

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AND CUSTOMER PURCHASE INTENTIONS IN RETAIL ORGANIZATIONS IN BAYELSA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between social media marketing and customer purchase intentions in retail organizations in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The study was guided by three specific objectives, research questions and hypotheses. The correlational design was adopted in the study. The population of the study was 1200 retail business owners in Yenagoa metropolis of Bayelsa state. The sample size of the study was 300 which was determined using the Taro Yamane method. Questionnaire was used to collect data in this study. The reliability of the instrument was 0.85. Data collected was analyzed using SPSS software. Findings indicate a moderate positive relationship between social media marketing and customer patronage intention, customers patronage and repeat purchase intention with a correlation coefficient of 0.57 and a significance level of $p < .05$. This suggests that social media marketing significantly impacts consumer patronage intention. Based on the findings, it was recommended amongst others that retail business owners should extensively leverage social media campaigns to effectively communicate their product/service offerings to social media users.

INTRODUCTION

The social media frenzy have provided a unique opportunities to consumers to engage on the internet interaction irrespective of differences in distance, time, race, culture or background. It is now easier for customers to generate content, build valuable relationships, express emotions as they effectively communicate with other users in real time. Similarly, marketers takes advantage of this to gain vantage position in a market as they also sign up on each of these networks with the aim of engaging target audience Today, firms now have special medial teams to manage their products or service on the internet, in some cases a whole department is setup for social medial to interface with other units in the organization so as to constantly push out campaigns about their offerings to engage their target audience. For example, floating a social medial contest aimed at engaging and growing followers, creating valuable resource via the social medial handle, championing thought provoking discuss that makes followers lend their opinions, going live as you keep series of conversation going etc. consist some of the marketing strategies leveraged on social media networks to grow and engage target audience.

The above social media marketing strategies finds its expressions through social media Ads, social media word of mouth, users' presence time on social media, user's exposure time on social media, user's number of social media account and user's level of trust in social media on a consumer purchase intention process. According to Kaplan and Haelein (2020) social media is the most popular new media platform today. The proliferation of social media, marketing messages are now very well individualized. Baines, Fill and Cage (2018) posited that social media promote immediate physical, cognitive and emotional responses in the audience. This shows how the advent of social media have revolutionalized the marketing practices and processes, because of obvious unique features. Indeed social media marketing brings about a new strategy in marketing which virtually all businesses are adopting to reach their target audience via several virtual networks therefore, it can never be underrated (Terfa, Alu, Tarnong & Ogba 2023).

To this end, small business owners in emerging nations like Nigeria need to strategically leverage on the potentials of social media marketing so as to reach large amount of consumers seeing that they are have limited resources required to carryout big marketing campaigns for their prod offerings. The use of internet facilities through phones information, markets, technology and

trainings can be accessed easily. This development in the Nigerian business space is attributed to the deregulation of its telecommunication sector in 2002 after the emergence of a democratic dispensation in 1999. Since then, Nigeria has joined the global space to leverage on the potentials of social media after it started from 2004. Thousands of retail outlets have emerged, marketers in highly competitive industries like the telecommunication, banking, hospitality, manufacturing etc actively engage social media users on daily bases with frequent social media marketing adverts, gossips, helpful contents and opinion sampling all in the bid to engage consumers. They also use the social media networks to prospect, close sales and facilitate effective deliveries of their products orderings.

Consequently, consumers are now engaged more than ever through series of activities like blogging, chatting, gaming and texting through the influence of social media. Data shows that about 200 million active Facebooks users log on every day and spend over 455 billion minutes on monthly bases on the internet (Chukwu & Uzoma, 214). This explains why every growth oriented firm now uses social media to undertake their marketing strategy, especially the retail marketing. So, with the advent of social medial creating virtual social networks in real time, consumer are able to expressively assert their position as the real essence why businesses are done globally. On the other hand social media provide organisations with access to new resources for having direct interaction with customers

Therefore, retail organizations in Nigeria must understand how social media has affected consumer buying decision making (Ola and Reem, 2018). It has also become expedient to undertake this research with aim at examining the influence of social media marketing on the consumer decision making process in Nigeria, with focus of firms that user social media for the purpose of marketing.

Statement of the Problem

The burgeoning influence of social media marketing on consumer behavior has become a focal point for businesses aiming to enhance their competitive edge, particularly in retail organizations. In Bayelsa State, Nigeria, the retail sector has seen a significant increase in the adoption of social media platforms for marketing purposes. However, there is a notable gap in understanding how these digital marketing strategies specifically impact customers' purchase intentions within this regional context. Retail organizations in Bayelsa State leverage social media to engage with potential customers, promote products, and build brand loyalty. Despite the widespread use of these platforms, the effectiveness of social media marketing in driving actual purchase decisions remains under-researched. Existing literature indicates that social media marketing can significantly influence consumer purchase intentions by fostering greater engagement and trust (Godey et al., 2016; Alalwan, 2018). However, the specific factors and mechanisms through which social media marketing affects purchase intentions in the unique socio-economic environment of Bayelsa State have not been adequately explored. The problem, therefore, lies in the limited empirical evidence on how social media marketing strategies impact consumer purchase intentions in Bayelsa State's retail sector. This study seeks to provide insights that can help retail organizations in Bayelsa State develop more effective social media marketing campaigns, ultimately leading to improved business performance and customer satisfaction. This research aims to fill this gap by investigating the relationship between social media marketing and customers' purchase intentions in retail organizations in Bayelsa State.

Aim and Objective of the Study

The main aim of this study is to examine social media marketing and customers purchase intention in retail organizations in Bayelsa state. The objectives of the study is as follows:

1. To ascertain the extent to which social media marketing relate to customers patronage

- intention in retail organizations in Bayelsa state
2. To ascertain the extent to which social media marketing on customers patronage in retail organizations in Bayelsa state
 3. To ascertain the extent to which social media marketing relate to repeat purchase intention in retail organizations in Bayelsa state

Research Questions

1. To what extent does social media marketing relate to customer patronage intention in retail organizations in Bayelsa state
2. To what extent does social media marketing on customers patronage in retail organizations in Bayelsa state
3. To what extent does social media marketing relate to repeat customers purchase intention in retail organizations in Bayelsa state

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relation between social media marketing and customer patronage intention in retail organizations in Bayelsa state
2. There is no significant relation between social media marketing and customers patronage in retail organizations in Bayelsa state
3. There is no significant relation between social media marketing and repeat customers purchase intention in retail organizations in Bayelsa state

Literature Review

Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing has emerged as a pivotal strategy in contemporary business environments, driven by the exponential growth of social media platforms. These platforms offer businesses unique opportunities to engage with a vast audience, enhance brand awareness, and drive consumer behavior. Social media marketing involves the use of social media platforms and websites to promote products or services, enabling direct interaction between companies and their customers (Felix, Rauschnabel, & Hinsch, 2017). One of the primary advantages of social media marketing is its ability to create highly targeted advertising campaigns. Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter provide sophisticated targeting options based on user demographics, interests, and behavior, allowing businesses to reach their ideal customer segments more efficiently than traditional marketing methods (Duffett, 2015). This precise targeting increases the likelihood of converting social media users into customers. Moreover, social media marketing facilitates real-time communication and feedback from customers. This immediate interaction helps businesses to understand customer preferences, address concerns promptly, and build stronger relationships with their audience. According to Godey et al. (2016), effective social media marketing can significantly enhance brand equity by fostering greater engagement and trust among consumers. Content marketing is another crucial aspect of social media marketing. High-quality, relevant content shared on social media platforms can attract and retain a clearly defined audience.

Customer purchase intentions

Customer purchase intentions refer to the likelihood or willingness of consumers to buy a particular product or service. Understanding these intentions is crucial for businesses as it helps in predicting future sales, designing effective marketing strategies, and enhancing customer satisfaction. Purchase intentions are influenced by various factors including personal preferences, marketing activities, social influences, and perceived value (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2015). One of the primary determinants of purchase intention is consumer attitude toward the product. This encompasses beliefs and feelings about the product's attributes and the benefits it provides. A

positive attitude generally leads to a higher intention to purchase (Ajzen, 2021). Marketing strategies that emphasize the unique benefits and positive attributes of a product can significantly enhance purchase intentions (Dodds, Monroe, & Grewal, 2021). Perceived value plays a pivotal role in shaping purchase intentions. Consumers assess the value of a product based on the perceived benefits relative to its cost. Higher perceived value often translates to stronger purchase intentions (Zeithaml, 2018). For instance, if customers believe that a product offers excellent quality at a reasonable price, they are more likely to intend to buy it.

Retail Organizations

Retail organizations play a crucial role in the distribution of goods and services directly to consumers. These businesses range from small independent stores to large multinational chains, and they operate in various formats such as brick-and-mortar stores, online platforms, and hybrid models combining both. The primary objective of retail organizations is to meet consumer demands efficiently while maximizing profitability. One of the key characteristics of retail organizations is their direct interaction with consumers. This proximity to the end-user allows retailers to gather valuable insights into consumer preferences, buying behaviors, and emerging trends. These insights are critical for inventory management, marketing strategies, and enhancing customer satisfaction (Levy & Weitz, 2018). Retail organizations often operate in highly competitive environments, necessitating the use of various strategies to attract and retain customers. One such strategy is the development of a strong brand identity. A compelling brand can differentiate a retailer from its competitors and build customer loyalty. Retailers invest in branding through store design, customer service, product assortment, and marketing communications (Ailawadi & Keller, 2022).

Social Media Marketing and Customers purchase intention

A customer's ultimate purchasing intention is heavily influenced by the product or service's qualities, quality, price, and characteristics. No of the results of prior transactions, research shows that consumers remember their experiences for as long as feasible (Keller, 2008). The internet's broad availability makes checking one's social media pages a snap. Social media's meteoric rise has made it an attractive option for brands seeking to reach their target audience (Renu, 2018). Better customer service, product variety, price, and individualised recommendations are all feasible because of the real-time data and interactive nature of social media platforms. Internet stores have a competitive advantage via the utilisation of social media platforms compared to conventional stores (Turban, King, Lee, & Liang, 2015). The effect of social media on customer decision making is widespread and might affect any service or product. The quality, reputation, marketing, and cost of a product may all be affected by consumer choice. Customers' reactions to advertisements, brand loyalty, and purchase intent may be influenced by social media connections. Purchasing and its accompanying activities have been revolutionised by social media. There are many benefits to which social media marketing poses but conventional advertising lack (Renu, 2019). Since consumers are increasingly shopping for products online through social media.

Social Media Marketing and Patronage Intention of Consumers

Trends in consumer behaviour towards the acquisition of goods or services are referred to as consumer decision making (Voramontri & Klieb, 2018). Several distinct types of consumer behaviour exist. Complex purchases require extensive research on the part of the buyer, consideration of several options, the expenditure of substantial funds, and the assumption of substantial risk. Considerable customer participation, little brand differentiation, and considerable risk all contribute to a low dissonance in this sort of transaction. Customers are not actively engaged, there is no differentiation between companies, and transactions are made on a consistent basis. Customer engagement is low, consumer trust in brands is low, and brand

switching is common. According to Voramontri and Klieb (2018), there is a greater need to gather data while making complex purchases due to the increased risk involved. Voramontri and Klieb (2018) define a community as a group of people who share content and work together to monitor and tally views. Customers are increasingly invested in difficult purchases, but they are taking more time than ever to research topics on social media before making a purchase. Optimisation and satisfaction of a decision are what decision-making is all about. Several researchers, including Schwartz Monterosso, Lyubomirsky, White, and Lehman (2002), "maximizers want the best possible outcome; satisfiers want an outcome which is strong enough to meet every criterion." Products are reviewed and tested by the Satisfiers until they locate one that is excellent enough to fulfil the requirements or limitations set by the Satisfiers. Maximizers, compare this to taking your time to think about and assess your alternatives for the best possible measurement (Schwartz, et al., 2022). The method of decision-making has evolved to provide for control over the amount of time spent considering options and the quality of those options' assessment (Karimi, Papamichail, & Holland, 2015). Marketers kept a close eye on the social media activities of their advertising partners, but few understand the effects on consumers. The social effect in various decision-making processes is often overlooked by researchers who focus on client behaviour instead (Darley, Blankson, & Luethge, 2020).

Social Media Marketing on Customers Repeat Purchase Intention

Consumers now have more options than ever before for learning about products and services because to the rise of social media (Voramontri and Klieb, 2018). Through social media, customers can maintain constant communication and share their opinions about brands at all times. Customers may also hang out and have conversations, write letters, and create weblogs. Alsubagh (2015) posit that consumers may now freely discuss their ideas, opinions, and experiences with one another. Dellarocas (2022) argues that social media marketing has made digital communication easier for people all over the world. Online evaluations posted by community members about a certain product, topic, or community have an impact on customers' purchase choices. Services and goods are discussed and ranked based on written and uploaded internet content. Because of the Internet, these suggestions and ideas may now reach a larger audience than ever before (Voramontri and Klieb, 2018). According to Trusov, Bucklin, and Pauwels (2019), traditional connections are becoming less effective, and as a result, marketers are eager to comprehend online language. Reviews left on websites are a powerful kind of online word of mouth (Zhou, et al., 2023). According to Jackson (2019), network effects on behaviour should be taken into account when modelling networks. Nolcheska (2017) found that consumer social contact affected all stages of the purchasing process, from problem identification and information search through alternative appraisal, purchase, and post-purchase satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted correlational design. It is a design that seeks to establish whether relationship exists between two or more variables. The Population of this study comprise of individual consumers who use the different social medial handles to buy products. The study coverage include active online users who are retail business owners in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State of Nigeria. It is estimated that there are about 1200 registered small businesses in Yenagoa city offering various products and services to the general public. The sample size for this study population is three hundred (300) respondents from small and medium retail enterprises in Yenagoa. The sample was determined using Taro Yamane formulae to arrive at a sample for this study population. This study used a structured questionnaire as the instrument of research. The questionnaire items was assigned values to the five-point rating Scale with the following response categories and ratings: Strongly Agree (SA) = 5 points, Agree (A) = 4 points, Undecided = 3, Disagree (DA) = 2 points, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point. The hard copy of the questionnaires were distributed to all the respondents at different locations in Yenagoa city.

The respondents filled the survey instrument and returned the filled copies back. Face validity, content validity, and construct validity were utilised to evaluate the reliability and validity of the research instrument that was employed in this study. The researcher used Cronbach's alpha method to obtain a reliability coefficient of 0.86. The data collected in this study were analyzed statistically using simple percentages to answer the research questions. The rating scales of 5 points were subjected to an estimation procedure on SPSS 21.0 software. The hypotheses were tested using Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (r) at 0.05 alpha level to determine the extent to which the variables are related. The iteration process for data classification was undertaken to the maximum level as contained in the software and nominal scores were converted to ordinal form.

Results:

Research Question One: To what extent does social media marketing relate to customer patronage intention in retail organizations in Bayelsa state?

Table 1: Responses on extent does social media marketing relate to customer patronage intention in retail organizations in Bayelsa state

	Items	5	4	3	2	1	Total
Q1	I sometimes discover what I need through advert online.	128 51.1%	80 32.1%	18 7.2%	13 5.3%	11 4.3%	250 100%
Q2	The internet aid my search for any product/service of interest.	106 42.5%	89 35.6%	18 7.3%	23 9.3%	13 5.5%	250 100%
Q3	Through product reviews online I have the privilege of comparing alternative product options.	124 49.6%	59 23.7%	14 5.6%	39 15.6%	14 5.5%	250 100%
Q4	The internet provide the ease of finding product of interest.	133 53.1%	62 25%	23 9.2%	21 8.2%	11 4.4%	250 100%
Q5	I am always willing to shop from online retailers.	101 40.5%	76 30.3%	14 5.5%	36 14.4%	20 8.1%	250 100%

The information from table and chart 1 stipulates the responses obtained on the questions outlined in the questionnaire regarding customers' patronage intention. The entire respondents of the survey were 250 and 51.1% of responses indicated that they strongly agreed to the item "sometimes discover what I need through advert online", 32.1% agreed, 7.2% undecided, while 5.3% disagreed and another 4.3% strongly disagreed. The next item which was "The internet aid my search for any product/service of interest" 42.5% strongly agreed, 35.6% agreed, 7.3% undecided, while 9.3% disagreed and another 5.5% strongly disagreed. The third item responses revealed that 49.6% of the response rate agree strongly that the internet provide the ease of finding product of interest, 23.7% were in agreement, 5.6% were neutral, 15.6% disagreed, while 5.5% strongly disagreed with the question. Also, on item four 53.1% agree strongly that the internet provide the ease of finding product of interest, 25% agreed, 9.2% were undecided, while 8.2% disagreed and another 4.4% strongly disagreed with the item. The responses on fifth item relating consumer patronage intention showed 40.5% agreed strongly that they always willing to shop from online retailers, 30.3% also agreed, 5.5% were undecided, 14.4% were not in agreement and another 8.1% were strongly not in agreement to the statement.

Research Question Two: To what extent does social media marketing on customers patronage in retail organizations in Bayelsa state

Table 4.6: Responses on extent social media marketing on customers patronage in retail organizations in Bayelsa state

	Items	5	4	3	2	1	Total
Q1	I now buy most items I need because the internet provide me the ability to make informed decision.	133 53.1%	76 30.2%	25 10.1%	13 5.2%	3 1.4%	100%
Q2	With the internet I have the opportunities to a large array of products to select from.	136 54.5%	73 29.1%	35 14.2%	3 1.1%	3 1.2%	100%
Q3	I would rather buy online if the price is lower.	131 52.3%	81 32.6%	22 8.6%	13 5.3%	3 1.2%	250 100%
Q4	The special discount offerings for a product or group of products make me patronize online product/services.	133 53.1%	75 30.1%	25 10.2%	13 5.1%	4 1.5%	250 100%
Q5	I purchase things easily through the internet.	144 57.6%	53 21.3%	36 14.4%	14 5.4%	3 1.3%	250 100%

The information from table and chart 2 stipulates the responses obtained on the questions outlined in the questionnaire regarding consumer patronage. The entire respondents of the survey were 250 and 53.1% of responses indicated that they strongly agreed to the item "I now buy most items I need because the internet provide me the ability to make informed decision.", 30.2% agreed, 10.1% undecided, while 5.2% disagreed and another 1.4 strongly disagreed. The next item which was "With the internet I have the opportunities to a large array of products to select from" 54.5% strongly agreed, 29.1% agreed, 14.2% undecided, while 1.1% disagreed and another 1.2% strongly disagreed. The third item responses revealed that 52.3% of the response rate agree strongly that would rather buy online if the price is lower, 32.6% were in agreement, 8.6% were neutral, 5.5% disagreed, while 1.2% strongly disagreed with the question. Also, on item four 53.1% agree strongly that special discount offerings for a product or group of products make me patronize online product/services, 30.1% agreed, 10.2% were undecided, while 5.1% disagreed and another 1.5% strongly disagreed with the item. The responses on fifth item relating to consumer patronage showed 57.6% agreed strongly that they always purchase things easily through the internet, 21.3% also agreed, 14.4% were undecided, 5.4% were not in agreement and another 1.3% were strongly not in agreement to the statement.

Research Question Three: To what extent does social media marketing relate to repeat customers purchase intention in retail organizations in Bayelsa state

Table 3: Responses on extent social media marketing relate to repeat customers purchase intention in retail organizations in Bayelsa state

	Items	5	4	3	2	1	Total
Q1	There are online retailers I buy regularly.	125 50%	81 32.2%	18 7.2%	13 5.3%	13 5.3%	250 100%
Q2	I feel satisfied buying from a particular retailer online.	119 47.5%	77 30.8%	27 10.8%	19 7.8%	8 3%	250 100%
Q3	The experience of a particular product make me still by it from the same online retailer whenever I need it.	101 40.6%	84 33.5%	32 12.8%	27 10.6%	6 2.3%	270 100%
Q4	I share my experience with friend on social media about a product I have used.	112 44.7%	89 35.6%	26 10.2%	21 8.4%	2 1%	250 100%

The information from table and chart 3 stipulates the responses obtained on the questions outlined in the questionnaire regarding customers repeat purchase intention. The entire respondents of the survey were 250 and 50% of responses indicated that they strongly agreed to the item "There are online retailers I buy regularly", 32.2% agreed, 7.2% undecided, while 5.3% disagreed and another 5.3% strongly disagreed. The next item which was "They feel satisfied buying from a particular retailer online" 47.5% strongly agreed, 30.8% agreed, 10.8% undecided, while 7.8% disagreed and another 3% strongly disagreed. The third item responses revealed that 40.6% of the response rate agree strongly that the experience of a particular product make me still buy it from the same online retailer whenever I need it, 33.5% were in agreement, 12.8% were neutral, 10.6% disagreed, while 2.3% strongly disagreed with the question. Also, on item four 44.7% agree strongly that they share my experience with friend on social media about a product I have used, 35.6% agreed, 10.2% were undecided, while 8.4% disagreed and another 1% strongly disagreed with the item.

Test of Hypotheses

Ho₁ There is no significant relationship between social media marketing and customer patronage intention in retail organizations in Bayelsa state

Table 4.: Summary of Spearman rho on Significant Relationship between social media marketing and customer patronage intention in retail organizations in Bayelsa state

		Social Media	Customers Purchase intention
Spearman's rho	Social media	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.57**
	Customers	N	300
		Correlation Coefficient	1.000

purchase intention	Sig. (2-tailed) N	.000 300	. 300
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** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4. provides results for answering hypothesis 1. The results reveal moderate positive relationship between social media marketing and customer patronage intention in retail organizations in Bayelsa state with $r(113) = 0.57$. In addition, the result also shows $p < .05$ at 0.000 which means that the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is significant relationship between social media marketing and customer patronage intention in retail organizations in Bayelsa state

Ho₂ There is no significant relationship between social media marketing and customers patronage in retail organizations in Bayelsa state

Table 5: Summary of Spearman rho on Relationship and Significant Relationship between social media marketing and customers patronage in retail organizations in Bayelsa state

		Social media	Customers patronage
Spearman's rho	Social media	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.69**
		N	.000
	Customers patronage	Correlation Coefficient	300
		Sig. (2-tailed)	300
		N	.000

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 provides results for answering hypothesis 2. The results reveal strong positive relationship between social media marketing and customers patronage in retail organizations in Bayelsa state with $r(113) = 0.69$. In addition, the result also shows $p < .05$ at 0.000 which means that the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a strong positive relationship between social media marketing and customers patronage in retail organizations in Bayelsa state

Ho₃ There is no significant relationship between social media marketing and repeat customers purchase intention in retail organizations in Bayelsa state

Table 6: Summary of Spearman rho on Relationship and Significant Relationship between social media marketing and repeat customers purchase intention in retail organizations in Bayelsa state

		Social media	Repeat purchase
Spearman's rho	Social media	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.49**
		N	.000
	Repeat purchase	Correlation Coefficient	300
		Sig. (2-tailed)	300
		N	.000

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 6 provides results for answering hypothesis 3. The results reveal moderate positive relationship between social media marketing and repeat customers purchase intention in retail organizations in Bayelsa state with $r(113) = 0.49$. In addition, the result also shows $p < .05$ at

0.000 which means that the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is moderate positive significant relationship between social media marketing and repeat customers purchase intention in retail organizations in Bayelsa state

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study from research question and hypothesis one, reveal moderate positive relationship between social media marketing and customer patronage intention in retail organizations in Bayelsa state with $r(113) = 0.57$. In addition, the result also shows $p < .05$ at 0.000 which means that the null hypothesis is rejected indicating that social media marketing have a significant impact on consumer patronage intention in the product offerings made available through this medium. Similarly the study found out that social media impact greatly on the consumer patronage intention as the result from the analysed data reveal 99.3% variation from the social media, meaning that social media greatly influence what these retail businesses buy as well as what they sell. This result reflects the fact that social media is a medium that facilitates information sharing and gathering. The state of consumer patronage intention is the prepurchase phase of a consumer decision making process and this state heavily depends on need recognition, information search for available options and critical evaluation of options. This state in consumer patronage decision making process is very crucial as it ultimately influences whether or not the consumer will make a purchase. So it is arguably accepted that in a digitalized global business environment, the social media promotes almost all purchases a consumer will want/need. This has also been corroborated by other results from scholarly outcomes from Chukwu and Uzoma (2020) which asserted that the online retailers have greatly influenced the expectations of consumers. The findings from Mehrdad (2022) factors like appearance, fast loading, sitemap, promotions, validity and protection have greatly shaped the attitude of online consumers. Similarly, Kim (2017) found out that social media marketing efforts have helped to reduce the tension that was largely created associated with product risk.

The hypothesis two, showed same attribute with hypothesis one as the alternative hypothesis were accepted because of the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 significant level adopted for this study. This showed that social media marketing statistically significantly impacts customer patronage. The consumer actual patronage phase of the decision making process is that point when choice of product is made and expressed through exchange of valuables to guarantee consumption. This result is a reflection of the fact that social media marketing is highly instrumental for the final consumption of product/services exchanged through and from small business owners in Yenagoa city and this is indicative of the high level of transaction social media marketing facilitates on daily bases. This position corroborates another finding by Michael (2017) which posits that firms are more likely to reach, acquire and maintain future customer base when they strategically utilize social media networks to adapt seamlessly with their marketing efforts. This finding also explains the position put forward by Mangold and Faulds (2019) that consumers are abandoning the use of television, radio, journal, magazines and other conventional medium as a means of having direct patronage. On the grounds, this study finalises that social media greatly influences the final choice of product/service of consumers.

The third research question and null hypothesis of the study reveal moderate positive relationship between social media marketing and repeat customers purchase intention in retail organizations in Bayelsa state with $r(113) = 0.49$. In addition, the result also shows $p < .05$ at 0.000 which means that the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that social media marketing statistically and significantly impacts repeat purchase. According to Wirtz and Lwin (2019) described repeat patronage is the process by which consumer return to purchase same product from the same firm from whom it was initially purchased. A repeat patronage is an indication of a satisfied and retained customer. Repeat purchase is the post purchase point in the consumer decision making process. The post purchase phase of the decision making process portends an excellent predictor of the firm's long-term viability and profitability. This result was corroborated by a similar

result from a study by Duangruthai and Leslie (2018) which concluded that the utilization of social media marketing affect the satisfaction of customer. Reviews shared from customers who have experienced a product often serve as valueable source of information for other buyers who might be willing to buy same product for the first. This study found that the social media marketing impact consumer repeat purchase in Yenagoa city of Bayelsa State , Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

The findings on social media marketing and customers' purchase intentions in retail organizations in Bayelsa State reveal significant insights that can guide local businesses in optimizing their marketing strategies. The study also showed the powerful role of social media platforms in influencing consumer behavior and driving purchase decisions. Retail organizations that effectively utilize social media platforms can enhance brand visibility and foster a more profound connection with their audience. The findings concludes that social media marketing contribute significantly to customers purchase intention especially amongst startups like retail organizations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The followings recommendations were made.

1. Retail business owners should extensively leverage on the social media campaign for effective communication of their product/service offering to social media users.
2. Retail business owners should endeavor to deliver quality experience to consumers as they eventually patronize their product offerings for the first time. This will enable customer retainer ship.
3. Retail business owners should be consistent in engaging social media users as a means of marketing the benefits of their products because it helps to instill confidence in consumerswho is showing interest in their product/service offering.

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