

Research Article

The Use of E-Marketing Channels and Customer Satisfaction in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This research was conducted to investigate the influence that the use of e-marketing channels have on customer satisfaction in Uyo Metropolis of Akwa Ibom State. Electronic marketing proxies like social media platforms and website platforms were considered and measured against customer satisfaction in Uyo metropolis. Primary data were collected with the use of the questionnaire from users of electronic marketing channels and the target population of the study were treated as infinite, hence a sample size of 347 respondents were selected using the convenience sampling technique. Data collected were further analyzed using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation statistics at a 0.05 level of significance. Findings showed that the two independent variables (social media platforms and website platforms) significantly influence customers' satisfaction. It was concluded that customers' access to information on social media platforms and website platforms played a significant role in building customer satisfaction. On the basis of the findings, it was recommended among others, that e-marketing channels like social media platforms should be well utilized by online merchants for engaging and communicating products information, benefits and availability to online shoppers in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

Keywords

E-marketing Channels, Website, Social Media, Customer Satisfaction, Distribution

1. Introduction

Marketing and particularly promotional efforts have been impacted on by the proliferation of the internet and other technological developments. The business world is always evolving due to the ever-changing tastes of consumers and the rapid pace of technology innovation [4]. Online marketing, also known as electronic marketing (E-marketing), e-commerce or digital marketing, has become an essential tool for companies in today's digital era to reach out to and interact with its consumers [17].

Noticeably, the use of Online stores for ease of accessibil-

ity and lower cost have grown among entrepreneurs in Nigeria, and especially in the state of Akwa Ibom. Having an online storefront allows retailers more leeway in terms of operational costs, ease of promotion, and transaction processing [1]. Online marketplaces have progressed from being just e-commerce platforms to significantly influencing economies around the world [13]. An online marketplace allows numerous third-party vendors to display and offer their goods and services to a large number of prospective customers [21]. Tools and features for selling products, processing

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payments, and communicating are commonplace on these platforms, which help buyers and sellers complete deals [8]. Internet marketing media like social media, email, search engine optimization, and mobile app channels are some of the methods used by businesses that have played significant marketing communication roles targeting customers [11].

Thus, the term "electronic marketing channels" refers to the distribution of goods and services over the World Wide Web in such a way that consumers who possess computers or other enabling equipment can peruse the offerings and finalize their purchases using interactive electronic channels [10]. In order for online customers to be able to research items and services, E-marketers utilize channels like social media, online marketplaces, internet platforms, and search engines like Google and Yahoo! to register their e-commerce sites, goods, and services. Social media, video sharing websites, photo sharing apps, microblogging sites, and blogs have revolutionized human interaction and the dissemination of news and other information.

Social media platforms consists of online communities where users can post, share, and engage with materials [17]. In a variety of ways, these platforms facilitate interaction between people and groups. Posts can be anything from text to photographs to videos, and users can engage with one another's posts in a variety of ways, including leaving comments, liking, sharing, reviews and more.

The prosperity of internet retailers depends on happy customers and Customer satisfaction increases the likelihood of repeat purchases, word-of-mouth advertising, and connection building [1]. In the realm of e-marketing, customer satisfaction can be defined as the extent to which a product, service, or entire experience satisfies customers' expectations and demands. It is a Key Performance measure that most companies use to see how visible they are in the market and how effective their sales strategies are in satisfying customers and providing value [26].

There are empirical evidence of researches on the potential impact of e-marketing channels on consumer satisfaction carried out in Akwa Ibom State. Basically, this study sets out to address the question, "How effective are e-marketing channels for online retailers in the Uyo Metropolis in boosting consumer satisfaction?". The main aim of this study is to ascertain the influence of that the use of e-marketing channels have on customer satisfaction in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. The specific objectives are to:

- 1) Examine the correlation between the use of social media channels and customer satisfaction in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.
- 2) Determine the association between the use of website platform on customer satisfaction in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

Research Hypotheses

In line with the objectives of the study, the following hypotheses are developed to guide the study:

H₀₁: Social media Platforms does not have any significant

correlation with customer satisfaction in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

H₀₂: Website platform does not have any significant association with customer satisfaction in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1. An Overview of E-Marketing Channel Use

Various online platforms and technologies that organizations use to sell goods and services, develop brand recognition, and engage with their target market are referred to as "e-marketing channels" [20]. A wide variety of online platforms and tools are utilized for electronic marketing campaigns, in order to speed up the sales, marketing, and communication operations using the internet and other digital resources. These include websites, search engines, social media, content marketing, email marketing, mobile apps, and online advertising networks. Electronic marketing also referred to as digital marketing are the process of advertising a product or service using digital media such as the Internet, mobile devices, display ads, and other digital platforms [6].

2.2. The Use of Social Media

Online stores use social media to engage with customers, promote items, and offer support services. Online businesses rely heavily on social media because of the influence it has on consumers' perceptions of products and services [16]. Online stores may connect with their consumers on a personal level, respond quickly to inquiries, and offer expert support through social media platforms [24]. Social media also provides vendors with an opportunity to conduct surveys, gather customer feedback, and integrate suggestions into their overall business strategy [23].

To achieve brand visibility and promotion, inspiring content, marketing efforts, and influencer partnerships may help businesses reach a wider audience and build their brands. Customers are more likely to be satisfied and loyal to a brand after having a positive experience on social media [15]. Also businesses and particularly online stores can get social proof and Customer reviews better on social media on their product [2]. One kind of social proof is when customers talk about their experiences with an online store on social media [25]. A vendor's trustworthiness and credibility can be enhanced by positive feedback and recommendations shared on social media sites like Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook [3]. Rapid issue resolution and outstanding customer service are of the utmost importance because negative reviews can spread like wildfire [5].

The use of social media can also help in achieving targeting and personalized interactions, like responding to consumer comments or inquiries which can foster a sense of value and satisfaction. Online businesses can use social me-

dia sites to target certain customer segments based on their demographics, interests and habits. Marketing messages and offers can be tailored to specific consumers, thus improving customer satisfaction using social media platforms.

Li and Zhang, [13] looked at how social media marketing affected happy customers in Greece. Study participants included business partners (i.e., partner diversity), competitors (i.e., localized competition), and customers (i.e., customer engagement). The results showed a favorable correlation between social media analytics and customer satisfaction.

2.3. The Use of Websites Platform

The use of website platform allows online retailers to interact with consumers and increase their satisfaction. Customers are more likely to be satisfied and online businesses are more likely to succeed when websites are well-designed and optimized. Websites allow online merchants to showcase their wares, provide pertinent information, and streamline transactions; in essence, they function as virtual shops [27]. Creating enjoyable client experiences and encouraging enjoyment requires user-friendly website design and functionality [22].

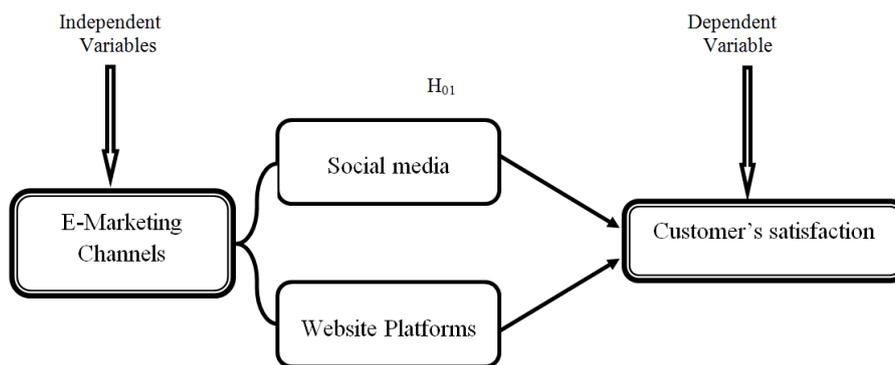
Customers can't peruse the site, find the things they want, and make educated purchases if the navigation isn't user-friendly. Chaffey and Smith [3] found that customers are more satisfied when there are clear product categories, easy-to-understand menus, and search possibilities. Fadhil, Majid, and Hama [9] undertook a research in Iraq's Kurdistan Region, aimed at examining how brand branches and official agencies selling food items used electronic marketing channels like social media, websites, and email to influence online consumer buying behavior. According to their find-

ings, Social Media and Website use were the two most influential factors on online shoppers' decisions. In addition, it was found that there is a positive correlation coefficient between consumer buying behavior and electronic marketing. However, Sharif and Butt [19] carried out an investigation on how internet marketing impacts on a company's procedures, image, and brands in Karachi, Pakistan, by studying online businesses and the impact of e-marketing on customer satisfaction. It was found that Web sites enable businesses to establish personalized connections with their clients.

2.4. Customer Satisfaction with E-marketing Channels

Evidently, businesses that wish to thrive in today's era of e-commerce and have lasting relationships with their clients, firms must put customers' needs first. According to Keiningham, Aksoy, Cooil and Andreassen [12] consumers who have a positive shopping experience are more likely to buy from the same store again, tell their friends about it, and promote the brand. Online stores may do more to make their clients happy by concentrating on giving them experiences that are out of this world [14].

There are a lot of aspects that could affect how happy a customer is with the use of e-marketing channels. Prominent among these factors are; Usability of the website, product quality, pricing, customer service, speed of delivery, and after sales services [7]. In order to deliver a satisfying experience for their customers and generate satisfaction, online stores need to provide all of these in their electronic marketing channels. Thus, the Conceptual model for this study is:



Source: Researcher's Construct, (2023).

Figure 1. Conceptual Model showing the use E-Marketing channels and Customer's Satisfaction.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study is theoretically anchored on the diffusion inno-

vation theory proposed by a Sociologist Everett Rogers in 2003, aimed at explaining the spread and adoption of innovations within social systems. It zeroes in on how a social system's members learn about, implement, and eventually embrace a new innovation. The term "innovation" is used to

describe the development of new tools, methods, or platforms that allow online businesses to interact with consumers through e-marketing channels. Some examples of such developments are augmented reality shopping, social media marketing, chat bot for customer service, and personalized suggestions.

The five-stage process of knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation is proposed by the Diffusion of Innovation theory as the means by which an innovation gets adopted. [18] Customers go through three steps while engaging with e-marketing channels: learning about it, weighing the pros and drawbacks, deciding to utilize it, and finally, evaluating how satisfied or unhappy they were with the experience.

4. Methodology

The survey research design was utilized in this study. In order to answer the research questions and achieve the study's aims, a questionnaire was used to gather data from primary sources, targeting e-marketing channel users, particularly resident within the city of Uyo in Akwa Ibom who shop online. This represents an infinite population, hence an appropriate sample size of 384 respondents were determined using the Topman's formular. Data collected were further tested using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation at a 0.05 level of significance.

4.1. Data Analysis, Results and Discussion of Findings

A total of 384 copies of questionnaire were sent out to respondents out of which 347 copies were returned usable, yielding a 90% response rate. Table 1 shows the results of the demographic variables analyzed:

Table 1. Demographic Data of the Respondents.

Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Age of respondents		
18-24 years	78	22.5
25-34years	67	19.3
35-44 years	66	19.0
45-54years	56	16.1

Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
55years and Above	80	23.1
Total	347	100.0
Gender of respondent		
Male	166	47.8
Female	181	52.2
Total	347	100.0
Occupation of Respondents		
Student	58	16.7
Employed (full-time)	65	18.7
Employed (part-time)	62	17.9
Self-employed	55	15.9
Unemployed	66	18.5
Total	349	100.0

Source: Compiled from Field Survey (2023).

According to results on Table 1, a significant portion of the survey participants were aged 55 years and above, with 80 respondents (23.1%) falling into that age bracket. Following closely were 78 respondents (22.5%) in the 18-24years age bracket, 67 respondents (19.3%) were within the age bracket of 25-34years, 66 respondents (19.0%) were within the age bracket of 35-44years, and 56 respondents (16.1%) were within the age range of 45-54 year. Additionally, the table shows that 166 participants were male (43.7%) and that 181 of the respondents were female (52.2%). This finding suggests that the respondents were of legal age to give the necessary responses. This study's findings also suggest that the survey was not conducted within gender insensitivity, as participants of all gender were accommodated in the survey and their opinions were valued.

The table summary also shows that 58 respondents (16.7%) were students, 65 (18.7%) were full-time employees, 62 (17.9%) were part-time employees, 55 (15.9%) were self-employed, 50 (14.4%) were unemployed, and 57 (16.4%) were not in any of these categories listed on the survey instrument. This finding suggests that participants in the survey had a unique view on the subject and had past experience within the context.

4.2. Test of Hypotheses

Table 2. Correlations.

		Social media	Website	Customer Satisfaction
Social media	Pearson Correlation	1	.671**	.852**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	347	347	347
Website	Pearson Correlation	.671**	1	.686**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	347	347	347
Customer satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.852**	.686**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	347	347	347

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field Survey Data (2023).

The test of hypothesis one (H_{01}) to ascertain the correlation between Social media Platforms and customer satisfaction in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State revealed a strong positive correlation at $R_{x_1} = 0.852$, at a 0.000 level of significance. It reveals that the use of social media platforms among the respondents are substantially correlated with customer satisfaction. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted since the p-value is less than 0.05 ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$).

The test of hypothesis two (H_{02}) to determine the association that Website platform has with customer satisfaction in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State revealed a moderate positive correlation at $R_{x_2} = 0.686$, at a 0.000 level of significance. It reveals that the use of Website platform among the respondents moderately associated with customer satisfaction. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted since the p-value is less than 0.05 ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$).

5. Discussion of the Findings

Findings from the test of hypotheses revealed that there exist a statistically significant relationship between electronic marketing channels adopted in this study and customer satisfaction. With respective correlation value of $R_{x_1} = 0.852$ for the first hypothesis test, indicating a strong positive correlation between social media platforms and customer satisfaction. This result is in line with what [13] whose findings revealed that social media analytics have a beneficial effect on customer satisfaction, but that this effect is conditional on the specific traits of the external stakeholders. The study also

discovered that social media platforms significantly impacted on consumer satisfaction positively.

The outcome of the second hypothesis test shows that there is a strong association between website platforms and customer satisfaction at $R_{x_2} = 0.686$. This confirms the study by Sharif and Butt (2017) who found that Web sites enable businesses to establish personalized connections with their clients. Corroborating the assertion that website's platform significantly affects customer satisfaction in a positive way.

6. Conclusion

Results show that both social media and website platforms significantly contributed to overall customer satisfaction and were strongly associated with customer satisfaction when evaluated independently. It is clear from the results that online retailers benefit from being able to contact customers through social media and the use of website platforms. Implying that Customers who are satisfied with the use of social media platforms and website platforms to access online vendors, are most likely to spread positive reviews about the vendors, refer customers and decide to return to these vendors.

7. Recommendation

In light of the study's results and conclusions, the following recommendations are given:

- 1) Entrepreneurs and business owners with online presence, should positively utilize social media platforms as a place to have a wider reach of customers and promote

their wares, by constantly interacting and addressing product objections from prospects.

- 2) It is important for businesses to make their website a representation of their business, offering important information on the product as well as making transactions and usability of transaction channels easy.

8. Suggestion for Further Study

Further research could measure other customer preferences, purchase decisions, and trust on e-marketing platforms to expand knowledge on e-marketing channels and broaden the contextual reach. Other studies could also analyze the results and return on investment (ROI) of different online marketing approaches used by different online stores. Further research might also consider expanding its geographical reach to include the South-South region of Nigeria or other larger regions within west Africa with same technological advantage as Nigeria. It would also be wise to compare the efficacy of social media marketing with that of websites, and to study the relationship between cyber security and privacy measures and customer trust in online purchases.

Author Contributions

Samuel G. Etuk: Conceptualization, Validation

Ini Smart Udoh: Formal Analysis, Methodology

Aniefiok Okon Akpan: Conceptualization, Methodology

Effiong Mfon Isaac: Conceptualization

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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