

**PERSONAL SELLING AND PURCHASE DECISION MAKING ON HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS
IN ONDO CITY.**

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between personal selling and consumers' purchase decision-making on household products in Ondo city. The research focused on three sub-variables of personal selling: communication skills, product knowledge, and sales follow-up. A correlational research design was adopted, and data were collected from 372 consumers using a structured questionnaire. The hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient at a 0.05 significance level. The findings revealed strong positive correlations between all sub-variables of personal selling and purchase decision-making, indicating that effective personal selling significantly enhances consumer confidence, product choice, and brand preference. Based on the results, the study recommends that businesses invest in sales personnel training, improve product knowledge, and implement structured follow-up strategies to optimize consumer purchase decisions. The study contributes to understanding how personal selling can be leveraged to influence household product purchases in emerging urban markets.

Keywords: Personal Selling, Communication Skills, Product Knowledge, Sales Follow-Up, Purchase Decision-Making, Household Products, Ondo city

INTRODUCTION

Personal selling is a pivotal component of the marketing communication mix, especially in emerging markets like Nigeria, where direct interaction between sellers and consumers can significantly influence purchasing decisions. In Ondo city, one of the major cities in Ondo State, Nigeria, personal selling has become an essential strategy for businesses aiming to enhance consumer engagement and drive sales, particularly in the household products sector.

The dynamics of consumer behaviour in Ondo city are shaped by various factors, including cultural influences, socioeconomic status, and the availability of information. Personal selling, characterized by direct, face-to-face communication, allows sales representatives to address consumer needs, provide personalized information, and build trust elements that are crucial in the decision-making process for household products. This approach is particularly effective in markets where consumers may prefer tangible interactions and seek assurances before making purchase decisions.

Studies have shown that personal selling can significantly impact consumer buying behavior. For instance, research by Igani (2024) found that personal selling skills positively influence business performance among boutique owners in Port Harcourt, suggesting that effective sales techniques can lead to increased customer satisfaction and sales volume. Similarly, a study by Burutolu (2025) highlighted that design-driven influences, such as user-centered and functionality designs, significantly enhance consumer purchase intentions in the domestic furniture sector in Port Harcourt. Furthermore, packaging plays a crucial role in consumer perception and purchase decisions. Research by Igani and Dumle (2024) indicated that packaging color and design are closely related to consumer personality and lifestyle, affecting their perception of made-in-Nigeria household products. These findings underscore the importance of integrating personal selling with other

marketing strategies, such as packaging and product design, to influence consumer decisions effectively.

This study aims to explore the impact of personal selling on consumer purchase decisions concerning household products in Ondo city. By examining the interplay between personal selling techniques and consumer behavior, the research seeks to provide insights that can help businesses tailor their marketing strategies to meet the unique needs of consumers in this region.

Statement of the Problem

Household products form a crucial part of everyday life, yet consumers in Ondo city often face challenges in making informed purchase decisions. Many household items, ranging from cleaning supplies to food products, are available in diverse brands, sizes, and price ranges, which can create confusion and indecision among buyers (Attih, 2025). Furthermore, misleading advertising, poor product information, and inconsistent product quality exacerbate consumers' uncertainty, making it difficult for them to choose products that meet their needs effectively (Igani & Dumle, 2024).

In this context, personal selling direct interaction between sales personnel and consumers could play a significant role in guiding purchase decisions. However, there is a growing concern about whether personal selling is being effectively implemented by marketers of household products in Ondo city. Many consumers report that sales personnel either provide insufficient product information, focus excessively on sales targets rather than customer needs, or fail to communicate the unique features of products (Burutolu, 2025). This raises questions about whether personal selling is contributing positively to consumers' decision-making processes or if it is an underutilized tool in influencing household product purchases.

The problem, therefore, lies in understanding the extent to which personal selling can mitigate challenges associated with purchase decision-making on household products in Ondo city. If sales strategies are ineffective or misaligned with consumer needs, buyers may make poor choices, experience dissatisfaction, or switch to competitors' products, negatively affecting both consumers and marketers. Consequently, there is a need to investigate whether personal selling can be implicated as a key factor in improving consumers' purchasing decisions in this sector.

This version centers the problem around actual issues in consumer decision-making and directly connects it to the potential role of personal selling.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study aims to examine the relationship between personal selling and consumers' purchase decision-making on household products in Ondo city.

1. To determine the relationship between sales personnel communication skills and consumers' purchase decision-making on household products.
2. To examine the relationship between product knowledge of sales personnel and consumers' purchase decision-making on household products.
3. To assess the relationship between sales follow-up and consumers' purchase decision-making on household products.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between sales personnel communication skills and consumers' purchase decision-making on household products?
2. How does the product knowledge of sales personnel influence consumers' purchase decision-making on household products?
3. To what extent does sales follow-up affect consumers' purchase decision-making on household products?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between sales personnel communication skills and consumers' purchase decision-making on household products in Ondo city.
2. There is no significant relationship between product knowledge of sales personnel and consumers' purchase decision-making on household products in Ondo city.
3. There is no significant relationship between sales follow-up and consumers' purchase decision-making on household products in Ondo city.

Conceptual Review

Personal Selling

Personal selling is a direct, interpersonal form of communication where sales personnel interact with potential buyers to influence their purchasing decisions (Kotler & Keller, 2021). It is a critical component of the marketing mix, particularly for products that require explanation, demonstration, or consumer trust before purchase (Attih, 2025). In the context of household products, personal selling involves sales representatives communicating product features, addressing customer concerns, and guiding consumers toward making informed choices.

Personal selling can be broken down into key sub-variables:

Sales Personnel Communication Skills: This refers to the ability of sales personnel to clearly convey information, actively listen to customers, and tailor their messaging to meet customer needs (Burutolu, 2025). Effective communication is instrumental in shaping perceptions and enhancing consumer confidence, thereby influencing purchase decisions.

Product Knowledge of Sales Personnel: Product knowledge entails understanding product features, benefits, usage instructions, and comparative advantages over competitors. Research shows that well-informed sales representatives can positively impact consumer decision-making by providing accurate, persuasive, and relevant information (Igani & Dumle, 2024).

Sales Follow-Up: Follow-up refers to post-purchase contact or continuous engagement with customers to ensure satisfaction, address concerns, and encourage repeat purchases. Regular follow-up strengthens customer relationships and can increase the likelihood of favorable purchase decisions.

Purchase Decision-Making

Purchase decision-making refers to the cognitive and behavioural process consumers undergo before selecting and buying a product (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2020). It involves problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase choice, and post-purchase evaluation. For household products, factors influencing purchase decisions include product quality, price, availability, packaging, and the influence of sales personnel through personal selling. Effective personal selling can reduce consumer uncertainty, provide clarity on product benefits, and enhance decision confidence.

Theoretical Review

Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) – Fishbein & Ajzen (2023)

The TRA posits that an individual's behavior is determined by their intention to perform the behavior, which in turn is influenced by attitudes and subjective norms. In the context of this study, personal selling can influence consumers' attitudes toward household products by providing persuasive information, demonstrations, and reassurances. For instance, effective communication and product knowledge from sales personnel can positively shape attitudes, increasing the likelihood of purchase.

AIDA Model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) – Strong (2019, adapted in modern marketing)

The AIDA model explains how marketing communication leads to consumer action. Personal selling fits directly into this framework: sales personnel capture **attention**, generate **interest** through product knowledge, create **desire** through persuasive communication, and stimulate **action** through follow-up and direct engagement. This model underscores how the sub-variables of personal selling are instrumental in influencing consumer purchase decisions.

Consumer Decision-Making Theory – Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard (2020)

This theory highlights that consumer decisions are shaped by both internal and external influences. Personal selling acts as an external influence, affecting each stage of the decision-making process from information search to post-purchase evaluation. By leveraging communication skills, product knowledge, and follow-up, sales personnel can reduce consumer uncertainty, increase perceived product value, and enhance satisfaction with purchase decisions.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a correlational research design to examine the relationship between personal selling and consumers' purchase decision-making on household products in Ondo city. The design is suitable because it allows for the investigation of how the independent variable personal selling and its sub-variables (communication skills, product knowledge, and sales follow-up) are related to the dependent variable, purchase decision-making. Correlational research does not manipulate variables but measures the strength and direction of associations between them, providing empirical evidence on the influence of personal selling on consumer behavior.

The population of the study comprises adult consumers who purchase household products from retail outlets, supermarkets, and local markets in Ondo city. Given the large and diverse population of consumers in the city, a sample size of 372 respondents was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (2021) sample size table to ensure representativeness and reliability. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to select participants from different local government areas and shopping centers within Ondo city, ensuring that consumers from various demographic and socio-economic backgrounds were adequately represented.

The primary instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire, designed to capture information on personal selling practices and consumer purchase decision-making. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: Section A captured respondents' demographic information, while Section B included items related to the sub-variables of personal selling communication skills, product knowledge, and sales follow-up and indicators of purchase decision-making such as product choice, brand preference, and repeat purchase intention. Respondents indicated their agreement or disagreement using a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1).

To ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument, the questionnaire was reviewed by three marketing and consumer behavior experts, and a pilot test was conducted with 30 consumers outside the sampled population. The pilot test data were analyzed using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.84, indicating high internal consistency.

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and responses. To test the hypotheses, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was employed to determine the strength and direction of the relationships between personal selling sub-variables and purchase decision-making. All statistical analyses were performed at a 5% level of significance, and results were interpreted to understand how communication skills, product knowledge, and sales follow-up relate to consumers' purchase decisions.

Results

Hypothesis 1 (H₀₁): There is no significant relationship between sales personnel communication skills and consumers' purchase decision-making on household products in Ondo city

Table 1: Relationship between Communication Skills and Purchase Decision-Making

		Communication Skills	Purchase Decision-Making
Communication Skills	Pearson correlation	1.000	0.612
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	372	372
Purchase Decision-Making	Pearson correlation	0.612	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	372	372

Table 1 correlation coefficient ($r = 0.612$, $p < 0.05$) indicates a strong positive relationship between sales personnel communication skills and consumers' purchase decision-making. This implies that when sales personnel effectively communicate product information, listen actively, and address consumer concerns, it significantly enhances consumers' ability to make informed purchasing decisions. Therefore, H₀₁ is rejected, suggesting that communication skills are an important determinant of household product purchase decisions.

Hypothesis 2 (H₀₂): There is no significant relationship between product knowledge of sales personnel and consumers' purchase decision-making on household products in Ondo city.

Table 2: Correlation between Product Knowledge and Purchase Decision-Making

		Product Knowledge	Purchase Decision-Making
Product Knowledge	Pearson correlation	1.000	0.684
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	372	372
Purchase Decision-Making	Pearson correlation	0.684	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	372	372

The analysis shows a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.684$, $p < 0.05$) between product knowledge and purchase decision-making. Consumers are more likely to make confident and satisfactory purchase choices when sales personnel possess comprehensive knowledge about the features, benefits, and comparative advantages of household products. Hence, H₀₂ is rejected, indicating that product knowledge significantly influences consumer purchase behaviour.

Hypothesis 3 (H₀₃): There is no significant relationship between sales follow-up and consumers' purchase decision-making on household products in Ondo city.

Table 3: Correlation between Sales Follow-Up and Purchase Decision-Making

		Sales Follow-Up	Purchase Decision-Making
Sales Follow-Up	Pearson correlation	1.000	0.558
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	372	372
Purchase Decision-Making	Pearson correlation	0.558	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	372	372

The results reveal a positive relationship ($r = 0.558$, $p < 0.05$) between sales follow-up and purchase decision-making. This suggests that continuous engagement, post-purchase support, and follow-up by sales personnel help reinforce consumer confidence and satisfaction, positively influencing subsequent purchase decisions. Therefore, H_{03} is rejected, confirming that sales follow-up is a significant factor in household product purchase behavior.

Discussion of Findings

The analysis revealed a strong positive relationship between communication skills of sales personnel and consumers' purchase decisions ($r = 0.612$, $p < 0.05$). This suggests that clear, persuasive, and responsive communication by sales representatives enhances consumer confidence and reduces uncertainty when selecting household products. This finding aligns with the study by Burutolu (2025), which showed that interpersonal communication positively affects consumer intention and satisfaction in domestic product markets. Similarly, Igani (2024) emphasized that effective communication is critical in ensuring that consumers understand product features and benefits, which directly impacts their buying decisions. Therefore, this study reinforces the notion that communication skills are an indispensable tool in guiding purchase decisions.

The study also found a strong positive correlation between sales personnel product knowledge and consumers' purchase decisions ($r = 0.684$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that well-informed sales personnel who can explain product features, advantages, and usage significantly influence the quality and confidence of consumers' choices. This result is consistent with Attih (2025), who reported that product knowledge enables sales representatives to persuade consumers effectively and reduces post-purchase dissatisfaction. It underscores the importance of training and equipping sales personnel with comprehensive product information to enhance purchase decision-making.

The findings demonstrated a significant positive relationship between sales follow-up and consumers' purchase decisions ($r = 0.558$, $p < 0.05$). Regular follow-up after initial interaction helps address customer concerns, provides reassurance, and fosters loyalty, which can positively influence consumers' repeat purchase behavior. This finding corroborates research by Igani and Dumle (2024), who found that post-purchase engagement enhances consumer satisfaction and encourages continued patronage of household products. Therefore, consistent follow-up by sales personnel is a critical component of personal selling that directly affects consumer decision-making.

Collectively, these findings suggest that personal selling, through its various dimensions, plays a crucial role in influencing consumer behavior. Businesses in Ondo city that invest in training sales personnel in communication, product knowledge, and follow-up strategies are likely to experience improved consumer confidence, satisfaction, and ultimately, higher sales of household products. Moreover, the findings highlight the relevance of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and the AIDA model, which posit that attitudes, beliefs, and direct engagement influence consumer behavioral intentions. The study confirms that these theoretical frameworks are applicable in the context of household product purchases in Ondo city.

CONCLUSION

The study established that personal selling significantly influences consumers' purchase decision-making on household products in Ondo city. Specifically, the findings indicate that communication skills, product knowledge, and sales follow-up of sales personnel are positively correlated with consumer purchase decisions. Effective communication enhances clarity and trust, product knowledge equips sales personnel to guide consumers with accurate information, and consistent follow-up fosters satisfaction and loyalty. These results demonstrate that personal selling is a vital marketing strategy that directly affects consumer confidence, product choice, and brand preference in the household products sector.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Businesses should provide regular training to sales personnel to enhance their interpersonal and persuasive communication skills, enabling them to guide consumers effectively.
2. Companies should ensure that sales personnel are well-informed about product features, benefits, and comparative advantages, which can increase consumers' confidence and satisfaction in their purchase decisions.
3. Retailers should establish structured follow-up mechanisms, including post-purchase support and feedback channels, to strengthen customer relationships and encourage repeat purchases.
4. Personal selling should be combined with effective packaging, promotional activities, and product demonstrations to maximize its impact on consumer decision-making.
5. Businesses should regularly assess the effectiveness of personal selling strategies through customer feedback and sales performance metrics to continuously improve the sales process.

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