

Effects of Online Marketing on the Behaviour of Consumers in Selected Online Companies in Owerri, Imo State – Nigeria.

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Abstract: *The study examined the influence of efficient online marketing, effective communication, and on-time delivery on the regularity of visits and consumer patronage of the three selected online stores in Owerri, Imo State. It was guided by six research questions and six hypotheses. The sample size was 300 respondents two sets of structured questionnaire were used for data collection. Mean statistics was used to analyze the responses of the research questions, while Z-test analysis was applied to test the hypotheses for this study. A Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to analyse the data. The findings of the study showed that online marketing is a viable marketing communication channel which has significant effect on the regularity of visits and consumer patronage of online stores. Based on the findings, it was recommended that companies should ascribe to market their goods and services via online shopping stores and/or develop and launch indigenous websites where customers can make purchases. For further testing of the impact of shopping websites on behaviour of electronic devices buyers, further studies should replicate the theory and methodology used in this study, with other products and websites.*

Key Words: *Online Marketing Sites, Behavioural Components, Electronic Devices, Buyers, Marketing Communication.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Uturu (1998), states that marketing communication is the key element of the marketing mix which deals with communicating the wants and satisfying attributes of a product to a target audience. When a new product comes into existence, consumers need to be informed. For products that are already in existence, consumers need to be reminded and persuaded. Marketing communication is the tool for achieving these objectives. From April 1995 to April 2000, online marketing was known as dot.com boom. During this 5-year period, hundreds of businesses tended to use internet as a primary means of doing their transaction with their consumers. Consequently, many of the firms terminated their operation and many others tried to exist with adequate business change. (Wikipedia, 2014).

Meanwhile e-tailers developed and introduced new internet based marketing aspect and as a result a new world for marketing was born. Internet marketing as a part of e-marketing led to the development of websites for business. Internet marketing in recent decade has very huge movement forward and companies all over the world use internet for advertisements or for corporate promotion activities. Beside, not many companies fully utilise their system with recruiting the power of Internet in business as new channel of doing transactions (Kiang, Raghu, and Shang, 2000). Also media consumption is changing too. The rise of convergent technology and social media is growing. Consumers online are growing rapidly because the internet makes their lifestyle easier as they tend to shop around more because they have access to several other points of information. They use the internet to research before committing to purchase and are early adopters of technology because they have a world view (Asoto, 2010).

Delafrooz, Paim, and Khatibi (2010), opined that online shopping has been a growing phenomenon in all four corners of the world, in particular amongst countries possessing highly developed infrastructure available for marketing activities through the internet. Marketing over the internet creates a basic change not only in business but also in customers` behaviour. Internet marketing provides a unique platform for firms to understand the need of the customers and make them free from the time and place encumbrances. It also reduces cost by omitting unnecessary transaction cost (Sheth and Sharma, 2005). Integrating competitive strategies and internet are progressively becoming a crucial factor for firms not only in physical market place but also in electronic environment (Goodarz, Samin, Muhammad, Firoozeh, Neda, & Samaneh, 2012). According to Ayo (2006), “virtually all organisations in Nigeria have online presence and internet access. Their goods and services are displayed online similarly; internet access is fairly popular among the citizens, particularly for sending mails

and sourcing for information. This is primarily due to the high number of cybercafés that offer internet access to all and sundry for a fee.”

In the Nigerian landscape, marketers and their clients are becoming aware of the need and underlying effects of online marketing via the internet; the trend has started to build where agencies ignorantly advise clients to use banner ads and display ads for campaign on Facebook, Yahoo, local news and entertainment sites, as opposed to looking critically at what the clients want to achieve and advising them on all the various digital marketing platforms available and what each of them can achieve and how to use them (Asoto, 2010). Based on the facts above, it is pertinent to ask if online marketing is important for Nigeria while discovering the influence of this means of marketing on individuals to make purchases of electronic devices.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Efficient and effective online marketing communications influence consumer behaviour in terms of purchase frequency and regular visits to online shopping stores. This generates the problem of discovering the effect of efficient on-line marketing, effective communication, and on-line delivery on the regularity of visits and consumer patronage to shopping sites. In some studies in other countries like India & China (Li and Zhang, 2002; Xiao, 2004; Delafrooz, et. al., 2010; Bhatt and Bhatt, 2012), it has been established that online marketing communication has effect on consumer behaviour. This assertion may have been verified and established in Nigeria, but we have not come across it, hence the need to evaluate the effect of online marketing sites on Nigerians who purchase electronic devices.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of efficient online marketing, effective communication, and on-time delivery on the regularity of visits and consumer patronage of the three online stores in Owerri, Imo State

The specific objectives were to:

1. To determine the influence of efficient on-line marketing on the regularity of visits to the sites.
2. To determine the influence of efficient on-line marketing on the consumer patronage of the sites.
3. To determine the influence of effective communication on the regularity of visits to the sites.
4. To determine the influence of effective communication on the consumer patronage of the sites.
5. To determine the influence of on-line delivery on the regularity of visits to the sites.

1.4 Research Questions

Six research questions guided the study.

1. To what extent does on-line marketing influence the regularity of visits to the sites?
2. In what ways has efficient on-line marketing influenced the consumer patronage of the sites?
3. How does effective communication influence the regularity of visits to the sites?
4. How does effective communication influence the consumer patronage of the sites?
5. How does on-line delivery influence the regularity of visits to the sites?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses, in null form, were tested to answer the research questions posed in this study:

1. Efficient on-line marketing has no influence on the regularity of visits of consumers to the sites.
2. Efficient on-line marketing has no influence on consumer patronage of the sites.
3. Effective communication has no influence on the regularity of visits of consumers to the sites.
4. Effective communication has no influence on consumer patronage of the sites.
5. On-line delivery has no influence on the regularity of visits of consumers to the sites.
6. On-time delivery has no influence on consumer patronage the sites.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of this research will significantly create awareness of the impact of online marketing on the buying behaviour of individuals especially students who wish to purchase electronic devices via online shopping stores. The study will serve as a piece of motivation to organisations wishing to market their products via websites. It will also be beneficial to web designers who are instrumental in the designing and launching of online stores. Finally, this study will be of importance to academia as additional literature in the understanding of online marketing and its effect on people's buying behaviour.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This study covered three selected websites namely; Amazon.com, jumia.com and Konga.com. These shopping store are strategically located in Owerri Imo State.

Subject and Variable Scope: The study's subject scope was delimited to online marketing via afore-mentioned websites and purchase of electronic devices. This is domiciled in the area of electronic marketing. The variables of interest in the study are the three afore-mentioned online shopping sites and their impact on the purchase of electronic devices. The three online marketing sites were the independent variables while buying behaviour of consumers, who purchase electronic devices, was the dependent variable.

Geographical Scope: Owerri, the Igbo heartland of Imo State in the South East geo-political zone of Nigeria is the geographical area of study.

Study Unit Scope/Brand of Interest: The units of study in this research work consisted of undergraduates, graduates, and postgraduates who patronise the websites under study, who at the time of this study visit the online sites to make purchases. Respondents comprised individuals who patronise these sites to discover which of the websites (if any) is responsible for the purchase of electronic devices.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

The sample of respondents can be seen as limitation of this study because it was limited by the number of respondents who successfully completed the questionnaire. Also, the chosen sample limited the generalisation of population to tertiary students in Owerri, Imo State. The websites were limited to three which are as follows: Amazon.com, Jumia.com, and Konga.com. These online sites were selected based on level of popularity. Time was also a constraint, as the respondents had to take out time from attending to both curricular and non-curricular activities to answer the questionnaire items. Research on online and internet marketing in Nigeria has not been tapped into extensively; hence related literature in the Nigerian context was limited and not readily available. Despite these limitations, the researcher made effort to minimise their negative impact by utilising validated research instrument.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Brief Historical Review of Online Marketing

Online marketing has outsold traditional advertising in recent years and continues to be a high-growth industry. It is a form of marketing and advertising which uses the internet to deliver promotional marketing messages to consumers. It includes email marketing, search engine marketing (SEM), social media marketing, many types of display advertising (including web banner advertising), and mobile advertising.

A Brief Description of the Online Shopping Stores under study

Amazon.com

Amazon.com, inc. is an American electronic commerce company with headquarters in Seattle, Washington. It is the largest internet-based retailer in the United States. Amazon.com started as an online bookstore, but soon diversified, selling DVDs, VHSs, CDs, video and MP3 downloads/streaming, software, video games, electronics, apparel, furniture, food, toys, and jewellery. Amazon has separate retail websites for United States, United Kingdom & Ireland, France, Canada, Germany, The Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Australia, Brazil, Japan, China, India, and Mexico. Amazon also offers international shipping to certain other countries for some of its products. In 2011, it had professed an intention to launch its websites in Poland and Sweden.

Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon.com>

Jumia.com

Jumia is a Nigerian online shopping site for a wide range of electronics, fashion, home appliances and kid's items. The business was founded in 2012 by a team that included Jeremy Hodara, Sacha Poignon, Tunde Kehinde, Raphael Afaedor, and Leonard Stiegeler, with funding from Rocket Internet. As of 2015, Jumia has warehouses in eight other countries, including: Egypt, Morocco, Kenya, Cote d'Ivoire, Uganda, Ghana, Cameroon, and the United Kingdom.

Jumia is an e-commerce start-up with an aim to mimic Amazon's success by delivering a wide range of items, from toys to generators across the African continent. Shortly after the start-up of the business in Nigeria, Jumia launched warehouses in four other growing countries which include: Egypt, Morocco, Kenya, and Cote d'Ivoire. Jumia's most notable competitors are Konga in Nigeria and Souq in Egypt. In both countries, all three online retailers compete for online shoppers through competitive prices and targeted marketing. This has partly

led to the launch of price aggregators such as *Yaoota.com* to guide users through the increasing number of online products.

Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jumia>

Konga.com

Konga.com is a Nigerian electronic commerce company founded in 2012 with headquarters in Yaba, Lagos. It offers a third-party online marketplace, as well as first-party direct retail spanning various categories including consumer electronics, fashion, home appliances, books, children's items, and personal care products.

Konga was founded in July 2012 by Sim Shagaya, with 20 staff. Shortly after launching in 2012, Konga raised a \$3.5 million seed round from Investment AB Kinnevik. The site initially functioned as a Lagos-only online retailer focused on merchandise in the baby, beauty, and personal care categories, but broadened its scope to all of Nigeria in December 2012 and gradually expanded merchandise categories through 2012 and 2013.

In January 2015, Konga was ranked as the most visited Nigerian website by Alexa Internet. According to CEO Sim Shagaya, Konga "leads the field in Nigeria today [early 2015] in Gross Merchandise Value," a metric measuring the total value of merchandise sold through a particular marketplace.

Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Konga.com>

Shortcomings of Online Shopping

Okolo and Ehikwe (2015) state some major issues hindering the fulfillment of the potentials of online marketing as well as the benefits of online marketing in Nigeria:

“Poor Infrastructure & Logistic Sector

The comatose state of infrastructure in Nigeria is well documented so there is no need sounding like a broken record. Infrastructure like regular internet network, power, roads, railways, aviation all needs urgent attention. The logistics sector is also struggling partly because of the infrastructure decay. Perhaps one key area Nigerians have seen improved infrastructure in the past five years is in internet accessibility. Nigerians now enjoy more reliable and efficient internet access than say power or roads. Although each time infrastructure is mentioned the minds of Nigerians usually go to roads, power, and the like, these are not the only infrastructure shortcomings. For example, a lot of Nigerians do not have valid addresses. That means that as it is today, there are probably millions of Nigerians who cannot shop online even if they want to. Without a clear address it will be impossible or expensive to ship products to customers. No one wants to lose the product they bought with their hard earned money just because someone else has impersonated them or the product got lost because their address was difficult to trace.

Low E-Payment Awareness & Acceptance

Nigeria is cash dominated economy. Most transactions in the country are cash based and most Nigerians love it that way. According to these classes of people cash is safe and more convenient as it is generally accepted. Some consumers are afraid of electronic payment because they fear their money will be stolen online. They often recount how their money or those of their friend or family was stolen via ATM. To make online shopping a way of life in Nigeria, Nigerian consumers must be open to making payments with e-payment solutions.

Nigerians Love of the Status Quo

This is also related to the low acceptability of e-payment solutions in Nigeria. Nigerians are often skeptical about new things, especially when money is involved. Each time government introduces a new policy, people line-up tons of excuses why that policy could be bad for the country and how it could break Nigeria into tiny little pieces. Making excuses for the status quo is now a natural pastime of some Nigerians. It is because of this attitude that the cashless policy being adopted in Nigeria is having some fundamental problems.

Low Level of Trust

Trust is a big issue in Nigeria. This is why very little transactions in Nigeria are done online. This is somehow connected to an inefficient identity management system. Most transactions are done face to face because both parties want to see who they are dealing with personally. The idea of sending money to someone you have not seen or have never met physically is alien to most Nigerians. This is bound to be bad for the online shopping and e-commerce industries in Nigeria. Trust is also an issue with online shopping all over the world. In consumer-based e-commerce, consumers (users) are the trustors and online firms are the trustees, since users provide sensitive information such as e-mail addresses, credit card numbers, and personal preferences to these firms and are hence vulnerable to firm behaviour. Users have limited ability to monitor or control firms' use of their private information; hence, the need for trust. Trust is undoubtedly a major factor in commerce, both on-line and off-line. These are however the major trust challenges that inhibit online shopping in Nigeria.

Low Human Capacity

Low human capacity has always been identified as a key limiting factor to the growth of the Nigerian economy. Education and learning infrastructure are in a state of decay like all other infrastructure in the country, leading to low human capacity. In addition, online shopping and e-commerce are relatively new in Nigeria hence certain specialist skills may not be readily available in Nigeria. Online stores targeting Nigeria must come prepared to handle this challenge.

An Unregulated Marketplace

Nigeria is a largely unregulated market. Anyone can buy and sell anything in Nigeria; adulterated, fake, banned, and new products. Although there are laws or appear to be laws, these laws are hardly enforced because agencies saddled with the regulation of goods and services are either understaffed, underfunded, or just plain corrupt. In addition, there are currently little or no laws regulating online transactions in Nigeria, and this makes consumer protection difficult. Building a reputable online store in Nigeria will no doubt pose a lot of challenge.

Benefits of Online Shopping

The major benefit of online shopping is the incomparable convenience it bequeaths consumers with. Business is done twenty four hours (24/7). Traditional offline shopping leaves consumer with a lot of discomfort such as: poor parking spaces, movement from one isle to another searching and picking goods, delays in checkouts communications, salespeople's embarrassments, time and fatigue, jostling through people and losing money due to store traffic, limited shopping hours etc. The appeal of online shopping is enormous. Comparably, online shopping is absolutely free from the hustle and bustle of bricks and mortar. A consumer stays at home or even outside home to just punch the keys of his computer (laptop, palmtop, iPod, tablet), or cell phone to conduct his transactions.

Consequently, a consumer do not risk the movement of bashing his car, delay in traffic jam, fatigue, but carefully and conveniently selects from thousands of products, compares prices with other online shops, places order, pays for it with credit card, debit card, ATM or other e-payment available, and finally receives delivery at his door step. Another important benefit of online shopping is the feedback approach involved. Sellers operate a question and answer (Q/A) section through twitter, Facebook, and other social media sites and exchange information that help resolve consumer complaints.

Online shopping is an offshoot of innovation of information and communication technology. Because the world has become a global village, the distance between New York and Abuja is less than one second. Consumers in Nigeria can conduct their shopping for US groceries in their various homes and receive speedy delivery from DHL, UPS or Fedex. The era has gone when one has to travel overseas simply to purchase a product that is not readily available in Nigeria. The main limitation of online marketing is where goods are being sold, the lack of tangibility means that consumers are unable to try out, or try on items they might wish to purchase. Generous return policies are the main way to circumvent such buyer apprehension". Lodhi and Shoaib (2017) state that online marketing has the benefits:

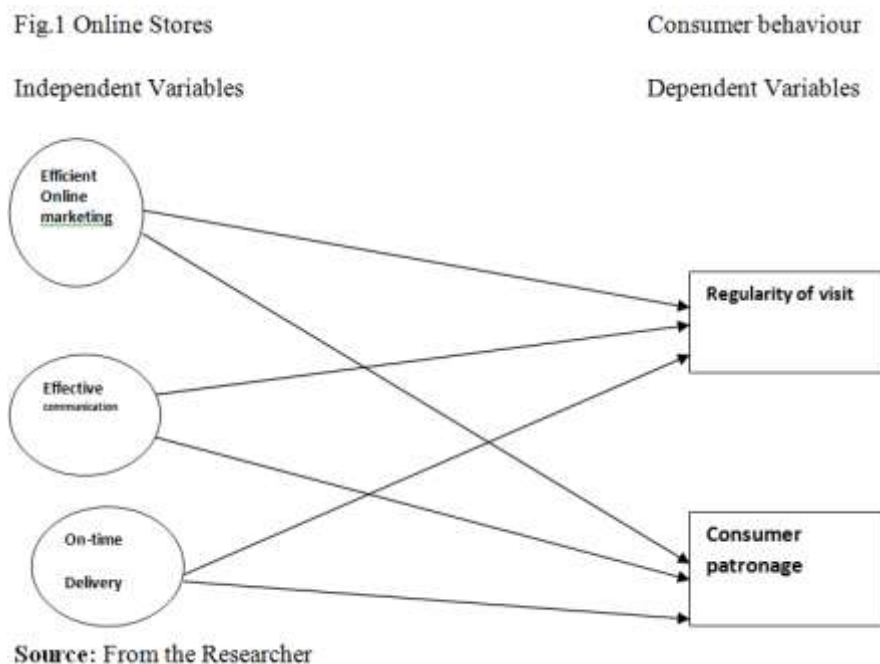
"online marketing has no time limit, 24/7 availability, safety of your money as well, increases the use of ATM cards and other online shopping cards attract customers effectively and efficiently. You can easily search the product information online, no sales tax for company as everything done online. Different e-shopping and e-marketing coupons are available on different websites as well"

Consumer Buying Behaviour

Marketing create opportunities for consumers and one of those opportunities is the evolution of online marketing (Ukaj, 2015). The behavior of consumers plays an unfathomable role to the success of businesses and this has an overarching influence in online marketing. (Svatosova, 2013). The future of Marketing is E-Marketing (Lodhi and Shoaib, 2017). They define e-marketing as "marketing of goods and services done through electronic tool. In their study, they found out that "E-marketing is the future of globalization and online marketing industry. Study showed that online word of mouth has greatly effecting on consumer purchase behavior and decision. Millions of people around the globe spend most of their time online, exposing themselves to digital and social media networks and this has motivated their buying habit (Stephens, 2015). Consumers in Malaysia are quickly adapting to the rubric of online marketing (Li-Ming and Wai, 2013). Nevertheless, majority of the consumers go online mainly for social networking and instant messaging. Contrary to the above statement, Ioanas and Stoica, (2014) argue that online users of the internet have switched to becoming online consumers as a result of the emergence of online shops. Kotler and Armstrong (2012) define consumer behaviour as "the buying behavior of final consumers— individuals and households that buy goods and services for personal consumption". Grimsley (2015), states that consumer buying behaviour is the sum total of a consumer's attitudes, preferences, intentions, and decisions regarding the consumer's behaviour in the market place when purchasing a product (good) or service. In other words, understanding the consumer

behaviour in market in any region is very important in order to sell any product properly. “Marketers must understand what influences consumer behaviour, such as the consumer buyer process, top influencers, and effective advertising. Effective advertising will aim to influence consumer behaviour at each and every stage of the consumer buying process. There are many different types of advertising that firms can employ to do this. Commercial advertisers often seek to generate increased consumption of their products or services through branding, which involves the repetition of an image or product name in an effort to associate certain qualities with the brand in the minds of consumers” Ugonna, Okolo, Obikeze, Ohanagorom, Nwodo and Oranusi, (2017). Constantinides (2004) conducted a study to investigate how customers could be acquired through online marketing. According to him, “Identifying the Web experience components and understanding their role as inputs in the online customer’s decision-making process are the first step in developing and delivering an attractive online presence likely to have the maximum impact on Internet users”.

The family is one of, if not the most critical, crucial and fundamental factors that influence consumer buying behaviour both in relation to brick-and-mortar and online shopping (Durmaz, 2014). He perceives consumer personality and motivation as very vital as well. He refers online shopping as click-and-mortar just as physical shopping is referred to as brick-and mortar. The social media has provided a new platform for consumer to interact and influence behaviours (Hajli, 2013). He states that trust is important in online buying. The social media assures direct communication between the customer and your brand and therefore influences behaviour by making a consumer a virtual journalist or public relations expert (Vinerean, Cetina, Dumitrescu, and Tichindelean, 2013). Jenyo and Soyoye (2015) in their study found out that online marketing has a positive relationship with consumer purchase decision and it was also discovered that internet security has a significant relationship with consumer online purchase behaviour (Lodhi and Shoaib, 2017).



Buyer behaviour which in this study consists of regularity of visits and consumer patronage depend on efficient online marketing, effective communication and on-time delivery as shown in figure 1.

Relationship between Online Marketing and Purchase of Electronic Devices

With change in time, technology has evolved rapidly as well. With the assistance of internet, one can get the preferred product within few clicks of a mouse. There is nothing a consumer can miss at online electronic stores. One can buy computers, mobile phones, batteries, memory cards, pen drives, earphones, headphones, et cetera. The most bought accessory online is mobile phones (32%) followed by Mp4 Players/iPods (21%) and digital cameras (19%) (Sunil, 2014).

Online Marketing in Nigeria: Overview of Trends, Challenges & Benefits

In his study, Asoto (2010) states that over the years, internet marketing has evolved in Nigeria. According to Africa Internet Usage and Population Statistics (See appendix V), internet penetration in Nigeria is now 28.9% at estimated 43,982,200 users and as a result, owing to the huge marketing potentials inherent in

digital media as a part of the overall marketing mix, coupled with the increasing use of the internet by Nigerians, brands are seeking to hire agencies (tra-digital agency) with in-depth knowledge of the digital marketing and how to use them to maximise media spend (ROI).

Top Online Stores in Nigeria

Online shopping has exploded in Nigeria from last two years, with some well-known brands like Amazon, MyStore, Jumia, Dealdey, Konga, Kaymu. Thousands of Nigerians now rely on online shopping to get their favourite stuff while many Nigerians are not interested in shopping online for products/accessories because of the issue of trust. (For a brief description of the online shopping stores under study, see appendix 6).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study is founded on two key theoretical perspectives (networking capability and image transferability), which provide strong potential for better understanding the advantages and disadvantages of online marketing for marketers. They are also useful for identifying important research gaps that need to be filled in the future (Okazaki and Taylor, 2014) The rationale behind this framework is that Internet can be an effective vehicle for national and international marketers based on executing and making good use of the two capabilities in the local and international marketplace.

Networking capability allows for communications across boundaries that are faster and more frequent than ever before and thereby has had a big impact on global marketers. Image transferability offers considerable brand building capability for marketers as advertising via the internet can be used to build and reinforce brand image with consumers across the world. Collectively, these two foundations of online marketing offer marketers tremendous opportunity to reach and appeal to cross-national audiences.

2.3 Empirical Studies on Online Marketing and Buying Behaviour for Electronic Devices

Results obtained from a study on the understanding of online shopping behaviour in the Indian context indicated a significant increase of online stores in the life of Indian people to the point of addiction even though the market was (at the time the study was conducted) not fully developed. The study arrived at the conclusion that the e-commerce market has a great potential for youth segment. (Sharma, Mehta, and Sharma, 2014). Another study by Khitoliya (2014) on customers' attitude and perception towards online shopping unveiled that majority of the respondents in all age groups shop online for convenience followed by wide variety and discount deal.

Kim (2004) in his research on consumers' shopping and purchasing behaviour, came to the conclusion that despite the remarkable growth in Internet sales, there was evidence to suggest that there were many consumers shopping with intent to buy at retail websites, but for some reason did not complete the transaction. A survey conducted in Pakistan revealed when a consumer has the mind to purchase electronic goods online, he or she is affected by multiple factors (Sunil, 2014). Bhatt and Bhatt (2012) in their study found that regular buyers are most influenced by ease/attractiveness and service quality of websites while occasional buyers value website security more than other categories of consumers. A study carried out by Delafrooz, et al. (2010) revealed that utilitarian orientation, convenience, price, and a wider selection influenced consumers' attitudes towards online shopping.

Summary

Due to the unlimited nature of the secondary source of data; the internet, there seems to be abundance of literature related to this study. Despite this, there is a gap in the chain of knowledge. The gap in the case of this study is that, to my knowledge and as at the time of this study, there is no previous research on the relationship between online marketing and purchase of electronic devices in the Nigerian context.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The survey method research design was used for this study. The researcher used judgement sampling technique to obtain data. The quantitative methodology to be used assumed that online marketing via online shopping stores and buying behaviour for electronic devices are independent and dependent variables, respectively. Means and variance were obtained from these variables for statistical analysis.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population for this study comprised individuals who study in the four tertiary institutions in Owerri, Imo State – Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education (AIFCE), Federal Polytechnic Nekede (FPN), Federal University of Technology Owerri (FUTO), and Imo State University (IMSU).

Imo State is one of the 36 states of Nigeria and lies in south eastern part of Nigeria with Owerri as its capital and largest city ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imo State](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imo_State)). Out of this overall population, only undergraduates and graduates, who at the time of this study attend lectures in the afore-mentioned universities in Owerri, and have made purchases of electronic devices via the internet, were used as respondents for this study.

3.3 Sampling and Sample Technique

The sample for this study came from students undertaking bachelor and postgraduate degree programmes. The judgement sampling method was used to obtain a sample size of 300 respondents. Each respondent was invited to participate in the survey - the participation by the respondents was voluntary. Upon obtaining respondent's consent, he/she was asked to complete the self-administered questionnaire. 300 copies of a structured questionnaire were distributed to 75 respondents in each of the four institutions in Owerri, Imo State.

3.4 Measuring Instrument

A structured questionnaire was used to collect data to determine the relationship between online marketing and buying behaviour for electronic devices. The questionnaire used in this study consisted of two parts namely Section A and B. The first part, Section A, consisted of demographic information such as respondent gender, age group, and level of education. Section B contained customers' opinion about the shopping websites which they visit to make purchases. A five-point labelled Likert type scale was used with anchor from 5= "Most important" to 1= "barely important." (A sample copy of the questionnaire can be seen in Appendix I).

3.5 Reliability and Validity of Data Collection Instrument

Reliability: A convenience sample of 30 respondents was used to pre-test on a test re-test basis. The questionnaire was used to calculate the correlation coefficient, an estimate of the reliability of the data collection instrument. Using Pearson correlation coefficient, a correlation coefficient of .86 was obtained. This indicated a high reliability of the research instrument.

Validity: The questionnaire had to undergo face and content validity before being administered on the respondents. The content validity was estimated as the questionnaire items were scrutinised by three senior members of the National Institute of Marketing Nigeria (NIMN) during one of its meetings in Awka, Anambra State.

3.6 Data Collection

The primary data for this study were obtained from a judgement sample of 300 respondents from the qualified population of undergraduates and graduates undergoing bachelor or postgraduate degrees in Owerri, who purchase electronics from online shopping sites. 300 copies of the questionnaire were distributed. The questionnaire were used to collect primary data from this sample of qualified respondents in the population. Using the convenience method, the questionnaire was administered to these respondents in a face to face setting as they went about their daily routine. The secondary data were sourced mainly from journals, publications, and books accessed via the internet.

3.7 Procedure and Analytical Techniques

Manual descriptive analysis was used to report the profile of research respondents. Computerised descriptive statistics was used to analyse the responses of the research questions while T-test analysis was applied to examine the hypotheses for this study. A statistical package, SPSS version 2.0, was used for data entry and to run the data for the statistical analysis.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data collected were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Data from the research questions were presented in tables while the research hypotheses were tested using computerised descriptive statistics and T-test analysis.

4.1 Presentation and Discussion of Findings/Results

Background Information: Bio Data (Appendix II)

Data from gender shows that 40 percent of the respondents were female while 60 percent were male, making a number of 119 and 181 for male and female respondents, respectively. Based on the data derived from marital status, 204 of the respondents were single and 96 were married, comprising a percentage of 68 for single respondents and 32 for married respondents. As regards age range, a total number of 217 respondents were of ages ranging between 16 – 31, 72 respondents were between ages 32 – 47, and only 11 respondents were of ages

ranging between 48 and above. Data retrieved from educational qualification showed that participants with a first degree or its equivalent seemed to be the highest number with 154 respondents. Respondents with postgraduate degrees were 109 in total, and participants with national diploma or its equivalent were 111. As regards the online stores where respondents purchase electronic devices, data received show that 86 of the respondents shop via Amazon, 111 make purchases at Jumia, and 103 respondents shop at Konga. Data on how often these respondents patronise this website show that 89 respondents visit the afore-mentioned websites annually while 83 of the respondents indicated that they patronise these shopping sites every four months. Every two weeks, 37 of the respondents make purchases using the websites. 50 respondents make monthly visits to the online stores, and only 18 respondents patronise the websites weekly.

Implications/Relevance for this Study

Judging from the data in the background information, it can be assumed that females purchase electronic devices online more than males; singles shop online more often than married people; the youth demography seem to patronise these online stores more than any other demography; participants with a first degree patronise online stores to buy electronic devices more than those with postgraduate degrees. Based on the findings, it can also be implied that Jumia.com is the most patronised out of the three online stores, and most of the respondents patronise these shopping sites at least once every year.

To what extent from 1 to 5 (5 means the most important) do the following attributes influence your decision to regularly visit the online shopping stores?

Table 1: No. of Responses Based on Extent Efficient Online Marketing Influences Regular Visits to the Shopping Stores.

Attributes	No. of Responses based on Extent				
	5	4	3	2	1
Efficiency	89	93	76	15	27

Table 2: No. of Responses Based on Extent Effective Communication Influences Regular Visits to the Shopping Stores.

Attributes	No. of Responses based on Extent				
	5	4	3	2	1
Effective communication	58	67	81	53	41

Table 3: No. of Responses Based on Extent On-time Delivery Influences Regular Visits to the Shopping Stores.

Attributes	No. of Responses based on Extent				
	5	4	3	2	1
On-time delivery	72	56	42	64	66

The result of attributes in tables 1, 2, and 3 was used to test the first, third, and fifth null hypotheses.

To what extent from 1 to 5 (5 means the most important) do the following attributes influence your patronage of the online shopping stores?

Table 4: No. of Responses Based on Extent Efficient Online Marketing Influences your patronage of the online shopping stores.

Attributes	No. of Responses based on Extent				
	5	4	3	2	1
Efficiency	78	92	85	12	33

Table 5: No. of Responses Based on Extent Effective Communication Influences your patronage of the online shopping stores.

Attributes	No. of Responses based on Extent				
	5	4	3	2	1
Effective communication	87	62	59	43	49

Table 6: No. of Responses Based on Extent On-time Delivery Influences your patronage of the online shopping stores.

Attributes	No. of Responses based on Extent				
	5	4	3	2	1
On-time delivery	54	71	69	66	40

The result in tables 4, 5, and 6 was used to test the second, fourth, and sixth null hypotheses.

4.2 Testing of Hypotheses:

Ho₁: Efficient online marketing has no influence on the regularity of visits of consumers to the sites.

Table 7: Computerised z-test Analysis of Data for Influence of Efficient Online Marketing on the Regularity of Visits to the Sites

Independent Variable	Df	Mean Difference	Z	Sig.(2-tailed)
Efficiency	299	3.66	46.20	.00

Dependent Variable: Regularity of Visits

Note: Significant level: $p < 0.05$** (If p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected).

Based on results shown in table 7, efficient online marketing has significant influence on the regularity of visits to the sites. Since P-value is < 0.05 , the null hypothesis was rejected.

Ho₂: Efficient online marketing has no influence on consumer patronage of the sites.

Table 8: Computerised z-test Analysis of Data for Influence of Efficient Online Marketing on Consumer Patronage of the Sites

Independent Variable	Df	Mean Difference	Z	Sig.(2-tailed)
Efficiency	299	3.52	38.16	.00

Dependent Variable: Consumer Patronage

Note: Significant level: $p < 0.05$** (If p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected).

Results shown in this table indicate that efficiency has significant influence on consumer patronage of the sites. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Ho₃: Effective communication has no influence on the regularity of visits of consumers to the sites.

Table 9: Computerised z-test Analysis of Data for Influence of Effective Communication on the Regularity of Visits to the Sites

Independent Variable	Df	Mean Difference	Z	Sig.(2-tailed)
Effective Communication	299	3.12	42.55	.00

Dependent Variable: Regularity of Visits

Note: Significant level: $p < 0.05$** (If p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected).

P-value is less than 0.05, so the null hypothesis was rejected. Hence, effective communication has significant influence on the regularity of visits to the sites.

Ho₄: Effective communication has no influence on consumer patronage of the sites.

Table 10: Computerised z-test Analysis of Data for Influence of Effective Communication on Consumer Patronage of the Sites

Independent Variable	Df	Mean Difference	Z	Sig.(2-tailed)
Effective Communication	299	3.26	36.12	.00

Dependent Variable: Consumer Patronage

Note: Significant level: $p < 0.05$** (If p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected).

The null hypothesis was rejected since the results indicated that the influence of effective communication on consumer patronage of the sites was of a significant level.

Ho₅: On-time delivery has no influence on the regularity of visits of consumers to the sites.

Table 11: Computerised z-test Analysis of Data for Influence of On-time Delivery on the Regularity of Visits to the Sites

Independent Variable	Df	Mean Difference	Z	Sig.(2-tailed)
On-time Delivery	299	2.96	30.86	.00

Dependent Variable: Regularity of Visits

Note: Significant level: $p < 0.05$** (If p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected).

Results in table 11 show that on-time delivery has significant influence on the regularity of visits to the sites, hence; the null hypothesis was rejected.

Ho₆: On-time delivery has no influence on consumer patronage of the sites.

Table 12: Computerised z-test Analysis of Data for Influence of On-time Delivery on Consumer Patronage of the Sites

Independent Variable	Df	Mean Difference	Z	Sig.(2-tailed)
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On-line Delivery	299	3.07	37.93	.00
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Dependent Variable: Consumer Patronage

Note: Significant level: $p < 0.05$ (If p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected).

Results shown in this table indicate that on-time delivery has significant influence on consumer patronage of the sites. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

V. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

In all, the six null hypotheses were rejected; hence, efficient online marketing, effective communication, and on-time delivery have significant influence on the regularity of visits and consumer patronage of the three online stores.

5.2 Conclusion

Indeed, among the factors that the findings emphasise, it is obvious that the use of online marketing is a viable marketing communication channel which has a significant influence on the regularity of visits and consumer patronage of shopping sites.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government and private initiatives should be encouraged to improve the online marketing sector of the economy. Collaborating, Ayo 2006 recommended that the international arena and an appropriate legislation should be put in place to guide the operations of web commerce.
2. Various brands should employ effective communication in online marketing and pay attention to the growing trend of online marketing in their marketing approach to influence buying behaviour and ultimately make purchases.
3. Shopping size operators should endeavour to apply on-time delivery as to encourage regularity of visits and consumer patronage of online stores.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

Extensive research on online marketing in a national context is still in its infancy, and needs further attention. As few cross-cultural studies have been conducted, the theories and their application will likely evolve in the future, hence; further studies should be carried out to gauge the buying behaviour of a larger population from various parts of Nigeria. Also, the study assessed customers' opinion merely based on the respondent's recollection of experience surfing the online shopping sites. Further research should be carried out to evaluate customer experience of pre, actual, and post website visits in order to ascertain the relationships of other variables under study. Moreover, other inferential statistics such as regression analysis as well as multivariate analysis may be applied to further provide in-depth understanding in the subject matter.

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