

**Influence of Social Networking Sites on Online Purchase Behaviour: Mediating Role of
Consumer Purchase Intention: A Pilot Test**

BY

Asiya Usman Maude
asiyamaude@gmail.com,

¹**Ahmad Audu Maiyaki, PhD**
aamaiyaki.bus@buk.edu.ng

²**Mukhtar Shehu Aliyu, PhD**
msaliyu.bus@buk.edu.ng

^{1&2}**Department of Business Administration & Entrepreneurship,
Bayero University, Kano**

ABSTARCT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of social networking sites on online purchase behaviour regarding masters' students of Dangote Business School Bayero University Kano. Survey research design is adopted and Quantitative method of data collection and analysis was used. Thus, a structured questionnaire based on Five -point scale Likert-type scale also adapted from different sources after testing its reliability and validity and following data regularity were analyzed with small sample data with cooperation of PLS path modelling using Smart PLS 3.3 M3 software employed to ascertain the internal consistency reliability and construct validity of the constructs used in the pilot study the result was calculate the average variance extracted and the composite reliability coefficients, meanwhile, assessment of discriminant validity value of Heterotrait Monotraits (HTMT) is below 0.90, has been established between reflective constructs.

KEYWORDS: *Social Networking Site, Online Purchase Behaviour, Consumer Purchase Intention, Pilot Test*

1.0 Introduction

Online shopping has become an important part of our daily lives. This is as a result of the rapid growth of online technology into a massive global marketplace for the exchange of products and services (Anushka, Chew & Yeo, 2021). Nowadays, internet shopping is rapidly growing in developing and developed economies due to advancement in technology. Internet buying provides convenience to the online customer because of fewer efforts to purchase goods (Khan & Khan, 2018). The internet has been adopted as an essential medium in many developed countries, offering a wide range of products with 24hours availability and full coverage (Mustakim, Abdul rahman & Abdulaziz, 2020).

Furthermore, online purchasing of goods plays a significant role in the last two decades and more than 1.6 billion people all over the world are considering this method to purchase goods online, amounting to 2.20 trillion US dollars in 2019. It is expected to increase online consumers more than 2.8 billion in 2022 and retail sales increased by more than 100% than 2019 at the end of 2021 (Statistia.com, 2020). In Africa, awareness on online purchase behaviours is on increase. For instance Varrella (2020) reported that, between 2017 and 2019, the average e-commerce spending per online shopper in Africa experienced an increase up to 53 Euros as of 2019. In 2024, the average spending per digital buyer in Africa might be 64 Euros. Varrella (2020) further reported that, in 2020, 3% of all purchases in Egypt were made online.

This was the highest of e-commerce retail among the five African countries taken into account. South Africa followed with 2% while e-commerce in Kenya, Nigeria and Morocco accounted for 1% of the total retail, respectively.

In 2020, Nigeria had 99.05 million internet users. This figure is projected to grow to 108.27, 120.24, 131.68, 142.39 and 152.28 million by 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025 respectively (Statista.com, 2021). The internet penetration amounted to 46.6% of the population in 2020 and is set to reach 65.2% by 2025. Between 2017 and 2019 the number of online buyers in Nigeria increased steadily. In 2019, the number of the shoppers reached 76.6 million, out of a population of over 200 million people (Varrella, 2020). The problems of online shopping behavior in Nigeria comprised with low Internet infrastructure, high level of illiteracy, cultural barrier, security issues, inadequate regulatory framework, and so forth, all of which have led to the low Internet penetration in the Country, and made adoption of online shopping unpopular among shoppers (Abiodun, 2017).

Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) puts the numbers of Nigerians with access to internet at approximately 122 million. Interestingly, proportion of Nigerians with access to internet was highest among young Nigerians between 18 – 35 years (70 percent) (NCC, 2020). As a result of these challenges, not many Nigerian consumers adopt online shopping. For example, in a survey of online shopping behavior of

consumers in Nigeria, only 23.3 per cent had ever purchased goods online; 37 per cent had never visited any online shop; 18 per cent had visited 1 to 2 online shops, 24.6 per cent had visited 3 to 5 online shops, 12.6 per cent had visited between 6 to 20 online shops, and 7.8 per cent had visited above 20 online shops (Ayo, Adewoye, & Oni, 2011). The research also aims to explore the influence of social networking sites on online purchase behaviour: mediating role of consumer purchase intention among MBA Student of Dangote Business School, Bayero University Kano.

Presumably, shopping online, could result in positive or negative feedback. The problems online shopping behavior in Nigeria comprised with low Internet infrastructure, high level of illiteracy, cultural barrier, security issues, inadequate regulatory framework, and so forth, all of which have led to the low Internet penetration and Inadequate regulatory framework (Ayodele & Chigbata, 2021). Positively, Social networking site is a medium through which consumers and businesses can communicate within a limited time, allowing all parties to use, experience, and gain benefits (Dwivedi, Kapoor, & Chen, 2015). Apart from that, social media marketing uses social media technologies, channels, and software to create, communicate, deliver, and exchange offerings that are valuable for organizations and stakeholders (Tuten & Solomon, 2015).

Previous researches indicated that attitude towards social networking site is a significant predictor of making online purchases. These include: Lee (2013),

Harshini (2015), Surenderkumar (2016), Lim, Heng, Ng, and Cheah (2016), Adnan and Ahmed (2016), Hajli et al. (2017), Pütter (2017), Asif and Kaushik (2017), Timothy and David (2017), Toor, Husnain and Hussain (2017), Mestlat (2018), Lang (2018), Andreini, Trisna and Sefnedi (2018), and Roudposhti, (2018). Others are: Renu (2018), Voramontri and Klieb (2019), Renu (2019), Teo, Leng, and Phua (2019), Renu and Gupta (2020), Ali, Abass and Farid (2020), Ayodele and Chigbata (2021), Udegbe and Aliu (2021), and Olutade (2021).

Additionally, from theoretical perspectives, scholars have employed different theories to understand the underlying courses of online purchase behaviour, Theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) (TPB), as well as Theory of reasoned action (Fishbein, 1960) (TRA), online consumer decision theory (Adam, 2010), social exchange theory (SET) and Traver (2009), envisages the consumer behavior, and TPB is the greatest theory that envisages consumer behavior (Taylor & Todd, 1995). Moreover, another study reveals that TPB theory extensively predicts consumer behaviour (Rehman et al. 2019). Despite this, TPB has some limitations in predicting consumer behaviour as this theory ignores fear, threat, and trust in determining consumer behaviour (Rehman et al. 2019). Perceived risks theory play a significant impact on internet buying behaviour and cannot ignore in decisive customer behaviour (Kamalul Ariffin, Mohan & Goh, 2018). Moreover, trust also plays a significant role in influential the online buying behaviour of customers and lack of trust reduces the online buying behaviour

of customers (Rahman et al. 2018). Therefore, the current study will use Technology Acceptance Model Theory TAM and Theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen 1991).

Although there are empirical studies that focus on various dimensions of social networking site, the current study seeks to adopt a multidimensional construct of social networking sites to include three dimensions of (Ease of use, Trust and Visual appeal). The identification of various factor in this paper has been done on the basis of the outcomes of numerous studies conducted in various contexts and cultures, and the suitability of these factors should be empirically examined in future research (Allahawiah & Tarawneh, 2018). Researchers may also propose different frameworks and models based on their own outcomes, taking the findings of the present study as a base.

Furthermore, reviewing the literature has revealed that many previous studies reported positive results on the relationship between social networking sites and online shopping behaviour (such as, Nadeem (2016), Adnan and Ahmed (2016), Pütter (2017), Asif and Kaushik (2017), Timothy and David (2017), Toor, Husnain and Hussain (2017), Mestlat (2018), Lang (2018), Andreini, Trisna and Sefnedi (2018), Teo, Leng, and Phua (2019), Renu and Gupta (2020), and Ali, Abass and Farid (2020). Few others (such as, Lee (2013), Surenderkumar and Huarng (2015), Harshini (2015),) Voramontri and Klieb (2019), Darsono and Sabri (2019), reported negative results.

These inconsistencies coupled with recommend-dation

of previous studies and limitation although the results of this study contradicts with some of the results of the previous researchers, it can be assumed that the reason for this may be due to different sample sizes or the population studied is different. Moreover, it can also be due to different studied variables for this particular research compared to previous researchers. Future researchers could possibly yield different results as well if different variables are studied or if a mediate variable is added, or more observed variables are included in the latent variable. Different methods can be further used to analyze the data or different statistical analysis within the same methodology could further be tested (Looji, 2021). Based on the recommendation from the study of Looji, (2021) consumer purchase intention could be use as a mediator, because according to traditional consumer decision model, Consumer purchase decision typically starts with need awareness, then information search, alternative evaluations, deciding to purchase and finally, post-purchasing behaviour, these advertise ments may attract customers' attention and stimulate their interesting particular products. The researcher found it worthwhile to introduce these additional variables of consumer purchase intention as a mediator In line with previous research and suggestion (Baron & Kenny, 1986). The mediator is expected to set a condition under which the relationship between social network ing sites and online purchase behaviour can be established.

2.0 Literature Review

This sections critically reviews both conceptual and empirical literature relevant to the study.

2.1 Online Purchase Behaviour

Online purchase behaviour (also called online shopping behaviour and Internet shopping/purchasing behaviour) refers to the Internet method of buying goods or services (Mustakim, Abdul rahman & Abdulaziz, 2020). Jadhav and Khanna (2016) defined Online Shopping behaviour as a kind of an individual's overall perception and evaluation for product or service during online shopping which could result in bad or good way. Bhatti, Rahman, kamal and Akram (2020) viewed Online shopping behaviour as a phenomenon when a person purchases goods and services by using internet technology because the internet is compulsory while shopping online. Ariff, Sylvester, Zakuan, Ismail and Ali (2014) gestured that Online shopping behaviour may be defined as a type of attitude which involve consumers browsing websites to search, select and purchase of goods and services, in fulfilling their needs and wants. It involves the reaction and choice of consumer decision making. However, Li and Zhang (2002) argued that online shopping behaviour relates to customer's psycho logical state regarding the accomplishment of online buying.

Online Shopping/ Internet shopping is one of the widely and commonly used mediums for convenient shopping. It is in fact, a popular means of shopping in the Internet community (Bourlakis et al., 2008).

One advantage of internet shopping is that it provides the consumers with detailed information and multiple choices so that they can compare products and price. The more the choice and convenience, the easier it is to find what you're looking for online (Butler & Peppard, 1998). It has been seen that online shopping provides more satisfaction to the modern-day consumers who are seeking convenience as well as speed (Yu and Wu, 2007). Internet shoppings that are widely and commonly used mediums for convenient shopping and the easier it is to find what you're looking for online.

2.2 Social Networking Sites

Social media have forever changed the way we communicate, interact and conduct our relationship with family, friends, politicians, the media, celebrities and companies (Elsantiel 2015). According to Mayfield (2008), a social network sites or social network services allow people to establish personal webpages and then connect with friends for the purpose of sharing information and communication. There are several social networking sites and their applications that allow users to make their profile and share contents with others. Some social media sites offers personal profile creation and allow users to share their views, photographs, and other activities (Nazir et al., 2020). Social networking sites are platforms used to assemble online networks where clients can easily access and associate with

one another (Aydin 2020). Social networking sites refer to web sites that allow the “friending” of people and staying connected with friends and family (Boyd & Ellison 2008). The most used social networking sites are Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and YouTube around the world; that is why marketers are trying to focus fully on these social networking sites to promote their company products (Nazir et al., 2020). These social networking sites are not just becoming a sources of communication between the customers and these companies but are also creating a better relationship between the firm and their customers (Kujur and Singh, 2020). Social network sites nowadays are far more than just platforms rather it has gradually been integrated into people’s daily life.

2.3 Consumer Purchase Intention

Consumer purchase intention is an important predictor of online shopping if consumer have intention then they can behave (Bhatti 2018). Thus, intention comes from the extent of conscious effort that an individual will follow to approve his or her behaviour and it is also considered as one of the motivational components of behaviour (Ru et al, 2021). Moreover, consumers generally develop their expectations based on product information before they decide to purchase a product (Kim 2020). Consumer purchase intention is an individual plans to buy products or services in the future (Bhatti and

Rehman, 2019). A consumer’s purchasing intention refers to that consumer’s attitude toward a specific purchasing behaviour and the consumer’s degree of willingness to pay (Zhang, Zhou and Liu 2020).

Similarly, consumer purchase intention can be described as the study of individuals, groups, or organizations and the processes they use to select, secure, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society (Kuester, 2012). Every individual’s consumer behaviour varies from another, depending on their buying choices. These choices are influenced by their buying habits which are affected by psychological and social factors which have an effect on the purchase decision process (Brassington & Pettitt, 2000). Online shopping behaviour (also known as online buying behaviour) is the process of purchasing products or services through websites on the Internet. The process has five steps, which are similar to the steps related to conventional shopping behaviour (Liang & Lai, 2000). Magee (2003) says that the growth in the number of people who shop online has become more than the growth in general Internet users. This indicates that more Internet users have begun to get comfortable with the concept of shopping online.

3.0 Methodology

A cross sectional survey method will be adopted in this study because a representative subset of the entire population of the study will be analysed at a specific point in time. The study population used small sampled of MBA students of Dangote business school, Bayero University Kano because there appears to be little or no empirical study that has investigated the underlying issue within the study area. 50 copies of questionnaire were distributed, 46 were returned out of which 1 were not perfectly completed. A PLS path modelling using Smart PLS 3.0 M3 software (Ringle, Wende, & Will, 2005) employed to ascertain the internal consistency reliability and construct validity of the constructs used in the pilot study, the Smart PLS 3.0 M3 software was selected as a tool of analysis because of its user friendly interface, which help users create a mediating effect for path models with interaction effects (Temme, Kreis & Hildebrandt, 2010). In particular, PLS Algorithm (Geladi & Kowalski, 1986) was calculated to obtain the average variance extracted and the composite reliability coefficients. Bagozzi and Yi (1988) as well as Hair et al. (2011) suggested that the composite reliability coefficient should be at least .70 or more. Meanwhile, Henseler (2015) suggested that, HTMT criterion has high sensitivity and specificity in detecting discriminant validity problems and more empirical evidence is needed to use this approach. However, to assess discriminate validity, model setup along with how conservative the researcher wants to be in assessment of discriminant

validity should also be kept in view. If the value of Heterotrait Monotraits (HTMT) is below 0.90, discriminant validity has been established between reflective constructs (Henseler, 2015)

3.2 Instrumentation and measurement of variables

The primary data is simple sourced through the use of a questionnaire, which will be administered to the selected students of the study area. In order to achieve the study objectives, the questionnaire will be divided into the following sections. Section A: Personal information "Gender, Age, and Marital status". Section B will measure the study independent variables which are the Social networking site dimensions "Ease of use, Trust and Visual appeal". Section C will measures the study dependent variable which is online purchase behaviour and finally section D will measures the study mediating variable which is consumer purchase Intention. Study variables will be utilized using a five point Likert-scale questions ranging from "5 =strongly agree" to "1 = strongly disagree".

3.3 Result of Reliability and Validity Result

Reliability refers to the extent to which the scale produces consistent results, and whether it is free from error and therefore yields consistent results (Zikmund, 2000). Previous Empirical studies in psychology commonly report Cronbach's alpha as a measure of internal consistency reliability despite the fact that many methodological studies have shown that Cronbach's alpha is riddled with problems

stemming from unrealistic assumptions. In many circumstances, violating these assumptions yields estimates of reliability that are too small, making measures look less reliable than they actually are (McNeich, 2017). Consistent with recent recommendations from Sharpe (2013) concerning bridging innovations in the use of statistical methods in psychology to empirical researchers, his paper is to state as plainly and succinctly as possible why Cronbach's alpha is often inappropriate in empirical contexts and why researchers would benefit from abandoning Cronbach's alpha in favour of alternative measures. (Bentler, 2007; Crutzen, 2007; Crutzen & Peters, 2015; Geldhof, Preacher, & Zyphur, 2014; Graham, 2006) These arguments have led to the development of alternative reliability measures whose assumptions are more in-line with psychological data. Composite reliability using Smart PLS Version 3.3 is conceptually related to Cronbach's alpha in that it assesses reliability via a ratio of the variability explained by items compared to the total variance of the entire scale (Bentler, 2007; Geldhof et al., 2014; Raykov, 1997).

Validity of the measuring instrument refers to the extent to which the instrument is measuring what it is supposed to be measuring. It is used to verify items loading on the correct factors as identified by researcher (Venkatraman, 1989). Previous researcher used Fornell and Larcker (1981) for assessing the discriminant validity. However, recently in Henseler (2015) disapproved the Fornell and Larcker criterion. They found out that the previous criterion is still lacking in establishing the distinctiveness between constructs that prompted them to suggest a more robust approach that could capture the discriminancy among the constructs under study. Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) criterion has high sensitivity and specificity in detecting discriminant validity problems and more empirical evidence is needed to use this approach. However, to assess discriminant validity, model setup along with how conservative the researcher wants to be in assessment of discriminant validity should also be kept in view (Henseler, 2015). If the HTMT value is below 0.90, discriminant validity has been established between reflective constructs.

Table. 3.1: Reliability of Constructs (n=45)

Latent construct variance	No. of indicators Composite	Average Extracted
Online Purchase Behaviour	5	0.81
Ease of Use	5	0.87
Trust	5	0.72
Visual Appeal	5	0.84
Consumer Purchase Intention		

Latent variables	CPI	EU	TR	VA	OPB
1 Consumer Purchase Intention	-				
2 Ease of Use	0.73	-			
3 Trust	0.56	0.78	-		
4 Visual Appeal	0.52	0.74	0.73	-	
5 Online Purchase Behaviour	0.27	0.62	0.60	0.82	-

HTMT Results

Source: Researcher (2021)

If the HTMT value is below 0.90, discriminant validity has been established between reflective constructs

4.0 Conclusion

This paper is work in progress advancing towards M.Sc. Dissertation, the study concise and relevant and not incorporate too much, the scope will be especially on the younger generations (aged less than 35 years) who represent the majority of Social Networking Sites users. One of the reasons behind this choice is that the younger generation was born amidst the digital revolution and represents a great share of all Social Media platform users with similar characteristics to coming generations who also take Social Networking Sites for granted.

Another reason is that this generation is going to acquire more financial power as they have recently entered employment or will do so soon and will furthermore be the backbone of the economy in the (near) future. Thus, this generation is very interesting to examine for this study's research direction. This study will focus on Facebook and Instagram as the leading Social Networking sites.

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