

**COMMODITY SCHOOL OF MARKETING THOUGHT AND
DEVELOPMENT OF ONLINE BUSINESS-TO-CONSUMER (B2C)
ELECTRONIC RETAILING IN NIGERIA**

AKINBODUN, S.O., DIXON-OGBECHI, B. N., & LADIPO, P.K.A.

Department of Business Administration,
University of Lagos, Lagos, Nigeria.

*Correspondence: sarah02akin@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper examined the commodity school of marketing thought and its relevance to the development of Online Business-to-Consumer (B2C) electronic retailing in Nigeria with special reference to Jumia. This topic is researched because the use of the internet to carry out business in Nigeria is still in its infancy, therefore an understanding of how Commodity school of marketing thought evolved as a building block in the development of Online B2C can add to the knowledge base of both existing electronic retailers (Jumia) and that of prospective entrepreneurs looking forward to entering the electronic retailing market in Nigeria. Using the desk research methodology relevant past and current data were collected from journal articles, conference proceedings as well as marketing textbooks. A total of 158 materials were reviewed; out of which the qualitative approach was used to select a sample of 128 using the purposive sampling technique. These secondary sources of data were relied upon to generate the needed information required to provide answers to the research questions. This study established that the Commodity school of marketing thought is relevant to the development of Online B2C electronic retailing of Jumia in Nigeria.

Keywords: Commodity, marketing thought, online Business-to-consumer, electronic retailing.

1. Introduction

Marketing as a discipline is endowed with a rich tradition of historical thought that has been employed in explaining various areas of retailing activities (Power, 2012) amongst others. Historical marketing literature serves as a robust addition to discipline knowledge, as it enables scholars within marketing and society to have an understanding of its origin and change patterns (Savitt, 1980). Also, as asserted by Karimov (2017), historical marketing thought literature has influenced the study of marketing from its beginning, and will still influence it as we are going into the automation age (Ratchford, 2020). The Commodity school of marketing thought is classified as one of the traditional approaches in the historical marketing literature (Omotoyinbo & Oladele, 2017). This school centers on the classification of product categories and it addresses the question

of how goods are classified and marketed (Shaw & Jones, 2005). Hence, this study seeks to demonstrate that the richness of literature on the Commodity school of marketing thought can be applied to contemporary electronic retailing activities.

Mulhern (1997) defined retail as the breaking of the bulk function performed in marketing channels. Nowadays, the retailing scope has expanded beyond bulk breaking and it is usually defined as activities involved in selling products to final consumers. While some authors stated that retailing is only peculiar to products purchased for personal and non-business use (Kotler, 1991); others view retail marketing as being on the verge of a new era that will produce more efficient, lucrative, and meaningful marketing practices; as this new era is being energized by technological development (Mulhern, 1997).

Retail marketing has witnessed major disruptions due to the use of the internet, most especially in the area of electronic retailing (Christensen & Tedlow, 2000). These disruptions led to changes in practices and activities of retail marketing in the area of development of new retailers and existing retailers' responsiveness (Powers, 2012). Thus, the changes that occurred due to the development of the internet can provide an opportunity to relate commodity school, being one of the early schools of marketing thought, to a contemporary online environment.

1.2 Problem Statement

Early schools of marketing are thought to represent the largest portions of historical marketing literature (Jones & Monieson, 1990) and the Commodity approach is one of the early approaches in scholarly marketing research (Zinn & Johnson, 1990). Due to past studies reviewed, the majority of works in the Commodity school centered on the classification of products and their characteristics, while little or no work has looked into how this School, is relevant to the development of contemporary retailing marketing such as Online B2C in electronic retailing most especially in developing countries such as Nigeria. Against the aforementioned background, this study seeks to fill this gap by examining the relevance of the Commodity school of marketing thought to the development of Online B2C electronic retailing in Nigeria with special reference to Jumia.

1.3 Research Objectives

The aims of this study are to:

- i. examine the relevance of the Commodity school to the product classification of Online B2C electronic retailing of Jumia.
- ii. examine the relevance of the Commodity school to the promotion strategy of Online B2C electronic retailing of Jumia

- iii. examine the relevance of the Commodity school to the distribution strategy of Online B2C electronic retailing of Jumia.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed:

- i. Of what relevance is the Commodity school to the product classification of Online B2C electronic retailing of Jumia?
- ii. Of what relevance is the Commodity school to the promotion strategy of online B2C electronic retailing of Jumia?
- iii. Of what relevance is the Commodity school to the distribution strategy of Jumia?

1.5 Background to the Study

1.5.1 Overview of Schools of Marketing Thought

The Commodity school of marketing thought emerged on the basis of development in the schools of marketing thoughts classification; therefore there is a need to have an overview of the classification of schools of marketing thought to see how it emerged. Kotler (1979) claimed that the marketing discipline was not mature enough because of its absence of a school of marketing thought classification. However, Tamila (2009) observed that these schools started as far back as 1970, specifically in 1973. Hence, the table below showed the summary of different classifications of schools of marketing starting from 1973 till 2005.

Table 1: Summary of Classifications in Schools of Marketing Thought from 1973 to 2005.

S/No	Beckman, Davidson and Talarzyk (1973)	Sheth and Garrett (1986)	Sheth, Gardner and Garrett (1988)	Shaw and Jones (2005)
1.	Interdisciplinary	Institutions	Commodity	Functions
2.	Psychological	Functions	Functional	Commodities
3.	Sociological	Products	Regional	Institutional
4.	Empirical	Managerial	Institutional	Interregional trade
5.	Quantitative	Environmental	Functionalist	Marketing Management
6.	Marketing process	Macromarketing	Managerial	Marketing Systems
7.	Decision theory	Consumerism	Buyer Behaviour	Consumer Behaviour
8.	Negativistic	Systems	Activist	Macromarketing
9.	Marketing management	Buyer Behaviour	Macromarketing	Exchange
10.	Historical	Behavioural Organization	Organizational dynamics	Marketing History
11.		Strategic Planning	Systems	
12.			Social Exchange	

Source: Desk Research, 2021.

This study dwells on the classification of Shaw and Jones (2005) and the contributions of other scholars which are summarized below:

The first school to emerge in the embryonic state of marketing was the *Functional School* founded by Shaw (1912). The Functional school is regarded as the most significant theoretical development of early marketing thought (Converse, 1945), and it centered on different activities that must be performed during the marketing process (Shaw & Jones, 2005). The next, school developed was *Commodity School*, propounded by Parlin (1912) although; Copeland (1923) is usually cited as its most influential early writer (Sheth et al., 1988). This school majorly addressed how classes of goods are marketed. Another school that emerged was the *Institutional School*. According to Sheth et al., (1988), the major developer in this school is Weld (1916). This school of marketing thought was founded in order to describe and classify types of marketing institutions, and thereafter explain their distribution channels (Shaw & Jones, 2005). Similarly, the *Interregional Trade School* also emerged; this school has two different approaches namely quantitative and conceptual, which were majorly influenced by Grether (1950) and centered on the location where transaction and exchange interactions take place (Shaw & Jones, 2005).

Subsequently, the *Marketing Management School* emerged with Borden (1964) as the major influencer. This school addresses how organizations should market their products. It also focuses on the managerial approach to activities of marketing and management practices viewed from the perspective of sellers (Shaw & Jones, 2005). Likewise, *Marketing Systems School* emanated. According to Shaw and Jones (2005), this system terminology was first used by Alderson (1957). This school focuses on the holistic approach to the practice and study of marketing using the social system view. In addition, the *Consumer Behaviour School* began in the 1960s and was influenced by authors, such as Howard and Sheth (1969). This school centered on assisting in explaining the reasons for certain actions of consumers and the intentions of buyers (Shaw & Jones, 2005). Next was the *Macromarketing School*. This school emerged due to the growing attention on larger societal issues and advocated that marketing should be considered in a larger context of social benefit instead of a narrow context of individual profit. Wilkie and Moore (2003) emphasized that its popularity should be advocated among future marketing leaders (Shaw & Jones, 2005).

Thereafter, the *Exchange School* was initiated by Alderson and Miles (1965); it centered on the motive that marketing should gravitate around exchange or transaction, as buyers' and sellers' relationship is not possible without exchange or transaction (Shaw & Jones, 2005). Lastly, the *Marketing History School*, suggested by Grether (1976), emanated. It addresses when practices, theories, and concepts of marketing are introduced and developed over time as well as their interactions. This school has been in existence before every other school

emerged, unfortunately, it did not receive scholarly attention until over 20 years ago (Jones & Shaw, 2005).

1.5.2 Brief History of Online B2C Electronic Retailing

Electronic retailing evolved in 1979 thanks to Michael Adrich, an English entrepreneur. And in 1980, Adrich launched Redifon's Office Revolution system; a system that enabled the completion of electronic business transactions in real-time by allowing online connections to take place among agents, customers, suppliers, distributors, and service companies via a corporate system (Ogbuji & Udom, 2018). That same year in 1980, Adrich used Videotex technology to improve the initial invention. While in 1991, the first sever and browser of the worldwide web was commercialized which was created in 1990 by Berners – Lee. But major innovations based on this invention did not start until 1994 including the Internet Shopping Network, and Net marketing. This was followed in 1995 by the launching of Amazon.com., eBay in 1995, and Taobao by Alibaba and Tmall in 2008 (Ogbuji & Udom, 2018).

1.5.3 Evolution of Online B2C Electronic Retailing in Nigeria

In Nigeria, the e-platform for commerce emerged when some Nigerians began to explore the electronic means of carrying out their retailing activities (Ogbuji & Udom, 2018). Electronic retailing in Nigeria by local stores could have been credited to Fouani Nigeria Ltd in 2011 as a distributor of LG electronic products. However, Jumia emerged as a true online store on July 3, 2012. That same year, other electronic retailers such as Konga, DealDey, etc. were launched (Sadiq-Mabeko, 2016; Ogbuji & Udom, 2018). Although there are many electronic retailers in Nigeria today, Jumia still remains the market leader (Ogbuji & Udom, 2018).

1.5.4 Overview of Jumia in Nigeria

Jumia was founded by Jeremy Hodara and Socha Poignonon nec in 2012. It was initially named Africa Internet Group (AIG) but the name was later changed to Jumia to date (Nkwo et al., 2018). Jumia started with \$10 million alongside 5 staff; today it has more than 500 staff listed on its payroll (Ogbuji & Udom, 2019). Jumia has been regarded as the leading company in online B2C electronic retailing in Nigeria (Nkwo et al., 2018). Jumia's website deals with varieties of a commodity such as an electronics, fashion items for men, women, and children, health products, beauty products, toys, groceries, automobile parts, etc. (Nkwo & Orji, 2018). As of March 31, 2020, the annual active consumers of Jumia were 6.4million up from 4.3million in 2019 (Jumia report, 2020). Jumia is the first African e-commerce to be referred to as an African "Unicorn" because it is valued at above \$1billion (Rosen, 2016).

1.6 Justification of the Study

This study is an important step in historical marketing thought research as regards the development of Online B2C electronic retailing in Nigeria. It proposes an enhanced understanding of the Commodity school of marketing thought and its relevance to the development of Online B2C electronic retailing with reference to Jumia, Nigeria.

This is important because the use of the internet to carry out business activities in Nigeria is still at its infant stage, and understanding how commodity school evolves as a building block for marketing practices in the development of Online (B2C) electronic retailing can add to the knowledge base of both existing electronic retailers (Jumia) and prospective electronic retailers in Nigeria.

1.7 Scope of Study

This study is restricted to Jumia Online B2C electronic retailing activities, being one of the leading companies in online B2C electronic retailing in Nigeria (Weigert, 2018). Though, the online B2C electronic retailing adoption rate in Nigeria is still very low compared to developed countries (Nkwo, Orji, Nwokeji & Ndulue, 2018); Ibam, Boyinbode, and Afolabi (2017) affirmed that internet usage growth in Nigeria is on the increase and above 90% from the year 2000 through the year 2008 till the year 2016. In comparing Nigeria's B2C electronic retailing with other African countries, a study conducted by IPSOS Nigeria Limited, a global research company, confirmed Nigeria as leading the e-commerce nation in Africa with 89% comprising 65% of internet users that shop online and 24% prospective users of potential and existing online shoppers, followed by South Africa with 70% and Kenya 60% respectively (Aderibigbe, 2015). Therefore, Nigeria is deemed a good fit to be adopted as a case study in the application of the Commodity school to the development of Online B2C in electronic retailing with reference to Jumia.

1.8 Limitation of Study

This study witnessed limitations due to the following factors: unavailability of full access to some journal articles and E-books, most especially in Google scholar due to publisher's restrictions; this notwithstanding, some of the abstracts contained relevant information as regards this study. Ample time was also spent while sourcing for materials and when conducting exclusion and inclusion processes due to rigorous and thorough checking for relevant materials. Even with all these hurdles, the data gathered was still able to produce sufficient information.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Commodity School of Marketing Thought: An Overview

The Commodity school concentrates on the distinctive characterization of goods (i.e. products). It addresses how classes of goods are marketed (Shaw

& Jones, 2005). Although the initial proponent of the Commodity perspective was Parlin (1912), Copeland (1923) is generally cited as the most influential early writer of the popular tripartite classification of convenience goods, shopping goods, and specialty goods (Sheth et al., 1988). Copeland (1923) differentiated between industrial goods and consumer goods and classified industrial goods into five (5) categories. This industrial goods term is sometimes interchanged with Business goods which are Business-to-Business marketing (B2B) while the concepts remain unchanged (Jones & Shaw, 2005). As regards classifications for consumer goods, it attracted the most extensive developments in the Commodity school. The majority of these works are built on Copeland (1923) three categories. Gardner cited Parlin (1912) who classified consumer goods as shopping and emergency (Gardner, 1945). Copeland (1923) subsumed Parlin (1912)'s emergency goods in the convenience category and added specialty goods. The specialty goods attracted some authors such as Holton (1958) and Luck (1959).

Various authors took different approaches to Copeland's (1923) classification structure. For instance, Aspinwall (1958) employed a continuous colour scheme; Bucklin (1963) used the approach of decision making in retail strategy formation, while Kaish (1967) used cognitive dissonance theory to explain the willingness of a buyer to put forward mental or physical energy. Holbrook and Howard (1977) built on Kaish (1967) and developed physical and mental efforts with a two-dimensional map. Furthermore, two basic buyer considerations were combined by Enis and Roering (1980) namely mental risk and physical effort with marketers' focus on differentiation of both marketing mix and product. Also, Murphy and Enis (1986) reviewed extensive literature of consumer goods classification based on Copeland (1923) using two dimensions namely: effort and risk.

From the 1920s to the 1980s, Copeland (1923)'s classification structure generated the longest string in conceptual development and improvement on an original idea rather than re-inventing (Jones & Shaw, 2005); as Sheth et al., (1988) opined that Copeland (1923)'s classification system is still relevant among recent marketing practitioners.

2.2 Business-to-Consumer (B2C) Concept - An Overview

The term B2C refers to the process whereby a business engages in the direct selling of products to consumers who are end-users of products (Kenton, 2019). It can be an e-commerce model that involves online sales between a consumer and a business (Nanehkaran, 2013). However, due to the internet's arrival, a whole new B2C business channel was created in the form of electronic retailing or selling of products via the internet (Kenton, 2019).

2.3 Business-to-Consumer (B2C) and Electronic Retailing

The concept of electronic retailing refers to the selling of retail goods with the use of electronic media most especially the internet (Hargrave, 2019). And Ozuru, Ogbuji, and Amue (2015) describe it as a process of making a real-time purchase without intermediary service over the internet between the buyer and the seller. This term was also associated with (B2C) transaction model of electronic commerce.

2.4 Benefits and Challenges of Online B2C Electronic Retailing in Nigeria

Previous scholarly works in Nigeria identified the following as benefits of *Online B2C Electronic Retailing in Nigeria*: time-saving, better pricing, easy buying, after-sale service, privacy, improves the economy, creation of new laws by expanding the legal system, increase in micro, small, medium enterprises, 24/7 shopping hours, reducing the rate of losing money, enable time management and time-saving, stress-free experience (Olotewo, 2017; Ogbuji & Udom, 2018).

While, scholars identified the following as the challenges militating against Online B2C electronic retailing in Nigeria: differences in physical product delivery and picture on the net, delays in delivery, internet scam, high cost of transportation and other infrastructural issues, cultural barriers, security concerns, issue related to cash on delivery, inadequacy in the regulatory framework, and perceived risk (Aminu, 2013; Ogbuji & Udom, 2018).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The qualitative approach was employed with the use of a desk research design to review findings of past studies; in order to enhance understanding of prospective and existing electronic retailers as regards the Commodity school and its relevance to the development of Online B2C electronic retailing in Nigeria. This was considered appropriate for this study because this is an exploratory (initial) study into a theoretical area.

3.2 Population of Study

This study employed different secondary sources such as the University library database, Google Scholar, a library reference section, Jumia database, etc. to search for journal articles and other relevant materials that contained kinds of literature on the Commodity school of marketing thought, Online B2C electronic retailing and Jumia. The search keywords used were Commodity, Marketing thought, Business-to-Consumer, Electronic retailing, and Jumia. 168 materials were retrieved from various sources stated above. Out of which 10 materials were excluded due to the following reasons: duplications, incongruence, and unavailability of the access. Therefore, the total materials searched were 158 representing the population size, this comprises articles

journals, E-books, marketing textbooks, conference proceedings, and Jumia annual reports as stated above.

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

3.3.1 Sample Size

The qualitative approach was employed to determine the sample size of 128 using the exclusion and inclusion criteria in four stages as discussed below:

Stage 1: Articles, E-books, and marketing textbooks that were not fully accessible to the researcher but contained the word “Commodity”, “Marketing Thought” “Business-to-Consumer”, or “Electronic Retailing”, “Jumia” in the topic, abstract, or keywords, were excluded. While, Articles, E-books Marketing textbooks, and annual reports that contained the word “Commodity”, “Marketing Thought” “Business-to-Consumer”, “Electronic Retailing”, and “Jumia”, were included.

Stage 2: Articles, E-books, and Marketing textbooks that do not contain search words such as: “Commodity school”, and “B2C’ Online retailing, were excluded. While, Articles, E-books, and Marketing textbooks that contain search words such as: “B2C’, Online retailing, were included.

Stage 3: Articles not peer-reviewed, unpublished working papers, and doctoral dissertations, were excluded. While, conference papers, annual reports, and articles that were peer-reviewed, were included.

Stage 4: Articles, E-books, Marketing textbooks, and other relevant materials that were not written in the English Language, were excluded; While, articles, E-books, marketing textbooks, and other relevant materials that were written in the English Language, were included.

Thus, out of 158 relevant materials that were initially selected for the study population, after using exclusion and inclusion criteria in the selection process, 30 journal articles and other initial materials were excluded. Thus, 128 relevant materials were included for the review.

3.3.2 Sampling Technique

The purposive sampling technique, based on exclusion and inclusion criteria as explained in 3.3.1 above, was used to select journal articles and other relevant materials that focused on the Commodity school of marketing thought and online B2C electronic retailing.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected from 128 journal articles and other relevant materials through a systematic literature review that focused on commodity school of marketing thought and online B2C electronic retailing from three electronic databases namely: Google scholar, PsycINFO (ProQuest), and JSTOR. In

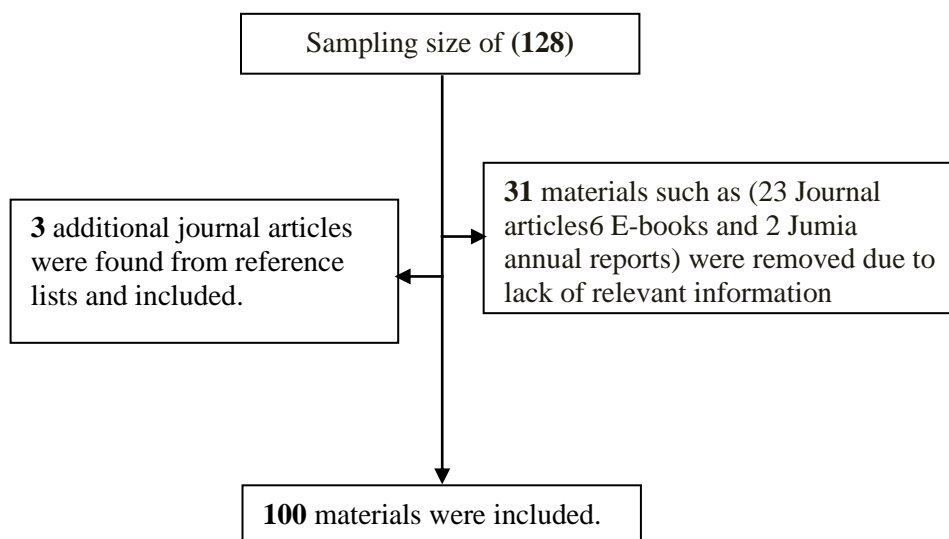
Googles scholar, the search was centered on articles' titles, abstracts, and keywords, while in PsycINFO and JSTOR document titles and abstracts were used. The search keywords used were Commodity, Marketing thought, Business-to-Consumer, Electronic retailing, and Jumia.

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Materials Used Rate

All 100 materials were found usable for this study, out of a sample of 128. Thus, the percentage of materials used is 78.1%. The flow chart below shows the details.

Figure 1: Flow Chart of Materials used



4.2 Analysis of Other Data

4.2.1 Commodity Approach to Product Classification (Parlin, 1912; Copeland, 1923)

Classification of consumer goods was originally defined by Parlin (1912) with a primary focus on convenience and shopping goods (Gardner, 1945). Goods purchased particularly on daily basis with insignificant value were referred to as convenience goods (Parlin, 1912). These goods are required for instant use and are usually bought at convenient places without price comparison. Examples are some grocery items, soaps, confectionery, shoe polish, etc. While shopping goods are perceived by consumers as goods that have significant importance due to their wider range. Therefore, consumers' carry out investigations and engage in price comparison before their purchase decision just to have value for their money (Copeland, 1923). Examples are suits, dresses, women's gloves, etc.

Copeland (1923) added specialty to the classification of goods theory by submerging Parlin's (1912) emergency goods into convenience goods. Thus, for

specialty goods, consumers are willing to make an extra effort to acquire them without price reduction as a primary motive (Copeland, 1923). Examples include expensive automobiles, electronic equipment, high-grade furniture, imported wines, etc.

4.2.2 Commodity Approach to Promotion Strategy (Aspinwall, 1958)

Aspinwall (1958) established a model that utilizes three colours that aligned with Copeland's (1923) structure. According to Aspinwall (1958) characteristics of goods classification, red goods are high in replacement rate and low in other goods characteristics. Yellow goods are low in replacement rate and high in other goods characteristics, while orange goods are moderate in all the goods characteristics.

In addition, Aspinwall (1958) developed a schematic chart that comprises a scale that ranges between pure red goods and pure yellow. The diagram explains the promotion strategy for each product classification. For instance, goods that fall at the extreme left portion of red on the schematic chart should be communicated to the target audience through a long channel; while goods that fall at the extreme right portion of yellow on the schematic chart should have their advertising messages communicated through the short channel. And goods that fall in the middle portion of orange on the schematic chart require a mid-length channel for communicating the advertising messages to the target audience (Aspinwall, 1958).

4.2.3 Commodity Approach to Distribution Strategy (Aspinwall, 1958)

Aspinwall (1958) established a theory that expanded Parlin (1912)'s and Copeland (1923)'s classification of goods in order to evaluate product distribution strategy by employing five key characteristics of goods namely: replacement rate, gross margin, adjustment, time of consumption and searching time. This classification structure also introduced the continuous colour spectrum rather than the distinct classification used by Parlin (1912) and Copeland (1923). In addition, a schematic chart was developed by Aspinwall (1958), as goods are segmented based on distribution methods with the aid of a schematic chart which tends to show how the distribution of goods varies based on the characteristics of such goods.

Aspinwall (1958) further asserted that goods can be classified into different groups by observing the types of distribution methods employed to market such goods. This chart comprises a scale ranging between goods of pure red and pure yellow. The extreme left for pure red goods connotes an indirect distribution method that involves wholesalers, brokers, and retail channels. While the extreme right for pure yellow goods represents a direct distribution method (Aspinwall, 1958).

5. Discussion

5.1 Commodity Approach-Product Classification (Parlin, 1912; Copeland, 1923) to Jumia Online B2C

In order for Jumia Online B2C in Nigeria to effectively serve different market segments, it adopted a commodity approach in classifying its products into different categories such as convenience, shopping, and specialty. Jumia Online B2C in Nigeria classified its product in its online website christened JUMIA MALL; where it has convenience products categories such as toothpaste, soaps, cereals, shampoo, etc. shopping goods categories like computers, mobile phones, cameras, clothing, etc. And specialty goods categories like designer clothes, exotic perfumes, sporting equipment, etc. (Jumia, 2019). This is in line with Parlin (1912)'s and Copeland (1923)'s framework as supported by Kitukutha and Olah (2018) and Badran (2018) in JUMIA MALL classification of products based on their related features as shown in the table below:

Table 2: Jumia Product category

S/No.	Product Category	Related products examples
1.	Food & Groceries	Grains & rice, pasta, noodles spices, cooking oil, condiments, canned food, wheat flour, etc.
2.	Fashion	Shoes, Clothing, Jewelry & Fashion accessories for men, women, and kids.
3.	General merchandise	Electronics, mobile phones, appliances, etc.
4.	Home & living	Furniture, home décor, lighting, kitchen appliances, cleaning supplies, etc.

Source: Desk Research, 2021.

5.2 Commodity Approach - Promotion Strategy (Aspinwall, 1958) to Jumia Online B2C

In order for Jumia Online B2C to effectively serve different market segments, it adopted the commodity approach to its promotion strategies. For instance, Jumia Online B2C adopts the use of electronic media in communicating its convenience products to its prospective and potential customers. As regards specialty goods, Jumia Online B2C adopts the use of both electronic media and traditional advertising media in communicating its advertising message to its prospective and potential customers. While as regards shopping goods Jumia Online B2C adopts either electronic media or advertising media in communicating its advertising messages to its prospective and potential consumers (Jumia, 2019). In addition, Jumia makes use of personalized ads to serve its customers as and when needed (Nkwo et al., 2018). And also considered the marketing strategies emphasized by Murphy and Enis (1986) as regards its product characteristics by establishing the J-Force which represents the sales agents to effectively market its products (Badran, 2018).

Aspinwall (1958)'s theory deals with distribution strategy to be adopted based on product characteristics which can be direct or indirect distribution. This is also applicable to Jumia operations; Jumia provides logistics services for good delivery to its customers with the use of motorbikes or motor vehicles depending on the characteristics of the product (Kitukutha & Olah, 2018). For instance, the JUMIA EXPRESS can be used for direct delivery such as door delivery, or indirect delivery via Jumia's pick-up stations which are available nationwide (Jumia, 2019).

Also, Murphy and Enis (1986)'s theory emphasized how product classification can be strategically marketed based on their characteristics. As regards innovative strategies emphasized by Murphy and Enis (1986) – Jumia developed different innovative strategies such as cash acceptance on delivery option as an alternative to pre-paid credit cards option (Badran, 2018). Furthermore, Jumia also built an integrated JUMIABOT that assists customers in making an informed decision on how to buy and what to buy in real-time as regards customers' economic and cultural status (Nkwo & Orji, 2018).

Table (3) below showed the summary of the aforementioned discussion.

Table 3: Summary of the relevance of Commodity school of marketing thought to operations of Jumia Online B2C electronic retailing

S/n.	Authors	Characteristics	Implementation by Jumia
1.	Parlin (1912)/Copeland (1923)	Product classification	Product category in Jumia Mall
2.	Aspinwall (1958)	Distribution	Jumia Fleet – Jumia Express
3.	Murphy and Enis (1986)	Promotion - Sales – Agent - Advertisement Innovative Strategies	J-Force Personalized Ad. Jumbot Cash on delivery

Source: Desk Research, 2021.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the Commodity school of marketing's theoretical foundation has some relevance to the operations of Jumia Online B2C electronic retailing in Nigeria. Its product classification system established a framework that facilitates the assessment of product-related features in the case of the Jumia online store christened JUMIA MALL (Kitukutha & Olah, 2018; Badran, 2018). Also, other theories such as Aspinwall's (1958) distribution strategy is relevant to Jumia's distribution method, as it uses both direct and indirect distribution methods in delivering its services to its customers such as JUMIA EXPRESS (Jumia, 2019; Kitukutha & Olah, 2018). In addition, Murphy and Enis (1986)'s promotion strategies are

relevant to Jumia's promotion strategies as it uses sales agents (Badran, 2018), personal ads (Nkwo et al., 2018), and other innovative marketing strategies such as cash on delivery option (Badran, 2018) and JUMIABOT to effectively serve its customers (Nkwo & Orji, 2018). Thus, the Commodity school of marketing thought is relevant to the development of Online B2C electronic retailing of Jumia in Nigeria.

Thus, based on the findings of this study the following are recommended:

- Electronic retailers, like Jumia, should embark on extensive advertising that portrays online B2C electronic retailing as an effective and efficient alternative to its traditional counterpart. Also, its benefits should be more communicated to help change the current entrenched habits of brick-and-mortar shopping of some Nigerians.
- Government intervention is required in the reduction of internet connection costs: By encouraging the Internet Service Providers (ISP) to reduce their charges and acquisition cost; also, government should embark on more basic infrastructural projects that will enhance the growth of online B2C in Nigeria such as constant electricity.
- Creation of enabling law: The Nigerian National Assembly should legislate on a bill that will treat all issues concerning online B2C electronic retailing activities in Nigeria such as regards to privacy, cyber-crime, etc.

7. Managerial and Academic Implications

The Commodity school of marketing thought's application and its importance to online B2C electronic retailing in Nigeria cannot be emphasized by scholars, government, and electronic retailers.

For scholars

- The Commodity school of marketing thought is just one of the early schools in marketing thought and its analysis requires rigorous intellectual exercise in relating it to contemporary issues. Therefore, scholars should consider other aspects in relating it to other contemporary areas of marketing in order to further its development as a school of marketing thought.
- Also, the knowledge accrued can be used for hypothesis and theme development that will increase the consumer and electronic retailers' understandings and majorly improve electronic retailing activities.

For Government

- Government can apply the knowledge gained from this study when making policies as regards online B2C electronic retailing activities in Nigeria.
- It can also assist the government in taking decisions based on predetermined goals and objectives thereby leading to effective service to its citizenry.

For electronic-retailers

- The knowledge gained from this study can serve as the foundation in planning marketing objectives relating to their commodities, thereby improving their Online B2C electronic retailing activities and making them more effective and efficient in servicing their existing and potential customers.

REFERENCES

- Aderibigbe, N. (2015, February 20). Ventures Africa / Nigeria is Africa's leading ecommerce market. Retrieved from <http://www.ventures-africa.com/2015/02/nigeria-is-africas-leading-ecommerce-market/>
- Alderson, W. (1957). *Marketing behavior and executive action*. Homewood, IL: Richard D. Irwin.
- Alderson, W., & Miles, M.W. (1965). Toward a formal theory of transactions and transvections. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 2(5): 117–127.
- Aminu, S. A. (2013). Challenges militating against adoption of online shopping in retail industry in Nigeria. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 1(1), 23–33.
- Aspinwall, L. (1958). The characteristics of goods and parallel systems theories. *Marketing: Critical perspectives on business and management*, 46–62.
- Badran, M. F. (2018). *Digital Platforms in Developing Countries: A Case Study of Jumia Egypt*. 29th European Regional Conference of the International Telecommunications Society (ITS).
- Beckman, T., Davidson, W. & Talarzyk, W. (1973). *Marketing* (9th ed.). New York: Ronald Press.
- Borden, N. H. (1964) in Shaw, E. H., & Jones, D.G.B. (2005). A history of schools of marketing thought. *Marketing Theory*, 5(3), 239–281.
- Bucklin, L. (1963). Retail strategy and the classification of consumer goods. *Journal of Marketing*. 27(1), 50–55.
- Christensen, C., & Tedlow, R. (2000). Patterns of disruption in retailing, *Harvard Business Review*, 78(1), 42–45.
- Converse, P.D. (1945). The development of the science of marketing: An exploratory survey. *Journal of Marketing*, 10(7), 14–23.
- Copeland, M. (1923). Relation of consumer buying habits. *Harvard Business Review*, 1(1), 282–289.
- Enis, B.M., & Roering, K.J. (1980). Product classification taxonomies: Synthesis and consumer implications. In C. Lamb, Jr. & P.M. Dunne (eds) *Theoretical Developments in Marketing*, (pp.186–189). Chicago, IL: American Marketing Association.
- Gardner, E. (1945). Consumer goods classification. *Journal of Marketing*, 275–276.
- Grether, E.T. (1950). A theoretical approach to the study of marketing. In R. Cox & W. Alderson (eds) *Theory in Marketing*, (pp. 113–123). Homewood, IL: Richard D. Irwin.
- Grether, E.T. (1976). The first forty years. *Journal of Marketing*, 40(7): 63–69.
- Hargrave, M. (2019). Electronic retailing. Retrieved from <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/e/electronic-retailing-e-tailing.asp>

- Holbrook, M.B., & Howard, J.A. (1977). Frequently purchased nondurable goods and Services. In Robert Ferber (ed.) *Selected Aspects of Consumer Behavior*, (pp.189–222). Washington, DC: NSF.
- Holton, R.H. (1958). The distinction between convenience goods, shopping goods, and specialty goods, *Journal of Marketing*, 23(7), 53–56.
- Howard, J.R., & Sheth, J.N. (1969). *The theory of buyer behavior*. New York: John Wiley.
- Ibam, E. O., Boyinbode, O. K., & Afolabi, M. O. (2017). E-commerce in Africa: The case of Nigeria. *EAI Endorsed Trans Serious Games*, 4(15), 1-6.
- Jones, D.G.B. & Monieson, D.D. (1990). Historical research in marketing: Retrospect and prospect. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 18(4), 269-278.
- Jumia (2019, February 5). Retrieved from <https://www.jumia.com.ng/>
- Jumia (2020, April 21). Jumia technology AG. Retrieved from <https://investor.jumia.com.ng/>
- Kaish, S. (1967). Cognitive dissonance and the classification of consumer goods. *Journal of Marketing*, 31(4), 28-31.
- Karimov, F.P. (2017). The review on the development of marketing thought, concepts, definitions, and its changing nature. *Empirical Economic Review Journal of UMT*, 6, 1-12.
- Kenton, W. (2019, May 20). Business-to-consumer (B2C). Retrieved from <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/b/btoc.asp>
- Kitukutha, N., & Oláh, J. (2018). Trust and E-commerce-case study on Jumia Company. *The annals of the University of Oradea. Econ. Science*, 27, 313-319.
- Kotler, P. (1979). A critical assessment of marketing theory and practice. In Andreasen, A. and Gardner, D. (eds.), *diffusing marketing theory and research*, (pp. 1-15). Chicago, IL: American Marketing Association.
- Kotler, P., 1991. *Marketing management* (7th ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Luck, D.J. (1959). On the nature of specialty goods. *Journal of Marketing*, 24(7): 61–64.
- Mulhern, F. J. (1997). Retail marketing: From distribution to integration. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 14(2), 103-124.
- Murphy, P. E. & Enis, B. M. (1986). Classifying products strategically. *Journal of Marketing*, 50(7), 24-42.
- Nanehkaran, Y. A. (2013). An introduction to electronic commerce. *International Journal of Scientific & Technology Research*, 2(4), 190-193.
- Nkwo, M., & Orji, R. (2018) Persuasive technology in African context: deconstructing persuasive techniques in an African online marketplace. In *Proceedings of the Second African Conference for Human Computer Interaction: Thriving Communities* (pp. 1- 10).

- Nkwo, M., Orji, R., Nwokeji, J. C., & Ndulue, C. (2018). *E-Commerce Personalization in Africa: A comparative Analysis of Jumia and Konga. In PPT@ PERSUASIVE (pp. 68- 76).*
- Ogbuji, C. N., & Udom, A. O. (2018). A Holistic Presentation of Online Shopping in Nigeria. *Researchers World, 9(3), 22.*
- Olotewo, J. (2017). Examining the Antecedents of In-Store and Online Purchasing Behavior: A Case of Nigeria. *Journal of Marketing Research and Case Studies, 1-16.*
- Omotoyinbo, C. A., & Oladele, I. O. (2017). Application of the Marketing School of Thought and Their Implications in Nigeria Market: A Study of Music Industry. *Journal of Marketing Management and Consumer Behavior, 2(1), 1-27.*
- Ozuru, H.N., Ogbuji, C. N., & Amue, J. G. (2015). *Consumer Behaviour: Without Individuals Nothing.* Port Harcourt: Sofiate Publications.
- Parlin, C. (1912). Department store report. (2)10.
- Powers, T. L. (2012). Early schools of marketing thought and marketplace evolution. *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing, 4(1), 190-206.*
- Ratchford, B. T. (2020). The history of academic research in marketing and its implications for the future. *Spanish Journal of Marketing-ESIC, 24(1), 3-36.*
- Rosen J. W., (2016), *Ghana's Last Mile, MIT Technology Review, available at: <https://www.technologyreview.com/s/603086/ghanas-last-mile/>*
- Sadiq-Mabeko, O. (2016, August 24). *Techpoint Africa. Retrieved from <https://techpoint.ng>*
- Savitt, R. (1980). Historical research in marketing. *Journal of marketing, 44(4), 52-58.*
- Shaw, A. (1912). Some problems in market distribution, *The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 26, 703-765.*
- Shaw, E. H., & Jones, D.G.B. (2005). A history of schools of marketing thought. *Marketing Theory, 5(3), 239-281.*
- Sheth, J. and Garrett, D. (eds) (1986). *Marketing theory, classic and contemporary readings.* South-Western Publishing, Cincinnati, OH.
- Sheth, J., Gardner, D., & Garrett, D. (1988). *Marketing theory: Evolution and evaluation,* New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Tamilia, R. D. (2009). An overview of the history of marketing thought. *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing, 1(2), 346-360.*
- Taylor, L. E. (2005). *The applicability of commodity classification structures to internet retail marketing.* Nova Southeastern University.
- Weld, L.D.H. (1916). *The marketing of farm products.* New York: Macmillan.
- Wilkie, W. & Moore, E. (2003). Scholarly research in marketing: Exploring the four eras of thought development. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing, 22(Fall), 116-146.*

Zinn, W., & Johnson, S.D. (1990). The commodity approach in marketing research: is it really obsolete? *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 18 (Fall): 345–353.