Original Article

Social Media Advertising and the Buying Behaviour of Electronics Products' Consumers in South-East Nigeria

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Abstract - *The study set out to determine the extent to which social media advertising influenced the buying behaviour of users of electronics products in South-East Nigeria. The major objective was to determine the level of consumers' exposure to electronic product advertisements on social media and the nature of their influenced buying behaviour. Thus, the survey design was adopted to study a sample of 384 electronics product users in state capitals out of a total population of 16,396,555 in the region under study. The questionnaire was used as an instrument, while descriptive and correlation statistics were used to analyse the data. The findings show that users of electronics products in South-East Nigeria were high to advertisements of electronics products on social media. It was also found that the consumers were influenced to patronise durable, portable, and utility electronics products trials, purchases and referrals. Based on the findings, it was concluded that social media advertising influenced users' buying behaviour of electronics products in South-East Nigeria through believable and persuasive message content. Therefore, the researchers recommend that consumer electronics firms sustain social media communities' interest in advertising.*

Keywords - *Social media advertising, Influence, Electronics products, Consumers, Buying behaviour.*

1. Introduction

The worldwide business trend has become engulfed in adopting new marketing strategies propelled by advanced technological applications in the last few years. One of the technological innovations used in today's business promotion revolves around social media. Social media are Internet-based platforms that have become extremely dynamic and vibrant. They have proven to be extremely useful platforms for person-to-many communication frameworks leading to a phenomenon known as mass-personal communication (Ihechu, Dike & Afulike, 2018). Despite being recent, social media are among the booming technological innovations because they offer a variety of benefits. Based on this, interests and curiosity to gain more social media knowledge have motivated many recent research decisions.

Social media refer to a collection of technologies that have enabled a revolution in user-generated content, global community and publishing of consumer opinion (Smith, 2010). In other words, they are groups of Internet-based applications built on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, which allow the creation of exchange of User Generated Content (UGC) (Kaplan & Haelein, 2010). In Nigeria, popular social media include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, Google+, etc.

However, advertising is the non-personal communication of information usually paid for and naturally persuasive about products, ideas and services by identified sponsors through the various mass communication channels (Ihechu *et al*., 2018, citing Arens, Wiegold & Arens, 2010).

Thus, social media advertising is done online through social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc. It is a paid form of promotion of brands that requires a properly planned communicative message and budget.

Social media advertising is more consumer-centric; therefore, consumers play a vital role in determining the fate of advertising communication (Jothi, Neelamalor & Prasad, 2011). The coming of mobile telephony in Nigeria in 2001 opened the space and enhanced the spate of mobile communication and Internet access.

Marketers have seriously invested in social media advertising due to the special features: spread, time sensitivity, personalisation, interactivity and convenience of use (Wong &Tang, 2008). This shows that increasing social media users is a great advantage to advertisers and marketers.

In Nigeria, the growth of social media usage, especially through the spur of mobile phone adaptabilities, such as the potential of smartphones and Android devices, has increased the popularity of mobile and social media advertising. The rise in mobile technology has created an avenue for people to be attuned to the affordances of the Internet and its offerings. According to Logicloop (2018), there are more than 100 million Facebook users through mobile devices, and Twitter gets more than 300,000 new users daily, YouTube receives more than 2 billion viewers, etc.

Due to the high reach of social media, low cost and high retention rates, industry expectations are high in relation to consumer acceptance of advertisements on the platforms they

regularly use (Ekwueme & Okoro, 2018). In the long run, the transition to social media advertising acts as a catalyst for consumer empowerment because there is the availability of a variety of information. Thus, the consumer can compare product offerings and prices before making significant buying decisions.

Nevertheless, the consumer electronics sector has been described as the mover of digital marketing techniques. Consumer electronics products are among the most popular product categories consumers purchase online (Nieson, 2010). The competition in terms of price loyalty has led brands to find even more innovative and effective ways of engaging consumers. Social media has played many roles in that competition.

However, consumer buying behaviour regarding patronage of advertised products rests on the perceived influence exerted by social media advertisements. Therefore, it would be appropriate to investigate consumers' buying behaviour toward electronics products within a Nigerian social media advertising environment.

2. The Problem

Social media have become popular communication platforms in the world today. They are extremely popular among young people and people in the higher age groups who also seem to be catching up with this new technological advancement to a great extent. The characteristics of social media have strengthened several businesses to extensively use the platforms in framing their marketing strategies. Although there are several studies on the use of social media in advertising (Ekwueme & Okoro, 2018; Olotewo, 2016; Rudloff & Fray, 2010), none of the studies talked about the role of social media in shaping consumer's perceptions as well as influencing their buying behaviour.

Also, even though many people use social media to buy consumer electronics, no major study has been conducted on the role of social media in instigating such purchases or otherwise in South-East Nigeria. That is why the major problem of this study is hinged on finding how social media advertising affects consumers' perception of products and, in turn, affects buying behaviour in relation to purchasing decisions. Hence, to what extent does social media advertising influence consumers' buying behaviour of electronics products in South-East Nigeria?

3. The Objectives

The general objective of this study was to investigate the influence of social media advertising on the buying behaviour of users of electronics products in select cities in South-East Nigeria. However, the specific objectives were to:

- ascertain the level of electronic products consumers' exposure to advertisements on social media;

- determine the level of influence that social media advertising has on the buying behaviour of electronics products consumers;
- examine the nature of influence social media advertising has on the buying behaviour of electronics products consumers; and
- determine the categories of electronic products that consumers are influenced by social media advertising to patronise.

4. The Hypothesis

The following research hypothesis was proposed for the study.

H_1:   There is a relationship between social media advertising and buying behaviour of electronics product consumers in South-East Nigeria.

5. Literature Review

This section contains the literature review on concepts, scholarly opinions, empirical studies, and theories relating to the issues and facts concerning the present study.

5.1. Social Media and Advertising

Social media are "a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content". (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p.60). They are "consumer-generated media that cover a wide variety of new online information sources, created and used by consumers intent on sharing information with others regarding any topic of interest" (Kohli, Suri & Kapoor, 2014, p. When assessing social media as a marketing tool, most researchers include mobile and web-based technologies that focus on how users "share, co-create, discuss and modify user-generated content" (Kohli et al., 2014, p. 1). Most people consider this a paradigmatic shift in the way companies market their products because companies rely on consumers more than ever to direct their marketing process and create the discourse around branding.

Unlike print or television advertising, social media is not an advertising platform in and of itself. As a result, companies can be challenged with determining how consumer information and engagement impact the branding process. Positive comments in social media venues can have a positive impact. Still, negative comments can also be a part of the brand dialogue and may not be able to be controlled by the companies using social media for marketing (Ho-Dac, Carson & Moore, 2013; Kohli et al., 2014). At the same time, consumers participate in the discussion and exchanges that influence the branding process while paying very little attention to their participation in the branding or marketing process (Kohli et al., 2014).

Increasing focus on global development and the expansive use of technology in marketing, advertising and promotion has led to shifts in how companies focus on

consumers (Quelch & Jocz, 2008). Researchers have recognised that technology has become a major component in expanding markets and have defined entire marketing strategies around global access to technology. At the same time, advertising and promotion often focus on the psychological, emotional, and social factors influencing consumer behaviours, elements that must be incorporated into technology-based marketing (Quelch & Jocz, 2008). As a result, even with global expansion and new technologies, companies need to look at the four essential "Ps" of marketing: product, price, place, and promotion (Quelch & Jocz, 2008).

Rather than focusing on short-term advertising through technology, adept companies integrate social media mechanisms to enhance their relationship with consumers. Companies frequently focus on three of the most widely used social media platforms for product marketing and branding: Facebook, YouTube and Twitter (Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit, 2011; Shi, Rui, & Whinston, 2014). More than at any time in the past, companies are now recognising the value of using methods to engage consumers to continually reintroduce the product, increase the appeal of products, or identify social components to product experiences. Social media websites have become the centre of information distribution on products, including introducing new product lines, creating brand awareness, and shaping consumer behaviour (Muntinga *et al.*, 2011). Social media provides the unique opportunity to use word-of-mouth marketing to a wider audience, supporting consumer-to-consumer communications and advancing brand awareness through a large-scale social network (Kozinets, de Valck, Wojnicki, & Wilner, 2010).

Of the three social media platforms identified as commonly used by companies to support marketing and branding (i.e. Twitter, YouTube and Facebook), Facebook is considered by some to be the "holy grail of marketers" because of its focus on the integration of advertising into participants' social content. In the Facebook format, advertisers present their information about specific brands and products, Facebook users provide comments or "Like" content (showing approval of specific content), and this then drives additional similar content (Nelson-Field, Riebe, & Sharp, 2012; Shen & Bissell, 2013). The more consumers engage in behaviours around product advertising or comment on Facebook about specific products, the more content they will be provided with similar products or brands (Shen & Bissell, 2013). Social media significantly impact how marketers design their strategic approach, deliver brand information, and scale advertising to enhance consumer engagement.

Media propagation has changed how advertising messages are delivered and received. Due to the high costs incurred in delivering a mass audience, advertisers are moving away from television and investing in alternate media to reach their target customers, such as social network sites (SNSs). The emergence of social media has helped organisations engage in direct, efficient, cost-effective, and timely end-consumer contact compared to traditional communication tools. Thus, social media advertising involves an "online ad that incorporates user interactions that the consumer has agreed to display and be shared. The resulting ad displays these interactions along with the user's persons (picture and/or name) within the ad content" (Interactive Advertising Bureau, IAB, 2009, p.4).

With the help of social network sites (SNSs), consumers can actively interact with advertising. For instance, SNS allows consumers to "like" certain ads, follow ads on Twitter, share them with friends and know which friends like the ads. Many consumers are turning away from traditional advertising sources like radio, television, magazines, and newspapers. They use social media more frequently to search for product information and make purchase decisions.

According to Tuten (2008), there are many differences between traditional and social media advertising. Thus the relationship between businesses and customers is changing with the introduction of Social Media. Social media is influencing various aspects of consumer behaviour. Businesses must develop their marketing strategies to generate a genuine relationship with their customers. According to Hajli (2014), Facebook had a higher amount of influence than Twitter on the buying behaviour of social media users. Social media have thrown up a variety of new ways. Consumers create, circulate, and use online information sources to educate each other about products, services, personalities, and issues.

5.2. Consumer Electronics and Social Media

The consumer electronics sector can be called an ice-breaker or the first mover in trying out digital marketing techniques. Consumer electronics are among the most popular product categories consumers purchase online (Nielson, 2010). A change has been observed in the advertising strategy of electronic items. The electronics manufacturers are now using and rather emphasising consumer's experience for promoting electronic products than the traditional product lead method of promotion. The competition in terms of price and loyalty has led brands to find even more innovative and effective ways of engaging directly with consumers. Social media has served as a crucial weapon in this battle. In 2007, Philips, a well-known brand in Consumer electronics, launched a universal 'experiential website' to change the traditional product-led approach to an approach that makes consumers aware of the experiences of the people who have used Philips products. This was a wider shift in the advertising strategy taken up by Philips, even though their online sale was extremely good, with around 70m products every year (Shen & Bissell, 2013).

According to Ruth Speakman, general manager at Sony Europe, Sony was accidentally introduced to Social Media in 2005 when it was running a campaign to promote the Bravia LCD TV. The campaign was based on a TV advertisement; however, it took off on social media, which proved to be an eye-opener for the company to the power of these platforms. Toshiba launched a Space chair campaign to promote its new LED TV, and this campaign was rooted in social media. Panasonic also launched its first Facebook campaign to promote its latest compact digital camera, the Lumix ZX-1, with 8x optical zoom and got a very positive response (eMarketer, 2020).

5.3. Online Consumer's Buying Behaviour

Adopting advanced technologies has changed how people buy a product or choose a service. The behaviour of online consumers poses a great challenge to marketing managers to develop the right digital (product promotion) strategy that meets the changing needs and retains competitiveness in the marketplace. Various aspects of consumer behaviour, including information acquisition, awareness, attitudes, opinions, purchase behaviour and post-purchase communication and evaluation, are influenced by social media (Kohli *et al*., 2014; Ihechu, Osuagwu & Nwankwo, 2021).

Online consumers are unwilling to read large amounts of data. They prefer brief but complete information while seeking a product's or service's key benefits. Online consumers always value integrated timesaving features like pop-up descriptions, photo galleries, product comparisons, etc. Product/Service reviews are more preferred over automated recommendations. Buying decisions of consumer products, vacations and movies are more influenced by online information. Organisations need to know online customers' expectations and reactions to advertisements to attract and retain them (online customers) (Kohli *et al*., 2014).

Knowledge of consumer behaviour is critical to developing an appropriate advertising strategy. It is very difficult to understand the consumers; it is a complex and multi-dimensional process. Consumers may say one thing and do another. They may respond positively to influences or advertisements and change their minds at the last minute. Therefore, gaining the correct consumer knowledge is extremely important before planning an advertising strategy. This research tends to throw light on the effect of social media advertising on the various types of consumer buying behaviours such as complex, variety seeking, impulsive, habitual and dissonance buying behaviour.

The marketer must be aware of these factors to develop an appropriate message for its target market. According to Nelson-Field *et al*. (2012), the following factors affect the consumer decision process: personality, motives, perception, ability and knowledge attitudes, lifestyles, social factors, opinion leaders, roles and family influences, reference groups, social class, culture and sub-culture. When the advertiser is aware of these factors, it would be easy to fashion messages to achieve goals.

6. Theoretical Framework

This research was conducted under the framework of two theoretical orientations: Cognitive Dissonance and the Uses-and-Gratification Approach.

Leon Festinger developed the theory of cognitive dissonance in 1957. It used one of the most important theoretical concepts in explaining the integration of a single attitude into an individual's attitudinal system. The theory is based on the assumption that an individual always aims to keep his cognitive system balanced. If inconsistencies between several cognitions (i.e. opinions, attitudes, or expectations) arise, consumers experience discomfort. Consumers try to reduce the inconsistencies between their cognitions to overcome this displeasing feeling. Frequent exposure to advertising creates familiarity with these advertisements, which keeps consumers' attitudes toward advertising stable and consistent. It, therefore, appears that the attitude toward social advertising will be highly dependent on the attitude toward advertising in general. For example, Raju (1980) found that individuals displaying a strong tendency toward "exploratory behaviour" tend to exhibit a high propensity to search and use information. This implies that information seekers are fond of receiving advertising messages and have a positive attitude toward advertising (Anaeto, Onabanjo & Osifeso, 2008).

Another theoretical concept explaining the utility perception of mobile advertising as a prerequisite for its acceptance is the Uses-and-Gratification Approach developed by Jay Blumer and Elihu Katz in 1973. According to this theory, consumers consciously select and use certain media and content to gratify specific needs. Anaeto *et al*. (2008) submit that Blumer and Katz (1973) identify the following three categories of needs as being the most important:

- Needs related to strengthening information, knowledge, and understanding of the perceived utility information.
- Needs related to strengthening aesthetic, pleasurable and emotional experience, which is the perceived utility of entertainment,
- Needs related to strengthening contact with family, friends, and the world," which is the perceived utility social.

In relation to this study, the Uses-and-Gratification Theory implies that consumers will only accept social media advertising if they perceive it as an opportunity to gratify the needs for information, knowledge and social acceptance. The thrust of these two theories is useful in investigating this study because the two theories reflect on the behavioural

pattern or attitudes of consumers buying decisions toward product advertisements on social media.

7. The Methods

This study adopted the survey research method as a design, and the questionnaire was used as the instrument of the study. The study adopted descriptive and analytical surveys to describe their opinions about the subject matter. Thus, the descriptive survey helped determine consumers' exposure to social media advertising of electronic products in South-East Nigeria and the nature of messages therein. The analytical survey helped determine the relationship between social media advertising and the behaviour of the consumers of electronics products in the area under study. This decision was based on the submission by Wimmer and Dominick (2006) that analytical surveys allow researchers to examine the interrelationships among variables and develop explanatory inferences. In the long run, the opinions would be taken as attitudes because, according to Ihechu and Ukaegbu (2018), citing Asika (2004), opinions are the verbal expression of attitudes.

The population of this study was 16,396,555, as estimated by NPC (National Population Commission, 2017), being the population of the five states in South-East Nigeria. The sample size for this study was 384. This was calculated using the online sample size calculator at surveysystem.com at a 5% confidence interval and 95% confidence level. To select the sample units, multi-stage cluster sampling was used. First, the population was grouped as clusters of state capitals. The state capitals were purposively considered because they were heterogeneously populated. Then, the sample elements were proportionately allocated according to the population of each state. Finally, the available sampling technique selected the sample units along the select streets. The sample distribution is presented in Table 1 below.

The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire. It was constructed to include rating scales used to ascertain the degree of agreement or disagreement with statements that emanated from the measurement indices. The measurement indices were subjected to the modified 5-point Likert Scale where: SA (5) = Strongly Agreed; A (4) =Agreed; FA (3) = Fairly Agreed; D (2) = Disagreed; SD (1) = Strongly Disagreed. Mean scores greater or equal to 3.0 ($xi \geq 3.0$) were considered significant and thus acceptable for decision. To get the cumulative mean scores, the mean scores for all the indices were summed and divided by the number of indices represented by the formula, $xii = \sum xi/n$, where xii = cumulative mean score; xi = mean score, n = the number of indices; and $\sum$ = summation sign.

8. The Results

In this section, the data are presented and analysed under the research questions (RQs) for which they were gathered.

RQ1: To what extent are electronics products consumers' exposed to advertisements on social media?

The respondents were asked to rate their exposure to social media on a 5-point scale. The result showed a mean score of 3.88 (sig $\geq$ 3.0) and indicated a significant 78% agreement with the level of exposure index. This meant a high level of exposure to social media by users of electronic products. Further, the respondents were asked to rate their level of awareness of social media advertising.

Table 1. Proportionate Sample Distribution

States	Proportion of population (%)	Sample Units	Sampled Streets in the state Capitals
Abia	17	65	Azikiwe Road Umuwaya Road
Anambra	26	100	Zik Avenue Arthur Eze Avenue
Ebonyi	13	50	Ogoja Road Water Works Road
Enugu	20	77	Okpara Avenue Ziks Avenue
Imo	24	92	Douglas Road Wetheral Road
Total	**100**	**384**	

The mean score was 3.75 (sig $\geq$ 3.0), indicating a 75% awareness level. The above results led to a probe about the reception frequency of electronic product advertisements. The mean score of 4.16 (sig $\geq$ 3.0) signified an 83% agreement level with the measurement index. The respondents regularly received messages about electronic products during their exposure to social media. The respondents were further subjected to rate their level of interest in information about electronics products on social media as an exposure index. Thus, the mean score of 3.76 (sig $\geq$ 3.0) amounted to 76% agreement that consumers of electronics products are likely to seek information about electronics. Finally, the respondents were asked to rate their level of reaction to the messages received about electronic products on social media. The measurement index recorded an agreement level of 74%, with a mean score of 3.72 (sig $\geq$ 3.0). In other words, the level at which consumers respond to information about electronics was high. With the cumulative mean score [$xii = \sum xi/n = (3.88 + 3.75 + 4.16 + 3.76 + 3.72)/5 = 3.85 = 77\%$], the level of electronics products consumers' exposure to advertisements on social media could be said to be high.

RQ2: **What influence does social media advertising have on consumers' buying behaviour of electronics products?**

To ascertain the level of influence social media advertising exerts on buying behaviour of electronics products consumers after exposure to the advertisements, four measurement indices (seeking updates about products, purchasing products, believing ad information and relying on messages) were subjected to rating. A mean score of 3.35 (sig ≥ 3.0) indicated a 67% agreement with the index that "social media advertising has persuaded consumers to search for updates about electronics products." In other words, the consumers received ample information that instigated their desire for the products. On the purchase level of the advertised electronics products, the data analysis showed a mean score of 3.52 (sig ≥ 3.0), which implied 70% agreement with the measurement index. Thus, most of the respondents bought electronic products advertised on social media. Furthermore, a mean score of 3.50 (sig ≥ 3.0) indicated 70% agreement with the measurement index and implied that most consumers believe the advertisements' information content. Finally, to confirm the credibility of the advertisements, a mean score of 3.59 (sig ≥ 3.0) signified 72% agreement with the statement that consumers adjudge social media advertisements on electronic products as credible. This invariably implies that high trust in the messages tends to promote patronage. With the cumulative mean score [*xii* = ∑*xi*/n = (3.35 + 3.52 + 3.50 + 3.59)/4 = 3.49 (sig ≥ 3.0) = 70%], the level of influence of social media advertising on the buying behaviour of consumers of electronics products was adjudged high.

RQ3: **What influence does social media advertising have on consumers' buying behaviour of electronics products?**

Four measurement indices (new products trials, knowledge about products, product referral and benefit assumptions) were subjected to rating. Consumers are persuaded to try out new electronics products on the measurement index – an average score of 3.18 (sig ≥ 3.0) indicated 64% agreement with the statement. By implication, the consumers were influenced to give a trial to new products after exposure to the advertisements. Also, further analysis resulted in a mean score of 3.33 (sig ≥ 3.0), indicating 67% agreement with the measurement index. Thus, the majority of the consumers were influenced to have profound knowledge about electronic products. About product referrals, there was a mean score of 3.89 (sig ≥ 3.0), implying that the majority (78%) of the consumers were persuaded to refer advertised electronics products to family and friends. Also, with a mean score of 3.50 (sig ≥ 3.0), indicating 70% agreement with the measurement index and, consequently, implied that most consumers were influenced to believe that advertisements on social media about electronics products were for the benefit of consumers' satisfaction. Therefore, the consumers were

influenced to appreciate the advertisers. The cumulative mean score [*xii* = ∑*xi*/n = (3.18 + 3.33 + 3.89 + 3.50)/4 = 3.47 (sig ≥ 3.0) = 69%] indicated positive attitude. It implied that the nature of influence on consumers' buying behaviour with respect to social media advertising was favourable for both the consumers and the advertisers.

RQ4: **What are the categories of electronic products that consumers are influenced by social media advertising to patronise?**

To ascertain the categories of electronic products, the respondents were subjected to five measurement statements bothering on the indices, including durable products, trending products, products for entertainment, house chore products and portable products. There was an average score of 3.39 (sig ≥ 3.0) for the durable products category, implying 68% agreement that the consumers were persuaded to patronise durable electronic products. Also, there was an average score of 3.48 (sig ≥ 3.0), signifying 69% agreement with the second measurement index. By implication, most consumers were influenced to patronise trendy electronic products while exposed to social media advertisements. Further, the mean score of 3.33 (sig ≥ 3.0) indicated 67% agreement with the third measurement index. This implied that the majority of consumers patronise electronic products that are used for entertainment. Data analysis for the fourth index resulted in a mean score of 3.42 (sig ≥ 3.0) and implied 68% agreement. This showed that the majority of the consumers were influenced to patronise products that aid house chores. Finally, to the index about portable electronics products, the mean score of 3.77 (sig ≥ 3.0) implied 75% agreement. Thus, the majority of the consumers were influenced to patronise portable electronics products advertised on social media. The cumulative mean score [*xii* = ∑*xi*/n = (3.39 + 3.48 +3.33 + 3.42 + 3.77)/5 = 3.48 (sig ≥ 3.0) = 69%] showed that the majority of the consumers were influenced to patronise products that fall under the categories that satisfy their expectations.

9. Testing of Hypothesis
Ho1: **There is no relationship between social media advertising and buying behaviour of electronic products in South-East Nigeria**

To test the above null hypothesis, which aimed at determining the relationship between social media advertising and consumers' buying behaviour, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation formula was used to calculate the correlation coefficient. The formula is defined as:

$$r = N\sum XY - \sum X\sum Y / \sqrt{[N\sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2][N\sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}$$

Where r = Correlation; X and Y = the original scores; N = the number of pairs of scores, and ∑ = summation symbol.

Table 2. Correlation of social media advertising (X) and buying behaviour (Y)

x	X	Y	X²	Y²	XY
5	127	45	16,129	2,025	7,740
4	105	176	11,025	30,976	18,480
3	86	94	7,396	8,836	8,084
2	38	49	1,444	2,401	1,862
1	19	11	361	121	201
N= 5	∑ = 350	∑ = 350	∑ = 36,355	∑ = 44,359	∑ = 36,375

r = 0.77

The correlation coefficient, r, was 0.77 and is close to one. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected because a result close to 1 indicates the relationship between the variables under study (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006). Therefore, the alternate hypothesis was accepted thus: *There is a relationship between social media advertising and buying behaviour of electronics products consumers in South-East Nigeria.*

The result would have arisen because most consumers were highly exposed to social media advertising of electronic products. They were also willing to receive messages about electronic products, meaning there was always pre-existing interest in knowing about the products. Then, when the information received matches expectations, a conviction exists to the extent of prompting action.

The above submission aligns with Kohli *et al*. (2014) that consumer buying behaviour involves information acquisition about products, awareness and opinion formation about the product, which all lead to purchase and post-purchase behaviour. However, Semenik (2002) submitted that consumers always want to satisfy their needs. Thus, they search the media for available products and services to satisfy their needs. With high exposure to social media advertisements, such information is acquired to harness decisions concerning what and how to buy (Cox & Brittan, 2004).

10. The Discussions

The findings of this study are discussed under each research question concerning and as captured by objectives. The discussion further connected scholarly positions, empirical submissions and theoretical backgrounds.

RQ1: To what extent are electronics products consumers' exposed to advertisements on social media?

Consumers were highly interested in information about electronic products on social media platforms. This interest led to constant exposure to social media in general and social media advertisements in particular. The majority of consumers always respond to advertisements received about electronic products. The frequent response to the message indicated a high involvement in message assimilation. Furthermore, consumers like the advertisements they receive on social media. Thus, the general relationship between the messages and consumers was such that advertisers and consumers could benefit. Moreover, willingness on the part of consumers to receive advertisements about electronic products translates to the ability to scrutinise messages to ascertain the relationship between need satisfaction and expectation conformity. All the above indicators answered RQ1 thus: consumers of electronics products in South-East Nigeria were highly exposed to advertisements on social media.

The result of interest in information about electronics products on social media is in line with the submission of Bruhn, Shoenmueller and Schafer (2012) that social media communications are managed to create opportunities to address negative elements that can influence consumer perceptions. In other words, the interest and subsequent exposure to information about electronics products enabled consumers to digest such information in line with need fulfilment expectations. Also, consumers want to be engaged on social media by sharing their stories and creating their content; these efforts align with social media campaigns' goals (Ashley & Tuten, 2015).

Also, consumers regularly respond to messages possible because of the nature of social media, which allows the users the leverage to share, like, react, and/or comment on posts, advertisements, and other communications on social media platforms. Again, this conformed to the consumers' relationship with advertisements, which showed that they liked the types of messages they received about electronic products. This was because product brands are now part of a social process (Hollebeek, Glynn & Brodie, 2014) whereby value is co-created in the interplay and negotiation of participants (Hutter, Hautz, Dennhardt, & Fuller, 2013).

Therefore, when consumers identify needs, they look for the best way to satisfy them (Semenik, 2002). Thus, they gather information and sieve them to form an opinion. This opinion, if in line with expectation, becomes positive. Moreover, the advertisers also research the consumers to know how to fashion advertisements and generate favourable dispositions towards messages and, in the long run, the products (Levy & Weitz, 2004). That was supposedly what led to the finding that consumers liked their messages, meaning that such messages could influence them. In the end, the consumers were highly willing to receive more messages about electronic products. The ones they received satisfied their curiosity, thus requiring more information than the advertisers were willing to supply.

RQ2: What influence does social media advertising have on consumers' buying behaviour of electronics products?

After analysing the data and the measurement indices, results indicate that social media advertising influenced consumers to seek updates about electronic products. The advertisements also influenced the consumers' interest in and purchase of electronic products. The consumers were further persuaded to believe the information about electronic products they received from social media advertisements. Finally, consumers highly rely on social media advertisements for information about electronic products. The recorded results showed that social media advertising greatly influenced consumers' buying behaviour of electronics products in South-East Nigeria, which answered RQ2.

This finding was in tandem with the first hypothesis that there was a relationship between social media advertising and buying behaviour of electronics products. In other words, the high exposure rate to social media advertisements and the positive attitude towards the messages and acceptance of message contents spurred the high level of patronage of advertised products.

This corroborates the submission of Bruhn *et al.* (2012) that if a consumer has a positive association based on company-linked media content and brand image, the consumer is likely to select and make decisions based on presentations arising from social media interactions. This is true because this study found that the consumers perceived the messages as credible and informative; and believed in the advertisements, which created room for trialling new products. Nevertheless, the finding extended an earlier finding by Henning-Thurqu (2003) that social networks influence consumers' purchasing behaviour. The influence arose from the stance that consumers acquire buyer-related information from other social media users on social media. That was why they were able to compare different brands and products within and outside online communities to support the pre-existing disposition. In the end, socialisation through chart groups affected buying decisions (Ihechu *et al.*, 2021).

RQ3: What influence does social media advertising have on consumers' buying behaviour of electronics products?

The influence of social media advertising on consumers' buying behaviour of electronics products was captured by the measurement indices through which a majority of the consumers tried out new electronics products. They made comparisons to ascertain the brands that most appropriately satisfy needs. They were also influenced to acquire profound knowledge about electronics products, which implied that they went for products they were conversant with in terms of capabilities and handling. As such, the knowledge helped them to scrutinise products by way of judging benefits and difficulties.

Advertisers further coerced the consumers to believe that the advertisements on social media about electronic products were aimed at consumers' satisfaction; therefore, consumers became available to the advertisers' manipulations. For RQ3, social media advertising influenced the buying behaviour of electronics products consumers in South-East Nigeria by making the consumers:

- try of new electronic products
- know more about electronic products
- referring advertised electronics products to others
- accepting social media advertisements as benefits

The trial of new products was correct because electronics companies have a very high online presence (Nielson, 2010). Also, electronics companies such as Toshiba, Panasonic and Sony often launch their new brands online (Kondo, 2018). The other findings concerning knowledge, referral, benefits and acceptance were corroborated by Animesh (2019) that marketers must be aware of factors that enable the development of appropriate messages for consumers. These factors include demographic factors, motives, perception, ability and knowledge, attitude, personality, lifestyle, social factors, etc. (Abdel, 2015).

Therefore, the trial of new products hinged on the personality requirements embedded in individuals' lifestyles of individuals; and, thus, prompted the consumers' ability to know more. The knowledge acquired helped in opinion formation, and after that, interaction with social factors and perception determined the favourability of social media interaction. When the messages yielded fulfilling information, they became beneficial to the consumers (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Finally, when trust in the credibility of the advertisers made the consumers accept such messages, evidenced in the decision to buy or recommend to others through sharing, liking and commenting.

RQ4: What are the categories of electronic products that consumers are influenced by social media advertising to patronise?

The results from the measurement indices show that consumers patronised electronic products the advertisements made them believe were durable. There was also high patronage of trendy electronics products and electronics products used for entertainment. Likewise, the consumers patronised products that could facilitate the performance of house chores and portable electronics products. These indicators summed up RQ4 as follows: the categories of advertised electronics products predominantly patronised by consumers in South-East Nigeria as influenced by social media were those that were considered to be durable, trendy, for entertainment, for house chores and portable.

This finding supports the position of Levy and Weitz (2004) that consumers recognise their needs and search for products that would help satisfy those needs. Thus, since advertisers usually researched consumers to understand the

tilting of their wants, they fashioned advertisements to close observed gaps. Again, the consumers were highly knowledgeable about electronics products, and the knowledge prepared them to seek and compare products that fit their expectations and desires. They targeted and patronised those categories that satisfied immediate and, to some extent, future relevance. These expectations fall under value-creation indices built by brand communities, developed during online social identification, and harnessed by physical and social drives (Wang, Yu, & Wei, 2012). Hutter (2013) submits that consumers' needs, values, and interests are weighed against those in their collective social media community based on the above position. Perceptions, confirmations, and decisions about different products are initiated and circulated.

The majority of the consumers studied were youths and fell within the less-than-100,000-per-month income level (Ihechu *et al.,* 2015). As such, they went for products that they considered durable. Durability implied that they bought electronics products that would stand the test of time and perform the functions they were purchased for. Again, consumers were active social media users; and that was why they patronised trendy electronics products such as mobile phones, head and earphones, wristwatches, music boxes, etc. Most of the trendy products desired by consumers were used for entertainment purposes (e.g. sound boxes, games, laptops, etc.).

Nowadays, people are so busy that some house chores become tedious when manually performed. Based on that, electronics companies produced devices that helped consumers perform their duties. The products in this category included pressing iron, electric kettles, cookers, blenders, juice extractors, graters, pounders, etc. It was unsurprising that the consumers patronised them, especially when social media advertisements regularly provided updates. They demonstrated the devices and appliances (Bamba & Barnes, 2007). Finally, consumers preferred portable electronics products because such products facilitated mobility-friendly adaptation. Thus, most of the products mentioned here were portable or had portable variants.

These findings of this study are in line with the provisions of the cognitive dissonance theory because frequent exposure to social media advertisements creates familiarity with messages. Then when the messages are consistent with their expectations, discomfort is reduced. This situation further motivates them to have or position

attitudes toward the advertised products, eventually leading to patronage.

The findings are also in tandem with the position of uses and gratification theory because social media advertisements provided consumers with the avenue to get information that helped them satisfy their needs. Thus, since the messages were informative, value-packed, and credible, they could satisfy their information needs about electronic products, which further helped them satisfy the material needs of acquiring the products. The messages helped them make choices after social media engagement through affordances such as interactions in social media communities.

11. Conclusion

Social media has become valuable in modern society. Both old and young find social usage attractive, so companies and businesses have been using the possibilities of interaction and group communication to advance their marketing strategies. Electronic products fall under product brands that receive a lot of attention because virtually all aspects of human endeavour feature electronic wares.

The use of social media is high, and advertisement projections for products' awareness and patronage. Relying on the high exposure to social media and social media advertising and the enormous knowledge of electronics products, as recorded by this study, this study made a breakthrough in advertising and consumer behaviour. Therefore, it is concluded that social media advertising of electronic products positively influenced users' buying behaviour in South-East Nigeria.

This conclusion was apt because consumers always sought information about the products. When they found the information credible, they tried out new products and constantly patronised those that satisfied their expectations.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that:

- Marketers should find ways of maintaining a high level of exposure to social media advertising by ensuring that the information about products is not doubted to hold the social communities on social media.
- Producers and marketers of electronics products in Nigeria should focus on consumer satisfaction to improve demand for their products.
- The platforms' messages should be persuasive enough, bearing in mind that the messages would undergo scrutiny through the social communities

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