

## Investigating the Awareness Level of Homemakers on Basic Consumer Rights and Utilization of Information Sources in Jos Metropolis of Plateau State

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**Abstract.** The study investigated the awareness level of home makers on basic consumer rights and utilization of information sources in Jos metropolis of plateau State. A descriptive survey was carried out on home makers in Jos north LGA of plateau State. The population is made up of male and female home makers in Jos metropolis. 500 home makers were selected using simple random sampling technique. A structured questionnaire was constructed and used for data collection. The data was statistically analyzed using t-test and mean statistics. The hypothesis was statistically tested at significant level of 0.05. The results revealed that, 43% of homemakers were moderately aware of their rights for basic needs and safety while, 48% were not aware of their right to choose and access goods. The study further showed that 147 (49%) of the homemakers, were aware of the sources of information by sales representatives while a few numbers of 90 (30%) got their information of household goods from billboards and posters. It was concluded that there is a moderate awareness level of consumer rights but low-level awareness of products information and utilization of goods and services in Jos metropolis. It was recommended that civil society on public and family matters should enlighten home makers on the need to utilize information on particular goods and services, also, consumer protection council (CPC) should sensitize consumers about the knowledge and skills needed to purchase and use goods and services.

**Keywords:** Investigating, Awareness, level of home makers, Basic consumer Rights and In information sources .

### 1. Introduction

Consumer education involves asking questions about goods and services and subsequently taking decisions based on information available and the consciousness of the consumer. Madugu (2016), referred to consumer education as the process of enlightening buyers about their rights on goods and services. Consequently, consumer education involves the preparation of an individual or a group through skills, concepts and understanding that are required for everyday living to achieve maximum satisfaction in purchasing and utilization of household goods. The aim of consumer education is to help buyers make knowledgeable rational choices in the market place concerning goods and services obtainable to them (Charbonneau, Ponte and Kochanowshi 2000; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2004). In order to achieve this, the consumer needs knowledge, material and skills to evaluate marketing and advertising messages as well as manage their resources. Thus, a consumer could be a male or female, educated or uneducated as long as they buy or use goods and services directly or indirectly (Ezeonyejaku, 2015). According to the Consumer Protection Council (CPC), uninformed consumer population in Nigeria cannot be efficiently protected if they are not aware of their rights and how the rights can be protected. Businesses in the same vain are

expected to be well familiar with their obligations to consumers (CPC, 2015).

The Services that a consumer may buy are numerous, some of which include: food, clothing, water, electricity, telephone and transport services. The goods available to consumers are in diverse forms. Some of them are edible while some are not. The edible consumer goods may include cereals and grains, roots and tubers, fruits and vegetables. The non-edible could include clothing or durable Consumer goods like electronics, furniture and furnishings (Pinjaker,2014, Paul,2006 and Morris 2011; Wilkie, 2011). Hence, it is necessary for consumers to understand that they do have some basic rights and privileges which include: the right to satisfaction of basic needs, choice of information, consumer representation and the right to a healthy environment (Hawkins, 2010).

According to Ndibisi, (2016), the consumer's rights were conceptualized in the developed countries as opportunities for the wealthy and completely dependent buyers to fulfill their needs. In many developing countries, however, many consumers are either ignorant or unaware of their consumer rights, information sources or legal redress system. Consumer awareness is part of the formal school curriculum in many countries of the world and incorporates knowledge from many disciplines, such as Home economics, psychology, economics, law and mathematics (Anyakoha and Eluwa, 2008; Consumer Education Foundation, 2014),

The Consumer Protection Council (PCP) is an organization of the Federal Government of Nigeria that is supervised by the Federal Ministry of Trade and Investment. Its purpose is to sensitize people about the knowledge and skills needed to purchase and use goods and services sensibly. These consumer rights were enacted in order to safe guard consumer interest. These rights are supposed to be an integral part of a consumer. Also the public are expected to be aware of what is available to them. These rights could be disseminated through various means such as: radio, television, newspapers and public enlightenment campaigns. These materials when available are supposed to aid the homemaker in planning, purchasing and handling of consumer goods and services.

(Dahiru, 2015). The home maker is a member of the household who is responsible for the handling of all or most of the household chores (Keswet&Anyakoha, 2013; Keswet and Anyakoha, 2014). They purchase the household goods and services, as well as use them. They are therefore the main targets of this study. This knowledge will be useful in further planning strategies that will enhance consumer education information of households in Nigeria and specifically Plateau State.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

The present stringent economic situation of Nigeria and particularly Plateau State poses a lot of challenges to homemakers especially in the area of genuine information about household consumer goods and services. The promotion of indigenous goods and services has paved way for some people to produce, promote and market many adulterated consumer goods and services. The ability to meet the demand of the household under the present economic crisis situation requires the homemaker to have adequate and relevant consumer information and dissemination sources. For homemakers to make wise and intelligent choices, they must be conscious about the availability, terms and conditions under which goods and services are available and promoted. As well as know the strategies that can make them better homemakers. This is the main purpose of this study.

## 3. Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- What is the awareness level of homemakers about consumer rights regarding basic household goods in Jos North L.G.A. of Plateau State?
- To what extent are Homemakers aware of the sources of information regarding basic household goods in Jos North L.G.A.?
- To what extent do Homemakers in Jos North L.G.A. utilize available consumer information in the purchase of household goods?

- What are some of the strategies that could help homemakers to enhance the purchase and use of household goods in Jos North L.G.A.?

**4. Hypotheses**

Two research hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance as follows:

HO<sub>1</sub> There is no significant difference between the mean rating of male homemakers and those of the female, regarding awareness level of homemakers about consumer rights in Jos North L. G.A.

HO<sub>2</sub> There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of married women and those of Single women regarding the extent of utilization of information available on household good.

**5. Methodology**

The design of the study was a descriptive survey. It was designed to Investigating the awareness level of homemakers on basic consumer rights, sources and utilization of information sources in Jos North L.G.A. of plateau state. The population for the study comprises of 437,217 in Jos North L.G.A of Plateau State. The population table further showed that there were 220,856 males and 216,361 females in the L.G.A. (National Population Commission, 2008).The sample for the study was made up of five hundred homemakers selected from the population of study. A simple random sampling technique was

adopted in the selection of the sample. Structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The instrument was made up of five sections. Section one consist of personal data of the Homemakers, section two contained 10 items on the awareness level of homemakers about consumer rights regarding basic household goods, Section three contained 14 items on the extent of awareness of homemakers on the sources of information regarding household goods, section four contained 13 items on the utilization of available consumer information sources regarding household goods and section five contained 11 items on the strategies that could help homemakers to enhance the purchase and use of household goods. Five hundred copies of the questionnaires were distributed to the homemakers in Jos North L.G.A. with the aid of two trained research assistants. The research assistants were taught how to interpret the items of the instrument to the respondents in Hausa or English language, as the case may be.

**6. Data Analysis Technique**

Five point Likert scale was used to generate responses from research questions two, three and four while a three point scale was used for research question one. Mean and Standard deviation was used to answer all the research questions while t-test was used for hypotheses 1 and 2 at 0.05 level of significance. Any item which had a mean score of 3.0 and above was accepted while below 3.0 were rejected..Find below the result of the findings

**Research Question 1:** What is the Awareness level of Homemakers about their consumer rights in Jos North L.G.A?

**Table 1:** Awareness level of Homemakers about consumer rights

STATEMENT	Not Aware	Aware	Very Aware	Much	No response	Total
Right to satisfaction of basic needs	98 (32.7)	158 (52.7)	37 (12.3)		7 (2.3)	300 (100)
Right to safety of protection against hazardous goods	94 (31.3)	149 (49.7)	39 (13.0)		18 (6.0)	300 (100)
Right to be informed about quality and quantity	82 (27.3)	131 (43.7)	80 (26.7)		7 (2.3)	300 (100)
Right to choose	145 (48.3)	113 (37.7)	35(11.7)		7(2.3)	300 (100)
Right to access a variety of goods at competitive prices	117 (39.0)	111 (37.0)	72 (24.0)		0	300 (100)
Right of protection against unfair practices	113 (37.7)	103 (34.3)	84 (28.0)		0	300 (100)
Right to seek redress	99 (33.0)	91 (30.3)	110 (36.7)		0	300 (100)
Right to be heard	118 (39.3)	135 (45.0)	40 (13.3)		7 (2.3)	300 (100)
Right to consumer education knowledge about goods	134 (44.7)	116 (38.7)	43 (14.3)		7 (2.3)	300 (100)
Right to consumer representation	113 (37.7)	113 (37.7)	61 (20.3)		13 (4.3)	300 (100)

Source: Field data 2017

N.B: percentage in parenthesis (%)

Table one shows the awareness level of homemakers about their consumer rights. 52.7%, 49.7% and 43.7% of the consumers are moderately aware of the right of basic needs, right to safety of protection against hazardous goods, right to be informed about quality and quantity respectively. Majority of the consumers 48.3%, 39.0%, 37.7%, 44.7% and 37.7% were not aware of Right to choose, Right to access a variety of goods at competitive prices, Right of protection against unfair practices, Right to consumer education knowledge about goods and Right to consumer representation respectively. The overall responses of 40.7% consumers had moderate Awareness level of Homemakers consumer rights, 20% of the consumers to a low extent had low awareness. This implies that, homemakers are not aware about their right to access products, and do not have much knowledge about consumer education, but aware of their right to basic needs and information.

**Table 2:** Awareness level of Homemakers about their consumer rights in Jos North L.G.A

Awareness Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very low	0	0
Low	0	0
Moderate	267	89.0
High	19	6.3
Very High	14	4.7
Total	300	100.0

Table 2 shows the mean scores of respondents regarding the level of awareness about consumer rights in Jos North L.G.A. 267(89%) of the Homemakers had moderate awareness level, 19(6.3%) of the homemakers had high awareness level and 14(4.7%) of the Homemakers had very high awareness level about their consumer rights in Jos North L.G.A .

**Research Question 2:** To what extent are Homemakers aware of the sources of information regarding basic household goods in Jos North L.G.A. of Plateau State?

**Table 3:** Sources of information regarding household goods

COMSUMER INFORMATION SOURCES	NO EXTENT	LITTLE EXTENT (LE)	UNDECIDED	GREAT EXTENT (GA)	VERY GREAT EXTENT (VGE)	Total
School curriculum at all levels	95(31.7)	100(33.3)	49(16.3)	95(15.7)	9(3.0)	300(100)
Cooperative Societies	59(19.7)	134(44.7)	56(18.7)	39(13.0)	12(4.0)	300(100)
Government price control boards	73(24.3)	130(43.3)	41(13.7)	45(15.0)	11(3.7)	300(100)
Seminars and workshops	67(22.3)	129(43.0)	46(15.3)	34(15.3)	24(8.0)	300(100)
Newspapers and magazine advertisements	58(19.3)	136(45.3)	40(13.3)	52(17.3)	14(4.7)	300(100)
Use of public address system	44(14.7)	117(39.0)	58(19.3)	67(22.3)	14(4.7)	300(100)
Television advertisement	95(31.7)	119(39.7)	37(12.3)	40(13.3)	9(3.0)	300(100)
Radio advertisement	105(35.0)	103(34.3)	49(16.3)	34(11.3)	9(3.0)	300(100)
Text messages	63(21.0)	110(36.7)	36(12.0)	60(20.6)	31(10.3)	300(100)
Internet/web information	83(27.7)	115(38.3)	18(6.0)	52(17.3)	32(10.7)	300(100)
Bill board/Posters	92(30.7)	90(30.0)	46(15.3)	32(10.7)	40(13.3)	300(100)
Sales representative	50(16.7)	147(49.0)	39(13.0)	42(14.0)	42(14.0)	300(100)
Enlightenment campaign	59(19.7)	106(35.3)	49(16.3)	64(21.3)	22(7.3)	300(100)
Display of products on stands	86(28.7)	104(34.7)	27(9.0)	61(20.3)	22(7.3)	300(100)

Source: Field data 2017

N.B: percentage in parenthesis (%)

Table 3 shows the Homemakers awareness of the sources of information regarding basic household goods in Jos North L.G.A. of Plateau State. Majority of the Homemakers awareness of sources of information

regarding basic household goods to a low little extent (LLE) were as follows: 90(30.0%) from Bill board/Posters,100(33.3%) from School curriculum at all levels are sources of information regarding basic household good, 103(34.3%) from Radio advertisement,104(34.7%) from display of products on stands, 106 (35.3%) from enlightenment campaigns, 110(36.7%) from Text messages, 115(38.3%) from Internet/web information,117(39.0%) from use of public address system,119(39.7%) from Television advertisement,129(43.0%) from seminars and workshops, 130(43.3%) from government price control boards, 134(44.7%) from cooperative Societies, 136(45.3%) from newspapers and magazine advertisements, 147(49.0%) from sales representative. This indicates that large number of home makers are aware of the sources of information by sales representatives, while a very few numbers of home makers get their information of household goods from billboards and posters.

**Table 4:** Consumers Awareness of Product Information Sources

Awareness of Product Information sources Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very low (0-4.34)	0	0
Low (4.35-14.13)	7	2.3
Moderate (14.14 – 43.5)	249	83.0
High (43.6-53.29)	38	12.7
Very High (53.30-65.00)	6	2.0
Total	300	100.0

Table 4 shows the mean scores of respondents regarding the level of awareness about consumer rights in Jos North L.G.A. the result shows that 7(2.3%) of the Homemakers had low awareness level, 249(83%) of the Homemakers had moderate awareness level, 38(12.7%) of the homemakers had high awareness level and 6(2.0%) of the Homemakers had very high awareness level about their consumer rights in Jos North L.G.A. This indicates that, moderate number of homemakers are aware of product information.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference between female and male homemakers mean rating on consumer rights awareness level.

**Table 5:** t-test Analysis on female and male homemakers mean rating on consumer rights awareness level

GENDER	N	Mean	SD	Df	t <sub>cal</sub>	P-value
MALE	108	19.18	5.26	298	1.212	0.226
FEMALE	192	18.48	4.43			

Table 5 shows the t-test Analysis on female and male homemakers mean rating on consumer rights awareness level, the married female had a mean and standard deviation rating of 18.48±4.43 while the male homemakers had a mean and a standard deviation of 19.18±5.26. In addition the calculated t-value of 1.212 with a p-value of 0.226 which is greater than 0.05 (P>0.05). Therefore, the researcher accepts the null hypothesis and rejects the alternative hypothesis, which implies that there is no significant difference between female and male homemakers mean rating on consumer rights awareness level.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference between married women and Single homemakers mean ratings on the extent of Products information utilization.

**Table 6:** t-test Analysis of married women and Single homemakers mean ratings on the extent of Products information utilization

MARITAL STATUS	N	Mean	SD	df	t <sub>cal</sub>	P-value
MARRIED	140	18.81	5.35	298	.276	.783
SINGLE	160	18.66	4.16			

Table 6 shows the t-test Analysis of significant difference between married women and Single homemakers mean ratings on the extent of Products information utilization, the married women had a mean rating of  $18.81 \pm 5.35$  while the single had a mean and a standard deviation of  $18.66 \pm 4.16$ . In addition the calculated t-value of 0.276 with a p-value of 0.783 which is greater than 0.05 ( $P > 0.05$ ). Therefore, the researcher accepts the null hypothesis and rejects the alternative hypothesis. This implies that there is no significant difference between married women and Single homemakers mean ratings on the extent of Products information utilization.

Table one shows the awareness level of homemakers about their consumer rights. 52.7%, 49.7% and 43.7% of the consumers are moderately aware of the right of basic needs, right to safety of protection against hazardous goods, right to be informed about quality and quantity respectively. Majority of the consumers 48.3%, 39.0%, 37.7%, 44.7% and 37.7% were not aware of Right to choose, Right to access a variety of goods at competitive prices, Right of protection against unfair practices, Right to consumer education knowledge about goods and Right to consumer representation respectively. The overall responses of 40.7% consumers had moderate Awareness level of Homemakers consumer rights, 20% of the consumers to a low extent had low awareness

## 7. Discussions

It is important for consumers, especially homemakers to know their rights in order to survive in the present economy in any country of the world, especially in Nigeria and particularly in Plateau State. This is necessary because most sellers are desperate to make money and consumers are also careful to make the most of the little family resources available to them. Majority of the respondents in table one (less than 50%), indicated lack of awareness to choose, right to access a variety of goods at competitive prices, right to protection against unfair practices and right to consumer education knowledge about goods and services. Since the basic aim of consumer education is to help clients make knowledgeable sensible choices in

the market place concerning goods and services available to them (Rana, 1997; 2000), consumers need knowledge, material and skills to evaluate marketing and advertising messages as well as manage their family resources.

A study carried out by Atoki, 2015 and Rani, 2003, showed that participants were unanimous on lack of awareness as the major challenge for the electricity consumers' protection. Uninformed consumer population cannot be efficiently protected if they do not know that they have rights, what the rights are, and how the rights could be protected. Businesses also need to be well acquainted with their obligations to consumers. 43 to 52% of the respondents however agreed on knowing their rights to basic needs, rights to safety against hazards and right to be informed about quality and quantity, although, they usually do nothing about. This is in contrast to the studies of some researchers (CIA, 2014; Ezeonyejiaku, 2015;), who found out that consumers are hardly aware of the existence of their legal rights. This lack of awareness according to the researchers is a big challenge for the consumer protection systems. This study showed that majority of the consumers were not aware of their rights to choose, access a variety of goods at competitive prices and protection against unfair practices, which is the main objective and essence of the Consumer Protection Agency in Nigeria and other countries of the world (World Bank, 2013, CIA, 2014). The responses of the participants in this present study therefore were not so different in this aspect mentioned. Also, responses of males and female respondents did not differ much. In other words, there is no significant difference between female and male homemakers mean rating on consumer rights awareness level and no significant difference between married women and Single homemakers mean ratings on the extent of Products information utilization.

In addition, complexities of consumer goods and services and the way they are marketed in recent times seem to pose more challenges to the consumer (Madugu, 2015). Although the results of this present work showed that consumer awareness of products information sources was

83%, meaning that they may be well informed, sometimes it is not quit true. For example; there are circumstances where sales representatives are hired to market the products that they know nothing about or are not familiar with. These sales representatives are young boys, girls, primary secondary or even university graduates who just hawk about with products, sometimes some of them just dance to entertain their audiences but may not know anything about what they are selling or advertising. Ignorant consumers not being specialists find it difficult to establish the quality, standard, as well as the performance of these products. Hence, consumer education becomes convenient. Radio advertisement was rated very low as a source of information perhaps, because most consumers now are on the go from morning to night while radios are left at home.

## 8. Conclusion

The study concluded that there is a moderate awareness level of consumer rights but low level of awareness of products information and utilization of goods and services. These rights could be disseminated through various means such as: radio, television, newspapers and public enlightenment campaigns. These materials when available are supposed to aid the homemaker in planning, purchasing and handling of consumer goods and services. Therefore, homemakers either male or female needs to be well informed about different goods and services in the market, the cost and availability of the products which will help them manage their family's needs effectively. The researcher by this has device means of getting consumer especially women to be more informed.

## 9. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendation was made;

- Home makers that are aware of their rights as far as goods and services is concern should do a door to door campaign on the need to focus on consumer rights.

- Consumer agencies, companies, such as consumer protection council (CPC) under the federal government supervised by the federal ministry of trade and investment should sensitized consumers about the knowledge and skills needed to purchase and use goods and services.
- Government should include consumer education in the curriculum of colleges. This will help in creating awareness about consumer protection laws amongst the public.
- Government should also provide necessary encouragement for establishment and functioning of voluntary organizations. Thus, through use of mass media, training camps & awareness camps can improve awareness level of consumers and thereby increase the utilization of consumer rights by the consumers.

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