, Responsibility and Consumer Choice in Consuming Cultures", *Journal of Historical Trajectories and Transnational Exchanges*, vol 6, p.p. 219-228.
- Shiftman, N.J. (2003). Mobilizing Consumers to Take Responsibility for Global Social Justice in Construction: *ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 47(2):157-165.
- Simon, J.N. (2001). "Who Are the Ethical Consumers of Construction products?" BOR Books Ltd, Manchester, p.p. 131-141.
- Tilford, O.L. (2000) "Investigating Consumption Anxiety, Aesthetic Choice, Narrativisation, Social Performance and Sociological Review". Melbourne press, p.p. 263-282.
- Weisen, M.R.A. (2003) "Factors Affecting Construction Labour Consumption in Malaysian Residential Projects", LIUN Press, Kuala Lumpur: p.p. 39, 42, 54-57.
- Zick, J.N. (2009) "Structures for Sale in Consumer Displays and Advertising", *African Journal of Consumer Culture*, vol 25, no2, p.p. 151-158.