E-marketing Practices and Consumer Patronage: A Conceptual and Extant Literature Approach

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Abstract: The study examined e-marketing practices and consumers' patronage using conceptual and extant literature approach. The objectives of the study are to: examine how website pattern influence consumer patronage, how internet security relates to consumer patronage, ascertain the relationship between Search Engine Marketing and consumer patronage and examine the influence of social media marketing on consumer patronage. The study carried out an extensive and in-depth review of extant literature on existing relationships amongst the independents and the dependent variables of the study to establish if a relevant relationship exist. The results showed that website pattern, internet security, Search Engine Marketing and social media marketing are positively related to consumer's patronage. The study concludes that all the independent variables examined in the study relate to consumer patronage positively. Website's visitors need to complete the task efficiently so as to obtain information or conduct a transaction in an appropriate manner. Also, Social media marketing is one essential technique in electronic marketing because it enables firm to use social media to disseminate their messages to their target audience without paying for the distribution.

Keywords: E-marketing practices, website pattern, Internet security, Search engine marketing and Social media marketing and consumers patronage

1. Introduction

Due to the rapid growth of electronic marketing, interesting research questions are being raised about the levels of competition it brought to marketing practices. It is no longer news that the global economy faced with new, more complex and fast changing environments, both physically and economically. The speed of the change is astronomical, impacting heavily on the economic, social, political and technological components of the globe. A significant proportion of this change has embraced the marketing profession via the information and communication technology, giving rise to what is today known as electronic marketing (Bramiah, 2009). It is widely recognized that Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) such as the internet are rapidly expanding and have affected the way businesses are done and the way organisations compete. The growth of internet as a marketing tool has progressed daily since its inception. Over the last years organisations in all sectors of the economy hurried to connect the online business community and employed the internet in their daily business activities.

Despite the rise of latest online communication tools as social media, email marketing remains one of the most credible and profitable tool from digital marketing. Based on different researches of more than 800 digital marketers, email marketing was seen as ‘excellent’ or ‘good’ in terms of returns on investment for 70% of the respondents. The only tool which also got such a high score is search engine optimization, leaving other digital tools far behind. Besides generating revenues, email marketing is highly appreciated for its possibility of quick deployment, immediate and highly measurable results, advanced customer segmentation and personalization. But the biggest benefit for the company from email marketing is the cost-effectiveness. The additional advantages are ease-of-use and the fact that emails are in list of the most common forms of communication, used by almost everyone who owns or digital or mobile device. Fast development of internet technologies opened a new page in the marketing world. In comparison with traditionally widely used instruments, such as broadcast, direct mail and telemarketing, it constitutes a considerably more cost-efficient environment for enhancing interaction with customers.

Electronic Marketing (e-marketing) which involves the use of complex systems of information and communication technology to aid marketing is designed to market the services of banks in the electronic platform. Activities such as advertising in the internet media, whether in Google, Yahoo, Facebook, Twitter or Youtube, mobile message from permitted operators, online chat room, ATM, 2go and digital television and radio network, can all be considered as tools for electronic marketing (Bisiolaas cited in Berthon, 2012). Williams (2011), defines email marketing as a direct digital marketing method, which is used to advertise products and services via email. While on the other hand Waldow and Falls, (2013) defined email marketing as ‘a marketing channel which allows companies to communicate en masse with their customers, prospects, fans and subscribers.’ Generally, email marketing may be understood as the process of distributing messages using email communication in order to establish and develop the relationship of a company with its potential or
current customers. Among its goals are: attracting new customers, stimulating the business with valid customers, increasing their brand loyalty and trust, etc. (Charlesworth, 2014). The paper examined howe-marketing practices relates to consumer patronage.

1.1. Problem Statement
The rapid evolution of internet technology of the 21st century and the adoption of mobile phone and wireless computers across countries of the world has triggered several challenges, making many businesses to devising strategies on how to invite millions of prospective and actual customers to have information on their brand, products or services through several methods of electronic marketing. Nigeria is not exempted of this technological shift. Many businesses in the country now embrace online dealings and transaction patterns which their counterpart abroad practice.

Despite the economic challenges, online marketing is becoming more popular in Nigeria, due to its relative convenience and the equitable price of goods and services available online. In a city like Lagos, with an estimate population of 12.5 million people in 2016, the traditional means of shopping, which involves physically visiting stores, can be frustrating and time consuming. The shops are filled to capacity at peak period.

In addition, traffic jam and parking space creates more complication in the traditional marketing process. All these make many Nigerians to shift from traditional platform to online marketing platforms at the comfort of their homes. The study therefore seeks to examine the effect of e-marketing practices on consumer patronage using conceptual and extant literature approach.

1.2. Objectives of the Study
- Examine how website pattern influence consumer patronage.
- Examine how internet security relates to consumer patronage.
- Ascertain the relationship between search engine marketing and consumer patronage.
- Examine the influence of social media marketing on consumer patronage.

2. Literature Review
2.1. Concept of E-Marketing
E-Marketing is the use of information and applications that are used for planning and implementing the concepts, distribution, promotion and pricing of goods and services, and can lead to transactions that will fund, individual and organizational goals. In another perspective, electronic marketing, which is formed when, technical infrastructure (data bases, proper terminals, servers, software) must be provided, and customer relationship using these technologies. E-marketing uses technology as a logical addition to the traditional marketing techniques (Gilmore, Gallagher and Henry 2007). Most firms have in progress developing e-marketing strategies for the web (Sheth and Sharma, 2005). The scope that customers adapt to the e-marketing services is directly associated to the website design and on the fact that how comprehensiveness of the website (Doherty and Chadwick, as cited in Ekwueme and Akagwu, 2017). Culture is playing a role in global e-marketing as people adapt to new environment things (Krishnamurthy and Singh, as cited in Ekwueme and Akagwu, 2017).

Electronic Marketing is viewed as a new business practice that is apprehensive with the promotion of goods, services, information and ideas through the Internet and other electronic medium (El Gohary, 2010). E-marketing is part of e-commerce as it is defined as the buying and selling online, giving virtual place, store fronts, digital value creation and various distribution channels intermediaries (Strauss and Frost, as cited in Ekwueme and Akagwu, 2017). E-marketing is becoming the need of this advanced society so companies are keenly looking towards it and they are anxious to adopt this trending method. It can help those building strong interaction with their customers thus making them more loyal to brands and maintaining the increased market share (Khan, 2012). The customer’s satisfaction is continuously changing in the e-retailing industry i.e. firstly, they are concerned with the convenience shopping and then price perception that leads to after sales services (Jang and Rosenbloom, as cited in Ekwueme and Akagwu, 2017). Van den Poel and Leunis as cited in Ekwueme and Akagwu, (2017) studied the capabilities of the World Wide Web as a new type of non-store vending in which the Internet is a direct link between the consumer and the retailer or producer, by passing the traditional store. Retail channel functions were categorized as follows by Ekwueme and Akagwu, (2017):
- Non-store information channel;
- Non-store reservation channel with a traditional mail or courier service delivery and
- Non-store purchasing and physical delivery channel.

National (Key) account relationship management is typically used in large organizations to keep a close tie with large volume and/or important customers. Every feature of electronic marketing is digital, connoting that it is electronic information that is transmitted on a computer, via naturally it can bind in with traditional offline advertising and sales too. Although the relative significance of the online marketing for a firm still mainly relies on the nature of its products and services and the buying behavior of its target customers, there has been a global dramatic change in media consumption over the last 10 years towards digital media which means that the internet is becoming relevant for all categories.

Hence, the internet as a communication means has enlarged the extent of marketing communications bearing in mind the number of people who can be effortlessly reached including the locations where they are reached, for example, from desktops to mobile smart phones. It has also enlarged the richness of marketing communications by integrating video, text, and audio content into rich messages. Thus, the web is debatably richer as a means than some traditional
means such as the television because of the intricacy of messages available, the vast content accessible on a wide variety of subjects and the ability of users to interactively control the experience (Laudon and Traveras cited in Charlesworth, 2014). Furthermore, the internet has succeeded in increasing the information strength of the market place vastly by providing marketers and customers with well comprehensive real-time information about customers as they transact in the market. Consumers are much more accessible to receive marketing messages due to the ‘always-on’ environment formed by mobile devices which results to an unusual increase in marketing opportunities for companies (Laudon and Traveras, as cited in Charlesworth, 2014).

Firms can utilize the internet for marketing purposes in three main ways (Nothnagel, as cited in Charlesworth, 2014). Firstly, it can be used to provide information concerning the company and its offering. Secondly, the internet provides a vastamount of information, mostly available at no cost. The internet thus provides a medium of market research to companies in the form of secondary data because of making use of the internet to find out what their customers want, as well as a way of enquiring what their competitors are doing (Nothanagel, as cited in Charlesworth, 2014). Discussion groups can also be used to conduct primary research as they are an excellent way of identifying the target market and determining the business-like activities of the target market (Wilson and Abel, as cited in Ekwueme and Akagwu, 2017). Most firms are able to utilize the internet as an enhancement tool in the form of brand building through their web site. This type of internet site is used to present information about the company and its offering (Nothanagel, as cited in Charlesworth, 2014). In its simplest form, this involves taking the firm’s marketing information and posting it to the web site (Wilson and Abel, as cited in Ekwueme and Akagwu, 2017).

2.2. Benefits of Online Marketing:

Hofacker (2001) stated the benefit of online marketing:

- Internet gives you a broad access of your potential customers. It has been estimated that a number people around the world use the Internet and more are becoming aware of Internet with each passing day. So, marketing your business to such a large number of people is only possible through Internet.
- Internet is the only medium that has no geographic and national boundaries.
- The cost of promoting your business online is cheaper than other mediums of marketing. This makes it easy for small and medium businesses to advertise their products.
- With Internet businesses can be connected with customers on a real-time basis. Customers can get information on the business at any given point in time. Internet also allows to send multiple messages at the same time through email, which saves the tedious task of sending a newsletter to every client.
- Online marketing facilitates an instant feedback from the customers. Customers can share about their experience and feedback after using the product.
- Online marketing saves a lot of time and effort. Instead of having a customer service representative to attend to customers’ queries, one can put all the information about the brand, product or service online so that customers can go through it. The most common way of doing it is to have a section dedicated to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the product so that customers get all the required information about the product or the service.
- Online marketing allows your business to be available 24/7, which helps increased sales and profits.

2.3. Website Pattern and Consumer Patronage

The ability of website characteristic to influence company image is not only playing an essential role in how these companies supply to their customers' needs, but is a reflection of how significant it is to have a website that is easy to navigate, has rich content, and is capable of keeping customers longer on the internet. As time is of the essence it is extremely important for the website’s visitors to complete the task efficiently, to obtain information or conduct a transaction in an appropriate manner. This has been stressed time and again by Huizingh and Hoekstra (2002), who pine that the ease of navigation has a large impact on usability and perceived capacity of the websites. This allows companies to attract the so-called ‘right’ customers, instead of being focused on attracting numerous numbers of customers.

Furthermore, the development of the website that is capable of assisting people to move through information efficiently by providing appropriate links is adding to the company's ability to increase income and profit (Vredenburg, 2003). Such researchers, as Chatterjee, Grewal, and Sambamurthy (2002), believe that companies are starting to focus on facilitating more effective conversions to the web-enabled business environments, as well as on the improvement of the user involvements (Vredenburg, 2003). Websites have different contents and objectives. The most basic type is websites created to establish closer relationship with the clients rather than making sell of products directly. These kinds of sites are called corporate or brand website. Usually they provide a wide range of characteristics to inform customers and promote the company or brand (Kotler and Armstrong, 2011). Another type is marketing website. Typically, these sites designed to sell product directly or at minimum move the buyer’s closer to purchase involving them in effective communication. These websites consist of interactive selling features and useful information (Kotler and Armstrong, 2011).
It is important to have a website; though, it is hopeless if nobody knows about it. Millions of websites are competing for the users. (Sweeney, 2008) ‘In fact, today’s web surfers are looking at more web pages in a single session than ever, but are spending less time per page’ (Stephenson and Thurman, 2007). Therefore, today visitors quickly leave the site that does not justify their expectations (Kotler and Armstrong, 2011). The faster, better looking, easier to navigate, more fun, and more informative your website is, the more likely it is that people will want to come back, and even bring their friends’ (Sterne, 2001). Nowadays internet users are people of diverse interests and habits. However, all has something in common. They all come online for utility. Therefore, it is crucial to understand people basic internet needs to make them keep visiting your website (Neuman, as cited in Tokunbo, 2017).

2.4. Internet Security and Consumer Patronage

Security of information is presently a growing concern that affects all sectors in the developing countries in this digital age, such as government parastatals, financial institutions, businesses, and corporate organizations as well as libraries and other information centers. According to Mellado and Rosado (2012), the ‘permanent and global nature of security threats and the increasing involvedness of Information Technology (IT) infrastructures are presently leading organizations all the way through the world to amend their approaches towards security’. They further observed that ‘Most organizations fully recognize the need to incessantly improve their internet security culture by establishing and maintaining proper security management processes’.

In order to provide useful services or to allow people to perform tasks more conveniently, computer systems are secured against attack and harking (Christopher, 2010). However, online security is the protection of intellectual content or information from unauthorized users. In this vein, Wikipedia defines that online security, ‘as the practice of preventing unauthorized access, use, disclosure, disturbance, alteration, scrutiny, recording or destruction of information’.

Coertze and Solms (2013) believed that ‘Information security pertains to the protection of the confidentiality, integrity and availability of information, which is frequently managed by a process called online security’. Fakehet et al. (2012) stated that ‘the growth of computers and multi-processing computer systems has resulted in several additional security mechanisms’. Furthermore, ‘Most of the information on security issues relies on physical devices. The device is used to guarantee the three main elements of information security. They are confidentiality, integrity and availability’. There is an incredible change from the traditional methods of information handling to electronic based approaches in the digital age.

This has helped to meet the demands of the 21st century by rendering effective services in online marketing. The online marketing is not resistant to information security issues. On the significance of managing online security, Crutchfield (2003) asserted that ‘Online security is critical to delivering the best service you can deliver while reinforcing the perception of trust; perceptibly trust is of extreme significance in online marketing’. According to Crutchfield (2003), a well-managed information security program provides competitive advantages, which is the cornerstone to any business capability to generate revenue. Moreover, without a solid information security program, the financial sector would not have been able to transfer competitive advantages to the networked world.

Fakehet et al. (2012) stated that the ‘disruption of information security will kill the main purpose of this complicated technology, encumber the smooth operation of an organization, make users feel doubtful and disturbed, and could cause losses to the organizations involved’. Moreover, Hinde (2003) maintained that recklessness towards privacy could cause an organization to have a big financial loss. In addition, information security helps protect an organization from investigations (court case) and scam. Fear of online scam is just one of the reasons for avoidance of most marketers and customers with respect to bringing marketing in the digital environment to their minds.

When the consumers make shopping via Internet they are required to share their financial and personal information with the marketing website during the registration and payment transactions. Details as to address, credentials and credit or debit card are important information from the perspective of consumers and may create problems such as fraud or unauthorized access for individuals in cases where same are not under protection. However, online marketing seems to be a promising means of marketing when there is security of personal information. This will also lead to a long-term relationship additionally. Personal information will be under the control of the consumers and companies will be rewarded with an increasing sense of loyalty as well as enthusiasm and concentration and consumer trust.

Instead, internet buyers must rely on arbitrated representations of the goods being purchased, are generally dependent on third parties for delivery of purchased goods and may question the convenience of product returns. The concept of risk is imperative for understanding how internet consumers make choices (Hasan and Rahim as cited in Hudson, Roth and Madden, 2015). Shopping environments on the internet may be indecisive for the majority of online shoppers particularly if they are novices. Zuroni and Goh, (2012) defined risk as the instinctively determined expectation of loss by an online purchaser in anticipating a particular online purchase. Amongst the identified perceived risk are financial, product performance, social, psychological and time/convenience loss.

2.5. Search Engine Marketing and Consumer Patronage

A search engine does not search the web to find a match; it searches its own database of information about web pages that it has collected, indexed, and stored’ (Schneider & Evans, 2003). Now, what is Search Engine Marketing (SEM)? Search Engine Marketing (SEM) is a type of internet marketing where the goal is to promote visibility in Search Engine Result Pages (SERP) in order to increase visitors for website (Ramos and Cota 2008). It is a phenomenon that comprises of all marketing techniques for search and visibility in the internet. Search Engine marketing was proposed by Sullivan (2001) to cover a range of activities involved in performing Search Engine Optimization (SEO), managing Pay-Per-
Click (PPC) listings, submitting websites to directories and developing online marketing strategies for commercial organisations and individuals. In 2010 he defined SEM as ‘a form of internet marketing that seeks to promote websites by increasing their visibility in Search Engine Result Pages (SERP)’. It is the process of gaining traffic from or visibility on search engines. The phrase is sometimes shortened to ‘search marketing’. It can also be seen as ‘activities that improve search referrals to a website using either organic or paid search’ (Moran and Hunt, 2006).

Furthermore, Curran (2004) claimed that: ‘Some companies are budgeting enough for payment to search engines and they have to deciding not to, is a bit like launching a media campaign and deciding to ignore one whole media, like TV’. SEM revenues increased from $4 billion to $5.75 billion in 2005 (US and Canada), a 44% increase over 2004 (SEMPA 2006). It was predicted that search spending will increase to $11 billion by 2010 (Clay 2006). Although, websites that do invest in search Engine are likely to receive more traffic than websites that do not. This is due to the fact that websites can wait for weeks or even months for a search engine crawler to index their website, whereas websites which extensively invest in search Engine may see results within days (Zuze 2011).

There are two categories of search engine marketing: Search engine optimization (SEO) and paid advertising, which is normally referred as Pay Per Click (PPC) marketing. SEO is working with the organic Google searches whereas PPC concentrates on the paid advertising on Google (Ramos and Cota 2008).

2.6. Social Media Marketing and Consumer Patronage

Social media and doing marketing activities according to Berthon et al (2012), is an opportunity that comprises text, images pictures, video and networks for both customers to customer and firm to customer. Base on that research text was the first social media that initially mentioned in blog. In addition, to illustrate some of these social networks and Micro-blogs, Twitter can be named as one of social networking site that make this option for user to read and write short messages that are limited to specific character to write or Flicker as a site which allow users to share their photo and their massaged in image format (Berthon, et al. 2012). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), defines social media as ‘a group of internet-based application that build on the ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content’ (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010).

Another researcher mentions social media as a real power of make all connected (Hanna, 2012) interaction between individuals and entities such as firms, organizations and companies gets easy and disseminated. Social media are very popular and very easy to access that push the ability of businesses to interact, reach and create relationship with large number of customers (Brogan 2010). These channel use internet service to change one too many dialogues to many to many dialogues that help the individual from being only a content user to content producer. In other word this can be consider as a tool which involves individuals to entire of the firms entity and become a part of it and by this relationship which is created by this fortune, firms and organization can enhance their quality, bring awareness about their promotion and also understand customers’ needs and want (Berthon, 2012).

Weinberg (2009) ‘Social media marketing is one of marketing approach that utilizes public social software platforms as a communication channel with the customer. Main Objective is to foster bidirectional communication’ (Weinberg 2009). Social media are some online application which aim is to facilitate interaction between users create collaboration and share content. Social media take in different type and forms like weblogs, wikis, podcasts, videos, pictures or etc. with considering the rapid speed of this media in the whole world not only existing social networks but also so many businesses, firms and companies try to reach to this phenomena and use it communication tools to enhance their profit and sustain it this competitive market. The nature of these websites is different from individual users, as business pint of view; managers try to do their business activities by using these media and recruit it in term of advertisement and marketing aspect to effect on its performance in customers mind. at the same time as commercial messages via this media is more effective and less cost for firm, with no doubt this phenomena could be very good place for firm to use to evaluate their business core (Kim and Ko 2011). Moreover; this research declared that companies which do not use this option in their online marketing strategy are missing this fortune to achieve customers and reach to them to understand needs and want to fulfill that base on the information which is available on social media site (Kim and Ko 2011).

2.7. Empirical Review

Olusoji, Ogunkoya, Lasisi and Elumah, (2015), carried out similar study entitled ‘Risk and Trust in Online Shopping: Experience in Nigeria, using respondent from Lagos, Port Harcourt and Abuja responded to 100 questionnaires. In the process, correlation analysis was used to test for relationship between variables. It was revealed that the presence of perceived risk adversely affects trust in online shopping and that perceived usefulness of online shopping has a positive influence on actual usage of online shopping. Online marketing is related to customer retention in a number of ways namely: customer loyalty, trust, quality services and brand commitment. They concludes that e-marketing is one essential technique in electronic marketing as firm use social media to disseminate their messages to their target audience without paying for the distributor.

Pozin (2014) carried out a study on social media marketing and how it affects brand performance in Germany. The study employed the survey research design, and a sample of 500 social media users was used. The result revealed that social media advertising helps to strengthen or change brand image, but in order to benefit from the power of social media, brands need to manage and enact their presence constantly.

Kemp (2014) in a study on the relationship between social media marketing and brand recognition in Soweto, South African using a sample of 150 randomly selected users revealed that brands may seek customer acquisitions by taking part in social media activities, such as discussions, that promote the brand to be associated with relevant themes.
and brands whose audiences are similar as the target market. They key to new customer acquisitions is content that is interesting to the users, and participating on discussions on social media.

Brodie, Ilic, Juric and Hollebeek (2013) also investigated ‘Consumer engagement in a virtual brand community: An exploratory analysis’. The study employed a sample of 400 randomly selected users of social media channels (website pattern) in Canada. The result revealed that social media advertising creates a kind of communication thread that interact with loyal customers and influence consumer perception of services and products disseminate valuable information and get feedback from their audience.

Jahn and Kunz (2012) carried out a study on transforming online customers into fans of a brand in India. The study provided a detailed step-by-step technique on how to build great brands using the social media. However, it also carried out a survey on users of social media through a session of questions and answers. The result of the survey revealed that consumer engagements through social media marketing strategies have the strong implications because it reveals behaviours and actions which are translated into pleasing brand outcomes. Thus, it can be assumed that content sharing activity creates pleasant brand experiences.

Ngugi (2012) carried out a study on the influence of online marketing strategies on the performance of commercial banks in Kenya. It was observed that some commercial banks adopted electronic marketing to reduce costs and improve efficiency. He conducted a study on the ‘growth of digital marketing and its impact on customer service at Barclays bank of Kenya, Meru branch’. It was discovered that online marketing was used as a strategy to improve customer service. His study does not show how online marketing influences customer retention. Therefore he concluded that there is zeroed in on performance and customer service to determine how online marketing influenced them.

3. Discussion

The study revealed that website pattern positively influence consumer patronage. The web design process uses skills to adequate structuring of information, using appropriate resources to serve on web pages, in a manner that the user can reach his goal in a direct and pleasant way. Web design differentiates itself from other traditional forms of design. This implied that Web is a unique vehicle that forces designers not to be able to control the environment around them (Chaffey and Smith, 2013).

It was revealed that internet security positively relates to consumer patronage which implied that security is a growing concern that affects all sectors in the developing countries in the digital age, such as government parastatals, financial institutions, businesses, and corporate organizations as well as libraries and other information centers (Mellado and Rosado, 2012).

It was observed from the study that search engine marketing has positive relationship with consumer patronage. Search engine marketing seeks to promote websites by increasing their visibility in Search Engine Result Page(SERP). It is the process of gaining traffic from or visibility on search engines (Moran and Hunt, 2009).

It was observed from the study that social media positively influenced consumer patronage. Social media marketing is the use of electronic and internet tools for sharing and discussing information and experiences with other customers in more efficient ways. Customers are increasing online on social media sites as it allows them to form relationships for personal, political and business use (Hanna, 2012).

4. Conclusions

The study concludes that all the variables examined in the study relate to consumer patronage positively. Website’s visitors need to complete the task efficiently so as to obtain information or conduct a transaction in an appropriate manner. The development of the website is capable of assisting people to move through information efficiently by providing appropriate links is adding to the company’s ability to increase income and profit. Information security pertains to the protection of the confidentiality, integrity and availability of information, which is usually managed by a process called online security, information on security issues rely on physical devices.

Search engines need some sort of revenue to cover expenses, and if the user is not willing to pay for basic search results, they have to look elsewhere for revenue. As a result, search engines rely on advantage of advertisers’ need to be visible and visited. Social media marketing is one essential technique in electronic marketing as firm use social media to disseminate their messages to their target audience without paying for the distribution.

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