

**INFLUENCE OF MULTI-LEVEL MARKETING MEDIA AND APPROACHES ON
CONSUMER PATRONAGE OF LONGRICH PRODUCTS AMONG CIVIL SERVANTS
IN IKEJA LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

BY

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE
DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION,
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL SCIENCES,
MOUNTAIN TOP UNIVERSITY, OGUN STATE**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (B.Sc.) IN MASS COMMUNICATION**

SEPTEMBER, 2021

CERTIFICATION

I certify that this work was carried out by **Apollos Chidera Jane** at the Department of Mass Communication, Mountain Top University, Ogun State, Nigeria under my supervision.

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DEDICATION

This work is humbly dedicated to God Almighty God for his divine guidance and strength to produce this work. Also, to my loving parents for their support and encouragement and to all lecturers of the department of Mass communication in Mountain Top University who have instilled knowledge in me.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My most profound gratitude goes to God Almighty for guiding and sustaining me throughout this programme. I would not have gone this far but for him. I am immensely grateful for his provision, good health and the will power to embark on the degree program and much more. Special appreciation to my amiable supervisor, Dr. Chinyere Mbaka, who amidst tight schedules; took out time to go through this work to make all necessary corrections. Her patience, advice, perfectionism and encouragement were of immense value in the course of this work. God bless you abundantly ma. I also owe my appreciation to my Head of Department; prof. Babatunde Oni who has been a father to my colleagues and I and has also had an impact on our personal and career development. I also thank other lecturers in my department- Prof. Anaeto, Dr. Oriola, Dr. Udeh, Dr. Akila, Dr. Odunlami, Dr Nancyand Mrs. Richards for all the knowledge they have impacted on me during my four years in the institution. These have helped me achieve this academic success. The good Lord shall reward you all. I acknowledge the great efforts of my parents, Mr. Gabriel Apollos and Mrs. Gloria Apollos for all the love, encouragement and spiritual, financial, material, moral support. You both shall definitely reap the fruit of your labor. Also worthy of note are my amazing friends, course mates, co-supervisees and colleagues, especially; Etta Grace, Sam- Jaja Boma, Anaekwe Ruth, Babalola Comfort and Ogaleye Mercy, I say a huge thank you to all of you for being there for me. You all shall exceed limits and excel in all endeavours. To those who contributed directly or indirectly to the accomplishment of this work, I say thank you. You all are great and I wish you all God's blessings.

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ABSTRACT

Multilevel marketing (MLM), also called network marketing has become a fruitful concept that endows ordinary people to turn into successful entrepreneurs. Although, there are so many benefits accruing from it, the need for an organization to properly coordinate its marketing communication strategies in order to deliver clear, consistent, credible and competitive message about itself and its products has become an issue of concern, which result oriented firms wishes to overcome. The study sought to find out the different communication strategies adopted by Longrich products' multi-level marketers and the extent to which they influence consumer patronage of the products, it also examined the marketing strategies adopted by Longrich multi-level marketers and the challenges they encounter while distributing products or recruiting new members. Both quantitative and qualitative method research were adopted for the study. Sample size 160 was systematically selected for the survey. While 8 multi-level marketers were interviewed. The findings revealed that the respondents and Longrich multi-level marketers make adequate use of social media for receiving information as well as dissemination of information respectively. Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram story twitter and word of mouth are forms of media that are mostly used by consumers and multi-level marketers, while issues surrounding the credibility of the business is the challenge mostly encountered by multi-level marketers. The study recommended more proactive ways of utilization of social media by multi-level marketers to educate the public about the business opportunity and improvement on pictorial representation that will be used to convince people.

KEYWORDS: Multi-level marketing, influence, consumer patronage, media platforms, Longrich products

Chapter One

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

One of the most common trends adopted by big companies of today is multi-level marketing (MLM) media, which is used to reach consumers and influence their patronage. Innovative technology and communication development have motivated the emanation of information technology. Direct sales are one of the oldest and most effective tools of the marketing complex. This approach has transformed into the network marketing or multilevel marketing (MLM) (Albaum & Peterson, 2011).

Information technology has been a key contributor to the major transformations on how companies market their products and services. When utilized appropriately, technology can affect how business processes are planned, implemented and evaluated. Technology can affect information processes and the information made available to decision makers, as well as the roles and responsibilities of organization personnel. Understanding the nature of information technology and how it might be used to solve problems is becoming increasingly important to professionals because of its potential effect. (Hollander, Denna, and Cherrington, 1996)

Organizations have adopted modern and advanced channels of communication, which have made it easy to reach or share a relationship with their stakeholders (Albesa, 2007).

Multi-level marketing (MLM) is a business model in which individual distributors promote to other distributors, forming a multi-level marketing hierarchy. (2014, Keep, Nat, & Vander).

Multi- level marketing is not a new approach as it has been practiced by large companies who engage in distribution of products to make profit from their comfort zone. Multi-level marketing (MLM) is a phrase that explains the marketing structure utilized by some organizations as part of their overall marketing strategy (also known as network marketing, direct selling, referral

marketing, and pyramid sales). The system is designed to establish a marketing and sales force by compensating promoters of firm products for not only their own sales, but also the sales of other developers that they bring into the company.

Multi-level marketing is a type of marketing that deals with being a representative of a company having a distributor who then recruits another sales person by selling a product to the person to get a commission. Distributors earn their commission by selling products to consumers/customers, typical products and services sold to non-members ('ultimate consumers') are, for example, cosmetics, energy supply, food storage products, insurances, jewelry, loans, Supplements, phone contracts, and wine are just a few of the things you'll find on this list. MLMs, or multilevel marketing companies, are known for making money in this manner. This 'multi-level marketing' structure is used by almost all direct selling companies, which means that practically all direct selling companies are also multi-level marketing companies.

To become a member of any MLM firm, an individual must first purchase an introductory sales kit (Keep & Nat, 2014). Stable salary will not be provided by the company since distributors are not employees. The distributors are self-employed, independent contractors, and they earn from product sales as well as successful recruitment (Keep & Nat, 2014). When a distributor brings in another distributor, the new recruit becomes the down-line while the recruiter becomes the up-line in the same network (Lee et al., 2016). Their collective performance is achieved through purchasing products and recruitment, which generate volume to their network. The volume is a unit of bonus calculation in a reward system.

In Nigeria, one of the most attractive business that deals with MLM is Longrich business that operates in the direct selling market adopting the MLM business model.

MLMs employed more than 103.3 million individuals worldwide in 2015, generating a retail turnover of around 183.7 billion USD (for worldwide as well as regional numbers see WFDSA2016).

The consumption of news via mobile platforms is one of the consequences of the digitization of media distribution which allows niche products to be channeled to consumers (Wilbur 2016, pp.217). mobile platform has made multi-marketing easy, people can now participate in online distribution and purchasing of product without having a physical contact with the seller.

1.2 STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PROBLEM

Multi-level marketing is gradually becoming a way of selling products by new companies and even older ones. They do it because of the popularity, they believe the strategy gives the marketed products or company the motivation that it generates among the marketers and the consumers as a result of the commissions and other benefits that accrue from this marketing strategy. The rapid rate at which individuals use media has captivated both marketers and consumers. Marketers recognize the importance of social media marketing in their marketing communication strategy.

Additionally, social media aids businesses in communicating with their clients. These encounters aid marketers in determining client demands and gaining a better understanding of their target market. Consumers can use key commercial features of social media to rate items, make suggestions to contacts or friends, and discuss any purchases they make.

There is a need for efficient communication between organizational management and direct reports to assist connect with people, establish stronger relationships, and enhance workplace attitudes and behaviors. (Dasgupta, Suar, & Singh, 2014).

Existing philosophies (theoretical perspectives) suggest that there may be a service quality gap in terms of the distributor's understanding of what prospective customers want, how they want it, and how to satisfy them satisfactorily, because the genesis of the transaction through some of these media platforms may occur without any physical contact between the distributors and consumers. The distributor may not know or understand what prospective customers specifically wanted or preferred either because of the disappointment with the information about the products and the attributes they have uploaded or because the information concerning the products available has not constantly been updated. The need for an organization to properly coordinate its marketing communication strategies in order to deliver clear, consistent, credible and competitive message about itself and its products has become an issue of concern, which result oriented firms wishes to.

The study seeks to find out the different communication strategies adopted by Longrich products' multi-level marketers and the extent to which they influence consumer patronage of the products.

1.3 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study has the following objectives:

- i. To determine the media that are used mostly for Longrich multi-level marketing
- ii. To ascertain the marketing strategies adopted by Longrich product multi-level marketers.
- iii. To examine the challenges faced by multi-level marketers of Longrich product
- iv. To measure the influence of multi-level marketing on consumer patronage of Longrich product.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The questions that this study seek to answer are as follows:

- i. Which media are used mostly for Longrich multi-level marketing?
- ii. What are the marketing strategies adopted by Longrich product multi-level marketers?
- iii. What are the challenges faced by multi-level marketers of Longrich product?
- iv. To what extent does multi-level marketing of Longrich products influence the consumer patronage of Longrich product?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study aims to give better understanding to marketers in their practice of multi-level marketing in Nigeria, it will assist them on how to send highly impactful messages to their esteemed target audience.

The findings will help existing companies and firms who are in the field already together with those who are willing to apply, a knowledge on how to improve their sales.

The research will benefit consumers of Longrich products, as the use of communication strategies will afford consumers with clear, credible and consistent messages. When consumers hear the same messages through advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, they will have strong faith in such messages and are likely to consistently patronize.

The findings of this research will help universities want to adopt marketing communication as a course to educate students on the marketing and communication strategies they need to implement before they can start up a business.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study focused on multi-level marketing media strategy and consumer patronage of Longrich products. This study is limited to the population (distributors of Longrich products and civil servants in the secretariat, Alausa Ikeja). The findings of this study were based on the data

collected (through questionnaires and in-depth interview) from civil servants and Longrich marketers respectively.

1.7 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Multi-level marketing: it is the strategy used by some direct sales companies to encourage existing distributors to recruit new distributors who are paid a percentage of their recruits' sales.

Media approach: media approach is concerned with how messages will be delivered to consumers or niche market.

Media Influence: It is the act or power of producing an effect without apparent exertion of force or direct exercise.

Longrich Distributor/Marketer: It is an entity that buys noncompeting products or product lines and sells them direct to end users or customers.

Communication strategies: Those strategies which infuse communication efforts with an agenda or plan

Consumer: A consumer is a person who acquires goods and services for his or her own personal needs. It is also an economic entity that purchase or buy goods for his/her personal consumption.

Business model: It is a plan for successful operation of a business, identifying sources of revenue, the intended customer base, products and details of financing.

Consumer Patronage: Customer, client, or paying visitor patronage is the financial support or business offered to a store, hotel, or similar establishment by customers, clients, or paying guests.

Longrich business: It is a company that focuses on producing household items and other health products that solve different ailment.

Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, an attempt was made to review the related literature to form the background and conceptual framework for the study. This review analyzed the multi-level marketing media and approaches used to influence consumer patronage of Longrich products, it also serves as a backup to the study. Finally, this chapter looked at various works done by other researchers and scholars about the research topic under the empirical review.

2.2 Conceptual Review

This study conceptual review includes the Multi-level marketing media and approaches, their influence on consumer patronage of Longrich products. The literature was reviewed under the following concepts: an overview of multi-level marketing media, multi-level strategy, marketing strategy, networking and word of mouth, communication and effective multi-level marketing, consumer patronage, the influence of media channels on consumer purchasing decision and the customer is boss.

2.2.1 An overview of multi-level marketing media

MLM, also known as network marketing, is a form of business structure and marketing strategy in which each distributor (business owner) hires a network of distributors (downline) who are paid not only for their sales but also for the sales of their downline. (Košnarová, 2013). As a result, as the distributor builds a team, there are multiple levels of compensation (Konarová, 2013; Wells, 2013) With unemployment in the United States reaching as high as 10% in 2010 and staying about 5% in 2015 (Nichols, Schmidt, & Sevak, 2017), Individual and economic sustainability can be achieved through business ownership.

However, many people are unable to afford the exorbitant costs of starting a traditional business, with the top ten franchises' start-up costs ranging from \$37K to \$2.2M. (Entrepreneur, 2017). The multilevel marketing industry is a multibillion-dollar industry that is rapidly expanding, with annual direct sales in the billions of dollars capturing 19% of the \$183 billion global market share (Neațu & Imbrișcă, 2016).

(Kodhek, 2005) termed multi-level marketing concepts as simple, involving tapping into friends, family, and acquaintances, and then the group of people they know. To sell not only a product but also the possibility of becoming a new distributor. These new distributors will then begin the process of establishing their network for selling and recruiting.

According to (kodhek, 2005). In general, multi-level marketing entails selling a product or service manufactured and supplied by a "mother" company, and any other company can opt to use network marketing to increase their distributor's base. This business is set up in such a way that once a person joins it, he can earn money in a variety of ways. It may be through retail income from selling directly to consumers, or through sales volume incentives from referring others to the company (kimutai, 2005).

2.2.1.1 The Multilevel Marketing Strategy

Strategy is the theory of the firm on how to compete successfully. It also considers performance as a factor influenced by strategy, as it can be considered that to compete successfully means having a satisfactory performance (Barney, 2001).

Multilevel marketing (MLM) is a business model in its own right. MLM is seen as a person who can do business with anyone. As a consequence, anyone and everybody is considered a potential customer for this business model.

MLM is a home-based company that entails selling a consumer product or service to individuals rather than through a fixed retail location. As the word "multilevel" implies, each salesperson is a link in the chain, and is referred to as a distributor, agent, or consultant depending on the organization they represent. These independent sales representatives mainly sell goods and services to consumers through personal relationships and one-on-one retailing. The strategy is to sell goods or services via local channels, saving money on delivery while also providing an additional source of income for people who work as independent distributors. strategy is not much different from advertising through the media or using distributors, manufacturer representatives, salesmen and retailers (Mwangi, 2007).

MLM Panics rely on word of mouth, a type of personal selling in which people share their experiences with others who may not have had the same advantage. Although word of mouth can quickly create a company's credibility, it can also quickly ruin that reputation. As a result, multilevel marketing firms rely on word of mouth or personal sale as their preferred strategy (Mwangi. 2007).

Rather than using the services of different agents in the marketing chain, goods are moved directly from the producer to the customer via a single level or distributor. These reduced levels of the marketing chain result in lower selling costs for manufacturing firms, while market share increases (Mwangi, 2007). Individual distributors now form the marketing chain amongst themselves, and the savings accrued from the reduced marketing chains are shared amongst them. The earnings of each person are determined by their degree of contribution or chain seniority. This network is known as a multilevel or distributor network.

2.2.1.2 Networking and word of mouth

Many companies rely on word-of-mouth marketing to spread the word about their products and services. Word-of-mouth marketing is a powerful method for changing customer perceptions and purchasing habits (Mohtasham, Sarollahi, & Hamirazavi, 2017).

(Mohtasham et al, 2017) suggested that word-of-mouth marketing aids in the creation of a positive image and brings significant benefits to the company Because of the direct sale nature of multilevel marketing (Keep & Vander Nat, 2014) and the referral or partnership nature of multilevel marketing (Mădălina, 2014), Networking in the context of multilevel marketing necessitates recruiting and replicating downlines in order to achieve sales goals (Droney, 2015).

(Lee, 2014) stated that marketing networks improve a company's competitiveness in resource acquisition. Marketing networks encourage knowledge sharing (Lee, 2014), and people's opinions and information influence consumer behavior (Berger, 2014). As a result, word of mouth becomes important in the process of opinion and information sharing in social networks. Word-of-mouth marketing is a critical tool in multilevel marketing (Konarová, 2013).

Word-of-mouth marketing involves a company's leaders providing its products or services to individuals known as brand ambassadors, who then share and spread the word about their experiences with the products or services (Buttle & Groeger, 2017).

Similarly, word of mouth marketing is defined as any positive or negative statement made by a current, former, or future customer about a product or service that the company provides. (King, Racherla, & Bush, 2014). Brand ambassadors communicate with others through email, Twitter, Facebook, chat rooms, and blogs, in addition to face-to-face interactions. There is a widespread belief that word-of-mouth marketing through various social media outlets and methods, such as blogging, Facebook, and Twitter, is more effective for business success than traditional paid

marketing (Pauwels, Aksehirli, & Lackman, 2016). Word-of-mouth marketing is an alternative to traditional marketing and an effective method of getting the message to its intended recipients via trusted friends and family members (Buttle & Groeger, 2017).

Berger (2014), considering word of mouth communication as being goal driven, presented five key functions it performs. The functions of word of mouth mentioned were (a) impression management, (b) emotion regulation, (c) information acquisition, (d) social bonding, and (e) persuasion (Berger, 2014). Understanding these functions of word-of-mouth communication can help you improve your direct selling experience. Word of mouth's impression management role denotes that knowledge exchange within the network forms people's perceptions of others or themselves (Berger, 2014). Individuals are almost always likely to prefer selective communication in order to improve others' perceptions of them. The possibility of a degree of dishonesty associated with word-of-mouth marketing is clear, according to (Hamilton, Vohs, and McGill, 2014). As a result, some traditionalists regard multilevel marketing, which involves this form of marketing, as suspicious. One of the reasons direct sellers quit is their perception of the multilevel marketing industry and the associated stigma. Regardless of any reservations some may have about word-of-mouth communication, the knowledge and information sharing feature allows individuals to project their actual or desired profile to others (Berger, 2014). Thus, multilevel marketers can use word of mouth communication to raise the profile of their company and attract new downlines. Emotion regulation connotes a mechanism for managing the emotional reactions to adverse product or service experience (Berger, 2014). This mechanism may include providing social support, showing empathy by letting the angered customer talk about their ordeal, or helping a victim of a negative experience make sense out of the event (Berger, 2014). Emotional regulation may also help an individual relive a positive experience or

arouse interests or affection toward the desired goal (Berger, 2014). Thus, in a network of close social ties, when customers share negative experiences, word of mouth communication may be more harmful than beneficial to a multilevel marketer unless there is prompt intervention to address the situation. Multilevel marketers' may need to include emotional regulation as part of their training to maintain productivity. Company personnel uses information acquisition to address the indecision of individuals in the network (Berger, 2014). Word of mouth communication makes information acquisition possible by the opportunity to seek advice in the network and leveraging on the experience of others to get problems solved (Berger, 2014). Thus, multilevel marketers may use word of mouth marketing to disseminate information to support solving existing problems, which may lead to more patronage and loyalty. Word of mouth communication affords a type of bonding that helps to reduce the feeling of social exclusion (Berger, 2014). Social bonding represents the platform for people to meet their needs to interact with other people (Berger, 2014).

The more people interact, the more they stay together, resulting in stronger social ties. Word of mouth marketing, thus, presents as an avenue for strengthening a multilevel marketing network. Berger (2014) pointed out that the more strongly knit people are by social ties, the stronger the reinforcement of opinions shared. This point may be beneficial to multilevel marketers. Multilevel marketers require the power of persuasion to increase their networks. Berger (2014) suggested that word of mouth has the potential to present as persuasive communication to achieve patronage or increased sales. Given that interpersonal communication reflects in word-of-mouth communication in a network, word of mouth serves as a medium of influencing the opinion of others and their decisions.

A multilevel marketer with effective interpersonal communication skills may influence the direction of others in a situation of making a choice or decision from a set of available alternatives. Marketers need to understand that negative information travels faster than positive information and therefore they should put strategies in place when utilizing word of mouth and e-word of mouth marketing (King et al., 2014).

Trust is a critical component of word-of-mouth marketing's success in influencing end-user decisions. Similarly, influence is established when the brand ambassador has a significant following with significant interaction. A brand ambassador is someone who acts on behalf of a company in order to effectively spread its message to the ambassador's audience or following, and who contributes to the company's success by being visible, iconic, and inspiring (Apostolakis, Jaffry, Sizeland, & Cox, 2015; Dumont & Dumont, 2018; Mazzei & Quarantino, 2017). Multi-level marketers serve as brand ambassadors for the companies they represent and distribute for. Factors influencing the brand ambassador's trust and influence over the customer include the deliverer's expertise, the interpersonal relationship between the deliverer and the receiver, the strength of the message being delivered, prior experience with the deliverer and brand, and the perceived value of the brand (Sweeney, Soutar, & Mazzarol, 2014).

Customers, on the other hand, will lose trust if the brand ambassador sends negative messaging, if the deliverer's perceived expertise is low, and if there has previously been a negative experience with the brand ambassador or the brand itself (Sweeney et al., 2014). This mistrust can have a negative impact on direct sellers' morale and, eventually, their sales, leading them to quit.

2.2.1.3 Communication and Effective Multi-Level Marketing.

Communication appears to be a common thread as a success factor. Communication, on the other hand, should not appear to be limited to the relationship between the distributor and the customer, but also to the relationship between up line and down line. Effective communication between the leader (up line) and the distributor (downline), according to (Konarová, 2013), is required for success in many areas. Effective communication begins with recruitment and includes persuasion and motivation, followed by planning and goal setting, creating a strategy to achieve goals, more motivation and education, and finally organizing and leading (Konarová, 2013). While distributors are recruiting new downlines to their team, the cycle should never come to a halt. Aside from human factors, there is also the need to provide what the market requires (Wells, 2013). Entrepreneurs must first understand the needs of their market before providing products and services to meet those needs. The sale becomes easier for entrepreneurs once they understand the needs of their market. Flexibility, thorough and customized sales presentations, and person-to-person contact allow for strong relationship marketing in direct selling, which includes multilevel marketing (Wells, 2013).

Furthermore, because direct sellers are frequent users of the products and services they sell, they would want to ensure that these products and services are effective and meet their customers' needs (Rozhkov, 2014). Tyre (2015) asserted that multilevel marketers must have a substantial and sustainable downline in order to be proficient, efficient, and successful. Multilevel marketing leaders should seek to empower distributors to launch into success by creating massive action, momentum, and enthusiasm among their downline in order to build a substantial and sustainable downline (Rubino, 2015). (Friedner, 2015) indicated that the up line/downline relationship is a relational management system used to facilitate accountability, efficiency, and motivation.

2.2 Marketing Strategy

The American Marketing Association (AMA) adopted the following definition of marketing as its official definition in 2004 (Marketing News, p. 1): 'Marketing is a function of the enterprise and a series of processes that help to create, communicate and enhance customer relations between the organization's partners and its parties. The American Marketing Association adopts an activity, "set of institutions, and processes to develop, communicate, deliver, and exchange value offerings to customers, customers, partners, and society at large" as its new official marketing definition in 2007. (Marketing News2008, p. 28).

These meanings were followed by four other official marketing definitions introduced by the American Marketing Association (AMA) in 1935, 1948, 1960, and 1985. (Gundlach, 2007).

The company should make two decisions on product marketing. Regardless of how new the product is to the market (Crawford and Di Benedetto, 2008, p. 372) state in a more directed sense (new product launch). Strategic platform decisions, which set general tones and orientations, and strategic action decisions, which determine to whom and how we will market, are both part of the strategic launch process. Tactical launch decisions, such as contact and promotion, delivery, and price, are determined after strategic launch decisions have been taken, and they determine how the strategic decisions will be implemented.

2.2.2 Factors promoting Consumer Patronage

A customer or consumer patronage is a person or thing who consumes or uses something, or a person who purchases goods and services for personal consumption or use.

People will use the goods or services of a corporation at some time in their lives. In this study we can exchange the phrases "customer support and loyalty" because customer support is prior to loyalty.

Patronship is strongly associated with loyalty. Patronage represents the willingness to engage a company on the basis of its service quality or service quality perceived. As a consequence, the amount to which a client is responsible for maintaining a bank's service depends on how the client sees the bank (service cape physical)'s environment, and on how the client believes and feels that the service environment's state is congruent with his/her personality.

2.2.2.1 Influence of Media Channels on Consumer Purchasing Decision

Prior to the invention of other media channels in the twentieth century, consumers relied on WOM (words of mouth) and print media (such as magazines and newspapers) to learn about products of interest. With the introduction of radio and television (TV), the number of media channels increased dramatically, revolutionizing the ways in which consumers could access information. The introduction of the Internet over the last two decades has fundamentally altered the quantity and quality of information available to consumers.

The Internet, as a type of "new media," contains all of the information previously available through older media and, when used in conjunction with personal media devices such as smartphones and tablets, allows consumers to obtain information anywhere, at any time. Consumer purchasing behavior and corporate advertising strategies have both changed as a result of the evolution of information and communications technology (ICT). At each stage of the purchase decision-making process, consumers can now gather information through various media channels (need recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior). As a result, companies must decide which media channels to use to promote their products in order to reach their target consumers. Different media channels will produce varying marketing and communication outcomes (Chen and Hsieh, 2012).

2.3 Theoretical Framework

Theories are needed in research because they serve as basis for the explanation of the phenomena being observed. Hence, this research study will be built on the following theories:

2.3.1 Source credibility theory

Source credibility theory was proposed in 1963 by Hovland, Janis and Kelly. The theory has shown that recipients of information are more likely to be convinced when the source is credible. According to this theory, the more the source is rated credible, the more likely it is to influence the behavior of receivers. Alternatively, the less likely a source is considered as credible, the less likely is the message is to influence the receivers of the message. The effectiveness of message is directly proportional to the credibility rating of the source by the receiver. Source credibility has dimensions, cornan et al, 32) cited in (Ale, 2020) submitted that the three critical dimensions of credibility are: goodwill, competence, and trustworthiness. Cornaan et al. adds, however, that these three dimensions do not reflect empirical realities, but reveal perceptions that guide the credibility rating source. In order to clarify how persuasive communication is influenced through its credibility, the core doctrinal foundation of the reliability of source has been employed. The perceived credibility of the provision of that communication has greatly influenced the quality of all communication, regardless of the format. The following diagram shows the theory;

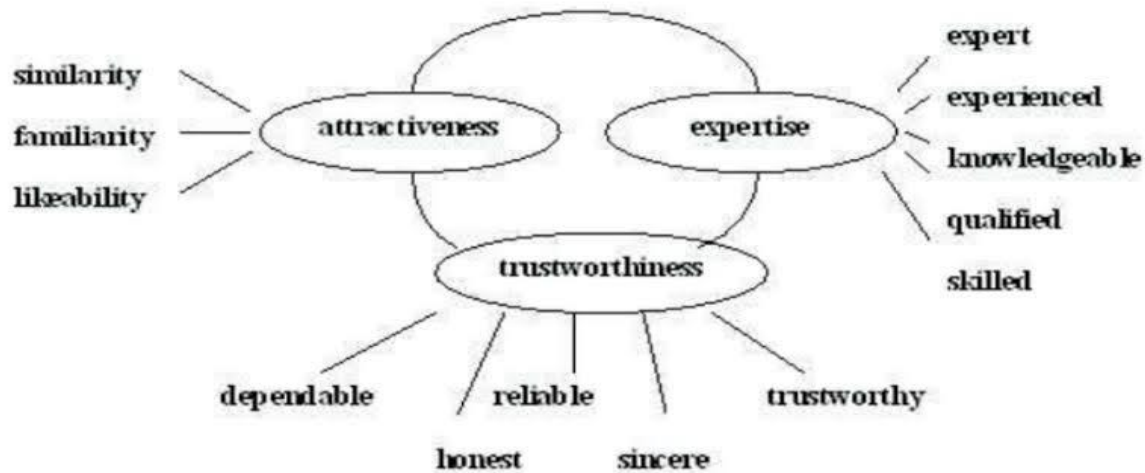


Figure 2.1. The Ohanian Model of source credibility Source: Louise E Canning, celebrity endorsement in Business Markets, 2005.

According to the source credibility theory, trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness of information is what attract and convince information receivers to share certain information. The theory has elements of persuasion. This means that messages, news and other information has to acquire certain features to persuade consumers into purchasing a product. The theory was selected because it explains elements of reasons why consumers need to be strongly convinced into patronizing Longrich products. If the source that present the message to the consumer has low credibility, then they may be a negative impact.

Therefore, low credibility rating of the messages by a sender may negatively impact on the communication and how it is received. Regarding using media for convincing consumers to patronize Longrich products, the source may play a significant role Consumers are reluctant to listen to those who have a poor credibility rating. They will likely listen more to the media which present themselves as credible. This is because consumers may not inquire the authenticity of information rather looks at the appeal and capability of the source.

2.4 Empirical review

(Caroline Wanjiku Kibe, 2014) conducted a research on **“Effects of Communication Strategies on Organizational Performance”**. Existing literature demonstrated a knowledge gap in terms of communication methods that influence perceived organizational performance. It also needed to know how an open-door communication policy affects organizational performance, how group effort improves organizational performance, how organizational structure can promote organizational performance, and what function formal communication channels play in organizational success. Promotional activities are widespread in the business world, where they are used as part of a company's plan to describe how to interact with various types of individuals, such as consumers, shareholders, rivals, and workers. Some businesses even have an internal communication strategy in place to help them decide what facts to share with consumers or investors, as well as how that information should be displayed.

(Benjamin Ibe Chukwu & Ifediora Chuka Uzoma, 2014) conducted a research on **The Influence of Social Media Platforms on Profit And productivity in Nigeria**”. Despite the horrible atrocities done by internet fraudsters, it was established on the growing the concept of online shopping enterprises in Nigeria, specifically through the application of various social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google Stores, LinkedIn, and so on. Jumia and Konga Nigeria Ltd, two of the most major retail companies in Nigeria that engage in such online enterprises, were studied, as were the customers that patronize the companies in both Enugu and Lagos states. Two goals were sought: to establish customer perceptions of online purchasing and to determine the extent to which consumers patronize online stores. The hypotheses have been tested using ANOVA at a 5% degree of evidence and selected degrees of Freedom and Chi-square statistical tools. According to the results, among other things, there is indeed a substantial

distinction in consumer perceptions and that consumers play a significant role by patronizing online retailers. Notwithstanding their differing perceptions of internet activity, the survey observed that consumers would continue to shop online at an increasing rate.

In a research conducted by (Aloo Rosemary Akinyi, 2008) titled: **“Benefits and challenges of Multilevel Marketing in Kenya: a case of golden Neolife Diamite international distributors in Nairobi Kenya”**

It was based on the assumption that the world was over Multilevel marketing (ML VI). Network marketing has become a successful concept that empowers ordinary people to turn into successful entrepreneurs. This notion is about distributing items directly from the makers to the end consumers, so doing away with the usual channel of distributors, wholesalers and retailers, so that the consumers get the complete benefit of direct selling. Over the years, the overall multi-level marketing industry has increased and, among many others, there are more people who seek to add or replace income. More opportunities in a recession are also available study Every licensed distributor of GNLD) products in Nairobi, Kenya were the target population. The study was conducted with a small sample size of 200 salespeople. Data from the field was collected using a semi structured questionnaire which was administered through personal interviews by research assistants. A total of 180 out of 201 surveys were completed and returned, representing a response rate of >4.5%. The data was evaluated using central tendency measures, such as frequencies, mean scores, and standard deviations, with the results displayed in tables and graphs.

GNLD is a great example of how the multi-level marketing system works in Kenya.

Other advantages of MLM among GNLD distributors, according to the survey, are the minimal hurdles to entrance into the business and its flexibility, as well as the fact that MLM has no age

or education requirements as compared to regular jobs. The notion that MLM operates as a social support network for people participating also ranked highly. It aids in the growth and development of not just business but also personal life abilities.

(Ika Mary Pasaribu, 2018) carried out a study on “**Multilevel marketing strategy in PT. oriflame Medan as a basic step for students of business studies**” The marketing strategy is used to establish the company's direction, marketing objectives, market segmentation, and marketing mix elements. The goal of this research is to figure out the marketing strategy, which comprises market segmentation, product, price, distribution, and promotion. Indonesians are becoming increasingly interested in network marketing (also known as multi-level marketing or MLM). In particular, in the city of Medan. Based on the results of the Multi-level marketing 9MLM0 techniques used at PT. The purpose of this study is to learn about the marketing strategy used by multi-level marketing (MLM) at PT. oriflame Indonesia in Medan. Oriflame Indonesia is a cosmetics company based in Medan, Indonesia. This study aims to establish whether a multi-level marketing strategy affects start-ups from the multi-level marketing (MLM) numbers at PT. oriflame field that holds the status as a student. The research method used is the descriptive qualitative method approach that means the research produces descriptive data as data derived from the words result of interview with observed behavior. The observed behavior is none other than that of the members of the multi-level marketing PT. Oriflame Medan, which served as a sample member of the company Multi-level marketing while maintaining the status of Medan students, acted as a population. The results reveal that, from the Multi-Level Marketing (MLM) strategy, the application addresses the whole strategy adopted in the PT products market, with a favorable and significant influence from the end to the end, which is always a new member.

Chapter Three

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focused on the methodology, research design for the research study, the instrument which the researcher used to gather the necessary data for the study and also the discussion of the population and the selection of the sample size of the study.

3.2 Research Design

A research design is the ‘procedures for collecting, analyzing, interpreting and reporting data in research studies’ (Creswell & Plano Clark 2007, pp.58). It is the overall plan for connecting the conceptual research problems with the pertinent (and achievable) empirical research.

This study adopted a descriptive survey and in-depth interview research method. The term "survey research" refers to the process of gathering information from a group of people by asking them questions (check & schutt, 2012, pp.160). While in-depth interview involves conducting an intensive interview to get respondents opinion or perception about a particular issue.

survey research design was used to get a straightforward answer to questions related to this study, the questionnaires will be for the civil servants to find out whether they have heard messages about multi-level marketing, their reaction to the messages and how the messages has influenced their perception towards Longrich product. while in-depth interview will be conducted on Longrich multi-level marketers who have knowledge on the communication strategies they use to convince consumers to purchase a product.

3.3 Population

The study location for this study were civil servants in Ikeja Local government with a population of 268 staffs from the ministry of information and Strategy.

3.4 Sampling Technique

Sampling technique is the means through which respondents are selected for the study. This is the procedure through which respondents was chosen for the study. **This study adopted the multi- stage sampling method and non-probability sampling technique respectively. In the first stage,** the systematic sampling method was used to divide the population into departments; in which a certain number of groups were selected from the departments; at the second stage, simple random method will be use to randomly distribute questionnaires to individuals from each of the groups selected.

For the interview, (non-probability sampling) snowball sampling technique was adopted because the population is rare and tough to assemble subjects as samples. This study needed a referral on which a sample will be generated. These were the multi-level marketers who are knowledgeable, informative and have a phenomenal interest on this study; in which eight (8) multi-level marketers were interviewed.

3.5 Sample Size

A sample is a smaller representation of the larger population. It allows the researcher to choose in such a way that all the elements in a population are well represented. Without the actual figure for a population, the sample is unknown.

The population size was narrowed down to determine the sample size. A statistical formula was used in determining the sample size.

Taro Yamane formula quoted in Nwabukei (1986:471) was applied and it is stated as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where n = sample size

N = total population size

1 is constant

e = the assume error margin or tolerable error which is taken as 5% (0.05)

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where N = 268

$$e = (0.05)^2 = 0.0025$$

$$\begin{aligned} n &= \frac{268}{1+(268 \times 0.0025)} \\ &= \frac{268}{1.67} \end{aligned}$$

$$N = 160.4.$$

3.6 Research Instrument

The instruments that were used to gather data for this study were the Questionnaire and interview. The questionnaires were constructed using both the open-ended and close-ended questions, the open-ended questions allowed the respondents provide some answers they feel should have been added and it consist of three (3) sections, major constructs were measured using a Likert scale item and a Yes or No option, while the interview guide was structured using

open-ended questions using a sound recorder to record their answers. In this case, interviews were conducted on eight (8) multi-level marketers who are knowledgeable about the topic of study, to provide rich and in-depth information, it served as a follow-up with individual respondents after questionnaires were distributed.

3.7 Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments

Validity explains how well the collected data covers the actual area of investigation (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2005) Validity refers to the degree which the instrument fully measures the study of interest. The validity was gotten through statistics and also questionnaires and interview guide were reviewed by the supervisor, experts and professionals in the field who assessed all the features and component parts of the questionnaire for grammatical and ambiguity errors.

On the reliability of the questionnaire items, 10 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to civil servants at Ikeja Local government. Which was excluded from the main study. All 10 properly filled the questionnaires that was used for the analysis. According to Creswell (2014) a scale is reliable if it reaches 0.60 0.70. Thus, the result of the pilot test was subjected to Cronbach alpha reliability test.

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	10	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	10	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.759	16

Source: Field results SPSS computation, 2021.

The Cronbach Alpha coefficient of scale stipulated a standard of 0.759 for reliability test. The reliability ratio for this study was 0.759. This indicated that the instrument used in this study was indeed reliable and valid.

3.8 Method of Data Collection

The researcher employed the use of questionnaires and interview as a data collecting instrument. A research assistant was employed for the distribution and collection of questionnaires to the civil servants at Ikeja local government via printed copies which took a whole day to distribute and interviews were conducted by the researcher on eight (8) multi-level marketers as a follow-up to the questionnaires that were distributed. The researcher started with two respondents (one male and one female) that were members of the researchers' immediate social circle and following the method of snowballing, the researcher asked them to think of friends and acquaintances of their own that were multi-level marketers that were willing to help with this project. When someone agreed to take part in this research, the researcher contacted them personally to arrange for their meeting.

3.9 Method of Data Analysis

Data analysis are methods used to represent and interpret data in ways that are understandable and explanations provided for the observations. The method of data analysis used for this study were the quantitative and qualitative method.

For the quantitative method, Data generated from the questionnaire was analyzed through the SPSS by the researcher using frequency distribution and percentages. For the qualitative method, in-depth interview was analyzed using the inductive approach of thematic analysis. The first phase was transcribing, which required gathering notes from the interview, review and write down the responses of the respondent in accordance to the questions asked. For the second phase, the researcher developed codes for the data in order to describe the content. For the third phase, the researcher searched for themes in the codes across different interview. For the fourth phase, the researcher reviewed the themes to ensure that it works well in relation to the codes. In the fifth phase, the researcher defined and name themes by analyzing specific themes with telling stories and generating clear understanding of each themes and the researcher produced the report in the last phase, by relating the research question back to the analysis by selecting vivid and compelling examples and producing a report of the analysis.

Chapter Four

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focused on presentation, analysis and interpretation of data collected through the use of structured questionnaires that was filled by civil servants in Lagos state secretariat in Ikeja. The data analysis is needed to show the results of the research carried out and also make comments on data collected and get to a conclusion based on the data collected. One hundred and sixty (160) copies of questionnaire were administered and one hundred and forty-nine (149) copies of questionnaire were retrieved and used for the analysis.

4.2 Respondents' Profile Data

Table 4.1 Sex

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	50	33.6	33.6	33.6
Female	99	66.4	66.4	100.0
Total	149	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Table 4.1 indicated that 49.7% of the respondents are male and the remaining 50.3% are female.

This implies that majority of the respondents are female.

Table 4.2 Marital Status

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Single	63	42.3	42.3	42.3
Married	62	41.6	41.6	83.9

Separated/Divorced	10	6.7	6.7	90.6
Widowed	14	9.4	9.4	100.0
Total	149	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Table 4.2 indicated that 42.3% of the respondents are single, 41.6% are married, 6.7% are separated/divorced and the remaining 9.4% are widowed. This implies that majority of the respondents are single.

Table 4.3 Age Group

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 18-25 years	11	7.4	7.4	7.4
26-35 years	84	56.4	56.4	63.8
36-45 years	30	20.1	20.1	83.9
46-55 years	18	12.1	12.1	96.0
56 years and above	6	4.0	4.0	100.0
Total	149	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Table 4.3 indicated that 7.4% of the respondents are 18-25 years, 56.4% are 26-35 years, 20.1% are 36-45 years, 12.1% are 46-55 years and the remaining 4% are 56 years and above. This implies that majority of the respondents are 26-35 years.

Table 4.4 Highest level of education attained

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Primary level	9	6.0	6.0	6.0
Secondary level	21	14.1	14.1	20.1

Diploma level	13	8.7	8.7	28.9
University Graduate	88	59.1	59.1	87.9
Post Graduate	18	12.1	12.1	100.0
Total	149	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Table 4.4 indicated that 6% of the respondents' highest educational qualification is primary level, 14.1% are secondary level, 8.7% are diploma level, 59.1% are university graduate and the remaining 12.1% are post graduates. This implies that majority of the respondents are university graduates.

Table 4.5 Years of Experience as a civil servant

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than a year	40	26.8	26.8	26.8
1-5 years	65	43.6	43.6	70.5
Valid 6-10 years	28	18.8	18.8	89.3
above 10 years	16	10.7	10.7	100.0
Total	149	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Table 4.5 indicated that 26.8% of the respondents have been a civil servant for less than a year, 43.6% for 1-5 years, 18.8% for 6-10 years and the remaining 10.7% have served for more than 10 years. This implies that majority of the respondents are serving as a civil servant in their first 5 years.

4.3 RESPONDENTS' KNOWLEDGE OF MULTI-LEVEL MARKETING

Table 4.6 Do you participate in multi-level marketing?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	84	56.4	56.4	56.4
No	65	43.6	43.6	100.0
Total	149	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Table 4.6 indicated that 56.4% of the respondents participates in multi-level marketing and the remaining 43.6% do not participate in multi-level marketing. Some of those participating are in Longrich, Oriflame, Tasly, Forever living products among others.

Table 4.7 You heard about Longrich products and multi-level marketing business?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	99	66.4	66.4	66.4
No	50	33.6	33.6	100.0
Total	149	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Table 4.7 indicated that 66.4% of the respondents have heard about Longrich marketing products and multi-level marketing business, 33.6% have not heard about Longrich marketing products and multi-level marketing business.

Table 4.8 Can you rate your knowledge of Longrich multi-level marketing?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Very good	42	28.2	28.2	28.2
Good	66	44.3	44.3	72.5
Don't know	41	27.5	27.5	100.0
Total	149	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Table 4.8 indicated that 28.2% of the respondents are very good with their knowledge of Longrich multi-level marketing, 44.3% are good and 27.5% do not know how much they know about Longrich multi-level marketing.

Table 4.9 Which media do you get information about Longrich and multi-level marketing?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	TV	10	6.7	6.7	6.7
	Radio	21	14.1	14.1	20.8
	Newspaper	13	8.7	8.7	29.5
	Social Media	53	35.6	35.6	65.1
	Family/Friends/Neighbor	25	16.8	16.8	81.9
	Posters/Fliers/Handbills	8	5.4	5.4	87.2
	T-shirts/ Fez caps	11	7.4	7.4	94.6
	Seminars/workshops.	8	5.4	5.4	100.0
	Total	149	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Table 4.9 indicated that 6.7% of the respondents get information about Longrich products and multi-level marketing from TV, 14.1% from Radio, 8.7% from Newspaper, and 35.6% from Social Media, 16.8% from Family/Friends/Neighbor, 5.4% from Posters/Fliers/Handbills, 7.4% from T-shirts/Fez caps and the remaining 5.4% from Seminars/workshops.

Table 4.10 How often do you get information about Longrich using the media?

S/N	STATEMENTS		Very Often	Hardly	Often	Never	Total
a.	TV	F	26	72	30	21	149

		%	17.4	48.3	20.1	14.1	100
b.	Radio	F	31	52	50	16	149
		%	20.8	34.9	33.6	10.7	100
c.	Newspaper	F	22	85	22	20	149
		%	14.8	57	14.8	13.4	100
d.	Social Media	F	65	39	31	14	149
		%	43.6	26.2	20.8	9.4	100
e.	Family/Friends/Neighbor	F	27	63	46	13	149
		%	18.1	42.3	30.9	8.7	100
f.	Posters/Fliers/Handbills	F	42	58	26	23	149
		%	28.2	38.9	17.5	15.4	100
g.	T-shirts/fez caps	F	46	62	25	16	149
		%	30.9	41.6	16.8	10.7	100
h.	Seminars/workshops	F	36	58	44	11	149
		%	24.2	38.9	29.5	7.4	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Table 4.10 indicated that 17.4% of the respondents get information about Longrich very often from TV, 48.3% hardly, 20.1% often and 14.1% never. It indicated that 20.8% of the respondents get information about Longrich very often from Radio, 34.9% hardly, 33.6% often and 10.7% never.

Also, the Table indicated that 14.8% of the respondents get information about Longrich very often from Newspaper, 57% hardly, 14.8% often and 13.4% never. It equally indicated that

43.6% of the respondents get information about Longrich very often from social media, 26.2% hardly, 20.8% often and 9.4% never.

More so, the table shows that 18.1% of the respondents get information about Longrich very often from Family/Friends/Neighbors, 42.3% hardly, 30.9% often and 8.7% never. The Table indicated that 28.2% of the respondents get information about Longrich very often from poster/fliers/handbills. 38.9% hardly, 17.5% often and 15.4 never.

Lastly, the Table indicated that 30.9% of the respondents get information about Longrich very often from T-shirts/fez caps, 41.6% hardly, 16.8% often and 10.7% never. The table indicated that 24.2% of the respondents get information about Longrich very often from seminars/workshops, 38.9% hardly, 29.5% often and 7.4% never.

Table 4.11 Have you bought any Longrich product before?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	60	40.3	40.3	40.3
	No	73	49.0	49.0	89.3
	Don't know	16	10.8	10.8	100.0
	Total	149	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Table 4.11 indicated that 40.3% of the respondents have bought Longrich products, 49% have not bought any Longrich product and 10.8% don't know if they have gotten any Longrich product before.

Table 4.12 Are you into Longrich multi-level marketing business?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	92	61.7	61.7	61.7

	No	51	34.2	34.2	96.0
	Don't know	6	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	149	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Table 4.12 indicated that 61.7% of the respondents are into Longrich multi-level marketing business, 34.2% are not into Longrich multi-level business and 4% don't know Longrich multi-level marketing business.

Table 4.13 What influenced your decision to buy Longrich products or join them?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Their messages on traditional media, (TV, radio, newspaper, magazine)	34	22.8	22.8	22.8
	Their messages showed on social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram etc.)	56	37.6	37.6	60.4
	Word of mouth (interpersonal relationship)	18	12.1	12.1	72.5
	Testimonies from friends/family/colleagues who have used the products or are into the business	18	12.1	12.1	84.6
	The quality of their products	23	15.4	15.4	100.0
	Total	149	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Table 4.13 indicated that 22.8% of the respondents was influenced by traditional media to buy Longrich products or join them, 37.6% was influenced by social media platforms, 12.1% was influenced by testimonies from friends/family and colleagues who have used the products and 15.4% were influenced by the quality of the products.

Table 4.14 Has Longrich multi-level marketers influenced you positively to patronize their products

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	69	46.3	46.3	46.3
No	80	53.7	53.7	100.0
Total	149	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Table 4.14 indicated that 46.3% of the respondents asserted that multi-level marketers influenced them positively to patronize their products and 53.7% said no Longrich multi-level marketers influenced them positively to patronize their products. Some of the reasons that resulted in No are that the multi-level marketers praise the product too much and discourage them from getting when their expectations become unattainable, some believe it is a Ponzi scheme hence, have no interest in hearing about it among others.

4.4 Discussion of findings

Based on the findings from the above analysis, it was found out that majority of the respondents are female, single, between 26-35 years, university graduates and are working as civil servants in their first 5 years. The findings equally show that quite a number of civil servants participate in numerous multi-level marketing that includes, Longrich, Oriflame, Forever Living Products,

among others. It also shows that majority of the respondents are familiar and have a good knowledge of Longrich marketing products and multi-level marketing business.

Research Question 1

Which media are used mostly for Longrich multi-level marketing?

The first research question was to find out the media mostly used for Longrich multi-level marketing. The respondents all forms of media and according to table 4.3.4, 53% of respondents make use of the social media applications for creating awareness about their products. Also, in table 4.3.5, 43.6% of respondents get information often about Longrich multi-level marketing from social media. In line with this, social media applications are mostly used for Longrich multi-level marketing. The social media like the Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc. seems to be the source where information about Longrich products and multi-level marketing was discussed the most as the respondents gets most information using the platform.

It was also confirmed in the interview conducted on the multi-level marketers that majority of them adopts the social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram etc.to disseminate information about Longrich business which has influence people to patronize.

Chu (2011), asserts to this claim that social media is an effective tool for advertising of products as users have more positive attitudes towards it than other media.

Research Question 2

What are the marketing strategies adopted by Longrich product multi-level marketers?

The research question seeks to know the strategies put in place by Longrich multi-level marketers. Table 4.3.9 shows that 56% of the respondents get to know about Longrich multi-level marketers through their messages via social media pages and also 34% knowing them through the traditional media. Hence, the strategies put in place by Longrich multi-level marketers is the usage of social media and also traditional media as the respondents get most information from these sources.

The marketers interviewed also supported this claim that they have their individual marketing strategies that work for them, in terms of getting people to join the business or convincing people to buy, which is done through the social media platforms and word of mouth by post pictures of people's achievement.

Chen and Hsieh (2012) supported this claim as they said that the use of social and traditional media helps consumers to gather information needed about the products and this makes it the best strategy to adopt.

Research Question 3

To what extent does multi-level marketing of Longrich products influence the consumer patronage of Longrich product?

This research was to know how multi-level marketing of Longrich products influence customer patronage of the product. Table 4.3.10 shows that 53.7% of the respondents do not agree that multi-level marketer influence them positively to patronize their products. This shows that there is little influence of multi-level marketing of Longrich products on consumer patronage of the product. It was discovered that they over-garnish their products and make customers over-expectant which negatively affects them.

This refute what the marketers said in their interview, they claim that people don't know the difference between Multi-level marketing business and Ponzi schemes, it is perceived that MLMs have some negative perception among other companies based on some MLMs use of deception and overzealous product claims to recruit individuals.

Indeed, Yamell (2002). confirms that Network marketing is one of the most fun and rewarding businesses in the world, but still poses a number of challenges to all network marketers.

Codes	Content	Themes
Knowledge	Marketer A: <i>“I use Social media, Facebook advert, and Instagram story”</i>	Media usage on consumer purchasing decision
Posts about people’s achievement.	Marketer B: <i>“I’m just a neutral person that follows testimony, so my strategies; I use the products, I see how it works, so I know how to talk about it more to people and when you see me, I am a testimonial, so you will definitely want to use the products. I use BUSI...”</i>	Persuasive strategies adopted by marketers
Influenced by the quality of product	Marketer F: <i>It’s the Quality of the products, if the products are not of good quality, the business would have folded up....”</i>	Marketers perception
Challenges	Marketer D: <i>“One of the challenges is Complaints about the cost of products, trying to get people to believe in the business and...”</i>	Marketers burnout

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.5 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the interview transcripts of multi-level marketers. The study findings are presented to examine the influence of multi-level marketing media and its approaches on consumer patronage of Longrich products in which eight (8) multi-level marketers were interviewed.

4.5.1 Media Usage on Consumer Purchasing Decision

As described in the theoretical background, If the source present itself as credible, people tend to believe it and also has an influence on people in one way or the other. As expected, most of the marketers interviewed ascertain that they mostly use their social media handles such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram story to advertise the Longrich products or make the products known to people because they have a massive audience on them and they also use these media platforms to post about people's achievement and how effective the products are, which makes people want to patronize the multi-level marketers.

Marketer H, who is female, explained her dissemination tactics this way, she said "I use WhatsApp mostly because that is the media I use mostly to chat with people".

Along the same line, **Marketer G** also said "I use Social media, Facebook advert, and Instagram story"

4.5.2 Persuasive Strategies Adopted by Marketers

All the marketers interviewed had so many marketing strategies that works better for them ranging from testimonies, weekly alert, pickup stations and delivering of the products and monthly proof of payment which they make believable by uploading it on their social media

handles. One of the interviewees also created an abbreviation that stands as her personal strategy to sell her products.

Marketer A, who is female, stated her personal abbreviation that works for her, she said “I’m just a neutral person that follows testimony, so my strategies; I use the products, I see how it works, so I know how to talk about it more to people and when you see me, I am a testimonial, so you will definitely want to use the products. I use BUSI...”. One of the interviewees also went to the extent of saying that if people see that the products works for other people, no matter the price, they get to buy and use. With this happening, they also refer other people to the marketers and they choose to join the trail of being a distributor and also patronizing.

Marketer H also added by saying “Good things speak for itself and people have watched these products work which prompt people into buying their products”

4.5.3 Marketer’s Perception

Majority of the marketers interviewed agreed that the quality of Longrich products has indeed influenced consumers to patronize them, only one of the interviewees said that it is the compensation plan of Longrich business, the marketer believe that compensating people at the end of the week with money, gifting out cars at the end of the month, and having an opportunity to travel out of the country encouraged people to become members and patronize them. The marketers perceived that the quality of their product has made people decided on being a member. All interviewee agreed that the product being a top notch cannot be compared to another product which made the female **Marketer F** said “It’s the Quality of the products, if the products are not of good quality, the business would have folded up....”

Also, **Marketer E** commented this way: Well, for me ooo..., it’s the compensation plan products.

4.5.4 Marketer's Burnout

Marketer burnout is an expression of marketers' experiences and feeling that show dissatisfaction with and /or intent to quit due to prevailing circumstances in the business. Many interviewee attest that they face so many challenges as a multi- level marketer, in terms of getting people to register under Longrich business and getting customers to buy their products because they always complain that the products are expensive. They equally face the challenge of distributing the products to people without paying for delivery fee and also convincing people that Longrich business is not a Ponzi scheme but a business that can profit people. All marketers interviewed bitterly expressed their feelings when the question of challenges they face aroused.

This is why **Marketer A**, who is female, put it this way “when convincing people to join longrich, a lot of people will be like “I’ve been into this, I’ve been into that, it didn’t work out, so how I’m I sure this one is going to work? How I’m I sure this one is a different one? You will just be hearing different complaint and when it comes to the products, a lot of people are so fixed that they will be like...”

Also, **Marketer H** said people complain that it is too expensive for a particular size, especially if the size of the product is too small, so they feel it’s not worth the money.

Alongside, **marketer H** also lamented on getting customers to even buy the product

“I can get just one customer in three weeks (laughs) it’s that bad but it’s not funny.”

4.6 Interpretation of findings

In this section, results and main findings of this research project will be described and analyzed. The main research questions were confirmed by an active audience and this is clearly reflected in the diverse interpretations given by the audience and in the findings discussed below. The interview with eight multi-level marketers produced a rich body of data and in this part of the

paper, results and their interpretation will be presented simultaneously. An effort has been made to separate results into four themes.

RQ1. Which media are used mostly for Longrich multi-level marketing?

The first research question was to find out the media that are mostly adopted by this multi-level marketer to advertise Longrich or get information about the product. The marketers all use the social media platform according to the codes and themes from the table. The marketers testified that the media they use has influenced people positively to patronize their product. The media channels that motivate a given consumer to make a given purchase vary depending on both socio-demographic variables and product categories. In the view of this, there exist satisfactory uses of social media by multi-level marketers.

Marketer G, who is female, explained her dissemination tactics this way, she said “I use Social media, Facebook advert, and Instagram story”

Marketer H also said “I use WhatsApp mostly because that is the media I use mostly to chat with people”

This affirms what Chen and Hsieh (2012) found, that different media channels would produce varying marketing and communication outcomes.

RQ2. What are the marketing strategies adopted by Longrich product multi-level marketers?

This research question was to know the marketing strategy that works for them, and they each confirmed that they have their individual marketing strategies that works for them, in terms of getting people to join the business or convincing people to buy. It just depends on how they make use of it or how they put it into work.

Marketer A puts it this way “I use BUSI, it is an abbreviation. The B stands for buy, the U stands for use, the S stands for share and the I stand for introduce. I buy, I use, I share the opportunities with the people; friends, family and ...”

The result is supported by Coughlan and Grayson (1998) which confirms that the MLM strategy comprises certain financial components germane to the success of any MLM business; compensation plan and upfront fees/registration fees/start---up capital (Droney, 2015).

RQ3. What are the challenges faced by multi-level marketers of Longrich product?

The third research question of the study was to determine the challenges that Longrich multi-level marketers face in participating in Multilevel marketing. Overall, from the study it can be observed that MLMs have some negative perception among other companies based on some MLMs use of deception and overzealous product claims to recruit individuals. Some other interviewees also complained about selling the products because they are too expensive. This situation is buttressed by some of the interviewees’ comment.

Marketer A said: “when convincing people to join Longrich, a lot of people will be like “I’ve been into this, I’ve been into that and it didn’t work out, so how I’m I sure this one is going to work? How I’m I sure this one is a different one? You will just be hearing different complaint and when it comes to the products, a lot of people are so fixed that they will be like...”

Along the same line, **Marketer E** said “Lack of information on the part of the greater majority, people don’t know the difference between MLM and Ponzi schemes”

Also, **Marketer H** said: “people complain that it is too expensive for a particular size, especially if the size of the product is too small, so they feel it’s not worth the money”

Marketer F also added by saying “Complains about the cost of products, trying to get people to believe in the business and also people are not ready for the business, due to some failure at another networking business”

Indeed, Yamell (2002). confirms that Network marketing is one of the most fun and rewarding businesses in the world, but still poses a number of challenges to all network marketers.

RQ4. To what extent does multi-level marketing of Longrich products influence the consumer patronage of longrich product.?

This last research question was used to measure if the multi-level marketing of Longrich product has influenced consumer patronage and all the respondents agreed that the quality of Longrich products has indeed influenced consumers to patronize them, only one of the interviewee said that it is the compensation plan of Longrich business, the marketer believes that compensating people at the end of the week with money, gifting out cars at the end of the month, and having an opportunity to travel out of the country encouraged people to become members and patronize them. The marketers perceived that the quality of their product has made people decided on being a member.

All interviewee agreed that the product being a top notch cannot be compared to another product which made **Marketer G** said “Well, for me I would say the product quality is top notch, it can’t be compared to others. Longrich products works for real. It’s organic and natural”

Marketer B who is a male also said “Their strongest point or niche is the quality of their products. Testimony about our products have made a lot of people be a member of Longrich”

Chapter Five

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 SUMMARY

The study examined the influence of Multi-level marketing media and its approaches on consumer patronage of Longrich product among civil servant in Ikeja. The source credibility theory was reviewed for the course of this study. In order to achieve the objective and answer all research questions, the primary method of data collection was adopted and the research instrument used were questionnaires and interview. This study made use of SPSS to analyze the quantitative data while thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data. The following are the findings that originated from this study;

- i. There is a great use of social media in getting information about Longrich products which has also been use by the marketers to influence consumers positively to patronize them.
- ii. Facebook, WhatsApp, twitter, Instagram story and word of mouth are the social media platforms that are mostly used by multi-level marketers
- iii. There are numerous marketing strategies adopted by Longrich multi-level marketers that are used to convince people to join the business.
- iv. A major challenge Longrich Multi-level marketer's encounter while trying to recruit people is authenticity of the business.

5.2 CONCLUSION

This research project concludes that multi-level marketing media has influenced consumers positively to purchase Longrich products through the approaches adopted by the multi-level marketers. The use of social media has become part of our human existence and an important tool for information dissemination by Longrich marketers. Although as important as social media

is, the study shows that its use is not void of challenges. However, the importance of using social media to influence consumer patronage outweighs the challenges it poses.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Going by the findings and conclusions above, the following recommendations were made:

- I. Ease of entry into a business is one of the benefits of MLM, it is a great opportunity to empower people economically and to also change lives. However, the practice of MLM is greatly impeded by negative public perceptions and image issues. The researcher recommends a periodic generic campaign to educate the public about the business opportunity.
- II. Multi-level marketers should actively put out messages on the social media platforms concerning the business.
- III. Multi-level marketers should improve on their pictorial representation that will be used to convince people on patronizing them.
- IV. universities should adopt marketing communication as a course to educate students on the marketing and communication strategies they need to implement before they can start up a business.
- V. Multi-level marketers should improve on their sales by advertising Longrich products on broadcast media such as television and radio.
- VI. For information to be credible and newsworthy, multi-level marketers should be able to properly access the credibility of the source of the news.

5.4 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Due to limited time to return back to school, the study was limited to just one ministry in Ikeja Local government. The researcher would have loved to extend the study to other ministries as to obtain a wider perspective on the phenomenon.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent,

My name is Apollos Chidera, a final year student of the Department of Mass Communication, Mountain Top University. I am carrying out a research on **“Influence of multi-level marketing media and approaches on consumer patronage of Longrich products among civil servants in Ikeja Local government”** in partial requirement for the award of a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) degree in Mass Communication. Please kindly tick and fix in your sincere response. All provided answers will be treated with strict confidentiality and used only for academic purposes. Thank You.

SECTION A: RESPONDENTS' PROFILE DATA

1. Name of Respondent (optional).....

(Please tick the appropriate option)

2. Sex: Male () Female ()

3. Marital Status: Single () Married () Separated/Divorced () Widowed ()

4. Age group: 18-25 years () 26-35 years () 36-45 years () 46-55 years () 56 years and above ()

5. Highest Level of Education attained: Primary level () Secondary level () Diploma level ()

University Graduate () Post Graduate ()

6. Years of Experience as a civil servant: Less than a year () 1-5 years () 6-10 years ()
above 10 years ()

SECTION B

7) Do you participate in any multi-level marketing?

a) Yes

b) No

7b) If yes, which one? -----

8) Have you heard about Longrich marketing products and multi-level marketing business?

a) Yes

b) No

9) Can you rate your knowledge of Longrich multi-level marketing?

a) Very good

b) Good

c) Don't know

10) From which media do you get information about Longrich products and multi-level marketing?

a) TV

b) Radio

c) Newspapers

d) Social Media

e) Family/friends/ Neighbors

f) Posters/ Fliers/ Handbills

g) T-shirts/ Fez caps

h) Seminars/ workshops

i) Others, please specify-----

11) How often do you get information about Longrich using this media?

INSTRUCTION: PLEASE TICK IN THE APPROPRIATE CELL IN THE TABLE BELOW

	Media	Very often	Hardly	Often	Never
a.	TV				
b.	Radio				
c.	Newspapers				
d.	Social Media				
e.	Family/friends/ Neighbors				
f.	Posters/ Fliers/ Handbills				
g.	T-shirts/fez caps				

h.	Seminars/ workshops				
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SECTION C

12) Have you bought any Longrich product before?

- a) Yes
- b) no
- c) Don't know

13) Are you into Longrich multi-level marketing business?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Don't know

14) What influenced your decision to buy Longrich products or join them?

- a) Their messages on traditional media (TV, radio, newspaper, magazine)
- b) Their messages showed on social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, etc.)
- c) Word of mouth (interpersonal communication)
- d) Testimonies from friends/family/colleagues who have used the products or are into the business
- e) The quality of their products
- f) Others (please specify) -----

15) Has Longrich multi-level marketers influenced you positively to patronize their products?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- b) If No, why.....

Thank you for your response.

Appendix 2: Interview Guide

INTRODUCTION

Welcome and thank you for accepting to participate in my research study. My name is Apollos Chidera, a final year student of mass communication at the mountain top university, Ibafo. I am carrying out a research on **“Influence of Multi-level marketing media and approaches on consumer patronage of longrich products among civil servants in Ikeja Local government”** and everything you say here is confidential and only your first name will be used, is that okay by you?

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

- Respondent's name, age and occupation
- How long have you been into Longrich multi-level business?
- Why did you decide to start Longrich multilevel business?
- What media do you use mostly to advertise Longrich products?
- What marketing strategy and media do you use to distribute Longrich products?
- What marketing strategy and media do you use to get people to register for Longrich multi-level marketing business?
- Do you face any challenge as a Longrich multi-level marketer?
- If yes, what are the challenges you face as a multi-level marketer when distributing Longrich products or trying to convince people to register on Longrich business?
- How many customers do you get in a day/week/month?
- Do you think your choice of media and marketing strategy has influenced people to patronize you?
- As a Longrich multi-level marketer, what do you think is their strongest point or niche?