

INTERNET-MEDIATED MARKETING AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC SECURITY OF YOUTHS IN RIVERS STATE

Juliet Gladson-Nwokah

Department of Marketing, Faculty of Management Sciences

Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to determine the relationship between internet-mediated marketing and socio-economic security of youths in Rivers State. The work adopted the cross-sectional explanatory survey research design. The target population of the study consisted of Three Thousand and Five Hundred (3,500) registered entrepreneurs engaged in e-information services, online software services, and internet marketing across the Twenty-Three (23) Local Government Areas in Rivers State. The sample size of the study consisted of three hundred and forty-six (346) respondents. The above sample is obtainable using the Krejcie and Morgan Sample Size Determination of 1970. Structured questionnaire was used as instrument for the collection of primary data. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20.0 was used for the analysis. Arithmetic mean and standard deviation were used for the univariate analysis while the bivariate analysis was done using Correlational Statistical tool such as Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. Partial correlation was used for the multivariate analysis. Based on the results of the analysis, the study concluded that internet mediated marketing influences socio-economic security of youths in Rivers State. Local Government Areas who fail to encourage youths who are internet mediated marketing by steady power supply, granting loans and offering scholarship, might face the risk of increasing socio-economic insecurity. Government should provide lasting power supply that will help individuals who are into one form of netpreneurship business or the other, to help save cost for them, thereby enhancing their daily financial realization.

Keywords: *Internet-Mediated Marketing Financial Security, Job Security, Social Security,*

INTRODUCTION

One of the most fearsome challenges faced by youths of Rivers State, Nigeria currently appears to be socio-economic insecurity. Rivers State is presently ranked as one of the states with the highest youth unemployment level in Nigeria (National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). This implies that youths in Rivers State face the problem of job insecurity or unemployment. With over ten tertiary institutions within the state, Rivers youths continue to graduate into the labour market in search of white collar jobs that hardly exist. Worsen by the rise in social unrest (which has forced many of the companies and employers to leave the state), job opportunities for the teaming youth are getting slimmer and slimmer by the day. The abject shortage of job opportunities for the average youth in Rivers State has also resulted to another form of socio-economic insecurity known as financial insecurity (Aljazeera, 2020). Since most of the youths are unemployed, it is not out of place hold that most of them are poor. Thus, most of them face steady financial difficult which difficult for some of them to pursue their dreams. Out of economic difficulties and frustrations, most of them now take to political thuggery and other social crimes. With this economic reality, it is also not surprising that Rivers State is reported as one of the states with the highest level of social crimes such as kidnapping, drug abuse, youth restiveness, rape, etc. (Ukoji & Okolie-Osemene, 2016; Wilson, 2018; Ogwe, 2019). These data suggests that the average youth of Rivers State could be battling with socio-economic insecurity. This scenario was even worsen by the Covid-19 Pandemic which has grinded economic activities and even forcing more people to lose their job and economic means of survival.

The researcher has also observed that the level of awareness and engagement in entrepreneurship activities by citizens and residents of Rivers State, Nigeria is still very low. It appears that only a few

persons have been able to take their business online; only a few persons seem to understand the potentials of the internet in generating economic wealth. The inability of many Nigerians to leverage on netpreneurship appears to be rubbing them of the opportunities the internet offers.

This implies that the relationship between netpreneurship and socio-economic security may not have received adequate research attention. This is the knowledge gap which this study seeks to fill. Here lies the essence of this study. This equally gives credence to this research effort.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were stated as tentative response to the research questions outlined above.

- Ho₁: Internet-mediated marketing practices do not have any significant influence on social security of youths in Rivers State.
- Ho₂: Internet-mediated marketing practices do not have any significant influence on financial security of youths in Rivers State.
- Ho₃: Internet-mediated marketing practices do not have any significant influence on job security of youths in Rivers State.

Internet Mediated Marketing Practices

According to Gronroos in Geiger and Martin (2014) the relationship marketing at an operational level rests on three cornerstones: direct contact with customers and other stakeholders, a database to store customer information, and a customer-oriented service system. Each of these practices can be supported by the internet; consequently, it is argued that the internet could offer a unique opportunity for firms to put into practice relationship marketing. Thus, Western civilization proliferate the use of internet to market activities of an organization. Notably, due to the rapid increase in usage of internet, more and more organizations are beginning to transfer parts of their business transactions and communications to the web. Although the new technology still displays some serious limitations such as the notorious bandwidth problem, missing transnational policies and the security issue of electronic transactions, to name but a few, the world wide web is bound to occupy a central place in tomorrow's business world. Reasons being, it is premeditated to serve customers and companies' visitors effectively and efficiently. To this end, internet-mediated marketing practices came to being.

In line with the above, internet-mediated marketing is the innovative practice of reaching customers and selling goods and services through the aid of dedicated websites, social media platforms, and e-payment systems. Among other internet mediated marketing tools, netpreneurs here make use of Whatsapp, Facebook, Websites and Electronic Payment platforms to reach out to both prospective and existing customers. Goods and services are being traded here. Complaints and other customer related issues are communicated on this platform as prompt redresses are offered to customers. With this platform, one does not need to go to the physical office (building) where the business is situated. All that is expected of the customer or client as the case may be is just to have dealings with the organization through an internet-mediated mechanism. The internet and its related technologies enable organizations to easily access information about customers, competition and to share innovative ideas from various sources beyond spatial and temporal boundaries (Min, Seokwoo & James, 2012). Thus, the Internet can acts as a transformer of the traditional marketing practices into a more efficient and effective internet marketing orientation process in the Internet-mediated marketing environment through both generative learning and adaptive learning.

Concept of Socio-economic Security

The concept of socio-economic security has been defined in different ways by authors who had diverse perspectives. Thus, there is no universally acceptable definition of the concept. Nevertheless, we shall critical look into some authors' definition of socio-economic security to draw a silver lining as regards its implication in this study, so as to crave definition as conceptualized by the researcher.

Socio-economic security is formed by means of combining two subcategories "economic security" and "social security". Prabhu (2012) refers socio-economic security as constituting measures that enhance social capabilities, ensure economic security and enable the vulnerable sections of the population to survive. He emphasizes that programmes for enhancing education, health and nutrition levels of the population, provision of statutory social security measures to workers in the organized sector, provision of measures to enhance the income levels of the poor through asset and employment programmes and social assistance programmes, constitute the elements of socio-economic security. The International Labour Organization (ILO) definition of socio-economic security comprises seven main components, viz., labour market security, employment security, job security, work security, skill reproduction security, income security, and representation security. Whereas labour market security recognises the importance of appropriate macro policies in ensuring that high levels of employment prevail in the economy, employment and job security emphasize the regulatory framework to ensure protection against arbitrary dismissal and ensuring growth in the chosen career for employees respectively. Work security relates to the familiar provisions to ensure safety of workers and protection of workers against occupational hazards. Skill reproduction security lays stress on the opportunities for acquiring skills through apprenticeships and on-the-job training. Finally, income security refers to protective labour legislation to ensure minimum wages, wage indexation, provision of social security benefits and the like whereas representation security pertains to the extent to which mechanisms for collective bargaining are present and are functioning effectively (International Labour Office (ILO). 2014a; 2009b.). Agents that provide such security are spread over the government, firms, households and the community. Hence, it is apparent in the definitions above that the provision of minimum levels of income constitutes not only a necessity for survival but also an essential pre-requisite for the acquisition of education, health and nutrition that lead to enhancing of social capabilities as well. This study is concern to the households and the community.

Need for Achievement Theory

Need for achievement theory was propounded by McClelland in 1961. It is a well-known need-based theory of motivation, as opposed to hierarchy of needs or satisfaction-dissatisfaction.

The theory states that human beings have a need to succeed, accomplish, excel or achieve. Also, need for achievement is the desire to obtain excellent results by setting high standards and striving to accomplish them. It is a consistent concern with doing things better. According to Sinha (2015), McClelland identified the following six characteristics of high need achievers:

1. High-need achievers have a strong desire to assume personal responsibilities for performing a task or finding a solution to a problem.
2. High need achievers tend to set moderately difficult goals and take calculated risks.
3. High need achievers have a strong desire for performance feedback.
4. They have need for achievement for attaining personal accomplishment.
5. They look for challenging tasks.
6. The high need-achievement individuals are not buck-passers.

The need for achievement is satisfied [intrinsically](#) with a feeling of personal accomplishment when getting something done in the world. Thus, the concept is quite broad and can be applied in most circumstances. For instance, in a culture that values well-being or [human development](#), an individual may feel achievement by bringing about greater levels of achievement in other individuals in the society. Evidence for the theory seems fairly strong, with [meta-analyses](#) confirming a positive relationship between need for achievement and netpreneurship entry and performance (socio-economic security). There is also meta-analytic evidence that the need for achievement is stronger in entrepreneurs (netpreneurs) than in managers (Steward & Roth, 2007). Thus, netpreneurs are driven by this need to achieve and excel amidst today's technological driven era where netpreneurial businesses are infusing the business world. While there is no research evidence to support personality traits, there is evidence for the relationship between achievement motivation and

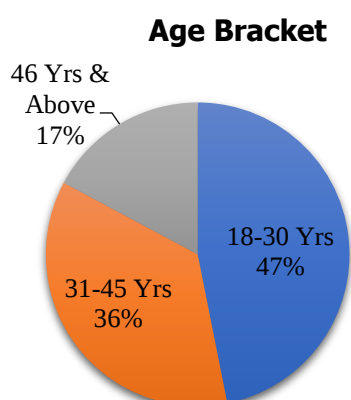
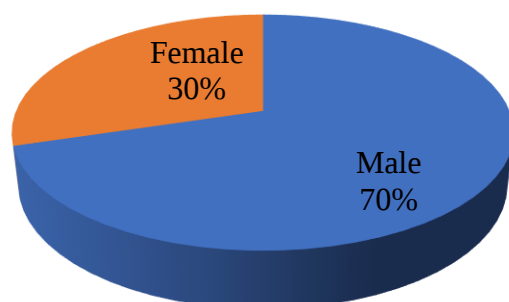
netpreneurship (Finogenow, 2017). Achievement motivation may be the only convincing personological factor related to new venture creation which is not far-fetched from netpreneurship. Risk taking and innovativeness, need for achievement, and tolerance for ambiguity had positive and significant influence on netpreneurial inclination, as it involves e-business (e-information services, software services and internet-mediated marketing practices) through the aid of internet for business activities while enhancing socio-economic security.

METHODOLOGY

The work adopted the cross-sectional explanatory survey research design. The target population of the study consisted of Three Thousand and Five Hundred (3,500) registered entrepreneurs engaged in e-information services, online software services, and internet marketing across the Twenty-Three (23) Local Government Areas in Rivers State. The population data was obtained from the Corporate Affairs Commission Office, Port Harcourt. The sample size of the study consisted of three hundred and forty-six (346) respondents. The above sample is obtainable using the Krejcie and Morgan Sample Size Determination of 1970. Structured questionnaire was used as instrument for the collection of primary data.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20.0 was used for the analysis. Arithmetic mean and standard deviation were used for the univariate analysis while the bivariate analysis was done using Correlational Statistical tool such as Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. Partial correlation was used for the multivariate analysis.

RESULTS



Internet-Mediated Marketing Practices and Socio-Economic Security

H₀₁: Internet-mediated marketing practices do not have any significant influence on social security of youths in Rivers State.

Ho₂: Internet-mediated marketing practices do not have any significant influence on financial security of youths in Rivers State.

Ho₃: Internet-mediated marketing practices do not have any significant influence on job security of youths in Rivers State.

Table Correlations of Internet-Mediated Marketing Practices and Socio-Economic Security

			Internet-Mediated Marketing Practices	Social Security	Financial Security	Job Security
Spearman's rho	Internet-Mediated Marketing Practices	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.412**	.888*	.776**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	320	320	320	320
	Social Security	Correlation Coefficient	.412**	1.000	.775**	.776**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	320	320	320	320
	Financial Security	Correlation Coefficient	.888	.775**	.024	.627**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
		N	320	320	320	320
	Job Security	Correlation Coefficient	.776**	.776**	.627**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	320	320	320	320

**** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Source: SPSS Output.**

Column two of table above reveals r value of 0.412 at a significance level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating internet-mediated marketing practices and social security of youths. Since the significance value 0.00 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (Ho₇) which states that internet-mediated marketing practices do not have any significant influence on social security of youths in Rivers State is rejected and the alternate hypothesis (Ha₇) accepted. This implies that there is a moderate positive correlation between internet-mediated marketing practices and c social security of youths in Rivers State. The correlation value of 0.412 indicates that the correlation is a moderate or relatively strong correlation.

Column three of table above reveals r value of 0.888 at a significance level of 0.000 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating internet-mediated marketing practices and financial security of youths. Since the significance value 0.000 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (Ho₈) which states that internet-mediated marketing practices do not have any significant influence on financial security of youths in Rivers State was rejected and the alternate hypothesis (Ha₈) accepted. This implies that internet-mediated marketing practices has significant positive correlation with financial security of youths in Rivers State. The correlation value of 0.888 indicates that the correlation is a very high/very strong one. Column four of table above reveals r value of 0.776 at a significance level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 relating internet-mediated marketing practices and job security of youths. Since the significance value 0.00 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (Ho₉) which states that internet-mediated marketing practices do not have any significant influence on job security of youths in Rivers State is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (Ha₉) accepted. This implies that there is relatively strong positive correlation between internet-mediated marketing practices and job security of youths in Rivers State. The correlation value of 0.776 indicates that the correlation is a high/strong correlation.

These results show that the more internet-mediated marketing are practiced, the more social-economic security will increase in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Internet-mediated Marketing Practices and Socio-Economic Security

The test of hypotheses seven, eight and nine revealed that **internet-mediated marketing practices** has high influence on socio-economic security in terms of social security of youths, financial security of youths job security of youths in Rivers State. This finding showed that netpreneurs who practices internet-mediated marketing bring about corresponding socio-economic security in terms of social security of youths, financial security of youths job security of youths in Rivers State. These findings are in agreement with the findings of Asuquo, (2009), In the course of netpreneurs doing their business, they pay attention in focusing on their activities, as such they are not inclined to permeate social insecurity such as rape, drug abuse, youth restiveness, kidnapping. With, such indulgence, reduction of such societal anomalies is said to reduce, hence promoting socio-economic security in terms of social security, financial security and job security of youths in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Every individual wants to be socially secured in his or her society. This is because peace and safety are not elements to be compromised if security must prevail among social entities. It could be said that individuals who put their time in enhancing the marketing of their businesses through social media platforms and other internet facilitated sites have sense of relative peace and safety as evidenced by serious decrease in incidents of kidnapping, rape, youth restiveness, and drug abuse. They are focused to their business, thus have less thought towards perpetrating insecurity in the state. The reduction of cases on kidnap, rape, youth restiveness and drug abuse is a concern to all meaning individuals, corporate bodies, government and non-governmental agencies. And it has been observed that most times individuals who commit such crimes give plea on the fact that "it was the devil". Some ascribed it to their idleness, unemployment and low paid jobs. This in turn has tune some scholars in finding lasting solution to these vices unleashed in the society. Since, an idle man is the devil's workshop, engaging individuals to inculcate e-information services skills such as big data analysis, plagiarism test and cybercafé would get them busy socio-economically which in turn will reduce the incidence of social insecurity.

With the influx of technology in our society today and the continuous shaping of businesses through the aid of internet, individuals who indulge in internet-mediated marketing practices tend to be socially secured. Some of these business services require full details of the individuals which is also are both owners and clients or customers during transaction. Since their details are known to an extent, and the fear for apprehension by the police, some would deviate from such abnormal behaviour in the society. Nevertheless, unemployment has been used as a cause for social insecurity. It is evident that smart individuals who seek solution to the problem of unemployment through lawful engagement in emancipation programmes such as skill acquisition and empowerment scheme to shift them from such anomalous indulgence, could explore on internet-facilitated businesses such as big data analysis, plagiarism test and cybercafé which are adds to employment and thus enhances one's social security, where one is less focused on perpetrating social vices such as rape, drug abuse, human trafficking, prostitution, restiveness. On the contrary, it is argued that because one is an netpreneur does not mean he or she cannot exercise social insecurity in the lives of others. Individuals amongst old and young of today are exposed to a number of social insecurities that are capable of influencing them negatively. This is aided by advance in technology (internet-aided business). People who have negative tendencies in their society would use their business handlers to fraud, send information to kidnappers, etc all to dupe their targets. Thus, owning or working as a big data analyst, plagiarism tester or in a cybercafé does not show proof of becoming socially secured. This is to say that those who want to make the society socially insecure, even though they work as e-information service-humans, they will still unleash their evil thoughts and acts.

Internet mediated marketing tools, such as use of whatsapp, facebook, websites and electronic payment platforms are now practiced by netpreneurs to reach out to both prospective and existing customers. Goods and services are being traded here. Complaints and other customer related issues are communicated on this platform as prompt redresses are offered to customers. With this platform, one does not need to go to the physical office (building) where the business is situated.

All that is expected of the customer or client as the case may be is just to have dealings with the organization through an internet-mediated mechanism. The internet and its related technologies enable organizations to easily access information about customers, competition and to share innovative ideas from various sources beyond spatial and temporal boundaries (Min, 2012). Being in such business requires one that has positive tendencies to serve, not to cause insecurity. Therefore, orientating individuals on the consequence of rape, kidnap, drug abuse, robbery and restiveness would go a long way in reducing their negative effect to social security. Such would be through the rebranding their mentality on the need to become netpreneurs where they make use of the internet to generate and transact businesses, either in their offices or home as far as their presence is registered. Internet-mediated marketing platforms such as whatsapp, facebook, websites, blogs, e-payment platforms would help netpreneurs and employees of netpreneurial businesses to secure social security, through focusing on business other than having thoughts to evil deeds. The involvement of individuals on internet-mediated marketing platforms is to boost patronage and income, thus having a financial security. Marketing is a sure way to enhance sales and generate profits. Businesses do not float on facebook, whatsapp, instagram, twitter, etc for fun. They are there to establish a global presence, thus increasing their patronage both locally and internationally. Individuals and organizations who use facebook, whatsapp, twitter, instagram for their business advert gain more sales than their counterparts who devoid from such activities. The continuous indulgence in such acts leads to financial security where practitioners have access to money, and are sure of continually generating income over a period of time (Gobbo, 2017). More so, individuals' indulgence on internet-mediated marketing practices tends to yield job security. Thus, they work using these platforms and are actively engaged and confident of continuously engaging in activities that generate economic strength (Alterman, et al, 2013).

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the analysis, the study concluded that internet mediated marketing influences socio-economic security of youths in Rivers State. Local Government Areas who fail to encourage youths who are internet mediated marketing by steady power supply, granting loans and offering scholarship, might face the risk of increasing socio-economic insecurity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government should provide lasting power supply that will help individuals who are into one form of netpreneurship business or the other, to help save cost for them, thereby enhancing their daily financial realization.
2. Government should give grants and soft loans to individuals who sincerely wish to get into netpreneurship business, so as to help them realize their dream and build their financial security.
3. Network providing companies in Nigeria such as MTN, Glo, 9Mobile, Airtel, etc. should provide dependable network across the nation to help individuals who are into netpreneurship services. This will ensure socio-economic security such as social security, financial security, and job security.
4. Government and well meaning individuals should help set up youths who are skillfully and psychologically ready to go into netpreneurship services, but lack the financial resources, as this will help to empty the streets of some unemployed individuals.

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