

Chapter Twenty One

A QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION OF THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19 LOCKDOWN ON RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AMONG WOMEN IN ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigates the effects of the COVID-19 lockdown on sustainable consumption pattern of women in Enugu state, Nigeria. Several studies have investigated the impact of COVID-19 on consumer behaviour in Nigeria but none focused on how the pandemic affected the consumers' responsible consumption pattern. This study is a qualitative one in which semi-structured interview was used to gather data for the study. Seventy participants were recruited using purposive sampling technique. All participants had strongly held views and provided unique insights into their experiences. Thematic analysis was applied to all interview transcripts. Findings revealed that consumers reduced quantity of products consumed and transformed products in sustainable ways during the COVID-19 lockdown. The study however found that the COVID-19 lockdown did not make most of the consumers to dispose of waste more responsibly. The findings of this study contribute to existing literature on responsible consumption and consumer behavior and could be used by producers, retailers, relevant government

organisations and campaigners to promote and sustain responsible consumption.

Keywords: Consumption, Responsible, Consumption, Sustainable Consumption, COVID-19, Lockdown

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Consumption generally means the using up of utilities. Thus, neoclassical economists consider consumption to be the final purpose of economic activities (Carroll, 2021). Featherstone in Smith (2014) describes consumption as a key stimulus for production, an inducement for workers to work, a major source of social status, and a significant channel for aspirations and pleasures. In the context of consumer responsibility, consumption is an extensive concept that begins even before an actual purchase is made and continues after the product is disposed of (Kanu, 2020). Consumption involves understanding, acknowledging and consenting to the product's behind-the-scenes practices (such as how it was produced), purchasing the products, using the products for their entire lifetime, disposing of or transforming the products and giving feedback on the products (Gonzalez, 2019). This description underscores the relationship between consumption and needs satisfaction. It shows that people consume to satisfy needs and thus, consumption can also be described as the satisfaction of needs. The Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs model indicates that the kind of needs that humans can seek to satisfy includes: physiological, security, psychological and social needs.

Consumption expenditure is high in most countries. Gonzalez (2019) reported that, in 2019, consumption expenditure represented 60 percent of global GDP. In the same year, consumption expenditure in Nigeria represented 80.17 percent of national GDP, and in 2020, it was 78.34 percent, representing 338,667 Billion US\$ (World Bank, 2021). Meanwhile, there is sufficient evidence that many people are consuming in careless and mindless ways. For example each year globally, an estimated one third of all food produced – equivalent to 1.3 billion tonnes worth around \$1 trillion – ends up rotting in the bins of consumers and retailers; two billion people are obsessed or overweight while almost 2 billion people go hungry or undernourished (United Nations Development Programme, 2021). Consequently, governments, civil societies, businesses and individual citizens have been called upon to take urgent actions to avoid the terrible effects of climate change. Consumers need to use information to support buying decisions, give information and feedback, reuse products, as well as recycle and reduce waste. In fact, the achievement of the SDG goal 12 (responsible consumption and production) requires both business and individual consumers to be earth-minded when: making purchase decisions, using goods or raw materials purchased; obtaining and using natural resources, and disposing of toxic wastes and pollutants.

Reports show that mindless consumption among consumers and businesses contribute to major global challenges such as climate change. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2018) state that temperature is currently rising at between 0.1°C and 0.1°C per decade and may reach 1.5°C in 2030. The Paris Agreement (an International Treaty signed by almost all countries in the world at COP21 in Paris in 2015) sets a target to keep the global average temperature to 'well

below' 2 degrees above pre-industrial levels, ideally 1.5 °C degrees; strengthen the ability to adapt to climate change and build resilience; and align all finance flows with 'a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development' (Aberg, 2021) However, WMO (2020) state that "we are currently way off track to meeting either the 1.5 °C or 2 °C that the Paris Agreement calls for. However, even at 1.5°C, all living things including humans, animals and plants will face drastically increased risks, and such consequences are already apparent. In 2019, when global temperature was 1.1 °C, heat waves, combined with long periods of drought, were linked to wild fires of unprecedented size in Australia, where millions of hectares were set ablaze as well as in Siberia and other arctic regions (WVMO, 2020). In Nigeria, floods drought, and rising sea levels are becoming more severe and may get worse and threaten lives and livelihoods if far-reaching actions are not taken to halt the effects of climate change.

To achieve these climate goals, business and individual consumers must take the recommended climate actions consistently including reducing consumption as well as reusing and recycling waste . Consistency in this context is about doing the right things at all times – in good times and in challenging times. The corona virus pandemic which is the situation in focus in this study presented unique challenges. China was the first country to face the mass spread of the corona virus (Benett, 2020). From China, the highly contagious disease immediately spread to almost all countries in the world. Given that there was no vaccine to curb the spread of the virus; most countries around the world were completely locked down. Lockdown is an emergency response imposed by the government, directing people to stay indoors in the event of an outbreak (Ajide, Ibrahim & Alimi, 2020). Elements of the lockdown included restriction of

mass gatherings stay at home order, border closure, curfew, interstate travel ban and limited access to unessential products. A major consequence of the lockdown in Nigeria was the halting of production as well as the local and international supply chains. Essential services such as hospitals and healthcare facilities, the media, security sector, and some business establishments such as those that provide energy, petroleum and food (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2020) were exempted from the lockdown as consumption of these essential products and services must be sustained for the existence of the human life.

While the corona virus era is definitely challenging and uncomfortable, it presents a lot of opportunities to make shifts towards better ways of living and working. Thus, We believe, as United nations (n.d.) states, that the corona virus crisis is an opportunity for a profound systematic shift to a more sustainable economy that works for both people and the planet and that people should build back better and transition their production and consumption patterns towards more sustainable practices. There is no doubt that government regulations, restrictions, personal motivations and economic challenges that usually accompany pandemics would change consumer priorities and consumption patterns, but the question is whether the changes were towards a more sustainable pattern or towards a less sustainable pattern. The behavior of consumers during epidemic outbreaks such as EBOLA, SARS, swine flu and dengue have been studied in the past (Balinska & Rizzo, 2009). In addition, many scholars have studied the impact of COVID-19 on general consumer behavior (such as Verma & Naveen, 2020; & Ulpiano, et. Al, 2020) but none has focused on how the virus affected responsible consumption patterns. Thus, it is still uncertain how conditions created by the COVID-19 affected responsible

consumption. We believe that findings about how the coronavirus affected sustainable consumption is a necessary input in designing the processes of increasing and sustaining positive shifts. To explore and address this gap, this study is designed to follow a qualitative research process to answer the following questions:

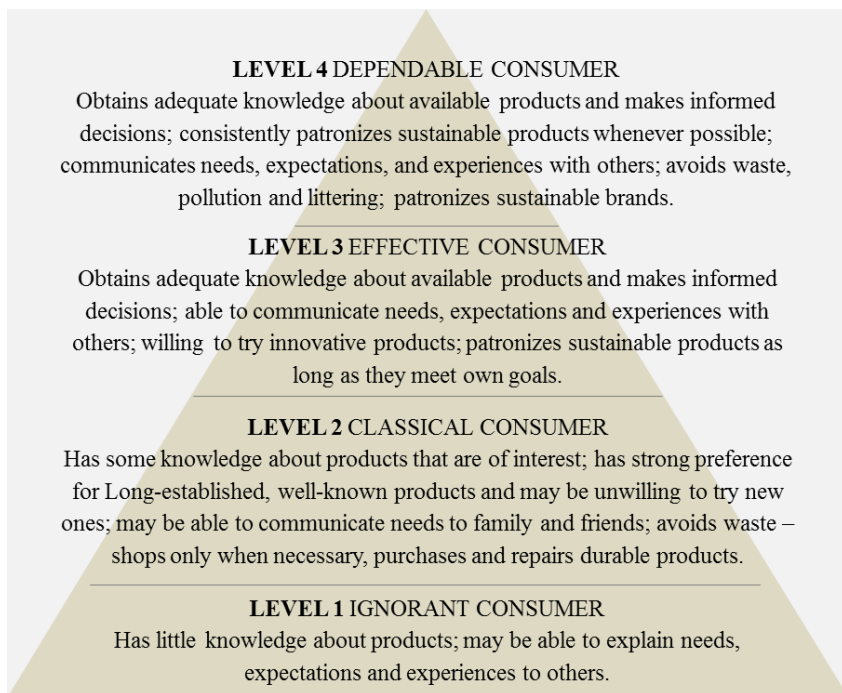
1. What are the perceived effects of COVID-19 lockdown on responsible product purchase among women in Enugu State?
1. What are the perceived effects of COVID-19 lockdown on responsible product usage among women in Enugu State?
2. What are the perceived effects of COVID-19 lockdown on responsible product disposal among women in Enugu State?

Responsible Consumption

Responsible consumption is gradually becoming non-optional if man and other beings will survive and be happy in this world. Responsible consumption is about consistently choosing, using and disposing of or transforming products in ways that are decent and fair to oneself, other beings and the environment (Kanu, 2020). Consistency is important in this context. In addition, rationality and decency are important components of discussions on responsible consumption as scholars, across decades, have described responsible consumption as rational and efficient use of resources (Balderjahn, 1988; Hobson, 2002; Marchand and Walker, 2008; Ulusoy, 2016). It entails consuming in ways that have less negative impact or more positive impact on the environment, society, the self and other beings (Ulusoy, 2016).

In light of the above, responsible consumers minimize waste, make informed purchase decisions, choose sustainable options

when possible and put pressure on businesses to adopt sustainable practices (United Nations, 2016). Accordingly, Nigeria's Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (2020) as well as the Consumer Affairs Commission, Jamaica (2020) state that consumer responsibilities include: gathering information and facts about available products to make informed decisions; being alert to quality and safety of products; thinking independently; speaking out; being ethical; complaining when necessary; sharing product experiences with other consumers; and respecting the environment - reducing consumption, reusing products and recycling waste. Not all consumers are able to meet all the responsibilities as a result of individual consumer's background, awareness level, exposure and personal believes among others. Therefore, consumers are responsible to different degrees. The hierarchy of responsible consumption is shown in the model presented in figure 1.



Hierarchy of Responsible Consumption (Kanu, 2020)

The A 4-level hierarchy of responsible consumption was developed based on insights from 1) research in consumer behaviour, social psychology and environmental sustainability; 2) theories in psychology and marketing; and 3) the expectations of a responsible consumer based on United Nations guideline for consumer protection. At the top of the hierarchy is the level 4 – the dependable consumer. Level 4 reflects wholistic responsibility consumers at this level possess the responsible behaviours of consumers at the lower levels but in addition, they possess some earth and future minded behaviours that are driven by selflessness and self-control (Kanu, 2020).

A Focus on Environmental Sustainability

Responsible consumption is a broad concept that includes various kinds of consumption practices such as sustainable consumption, ethical consumption, socially responsible consumption, consumer citizenship and green consumption (Ulusoy, 2016). This study focuses on sustainable consumption – the kind of consumption that increases resource efficiency, preserves the environment and promotes sustainable development. Sustainable consumption has been comprehensively described by UNEP (2001) as a term that brings together a number of key issues such as meeting needs, enhancing quality of life, improving efficiency, minimising waste, taking a lifecycle perspective; taking into account the equity dimension; and integrating these component parts in the central question of how to provide the same or better services to meet the basic requirements of life and the aspiration for improvement for both current and future generations, while continually reducing environmental damage and the risk to human health. In summary, sustainable consumption entails having a basic understanding that while the needs and wants of man are unlimited, nature's ability to satisfy them is limited. The United Nations estimates that if the global population reaches 9.6 billion by 2050, the equivalent of almost three planets could be required to provide the natural resources needed to sustain current lifestyles. Since there is only one planet earth, this estimate underscores the need for people to consume in ways that nature can cope with the demands of current and future generations.

Based on the foregoing, it is important for consumers to reduce their consumption of scarce resources and substitute their current products for ones that are ecologically less damaging (Fisk, 1973; Scott & Jobber, 2000). Adopting sustainable

consumption patterns require consumers to intentionally make informed choices of goods and services to consume and to dispose of whatever remains with due regard for the economic, social and environmental impacts of their acquisitions and use (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 2019). Therefore, availability and price of sustainable products are determinants of consumer purchase decision-making (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2004; Kaufmann, Panni & Orphanidou, 2012; Brittany, 2020). Availability, in this context, refers to the level of ease or difficulty of obtaining or consuming a specific product (Kaufmann, Panni & Orphanidou, 2012). This means that consumers need to be offered and supported with more responsible options for consumption. In addition, transforming and using the products in sustainable ways require adequate product information and guidelines on how to use the products and dispose of waste sustainably. Several waste disposal methods have been identified in literature but not all of them are sustainable. For instance, recycling, incineration and composting have been identified as sustainable waste disposal methods while open dumping, burning, land filling are considered unsustainable (Seneca Resource Recovery, 2019; Nnamdi Ikpeze, 2014; Arogundade, 2019; Ogunmakinde, Sher & Maund, 2019). Reducing and reusing has been reported by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA, 2020) as the most effective way to reduce waste, save natural resources, protect the environment and save money.

Methodology

This is a qualitative study that used the phenomenological research design. Phenomenology is focused on individuals' meaning making as the quintessential element of the human experience and thus, phenomenological inquiry holds the assumption that there is an essence or essences to shared

experience (Patton, 2002). The phenomenological research design is well-suited for studying affective, emotional, and often intense human experiences” (Merriam, 2009) and used when there is need to understand a social and psychological phenomenon from the perspectives of those involved (Moutstakas, 1994; Welman& Kruger, 1999). This design is appropriate for this study because the COVID-19 pandemic is an intense human experience, especially when viewed from the light of the fact the that for most people, COVID-19 is their first experience of a wide spread pandemic. The approach in this studyIt is used in this study used in this study to describe how the conditions created by COVID-19 pandemic affected sustainable consumption among consumers. Semi-structured interview was conducted to allow for elaborate exploration of issues (Britten, 1995). Interviews conducted in this study allowed the researcher to ask questions that are open enough to elicit the rich individual responses that are required in this kind of studies. The research was conducted in Enugu State, Nigeria. The state is located in the South-Eastern part of Nigeria and spreads its borders to the States of Kogi and Benue to the north, Ebonyi to the east, Abia and Imo to the south and Anambra to the west. Purposive sampling technique was used to select participants for the study. Women were selected for the study because in the South-east Nigeria, women are mainly responsible for purchasing and converting or transforming most products for family consumption. Recruitment of participants continued until data saturation was achieved resulting in total of 70 participants. Semi-structured interviews were conducted one-on-one, face-to-face and via telephone between July and August, 2021. A semi-structured interview guide was developed by the researcher, in association with five experts in psychology, business management and environmental sciences. The areas of questioning included: relevant background information

(education levels, occupation, age range) as well as how COVID-19 lockdown affected responsible product purchase, use and disposal among working class women in Enugu State

Each interview session lasted between 12-20 minutes. All interviews were recorded and written down with permission from the participants. The interview records were subsequently transcribed verbatim by the researcher. To protect participants' anonymity, participants were assigned code from C1-C70.

Data analysis was conducted using the explication process described by Hycner (1999). This model was chosen because it allows data to emerge organically, captures the description in terms of the interviewee and enables the explication to be conducted in a structured manner. The process which has five stages includes: Bracketing and phenomenal reduction, delineating units of meaning, clustering of units of meaning to form themes, summarizing each interview and where necessary, validating and modifying it: extracting general and unique themes from all interviews and summarizing. Following this process, the researcher listened to the interviews repeatedly and identified the keywords from the interviews, created themes by grouping related parts. The key issues, ideas and concepts raised by participants formed the major themes. In situations where any point made by a participant was unclear, the researcher returned to the participant to ensure that correct perspective was captured. A composite summary of the findings was presented and the themes were graphically represented.

Results

Participants (n=70) represented a range of ages and distribution across various sectors and educational qualifications.

Table 1: Participants Characteristics

Characteristics	Category	Number of participants (n=60)
Age (Years) (Mean $\pm$ SD)	NA	40 $\pm$ 9
Highest Educational Level	SSCE	6
	NCE/OND	3
	BSC/HND	36
	MSC	18
	PHD	7
Occupation	Self-employed	24
	Private sector employee	14
	Civil/Public servant	32

Thematic analysis was done for each research question and presented in tables in the following sections. To supplement the qualitative analysis, a summation of how many participants cited a particular view was included. As expected, most of the women cited multiple views which were reflected in the frequency column.

Table 2 The impact of COVID-19 on sustainable products purchase

Theme	Sub-theme	Theme Dimension	#Cited
Accessibility	Availability of sustainable products	Generally available	32
		More available in rural areas	15
		More available in informal/ street markets	21

		Available because I buy in bulk and store	7
		Fresh foods not offered online in Nigeria	2
	Ease of access to sustainable products	Easy to access	26
		Difficult to access due to reduced means of transportation	13
		Difficult to access as markets were shut down	19
		Difficult to access as retailers stayed home	18
		Difficult to access due to retailers' hoarding of goods	9
Price	Price increase	Prices increased due to the lockdown	16
		Prices of fresh food products reduced in rural areas because of limited means of transport	7
		Transportation challenges during the hiked prices	22
		Inflation increased prices of sustainable products	14

		Importation-related challenges increased prices	20
	Reactions to price change	Reduced the quantity of products purchased	41
		Purchased immediate needs	22
		Purchased only important products	29
		Switched over to less sustainable substitutes	14
		Avoided impulse buying	8
Payment	Method of Payment	Paid cash to local sellers	43
		Paid cash to avoid scam	5
		Used mainly online transfer	13
		Used both cash and online transfer	23
		Used online transfer due to bulk buying	6
		Used POS for convenience	13
	Type of payment	Instant payment	45
		Credit purchases	21
		On Installments	3

Accessibility of sustainable products during the COVID-19 lockdown

Most participants were of the view that sustainable products were available during the lockdown. However, some of the participants mentioned that sustainable products were available in rural areas during the lockdown than they were in the urban areas. Many of the participants reported that sustainable products were easy to access during the lockdown while many reported that it was difficult due to reduced means of transportation, closing of markets, retailers' compliance with the sit-at home-order and hoarding of goods. The main sustainable products that participants referred to in the interview were food, groceries, personal care and healthcare. Some of the participants stated thus:

I live in the rural area and since there was limited transportation to move the goods out, we had more than enough (C26)

Sustainable products were available but I had difficulty accessing them during the lockdown as the market close in my residence was completely shut down. C57

Some natural products were not available at the peak of the COVID-19 lockdown because the sellers were not around. (C8)

Restriction in transportation made it difficult to find some sustainable products during the lockdown as traders didn't have adequate means of transportation. (C22)

Sustainable products were scarce during the lockdown because some traders were hoarding the products so as to increase the prices. (C51)

Price

Most of the participants reported that there was increase in prices of sustainable products as a result of difficulty in

movement of goods, inflation and limited importation activities. However, those in rural areas had the food products in abundance because they couldn't easily move the goods out as usual. Some of the participants stated:

Prices of sustainable products were very high, especially food products. There was inflation during that period (C4)

The prices of goods went high because of limited means of moving them around but even now that the lockdown is over, prices are still high (60)

The participants shared how they were able to cope with the increase in prices of the products during the period. Most participants reported that they reduced the quantity of sustainable products purchased. Some said they bought only important goods. Some satisfied only immediate needs while others avoided impulse buying.

The hike in price made me purchase less quantity of products. (C31)

Whenever sustainable options were too high, I went for less sustainable ones. Those ones are usually cheaper than anything they tell you it's natural or organic, especially with spices and cosmetics (C34)

I had my shopping list and I stuck to it. I resisted anything that was not in my list that was calling for my attention in the market (C70)

Due reduced purchasing power, I only purchased immediate needs, not buying in bulk for storage (C38)

I had to buy only what my family and I really needed, that is, those things we cannot do without. (C58)

Few participants stated that they switched over to food products that were more sustainable because they were cheaper than the other alternatives.

When I couldn't afford my usual stock, I bough alternatives that were more sustainable. For example, instead of buying semolina

I bought maize flour, mixed it with cassava flour and it was a lot cheaper. (C11)
Because of the lockdown, I looked for substitutes that were cheaper and improvised. I have a garden in my house so I ate whatever vegetable I found in my garden (C45)

Payment

Most participants reported that they used mainly cash as their method of payment. They said that they bought what they needed from the local markets and paid cash since most traders in local markets accepted only cash. Some participants reported that they used both cash and transfer, while few mentioned that they made mainly online transfers due to bulk buying while some used Point of Sale (POS) machines for convenience during the lockdown. Some of their reasons included the fact that they bought essential products in bulk and that they bought from shopping malls during the lockdown hence, they could use POS. with respect to kind payment made, most of the participants reported that they made instant payment while many bought on credit. Only a few reported that they paid on installments.

Table 3: The impact of Covid-19 lockdown on responsible product usage

Theme	Sub-theme	Theme Dimension	#Cited
Conversion	Product Transformation	Learnt about healthier ways of cooking various dishes	36
		Motivated to cook in sustainable ways in order to avoid/manage weight gain	18

		Prepare healthier meals because there was adequate time	24
		Could not transform products in sustainable ways during the lockdown due to the stress of managing children	8
		Could not transform products in sustainable ways due to domestic challenges and violence	5
Utilization	Consumption Rate	Reduced usage because of hike in prices of goods	41
		Reduced consumption due to fear of weight gain	14
		Reduced consumption to reduce frequency of visiting open markets/shops due to fear of contracting coronavirus	8
		Reduced consumption due to	28

	reduced purchasing power	
	Reduced consumption due to feeling of the need to save as future was uncertain	4
	Increased usage of sustainable products due to idleness/staying home	18
	Used essential products normally as before the corona virus pandemic	4
Defective Products	Did not use defective products	47
	Used spoilt food products	8
	Used expired groceries	12
	Used expired cosmetics	12
	Consumed poorly prepared meals	9

Conversion

Most participants reported that they transformed food products in more sustainable ways as a result of the lockdown. Many of the participants learnt about healthier ways of cooking and they prepared healthier meals because they had a lot of time due to

the movement restrictions. Some of the participants also reported that they cooked in healthier ways because they were gaining weight due to idleness and needed to prevent weight gain or manage their weights.

I had enough time to read about and practice how to prepare meals in healthier ways (C62)

I Processed and packaged avocado pear into a spread for my family and then refrigerate it so we were using it for bread instead of margarine. (C4)

However, some participants reported that some consequences of staying at home did not allow them to transform goods in sustainable ways:

My children were not going to school; they were a handful for me so I made meals that were easy and fast like noodles and bread.

Frequent arguments and fight at home during the lockdown took my time and energy. ...food was not even one of the things on my mind let alone preparing it sustainably.

Utilization

Most participants reported that they reduced their usage of essential products as a result of the lockdown. Some reasons they gave for reducing usage of essential products were because of the hike in price, watching of weight, fear of contracting the virus if they go out to the markets, not knowing when the lockdown would end and the fact that they were not earning during the lockdown and cannot afford to spend the way they did before the lockdown.

I reduced my usage of essential products during the lockdown in order to avoid going to the market frequently and reduce possibility of contacting coronavirus. (C2)

I had to reduce my use of essential products during the lockdown because I was not earning. ... I didn't have enough money to purchase essential products so I had to reduce it. (C16)

I reduced food consumption because I was not doing anything at the peak of the COVID and I was conscious of my weight. (C59)

Conversely, some participants reported that they increased their usage of essential products especially food as a result of the lockdown. They stated that the fact they stayed at home made them consume more. Others reported that because all the members of their families were around during the lockdown, their general consumption increased.

I think we consumed more food during the lockdown because we were at home all through and did not spend money on any other thing except food. (C4)

Our usage of essential products increased during the lockdown because all the members of my family were at home, we ate more during the lockdown. (C58)

Only few participants admitted that their usage of essential products was just the way it is even before the lockdown. To them, the lockdown did not affect their usage of essential products. Few participants even reported that they used defective products as a result of the lockdown on several occasions.

During the lockdown, I used vegetables that were not fresh because. (C27)

During the lockdown, I consumed defective loaf of bread. I couldn't get the brand that I used to purchase before the lockdown. (C8)

Meanwhile, a few participants reported that they used defective products as a result of the lockdown on several occasions.

I bought a fake vegetable oil during the lock down and it increased my cholesterol level. (C10)

I used vegetables that were not fresh because of the lockdown because I couldn't go out to buy fresh ones. (C27)

I used my expired lotion because li wasn't available so I couldn't replace it (C66)

During the lockdown, members of family were practicing new ways of cooking different things, even the boys, so we allowed them and we were eating all sorts because we couldn't throw whatever they prepared away. (C8)

Table 3: *Impact of Covid-19 lockdown on responsible product disposal*

Theme	Sub-theme	Theme dimension	#Cited
Waste Reduction	Product	The lockdown did not	30
	Reuse	cause me to reuse any product I was not reusing before	
		Reused products due to economic hardships	28
		Reused products due to limited movement to buy	9
		Reused products because of the need to save	18
		Reused packages because there was adequate time to explore various ways of re-using them	3
		Reused packaging materials to create arts in order to occupy idle time	2

	Product Repair	Did not repair products because of the lockdown	31
		Amended clothes because of the lockdown	17
		Motorcycle was repaired to save fuel that would have been used in cars	4
		Television was repaired to get news since movement was restricted	7
		Household equipments were repaired to avoid buying new ones because of economic hardship	12
		Android phones were repaired to help keep busy during the lockdown	9
Waste Recycling	Recycling	did not recycle any product	51
		recycled Iron metals during the lockdown	2
		recycled old clothes	7
		recycled nylon bags	7
		Movement restrictions hindered my usual recycling activities	2
Waste Disposal	Disposal methods	Designated refuse dump	48
		Burning	16
		Compost	12

	Bush	14
Effect on choice of method	Conditions created by the lockdown did not affect my method of waste disposal	42
	More Composting during the lockdown	19
	More burning during the lockdown	11

Waste Reduction

Many participants reported that they did not reuse products because of the lockdown while more than half of the participants stated that did due to economic hardship, limited movement and availability of adequate time to figure out how products and packages can be reused. Some of the items reused include empty bottled water containers, empty beverage containers, wipes, nose masks, etc. some of the participants stated that if not for the lockdown, they would not have imagined that such products can be reused.

I washed and reused my baby's wipes during the lockdown. I didn't really like the idea but I was forced to do that in order to reduce expenses to the barest minimum. (C16)

The lockdown made me to stop buying bottled water and start boiling and filtering my drinking water so I reused bottled water containers for putting my water in the fridge. (C24)

Few participants reported that they had to repair things they were not intending to repair because of the lockdown. Some of things the participants repaired are motorcycles, Televisions, android phones and clothes. Participants gave different reasons for the repairs including availability of time to amend things,

economic challenges, need to save, needs to be current and need to reduce idleness and boredom.

...because of the lockdown, I had the time to mend my clothes which I wanted to dispose of. (C19)

Since my car consume more fuel than my motorcycle, I repaired my motor cycle during the lockdown to avoid using my car and then save money for fuel. (C58)

I repaired my television because of the covid-19 lockdown. I was at home most of the time so I repaired it so that I can see what was happening around the world. (C44)

Waste Recycling

Most of the participants reported that the conditions created by the lockdown did not make them recycle during the lockdown. Two participants stated that they recycled metals.

I recycled some iron metals I wanted to dispose of during the lockdown C26

I recycled some old clothes I wanted to dispose into new dresses for my daughter (C64)

Waste Disposal

Several waste disposal methods were used by participants during the lockdown. Some of them include refuse dump, burning, composting and throwing waste in the bush. Most participants explained that they disposed their waste in a refuse dump. Many participants reported that they burn waste, few said they use compost for waste that can decay and very few said they throw their waste in the bush. Some participants combined two methods. However, more than half of the participants reported that the lockdown did not affect their method of

disposing waste. Some of the participants however stated that did more burning than they used to do because movement restrictions and waste management agencies not functioning normally. Some said they composting more than usual because of movement restrictions and uncertainty about getting fertilizer.

I dispose of my waste in a refuse dump but that was how I was disposing waste even before the lockdown. (C8)

I threw some waste in my garden to serve as manure. I was not sure that there will be fertilizer that year. (C61)

Waste management agencies were not working well during the lockdown so we burnt our waste (C63)

I throw my waste in the bush. We don't have local government designated refuse dump in my area. That's how I have been disposing of waste even before the lockdown. (C62)

Discussion of Findings

Overall, eight dominant themes and fourteen sub-themes were identified. The study identified real-life experiences of consumers in Enugu State during the COVID-19 lockdown with respect to consumer behavior, responsible consumption and sustainable consumption and the findings add to existing knowledge in these areas. It was found that essential sustainable products were available during the lockdown. This made it easier for people to consume healthy products. Availability has been reported to be a factor that aids responsible consumption (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2004; Kaufmann, Panni & Orphanidou, 2012). in addition, price was a major determinant of participants' decision-making while purchasing during the lockdown. The increase in prices of sustainable products, to a great extent, encouraged responsible consumption. This is in contrast to the findings of Kaufmann, Panni & Orphanidou, 2012 which found that unfair pricing is a factor that affects responsible purchasing negatively. The COVID-19 lockdown gave consumers the

opportunity to purchase only the things that are really needed and considered as essential.

With respect to method of payment, most participants reported that they paid cash for goods during the lockdown. This is in contrast to the findings of a study conducted by Brittany (2020) in Canada. Brittany found that consumers were spending, with a dramatic shift towards e-commerce.

This study also found that some consumers purchased immediate needs, avoided impulse buying and switched over to more organic substitutes during the lockdown. Prices of consumers' preferred options increased during the lockdown and their availability was also limited. These were the reasons participants cited for making the positive changes, which have been previously reported as responsible consumption practices (Fisk, 1973; Scott & Jobber, 2000; Oslo Symposium, 1994). The finding the many consumers reduced their usage of essential products during the COVID-19 lockdown is regarded as a positive change since UNCTAD (2019); Fisk (1973) and Scott & Jobber (2000) reported that reducing consumption is a responsible consumption practice. Some reasons the participants gave for reducing usage of essential products were: increase in prices of goods, watching of weight for health and aesthetic reasons, fear of and contracting the virus if they consistently go out, not knowing when the lockdown would end and thus, the need to save money, the fact that they were not earning during the lockdown.

Increased usage of products and usage of defective products are considered unsustainable practices that may be detrimental to health. Increasing usage of products and using defective products does not impact on the self and others positively and so

are not considered responsible (Ulusoy, 2016). in addition, UNDP (2020) states that almost 2 billion people go hungry or are undernourished while 2 billion people are overweight or obese. These statistics underscore the need to for consumers to reduce consumption as much as possible.

Many participants reused and repaired products as a result of the lockdown with the main aim of saving money, while only a few recycled with the aim of reducing waste. Reusing, repairing and recycling are methods of reducing waste generation and have been considered as responsible consumption practices (United Nations, 2016). In fact, these methods have been reported as the most effective ways to reduce waste, save natural resources, protect the environment and save money (EPA, 2020; United Nations, 2016).

Waste disposal methods cited by participants included refuse dumping at designated places, burning, indiscriminate throwing of refuse into bushes and compost. Only the latter is a sustainable method of disposing waste as reported by different literatures on sustainable waste disposal. (Seneca Resource Recovery, 2019; NnamdiIkpeze, 2014; Ogunmakinde, Sher&Maund, 2019). Most refuse dumps used by participants are open dumps which are burnt after some time. Every type of waste is disposed of in an open dump which is usually located within a community or outside different homes in a community and then burnt after a number of days (Arogundade, 2019). Burning should be discouraged because of the negative impact it has on our health and environment. Most participants reported that the COVID-19 lockdown did not affect waste disposal methods used by them but a few stated that the lockdown made them compost and burn more because of restricted movement and ineffectiveness of waste management agencies at that time.

Conclusion and Recommendations

COVID-19 lockdown came with a lot of challenges. However, just like other difficult times, it also came with some positive consequences. Our study found that the lockdown aided responsible consumption as participants reported that they purchased less, reduced their consumption, found more sustainable ways of transforming products to use and preserve them. Consumers also reused products they would have disposed of, if not for the lockdown. In view of the findings, international organizations interested in sustainability as well as government agencies and NGOs should organize consumer education campaigns, especially in the area of waste disposal. The campaign should be inclusive campaign and should capture attention of different kinds of audience. In addition, governments can use regulations to sustain and improve the positive changes that happened during the lockdown, we believe that since the changes consumers made and why they took the steps are now clear, it is easier for government to formulate regulations that are balanced and fair but have capacity to sustainable lifestyles/

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