

Product Design Qualities and the Economic Trade Patterns of Investors in Nigerian Consumer Market

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Abstract: Design has become an extensive catchword that embraces all terms and business practices. It is pivotal in the growth or otherwise of global business practices. Elegance and meretricious finery are highlighted in both aesthetic and functional realms as utilitarian necessity. Besides, there is visible and incontestable eruption of affinity and propensity in Nigerians to buy durable designs but the economy of the nation and by extension, the individuals leaves much to be desired. Huge investments on varieties of product designs for local consumption in Nigeria dwindled on daily basis because of low living incomes and domestic earnings. The proliferation and infiltration of fake products for Nigerian consumer market was necessitated by a great deal of enthusiasm in the purchase of cheap but attractive designs of low quality. Product design is generally judged by their characteristic contents and the sensation of packaging. There is the exigent need to cut corners with poverty in the acquisition of life-supporting products such as building materials, automobile spare parts, electrical-electronics, textiles and clothing products, foot wears, etc. This study argues that every mention of design emerges with new proficiencies and specialties essential for production, consumption as well as the ordering of principles that constantly propel interests in acquisition. The study also looks into the Nigerian economic capacity to acquire quality products with a view to reviewing the investors' practices. The reasons enumerated above provide answers to why Nigeria is readily a dumping ground for sub-standard designs in recent time. Survey method was used to carry out the study. The instrument used was questionnaire in which responses were elicited from local investors who purposively formed the sample size. Findings arising from this study showed that design products from some Asian countries top the list of consumer favourites. Although, consumer and professional product designers are collaborating in their fields to give integrity and essential marketability to make designs usable, findings revealed that only very little of original goods exist side by side with sub-standard products that flood everywhere in the country. There are pockets of sharp practices and there exists greater suspicion for a Memorandum of Understanding between the Nigerian investors and their foreign business partners on relaxation of qualitative materials for the production of sub-standard designs which the impoverished majority could afford in the Nigerian market. The paper concludes that the wide-ranging influx of sub-standard designs into Nigeria often reveal hidden attitudes of the investors, their foreign partners and the end-users.

Key words: *Economy, Sub-standard, Investors, Poverty, Integrity, Dumping ground*

1. The Prelude- Influence of Product Design Market and Trade-Pattern of Investors in Nigeria

The history of production and ergonomics of trade-patterns of design products were developed in phases of articulation overtime not only because people invented things they used in direct response to their needs, but that the revolution was based on prevailing technology. The course of product design had been endured and directed by periods of evolution through the primitive times when humans fashioned functional tools from stone, bone and wood; albeit with little decorations and embellishments. The growing demand for all brands of product designs for utilitarian uses in Nigeria skyrocketed at the beginning of the 21st due to the application of new technologies for the renewal of production and branding processes. With the Nigerian population rising from 88.5 million in 1991 to about 140 million in 2006 (National Population Commission, 2006), material needs of all types were demanded for sales in the open market. About 90% of product designs used in Nigeria are imported from other countries of the world.

The continual depreciating value of the Nigeria Naira and heavy reliance on imported product designs such as electronics, textiles, beverages, building materials; drugs, household utensils, generators etc. were corroborated by failure of the economy to address production issues. For example, the cost of building materials and electronics and electrical components rise by average of 10% - 15% yearly in Nigeria (Alkhiea, 2010). End-users are daily shortchanged for hard-earned money by paying significantly for imported premium, three to four times of the shelf price in other economy. Shady products are patronized because poverty is widespread, despite the oil wealth. The need for a Nigerian to use the scarce allowance to cater for many extended family issues brought about the patronage of cheaper goods. Barbara (2010) noted that the price of tiles, (a component of building material) costs between \$1.09 to \$5 per square metre in other countries. This translates to between N145.00 to N750.00 in Nigeria Naira. The additional issues of unguided foreign exchange and port-clearing procedure with profiteering subsequently project floor tiles of one square metre to between N2, 500.00 – N3, 600.00. The example of cost-estimated here deprived ordinary buyer to own genuine types of product. The scout for alternative lower price would therefore compel buyers with low income to opt for products of lesser quality. The investors in Nigerian business economy capture the dilemma of the buyer in search of lower pricing with lesser quality, and demand for the manufacture and importation of inferior commodities into the Nigerian market. While billion of dollars worth of product materials are imported into Nigeria year by year with huge foreign exchange involved in the process, the average Nigerian buyer still opts for cheaper but less superior products.

On the part of academia, there exist droughts of researches and investigation into the process and materials to fabricate simple mechanism for product design materials. Those that exist are either based on borrowed technology of which are in bad shapes and sorry states. Product designs are subjected to varied imitations and unauthorized appropriations by manufacturers in collaboration with their counterpart investors. The resultant effect is that patenting rights are infringed without shame. There is sufficient lesson to learn from the developed countries where human creative potentials are given recognition and protection by laws and constitutional powers. However, developing nations are yet to catch with the tide of legal issues surrounding product design rights and merchandise. For the sake of emphasis, electronic products, utensils, generators of no implied warranty, building materials of lesser quality, unauthorized appropriation and duplication of automobile spare parts, smuggled textile and apparel materials of controversial qualities are imported into Nigeria by investors who have little regards for human comfort.

Another salient issue is whether a product design is original or appropriated, warranties on design products such as electronics cannot be guaranteed by manufacturer to Nigeria consumer homes. Where implied warranty exists, the unstable power supply resulting from technical and natural disasters, such as poor maintenance of power generating stations, electric power surge, damage to electric poles during rain storm and thundering are factors that naturally cause damages to electronics in Nigeria. It is therefore unthinkable to institute a legal action against the manufacturer on the breach of warranty on products. The scenario painted above is additional alibi for investors who import products of low quality to Nigerian market space. In order to achieve standardized quality products, the paper envisages a likely globalization of reform efforts using benchmarking, best practices and principles for all product designs. It is also conceived that products should conform to requirements rather than specification since quality is essential for survival and not choice based on economic factors.

1.1 Background of the Study

To speak about design and economy in Nigeria, it is important not to forget the past. Rich country: poor people. In spite of Nigeria's population as the sixth largest oil producing country, with current daily production of 2million barrels, the nation still ranks among one of the poorest countries in the world. It is lagging behind in virtually all Millennium Development Goal (MDG) indices (Ogunleye, 2012). Nigeria's leadership challenges and pitiable economic retrogression has reduced the status of industrial production and consequently became an import dependent country. Mwanaongoro and Munyendo (2013) notes that since political independence about 50 years ago, many African countries are faced with multiple socio-economic problems occasioned by self-serving leadership, widespread corruption, non-growing economies, and nonintegrated communities who lack a common purpose towards rapid industrialization for the benefit of the present and future generations. Ogunleye (2012) however poignantly mentioned that Nigeria which used to be the giant of Africa is now regarded as a consumer nation with gross under-capacity for the manufactured goods, a situation that has been made worse by the unending power supply crisis. The abysmal leadership performance resulting in monumental economic failure are major reasons why companies like Dunlop Nigeria Limited, Philips Nigeria Limited, Cadbury Nigeria Plc., etc have folded up in Nigeria and shifted the operational base of their factories to other African countries whose national economic, political and energy situations are favourable to business climates. Since independence in 1960, Momoh (1988) notes that Nigeria has behaved as if the world owes her a living. First there was preference for British defence rather than native forces. In the second place, the unfortunate civil war, which was hitherto avoidable, caused set back to lives and properties and by extension the economy.

In the past, according to Ihendinihu and Onwuchekwa (2012) Nigeria has initiated and pursued many development-driven policies, notable among which were the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), Vision 2020, Millennium Development Goal (MDGs), National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS) under the auspices of the Federal Government, State Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (SEEDS) for the State Government, and Local Empowerment Development Strategy (LEEDS) for the Local Governments. All of these are now moribund. The ineffective implementation and unsuccessful outcomes of these programmes depended largely on the problem which had more to do with leadership and corruption than *economic epidemic*. In fact, the economic instability itself is caused by bad leadership. All these programmes which were attempts at economic recovery have been eventually thwarted by internal saboteurs through all forms of anti-patriotic practices which include but not limited to embezzlement of public funds, oil pipe vandalism, smuggling

and abuse of political offices. As if these were not enough, the developed countries have ensured that Nigeria remains indebted to them either in sale of crops or in the use of their finished products. There is hardly anything produced in Nigeria today that does not need an input which will be so costly that it must make the end-product uncompetitive in pricing with goods in the supplier country (Momoh, 1988).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Advocacy programmes on economic self-reliance is intense whereas, the continuous depreciation of the Naira and heavy reliance on imported goods like textiles, building materials, household utensils, food items among many others remain unabated. These, presently do not augur well for the Nigerian economy. Alkhiea (2010) agrees with Momoh (1985) to posit that there is poverty in the land as a result of mis-managed oil wealth and other potential economic resources that are suffering neglect. The Nigerian masses now crave for cheap product designs which ultimately are not durable because of low living incomes that can not afford the purchase of quality products. The abundance of sub-standard designs in the Nigerian market implies incontestable evidence that investors have to cut corners in order to meet whatever is the dictate of the market trends.

The aim of the study is to look at the economic trade patterns of the Nigerian investors who bring product designs into the country with a view to determining the effects of their trade patterns on the quality of such products.

The following are set to guide the study.

1. Is economic mismanagement and bad leadership the bane of production of quality product design in the Nigerian industries?
2. Are the product design quality regulatory bodies efficient in their duties?
3. Can porous borders and corrupt sea port officials cause of the influx of fake products into the country?
4. Do attractive packaging and deceptive advertisements contribute to the regular patronage of substandard designs?
5. Do the Nigerian consumers deliberately ask for sub-standard product designs?
6. Do Nigerian investors travel abroad to negotiate for alternative production templates?
7. Can staple commodities like drugs, dairies, beverages etc... that come into the country be faked?

2. Packaging and Advertising of Product Designs in Nigeria

Made-in-Nigeria design products have generally been accepted as inferior to imported products. Drugs, beverages and dairies automobile spare parts and household commodities are all packaged as product design for presentation to the consumer. Packaging in this sense, is a corporate word intended to illustrate the presentation of goods through cartons and other containers with information displayed on them. There is a connection between the information and product advertisement where posters, banners and billboards are expressive promotional structure. An articulate creative packaging and advertisement is expected to create less economic constraints to consumers.

It is noteworthy however to reveal that many advertisement of packaged products bear misleading information in Nigerian market. The difficulties experienced by consumers in identifying imitation products stemmed from wrong advertisements. The truth is that the Nigerian society has no sufficient education on merchandizing rights

and wrongs. Products that are made in Nigeria are thus left to face open market competition. This misleading advertorials on home-made goods and issues of integrity notwithstanding, consumers' loyalty and satisfaction on certain goods depend solely on their usability. Regulatory bodies such as the Consumer Protection Council of Nigeria (CPC) and the Standard Organization of Nigeria (SON) remain toothless bulldogs when there are breaches of consumers' rights. How then can the issue of warranty on goods be integrated as customers' basic acceptance of words of integrity? The commercial system in Nigeria had made difficult for disputes between buyers and sellers to be settled legally. Creative efforts, which form the bases of intellectual property, can not be seen to be protected by any legitimate law.

2.1 The Tangibility of Business Integrity and Trade Patterns

Balancing business integrity and private conscience embodies certain possessive qualities: virtues and values. Integrity can be seen as a virtue when related to human behaviour in its high affective relationship while it is related to products when it is seen as a value-aided phenomenon serving a means to selling an advertised product. Integrity is one of those words which every one uses but is hardly observed in the Nigerian investors' context. Really practised, most trade patterns came up variant and more are still coming as the present dwindling economy seems unable to guarantee free flow of quality designs that will not be intercepted by fakery in any way. Kirkpatrick (1994) notes that all social and business relationship with people are value-driven and research clearly shows that people do business with people they like rather than with those who only offer economic or technical effectiveness. Economic benefit is founded in much, much more than money alone (Kirkpatrick, op cit). Product design quality is service quality in itself because it implies the delivery of excellent or superior concept rendition in outward form and function. It involves methods and materials relative to users' expectation. User's expectation for a product is perceptive but prudent and according to Songsosm and Trichun (2012) stems from a comparison of what they feel product firms should offer in line with their perception of the actual performance. Quality in product design enhances consumers' inclination to buy more, to buy other services, to become less price-sensitive and to tell others about their favourable experiences.

3. Methodology

Descriptive statistics was employed for this study and the data gathering instrument used was questionnaire. The populations for the study were the local investors in Nigeria and the end-users of product designs. Five hundred and fifty (550) investors selected by random sampling technique and four hundred (400) end-users determined with the aid of the Recommended Sample Size Statistical Table of Krejcie and Morgan (1970) and The Research Advisors, (2006) form the sample sizes of respondents. A pilot study was conducted with the aim of testing the reliability and validity of the instrument. Method of data analysis was done by subjecting data to cross-tabulation statistics. Seven (7) research questions stated to guide the study were cross-tabulated with the sole aim of looking at the areas where two variables intercept at the same time. Results of the study was presented in a cross tabulated format.

3.1 Results

This study deduces that the debate on the use and acquisition of substandard products continues unabated among user-communities in Nigeria. That the fake product design and misleading labeling and advertising have wrecked havoc in Nigeria as a Nation is not an understatement. This also explains why the study conducts a

random survey with questionnaire instruments to elicit information in respect of the effects of fakeness of design products from respondents who were selected across the country. Below is the data collected and subjected to descriptive statistics with cross tabulation and percentage ranking.

Table 1. Cross-tabulation of Influx of fake products and economic mismanagement and bad leadership variables.

Economic mismanagement and bad leadership is not a bane of product quality	Influx of fake product designs		
	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
Disagree	360 (90.0%)	0 (0%)	0
Agree	40 (10.0%)	0 (0%)	0
Neutral	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0

Source: Authors' field work, 2013

All the 400 respondents agree that there is an influx of fake products in Nigerian market. Out of the 400 respondents 360 (90%) of them agree that there is the influx of fake product designs but they disagree that high level of economic mismanagement and bad leadership styles is not the bane of production of quality product designs in Nigeria. On the other hand, 40 (10%) agree that there is an influx of fake product designs and that economic mismanagement of leaders are not bane of the production of product quality. It could be inferred from the result that there is an influx of fake and adulterated products in Nigeria and these fake products are as a result of the economic mismanagement and bad leadership styles which remain a bane of the production of product design qualities.

Table 2. Cross-tabulation of Influx of fake products and the Inefficiency of the product design regulatory agencies variables.

Influx of fake product designs	Inefficiency of Product Regulatory Agency			
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total
Disagree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
Neutral	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
Agree	40 (10%)	40 (10%)	320 (80%)	400
Total	40	40	320	400

Source: Authors' field work, 2013

The whole 400 respondents agree that fake product designs exist and abound everywhere in Nigeria. Forty (10%) out of the respondents disagree with the fact that the influx of fake products in Nigeria is as a result of the inefficiencies of the products regulatory agencies. Similarly, forty (10%) respondents, though agree that fake products exist are neutral on whether or not the existence is caused by the inefficiency of the regulatory bodies. However, 320 (80%) of the whole respondents agree that the influx of fake products in Nigeria can be traced to the inefficiency of the regulatory agencies. In conclusion, having a large percentage of respondents i.e. 80% agreeing that the regulatory agency is inefficient, there is need for increasing the efficiency of the agencies, in order to curb the influx of fake and adulterated product designs in the country.

Table 3. Cross-tabulation of Influx of fake products and the Porous border routes and corruption at sea ports variables.

Influx of Fake Product designs	Porous bordered and corruption of officials			
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total
Disagree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
Neutral	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
Agree	320 (80%)	0 (0%)	80 (20%)	400
Total	320	0	80	400

Source: Authors' field work, 2013

All the respondents agree to the fact that there is influx of fake product designs. Three hundred and twenty (80%) of them who agree that there is influx of sub-standard products again disagree to the fact that porous border for corruption at seaports and smuggling are responsible for the influx of fake products in Nigeria. It is also deduced from the table that only 20% of the respondents agree that porous border and corruption of sea ports are responsible for the existence of fake product in the country.

Table 4. Cross-tabulation of Influx of fake products and the Attractive packaging and deceptive advertisement of products variables.

Influx of fake product	Attractive packaging and deceptive advertisement			
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total
Disagree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
Neutral	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
Agree	160 (40%)	0 (0%)	240 (60%)	400
Total	160	0	240	400

Source: Authors' field work, 2013

None of the respondents disagrees that fake and adulterated products find its way through many routes into the country. Two hundred and forty (60%) of the respondents agree that fake products still exist in Nigeria because attractive packaging and deceptive advertisements while 40% disagree to the fact that the attractiveness and deceptive advertisements of products are responsible for the existence of fake products.

Table 5. Cross-tabulation of Investors should have a say in conception and production of designs and Consumers demand for sub-standard product designs variables.

Investors should have a say in design concepts	Consumers demand for sub-standard product designs			
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total
Disagree	110 (66.6%)	0 (0%)	55 (33.3%)	165 (100%)
Neutral	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Agree	165 (42.9%)	55 (14.3%)	165 (42.9%)	385 (100%)
Total	275 (50%)	55 (10%)	220 (40%)	550 (100%)

Source: Authors' field work, 2013

Of the 550 respondents, 165 (42.9%) disagree that investors should have a say in design while 385 respondents agree that investor should have a say in design. Of the 165 representing 30% of the entire population size, 110 (66.6%) of them disagree with the fact that investors not having a say in design contributes to consumers demand for substandard parts while 33.3% (55 respondents) agree that investors not having a say ultimately leads to consumers demand for substandard parts. Of the 385 respondents who agree that investors should have a say in design, 165 (42.9%) of them disagree that it is responsible for consumers demand for substandard parts. Similarly, 165 (42.9%) of the respondents also agree that investors having a say in design ultimately leads to bringing into the country substandard parts while 55 (14.3%) of the respondents were neutral.

Table 6: Cross-tabulation of Investors should have a say in conception and production of designs and Investors travel abroad to negotiate alternative production templates variables.

Investors should have a say in design concepts	Investors travel abroad to negotiate alternative production templates			
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total
Disagree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	165 (100%)	165 (100%)
Neutral	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Agree	110 (28.6%)	0 (0%)	275 (71.4%)	385 (100%)
Total	110 (20%)	0 (0%)	440 (80%)	550 (100%)

Source: Authors' field work, 2013

Out of the 550 respondents, 165 disagreed that investors should have a say in design concepts while 385 respondents agree that investors should have a say in design. The 165 respondents representing 30% of the entire population again agree that Nigerian investors travel abroad to negotiate creative templates for production of fake designs. 275 (71.4%) out of the 385 agree that Nigerian investors travel abroad to negotiate creative templates while 28.6% (110 respondents) disagree with the fact that investors travel aboard to negotiate for alternative creative templates of design production.

Table 7: Cross-tabulation of Investors should have a say in conception and production of designs and Staple commodities (dairies, perfumes, cream beverages...) can be produced in low quality variables.

Investors should have a say in design concepts	Staple commodities like dairies, perfumes, creams, beverages etc... can be produced in low quality			
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total
Disagree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Neutral	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Agree	0 (0%)	55 (14.5%)	330 (85.8%)	385 (100%)
Total	0 (0%)	55 (10%)	495 (90%)	550 (100%)

Source: Authors' field work, 2013

Of the 550 respondents, 165 (30%) disagree that investors should have a say in working out design of products while 385 (70%) agree that investors should have a say in design. All the 165 respondents also agree that dairies, beverages, areas, perfumes and drugs can be produced in low quality. Of the 385 respondents, 330 (85.8%) agree that dairies, beverages, creams, perfumes and drugs can be produced in low quality while 55 (14.3%) of the respondents are neutral.

4. Discussion/Statistical inference

There is an influx of sub-standard product designs all over the Nigerian markets. Presently and the manufacturer's antics are such that the innocent masses can not easily recognize the fakery in most of the products whenever they come across them. The product regulatory agencies are grossly inadequate in their functions. Fake products still exist in the country because of deception either by the introduction of fascinating colours of the package design or by the hyperbolic analysis of what the advertisement is saying about the product benefit. Border routes are porous with the port officials being corrupt and betraying the confidence being reposed in them by the government. Much as the entire respondents agree that investors should be carried along in the design processes, the study finds out that the Nigerian investors travel to overseas countries like China, Taiwan, Singapore and other Asian countries to sign Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with which to negotiate for relaxation of product manufacturing templates. A relaxed creative template mass-produces reduced product qualities. However, the investors alone can not be blamed for this; respondents to the research questionnaire did say that the Nigerian masses often times prevail on the investors to bring into the country cheap goods that their little financial means could afford.

4.1 The Imperatives of Product Design Qualities in Nigerian Consumer Market

Designed products have been used since antiquity and have inevitably assumed varied functional and decorative roles. The tripartite metamorphosis of design from imaginary conception of idea, to production line as well as consumption retains a dynamic process that is making life livable. The thriving of designs in all measures demands for not only interconnectedness of material application, production skills but also *fanatical* awareness of the continuity of business. However, the ubiquity of products is undeniable evidence that design is not just a catchword embracing all terms; it goes beyond that in recent time. Design has taken over bilateral interactivity in all fields of human endeavour such that standard and quirk goods from diverse quarters and often times from the same source exist side by side in the country. These are two different trade patterns in the same economy. In the words of Pollard (2004) pursuit of profit and the maximization of shareholders value has become an excuse used by investors to distort the facts, lie to the public, cheat and gouge their customers, screw and extort concessions from their frontline employees, wreck the environment, cripple the holistic economies of the communities and country in which they carry out commercial activities. Manifestation of quality in product designing has economic leverage; technical skills and integrity are needed by product designers to produce products for individual, group and organizational performance. Also, real savings can be made through various forms of concept innovation, renovation and by implication meets or exceed expected standards of excellence. The thriving of a product is directly linked to the economic circumstance of producer and the user but most importantly, the usability and functionality integrity.

Human beings have the greatest contact with artificially produced goods and the culture of consumption is equally high. It is therefore postulated here that there is a growing need for total quality management (TQM). Total Quality Management, according to Moghadam, Sayadi and Moharer (2013) is a process that is aimed at creating standards in order to continuously raise the quality and optimized use of limited facilities. Total Quality Management (TQM) is a comprehensive and structured approach to organizational management that seeks to improve the quality of products and services through ongoing refinements in response to continuous feedback

(Rouse, 2005). This movement was started as the concept of the industrial sector and then involved other parts of society. The most important objective of this process is to gain customers satisfaction, and improve services and products.

Even in ghettos where there is no industry, product design still influence human life. As it is, technological progress which has brought about vast array of standard and sub-standard products will continue to determine the quality of life of people. Design is only an important means to an end in taste-changing process. A technological society currently being experienced takes global perspective to present a staggering array of ideas, images, products and much more design possibilities. Today's design production systems have high contractual obligation towards quality to create unique concepts that are fundamental to satisfying the market demand and experimentation of new methodologies. There is no frisson about combining the words 'product' and 'design' since design itself is an extensive catchword that embraces all terms including the product production imperatives. The combination of art, science and technology results in design process that leads to new product which people can use with pleasurable feelings. Quality has been high-stake phenomenon; one that demands integrity, the right technology application and an unblinking eye on material test parameters. A product design quality is service quality delivery of excellent or superior concept in form and function and as well relative to user's expectation. Drucker (1986) remarks that quality in a product or service is not what the supplier puts in. It is what the customer gets out and is willing to pay for. A product is not quality because it is hard to make and costs a lot of money as the manufacturers typically believe. Drucker (op cit) notes that customers pay only for what is of use to them and gives them value. Users' expectation according to Songsome and Trichun (2012), Bourdeau (2005) stems from comparison of what consumers feel service firms should offer with their perception of the actual performance. Quality of products enhances consumers' inclination to buy more, to buy other services and to become less-price sensitive and to tell others about their favourable experiences of their taste. Taste, in the words of Romans (2005) is an all-embracing term that took in moral imperatives, civic behaviour, good judgment in consumer choices, and the promotion of economic interest.

5. Conclusion

The economic trade pattern of the Nigerian investors is increasingly worrisome. There is a unanimous agreement from the masses that fake design products abound in foreign and locally produced goods, and that the influx of fake design products in Nigerian market is a growing common phenomena. The production of fake design products in Nigeria particularly starts from the absence of creative template for production, and the lack of equipment and materials to adhere strictly to the rules of quality production. Sub-standard product designs are sold everywhere without the required adequate caution from the concerned regulatory agencies. As it is presently, the state of the Nigerian economy and by extension, the masses have an obviously weak base for the patronage of quality products.

Designs of all periods are developed during and for a specific phase in history. Each design effort is controlled by the available technical materials and aesthetic requirements of that day. The connivance of investors in Nigeria with manufacturers abroad to manipulate industrial creative template for the production of shoddy goods is an idle observation that has been much discussed. "Creativity templates are certain regularities in product development, where marketers may hear the voice of the customer by listening to the voice of the product". A creativity template

theory propounded by Goldenberg and Mazucsky (2002) still serves as a reference point to this study. It is postulated that successful new products falling within creativity templates regularize the code of conduct and ethics of product designs. Investors and businessmen who made request for product designs to be imported for sale in Nigerian markets are also aware of the existing production templates. Not that the industries in Japan and China undermined their own templates for “replacement template” of producing cheaper products for the third world investors, the alteration of quality goods as the alternatives was a shoddy merchandize and manipulation of quality assurance that was not supported by any existing production law and ethics. Liston (1999) explained that the Japanese old “Haguchi” method, meaning prototyping, was foremost in emphasizing quality, and up to this day, quality control is everyone’s responsibility in Japan. Quality and reliability had to be built in at the design stage of the product.

A competitive advantage of a successful new product is desirable for the identification and trade marking. Products that tend to imitate the original would by that, disappear when consumers fail to derive satisfaction overtime. Therefore less original products are adjudged as not possessing the characteristics that can stand the test of time. It was on this doubting note that the Nigerian product market becomes porous for investors who take advantage of the unsuspecting consumers to import substandard products to the Nigerian market space. Added to this anomaly is the initial suspicion that the product markets are still being underdeveloped. Lindbeck (1995) noted that there is a prevailing general impression that the quality of U.S.A. products and the efficiency with which they are made has deteriorated in recent years”. The Japanese products are blamed for this as they are suspected of denying open market to U.S. goods and commodities. Lindbeck (1995) therefore submitted that:

Consumers were blamed for accepting American shoddy goods and the industrial managers and designers for their demonstrated concern for making money rather than quality products. No corporate productivity on the side of Board of Directors, educators fail to provide the state-of-the-art programmes, production workers for their indifference to work... Everyone is responsible and no one is responsible... (pg. VI)

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