

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE CONSUMERHALLA BRAND

# Hello CONSUMERS!

MAIDEN EDITION

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JANUARY - MARCH, 2024

**Hope rises for over 200m  
Nigerians**

**Nigerian Banks splash  
over N1b on consumers**

**Fake, Fake Products  
everywhere**

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## Consumers name their Brands of the year

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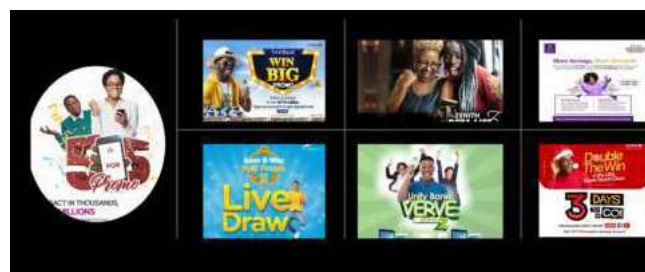


my bank and I

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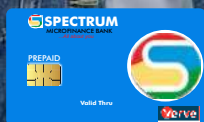
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# Nigerian consumers finally got a voice

**L**ike the proverbial Chinese saying that “a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step”, it was a seven-year journey, but we are glad to announce the final arrival of our quarterly consumer-centric tabloid – “Hello Consumers”.

With precept upon precept, line upon line, we have been able to put together this unique publication, that aims to give voice to over 200 million Nigerian consumers.

Hello Consumers is an analytical, insightful, informative, educative, and newsworthy publication that hopes to create a strong connection between consumers and brands in Nigeria. It promises to constantly echo the voices of consumers while providing brands with a platform to engage constantly with the millions of consumers in Nigeria and beyond. It offers a true reflection of consumer perception.

It is an offshoot of our ConsumerHalla brand – the foremost and fastest-growing online consumer engagement and solution portal currently reaching over a million active consumers daily and powered by a 72-hour feedback mechanism.

At Hello Consumers, our mission is to help build an enhanced relationship between brands and consumers by creating a robust market platform where conversations thrive. We bring a broader perspective into the growing world of consumerism. Some of the quarterly interesting features include:

- Consumer News and Analysis
- Consumer Analytics
- Product Brand Review

- Consumer Insight and Intelligence
- Consumer Food Basket
- Shopper's Guide & Best Deals
- Brand Personae
- Consumer Rights & Protection
- Consumer Fashion & Style
- Consumer Property Market
- Consumer Technology
- Consumer Tips & Tricks
- Consumer Voice Pop
- Special Editorial Report
- Expert Views & Opinions
- Consumer Finance
- Consumer Investment Guide

Hello Consumers comes refreshingly to you every quarter in A-4 all-color, fine print format. Our circulation for now is by subscription and through existing news magazine distribution channels. The publication will also be available on the ConsumerHalla portal for subscription download. It is a must-read for consumers, brand reputation managers, product marketing managers, Companies, and government agencies.

With Hello Consumers, you can hear the voice of your consumers and gauge the true undiluted perception of your brand.

For instance, in this maiden edition, we took to the street of Lagos towards the tail end of 2023 to hear what consumers have to say about some of the brands operating within the Nigerian economic sectors. Feedback The feedback we got was as revealing and as well interesting. We think it's a MUST-READ for all operating brands in the country and other consumers alike. We plan to bring you more perspectives on this in our next edition.



Now, as a consumer, you can make your voice count and you will never walk alone! This is our promise.

Welcome to a new and refreshing world of consumers!



**At Hello Consumers, our mission is to help build an enhanced relationship between brands and consumers by creating a robust market platform where conversations thrive. We bring a broader perspective into the growing world of consumerism**



*Tunde Olufowora*  
PUBLISHER/EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



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# Hello Consumers and the world of Consumers

Communication is very important in life and it is as old as human existence. It is universal and vital to life to the extent that without it, life may cease to have meaning.

To the Sociologists, communication does the following essentials: creates better relationships, helps solve conflicts, improves productivity, builds trust, encourages team building, helps connect with others, builds empathy, influences learning, develops personality, and increases engagement.

In modern business, information and communication management with customers is vital to the symbiotic relationship that exists between business owners and consumers, especially in a competitive industry.

Except in a monopolistic market, where it still exists, the reality is that the world now belongs to consumers. It is called the Consumer Market. Consumers expectedly dictate the policies of companies and keep the ones they love in business through their behaviour. The realization of this ultimate power of consumers is behind the deliberate strategies of companies in managing customers' expectations

Hello Consumers Magazine is a unique publication and it will be a platform to promote the business interest of the brands and their consumers.

It will strengthen the world of consumers through incisive market intelligence and investigative fair reporting

We will elevate creativity and provide a platform for expression for brands without compromising the rule of ethical and responsible journalism.

In this maiden edition, Hello Consumers went to the streets to ask for consumers' experiences on brands and vote for brands that have acquired strong equity in their minds in 2023. The revealing verdicts, based on their personal experience and satisfaction

index with the brands, are very helpful not only to the brands but other stakeholders. In a nutshell, it will help the brands to shape up and work to attain customer loyalty and satisfaction.

We also bring to you the efforts of banks in hyping the promotion channel in their marketing mix to attract savings deposits through the acts of enticing and rewarding customers with gifts and cash. This mutually beneficial relationship has helped both parties - banks and their customers. The banks have in the process reinvigorated their brands in the minds of the people and the process cash-lifted them too. The promos have thus become a competition tool in the erstwhile

conservative industry.

Nigerians are interesting people and there is no dull moment for them. They shared their experiences in the year 2023 with Hello Consumers which largely was challenging. They also know what they want from the government in 2024 and pointedly expressed them in clear terms to have a better life. Their suggestions are varied but most agreed on critical areas the government must focus on to achieve a modicum of success in governance - improved power supply, reduced inflation, and moderate petroleum pricing.

The issue of fake drugs, foods, and drinks in circulation now has progressed into an endemic state and practically getting out of control for the regulatory agencies in charge-NAFDAC and SON. We bring to the fore again the damage this unpatriotic zeal of the merchant of death is doing to the country and how Nigerians can escape the death trap.

Since the '90s when it first emerged on Nigerian roads, the tricycle has become a way of life for average Nigerians and can be rightly termed the King of the Road. Believe it or not, the increase in the price of petroleum products has further erased the gap in social and economic status. Keke or tricycle is now a leveler in the transportation sector in the country and daily becoming a survival instinct.

There are many more consumer-centric reports in this Edition.

Always keep a date with Hello Consumers, the quarterly Magazine that is positioned to refresh, redefine, and reconstruct the world of brands and consumers. We are conscious of our pioneering role and vision.

Hello Consumers will welcome constructive feedback.

We are also committed to being a brand of first choice to you - our consumers.

You are welcome to the Hello Consumers readers list.



**At Hello Consumers, our mission is to help build an enhanced relationship between brands and consumers by creating a robust market platform where conversations thrive. We bring a broader perspective into the growing world of consumerism**



Editor

# Consumers name their brands of the year

## ... Access Bank, OPay, MTN, Air Peace, Coca-Cola Take the Lead

**N**igerian consumers have expressed their choice and preference for some brands operating in Nigeria in the year 2023 based on their interaction and engagement with the brands.

In a special market survey by Hello Consumers towards the tail end of the year 2023, consumers spoke freely about their choices, passing a vote of confidence on some brands while also expressing deep reservations about others.

Questions about service quality, pricing, taste, turn-around time, and product and service satisfaction, among others, were asked consumers on the streets of Lagos across key sectors in a one-on-one interview with our correspondents. Most of the responses and feedback were revealing and based primarily on brand familiarity and user experience.

For instance, within the commercial banking sector, 60 percent of consumers spoken with, rated Access Bank as the best brand of the year in the commercial banking sector hinging their decisions on the bank's fast, reliable quality service offerings, high daily transaction limit, and prompt and quick turnaround time. Some of the respondents were bank customers with at least two to three other bank accounts. So, their preferences were premised on the history of transactions and experience with other banks.

Access Bank is currently rated as one of the leading banks in Africa with a total asset net worth of over \$28billion as of March 2022 and a branch network of over 700 across the African continent.

The Bank has been named as one of the top 500 global banking brands, according to leading business valuation and strategy consultancy, Brand Finance.

Its website says: "Access bank is a wholly owned subsidiary of Access Holdings Plc ("Access Corporation"), a leading full-service commercial bank operating through a network of more than 700 branches and service outlets, spanning 3 continents, 17 markets, and 52 million customers." Some of the consumers spoken with attributed the success of the bank to this growing status.

Guaranty Trust Bank (GT Bank) was rated next to Access Bank, closely followed by Zenith Bank

Plc. GT received accolades for its quality banking platform and its support for large corporate businesses. On the other hand, Zenith Bank was commended for its excellent customer service and turn-around time (TAT).

In another segment rating of the financial sector, more than 70 percent of respondents voted OPAY Digital Services Limited (famously known as OPAY) as the best Financial Technology and mobile money services provider in the country based on zero charges on funds transfers (free transaction charges), fast and efficient funds transfer delivery, swift response to customer service. Their assessment and vote of confidence in the brand were unequivocal. Some even rated the brand as the best in the financial services industry. Many users of the OPay platform confirmed having other bank accounts but would prefer to use OPay particularly when it comes to funds transfer or making payments for their day-to-day transactions.

OPay Digital Services Limited is one of the fintech mobile money operators licensed by the Central Bank of Nigeria in 2018 to deepen the financial inclusion agenda in the country by the apex bank. It is a one-stop mobile-based platform for payments, transfers, loans, savings, and other



essential services for every individual. Currently, OPay boasts over 35+ million registered app users and 500,000 agents in Nigeria who rely on OPay's services to send and receive money, pay bills, and many more.

The company was founded by Opera Norway AS Group with footprints in emerging markets across Asia, Africa, and Latin America in countries like Mexico, Nigeria, Egypt, and Pakistan.

The company says on its website "We are committed to deepening financial inclusion through technology and enabling shared prosperity. We are more than a payment company, OPay is Beyond Banking". Observers say the company is gradually becoming the main alternative to banks particularly when it comes to money transfers and bill payments.

In the mobile telecommunication sector, MTN Nigeria came top of the minds of consumers concerning mobile telecommunication and internet services. Though few consumers also pitched Airtel as a key rival to MTN because of its data affordability and cheaper call rates, however majority of consumers voted for MTN as the best mobile telecommunication and internet provider in the country in the year 2023, largely because of their large network and reach across the country. Most consumers said the brand truly lives up to its brand promise of "everywhere you go". Other reasons adduced include fast and reliable services, a pocket-friendly data plan, and a stable network.

MTN is one of the leading three mobile telecommunications companies in Nigeria. Others are Airtel and Glo Mobile (an indigenous company). MTN started operations in Nigeria in the year 2001 and currently boasts a 76.7 million active subscribers base as of March 2023, arguably the largest amongst the telecommunication operators in the country. Nigeria currently has a population of over 220 million people. A recent report by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) put the number of telephone subscribers, which is mostly mobile, at the end of Year 2022 at 222.5 million. This implies that out of every three Nigerian mobile telephone subscribers, MTN has one subscriber. There are four nota-



**Herbert Wigwe, CEO, Access Bank**



**Access Bank is currently rated as one of the leading banks in Africa with a total asset net worth of over \$28 billion as of March 2022 and a branch network of over 700 across the African continent.**



ble mobile telephone operators in the country currently.

The company through its website says: "We believe that everyone deserves the benefits of a modern connected life. We are inspired by the potential of Africa. We are committed to bridging the digital and financial divide, furthering inclusion, and advancing the attainment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals through our core business activities and our support to governments, communities, and customers. The UN SDGs target a sustainable society with a plan to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure equality for all by 2030".

The other major sector that was rated by the consumers was the aviation sector. Currently, there are avalanches of service providers in the sector yet the general perception amongst consumers is that of abysmal services by many of the operators, largely amongst the local airlines. In the words of one of the respondents spoken to: "There are many dead woods amongst these airline operators in Nigeria that need to be weeded off. They ought not to be in operations and talk less of flying. We need urgent standardization and service quality checks in this sector, says Mr. Olalekan Braimah, a Lagos-based businessman.

However, some of the consumers spoke with expressed their preference for Air Peace as the best airline of the year when compared with others. Although they generally discountenance the quality of service across the sector, particularly with timely operation, they however pitched Air Peace above other rivals based largely on availability and good maintenance of air fleet. Interestingly Ibom Air came as the closest rival and was rated higher in terms of promptness and timely service delivery. The airline is relatively new in operations compared to Air Peace which started operations in Nigeria in 2013.

According to Wikipedia, Air Peace was founded in 2013 by Nigerian lawyer and businessman Allen Onyema who claims that he started the airline to use it as an engine to provide economic opportunities to Nigerian youth. The airline began operations with Dornier 328s and Boeing 737s. In 2017, the first international route to Kotoka International Airport in Accra, Ghana was launched. By 2018, Air Peace had the largest market share in the domestic airline market in Nigeria. That same year, the airline took delivery of its first Boeing 777s and it commenced flights to Sharjah UAE in 2019. Flights to Johannesburg, South Africa commenced in 2020. The airline is said to currently have 30 aircraft of an average age of 20 years in its fleet and presently flies across Nigeria and over 20 other destinations including regional and international routes.

Ibom Air, which came next in the consumer rating of the aviation sector, was commended for its on-schedule reliability, on-time departure, and customer service excellence. However, consumers' perception is that the airline service is not readily available across many routes in the country. Ibom Air is a limited liability company wholly owned by the Akwa Ibom State Government. It began operations in Nigeria only in



## Lead Story



**Mr. Daudu Gotring, CEO/Managing Director of OPay**

June 2019 and currently flies to only five cities in the country.

The airline says it aims to set the standard as the airline of choice for customers in Nigeria, West Africa, and beyond by focusing on service excellence, hospitality, and innovation, plus our infusion of style and grace!”

Our final consumer assessment of the year was on the beverage sub-sector (sweetened carbonated drinks in particular). Most of the feedback from consumers was quite revealing and interesting, pointing to the already known unending “cola war” between two globally known brands in the sector – Coca-Cola and Pepsi.

It’s interesting to note that despite the entrance of many brands in this sector, consumer choices remain largely between these two notable global brands. However, 60 percent of the respondents pitch a tent with Coca-Cola as the brand of the year 2023 in the beverage sub-sector. Their choices were hinged largely on the unique taste of the Coca-Cola brand despite reservations expressed by a few consumers on the high level of gas contained in the Coca-Cola products.

One of the respondents, Mr. Bright says this about his choice of the brand: “Coca-Cola is a brand that I grew up with. When I was still young, whenever I heard Coca-Cola, we became so excited, that even now little children still feel excited whenever they hear Coca-Cola, I love it especially when it is very chill. When I want to eat my local food or intercontinental dishes, it digests well with Coca-Cola. The company has done a great job in sustaining a standard and outstanding packaging, I will always go for Coca-Cola even if the price increases.”

Those who pitched for the Pepsi brand were also very unambiguous about their choice of the brand. Here is what one of the respondents (Mrs. Abdul Olushade) said about the brand: “I love Pepsi because it has less gas and is very refreshing, the pricing is okay if they don’t increase it and I love the packaging”

In any competitive business, one thing is cen-



**Coca-Cola is a brand that I grew up with. When I was still young, whenever I heard Coca-Cola, we became so excited, that even now little children still feel excited whenever they hear Coca-Cola, I love it especially when it is very chill.**



tral to the survival of the operators - attraction and retention of customers. The ability and capacity of the entities to implement strategies that will guarantee good products and services at good prices is very good but that is not all. A company should be able to influence its customers to a level of satisfaction and loyalty.

Getting to that comfort threshold by a company requires a gamut of strategies and tactics beyond merely offering quality products and promotional campaigns.

More precisely, customer satisfaction is the result of the interaction of a customer with a brand or its product/service, which shapes the customer’s perception of the brand. Customer satisfaction is important for businesses that want loyal and returning customers, good reviews, and a positive brand image.

This is what informed organizations to commit resources to gauge their customers’ temperature on how they are satisfying them holistically through brand audit and customer experience feedback.



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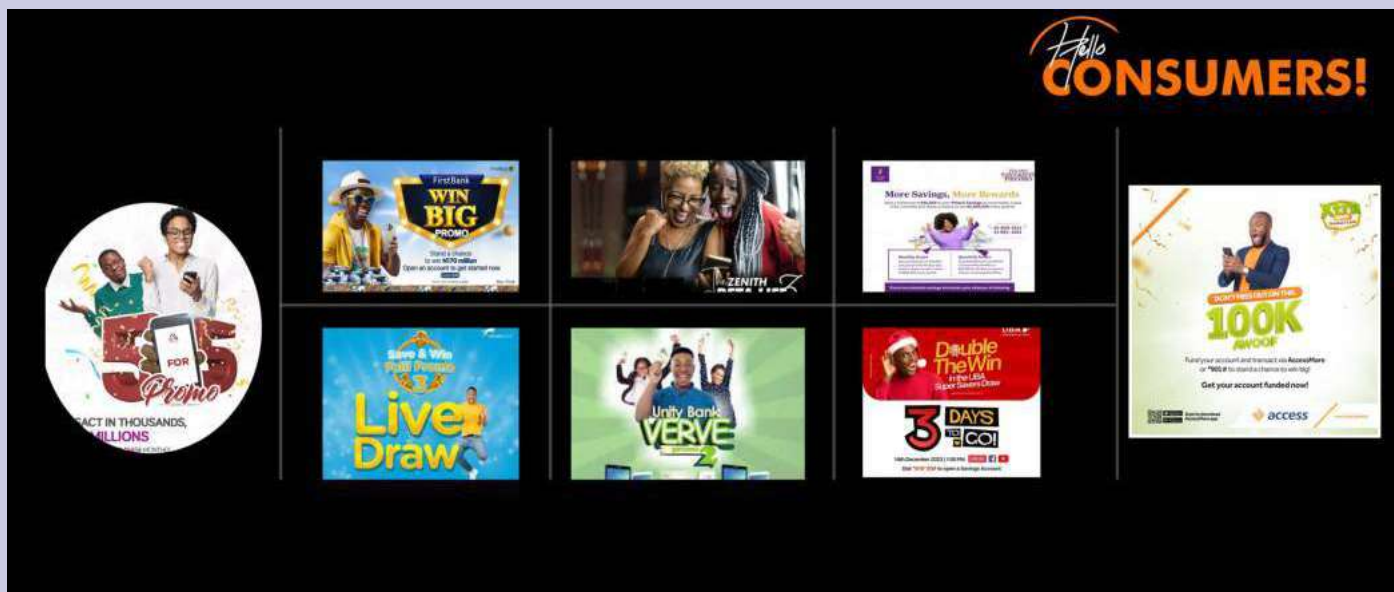
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# Nigerian banks splash N1Billion on promos to deepen consumer pockets

One are the days when the banking industry belongs to the conservative block. The sector has undergone a revolutionary transformation and caught the bug. They now fight competition and vie for visibility which is traditional to the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG).

For many years now, the banking quiet market approach has given way to sophisticated and populist public relations strategies prominent of which is the PROMOTIONS.

This strategy is now a common phenomenon and seasonless. As of December 2023, about 12 Nigerian commercial banks are running one promo or the other to attract customers and mobilize savings. Some of the promos were and are part of the banks' year-seasonal offerings to customers in terms of cash and assorted gifts. A total of N.526b was splashed (and being splashed) on customers by 12 banks in their last and ongoing Promos (see table below).

In a nutshell, promotions by banks as a marketing strategy are meant to expand brand awareness beyond existing customers or members. It is also meant to build client relationships (especially with high-end gifts) and improve brand association and affinity, establish a cohesive, professional, and trustworthy brand.

In facts and figures, the promo is beneficial to both the banks and their customers, contributing to a symbiotic relationship that fosters

growth and satisfaction on both ends.

## Benefits of Promotions to the banks and customers'

### Benefits to Banks

#### Customer Acquisition:

Attracting new Customers: Promos serve as powerful incentives for individuals to choose a particular bank over its competitors. Whether it's a limited-time offer on interest rates, cash rewards, or fee waivers, these perks attract new customers to the bank.

#### Market Differentiation:

Standing Out in a Crowded Market: In a competitive banking landscape, promo helps banks differentiate themselves. Unique and compelling offers create a distinctive brand identity, making the bank more memorable and appealing to consumers.

#### Product Cross-Selling:

Encouraging Product Exploration: Promo can be strategically designed to encourage customers to explore additional products and services. For example, a promo rate on a home loan might prompt customers to consider other banking products like insurance or investment services.

#### Brand Visibility:

Enhanced Presence: Aggressive promo cam-

paigns increase a bank's visibility in the market. Through various advertising channels, banks can expand their reach, reinforcing their brand and attracting a wider audience.

Bank promo can be highly beneficial to both banks and customers, contributing to a symbiotic relationship that fosters growth and satisfaction on both ends. Let's delve into the specific advantages for each party:

### Benefits to Customers

#### Cost Savings:

Financial Relief: The most direct benefit for customers is the opportunity to save money. Promos often translate into reduced costs, whether through lower interest rates, fee waivers, or cashback rewards, making banking services more affordable.

#### Incentives for Loyalty:

Building Customer Loyalty: Regular promos build a sense of appreciation and loyalty among existing customers. When a bank consistently rewards its clients with exclusive offers, these customers are more likely to stay with the bank over the long term.

#### Access to Better Products:

Exploring Premium Services: Promo introduces customers to premium products or services at discounted rates. This allows customers to experience higher-tier offerings, encouraging them to upgrade and benefit from enhanced features.

## Enhanced Financial Planning:

Informed Decision-Making: Promos empower customers to make more informed financial decisions. They provide an opportunity for clients to assess their current financial products and, if needed, switch to alternatives that better suit their needs.

In essence, bank promos create a mutually beneficial scenario. Banks leverage promotions as a strategic tool for growth, attracting and retaining customers in a fiercely competitive market. Meanwhile, customers enjoy cost savings, enhanced loyalty benefits, and the chance to explore and access better financial products. This symbiotic relationship is integral to the success and sustainability of both banks and their customer base. As the banking landscape evolves, well-crafted promotions will likely continue to play a pivotal role in shaping the dynamics of this relationship.



In a competitive banking landscape, promo helps banks differentiate themselves. Unique and compelling offers create a distinctive brand identity, making the bank more memorable and appealing to consumers.



Bank	Promo	Details of Reward
Wema	Spin the wheel and win! 5 for 5 Promo	<b>N90 million</b>
First Bank	Win big promo (October 2023 February 2024)	<b>N170 million:</b> N100,000 x1,240 customers N1million X 6 customers
UBA	Super Savers Draw (September 2023- February 2024)	<b>N26.6 million:</b> N10 million X1 winner N5 million X 1 winner N1.8 million yearly rent x1 winner N1 million X 10 winners N500k shopping X 1 winner N200k scholarship rewards x 15 children (017 years) N180k pocket money reward x 10 Nextgen winners N100k cash prize x 35 winner N10k weekly cash prize x more than 100 winners
Polaris	Save & Win Promo	<b>N500,000:</b> N10,000 X50 winners
Access	Xtra Wins: Transact & Win (October-December 2023)	<b>N1 million</b>
Union Bank	Save & Win Pali promo	<b>N89 million:</b> N51 million cash N5 million X 3vwinners Brand new GAC SUV
FCMB	Millionaire promo (November- December 2023)	<b>N4 million:</b> N1 million X4 winners
Stanbic IBTC	Reward4saving promo (July 2023-June 2024)	<b>N126 million:</b> N100,000X per winner
Fidelity	Savings Loyalty Reward	<b>N3.5 million:</b> N500,000 X 7 winners
Zenith	Beta Life Promo (June 2023 - May 2024)	<b>N3 million:</b> N150,000 worth of gifts X20 winners.
Heritage Bank		<b>N4million</b>
Unity Bank	Verve promo (August 2023- January 2024)	<b>N5million</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>N522.6 million</b>

# The rise and rise of pos banking services in Nigeria

In the last two decades, only a few policies of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) have made a phenomenal impact like the agent banking model introduced in 2013. Nigeria's agency banking has turned out to be a revolutionary bullet from the policy armory of the CBN that has addressed many poignant issues in the nation's economy.

With one policy alone, banking is now a democratized service accessible to the low and the upscale citizens, seamlessly bridging the gap between the formal and informal sectors, driving inclusive banking and at the same time, creating streams of income and employment in virtually all corners of Nigeria.

CBN's chief motivation for the agent banking channel is primarily to bring financial services closer to the unbanked and underbanked segments of society and this has provenly been a huge success. It has turned out to be a bang, making impacts beyond the forecasts of the apex bank.

The CBN was very calculative when it became imperative to adopt a mobile model to drive financial inclusion in Nigeria in 2013 after several pushbacks. The regulatory authority settled on two models for the implementation of Mobile Money Operations - bank-led and non-bank-led (agency banking). Both models involve the use of strategically positioned agents to provide essential banking services to users.

Within six years, agency banking, exemplified by the point of sales operator (PoS), has become a widely accepted and adopted policy, so that by 2019, there were over 15 million mobile money accounts in Nigeria.

As of September 2022, the volume of PoS transactions in Nigeria rose to N4.6 trillion, from 706.8 million in the corresponding time in 2021.

The number of PoS terminals in Nigeria grew significantly from around 155,000 to 1.1 million, as of April 2022; and PoS agents have increased up to 1.9 million as of January 2023. With figures like this, it is a no-brainer that PoS agents or agency banking hold the key to financial inclusion in Nigeria.

According to the Nigeria Interbank Settlement System, (NIBSS), there was a 153% growth in the use of mobile for financial transactions, surpassing the N8 trillion recorded in 2021. The surge was bolstered by the rising mobile connections across the country.

As its adoption continues to deepen, more and



more people are exploring ways to benefit from the banking rave by embracing it as a side or major source of income.

To further boost financial inclusion, especially in rural areas, and facilitate transactions, the CBN awarded three more licenses to telecommunications companies in 2022 - MTN (Momo PSB), Airtel (SmartCash PSB), and Globacom (Moneymaster PSB) - to operate agency banking. This is aimed at achieving the targeted 95% financial inclusion by 2024.

## What is a Mobile Money Agent?

A mobile money agent is essentially a novel point of call for banking services such as cash

withdrawal, cash deposit, utility bill payments, airtime recharge, and even account creation.

It has become so ubiquitous in Nigeria today that in many areas, particularly in rural regions, it is faster and easier to get basic banking services through mobile money agents than it is to find an automated teller machine (ATM). These agents are highly mobile because they only need one critical operational tool to perform all their transactions: a Point of Sale (PoS) machine. This business continues to thrive in urban and rural centers because of some unique advantages it offers which includes being able to help their clients with fewer banking hurdles such as being faster, easily accessible, comparatively cost-ef-

fectiveness, and friendly in terms of operational hours flexibility. Also, besides the advantages mobile money agents provide to the masses, PoS agents make money from the business.

For clarity, mobile money involves the use of mobile phones for the initiation, authorization, and confirmation of the transfer of a value out of a current/checking, savings, or stored value account.

Agent banking is a global initiative in which

rienced by users of commercial banks during the period popularized mobile apps and other digital channels and caused many Nigerians to shift to other financial services providers, especially fintechs for a better experience.

### Mobile banking and Nigeria's Fintech

True to their expectations, fintechs have been providing succor for Nigerians as alternative

Just recently, the CBN also licensed 17 companies as mobile money operators to deepen the project. These service providers have been providing relief to Nigerians in recent times as banks' digital transaction channels fail in service delivery.

The year 2022 saw the continued rise of Nigeria tech start-up funding. Between January and August 2023, a total of \$747,908,000 was raised by 107 fintech start-ups in Nigeria. To show the growth of the fintech space, Nigeria's fintech unicorns have grown to five with Flutterwave, OPay, and Andela attaining unicorn status last year, joining Interswitch and Jumia.

The year also saw an increase in Agent Banking with an all-time high of about 1.4 million agents spread across the country, through the Shared Agent Network Expansion Facility (SANEF).



Nigeria is playing a lead role because of its population and peculiarities.

The CGAP, a global partnership of more than 30 leading development organizations that works to advance the lives of poor people, especially women, through financial inclusion did a survey on mobile money business profitability, which involved major mobile network operators in over 15 markets. 64 percent of the respondents launched mobile money in the past year and 70 percent claim to have already reached over half a million customers each with transfers or bill payments or both.

The wave of the naira scarcity that blew in Nigeria a few months ago and service glitches expe-

basic financial service providers. Aside from swift transfers, mobile money operators are also offering perks such as zero charges and daily rewards for customers.

However, there is a source of concern for some customers, who are unaware of the status of these financial service providers. Some customers fear that these branchless 'banks' might disappear with their money one day.

But the truth is that these neo-banks are duly licensed by the CBN. What this means is that they cannot just disappear, and the customers' funds in their care are also safe. Deposits in these fintechs are also insured by the Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC), just like the commercial banks.



**The CBN was very calculative when it became imperative to adopt a mobile model to drive financial inclusion in Nigeria in 2013 after several pushbacks. The regulatory authority settled on two models for the implementation of Mobile Money Operations - bank-led and non-bank-led (agency banking). Both models involve the use of strategically positioned agents to provide essential banking services to users.**



# AI Banking takes the Lead in Nigeria, projected to save banks over \$447 billion by 2030

Imagine walking into an empty banking hall and still being able to be served a banquet of banking services with precision. Or being served full banking services virtually without an conversation with any human being. That sounds strange and unrealistic. Or consider a situation where a banking customer would have no reason to visit the banking hall any more and yet receive attention 24 hours for his or her need and have issues resolved without human intervention from the other end.

Well, the fact is, it's already happening. It has become today's reality and not a project of the future. Welcome to the world of Artificial Intelligence Banking (AIB)

## What is AI?

According to Google Search: Artificial intelligence (AI) is the ability of a digital computer or a computer-controlled robot to perform tasks commonly associated with intelligent beings. The transformative impact of AI has been very positive since its inception, transforming how businesses and enterprises operate and deliver services to their customers, especially in the banking and finance sector.

The introduction of AI banking apps and services has made the banking sector more consumer-friendly and technologically relevant.

AI-based systems are now helping banks reduce costs by increasing productivity and making decisions based on information relating to human behavior. Also, intelligent algorithms can spot fraudulent information in a matter of seconds.

Here are some of the AI banking technologies that have been adopted by several banks in Nigeria for online customer resolutions: Zenith Bank – Ziva; FCMB – Temi; UBA – Leo; Fidelity Bank – Ivy; Access Bank – Tamada; Heritage Bank – Octopus; Keystone Bank – Oxygen.

These chatbots are designed to assist customers with banking tasks and provide speedy customer service response and resolutions.

The future of chatbots in the Nigerian banking industry holds the potential for enhanced customer service, faster query resolution, and online transactions service.

The global market for AI banking tech is projected to reach just over \$64 billion by 2030 and experts also suggest that AI could save banks \$447 billion by the end of 2023.



**Dr Olayemi Cardoso, Governor, CBN**

As technology evolves, advanced chatbots with AI are capable of handling complex inquiries, providing customer-related services, and improving user experience in the banking sector. The AI for corporate banking automates tasks and boosts customer services through chatbots. It has been designed to detect fraud, optimize investments, and predict market trends. AI has helped to increase productivity, lower the cost of labor, and provide individual service. Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System head of Enterprise Support Service, Bolanle Enigbokan, says "The application of AI with payments in Nigeria is largely still on the surface level dominated by anti-fraud and credit worthiness".

AI in banking has different applications of which the most popular are:

1. Chat-Bots and Virtual Assistants: This is powered by AI and it has become very functional in modern banking. These applications use natural language processing (NLP) and machine learning algorithms to understand and give good customer service.

2. Risk assessment and credit rating: The regular method of accessing credibility can be time-consuming and might not produce an accurate representation of a borrower's financial situation. AI algorithms, on the other hand, can analyze a wider range of data points, including social media and online behavior.

3. Fraud Detection and Prevention: AI plays a very important role in protecting the security of banking operations. It also identifies potentially fraudulent activities and allows banks to take haste action to prevent financial losses. Algorithms can analyze unusual patterns and financial transactions.

4. Operational and Automation Efficiency: AI-driven process automation has transformed the way banks handle routine tasks, systems powered by AI have the ability to streamline workflows and reduce manual intervention. By automating these processes, banks can enhance efficiency, reduce the cost of operations, and minimize human errors. This allows employees to focus more on high-value tasks.

# How agency banking changes the dynamics of cash management by banks

No doubt the emergence of agency banking is redefining the art of traditional cash management systems banks are noted for. Banks until now had exclusively managed cash by mobilizing and dispensing it through various branches and ATMs. So, it is a common sight to see people at the banking halls or queue at ATMs to get cash.

Banks also depend on cash deposits from traders and businessmen who visit the banks to deposit proceeds of sales regularly. This is a regular and core business of branches especially cash-centered in markets or businesses that involve cash such as petrol stations.

Thus, banks are constantly fed with cash from the markets instead of getting supplies only from their head office, nearest branch, or even from the CBN from their cash deposit reserve.

But all this, like many things in the banking industry, is changing. Banks don't get cash from the markets anymore. They rather endlessly have to be feeding their vault from somewhere else as cash that goes out hardly comes back to them.

The PoS operators now do funds mopping directly from the markets and traders now to dispense to the end users, without having to visit the banking halls. This gives them instant access to cash and it pays the traders too who need not leave their offices to go to the banking hall to make cash deposit. This is done at a commission margin and both parties are happy, short-circuiting banks in the process.

When cash from the markets is not even enough, the PoS operators visit the banks and their ATMs to mop up cash. So, the banks constantly have their ATMs being dried up of cash by the PoS operators who move from one ATM to the other with multiple ATM Cards, without adequate compensation for the intermediation role.

The banks have to fire back too and devise means to keep the PoS antics under check.

Banks have now resorted to ration money cashable in the banking halls and even on ATMs to as low as N5,000 per withdrawal and with limits on the number of times one can withdraw in a day. This is, however, putting pressure on non-PoS operators who need cash.

The consequence of all these dynamics is that with the PoS operator on the scene, the issue of cashless banking is getting defeated as the PoS operators are now in charge of cash. The Fintechs are also beneficiaries of these trends as they now host most of the platform's customers are now using for PoS transactions.

If the trend goes deeper, the banks may gradually whittle down their cash management operations as some of them now do. It is now a common sight to see only one or two designated tellers in banking halls as the PoS operators have cornered their customers from the corners of the street.

## What to know to operate a PoS business

The ability to meet the documentation requirements of the host bank is very key. For a medium-size PoS operator, the startup capital requirement is about N100,000 including money to get the PoS machine.

A prospective operator needs to decide

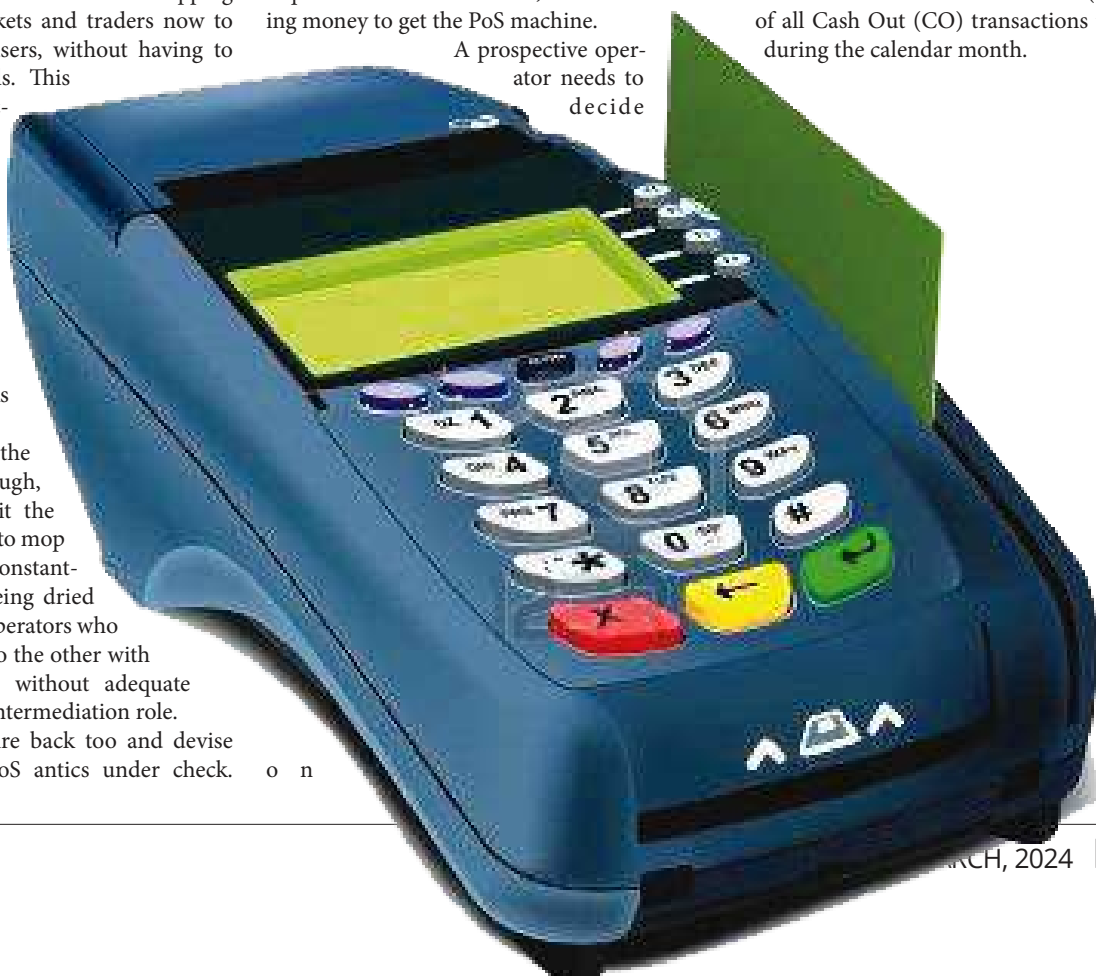
a Mobile Money Operator and complete the onboarding process. A list of required documentation to operate an agent banking PoS will include:

- Valid means of Identification - National ID card, international passport, Driver's license.
- Bank Verification Number
- An active account with the bank or agency of your choice
- Business Registration documents from the Corporate Affairs Commission
- Contact details: address, email, phone numbers
- References

## How do PoS agents make money?

**Transaction Fees:** One of the primary ways PoS agents make money is through transaction fees. Whenever they facilitate a financial transaction for a customer, they receive a small fee or commission. This fee can vary depending on the type and amount of the transaction.

**Commissions:** Mobile money agents earn commissions depending on the volume of transactions they make which varies but it's typically between 0.5% of all the Cash-in (CI) and 1% of all Cash Out (CO) transactions that happen during the calendar month.



# Carbonated and Alcoholic Drinks

Every brand has its messaging style, values, and overall identity that creates a unique and relatable character in the eyes of consumers.

Hello Consumers regularly carry out surveys targeted towards the different perspectives consumers have, concerning particular products offered by different brands in Nigeria.

In this category, we interviewed consumers to understand their overall perception of sweetened carbonated and alcoholic drinks (beer) in Nigeria, and why and what they love about them.

Below is the list of questions we asked during the interview and their responses

## Review Questions:

- Do you take carbonated soft drinks?
- If yes, what brand of carbonated drink do you take?
- Why do you like your most-preferred sweetened carbonated drink?
- What do you have to say about the brand generally?

## Responses (based on consumers' choice)



Mr Favour shared his personal view saying,  
"I take Coca-Cola soft drink. The taste of Coca-Cola is different. The

price is okay for now and I like the branding."

### Mr. Bright

Mr. Bright

"Yes, I prefer Coca-Cola. Coca-Cola is a brand that I grew up with, when I was still young whenever I heard Coca-Cola we became so excited, that even till now little children still feel excited whenever they hear Coca-Cola, I love it especially when it is very chilled. When I want to eat my local food or intercontinental dishes, it digests well with Coca-Cola."



### • Mrs Abdul Olushade stated,

"I love Pepsi because it has less gas and it is very refreshing. The pricing is okay and that's if they don't increase it and also, I love the packaging."

### • Fowoshere

"Yes I like Pepsi, because of less sugar and less gas, affordable and I like the packaging."

### • Miss Anuoluwapo

"I prefer Pepsi because it's easier to access, when I was in school Pepsi was always available whenever I feel like taking a soft drink, and for the price is still affordable but the price should be reduced or not added to, the branding is okay."

### • Mr Chinonso

"I like Pepsi because Pepsi have a good taste and less gas. Pepsi is the best and he's willing to buy despite the price increase and also I love the packaging"

### • Tohuwani Ayomide

"Yes, I take Pepsi. I love Pepsi because whenever I take Pepsi it gives me ginger and has a unique taste. Regarding the price, I believe they are working on the budget, and because am a lover of Pepsi I will still buy despite the price increase, and I love the packaging."

### • Michael Nwonko

"Yes I take Fanta Apple. The Fanta apple taste like Lacasera, but lascara make me belch and Fanta gives me a different feelings" also I like the branding. The pricing is okay, and has less gas."



### • Mr Joseph

"Yes I prefer Sprite because it's energizes my body, has low sugar. The price is okay, but the quantity should be added"

The following review was made by consumers based on each person's view of alcohol beer drinks in Nigeria. Here are the list of questions asked during the review and their responses subsequently

## Review Questions:

- Do you take alcohol beer?
- If yes, what brand of alcoholic beer do you consume?
- Why do you like your most-preferred

alcohol beer?

- What do you have to say about the brand generally, in terms of the price and packaging?
- Responses(based on consumers' choice)



### • Mr Ahmed

"Yes, I take beer mostly after work to ease off the stress of the day. I consume varieties, but I prefer Budweiser than others because the filter is okay, the flavor is good, and it is also good for the health. The price is okay. And I love the packaging too"

### • Mr Jerry

Yes, I love taking beer and I love Budweiser. The alcoholic content is okay, doesn't make me misbehave after having 2 or 3 bottles, and also, I take star but the alcohol is higher than Budweiser.

Branding and price are okay.

### • Mr Balogun

"Yes, I take beer, I love Goldberg because of its roots. It has less sugar and the price is high due to



inflation. The branding is okay."

### • Mr. Thomas

"Yes, I take beer, and my favorite beer is Goldberg. It is well blended and has a good taste. It makes me feel more relaxed, doesn't make me urinate often. The price is high because of the economy and it's a lovely product."



### • Mr. Vincent

"Yes, I take beer, and I prefer Heineken because of the blended taste, nourishment and its gives me satisfaction. The price is high and the brand is okay."

### • Mr. Jameson

Yes, I take beer, particularly Heineken. It has a mild taste, doesn't make me misbehave, and has a

high standard. The packaging is okay though the price varies, it's okay. They should keep up with the good work.

### • Mr. Emmanuel

Yes, I take beer, and I prefer Smirnoff beer drink because the taste is okay, doesn't have too much alcohol. The price is okay and the branding is okay.



### • Mr Tunde

I drink beer a lot but Trophy causes Pile. I also like small stout too. It's just the price is high now. How can I use #600 naira to drink Trophy beer when I have a family at home? If they can reduce the price of the Trophy beer, it will be okay.



# Hope rises for Nigerian consumers

## ... FG takes critical measures to boost economic activities

If the federal government faithfully executes its many socio-economic plans and policies, there is hope for an improved standard of living for Nigerians in a short time.

President Bola Tinubu had in his N27.5 trillion 2024 budget assured the government would ensure effective coordination of fiscal and monetary policy measures, and collaborate with sub-national governments to address structural factors stifling the development of economic activities in the country.

He stated that the Budget proposal 'meets our goal of completing critical infrastructure projects which will help address structural problems in the economy by lowering the costs of doing business for companies and the cost of living for the average person'.

Also, in his New Year Broadcast, President Tinubu committed himself to removing every obstacle that impedes economic recovery and competitiveness of the business environment, assuring that his administration would race against time to deliver necessary reforms that will make life better for all.

As part of this, the Federal Government has intensified the process to launch a massive consumer credit system in the country early this year to drive economic recovery, growth, and development, boosting industrial produc-

tion and as a strong weapon against poverty and corruption.

Against this backdrop, the Presidential Council on Industrial Revitalisation, on December 20, 2023, established a Technical Working Group to develop the needed framework to enhance consumer credit in Nigeria.

The Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Doris Uzoka-Anite has stated that "An efficient consumer credit system is a highly essential component of successful economies, as it works to improve market efficiencies and fill in gaps in consumption and productivity by providing consumers immediate access to credit, allowing them to purchase ahead of ability."

According to the Minister, Nigerians are facing hurdles in accessing credit due to stringent eligibility criteria, high interest rates, identity-related challenges, fragmented data sources for proof of livelihood and financial worth, lack of awareness or understanding of credit processes, and inadequate credit available for lending.

In this same thread, the Nigerian naira (cNGN) stablecoin was approved in November 2023 by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and it is slated for launch on February 27, 2024. Powered by the Africa Stablecoin

Consortium (ASC), a consortium of Nigerian financial institutions, fintechs, and blockchain experts, the stablecoin has met the regulatory standards and requirements as established by the CBN, the Nigerian Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), and the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU).

This cNGN will usher in a new era of financial fluidity, bridging the Nigerian Naira with the global market through blockchain technology and will transform the Naira into a dynamic tool for worldwide remittances, commerce, trade, and investment.

Also, the Federal Government has firmed up plans to disburse N75bn loans to Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) across the country through the Bank of Industry (BOI) at an interest rate of nine percent by January 2024.

Mr. Temitola Adegkunle-Johnson, Senior Special Assistant to the President on Job Creation and MSMEs, Office of the Vice-President, said that the move was part of an effort in keeping with President Bola Tinubu's promise to support the transformation of the MSMEs space in the country.

Adegkunle-Johnson explained that the Federal Government and the bank would leverage existing platforms to provide loans to small



businesses, targeting women and youths.

In addition, after years of dormancy, the Por-Harcourt Refinery Company (PHRC) has begun operation with a combined capacity of 210,000 barrels per day.

Consequent to the development, the Group Chief Executive Officer of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation Limited, NNPC-CL, Mele Kyari, said, "I can confirm to you that by the end of December this year, we will start the Port Harcourt refinery; early in the first quarter of 2024, we will start the Warri refinery, and by the end of 2024, Kaduna refinery will come into operation."

Meanwhile, with the commencement of Port Harcourt Refinery, stakeholders in the downstream sector said the price of fuel, which is over N617/litre, may drop.

Meanwhile, stakeholders in the downstream petroleum sub-sector drawn from the Natural Oil and Gas Suppliers Association of Nigeria (NOGASA) and the Petroleum Products Retail Outlet Owners Association of Nigeria (PETROAN) have assured that the prevailing crisis in the energy sector would soon end with the envisaged return of operations at the Port Harcourt Refinery, Rivers State in January.

The national president and chairman of, the Board of Trustees (BoT) of NOGASA, Mr. Kenneth Korie, and his PETROAN counter-



**With the CBN's approval, banks are now allowed to open bank accounts for crypto companies, also referred to as VASPs, provide them with designated settlement accounts, and act as channels for FX flows and trade.**



part, Dr. Billy Harry, who spoke after the inauguration of Akwa Ibom State chapters of the two industry regulatory bodies at Ibom Icon Hotel, Uyo, the state capital yesterday, said they were 100 percent sure that the prices of petroleum products would crash when the refineries begin to function again from January.

Korie, who blamed the current hike in prices of the products on importation, said rehabilitation and upgrade of the refineries in Port Harcourt, Kaduna, and Warri, which he said works have reached advanced stages, remain the sure way of collapsing the prices of the products.

The return of the refineries when completed will no doubt have huge multiplier effects on job creation and value chain.

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) mid-December 2023 legalized cryptocurrency by lifting the ban placed upon in 2021 while releasing guidelines for banks and other financial institutions when operating with entities that provide crypto services.

This directive is coming two years after crypto enthusiasts and companies yearned for the apex bank to lift the restriction.

The development will make Nigeria's financial space competitive for local and global businesses.

The adoption of Cryptocurrencies has the potential to lower the cost and increase the speed of cross-border remittances. People sending money to their home countries can benefit from reduced fees, which can have a positive impact on the economies of receiving nations.

One of the most significant contributions of cryptocurrencies to society is the promotion of financial inclusion. Traditional financial systems often exclude marginalized communities, leaving them without access to basic banking services.

With the CBN's approval, banks are now allowed to open bank accounts for crypto companies, also referred to as VASPs, provide them with designated settlement accounts, and act as channels for FX flows and trade.

Themed 'The Budget of Renewed Hope', the 2024 budget 'seeks to achieve job-rich economic growth, macro-economic stability, a better investment environment, enhanced human capital development, as well as poverty reduction, and greater access to social security.

President Tinubu had assured in his budget speech that a stable macroeconomic environment is important to catalyse private investment and accelerate economic growth and shall continue to implement business and investment-friendly measures for sustainable growth.

The President is very optimistic the economy will grow by a minimum of 3.76 percent as against the World Economic Outlook forecast of 3.1% in 2024.

# Fake, Fake Products Everywhere

**N**igerian consumers have more issues to worry about beyond the scarcity and high cost of goods - the integrity of the products they are buying. The deluge of counterfeit, fake, expired, and adulterated daily consumable and non-consumable goods in the markets across the country is assuming an epidemic state. Counterfeit products are fake or unauthorized replicas of the real product.

The development is leaving on its trail, not only a huge loss of resources but in severe cases loss of health and life. The incidence is also eroding the consumers' confidence in the goods available in the local, organized, or even structured markets.

A note of warning to consumers now is that the fear of buying fake and counterfeit products is the beginning of wisdom as the reign of fake products and drugs compounds the misery of Nigerians.

The two agencies of government in Nigeria saddled with the responsibilities of certifying and curtailing the circulation of fake and adulterated goods, whether locally produced or imported, the Standard Organization of Nigeria (SON) and the National Agency for Food, Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) seem to have been overwhelmed. The markets for fake goods keep expanding daily into more locations and increasingly affecting more goods, making the job of the SON and NAFDAC more complex.

The World Health Organization (WHO) explained in its 2023 Report that counterfeit medicine is a 'medicine that is deliberately and fraudulently misrepresented in identity, composition, or source'. Unknown manufacturers produce these medications under unhygienic and uncontrolled conditions. They might contain harmful contaminants, inactive components (such as chalk corn or potato starch), the wrong API or the incorrect amount of the right API, and no API at all. Falsified medications frequently have virtually the same packaging as genuine medication, making it difficult to distinguish between the two without conducting some detection tests on the medication's ingredients.

The NAFDAC DG, Prof. Prof Moji Adeyeye noted that the importation, distribution, and sales of fake, unsafe, and wholesome NAFDAC-regulated products represented a grave onslaught on human life.

Common household beverages are not left out in the infamous act of the evil merchants.



**Prof. Prof Moji Adeyeye, NAFDAC DG**

NAFDAC had recently alerted that the perpetrators of fake and adulterated goods also engage in the date revalidation for expired products like Peak milk, Powdered milk, Ketchups, Yoghurt, Coca-Cola products, packaging of fake and substandard products, which are later sold to unsuspecting members of the public.

The Agency in a statement in December revealed a list of adulterated wines and drinks in circulation, even as it has enlightened Nigerians on steps to verify the original products. This includes different kinds of wine from a wide variety of brands ranging from Seaman Schnapps, Hennessy, Four Cousins, Carlo Rossi, Jenney, Chelsea London Dry Gin, Schnapp Dry Gin, McDowell's, Black Labels, Gordons, Martell, Campari, Smirnoff Ice, Eva Non-Alcoholic Drink, Evra Non-Alcoholic Drink, Cartel, and others.

A sauce, which is said to be made in China, originally known as Amoy, had been faked to Amoy's, Amqy, Amuy, Amiy, Amoys, Anoy, and several other substandard variations with different flavours and packaging.

A brand of wine, Four Cousins, had been faked into 'Four Brothers', 'Nice Brothers', and many others. The popular Eva fruit wine has also been faked into three other variants.

The Pepsi-Cola brand, Pepsi, has also been faked to Popsi. Popular toothpaste brand, Close Up, has a parody variant, Open Up, with the same brand logo and catchphrase.

Stapes like rice, palm oil, and vegetable oil are

not spared as several consumers complain that several substandard versions have now flooded the market.

The antics of the cartels behind the adulterated goods in Nigeria could beat the eagle-eyed customers whether educated or not as they continue to perfect their nefarious act.

The adulteration of alcoholic beverages by the agents of death is done by mixing cheaper sources of sugar and starch besides grapes or fruit, among other harmful chemicals unsuitable for human consumption.

## Effects of Fake Products:

A report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime underscores the consequences of the influx. It said substandard drugs kill 500,000 persons in sub-Saharan Africa each year. As many as 267,000 deaths per year, it said, are linked to falsified and substandard anti-malarial medicines, the transnational organised crime threat assessment found.

In addition, up to 169,271 deaths are linked to falsified and substandard antibiotics used to treat severe pneumonia in children.

Similarly, the WHO estimates that caring for people who have used falsified or substandard medical products for malaria treatment in sub-Saharan Africa costs between \$12 million and \$44.7 million every year. With 191,890 deaths, Nigeria accounted for 31 percent of global deaths from malaria in 2021, the agency revealed. Fake malaria drugs contribute to the toll.

Recent alerts from the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control warn of adulterated cough syrups, antibiotics, and other children's remedies in the market.

The NAFDAC DG however warned that drinking adulterated alcohol can cause nausea and vomiting, abdominal pain, drowsiness, dizziness, blue-tinged or pale skin, irregular or slow breathing, low body temperature, unconsciousness or passing out, kidney and liver failure, or even death.

Methanol, a substance that can be used in fake vodka, may cause permanent blindness.

World Health Organisation (WHO) in its Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health estimated that more than three million people died all over the world as a result of alcohol poisoning.

Many Nigerians also complained that the potency of some of their popular over-the-counter medications had reduced, alleging that most of them might have been compromised.

A public health physician and Chief Executive Officer of TalkHealth9ja, Dr Laz Eze, had said that fake products are harmful to the health, and the economy, and potentially harmful to the environment.

He stated, "Counterfeit drugs cannot cure a disease, but they can lead to complications and death. They may harm body organs and can cause liver and kidney failure, among others."

"Fake antibiotics are a major cause of antimicrobial resistance, which is a growing public health problem of global concern."

To tackle the menace of fake products in the country, Eze said there must be effective surveillance to identify product fakers.

He also said there was a need to punish offenders severely under the law, provide counseling and value reorientation as part of the correctional services, and empower them to contribute positively to the economy.

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has also alerted that one of every 10 cancer cases in Nigeria can be traced to alcohol and 4.7 percent of overall cancer cases in Nigeria in 2019 can be attributed to consumption of adulterated alcohol.

The NAFDAC however said that from its investigations Nigeria is home to only 15 percent of fake medicines contrary to claims in some quarters that the country has 70 percent of fake medicines.

In a report published in the Mayne Quarterly Law Review (2021) Volume 6 Issue 4 titled 'Justification of Counterfeits: A Microscopic View from a Trademark Perspective' it was disclosed that: As of 2016, 80% of the products sold in Nigeria were counterfeits and as of today, it is quite doubtful that the percentage of counterfeit and illegal goods in circulation has decreased below 50%.

According to a report from The Economics in 2017, which was based on an earlier report of 2016 prepared by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), it was estimated that the total international trade in counterfeit and pirated goods in 2022 will be worth 991 billion, which is almost double the number reported in 2013 - 461 billion.

Based on data for 2019, the OECD estimates that the volume of international trade in counterfeit and pirated products amounted to as much as USD 464 billion in that year or 2.5% of world trade.

A Publication on 'Dangerous Fakes: Trade in Counterfeit Goods that Pose Health, Safety and Environmental Risks' by the OECD explained further that global illicit trade in counterfeit goods causes economic damage by reducing sales and profits as well as innovation incentives in legitimate industries.

According to it, counterfeits create significant risks, including health risks (fake pharmaceuticals or food products), safety risks



(counterfeit automotive spare parts, fake batteries), and environmental risks (fake chemicals or pesticides).

A report by the 'Organised Crime: West African Response to Trafficking,' a project of the Economic Community of West African States, said illicit and counterfeit medical products from China and India were taking over the drug markets in Nigeria, Ghana, Benin Republic, Togo, Guinea and other countries in the sub-region.

The OCVAR-T observed that the illegal drugs were often shipped from Guangzhou in China and cleared through the ports in Apapa, Tema, Cotonou, and Conakry, using intermediaries.

Experts have also noted that Nigeria's healthcare system is under renewed attack due to the

growing prevalence of fake and substandard products.

They identify weak regulations and enforcement as reasons for why the menace has thrived for so long.

The experts, however, called on the government at all levels to urgently reinvigorate strategies to protect the people from the scourge of counterfeit products.

The World Health Organisation also reiterated that substandard and falsified medical products may cause harm to patients and fail to treat the diseases for which they are intended.

They lead to a loss of confidence in medicines, healthcare providers, and health systems.



# 10 most commonly counterfeited products in Nigeria

**A**frica remains the continent most affected by counterfeits with Nigeria being on the front seat with it's as the most populous country. From street markets in Agura in Ikorodu to the Balogun market on the Island, buyers are in a quandary with the number of fake goods, most of which are sadly passed off as the real deal.

According to Checkit Technologies below are the commonly fake products in Nigeria

**1. Packaged Foods:** Fake food is simply known as food fraud. Wouldn't you be pained if you bought an expensive bag of rice and found out that it was all plastic just after taking out some to cook our delicious Nigerian Jollof? It might seem strange but there is a lot of fake rice in

Nigeria and over 100 bags of plastic rice were seized in 2016. Fake food generally is so much that it has been taking Nigerian lives and one painfully unforgettable instance came up in 2018 when two students of a school in Abuja died after eating counterfeit biscuits at a classmate's birthday party

**2. Pharmaceuticals:** Even with all the efforts put in the fight against fake drugs, NAFDAC still seizes a lot of counterfeit drugs as seen. From wheelbarrows hawking drugs at the side of the roads, to makeshift drugstores, online pharmacies, and even known drug outlets, fake drugs can be found in every single one.

**3. Footwear:** Both on social media and when

you go out these days it seems everyone has on a Nike or Adidas sneaker. Let's not forget all the Gucci, Christian Louboutin, Louis Vuitton, and Versace footwear you also find on the feet of many and being sold by several online and offline outlets. All counterfeit footwear isn't cheap though, there are high-grade fakes everywhere as well.

**4. Clothing:** In 2018, so many fake Nigerian World Cup jerseys dominated the market. It was so bad then that some people were selling the \$85 jersey for as low as N2,500. Now, it is incredibly easy to spot the fakes but, somehow, people just don't care. This kind of counterfeiting affects local brands too. Today, it's safe to say that for almost every producer selling

high-quality local fabrics, there's another that just wants to make quick cash with fakes.

**5. Leather Goods:** It is hard to say we haven't seen anyone with a fake hand bag, belt, or wallet, carrying the tags of Louis Vuitton, Chanel, YSL, Gucci, and Hermes which are the most counterfeited leather goods brands. In the Nigerian market today, you can be sure to find the knock-offs that look identical for every new design of these big brands. Why? The original is expensive but people will like to own it and they don't mind going about it the wrong way. This then encourages counterfeiters to produce, knowing they already have a market for it.

**6. Automotive Parts:** In 2013, the DG of SON mentioned that a staggering 95% of all imported car parts were fake. By all means, this number is very alarming. But, even if you've not experienced it personally, you must've come across or heard someone in a squabble with a Nigerian mechanic because they used counterfeit automotive parts for car repairs. Usually, to save money the mechanic uses cheap/fake parts. Sadly, this simple act causes thousands of people to die yearly.

**7. Optical Media (CDs & DVDs):** In Nigeria, pirated DVDs and CDs are not difficult to find and are openly sold in traffic, hawked on the streets, etc. Nollywood insiders estimated that up to 50 percent of the industry's profits are currently being lost to Nigeria's endemic piracy and corruption problems. The issue of piracy doesn't only affect local content but international content as well, people prefer to buy pirated copies for less or even download or watch it from free streaming websites like Torrent, AZM movies, and the like, rather than go watch it in Cinemas.

**8. Cosmetics:** In 2019 alone, NAFDAC confiscated 60m in fake cosmetics and someone was jailed for producing fake cosmetic products. Today, even though cosmetic brands have their stores, you'll still find counterfeits in open markets with prices that are just too good to be true.

**9. Alcohol:** In January 2020, David Ozomenam was caught producing counterfeit alcohol. Besides him, a man named Ojukwu confessed that he used to pour his spirits into popular alcohol bottles to make more sales of his counterfeit wine and whiskey these stories don't exist in isolation and so many people are into this act. Today, fake "booze" is still sold almost everywhere in wine stores and even open bars. Sadly, you can hardly differentiate between fakes and originals as they are so well-branded that you would think they're dis-



counted, but they're mostly fake.

Both on social media and when you go out these days it seems everyone has on a Nike or Adidas sneaker. Let's not forget all the Gucci, Christian Louboutin, Louis Vuitton, and Versace footwear you also find on the feet of many and being sold by several online and offline outlets

**10. Jewelry:** In markets and even in traffic, it is easy to spot hawkers displaying different brands of wristwatches, bracelets, and even necklaces from brands like Rolex, Hublot, Cartier, Gucci, etc which are unfortunately the most counterfeited watches amongst other big brands, they might seem original but they're mostly counterfeits that spoil very quickly.

The most common global counterfeit goods include:

- Products from well-known brands (e.g., Nike, Apple, Louis Vuitton)
- Products that have a hefty markup.
- Popular products (e.g., AirPods, designer handbags)
- Small- or medium-sized products
- Products that can be easily manufactured in bulk and shipped

How ChekkIt Help Limit the Spread of the Most Commonly Counterfeited Products?

Download ChekkItApp from the Google Play Store or just click chekkit.app to use the app without downloading. You can also check if a product is original by using ChekkIt App or dialing a USSD code.

ChekkIt provides anti-counterfeiting solutions for brands by allowing buyers to verify the authenticity of products by QR code scan or by dialing a USSD code.

# The era of Tricycle: The new king of the Nigerian roads

To address the perennial problems of transportation in the nation's economic capital - Lagos in 1999, the military administration under Mohammed Buba Marwa, a retired brigadier general, in Lagos between 1986 and 1999 launched the use of tricycles for commercial transportation in the city of excellence. This accounted for the name Keke Marwa for the mode of transportation. That initiative then marked the entrance of the tricycles into the Nigerian roads which has now expanded deeper into the nation's cities and communities.

TVS Motor Company (India), one of the largest manufacturers of three-wheelers in the world, has found a good market in Nigeria due to the high demand for its products. It is reported that as of 2020, there were about 400,000 tricycles on Nigerian roads and there is the potential of 2 million tricycles in the country with cities like Kano and Lagos accounting for high percentages.

Nigeria spent about N304.23 billion importing motorcycles and tricycles into the country in 2020 within nine months.

In 2022, Nigeria's leading auto manufacturer, Innoson Vehicle Manufacturing Company (IVM) also diversified into the production of tricycles to get a share of the expanding market as the mode of transportation became more popular.

Tricycle transportation has become so popular in Nigeria today that academics are researching its role and impact. Oluwaseun Bamidele of the Institute of Peace, Security, and Governance, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, a few years ago wrote a thesis on 'The Political Economy of Tricycle Transportation Business in Osogbo Metropolis: Lessons for a Developing Economy'.

## Tricycle breaks into social and economic class

In the tricycle as a means of movement in Nigeria, one thing has emerged of late. It has broken the social and economic class boundaries as many people now embrace it primarily as a preferred mode of transportation. No thanks to the emerging realities and the Nigerians' usual way of coping with hard choices.

It is now a common sight to see this new KING OF THE NIGERIAN ROADS compet-



ing for right of way in highly urban locations in Lagos such as Marina, Broad Street, Allen Avenue, Omole Estate, Lekki, Magodo, Ikeja, Opebi among others. They are also a common sight in the Federal Capital Territory - Abuja, Kano, and virtually in all Nigerian cities and communities.

Its growth and growing relevance are attributed to its inherent advantages of door-to-door service, maneuverability in traffic congestion, ability to travel on poor roads, ease of responsiveness to demand, fuel efficiency, and ruggedness. Also, an important contributory factor is the employment and investment opportunities it offers for the teeming unemployed young Nigerians.

It is not strange anymore to see adults and young professionals, civil servants, and people in the middle and upper economic classes, in formal dresses, comfortably enjoying good rides around the city in the newfound experience imposed by the new economic reality and the necessity to save cost on transportation. The cost of fueling and maintaining personal

cars has gone so high that Nigerians are ready to forgo luxury as they adjust their lifestyle.

## Problems Associated with Tricycle Transportation

For Tricycle transportation in Nigeria, it is not all about the benefits it offers. There have been widely reported cases of its downsides that have compelled governments to intervene and restrict the riders to some locations and hours.

The tricycle riders have the reputation of being careless on the roads thereby causing frequent accidents and car bashing in an attempt to maneuver their ways, disobeying traffic rules, endangering lives, and aiding criminality in several instances.

Some state governments have come up with the idea of registering the tricycles and the riders to curb their excesses and also earn revenue from their operations.

No doubt, Nigerians today have found solace in Tricycle, a new leveler in transportation, as their new mode of transportation.

# 2024 Budget: Government revenue agencies push for more taxes on tobacco, alcohol, others

**A**s the Federal Government searches wide to fund the 2024 budget, revenue-generating agencies of the federal government are pushing for more Nigerians to be included in the tax payment net and an increase in taxes for goods such as alcohol and tobacco.

While defending their budget before the joint Session of the National Assembly, the Nigerian Customs Service (NCS), the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), and the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) expressed readiness to increase and surpass their revenue target through more tax revenue.

President Bola Tinubu had last year presented the 2024 N27.5 trillion budget to the joint session of the National Assembly with a projected revenue of N18 trillion.

The Committee on Appropriations has consistently maintained that government-owned enterprises (GOEs) should generate more revenue than projected in the budget proposal.

While addressing the lawmakers, the Comptroller General of Customs, Wale Adeniyi said the NCS has a projected N5 trillion in revenue but said the 'NCS can generate an additional N1trillion if the government lifts the suspension of duty on single-use plastic and increases the duty on alcohol and tobacco'.

However, the Chairman of the Committee, Abubakar Bichi (APC, Kano), said NCS should be able to increase its revenue target to N6 trillion.

"We are targeting N5 trillion but we can make N6 trillion if some of the issues around the operating environment are talked about. If we can review the concession that we are going to grant in 2024, we might get there, he noted.

"Excise on single-use plastics products was suspended at the beginning of July. We believe that if the suspension is lifted, something in the region of N300 billion can be realized from single-use plastics alone.

"The excise duty on alcohol and tobacco. There is a projection to increase it to 30 per-



cent. If this is done, we expect that revenue will get to where we want it," the CGC said.

The Executive Secretary of NUPRC, Gbenga Komolafe, in his presentation, said the commission is projecting a revenue of N5.6 trillion for the year 2024.

When asked about the possibility of increasing the projection, he said the upstream sector is currently facing multiple challenges ranging from oil theft, dearth of investment in the sector, and challenges with host communities.

He stated that the Commission is seeking to increase Nigeria's daily oil production by 300,000 barrels per day.

When pushed by the lawmakers on the actual figure, Mr Komolafe said the Commission can push its revenue target to N6 trillion.

"We have the potential to increase the current production based on the field development plans we already have. We see an incremental of 300,000 barrels.

"We are committed to achieving and surpass-

ing the target. In terms of figure, the N5.6 trillion, we are committed to surpassing it and go toward N6 trillion,” he said.

Mr Bichi insisted that NUPRC can generate more than N6 trillion, he, therefore, tasked the agency to exceed the N6 trillion target.

“We will try our best to go above N6 trillion. We are working around the clock to achieve the national aspiration,” Mr Komolafe said.

Also appearing before the Committee, the Executive Vice Chairman of NCC, Aminu Maida said his commission is projecting N350 billion for the year 2024, of which N224 billion is to be remitted to the Consolidated Account.

Mr Maida explained that the NCC majorly generates money from spectrum licensing and



annual operating levy.

He stated that the NCC is concerned about the growth of the sector instead of pushing for revenue.

“I share your desire. I pray that we will exceed the revenue target. As a regulator, we have to balance the growth of the industry. What we need to do is to let the industry grow and have more people using telecommunication, therefore, we can get more annual operating levy,” he said.



**Wale Edun, Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy**

When pressed by the committee, Mr Maida said he should be allowed to check the books of the NCC to give a definite answer on a possible review of the revenue projection.

He added that the Commission will launch a revenue collection App by the second quarter of 2024. Adding that the projection will help to increase the revenue of the Commission.

“Sometime in Q1 or Q2, we are also going

to deploy technology called the revenue assurance system. It will help us to collect our revenue. Right now, we depend on their management account to collect our revenue. With the software, we can know what exactly is due to NCC,” Mr Maida said.

In his remarks, Mr. Bichi said the committee is prioritizing revenue generation to support the programmes in the budgets.





# Nigerian Import Propensity Grows by 200 percent as more Multinationals Exit the Nation

**T**he cumulative impact of government policies over the years and an unfriendly economic climate are forcing many local industries to close shop and forcing many multinational companies to exit Nigeria.

Procter & Gamble, P&G, an American company and major global player in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) with an \$85bn overall portfolio, GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) Consumer Nigeria Plc with N29,386.204billion and Sanofi-Aventis Nigeria Limited, a French pharmaceutical company with total assets \$133.514B for 2022 are the latest to announce their exit from Nigeria this year.

P & G and GSK said they would be importing their products into Nigeria from other countries.

Examples of these far-reaching policies are the recent liberalization of the downstream oil sector and the merger of the forex regime by President Bola Tinubu which have pushed up the cost of living and prices, bringing inflation to an all-time high of 28.20% and food inflation to 32% in November 2023. This has consequently impacted heavily on the purchasing powers of the consumers.

The fears of more foreign companies leaving the country are also real unless drastic measures are taken to lessen the frustrating economic climate.

In the last 10 years, no fewer than 40 blue-chip

companies including ShopRite, Surest Foam Limited, Mufex, Framan Industries, MZM Continental, Nipol Industries, Moak Industries, Deli Foods, GSK, Stone Industries, have totally or partially shut down their operations in the country.

Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) has listed, among others, the high cost of doing business, inadequate power supply, poor infrastructure, inconsistent economic policies, poor human capital development, multiple taxation, and corruption as problems hindering the growth of their business.

The Nigerians' unbridled appetite for foreign goods also compounds the unfavorable economic climate. Unofficial statistics said Nigeria's propensity for consumption of foreign goods has moved up by 200% in the last ten years.

The high propensity for foreign-made goods by citizens of a country has both positive and negative effects on the nation's economy because no country is self-sufficient, but in a real sense, a country's import should not supersede its exports as this will lead to unfavorable terms of trade.

Today, many Nigerians will fail the patriotic test if the preference for foreign goods above local products is a factor of nationalism. This is unlike the nationals of the United States, India, Australia, United Arab Emirates, Thailand, Saudi Arabia, Philippines, and Indonesia whose nationals are graded the most patriotic in the world.

Nigeria's heavy international trade imbalance is a direct consequence of its citizens' excessive love

for foreign items across all facets from the mundane to the critical. Sadly, even perfect local substitute goods are not appreciated and patronized by Nigerians.

Unfortunately, Africa's biggest economy relies heavily on importation for many goods consumed in the country, including food. It exports mostly agricultural goods, crude oil, and gas.

No doubt, the presence of foreign goods in a country has advantages such as the availability of varieties of goods, international specialization, increase in the standard of living, revenue generation, and fostering of closer international relationships. But the dominant presence of foreign goods over local products, as we have in Nigeria today, is inimical to the health of the country.

Basic economics teaches that the negative effects of relying more on local products far outweigh any merits it may attract.

The high taste for imported goods among Nigerians has been detrimental to the Nigerian economy in the past decades. Nigeria is a country where even people in the low socio-economic class have a disposition to buy foreign goods.

A high level of import often leads to forex scarcity, as a result of an increase in the demand for the dollar by importers which in turn depreciates the value of the Naira. This is the present case in Nigeria today as importation for mundane items competes with critical and essential for forex. It is not surprising that a dollar now exchanges for

over N1,000. Yet people still source for dollars to import items such as toothpicks and pencils.

The high value of imports by Nigeria has led to unfavorable trade balances, terms of trade, and even trade policies for the country. In 2022, goods valued at a total of 53.61 billion U.S. dollars were imported into Nigeria and goods totaling at a value of 46.93 billion U.S. dollars were exported from Nigeria. But the question is what did Nigeria export? Nigeria exported crude oil valued at N21.099 trillion in 2022, up by 46.41 percent from N14.411 trillion crude oil exported in 2021, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

The NBS, in its Foreign Trade in Goods Statistics for the Fourth Quarter of 2022, revealed that crude oil exports accounted for 78.74 percent of total exports in 2022, compared with 76.22 percent of total exports in 2021; while it accounted for 51.15 percent of total exports in 2022, as against 47.58 percent of total trade in 2021.

Since Nigerians even import goods that can be easily produced locally, many thriving local factories have folded up and are still folding up.

Hundreds of Nigerian manufacturing companies have folded up over the years, while the surviving ones are grasping for breath, and some planning to relocate.

A World Bank Enterprise survey reported that 322 private firms closed down in Nigeria between 2009 and 2014 due to stifling business regulations and the inability to compete with foreign goods that are considered cheaper and better.

This is the Nigeria's situation for many years now and no doubt the economy is inflicted with serious consequences. The list of the havoc foreign dependency for goods brings to the country includes encouragement of dumping, effects on infant industries, importation of dangerous or harmful goods, reduction in effort to attain self-reliance, and creation of balance of payment deficit and destruction of the cultural value of a country.

There is a very long list of manufacturing companies and factories that have folded up in Nigeria, space will not permit naming all. The shortlist includes Berec Batteries; Exide Batteries; Okin Biscuits; Osogbo Steel Rolling Mills; Nigeria Sugar Company; Bacita; Tate and Lyle Sugar Company; Matches Manufacturing Company, Ilorin; Nigeria Paper Mill Limited located in Jebba, Kwara State; Nigerian Newsprint Manufacturing Company Limited, Oku-Iboku, Akwa Ibom State; and the Nigerian National Paper Manufacturing Company Limited in Ogun State.

Others include Nigeria's six automobile assembly plants, namely Peugeot Automobile Nigeria Limited, Kaduna, set up in 1975; Volkswagen of Nigeria Limited, Lagos, established in 1978; Anambra Motor Manufacturing Limited, Emene, Enugu, set up in 1980; Steyr Nigeria Limited Bauchi; National Truck Manufacturers, Kano; Fiat Production; and LeyLand Nigeria Limited Ibadan.

The most troubled industrial sector perhaps is Nigeria's textile industry. A liberalization policy

that opened Nigerian borders to cheaper textiles from China, coupled with smuggling of foreign textiles killed the once vibrant and thriving textile industry.

Thirty-eight major textile companies closed down business in Nigeria between 1999 and 2009, according to the Nigerian Textile Manufacturers' Association. These firms include Afprint Nigeria Plc; President Industries Nigeria Ltd; Aswani Industries Nigeria Limited; and Nigerian Synthetic Fabrics Limited; and First Spinner Pls all in Lagos State. Others are United Nigeria Textile Limited; Arewa Textiles; Kaduna Textile Limited; Unitex Limited; Supertex Limited all in Kaduna State; Kano Textile Printers Limited; Asaba Textiles Mills; Aba Textile Mills Limited, Aba; Edo Textiles Mills Limited Benin, and Odua Textile Industries Limited, Ado Ekiti.

Thousands of Nigerians have lost their jobs since local industries are also closing down. For example, textile industries in the Northern parts of Nigeria used to employ thousands of Nigerians up till the early 1990s due to dumping which has affected local products which are pushed out of imported countries into Nigeria.

#### Why Nigerians Prefer Foreign-Made Goods

The huge flair for imported goods among Nigerians began immediately after the oil boom started in the early 1970s. With the unexpected and huge inflow of foreign exchange into the economy (due to the tremendous increase in the crude

oil price then) Nigeria had nothing economically meaningful to do with the oil windfall and began serious importation of foreign goods, which they could not hitherto afford.

Also, the oil boom led to an appreciation in the value of the Naira and weakened hard currencies like Dollar and Pound relative to the Naira. This exchange rate encouraged importation since imported goods then became cheaper for Nigerians to consume. Unfortunately, when the oil boom ended in 1977, the Nigerian economy had become heavily dependent on imports - with almost everything imported - and the passion for foreign goods has since failed to vanish among Nigerians.

Not a few Nigerians have the erroneous impression that goods produced in foreign lands and services rendered overseas are of better quality than those that were locally produced and serviced.

In the same vein, not a few of them also understand that patronage of goods and services produced in Nigeria is a key determinant of the economic growth and development of the country.

It is, however, disappointing to know that by having a rabid penchant for foreign-made goods Nigerian consumers have been vicariously growing other countries' economies through over-dependence on imported goods, especially those which have local substitutes.

Against the foregoing backdrop, there is no denying the fact that the need to patronize made-in-Nigeria goods cannot be over-empha-



sized as it is one major way to catalyse the nation's economic growth and development.

In 2017, a public opinion poll released by NOI-Polls, an online research platform that is committed to gauging opinions, answering questions, and providing strategic recommendations for decision-making revealed that 97 percent of Nigerians expressed their willingness to buy locally made products to strengthen the country's economy. Similarly, the poll indicated that about 98 percent of Nigerians were willing to support a "BuyNaija" campaign to encourage patronage of locally made products.

The poll which sought the opinion of Nigerians regarding their aptitude and preference for locally made products also showed that almost 6 in 10 Nigerians (59 percent) said they buy locally made products very often; followed by 37 percent who stated that they buy locally made products somewhat often.

The list of products that they buy includes food items (58 percent), clothing (50 percent), footwear (34 percent), and soap and detergent (12 percent) to mention a few.

On the contrary, 4 percent of those interviewed stated that they do not buy locally made products because they are mostly of sub-standard quality.

On the issue of comparing the quality of locally made versus foreign products, more than half of the respondents (54 percent) thought that locally made products are of good quality, while 21 percent ranked the products poorly, and 25 percent were indifferent.

Unfortunately, contrary to the Report, there are pieces of evidence on the ground across markets in the country that Nigerian consumers majorly prefer foreign-made goods to locally-made goods.

The question at this juncture is, "Why the preference for foreign goods and services to the detriment of the patronage of local goods?"

However, evidence abounds that the Nigerian consumer population prefers foreign products despite calls by the government at various levels and some concerned individuals on Nigerians to buy products made in Nigeria to make the naira stronger.

Mr. Innocent Eluemibe was quoted by Isaac Asabor, a Reporter with Independent Newspapers Limited, that one of the major reasons why most consumers in Nigeria prefer foreign goods is economic.

He said, "The economic factors lean towards consumers' predilection on quality, price, and product availability. They have the notion that money spent for a product should reinvigorate a high sense of value for the product as they strongly believe that the qualities of local products are lower than those of imported products."

In the same vein, Harry Ajuebon said, "There is an equally psychological dimension to it. Several psychological forces operate in the consumer to influence his perception of local and foreign products. The reason cannot be farfetched as there are consumers who, in the search for distinctiveness, exclusiveness, and egotism, seek out those products which can confer these qualities."

He explained that it has been well known for a long time that consumers do not solely follow



economic reasons in their consuming decisions but psychologically do that as can be seen from the perspective of identities, culture, values, worldviews, and group memberships, asserting that in this sense, consumer behavior is sometimes against economic reason.

He added that being defined as a rational activity by classical economists consuming behavior is to be referred to as a means of a complex process based on various irrational attitudes.

Therefore, consuming behavior is also a subject of both economic, cultural, and social capital.

The immediate past Abia State Governor, Dr. Okezie Ikpeazu, in his keynote address at the Public Policy Lecture series of Business Hallmark Newspapers at the Chartered Institute of Bankers House, Victoria Island, Lagos a few years ago, opined that theories that reinforce consumers' predilection toward foreign-made goods are encapsulated in the overall theories of Consumer Complex Syndrome.

According to him, the theory of Superiority suggests that consumers see non-local brands as a determinant of quality and brand desirability. He said some people believe that "if a white man did it, then it is good". He said the theory is reported to hold sway mostly in developing economies.

Again, he said another theory, the Theory of Ethnocentrism which unearthed a psychological notion of pride in consumers, and consequently let them prefer products and brands from their own country. He said the construct has been identified as one of the significant factors that engendered China's economic rise.

Another theory pointed out by him is the Theory of Animosity. He said under the theory, that in situations where no domestic substitutes exist to permit ethnocentrism, Watson and Wright (2000) discovered that consumers resort to foreign products from countries to which they have a cultural affinity. On the other hand, animosity (historical, political, cultural, and other factors) against a country negates this preference.



Also in the same vein is the Theory of Transition under which non-utilitarian product attributes, such as status display, are more prevalent in developing countries where interpersonal relationships are of prime importance.

This is because of the economic transition, income disparities, and high-status mobility which find expression in the tendency to claim differential status through the exotic foreign brands one consumes (Batra et al, 2000).

According to the former Governor, the construct applies to Nigeria where some people take pride in foreign exotic brands and make it a yardstick for status definition.

Also in the series is the Theory of Missing Link - Consumption Complex. On this theory, Dr Ikpeazu said a review of the existing literature has little explanation for a situation where consumers have no objectively verifiable and consistent rationale for preferring foreign brands (irrespective of origin).

Researchers have also stressed that consumers may prefer imported products because of associations with higher prestige (Schuiling & Kapferer, 2004) which may be determined by other factors such as the level of education, age, income level, and culture.

Chike Okechuku and Vincent Onyemah in their thesis on Nigerian Consumer Attitudes Toward Foreign and Domestic Products published

in the Journal of International Business Studies revealed in their research findings that the country of manufacture is significantly more important than price and other product attributes in consumer preference. According to them, Nigerian consumers have a negative image of the 'Made in Nigeria' label, rating it lower than labels from more economically developed countries. Additional analyses indicate that the superior reliability and technological advancement of foreign products are the most important correlates of the Nigerian consumer's likelihood to purchase foreign products. Implications for foreign marketers, domestic governments, and domestic manufacturers are discussed.

Many Nigerians also voiced that foreign companies are winning over local businesses because



**Researchers have also stressed that consumers may prefer imported products because of associations with higher prestige (Schuiling & Kapferer, 2004) which may be determined by other factors such as the level of education, age, income level, and culture.**



foreign goods tend to be cheaper while maintaining the same quality which influences the customer's decision to eventually drift away from buying local goods.

Many also believe that foreign goods are superior in terms of quality, and durability and sometimes cheaper when compared to locally made ones. To some, the consumption of foreign goods is taken as a status symbol for the elite and affluent consumers.

Oftentimes, it's cheaper to import and transport the food than it is to produce it locally. The dollar is more valuable in other countries. As a result, these countries sell their foods at lower prices, something we can take advantage of.

#### **Institutional and Individual interventions?**

The economy of any nation grows rapidly when locally made goods are promoted through patronage, first by its people, and then through export.

There is no denying the fact that Nigeria can easily experience a breakthrough in the quest for local content development and a stable, strong, and advanced economy if Nigerians rev up their patronage of made-in-Nigeria products.

Senator Ben Murray Bruce in 2016 invented a hashtag campaign to trigger national interest in homemade products which the government subscribed to.

However, an attempt to curb the heavy presence of foreign-made goods in Nigeria by successive governments has led to the introduction of many fire brigade measures to curtail the importation of foreign goods the government considers are not vital to Nigeria.

The measures at various times include an embargo or a complete prohibition of commerce and trade with some countries, import duties or tariffs, foreign exchange control tactics, import licensing restriction, and in extremely rare cases, devaluation.

Unarguably to grow the nation's economy through locally-made products and locally-rendered services, the Federal Government had in the past taken decisions aimed at growing and promoting the economy. For instance, the government has done that through its determination to promote made-in-Nigeria products by giving preference to Nigerian professionals in the execution of all government projects.

Giving credence to the move was the issuance of Executive Order No. 5, which made it mandatory for all Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), to patronize made-in-Nigeria products without conceding standards.

It would be recalled that the Executive Order was signed early in 2018 by former President Muhammadu Buhari, entitled: "Presidential Executive Order 5 for planning and execution of projects, promotion of Nigerian contents in contracts and science, engineering and technology." But all these measures have been met with resistance and recorded a relatively low success.

## Food stuff prices in some major lagos markets

One of Nigeria's economy's segments hugely impacted by inflation today is the foodstuff, recording over 28% inflation in December 2023. The development has attracted more interest because of its threat to food and national security.

Data compiled by Picodi, an international e-commerce organisation, revealed that the average Nigerian household spends about 59 percent of its income on food as of November 2023.

Nigerians have however devised several means on how to manage their expense of daily feeding. One of the means is buying only what is essential and being extra prudent to avoid waste.

Many have also resorted to monitoring the price of foodstuff in different markets as a guide to get value for money.

To assist Lagosians, Consumer Halla visited major markets in Lagos to compare the prices of foodstuffs.

**See the table below:**



Items	Mile 12 market (N)	Ayobo market	Jakande market	New market hub (Mushin)
Bag of rice (small)	55,000	58,000	57,000	NA
Bag of rice (big)	60,000	64,000	67,000	55,000
Bag of beans	NA	56,000	58,000	NA
Bag of garri (yellow)	NA	21,000	20,000	4,000 (4kg)
Bag of garri (white)	NA	29,000	NA	NA
Bag of semovita (5kg)	NA	9,500 - 9,700	NA	NA
Noodles (a carton indomie)	5,000	5,700	NA	NA
Vegetable oil (5 liters)	9,000	7,500	8,800	10,000
Basket of pepper	30,000	20,000	NA	NA
Basket of tomato	45,000	45,000	NA	NA
Carton of spaghetti	NA	12,000	12,000	NA
Carton of chicken	NA	33,000	NA	NA
Carton of turkey	NA	48,000	NA	NA
Crate of eggs	NA	3,400	2,800	NA
Yam (10 tubers)	15,000	20,000	12,000	NA
Tomato paste	600	550	550	NA
Plantain (a bunch)	1,000	1,000	NA	2,000
Stockfish	NA	NA	NA	7,000 (1kg)
Watermelon	NA	NA	NA	4,000 (5pcs)
Ginger & Garlic/measure	NA	NA	450	NA
Crate of Apple fruit	NA	NA	7,250	NA



# Consumer rights: **What constitutes negative feedback**

**I**n the 19th century, three customer-driven quotes emerged in the retail business scene, and they have since found their way into the heart of business management irrespective of the sectors globally. They are: ‘The Customer is King’ credited to John Wanamaker who worked at Field’s store for more than 20 years. During that time at Wanamaker European import houses in London and Paris, he breathed and adopted the ideology that “When a customer enters my store, forget me. He is king.” In 1909, Harry Gordon Selfridge coined ‘The customer is always right.’ However, the slogan in 1809 by a Swiss, César Ritz, the famous owner of the Ritz Hotel in Paris and the Carlton in London that “Le client n’a jamais tort” (“the customer is never wrong”) brought home clearly the place of a customer in any business set up.

The verdict of the trio is that business only exists because of the customer and conse-

quently, the customer must be given the most pride of place in business.

The relevance of the above slogans that have found their way into the business lexicon was called to question recently in Nigeria in a case involving a leading foods and beverages firm, Erisco Foods Limited, Lagos, makers of Nagiko tomato mix, and a woman, Chioma Egodi.

Egodi, an activist, had on September 17, 2023 gone on Facebook to make comments on her experience with Nagiko Tomato Mix. In the post, now brought down, Egodi said she had gone to the market on September 16 to buy Gino or Sonia brand of tomato paste but could not find them. According to her, she later bought the Nagiko tomato mix which she had planned to use in making stew. “I went to buy tin tomatoes yesterday that I will use to make stew. I didn’t see Gino and Sonia. “So, I decided to buy this one. When I opened it, I decided to taste it. Omo! Sugar was just too much. Ha,

biko, let me know if you have used this tin tomato before because this is an Ike gwuru situation”, she wrote.

In the post, she urged other Facebook users to confirm if they had used the product before to ascertain if they had similar experiences.

Egodi hails from Nnewi in Anambra State but resides in Lagos State.

However, the comments ruffled and unsettled the management of Erisco. They believed that Egodi had crossed the red line in exercising her right as a customer and she must be taught a lesson for the poisonous review of its product. They do not believe in Ritz’s slogan of “the customer is never wrong’ mantra. They believed also that Egodi did not act alone and that her comments must have been the hands of Esau and the voice of Jacobs. Thus, they concluded that Egodi must have been sponsored by competitors. Erisco alerted the Police and Egodi was airlifted to Abuja Police Force

Headquarters for questioning.

Social media was instantly abuzz with the news and the majority of netizens sided with Egodi claiming that she was exercising her freedom of speech as a customer. As a result, many called for class action or boycott of the company's products in retaliation for the high-handedness by Erisco.

However, some people were also hard on Egodi for her review and questioned her motive. "Someone in her comment section had asked her why she did the review, and she responded by saying that person should go talk to her brother (Erisco Food) to stop killing people," a statement from Erisco claimed.

A statement by the Management of Erisco claimed that Egodi's post was "obviously intended to mislead our esteemed customers and discredit the image of Erisco Foods Limited, as previously instigated by some elements and syndicates who are uncomfortable with our increasing market dominance as a leading indigenous manufacturer of tomato pastes".

It added, "While we recognise the rights of our consumers to make genuine observations about our products ---- However, having built our reputation on healthy and quality products which have earned us both local and international awards, including the National Productivity Order of Merit Award, we will take all necessary actions against any malicious attack on our reputation."

### What constitutes the rights of consumers?

Though the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission, FCCPC stepped into Erisco vs Egodi's case, the public, nay the consumers, need to know what constitutes the right of consumers and when a consumer crosses the red line even if they are king. Or are the rights of the consumer absolute?

Recently, we've witnessed several instances where brands have mistreated consumers due to a lack of understanding and respect for consumer rights in the country and also there are instances where customers have been too critical and made damaging comments about the brand.

According to the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC), consumers have 'the right to receive clear and understandable product information, ensuring that what they purchase serves its intended purpose.

In this reference case, the customer had bought Nagiko Tomato Mix for 'cooking,' but the product was more suited for jams, as stated by the CEO of Erisco Foods, Chief Eric Umeofia, in an interview on Arise TV.

Now, product promise and customer expectations are not the same here. Egodi most likely did not have 'clear and understandable product information' about Nagiko.

Chief Umeofia explained that the Nagiko is a mix of tomatoe paste that can also be used



**According to the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC), consumers have 'the right to receive clear and understandable product information, ensuring that what they purchase serves its intended purpose.'**



to eat bread which is why there is sugar in it. Also, many believed that Erisco had not run any advert on Nagiko to educate consumers about the product and usage. It was Egodi's review of the sugary content that brought the new disclosure about the usage of the product. Many consumers were oblivious to this fact made known by the company during this case.

Many also felt Egodi's reference to 'killing' in her comment exchange on Facebook was unfounded and too careless indeed because there has never been a reference case for such against the product.

Branding and marketing professionals have opined that the situation could have been handled better by Erisco. Egodi and numerous consumers including existing customers of the brand need education about the product promise and the company could have deployed its mass information channels to educate her and the larger public.

Erisco also did not deny that the paste contains sugar. But how much is 'much' is the issue here? No two products will be the same, but Erisco missed the opportunity to educate the public and attract their sympathy for the assumed 'negative' comments on its pride product and priced reputation.

The development should have been seized by Erisco to promote the approval and certification of Nagiko and its other products, thereby



putting the Egodi or her assumed sponsors in silence.

#### **The Rights of Consumers:**

The FCCPC under Consumer Rights and Responsibilities on its website states that a consumer can make 'Complaint - Inform businesses and appropriate regulatory authorities about your dissatisfaction with a product or service, fairly and honestly' and 'Share Experience - Inform other consumers about your experience with a product or service.' (emphasis ours).

We can conveniently say that Egodi might not have read the above FCCPC's right of customers, but her comments can be situated here. That is a good buffer for her and if the Nigerian Police knew this too, they would have advised Erisco better.

Feedback is a valued asset for progressive companies that want to build customer loyalty and expand. That is why they have an inbuilt mechanism and consciously seek and even pay for a third-party opinion. Alan Weiss, a customer experience expert says "Ask your customers to be part of the solution, and don't view them as part of the problem."

Jeff Bezos, Founder & CEO at Amazon, says "If you do build a great experience, customers tell each other about that. Word of mouth is very powerful."



**Babatunde Irukera, EVC, Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission**

"Spend a lot of time talking to customers face-to-face. You'd be amazed how many companies don't listen to their customers." -Ross Perot, CEO of Electronic Data Systems & Perot Systems

Treating consumers' complaints poorly can have serious consequences for a business, including damage to its reputation, loss of customers, and legal troubles.

It is very clear that consumers, as Egodi did, have the right to make reviews on their product experiences, although it's generally recommended to use official feedback channels rather than public platforms like Facebook.

In the competitive world of business, every brand faces challenges from various fronts, both locally and internationally.

The Erisco brand for sure has certainly suffered reputational damages as a result mishandling of this case. The company may claim that it is sending a strong warning to its detractors who it accused might be behind Egodi's claims but it has in the process been in the news for the wrong reason.

#### **A Similar Case Review of the Coca-Cola brand**

A casual review of attacks against a global brand like Coca-Cola will offer insight into how to manage competition-sponsored attacks.

Coca-Cola has in recent times (and still fac-

ing) faced criticisms for its high sugar content in its Cola brand. How has the brand responded to this global criticism? -Through Innovation! The company defended the Coca-Cola contents and came up with varieties of alternative brands that have zero or less sugar such as Diet Coke, Zero Sugar, Caffeine Free, and other brands which have today further helped to solidify the leadership of the brand in the market and retain its dominance in the beverage industry worldwide. Coca-Cola didn't bother to engage in a confrontational battle with any of the critics of its products.

Erisco should have employed effective public relations management to derive more appreciation for its indigenous Tomato brand - Nagiko (especially now that forex is an issue for manufacturers and Nigerians) through consumer education and innovative marketing strategies. The management of the company should have known better that brands thrive because of consumers.

Ultimately, customers are the lifeblood of any organization. Without them, a company is unsustainable. Feedback is a crucial metric for ensuring a product's sustainability and growth, and consumers have every right to voice their concerns about the products and services they use daily. That's why at "Hello Consumers" (an offshoot of the Consumerhalla brand), we care deeply about the brands, products, and services you use.



# Know your rights as an airline passenger

Since the invention of air transportation by the Wright Brothers in 1903, traveling by air has been one of the fastest, safest, and most reliable means of transportation all over the world. Traveling by flight offers a delightful experience.

Despite the cost of airline tickets, many Nigerians prefer to take this route with the surge in airfare.

Like any structured mode of transportation, the aviation industry is governed by rules and regulations to guarantee the safety and security of the air route and the convenience of passengers.

Specifically, some rules govern the relationship between the airline and the passengers. These include the booking, securing, timing, convenience, and luggage of the air passengers.

In each environment, there are multiple regulatory agencies in charge of the aviation sector.

In Nigeria, aviation sector agencies include - the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria

(FAAN), the Nigerian Airspace Management Agency (NAMA), the Nigerian Safety Investigation Bureau (NSIB), the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NIME) and the Nigerian College of Aviation Technology (NCAT).

## Rights of Airline Passengers

The principal legislation governing the rights of air flight passengers in Nigeria is the Civil Aviation Act 2006. The aviation industry is equally governed by international laws which include the Convention for the Unification of Certain Rules for International Carriage by Air (Montreal Convention) 1999 as successor to the original convention on air carrier liability, the Warsaw Convention 1929. The Montreal Convention was recognized and ratified under Nigerian law by Section 48(2) of the Civil Aviation Act 2006 per the provisions of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria.

Many of these rights are today very unknown to a large number of air passengers because of their small prints.

As stated on the official website of the Nigerian Civil Aviation, the rights of air passengers are as follows:

- a) The right to the full value of your money
- b) The right to compensation for flight cancellation, delays, damaged/lost baggage, and denied boarding for reasons other than technical, weather conditions, air traffic control restrictions, security risks, and industrial disputes that affect the operation of the flight.
- c) The right to book and confirm tickets with an airline of your choice.
- d) The right to the provision of a conducive airport environment before, during, and after flights.
- e) The right to seek redress for all irregularities during your flight.
- f) The right to timely feedback in respect of matters/complaints lodged with service providers.
- g) The right to be fully informed about flight status.
- h) The right to be treated with respect and



dignity irrespective of race or physical condition.

Further to the rights stated above, the Civil Aviation Regulations 2015 also states that the airline carrier shall be liable to compensate an aggrieved passenger for flight cancellation, delays, damaged/lost baggage, and denied boarding for reasons other than technical, weather conditions, air traffic control restrictions, security risks and industrial disputes that affect the operation of the flight.

#### Your Rights During Domestic Flights:

For domestic flights, when an operating air carrier reasonably expects a flight to be delayed beyond its scheduled time of departure, it must provide you with the reason(s) (written notice) for the delay within 30 minutes after the scheduled departure time and the assistance specified below:

(i) After two hours, refreshments (water, soft drinks, confectioneries/snacks) and telephone calls, SMS, and e-mails (free of charge; two telephone calls, SMS, or emails);

(ii) Beyond three (3) hours, immediate reimbursement in cash for domestic flights and reimbursement within fourteen days for international flights (paid in cash, by electronic bank transfer, bank orders, or bank cheques or, with the signed agreement of the passenger, in travel vouchers or other services.), of the full cost of the unutilized ticket at the price at which it was bought, for the part or parts of the journey not made, and for the part or parts already made if the flight is no longer serving any purpose with the passenger's original travel plan, together with, when relevant, a return flight to

the first point of departure, at the earliest opportunity; and

(iii) At a time beyond 10 pm till 4 am, or at a time when the airport is closed at the point of departure or final destination, you're entitled to hotel accommodation and transportation fares between the airport and place of accommodation (hotel or other accommodation).

#### Your Rights During International Flights:

For international flights, you're also obligated to the assistance specified below:

(i) Between two and four hours, compensation of 25% of the ticket price for all flights within Nigeria and refreshments such as water, soft drinks, confectioneries/snacks; (ii) a meal; (iii) hotel accommodation; (iv) transport between the airport and place of accommodation (hotel or other accommodation);

(ii) More than four hours; a free meal, two telephone calls, SMS, or emails.

(iii) When the reasonably expected time of departure is at least six hours after the time of departure previously announced; you're also entitled to hotel accommodation assistance and transport between the airport and place of accommodation (hotel or other accommodation).

#### Right To Compensation for Delayed, Lost, And Damaged Baggage

You also have the right to your baggage carried on the same flight not limited to but subject to the considerations of safety, security, or any other legal and valid cause.

In case checked-in baggage has been off-loaded for operational, safety, or security reasons, the air carrier must inform you at the soonest practicable time and in such a manner that you will readily know of the off-loading.

If your baggage has been off-loaded, the air

carrier must inform you, even if it has already announced that your baggage will be on the next flight.

Note: You have a right to demand compensation if the air carrier fails to inform you when your luggage is been trans-loaded to a second flight - without informing you initially.

If you were informed, the air carrier must also carry the off-loaded baggage on the next flight with available space, and deliver the same to you but in the space of doing that, the NCAA states that the air carrier shall immediately tender an amount to you (passenger), as compensation for the inconvenience you experienced as follows:

(i) For Domestic flights five thousand Naira (N5,000);

(ii) For International flights One hundred and fifty USD (\$150)

Note: This fee was agreed upon in 2015, the compensation fee as of December 2023 must have been increased (no data from NCAA yet)

Also, if your baggage, whether carried on the same or a later flight, gets lost or suffers any damage attributable to the airline operators, the act states you shall be compensated per the provisions of the Nigeria Civil Aviation Act below:

If a passenger's baggage within 7 (seven) days for domestic flights and 21 (twenty-one) days, for international flights is presumed to have been permanently lost, counting from the time you or your consignee should have received the baggage, you will have a refund of checked baggage fees. But if it wasn't lost but the baggage was not delivered to the passenger within twenty-four (24) hours from the arrival of the flight, a refund of checked baggage fees would also apply.

#### Obligation to Inform Passengers of Their



### Rights:

The operating airline shall ensure that at check-in, a legible notice containing the following text is displayed in a manner visible to passengers:

“If you are denied boarding or if your flight is canceled or delayed for at least one hour, ask the airline officials for a written statement of your rights, particularly about compensation and assistance”

Any airline in Nigeria denying boarding or canceling a flight must provide you with a written notice setting out the procedures for your compensation and assistance in line with these Regulations.

They are also mandated to provide you, by a delay of at least one hour, an equivalent notice but if it's in the case of an illiterate whether visually impaired or other persons under disability, the provisions of this Regulation shall be applied using appropriate alternative means.

### Conclusion:

Airline safety and an assurance of security of the passengers' assets and lives are what have made the aviation industry a thriving industry in Nigeria. However, the threats to these would lower passengers' trust in airline carriers and cause a reduction in patronage for airline travel.

Knowing your flight rights as a consumer in Nigeria is part of being patriotic to ensure the modus operandi of international relations in other countries and that's why at ConsumerHalla, we care about you and empower you with the information needed to live in Nigeria - as a consumer

### Where to Find Redress for Consumer's Complaint

As a consumer, have you had a bad or unfair experience with any brand? As many people do, you need not keep it to yourself or take it as an act of God, or end it in self-pity.

There are several regulatory and industry-specific platforms and avenues to air your grievances and seek redress.

As a consumer, it is expedient to know your rights and how to enforce them through appropriate institutions.

Some regulatory authorities and advocacy groups in Nigeria with mandates and responsibilities to protect and assist customers in getting fair treatment are listed below:

- a. Consumerhalla - An advocacy platform in Nigeria responsible for addressing consumers' complaints and ensuring the protection of consumers' rights, policies, and regulations
  - Download Consumerhalla from Play Store or Apple Store,
  - install the Consumerhalla app,
  - register by signing up, and then sign in. Once you sign in you will see “Make Complaints”
  - Click on Make Complaints and lodge your complaints.
  - You will get feedback after 72 hours.
  - The username on Instagram, Facebook, and X (Twitter) is “Consumerhalla”



b. Lagos State Consumer Protection Agency (LASCOPA). A Lagos state agency established to protect consumers and promote their rights handles consumer complaints against unfair trade practices, substandard goods, or unsatisfactory services.

- Contact Address: 2b, Soji Adepege Close, Off Allen Avenue, Ikeja
- E-mail to the agency. [lascopa@lagosstate.gov.ng](mailto:lascopa@lagosstate.gov.ng). and [lascopa@gmail.com](mailto:lascopa@gmail.com).
- Please attach necessary details and documents to the complaints.

c. Consumer Protection Council (CPC): A federal government agency with the mandate to protect and enhance consumers' rights by investigating and addressing complaints, taking up issues, and advocating for better products, and services, as well as promoting consumer education.

- Phone Nos: 08056002020, 08056003030.
- E-mail to [info@cpc.gov.ng](mailto:info@cpc.gov.ng) or [cpcnigeria@yahoo.co](mailto:cpcnigeria@yahoo.co)

d. Social-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP): A non-governmental organizational, advocacy group that focuses on promoting human rights, including economic

and social rights, transparency, and accountability, often through legal means.

- Phone Nos. 0800-2255-73727 to lodge their complaints

- E-mail to [infor@serap-nigeria.org](mailto:infor@serap-nigeria.org).

e. Nigeria Communication Commission (NCC): The NCC is responsible for regulating the supply of telecommunications services and facilities, promoting competition, and setting performance standards for telephone services in Nigeria.

- NCC's toll-free Contact Center - 622
- Email: [consumerportal@ncc.gov.ng](mailto:consumerportal@ncc.gov.ng).

f. Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC): The NERC is an independent body, established by the power sector to undertake technical and economic regulation of the Nigerian electricity supply.

- Phone Nos: 09-462 1414, 09-462 1424
- E-mail: [complaints@nerc.gov.ng](mailto:complaints@nerc.gov.ng).

g. Public Complaints Commission (PCC): An agency of the federal government that helps the Public Complaints Commission to provide impartial investigation on behalf of the complainants who feel aggrieved by action or inaction of the government, local govern-



ment, private companies, banking, and financial institutions.

- Phone Nos: 08065553671, 08096888818, 08024200080E-mail
- E-mail: complaint@pcc.gov.ng.

h. National Human Rights Commission (NHRC): the NHRC monitors human rights in Nigeria, assists victims of human rights violations, and helps in the formulation of the Nigerian government's policies on human rights.

- Contact Address: No 19, Aguyi Ironsi Street, Maitama, Abuja
- Phone Nos: 6472 (short code), 09-2903746, 092-908829, 09032192577.

i. Standard Organization of Nigeria (SON): The Standard Organization of Nigeria is the sole statutory body vested with the responsibility of standardizing and regulating the quality of all products in Nigeria.

j. Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC): the FCCPC protects and promotes the interest and welfare of consumers by providing them with a wider variety of quality products at competitive prices

and ensuring the adoption of measures to guarantee that goods and services are safe for intended or normally safe use.

- Tel Nos: 08056002020, 08056003030, 08148007378

• 6th floor, Federal Secretariat Complex, No.1, Murtala Mohammed Way, Kano

- E-mail: kano@fccpc.gov.ng.

k. National Films and Video Censors Board (NFVCB): the role of NFVCB is to classify all films and videos whether imported or produced locally, negotiate, mediate, and conciliate consumer complaints, also obtain compensation, relief, and safeguard.

- Phone No: 07082767572
- Contact Address: Plot 20, Alexandria Crescent, Wuse II, Zone A7, Abuja

l. National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC): The NAFDAC's duties to the consumer is the regulatory duties that products manufactured, used, and sold in Nigeria meet international standards thereby reducing the risk of counterfeiting, drug abuse, and production of sub-standard products.

- Phone Nos: 09-6718008, 09-5240996,
- E-mail: nafdac@nafdac.gov.ng.
- Contact Address: Plot 2032, Olusegun Obasanjo Way, Wuse Zone 7, Abuja.

Note: if the complaint is regarding the defect of goods /Items, or about the deficiency of service then provide details of the deficiency/ type of services and date/year of purchase of goods/ service received. Details of the items/goods (provide information about defects/supplying of less quantity of goods/items

m. Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA): the NCAA enforces in compliance of airlines and other service providers with relevant regulations. They Collect and follow up on consumer complaints to a satisfactory conclusion.

- Phone Nos: 01-7607286, 01-7607285, 070985135, 07098513500, 07098513502
- Email NCAA for your complaints at cpd@ncaa.gov.ng.
- Office Address: 21039, Murtala Mohammed Airport, Ikeja, Lagos

n. Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN): the CBN provides standards required of institutions under the regulatory purview of the bank on fair treatment of consumers.

- Phone No: 07002255226
- Email: contactcbn@cbn.gov. cpd@cbn.gov.ng. Attach documentary evidence

o. National Information and Technology Development Agency (NITDA) - create a framework for the planning, research, development, standardization, application, coordination, monitoring, evaluation, and regulation of Information Technology practices in Nigeria

- Phone No: 08168401851.
- Email info@nitda.gov.ng.
- Head office. No. 28, Port Harcourt Crescent, Off Gimbiya Street, Area 11 Garki, Abuja,

p. National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) - the responsibility of the commission to receive, process, and consider applications for the establishment, ownership, or operation of radio and television stations including cable television service, direct satellite broadcast, and any other medium of broadcasting; radio and television stations owned,

- Phone No: 090780 5730
- E-mail info@nbc.gov.ng,
- Contact Address: 14 Bamako Road, Wuse Zone 1 Abuja, or Plot 20 Ibrahim Taiwo Street, Asokoro. City, Abuja.

q. The National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA): The Agency is responsible for enforcing all environmental laws, guidelines, policies, standards, and regulations in Nigeria, as well as enforcing compliance with provisions of international agreements, protocols, conventions

- E-mail dg@nesrea.gov.ng
- Contact Address: 56, Lome Crescent, Wuse Zone 7, Abuja



# A Guide to Seamless Resolutions of Consumer Concerns

**I**n the intricate dance between consumers and brands, challenges are inevitable. Whether it's a product concern, service dissatisfaction, or a simple communication breakdown, consumer issues need thoughtful resolution strategies.

In this guide, we explore how brands can address and resolve consumer concerns, fostering a relationship of trust and loyalty.

## Understanding the Consumer Landscape

Consumer concerns are as diverse as the products and services they engage with. From quality issues and pricing disputes to customer service woes, the modern consumer demands not only exceptional products but also a responsive and attentive brand.

## Proactive Communication: The First Line of Defense

One of the most effective ways to resolve consumer concerns is to prevent them from escalating in the first place. Proactive communication involves transparently conveying information about products, services, and potential challenges. By setting clear expectations, brands can reduce the likelihood of misunderstandings.

### Scenario:

Imagine a scenario where a tech company is launching a new software update. Proactive communication in this context would involve notifying users well in advance, detailing the changes, and providing resources for troubleshooting potential issues.

## Accessible Customer Support Channels

When issues do arise, accessible and respon-

sive customer support is paramount. Brands should invest in multi-channel customer support systems, including chat, email, and phone support, to ensure that consumers can easily reach out when problems occur.

### Scenario:

Consider a fashion brand where a consumer receives a damaged product. A responsive and accessible customer support team can quickly address the issue, offering solutions such as a replacement or refund.

## Implementing Consumer Feedback Loops

Listening to consumer feedback is a powerful tool for identifying and resolving issues. Brands can employ surveys, feedback forms, and social media monitoring to gain insights into consumer sentiments. Analyzing this data helps brands understand recurring concerns and implement proactive solutions.

### Scenario:

In the hospitality industry, a hotel chain could use feedback loops to identify common complaints, such as issues with cleanliness. Armed with this information, the brand can implement stricter quality control measures to address the root cause.

## Transparent Conflict Resolution Policies

Establishing clear conflict resolution policies is crucial for handling more complex issues. Brands should communicate these policies openly, detailing the steps consumers can take to escalate concerns and the expected resolution timelines.

### Scenario:

In the case of a subscription-based service, if a consumer encounters billing discrepancies,

a transparent conflict resolution policy would guide them on how to report the issue and the steps the brand will take to rectify it.

## Learning from Consumer Concerns: Continuous Improvement

Rather than viewing consumer concerns as mere obstacles, brands can treat them as opportunities for improvement. By adopting a mindset of continuous improvement, brands can iterate on their products and services, ultimately preventing similar issues in the future.

### Scenario:

An e-commerce platform may face recurring complaints about late deliveries. Instead of just addressing individual cases, the brand can use this feedback to optimize its logistics processes, enhancing overall service efficiency.

## Conclusion: Building Resilient Consumer-Brand Relationships

In the ever-evolving landscape of consumer-brand interactions, resolving concerns is not just a reactive strategy; it's a proactive approach to building resilient relationships. Brands that prioritize communication, accessible support, feedback analysis, transparent policies, and continuous improvement are better positioned to navigate the complexities of the modern consumer landscape.

By addressing concerns with empathy and efficiency, brands not only resolve immediate issues but also cultivate a positive perception among consumers. In an era where consumer loyalty is earned through both product excellence and exceptional service, mastering the art of issue resolution is a strategic imperative for brands aiming for long-term success.

# Customer is king in the West but not in Nigeria

By Azuka Onwuka

**A**s a marketing professional, one of the axioms or aphorisms I learned early in the industry was: “Customer is king.” I believed that it was applicable in Nigeria and, therefore, repeated it in discussions on marketing. Even though I had visited North America and Europe, I didn’t stay long enough to truly see how their countries worked. That affected my view.

However, recently I spent some extended time in North America and experienced first-hand what customer care is. With that experience, it became crystal clear to me that the term “customer is king” should not be uttered in Nigeria, as it is a hollow statement that is in dissonance with reality. When you compare how the customer in Canada, the United States, or the United Kingdom is treated with the way the Nigerian customer is treated, then you will conclude that the Nigerian customer is a nobody in real life playing the role of a king in a low-budget film.

For example, one thing that is common in most Western countries is a clear return policy. It is taken for granted that a customer can return any purchased good and get a refund

like a real king is treated. There are usually no hidden terms and conditions. The returned good does not even have to be in the same condition of purchase. The customer does not even have to give a reason for returning the product. The only terms and conditions that sometimes exist are that the return has to take place within a certain period like 30 or 60 days.

A customer can buy a pack of powdered coffee, open it, take some out of it, and return it to the store of purchase with the excuse of dissatisfaction with the taste. Note that the coffee is not spoiled, expired or adulterated. Note that the coffee pack has been opened and can no longer be resold. Note that there is no empirical way of certifying good or bad taste. But the store will simply give the customer a refund. In Nigeria, as long as that pack has not expired and there is no mold or impurity in it, that opened pack will not be accepted back. If it had not been opened, the customer may be indulged with a replacement at some stores after a long and frustrating process.

University students in Western countries who need suits for graduation ceremonies sometimes buy suits, wear them for their events, return them, and collect their full refund. Some customers even take things a

notch higher by buying a travel bag in a store in Canada, for example, using it to bag their items, traveling to the US with it, and then returning it to a branch of that same store in the US and getting their full refund.

Imagine a customer going to a store with a torn pack of chips, saying that her cat tore it open, and asking for a replacement. Please process this very well. The customer bought the pack of chips in good condition and went home with it. In her own home, her cat pounced on the pack of chips and ripped it open. The cat does not belong to the grocery store, neither did a member of the grocery store throw the pack of chips at the cat. One would wonder why a customer should go back to a grocery store with such a case. But the customer knows that she is in a country where she is a true reigning queen, and the store will accept the torn pack of chips and give her a new one.

Switch the countries and place the same customer in Nigeria. In the first place, no Nigerian will take a pack of chips torn open by his or her cat or dog back to where it was bought and demand a replacement. That is completely unimaginable. Any customer who does that will be rebuked or mocked by the



store owner. The employees or owner of the store will be outraged that someone is making such a demand.

Western countries have also created laws to protect the customer against any form of deceit in pricing. In Canada, for example, there is what is called the scanning code practice. If a store has a price tag on the shelf that is different from what is on the computer when the customer is about to pay for the product, the customer gets the product free. The code states that the product will be given to the customer free of charge if its price is not above ten dollars. But if it is above ten dollars, the customer will get ten dollars free and pay the difference.

Even when the purchase is done online, the same return policy applies. If the product arrives, the customer may open it, use it, feel dissatisfied, and send it back, usually within 30 days or 60 days, depending on the terms of return. Another interesting part of the return policy is that the customer will not spend a dime on the return. All the customer needs to do is put the product back in its box, seal it, stick the address on the pack, and keep it for the seller to pick up or drop it off at the nearest post office. Once the seller receives the item, the customer is given a full refund.

As a customer, if you walk into a store and see an employee of the store cleaning the floor or see the store manager moving around, and you ask any of them for the location of a product, the person is not expected to point at the aisle or tell you "I don't know." The person is expected to take you to the place where the product is. If you have any issues and ask to see the store manager, within two minutes the store manager comes out to meet you.

Currently, Facebook users in the United States have been awarded \$725m as the settlement amount for the multiple lawsuits brought against its parent company Meta. Many Facebook users sued the company for improperly sharing their information with third-party sources such as advertisers and data brokers. Facebook chose to settle out of court by agreeing to pay some money to all its subscribers in the US who used the social media app between May 24, 2007, and December 22, 2022. All they need to do is file a monetary claim before Friday, August 25, 2023. In Nigeria, such is unimaginable.

A Nigerian doctor told me that the best patients to have on earth are Nigerians. When a Nigerian patient dies in your hospital or under your care as a doctor, the family will come to thank you as the doctor – sometimes even give you a gift – pay any outstanding bills, take the body away, and go prepare for the funeral. As far as they are concerned, it is the way God willed it. If God had not wanted it like that, their relative would not have died.



But in the Western world, if a patient dies under your care as a doctor, you will not be at ease. The family will scrutinize every inch of the care given to their loved one. They may ask for an autopsy. They may even file a complaint. All the drugs and care procedures administered will be investigated. If anything is found to have not been done properly, the doctor may lose his or her license and may even go to jail, like Michael Jackson's doctor.

In the Western world, organisations – both private and public – know that the customer is king and accord the customer the full rights of a king. But in Nigeria, the customer is nowhere near such an exalted title and should no longer be deceived with such honorifics, for it is what William Shakespeare describes as being dressed in borrowed robes.

**•Azuka Onwuka, a Developmental journalist writes from Lagos**

**As a customer, if you walk into a store and see an employee of the store cleaning the floor or see the store manager moving around, and you ask any of them for the location of a product, the person is not expected to point at the aisle or tell you "I don't know."**

# Men's Fashion World

**I**n the changing world of fashion, men's style has become a means of self-expression, identity, culture, and personal flair. As societal beliefs and norms evolve and adjust, so does the narrative of what it means to dress well as a man.

## The world of men's fashion

**1. Classic and timeless styles:** someone who often opts for classic, timeless, and well-crafted shoes tends to appreciate tradition, elegance, and high quality. They are usually minimalists in terms of appearance. Such men are cool-headed and not trend freaks.

**2. Sneakers/trainers:** most people wear sneakers from time to time. A preference for sneakers or trainers indicates an active lifestyle, he has a casual approach to fashion and values comfort and functionality in their daily activities. So, if you see a man who likes wearing sneakers you might immediately know what to think of him.

**3. Boots:** in this case, it could be either work boots or fashion boots, this choice often signifies a rugged and adventurous spirit, a man who isn't afraid of getting messy. He might work as a con-

structor, plumber, or maybe welder where such footwear is necessary for keeping his feet safe. It might suggest that such an individual enjoys outdoor activities such as polo sport, and hiking and also values durability in their footwear.

**4. Dress shoes:** wearing dress shoes as a man suggests a more formal or professional lifestyle, probably in the co-operate world. He likes suits or traditional outfits; he wants to be addressed as a competent adult with class and poise. Also, a person who pays attention to details values a polished appearance.

**5. Slip-ons:** this style is a bit confusing to tell what it says about a man. If they are old and dirty, you might think of household slippers. As a man, it is difficult to look distinguished in slip-ons unless they are made of leather or a different kind of soles and look new. Most times such men

compliment slip-ons with a very nice outfit to appear presentable.

**6. Sandals:** sandals usually give a man a reserved and laid-back vibe, it could be good or bad depending on the situation and event they appear with sandals. Such men are seen as very casual, easy-going outgoing and free-spirited, and fun.

Loves to hang out casually.

## A Guide to Pairing Men's Shoes and Clothes

A man's choice of shoes often offers an insight into his personality, lifestyle, and preferences. So, here's a few general interpretations:

A man's shoes say a lot about him, shoes are important factors when rating a man's appearance which is why it's important to know how to match clothes and shoes for guys.

If you pair the wrong shades together, your whole look will be thrown off, and be seen as a clown. Certainly, pairing men's shoes is a key aspect of creating a polished and well-coordinated look.

As long as you've got plenty of options to choose from, you'll have no problem matching your shoes with your outfit.

If you don't have many shoe colors, starting with black is the smartest choice. Every guy needs clean and simple black leather lace-up shoes. They are classic, and they're great for guys of all ages, even if you're in your 20s, 30s, 40s and 50s.

- Black color appears smarter than multicolor patterns

- Darker tones tend to be more stylish than lighter tones, and they're also more versatile.

- The style of shoes also plays a big role in how stylish they are, and how well they pair with different types of outfits and occasions.

- Sneakers and dress shoes play by different sets of rules, most men wear sneakers for informal and casual outings while dress shoes are for co-operate outings.

- Invest in a good shoe polish, because no shoe looks good when it's unpolished.

- If your shoes are bright, tone the rest of your look down with neutral or block colors.

Pairing men's shoes with clothes is a key aspect of creating a polished and well-coordinated look.

### Here are some tips to help you navigate the world of matching shoes with different outfits:

#### 1. Consider Occasions:

Match the formality of the shoes to the occasion and your outfit. For example, wear dress shoes with suits and formal wear, and reserve sneakers for casual settings and club parties.

#### 2. Combine Colors:

Ensure that the color of your shoes complements your outfit. This is very important, Classic choices like black and brown shoes are versatile, but don't be afraid to experiment with different shades to add interest.

#### 3. Match Leather Shade:

If you're wearing leather shoes, try to match the color of your shoes with other leather accessories like belts. Consistency in leather tones creates a cohesive and put-together look.

#### 4. Casual vs. Formal:

Understand the difference between casual and formal shoe styles. Loafers and sneakers are generally more casual, while brogues and derbies are considered formal.

#### 5. Sock Color Matters:

Pay attention to your sock color, especially when wearing trousers. Ideally, your socks should match your trousers to create a smooth transition and enhance the look of your legs.

#### 6. Match Shoes to Pants:

Consider the style and color of your pants.

Darker shoes often work well with dark trousers, while lighter shoes pair nicely with lighter-colored pants.

#### 7. Experiment with Textures:

Don't be afraid to mix textures. Suede shoes can add a touch of sophistication to casual outfits, while polished leather shoes can elevate a more formal look.

#### 8. Mind the Seasons:

Choose shoes that are appropriate for the weather. Boots are great for rainy seasons while loafers and canvas shoes are ideal for harmattan and sunny weather

#### 9. Contrast for Attention:

Experiment with contrast. A bit of contrast between your shoes and pants can create visual interest. For instance, tan shoes with navy trousers or black shoes with light gray trousers.

#### 10. Consider the Overall Aesthetic:

Think about the overall aesthetic you want to achieve.

A sporty sneaker might work well with casual, while a classic brogue complements a more traditional look.

Remember, personal style is subjective, and these are guidelines rather than strict rules. Feel free to experiment and find combinations that suit your taste and express your individuality.

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• *Culled from Google fashion for men*





# Optimal residential areas for Island workers in Lagos

**L**agos, the most populated city in West Africa has been ranked as the 12th most expensive city to live in Africa for the first quarter of 2022, according to a recent cost of living index.

The cost-of-living index compiled by Statista, a German company that specializes in market and consumer data said that the index compares the expected average costs of necessities such as food, clothing, entertainment, healthcare, etc.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the inflation rate for Lagos State rose to 25.7% in June, 2023.

compared to the national average of 22.7%. This means that the prices of goods and services in Lagos State increased by 25.7% compared to the same period last year.

According to a report by Nairametrics, the NBS also revealed that every month, Lagos recorded the highest inflation rate of 2.7%, indicating a faster pace of price changes than

other states and the main driver of this increase was the removal of fuel subsidies by the federal government, which led to a sharp rise in the pump price of petrol in Lagos.

When seeking employment in Lagos, the critical consideration extends beyond the job itself to the commute and distance from home to the workplace. With the anticipated rise in the unemployment rate to 41% by the end of 2023, many Nigerians are grappling to retain their jobs, often enduring lengthy daily commutes.

Transportation is a major factor to consider when getting an apartment in Lagos as the price of fuel affects it all the time.

However, with the subsidy removal, Lagosians now pay almost the same as other Nigerians for fuel with fuel prices jumping more than 2 folds from N180/ltr to about N569/ltr.

On the other hand, Lagos Island, as the vibrant hub of commercial activities, magnetically attracts its workforce from the outskirts. A substantial population residing outside the

island perimeter commutes daily for work.

In this guide, we delve into the prime residential areas in Lagos for those employed on the Island, factoring in elements such as proximity, safety, and living costs.

## 1. Ikorodu

Ikorodu is one town / Local government area in Lagos State that has so much untapped potential and opportunities.

The majority of individuals settling there are middle, low, and high-income earners, and with this, having a business startup would be an amazing investment as you can make use of cheap labor. One thing about Ikorodu is its accessibility to other parts of Lagos and indeed the country as a whole.

With the new expanded beautiful Ikorodu road (6 lanes) with BRT lanes, you will surely enjoy your ride. Over 400 Blue BRT buses with A.C. are on this road every day. The 4th mainland bridge will connect Ikorodu directly to Lekki, Ajah, and Ibeju Lekki. After the

completion of the 4th mainland bridge in less than 30 minutes you can drive from Ikorodu to Lekki or Ajah or Ibeju Lekki. Ikeja is about 40 minutes from Ikorodu.

### 2. Magodo

Situated in the Kosofe Local Government Area, Magodo is a residential haven close to Ikeja and Ojodu Berger. Known for its affluent residents, Magodo offers a secure environment, vibrant surroundings, excellent social amenities, well-maintained roads, and amicable neighbors. With numerous estates emerging between Ajah and Lekki, Magodo stands out as an ideal living space with affordable land and housing opportunities.

### 3. Yaba

Yaba, often hailed as the Silicon Valley of Nigeria, is a popular location on Lagos Mainland. It hosts major internet start-ups like Co-Creation Hub and Andela, making it a sought-after spot. Yaba is not just a business hub; it's also a suitable place for families, accommodating prominent educational institutions like the University of Lagos, Queens College, and Yaba College of Technology. Tejuosho Market and vibrant nightlife contribute to Yaba's allure.

### 4. Festac Town

Located along the Lagos-Badagry Expressway, Festac Town is a federal housing estate renowned for its family-friendly environment. With reliable power supply, accessible emer-



**When seeking employment in Lagos, the critical consideration extends beyond the job itself to the commute and distance from home to the workplace. With the anticipated rise in the unemployment rate to 41% by the end of 2023, many Nigerians are grappling to retain their jobs, often enduring lengthy daily commutes.**



gency services, supermarkets, restaurants, hotels, health centers, and post offices, Festac Town stands out as one of the most peaceful places in Lagos.

### 5. Surulere

Suited for young professionals and social butterflies on a budget, Surulere is a lively neighborhood at the heart of Lagos. Connected to almost all routes and roads in Lagos, Surulere boasts landmarks like the National Stadium, National Arts Theatre, and Adeniran Ogunsanya Shopping Mall. With multiple attractive areas like Bode Thomas, Coker, Shitta, and Orile, Surulere is an excellent option for those looking for an affordable yet lively residence.

### 6. Ikeja

As the capital of Lagos, Ikeja is a bustling area, housing government parastatals, the Governor's office, and the government house. It serves as the business hub of the state, featuring a well-planned, clean, and quiet residential environment. Despite its bustling nature, Ikeja offers hangout spots like the Ikeja City Mall, cinemas, bars, and restaurants. With good schools, hospitals, and security outposts, Ikeja provides a balance between urban living and essential amenities.

For anyone looking to enjoy life in Lagos while maintaining seamless access to their workplace, these locations offer comfort and convenience.

Adapted from: [privatepropertyng.com.ng](https://privatepropertyng.com.ng)





# The world of smartphones and the Nigerian market?

**W**ith a population of over 220 million people, and with highly active young men and women segment, Nigeria is a bride for the burgeoning telecom market and GSM handsets in the world.

Currently, estimates from different sources put the number of smartphone users in Nigeria at roughly 25 and 40 million although a report said there are around 170 million GSM mobile phone subscribers in Nigeria. The number of smartphone users in Nigeria is forecast to grow to more than 140 million by 2025.

According to the report titled, The Telecommunications Industry in Nigeria 2022 published by ResearchAndMarkets.com, "About 63 million phone devices are sold in Nigeria each year."

Although there are brands from countries

including Finland, France, America, India, Japan, Philippines, Taiwan, South Korea, South Africa, and UAE, however, the bulk of the brands found in the market belong to the Chinese with experts putting such brands at over 300 models in the last 15 years.

Some of these phone brands include Tecno Mobile, Nokia, Wiko, Samsung, Panasonic, Huawei, Asus, Apple, HP, Google, Gionee, Alcatel, and Oppo, among others. Each of these has significant market shares, as mobile phones remain the main platform for voice and data connectivity with the majority of Nigerians accessing the internet through mobile phones, the report explains.

There were reports that the number of phones approved for sale in the country by the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) increased to 1,985 as of April 2023.

According to Global Brands Magazine,

even though the phone mobile market is flooded with a lot of manufacturers from Asia, particularly China, the American multinational technology company still leads the team in the global market but how true is that?

The world has now entered an era of cell phones with superior functions. Over the past 20 years, many aspects of mobile devices have undergone significant changes such as style and appearance, size, function, image and camera technology, larger screens, mobile technology, foldable phones, AI, 5G networks, and even processors.

We look at the top five manufacturers of smartphones globally and the market in Nigeria.

**Samsung**

On the other hand, a South Korean company founded on 1st March 1938 with sales per year of 321.3 million units and revenue

per year of 211.2 billion USD makes it rank number one in the top mobile brands in the world list.

According to Global Brands Magazine, Samsung sells more units of its handheld devices compared to Apple. Known for its innovation, design excellence, and cutting-edge features, Samsung offers high-quality smartphones that cater to a diverse range of consumer needs.

Samsung's commitment to delivering exceptional smartphone quality is evident in its attention to detail, the use of premium materials, and advanced technological capabilities. Their smartphones boast impressive displays, powerful processors, excellent camera systems, and long-lasting battery life.

Furthermore, Samsung prioritizes user experience, offering intuitive interfaces, customization options, and a wide range of software features.

Today, Samsung is arguably the biggest phone brand in Nigeria. Samsung remains the market leader in the industry as it incessantly strives to improve product capabilities.

Known for its Samsung Galaxy S-series smartphones, they partnered with Audio expert corporations including AKG and Dolby to offer their customers a high-quality sound experience. Samsung has a market share of about 20 percent, which makes it the top in Nigeria and one of the biggest mobile phone brands in the world.

In Nigeria, mid-range income earners who cannot afford iPhones are most likely to go for Samsung.

In 2019, Samsung started a campaign and targeted people from ages 15 to 45 who follow the latest technology trends. Their lifestyles are driven by heavy consumption of TV and digital media, and they are especially engaged in local TV series, as well as celebrities and their aspirational lifestyles.

The result was mind-blowing. The campaign created valuable social conversations with the target audience, which rated a positive social response to the Galaxy S5. The brand performed well both in terms of unit cost and the rate of download return via targeting and optimization tools.

With this, we can outrightly say major buyers of Samsung in Nigeria happen to be people, who follow the latest technology trends. Their lifestyles are driven by heavy consumption of TV and digital media, and they are especially engaged in local TV series, as well as celebrities and their aspirational lifestyles.

In a typical Nigerian family where the family is specially engaged in local TV series, there is a 90% chance that Samsung devices are the most paramount devices and gadgets because of the comfort and relaxation gotten



**In a typical Nigerian family where the family is specially engaged in local TV series, there is a 90% chance that Samsung devices are the most paramount devices and gadgets because of the comfort and relaxation gotten from viewing (watching movies from Samsung TVs) favourite home movies.**



from viewing (watching movies from Samsung TVs) favourite home movies.

It's always a no-brainer in getting a new phone as the same pleasure gotten from watching from a Samsung OLED TV would be the same, as watching from a Samsung S-Series smartphone.

#### The iPhone

The iPhone is one of the most premium mobile brands in the world. Founded in 1976, its sales per year of 217 plus million phones and revenue per year of USD 53.8 billion, makes it ranked number two on a global scale.

Since its inception, Apple has been at the forefront of technological advancements, introducing groundbreaking products such as the Macintosh, iPod, iPhone, and iPad.

They combine cutting-edge hardware with a seamless integration of software, providing a smooth and intuitive user experience. They always strive to create products that enhance people's lives and empower creativity.

The brand's commitment to privacy and security also sets it apart from its competitors, ensuring that user data remains protected.

Apple is the closest rival to Samsung. Apple not only has one of the highest customer bases in Nigeria in the smartphone world, it has developed a class for itself. Their products offer superior design and features, which have become more of a trademark brand across the globe.

It is amazing to see how the brand has maintained the quality of its products over the years with rapid technological developments and growing design approaches.

Their latest iPhone series - Apple iPhone 15 and 15 Pro Max only shows their consistency in the market and will be the very best in the industry.

Comparatively, iOS users typically have higher income, higher education levels, more engagement, and spend more per app. Of course, that doesn't mean that those who have those same characteristics won't own an Android device and will only use iOS devices.

In Nigeria, a good number of millennials are yet to grasp the profitability - from a Gen Z point of view reason being due to the sophistication and features it embodies. Most people in their 60s, they'd rather use a smartphone that's easy to operate than bother using an iPhone with its so different operating system.

On the other hand, Gen Z is more likely to use an iPhone in other to claim status or even for content creation because of the high-definition cameras it possesses.

Also, many business owners have utilized the high-definition camera instead of investing in digital cameras as the iPhone has proved without reasonable doubt, how good the picture quality is.

In general, major buyers of iPhones in Nigeria vary from different perspectives like business owners, elites, literates in different fields, and Gen Z all for different reasons.

Apple and Samsung mobile phone giants seem to be the major players in the industry but that's not all there is. Other phone manufacturers have targeted their marketing efforts to certain regions and thus, garnered a fair share of the cake.

But just recently, there seems to be a very neglected and underrated Asian competitor that has overtaken Samsung Electronics Co. and Apple Inc. as the largest mobile phone maker there, tapping into a huge and fast-growing market.

#### **Transsion - Manufacturers of Tecno, Itel and Infinix**

Transsion's mobile phone business in Africa is bigger than either of Apple iPhone or Samsung Galaxy and the reason for Transsion's growth appears to be its focus on emerging markets, where demand has been relatively strong compared to more developed markets.

While Transsion may not be dominating the markets in Europe and North America, its strategic focus on Africa has meant that it outsells competitors such as Samsung and Xiaomi on the continent with a market share of 48 percent, according to Canalysis.

The company also dominates the accessories market with the Oraimo brand with a 21 percent share of the wearable market.

According to Marketing Edge, founder Zhu Zhaojiang has overseen an expansion that now claims a 48.7% market share in Africa, according to the filing.

Known for offering high-value smartphones at lower cost, Tecno understood the uniqueness of the African mobile market and developed smartphones best suited to African people and cultures. TECNO stayed true to the maxim "Think globally, act locally," thereby achieving great success in translating advanced technology into superior or localized products.

The transition of Tecno mobile from an ordinary 'China phone' to a force to reckon with in the smartphone industry is amazing. Now rated among the most purchased smartphone brands in Nigeria, Tecno has experienced a significant upsurge in fortune thanks to its relatively affordable phones with highly rated features.

In the last quarter of 2023, the brand held about 26.49% of the market share in Nigeria.

While the brand might not be among the best-rated in the world, it has certainly found a huge market in Nigeria.

#### **Conclusion**

There is no clear leader (so to say) as most major phone manufacturers in the world are keeping up with the competition to avoid what happened to Blackberry when the iPhone entered the market in 2009.

Every manufacturer is keeping tabs on what's on demand and trending, by listening to local customer needs and delivering frugal innovation which is a great value for money.

The thing is that the iPhone focuses on luxury and marketing efforts while Samsung on the other hand focuses on innovation and creativity lastly, TECNO focuses its phone development on meeting the needs of the masses, of which the large majority of people are middle class and low-class earners.

These people would rather get a phone within their pocket limits, rather than break the bank to get a Samsung, even though Samsung is miles better in terms of quality.



# 85million Nigerians continue to grope in darkness

## ... Prepaid Meter Debacle Worsens

**N**igeria is presently indexed as a developing nation and its attempts to move forward are being stunted because of its energy deficit, among others.

Nigeria is graded as a developing and emerging economy nation because it is still on the threshold of industrialization, economic development and stability, and enhanced living standards for its populace. But one thing is indisputable, its potential, if well harnessed, can slingshot her into a developing economy in a short time.

Its electricity problem is a perennial and teething problem that has gone on unabated for decades. As a result, Nigerians have continued to grope in darkness due to the challenges bedeviling the power sector. Several businesses have failed as a result of energy crises and many are operating non-competitively and have expectedly passed the bur-

den to the consumers, fueling inflation and consequently worsening unemployment.

Imagine Nigeria, the acclaimed giant of Africa, with a population of about 220 million sharing a paltry 4,000 MW of electricity even though the Federal Government through the Association of Power Generation Companies said the nation grew the power capacity of the national grid to about 14,000 MW in October 2023. However, the fact sheet on Nigeria's power supply is painted in the dark and red.

According to World Bank statistics, 85 million Nigerians do not have access to national grid electricity making it a country with the largest energy access deficit in the world. According to the Bank, the lack of reliable power is a substantial constraint for citizens and businesses, resulting in annual economic losses estimated at \$26.2 billion (N10.1 trillion) which is equivalent to about

2 percent of the GDP. According to the 2020 World Bank Doing Business report, Nigeria ranks 171 out of 190 countries in getting electricity, and its access is seen as one of the major constraints for the private sector.

Additionally, the Report added that 8 out of 10 Nigerians lack access to 10 hours of power supply. This has made doing business in the country increasingly difficult as most companies incur additional costs to have access to electricity through generating plants. Also, the high cost of diesel and petrol has further compounded woes and increased prices of goods in the market.

The Manufacturers Association of Nigeria laments that alternative energy adds 40 percent to the cost of Nigerian goods, rendering them uncompetitive against cheaper imports.

All attempts by successive governments to resolve the electricity supply imbroglio have

yielded marginal results even after spending a humongous amount in the sector. It is reported that as of August 2022, the Federal Government's intervention fund to the electricity distribution companies since their privatization had risen to N2.9 trillion.

A bold move by the government was made in 2005 when it enacted the Electric Power Sector Reform (EPSR) Act, which gave role to private companies to participate in electricity generation, transmission, and distribution. But 18 years later, this had yet to yield appreciable results not due to the content of the Act but by the same factors that have kept Nigerian prostate for years.

Central to the Act is the private sector participation in the electricity value chain. Of critical significance is the introduction of a pre-paid meter approach to effect a lasting solution to billing and payment systems. The prepaid meter was introduced in 2006 to aid revenue collection and generation as well as abolish meter reading and estimated billing. However, since its introduction, the same challenges being faced by consumers and power network operators persist to date. And it is not due to anything other than pervasive inefficiency, conspiracy, corruption, changes in policy, instability, and lack of accountability and transparency in its execution strategy.

Using a prepaid meter should ordinarily be a winning formula for all the stakeholders.

The Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) disclosed in its Q2 2023 report that electricity distribution companies (DisCos) installed 178,864 prepaid meters in Q2 of 2023, an increase of 3,586 compared to the 175,281 installed in Q1 of the same year. Despite this flash record, the number of power consumers on estimated billing, who lack meters, has risen to over 7.8 million, the NERC disclosed in the Report.

Sadly, ten years after the partial privatisation of the electricity sub-sector, the report reveals that 7.1 million consumers are still without prepaid meters.

The prepaid meter installation has run into several bumps. It is saddening that nine years after the privatisation of the distribution component of the electricity sector, millions of consumers have yet to own prepaid meters. This subjects them to extortion, exploitation, and fraudulent antics of the DiSCos.

The regulator said out of the 12,542,581 registered energy consumers in the country as of March 2022, only 4,740,114, or about 37.79 percent were metered. The remaining 7,802,427 consumers are billed arbitrarily through some wonky arithmetic, which has made many customers frustrated.

Confirming the figure, a recent public opinion poll conducted by NOIPolls also



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revealed that ownership of fixed pre-paid metering is limited to only 37 percent of the electricity customers in Nigeria. The rest of the customers are divided among those who use post-paid meters and those who do not have a meter, but simply pay fixed amounts of money for electricity. Usage of pre-paid meters is highest in the North-East zone and lowest in the South-East zone

However, the NERC believed that the DisCos were not doing enough to provide pre-paid meters to Nigerians. The Commission expects DisCos to utilize fully any of the five-meter financing frameworks provided in the 2021 Meter Asset Provider and National Mass Metering Regulations to close their respective metering gaps. Prepaid meters were meant to safeguard customers against exploitation due to the lack of meters.

The latest statistics from the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission revealed that more than half of the registered consumers are on estimated billing. This is unacceptable; a reminder that the privatized entities cannot deliver on the mandates they were given and an indication that the exercise was dubious.

In its 2023 third-quarter report, NERC noted that of Nigeria's 12.82 million registered customers, only 5.70 million, or 44.51 percent are metered. In Q3 2023, DisCos metered 148,389 consumers.

After 10 years of existence, this rate is too low, leading to extortion by DisCos staff,



by-passing of meters, and low bill payment. Between July and September 2023, consumers lodged 333,947 complaints against the DisCos to NERC on metering, billing, and service disruption.

Electricity consumers are now being billed indiscriminately as charges are not based on actual power consumption but revenue targets driven by the DisCos. For example, what Ikeja Electric does is to spread the shortfall on revenue target for each transformer to unmetered households and businesses no matter what it amounts to. In Ikorodu for example, an unmetered 2-bed room's average estimated bill is N100k/month while the average power consumption for the same flat in the same neighborhood is less than N20k/month. In such circumstances, the consumers are left with no option but to pay just to meet the revenue target of the DisCo and not for what is consumed.

The NERC said in its 2022/Q2 Report the DisCos received 251,007 complaints from consumers to protest estimated billing, lack of meters, and service interruption, among others. This is 7,620 (+3.13 percent) more complaints than those received in 2022/Q1.

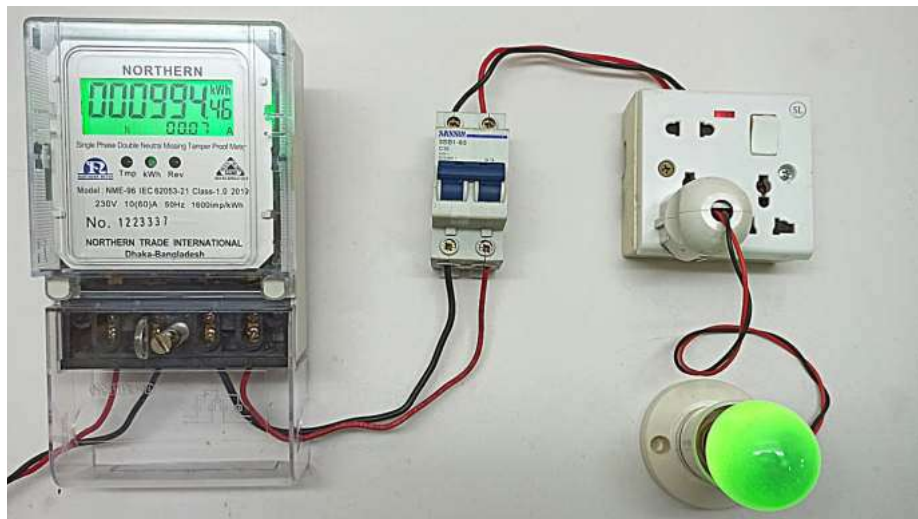
The commission pointed out that "metering, billing, and service interruption were the prevalent sources of customer complaints, accounting for more than 72 percent of the total complaints during the quarter."

In another bold attempt, in February 2022, the Federal Government-led initiative to distribute four million prepaid meters to households to tackle the problems associated with the estimated billing system, adding that the gesture was aimed at ensuring that every customer had the liberty to control their electricity usage. But this has yet to make a nationwide industry impact.

At a point, the former minister of Power, Babatunde Raji Fashola, accused the DisCos of sabotaging the country's economy by refusing to carry out directives aimed at resolving key constraints to performance, including metering of consumers.

DisCos have also tied their low capacity to provide efficient service to inadequate funding by the federal government and a shortfall in their revenue generation. The shortfall was blamed on their inability to efficiently collect revenues from consumers. The inefficient revenue collection is linked to the failure to deploy meters.

However, the Executive Secretary, of the Association of Power Generation Companies, Joy Ogaji, had called the meter the 'cashbox' of the power sector industry. According to her, apart from helping the DisCos measure electricity delivered to customers for billing, prepaid meter helps in determining the consumption load by customers and guarantee revenue returns in the sector. It almost helps to eliminate energy theft in the system



Ogaji posited that the survival of the power industry depends on the efficient deployment of the meter. When the GENCOs generate electricity and the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) transmits, if the DisCos are not able to efficiently collect the revenue from consumers they supply electricity, the system fails.

Again, the federal government had in 2018 transferred metering responsibility to Meter Assets Providers (MAP) as an independent body to fast-track the supply of prepaid meters.

Despite the government's intervention, the then Minister Fashola said the MAP scheme does not relieve the DisCos of their contractual obligation to provide meters but helps them perform it.

He said the MAP policy was to help relieve the DisCos of the financial burden of supplying meters to consumers, allow the entrepreneurs to take up the responsibility as a business, diversify the sources of meter supply, and address the huge metering gap in the system.

The MAP regulation provides for third-party financing of meter production and supply, under a permit issued by the NERC, with 10 years to pay back the cost. Meters are seen as assets with a technically useful life of 10-15 years.

Amidst the tension of unsatisfactory performance of DisCos especially in metering, the NERC announced a new meter rate last September. The Commission said a single-phase meter will now cost N81,975.16k, instead of the previous price of N58,661.69k. Similarly, the price of a three-phase meter was increased to N143,836.10k from N109,684.36k. According to the NERC, the new charges take effect from September 6, 2023.

This was widely criticized by consumers who decried the increase, saying that it would affect the meager income of many Nigerians, as the cost of the meters is far above

the nation's minimum wage.

Considering the low disposable income of an average Nigerian customer, it might be difficult for many to afford the new rates," said Kunle Olubiyo, president of Nigeria Consumer Protection Network.

The NOI Polls explained that while further reforms of the electricity sector are imminent, it is essential to further develop the private energy market and improve accountability in the sector. Also, given that 43 percent of consumers do not have pre-paid meters, it is therefore pertinent that stakeholders responsible for the distribution and installation ensure that all electricity users have pre-paid meters in their households.

Interestingly, another landmark move was also made when on June 9, 2023, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu assented to the Electricity Bill, thereby making it an Act, empowering states, companies, and individuals to generate, transmit, and distribute electricity. This in turn repealed the EPSRA 2005 and created a comprehensive legal and institutional framework to guide the Nigeria Electricity Supply Industry (NESI).

The Act aims to consolidate the laws relating to electricity in Nigeria across the entire value chain of the Nigerian Power Sector, including the integration of renewable energy into Nigeria's energy. A fully privatized electricity sector will aid cost and service-reflective tariff, contract, and rule-based competitive electricity market in Nigeria.

Energy sector industry watchers believe that the new Act may be the game-changer Nigerians have been waiting for but it may be too early to speculate. Nigerians hope that the new move will not experience policy summersault and implementation bottlenecks like many before it.

Nigerians are already exasperated and cannot afford to wait any longer to get enough electricity supply and have seamless access to affordable prepaid meters.

# Artificial Intelligence (AI) sets to take over many jobs in 2024 -2030 - *Experts*

- 85 Million to lose jobs to AI by 2025 - World Economic Forum

**Y**ou would have been living under a rock if you did not know how artificial intelligence is set to affect jobs in 2023-2030. AI like ChatGPT seems to be stealing all of the headlines at the moment, Google unveiled new AI software to build presentations, analyze and enter data, and write content, and there are so many more AI tools like Gamma and Numerous AI.

Those who are resisting, rather than riding the crest of the wave will not be making hay whilst the sun shines when it comes to landing in-demand jobs in the next 7 years and enjoying job growth. AI will be taking some jobs, but it will be creating new ones!

## What jobs are most likely to be automated?

### 1. Customer service representative

Most human customer service interactions are no longer done by phone with human employees manning the lines. Most of the time, the queries and problems of customers are repetitive. Therefore, AI can be used to provide automated responses to frequently asked questions.

### 2. Receptionists

The majority of companies across the world are now using robots at their reception. Even the calls are being managed by AI now. For example, AI MeReception can see, listen, understand, and talk with guests and customers.

### 3. Accountants/Bookkeepers

Many companies are now using automation and AI for their bookkeeping practices. AI-powered bookkeeping services provide an efficient accounting system and flexibility and security, considering that they are available as cloud-based services. Using AI algorithms, AI will ensure the data is collected, stored, and analyzed correctly. Using an AI accounting service is significantly less costly than paying an employee's salary to do the same job.

### 4. Salespeople

Gone are the days when corporations required salespeople for advertising and retail activities. Advertising has shifted towards web and social media landscapes. The built-in target marketing capabilities in social media allow advertisers to create custom content for different types of au-

diences.

### 5. Research and analysis

The fields of data analysis and research are areas that already implement the use of artificial intelligence as a method of streamlining the process and identifying new data without human assistance. The processing power of modern computers allows for the efficient sorting, extrapolation, and analysis of data. As artificial intelligence continues to improve, there may not be a need for humans to play a role in data analysis and research.

### 6. Warehouse work

Online sales is a steadily growing industry and comes with an increasing need for processes and automated systems that efficiently get orders onto trucks for delivery. One area of focus for streamlining the process has been the use of automation. Basic automation and artificial implementation in a warehouse allow for easy access to computerized systems to locate packages and direct staff, and future AI may even perform mechanized retrieval and loading to increase shipping capacities.

### 7. Insurance underwriting

When making assessments on the viability of insurance applicants, the most important work is often in analyzing the data available and applying it within a set of formulas or structures. Automation can easily complete these tasks and is continually adapting to perform more complicated duties, which may reduce how many underwriters a company requires.

## 8. Retail

Self-checkout stations at stores are an example of automation in the retail sphere and have gained prominence in grocery stores and big-box outlets. When a company makes use of self-checkout areas, it results from a cost-benefit analysis. Although allowing customers to scan their items can increase the instances of theft, the company saves more money by reducing the need for employees to work registers.

## How to quickly change career

To acquire the skills to stand out from other would-be candidates you should: ramp up your technical skills, complete online courses, understand the industry, gain work experience, and develop your soft skills. AI will require extensive research and collaboration as it is still an emerging area. Soft skills will help set you apart from other developers who only have technical skills.

## 1. Teachers

Teachers often represent a reference point for many of us. Often, our academic decisions are partly based on how inspiring a particular teacher has been with us in the years prior. For all these reasons, it is almost impossible that we will have a fully digital teaching experience in the future.

## 2. Lawyers and judges

These positions have a strong component of negotiation, strategy, and case analysis. A lot is based on the personal experience and knowledge of each specialist. It requires a certain set of skills to be able to navigate complex legal systems and argue in defense of a client in court. There is a human factor involved when it comes to considering all the various aspects of a trial and making a final decision that could turn into years in prison, in the case of a Judge.

## 3. Directors, Managers and CEOs

Managing teams inside an organization is a matter of Leadership and this is not a stack of behaviors that can be written down in a code and processed in a linear way. A CEO is also the person responsible for sharing the company's mission and values with the team. It is very unlikely that investors will ever feel comfortable investing in a company managed by robots or algorithms.

## 4. HR Managers

Although AI does assist in the hiring process to make sifting through CVs so much easier and



quicker, Human Resource Managers still cover a variety of very important tasks inside an organization. Hiring new professionals is just part of their prerogatives. They also are a key position inside the organization for maintaining the staff motivated, detecting early-on signs of discontent, and managing them if possible.

## 5. Psychologists and Psychiatrists

Although a lot of face recognition technology is currently being used to develop initial AI counseling care and support, given the growing demand, mental health is a very delicate topic. The human touch is essential when it comes to supporting people to succeed in their lives in all of the aspects that it can entail.

## 6. Surgeons

For sure, technology has seriously increased the accuracy with whom we are today able to diagnose and detect diseases in any medical report. Micro robotics also enhance the precision of the surgeons when it comes to operation, enabling less invasive procedures. However, being a surgeon requires the ability to connect with the patient on so many other different levels while

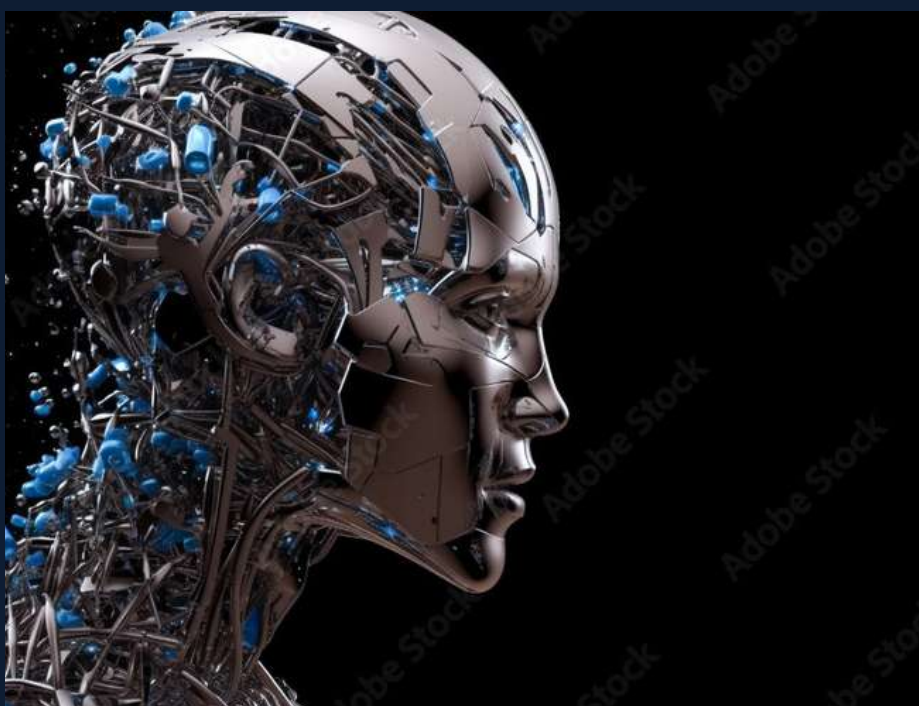
taking a vast number of factors under consideration at the same time. Experience, knowledge, and skills acquired throughout the years are all factors that need to be condensed in a matter of minutes during an operation.

## 7. Computer System Analysts

No matter how automated we become, there will always be the need for a human presence that can run maintenance work, update, improve, correct, and set up complex software and hardware systems that often require coordination among more than one specialist to properly work. Reviewing the system capabilities, controlling the workflow, scheduling improvements, and increase automation are only part of being a Computer System Analyst, a profession that has been a great demand in the last years.

## 8. Artists and writers

Writing especially is such an imaginative fine art, and being able to place a specific selection of words in the right order is a challenging endeavor. So even if AI technically would have the capacity to absorb the content of most books in the world, in probably any language, and come



up with a somewhat personal style of communication, the magic, and thrill of creating art with words is something that is pretty much going to rest in our domain of competition in the years to come.

How many jobs will be lost to AI by 2025?

The World Economic Forum has estimated that artificial intelligence will replace some 85 million jobs by 2025.

## How many jobs will be lost to AI by 2030?

PwC estimates that by the mid-2030s, up to 30% of jobs could be automatable, with slightly more men being affected in the long run as autonomous vehicles and other machines replace many manual tasks where their share of employment is higher. During the first and second waves, they estimate that women could be at greater risk of automation due to their higher representation in clerical and other administrative functions.

## How to embrace AI

### 1. Embrace lifelong learning

In the era of AI, it is important to be constantly learning and adapting to new technologies and ways of working. This means taking courses, attending workshops and conferences, and keeping up-to-date with the latest trends in your industry.

### 2. Develop soft skills

While AI is great at performing routine tasks, it is still far from replicating human emotional intelligence and creativity. Developing soft skills such as communication, problem-solving, and collaboration will be crucial in the era of AI.

### 3. Be agile

In the era of AI, the ability to adapt quickly to changing circumstances will be key. This means being willing to learn new skills, take on new responsibilities, and pivot to new career paths.

### 4. Specialize

As AI becomes more ubiquitous, there will be increasing demand for workers with specialized skills and knowledge. By developing expertise in a particular area, you can increase your value to employers and differentiate yourself in the job market.

*Author: Mark Talmage-Rostron from the Mind Read*

*Mark is a college graduate with Honours in Copywriting*

# IOS Vs Android Operating System:

## The GROWING WAR for Leadership



The world of mobile handsets has continued to witness evolution and revolution of late. New designs with great features are being pushed into the market by manufacturers such as Apple, Samsung, Huawei, Nokia, Xiaomi, and a few others fighting for a fair share of the growing telephony market.

The mobile handsets are basically grouped into two operating systems – iOS (exclusively being used by Apple for iPhone) and Android which powers the rest of the handsets in the market.

These two operating systems largely determine the workings, efficiency and effectiveness, security, and other features of mobile phones.

These operating systems, iOS and Android, are two of the most popular mobile operating systems, each with its own set of features and characteristics.

It's important to note that the choice between IOS AND ANDROID often comes down to personal preferences, needs, and the customer's existing tech ecosystem.

The war amongst world-leading mobile telecommunications who are users of the

two operating systems has continued to grow intensely almost at cut-throat with many consumers daily faced with an avalanche product choice to make.

However, both operating systems have their strengths and cater to different user profiles.

Their ten key features and differences are in the User Interface, App Ecosystem, Hardware and Device Variety, Customization, and Updates. Others are Voice Assistants, Security, File Management, Multitasking, and Integration with Ecosystem.



## The key features and differences



It's important to note that the choice between IOS AND ANDROID often comes down to personal preferences, needs, and the customer's existing tech ecosystem.



S/N	Key Feature	iOS	Android
1	User Interface (UI)	Clean and intuitive interface, with consistent design elements and a focus on simplicity and user-friendliness.	More customization options, allowing users to tweak the interface to their preferences. It provides a wide range of home screen widgets and app icon placement choices.
2	App Ecosystem	known for its strict app review process, resulting in a generally higher quality and more secure app environment.	Has a larger number of apps, including some that may not pass the same strict review process as in the Apple App Store. This gives Android users more variety but may come with some security risks.
3	Hardware and Device Variety	Limited to Apple's hardware, which is known for its quality and consistency but comes at a premium price.	Available on a wide range of devices from various manufacturers, offering different price points and hardware specifications to suit diverse preferences and budgets.
4	Customization	Limited customization options for home screen layout, widgets, and themes. Users have more control over notification settings and accessibility features	Highly customizable, allowing users to change themes, icons, widgets, and even install custom launchers for a completely different look and feel
5	Updates	Apple has provided regular, consistent updates to its devices for several years. This ensures that users receive the latest features and security patches	Update availability and frequency can vary significantly based on the manufacturer and carrier, which can result in fragmentation and delayed updates for some Android devices.
6	Voice Assistants	Siri is the built-in voice assistant, known for its integration with the Apple ecosystem	Google Assistant is the native voice assistant, offering deep integration with Google services and a focus on contextual
7	Security	Generally considered more secure due to Apple's strict app review process, frequent updates, and strong encryption. It also has features like Face ID and Touch ID for biometric security	Security can vary depending on the device, with some manufacturers implementing additional security measures. Google Play Protect helps to safeguard against malicious apps.
8	File Management	Limited file system access, with files primarily managed through specific apps or iCloud Drive.	Offers a more open file system, allowing users to browse and manage files directly, making it easier to transfer data and work with files
9	Multitasking	Supports limited multitasking through features like Split View and Slide Over on iPad and recent iPhones.	Offers more robust multitasking capabilities, with split-screen and floating apps on many devices
10	Integration with Ecosystem	Seamless integration with other Apple devices and services, such as Mac, iPad, Apple Watch, and iCloud	Deep integration with Google services like Gmail, Google Drive, and Google Photos, as well as compatibility with various third-party services.

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# AEDC makes bold move to deliver uninterrupted power

*... Signs landmark deal for solar hybrid power solution*

**E**lectricity consumers being serviced by the Abuja Electricity Distribution Plc (AEDC) will soon have access to 24-hour uninterrupted power supply as the DisCo recently signed a tripartite agreement with Daystar Power Solutions Limited (Daystar Power) and The Wood Factory Limited (Wood Factory), to pioneer the delivery of its first grid-connected and solar hybrid power solution for commercial and industrial customers in Nigeria.

This historic development comes on the heels of the first interconnected mini-grid power solution for communities in Nigeria launched by AEDC and its strategic partners in Toto, Nasarawa State, in November 2023 for the provision of integrated power solutions.

Under this historic agreement, AEDC will provide 18 hours of reliable electricity supply to Wood Factory (a top furniture manufacturer) while Daybreak Power will provide 6 hours of solar powered electricity to Wood Factory, both leveraging interconnected power facilities to deliver seamless electricity supply and great value to the customer.

This integrated power solution is expected to yield an estimated 44% reduction in energy costs and an impressive 76% annual decrease in carbon emissions for Wood Factory. The unique value offering is in furtherance of AEDC's transformational strategic objective of redefining customers' experience by providing reliable electricity supply to both existing and new customers, including the unserved and underserved customers. Under the ongoing transformation of AEDC, the Management of the company is driving its repositioning as a clear leader amongst the power distribution companies (DisCos) in Nigeria.

The Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of AEDC, Christopher Ezeafulukwe, stated that "We are excited about the great opportunities that the transformation and turnaround of AEDC is giving us to serve our customers, both new and existing, in more delightful ways. This project is a product of our consistent questioning of the status quo in the resilient push of our conviction and belief in using diversified energy sources to serve our customers better, while closing the supply gap



in our market."

He further stated that having previously commissioned an integrated power solution to serve some unserved communities in our network, the current solution for which we signed the agreement today, is focused on serving industrials and commercials, thus repositioning AEDC to serve all bands of customers within its network better. The two projects also confirm to the world, the readiness of AEDC to enter into complementary partnerships that will add great value to the Nigerian electricity market.

AEDC has been in partnership with the Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) through which the United States Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) provides funding for feasibility study grants and facilitates the optimization of energy supply through distributed solar energy and grid power.

Jasper Graf von Hardenberg, CEO of Daystar Power, expressed his excitement about the innovative interconnected solar installation, stating: "Working together with DisCos, we can provide reliable and affordable power to Nigerian businesses which will save on energy costs to reinvest in their operations. Our partnership with AEDC supports this position. It is just the beginning; we

are looking forward to developing more hybrid solar projects for C&I customers in partnership with the likes of AEDC."

Mohamed Akar, Director and General Manager of The Wood Factory, expressed his excitement about the transition from self-generated supply to the integrated power supply that AEDC and Daystar offer. He said: "We're thrilled that we'll soon be switching to a reliable integrated power solution to power our factory. For many years, we've operated on diesel generators, which is hardly sustainable or affordable. We believe that the future of our business has become brighter with this new partnership with AEDC and Daystar."

AEDC is a leading electricity distribution company in Nigeria serving the FCT, Niger State, Nasarawa State and Kogi State. As a trusted service provider, AEDC is dedicated to ensuring reliable, safe, and sustainable electricity delivery to its diverse customers. With a strong commitment to delighting its customers, AEDC continues to contribute to the growth and development of Nigeria's energy sector through investments in infrastructure, innovative technologies, and sustainable practices. AEDC consistently seeks to improve the quality of life

## Lagos leads as Nigeria active voice subscribers hit 221.7m

Lagos State recorded the highest number of active voice subscribers in Q3 2023 with 27,043,333, followed by Ogun with 13,136,247 and Kano with 12,192,122 respectively, the state-by-state analysis report of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) revealed.

The Report showed that a total of 221,769,883 active voice subscribers were recorded in Q3 of 2023 in Nigeria, an increase of 4.51 percent compared to the 212,201,578 reported in Q3 2022.

In addition, the report said Lagos state had the highest number of active internet subscrib-

ers in Q3 2023 with 19,188,745, followed by Ogun with 9,538,622 and Kano with 8,712,782.

The NBS Telecoms Data: Active Voice and Internet per State, Porting and Tariff Information report for Q3 2023, stated that on a quarter-on-quarter basis, active voice subscribers increased by 0.76 percent from the 220,086,951 recorded in Q2 2023.

It also revealed a total of 160,171,125 active internet subscribers were recorded in Q3 of 2023 compared to 152,784,980 in Q3 of 2022.

"This represents a 4.83 percent increase in active internet subscriptions year-on-year.

"On the other hand, Bayelsa recorded the least number of 1,558,509 voice subscribers, followed by Gombe and Yobe with 2,643,899 and 2,760,261, respectively," it stated.

"On the other hand, Bayelsa recorded the least no of internet subscribers with 1,195,580, followed by Zamfara and Gombe with 1,863,686 and 1,909,498, respectively."

The NBS report showed that MTN had the highest share of subscriptions in Q3 2023.

Lagos with a population of over 20 million people is the second-largest metropolis and the fifth-largest economy in Africa.

## All set as Dangote Refinery hits the market with diesel and aviation fuel in January

... Chairman praises President Tinubu for the feat  
Assures of global standards

By the end of January 2024, Dangote Petroleum's refined diesel and aviation fuel will be available in the Nigerian market.

The 650,000 barrels capacity Dangote Refinery, the world's largest single-train refinery located in Lekki, Lagos, commenced production on January 13, 2024, morning.

Mr. Anthony Chiejina, Dangote Group Head of Corporate Communications, confirmed that: "The refinery started production after receiving six million barrels of crude oil from the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Ltd".

According to him, the President of Dangote Group, Alhaji Aliko Dangote, thanked President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for his support, encouragement, and thoughtful advice towards the actualisation of the project.

Dangote also thanked the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Ltd., the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC), the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA), and Nigerians for their support and belief in the historic project.

According to him, "We thank President Tinubu for his support and for making our dream come true.



"This production would not have been possible without his visionary leadership and prompt attention to detail. "His intervention at various stages cleared all impediments, there-

by accelerating the actualisation of the project.

"We also thank the NNPC, NUPRC and NMDPRA for their support. "These organisations have been our dependable partners in

this historic journey.

"We also thank Nigerians for their belief and support in this project," he said.

"This is a big day for Nigeria. We are delighted to have reached this significant milestone.

"This is an important achievement for our country as it demonstrates our ability to develop and deliver large capital projects.

"This is a game changer for our country, and I am very fulfilled with the actualisation of this project.

"The refinery has so far received six million barrels of crude oil at its two SPMs located 25 kilometers from the shore.

"The first crude delivery was done on Dec. 12, 2023, and the 6th cargo was delivered on Jan. 8, 2024," he added.

He said that the refinery can load 2,900 trucks a day at its truck-loading gantries.

He added that the products from the refinery

will conform to Euro V specifications.

Dangote boss said that the refinery design complies with the World Bank, US EPA, European emission norms, and Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) emission/effluent norms. State-of-the-art technology.

"I must extend our sincere appreciation to our Bankers and financiers, both local and offshore, who demonstrated a great deal of patience, in seeing us through many difficult times.

"In the same vein, we thank the Government of Lagos State, under the leadership of Babajide Sanwo-Olu, who has been incredibly proactive in ensuring that the many challenges we encountered in the course of executing this project were quickly resolved.

"I thank him immensely. I also sincerely thank our host communities and their traditional leaders for their sustained patience, for-

bearance, and admirable willingness to work with us to find amicable and win-win resolutions to the many issues we have had to deal with as the construction of this huge facility progressed.

"Our staff have also contributed so immensely to the success of this project. I thank them profusely," the Dangote Refinery started production after receiving one million barrels of Agbami crude via MT ALMI SUN recently.

The one million barrels of Agbami crude received was the last cargo to complete the initial scheduled 6 million barrels consignment to be delivered to the facility for the commencement of production of refined petroleum products.

Initial processing capacity is expected to reach 350,000 barrels per day (bpd) at the 650,000 bpd integrated refinery, to ramp up to full capacity by the end of the year.

## Sanwo-Olu Increases 2024 Lagos Budget by N21.74bn to aid projects completion

**G**ov. Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State has signed the 2024 Appropriation Bill into law, with an addition of N21.74 billion on the initial N2.246 trillion 'Budget of Renewal' presented.

The Governor said the budget size now stood at N2.267 trillion as against the initial N2.246 trillion.

"For clarity, the approved budget size is N2,267,976,120,869; comprising N1,315,545,553,871 for capital expenditure and N952,430,566,998 for recurrent expenditure, a ratio of 58:42.

"The approved budget size is N21.74 billion higher than what was presented to the House of Assembly, due to additional provisions to enforce completion of ongoing projects," he said.

The governor said the impact of the budget would be determined by the effectiveness of its implementation.

He said the government was determined to ensure that the goals and objectives of the budget were maximally realised, for the benefit of all residents and in line with the THEMES+ development agenda.

According to him, the government will work assiduously to ensure the completion of ongoing projects and ensure the effective take off of new ones.

He urged all residents to play their roles in the successful implementation of the budget, committedly discharging their civic obligations as and when due.



**Babajide Sanwo-Olu, Governor, Lagos State**

"As a government, we will continue to be guided by the highest standards of transparency and accountability in the management of resources put in our care," the governor said.

He thanked the Speaker of the Lagos State House of Assembly, Mr Mudashiru Obasa, and all members of the assembly for their cooperation and commitment, which ensured the expeditious consideration and passage of the budget.

Speaking earlier on behalf of the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, Mrs Mojisola Meranda,

said the budget had been thoroughly looked at by the assembly members and all necessities put in place.

Also speaking, the Commissioner for Economic Planning and Budget, Mr. Ope George, said to put up an all-encompassing budget, the ministry held fora at the five divisions (Ikorodu, Ikeja, Epe, Badagry, and Lagos Island) of the state.

George said that such fora helped to understand the needs of the different divisions, which assisted in guiding the budget development.

# Relief for Patients as President Tinubu mulls executive order for slash of pharmaceutical prices

**T**o curtail the prohibitive costs of medicines hugely impacted by inflation in the country, President Bola Tinubu is set to issue an executive order aimed at reducing pharmaceutical prices and ensuring that essential medicines are more affordable for the citizens, Ali Pate, the Coordinating Minister of Health, disclosed.

Pate highlighted that the surge in drug costs has made life-saving commodities inaccessible to many Nigerians, prompting the need for regulatory measures. He emphasized that the executive order intends to support the growth of local drug manufacturers and enforce fair pricing of essential medicines. This move comes in the wake of major multinational pharmaceutical companies exiting the Nigerian market, leading to decreased competition.

According to Pate, the order reflects President Tinubu's commitment under the Renewed Hope Agenda to prioritise healthcare access.

He said: "Consistent with the President's Renewed Hope Agenda, which puts the human capital, health and social welfare of Nigerians at the centre, today at the Federal Executive Council, Mr. President took three far-reaching decisions relating to the health sector.

"The first is on the rising cost of pharmaceuticals, the hike in prices that we have in the pharmaceutical, which is going beyond the reach of many Nigerians, life-saving commodities, devices like syringes and needles and the exit of major companies from our market.

"Those decisions also include the regulation of the sector to protect the health and well-being of humans and the third decision is regarding how we deal with the crisis of human resources in the health sector.

"The first on the syringes, drugs, pharmaceuticals and other devices, as you'll recall, Mr President, in his wisdom, at the end of last year, in October, approved an initiative to unlock the healthcare value-chain and appointed a coordinator for that. But we know that the price of pharmaceuticals have escalated and many entities have decided to withdraw and some of the local manufacturers in Nigeria are struggling.

"The President's intent is that we begin to



take steps to enable the local manufacturers to survive, to thrive and to deliver the basic commodities that are key to saving their lives.

"And he directed that the Attorney General of the Federation work with us to come up with an executive order, which is the mechanism through which he will act, given the concern that he has that many Nigerians are suffering from the costs of pharmaceuticals, as well as other devices. That is the first important step and that should be coming very soon."

The minister also said to strengthen healthcare regula-

tion and protect citizens, key regulatory bodies, including the Medical and Dental Council will continue to receive funding, except from cuts impacting other professional associations.

Also, to address the shortage of healthcare workers, Pate said the council has delegated approval of recruitment waivers to the Health Ministry directly.

According to him, this will accelerate hiring and reduce delays.

"The third is regarding the acute human resource shortage that we have. We know having gone around many of our hospitals, particularly federal tertiary hospitals, that the replacement of health workers who leave oftentimes takes a very long time because the waiver process takes several stages.

"Mr. President directed in council that the approvals of those waivers be delegated to the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare so that it doesn't have to go through the Office of the Head of Civil Service of the Federation.

"That will hasten the recruitment of health workers in terms of those who are out there unemployed, within limits of their fiscal resources.

"All in all, to say that the President is very keen that we drive forward to safeguard the health of Nigerians, to earn the confidence, the trust of Nigerians, and to deliver for Nigerians in this new year that we have started and the marching orders are very clear," he added.





# which cooking oil powers your heart?

**C**ooking is a feature in every home no matter the social economic class. For ages, cooking oils, no matter the source and colour, have been part of our daily food recipe which homes cannot do without daily.

But the question is 'What is the quality of the cooking oil available in the market or you are using in your home?'

An answer to this is very important as cooking oil is more than just a must for virtually every cooking we do. It does more than salivate our taste buds; it is a part of a balanced diet in the category of fat and oil, and its effect on our health is very huge.

Cooking oils with high levels of mono-unsaturated and polyunsaturated provide nutrients that are needed for cell health. Polyunsaturated fats are essential fatty acids, meaning everyone needs them to function.

In Nigeria today, cooking oils are available in various shades, colours, and qualities and many come from sources that are not traceable whether locally or foreign. Nigeria, with over 200m population, is indeed a dumping market for unapproved and contaminated or polluted cooking oils, putting the lives of many at risk.

Experts have raised concern over the proliferation of adulterated cooking oil across

markets in the country. According to them, the diluted oil, when deposited in the human body is capable of causing cancer and other critical health issues that may lead to terminal diseases or untimely death.

They explained further that vegetable oils produced through an unhygienic process may contain high cholesterol and work against the normal flow of the body thereby breaking the heart vessels and leading to the sluggishness of body movement.

The Nigerian Heart Foundation (NHF) and National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) have severally warned that contaminated vegetable oil is the kind that has been diluted with other forms of oil, including animal fat, adding that once it gets congealed at room temperature, or packaged in unhealthy containers, it is unfit for consumption.

Despite the warn-

ings, circulation, and consumption of unbranded cooking oils continue in Nigeria as many simply consider them more affordable.

NAFDAC identifies safe vegetable oils as those that are sourced from plants, cholesterol-free produced, and packaged in a hygienic situation. The Agency further states in its 'fat and oil regulation 2018' that 'vegetable oils shall be derived from botanical sources after which they are named and indicated under regulations for individual oils'.

Advisedly, cooking oils should not be taken with indiscretion because of their implications on our health. Not only do they contain fatty acids, but they are also high in saturated fats which can spike cholesterol levels.

We must therefore consciously make a healthy choice about the cooking oil we cook with.

Investigations by ConsumerHalla reveal that unbranded oils are mostly found in local and unregulated markets unlike shopping malls where stall owners are more careful and specific about the brands of oils they put up for sale.

So, the next time you are about to pick your preferred cooking oil, ask yourself a question, 'Is this oil fit for human consumption?'



# NAFDAC gives tips on how to detect counterfeit products

**C**oncerned about the prevalent fake products in the market and how consumers easily fall prey, the National Agency for Food, Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) has tasked consumers to scrutinize branded products to distinguish them from counterfeits before consuming them.

The Director-General of NAFDAC, Prof. Mojisola Adeyeye advised members of the public to buy only NAFDAC-registered products from reputable and licensed retailers, bars, and supermarkets.

To identify fake products, NAFDAC formulated what it termed 'the four Ps', which he identified as pricing (competitive price), product (easily faked product), place (reputation of the seller or location), and packaging (appearance). For 'pricing', she said products that are priced competitively lower than usual might be

substandard.

She advised further: "If the product is being sold well below its normal price, or doesn't seem to include normal taxes on liquors, then it is probably fake. Check for poor-quality packaging, spelling mistakes, and unusually shaped bottles. Look for the contact information and address of the manufacturer. If it is missing, the alcohol is fake."

"Inspect the seal on the bottle. If the seal is broken or damaged, then the contents might have been interfered with and are not safe to drink. Check for fake bar codes. If you have an app on your mobile that scans bar codes, scan it and see if it's listed as the correct product, and beware of bad smells! If it smells like paint stripper or nail polish remover, then it probably is!"

She assured that NAFDAC would con-

tinue to ensure that the level of counterfeit products nationwide is brought to the nearest minimum so that Nigerians will continue to consume only healthy and safe products.



## N21.29bn counterfeit products destroyed in 2 years

**T**he National Agency for Food, Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) has revealed that the street value of products that were destroyed in two years was N21,159 billion.

The Director-General of NAFDAC, Prof. Mojisola Adeyeye said the destruction of the products was to prevent their reintroduction into the distribution chain.

Data obtained from NAFDAC showed that no fewer than 1,125 drug stores selling unregistered products were sealed off in 2022 across the country. A total of 108 warehouses storing substandard goods were shut, and 412 persons carrying out dangerous activities were arrested in the year.

Despite these efforts, many substandard products still find their way to the shelves in major markets.

NAFDAC also destroyed fake and substandard goods worth over N4.2bn in Awka, the Anambra State in 2023 which the DG said was in line with the agency's mandate of eradicating fake and other spurious from circulating in Nigeria.

According to her, the products were made up of spurious, counterfeited, substandard, and falsified medicinal products, unwholesome pro-



cessed food products, and several other unsafe regulated products seized from various manufacturers, importers, and distributors in the South-East and South-South zones.

Some products destroyed in Awka include antibiotics, anti-hypertensive, anti-diabetic, anti-asthmatic, aphrodisiacs, antimalarial, anti-in-

flammatory, herbal remedies, and psychoactive drugs.

Others were banned drugs such as analgin, tramadol (above 100mg), gentamycin 280mg and controlled substances, vaccines, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, cosmetics, chemicals, and unwholesome food, among others.

# The market that makes Lagos thick; Mile 12 Market

**L**agos State is a major economic center of Nigeria and it would be the fifth largest economy in Africa if it were a country. There is no conglomerate or any big business in Nigeria today that does not have a presence in Lagos.

Even with its loss as Nigeria's federal capital in December 1991, it still retains its status as the nation's commercial capital like what New York is to the US.

For a state with a 1,171 KM Square land mass and a population of over 20 million people, it is indeed one of the most highly populated cities in the world. More than any city, a home to all Nigerians.

Expectedly, one of the attributes that makes Lagos thick is the presence of many specialized markets that not only serve the residents but the other nationals too. There are many big markets in Lagos state but some are very popular and international because of their sheer size, transactions, patronage, and volume.

Two of these are Mile 12 International Market and Alaba International Market.

## What Makes the Mile 12 Market Special?

The Mile 12 Market is one of the popular places in Lagos, Nigeria which plays a vital role in the food supply chain to the most populated city in Nigeria. It is arguably one of the most common names on the lips of Lagosians when food items are mentioned.

The Mile 12 Market holds immense importance in Nigeria's food economy, it serves as a major hub for the distribution of food products, particularly fruits and vegetables, to different parts of the country. This market plays a role in ensuring that the nation's growing population has access to fresh produce.

The market is located along the popular Ikoro Road.

It is no doubt one of the biggest market places in the state and the top choice destination for wholesale and retail shopping, especially for perishable foods. Mile 12 Market is one place where you can get all the food items you want; fruits, rice, tomatoes, vegetables, spices, palm oil, yam, and a lot more.

Before its emergence, there had been the Iddo Market located along the Ebute Metta axis of Lagos. Due to the rapid growth of the Iddo Market, the area became too small for its traders and their goods. Hence, the emergence of the popular Mile



12 Market in the early 1970s. It should be noted that when the market was sited at its present location, it used to be at the outskirts of the metropolis until it was overtaken by rapid urbanization.

As Lagos experienced urbanization and population growth, the demand for fresh produce and commodities multiplied. Mile 12 Market gradually evolved to meet these demands, expanding both in scale and scope.

What began as a small marketplace transformed into a bustling hub for wholesale transactions, drawing vendors, traders, and buyers from various parts of the state.

Over the years, Mile 12 Market solidified its position as a key player in the distribution network of agricultural products. Its strategic location and diverse array of goods made it a central point for the exchange of goods between farmers, wholesalers, and retailers. The market became instrumental in the supply chain, facilitating the flow of produce from farms to consumers in Lagos and beyond.

A confidential report from a market says that the Mile 12 market generates over N50 million naira monthly as revenue to the Kosofe Local Government, its host, with over 5 thousand people visiting the market daily.

Due to infrastructural limitations, and traffic congestion along the market road, farmers and

retailers experience a high rate of goods spoilage during its transportation and offloading. Baskets in which fruits and tomatoes are kept sometimes cause damage to these products to go into waste thereby causing a serious sanitation problem.

The atmosphere and environment are what you expect of a typical Lagos market. The market is known for its poor and untidy environment as the smell and spoilage of rot perishable foods in the market foul the air.

The market has a history of yearly losses due to its closure by the government because of poor environmental sanitation. The closure has a ripple effect on the traders and Lagosians. According to the market traders in October, the closure of the market which lasted for about 48 hours cost them nothing less than N1 Billion within the days it lasted. According to the market union spokesperson, Mr. Femi "The loss was due to damaged perishable goods that were not able to be sold due to the market closure and the effect of the closure were not only felt by the traders but also Lagosians who were at the receiving end due to cost of food at this difficult times". The market traders lose over 400 million daily due to damaged perishable goods that were not able to be sold due to the market closure.

Over the years, the market has been able to hold its. Arguably, there are more traders from differ-



ent ethnic groups in the market than any other market and there is no tribal discrimination as it is strictly for business. Here, you will find Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, Edo, Fulani, Efik, Isoko, Ibibio, Tiv, and Igala, and even traders from neighboring countries like Ghana, Togo, and Cameroon to mention a few.

Aside from the business activities that go on within and outside the Market, it is undoubtedly one of the major places in Lagos with traffic congestion. This is caused by the number of people within the market area and a couple of bad roads around the market.

One of the key reasons why the Mile 12 Market is important is its ability to meet the high demand for food in Nigeria. As one of the largest food markets in West Africa, it caters to the needs of millions of people, providing them with a wide variety of agricultural products. Traders at the market source these goods from farmers across the country and even from neighboring countries like Benin and Togo.

Moreover, the Market serves as an economic lifeline for numerous individuals and businesses. It provides employment opportunities for thousands of people who work as traders, loaders, and even support staff in the market. This creates a positive effect on the economy as it stimulates job



creation and boosts the income of many households.

Additionally, the market acts as a hub for innovation and entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector. It serves as a platform for small-scale farmers to connect with larger distributors and retailers, allowing them to expand their market reach and sell their produce on a larger scale. This

not only improves their livelihood but also contributes to the overall growth of the agricultural sector.

Furthermore, the Mile 12 Market plays a vital role in ensuring food security in Nigeria. With its ability to handle large quantities of produce, it helps in stabilizing food prices and ensuring that essential commodities are readily available to consumers. This is especially crucial in a country

where food insecurity and rising food prices are pressing issues.

### The Emergence of Mile 12 Market Online:

Going to the Mile 12 market could be very stressful, but there are ways right now to purchase items without actually going to the market. Thanks to the internet and the introduction of newer technologies.

There are several online platforms like mile-12market.com, mile12plus.com, and mile12mart.com that make buying from The Mile 12 market seamless.

Considering the stress of going to the market physically, you can just decide to order them online. This process like every other online shopping process tends to make things easier and faster.

### How to Locate Mile 12 Market

Mile 12 is located around Ketu along Ikorodu Road, easily accessible from the Lagos Mainland, Island, Lagos- Ibadan Expressway.

### What to look out for in Mile 12 Market

Getting to Mile 12 is not enough, you should have an idea of things to expect. although it is like every other market in Lagos typified by the hustle and bustle atmosphere.

Another visible thing is the congestion at the entrance to the market area by traders, by hawkers.

The time in which you are visiting the area is also very important. In as much as you can visit the market at any time of the day, you also want to take into consideration the season.

Unlike others, Mile 12 Market is very unpredictable but you may have to go with your nose mask. Well for the dry season, you have nothing much to worry. But if you are visiting during the rainy period, then you must put on rubber shoes and shorts if you can to avoid your clothes getting stained.

Mile 12 is like any other major market in Lagos. The usual hustle and bustle are expected as people bumping into each other. But generally, the market is considered safe except for pickpockets.

### 8 Interesting Facts About Mile 12 Market

1. Mile 12 Market is one of the largest food markets in Africa, covering more than 100 acres of land.
2. The market is named after the 12-mile mark on the Ikorodu road, which was originally a marker for the distance from Lagos Island.
3. The market operates 24/7, with traders arriving as early as 2 am to prepare for the day's business. While some sell overnight
4. Over 80% of the food supply in Lagos comes from Mile 12 Market.
5. The market has a unique system of vendors catcalling customers to buy from them
6. The market has a diverse range of products, including vegetables, fruits, grains, meat, fish, and herbs to spice up cooking.
7. The market faces several challenges, includ-



**Unlike others, Mile 12 Market is very unpredictable but you may have to go with your nose mask. Well for the dry season, you have nothing much to worry. But if you are visiting during the rainy period, then you must put on rubber shoes and shorts if you can to avoid your clothes getting stained.**



ing sanitation issues, flooding, and violence.

8. In recent years, the market has been undergoing modernization and renovation efforts aimed at improving infrastructure, security, and hygiene.

### The Planned Relocation of Mile 12

The then Governor of Lagos state, Mr. Akinwunmi Ambode, planned the relocation of Lagos' popular Mile 12 Market early in 2016 to Imota, a suburb of Lagos, along Ijebu ode Road. The move generated so much uproar then but the Governor was determined.

The then Governor's reason was that a market as large as Mile-12 should not exist at the heart of the city. It should not be present in such a densely populated area as Ketu. Hence, Mr. Ambode believed that the proper thing to do was to relocate the market to a remote part of the metropolis where it would have access to sufficient space for future growth and expansion which is Imota in Ikorodu. The idea was to have the Mile-12 market alongside the Imota Rice Processing Mill at the same location for economic gains and logistical convenience. It is this kind of arrangement that fast-tracks economic development in developed climes.

Even though the relocation didn't happen, however, there are building constructions already in the location which in the future will still host the new Mile 12 Market.



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# Alaba International Market

**A**laba International Market is reputed as the largest market for electricals and electronics in West Africa. Since its establishment in 1978 in Ojo, Alaba, it has grown into a major commercial destination for trade and commerce. It started as a small open-air market with just a few traders selling electronics and home appliances, note that the market is famous for the sale of home and electrical appliances.

Over the years, more traders joined and the market space expanded, gaining popularity and patronage across Nigeria and West Africa. The popularity of the market was possible because Nigerians and other West African nations place high value on foreign goods and products, regardless of quality, durability, and productivity. The belief of using imported over locally produced items is a sort of satisfaction that the people of Nigeria have. There are about 100,000 direct and indirect traders in the Market who attract over one million customers daily.

Today, Alaba International Market spans over 200 hectares with thousands of shops and traders dealing in a wide range of products, from interiors to automobile parts, the market is said to serve as a dumping ground for substandard products as

some groups of traders are known to have specialized in assembling, fabricating and importing cheap and locally made components and parts of all kinds of products including electronics and households to suit all types of categories of consumers.

Nevertheless, good products are also being sold in the market, that's why it is advisable to go with someone if you're touring the market for the first time. You're most likely to meet thugs and agents around the market trying to persuade and direct customers to buy from some shops. Some of these shops sell inferior goods and one might be lucky to find genuine traders this is a common market strategy among traders of Alaba. The market and its wide range of business activities give opportunities to electronics and electrical engineers who specialize in the repair of faulty home appliances to transact business with dealers in electronics.

Over the years Alaba has played a major role in the Nigerian entertainment business. The market largely deals with duplicate music into CDs and DVDs to sell to the public, young boys hawking brand new singles and albums in traffic.

The Alaba Music Market has become an integral part of getting music to the far reaches of Lagos and beyond, being the country's pirated en-

tertainment headquarters. They have effectively created a wide distribution of pirated music, such that you can purchase pirated music CDs even without getting to the market itself, these CDs find their way to bus drivers, shop owners, okada and keke drivers as well as traffic hawkers across the state. They take full advantage of the lack of law enforcement against copyright and the protection of intellectual property.

The market is said to be a bustling place, opens every day of the week except on public holidays, attracting over 20,000 people daily who come to buy and trade items.

The Market is a major importer and distributor of goods in Nigeria, bringing in containers of products from Asia, Europe, and America. Many traders personally import or travel abroad to source high-demand and affordable goods to sell locally. This commercial activity and flow of trade have made Alaba International Market a hub for business and commerce, generating billions in revenue and employment in the international market.

## What to expect in Alaba Market

Alaba market, a bustling commercial hub in La-

## Market Intelligence

gos, Nigeria, offers a vibrant yet complex environment that comes with its share of dangers.

Visitors can enhance their safety by staying alert, practicing caution during negotiations, and being mindful of the surrounding infrastructure.

Visitors should be aware of potential risks to ensure a safe secure experience; here are some key dangers associated with Alaba market crowd-related risks:

**1. Crowd-Related Risks:** The market's crowded atmosphere poses risks such as accidental collisions, tripping, and difficulty in navigating through narrow pathways. Visitors should exercise caution to avoid injuries in the densely populated areas.

**2. Pickpocketing and Theft:** The bustling nature of Alaba Market makes it a target for pickpockets. Visitors should be vigilant and keep a close eye on their belongings to prevent theft. Avoid carrying large amounts of cash or valuables.

**3. Traffic Congestion:** Accessing Alaba Market can be challenging due to heavy traffic congestion in the surrounding areas. Visitors should exercise caution when navigating through traffic and plan for potential delays in reaching the market.

**4. Sanitation-Related Health Risks:** Sanitation issues, including improper waste disposal, can contribute to health risks. Visitors should be mindful of their surroundings to minimize the risk of exposure to unsanitary conditions and potential health hazards.

**5. Structural Integrity Concerns:** Some parts of Alaba Market may have older structures with questionable structural integrity. Visitors should be cautious about the condition of buildings and stalls to avoid accidents related to structural deficiencies.



Over the years Alaba has played a major role in the Nigerian entertainment business. The market largely deals with duplicate music into CDs and DVDs to sell to the public, young boys hawking brand new singles and albums in traffic.

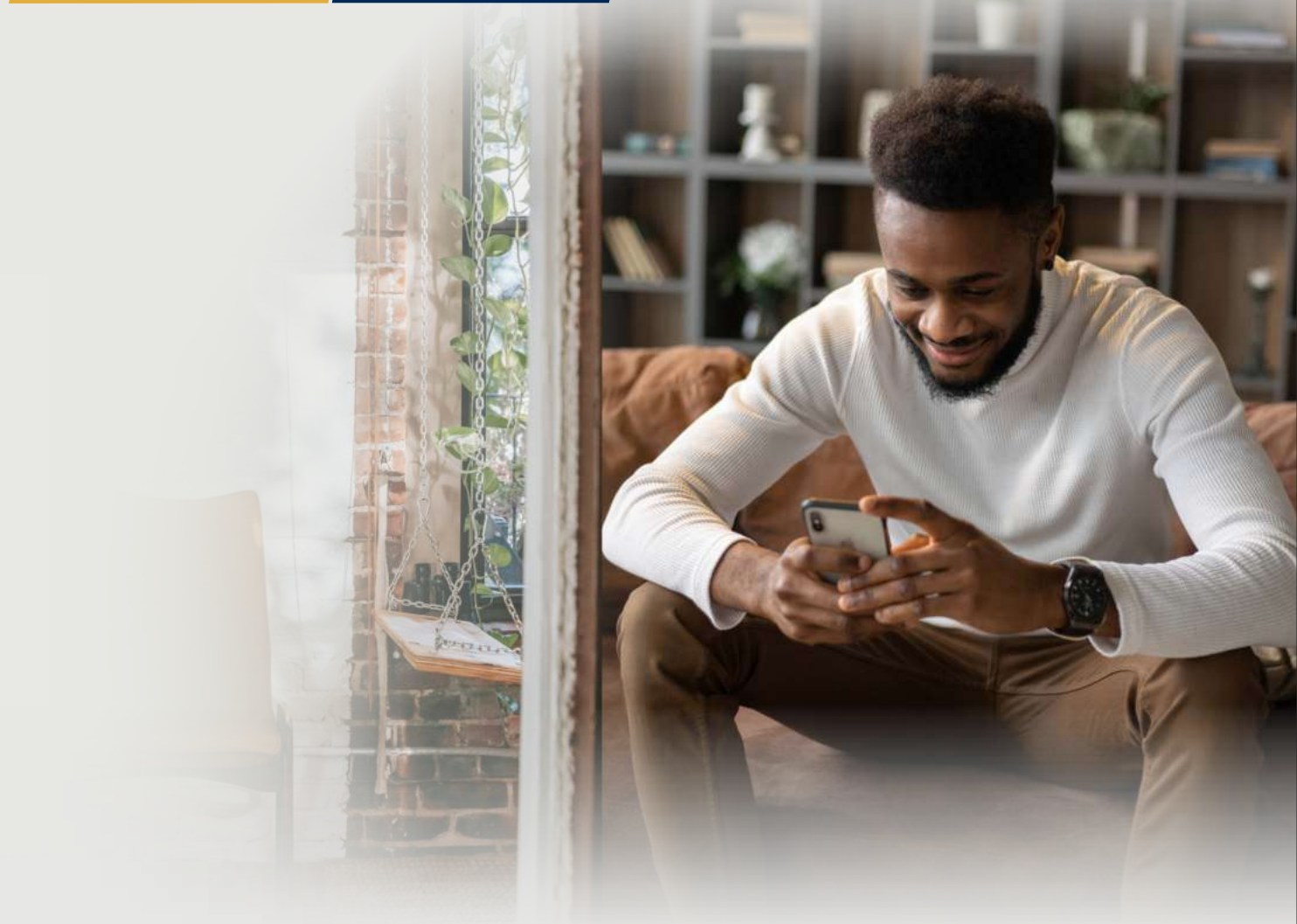
**6. Pricing Disputes:** While haggling is a common practice, it can sometimes lead to disputes between buyers and sellers. Visitors should approach negotiations calmly and be aware of their surroundings to prevent conflicts from escalating.

Despite these challenges, Alaba Market remains an integral part of the local economy and culture, offering a unique shopping experience with a vast array of goods.

Efforts to address the market's challenges, including improving infrastructure, sanitation facilities, and security measures, could contribute to creating a safer and more visitor-friendly environment. By understanding and navigating the potential dangers, visitors can make the most of their time at Alaba Market while appreciating the rich tapestry of Nigerian commerce and culture it represents.



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