

## DIGITAL MARKETING AND CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR OF SME'S IN KOGI STATE

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### ABSTRACT

*Digital marketing has become popular as a result of the emergence of digital technologies. Marketing operations are now carried out at a lower cost and with less effort. Digital marketing relates with website, email marketing, social media, e-commerce among others. This study focused on digital marketing and consumer buying behaviour in Kogi State. The study used descriptive research design and the population of study consists of managers and owners from small enterprises that are digitally inclined. Three hundred and six (306) respondents were used as a sample size for this study. A multistage random sampling technique was used in this study. Data were analysed using multiple regression analysis. Findings showed that social media marketing has a significant and positive relationship with consumers buying behaviour in Kogi State. It was also found that website marketing has a significant but positive linear relationship with the consumers buying behaviour in Kogi State. The study recommends that more effort should be tailored towards increasing the use of social media marketing, as this will enhance positive buying behaviour from customers. It was also recommends that managers of enterprises should use website marketing as a medium for reaching out to their esteem customers.*

**Keywords:** Digital Marketing, Social Media Marketing, Website Marketing, Consumer Buying Behavior, Internet.

### INTRODUCTION

The notion of digital marketing has become mechanized as a result of the emergence of digital technologies. Digital technologies have significantly transformed the global marketing landscape by enhancing the visibility and interaction among various market actors. These technologies have facilitated the development of a diverse and interconnected global network, characterized by complex systems, structures, and orientations. As a result, marketing activities can now be conducted more efficiently, with reduced costs and effort. Digital marketing encompasses various channels, including websites, email marketing, social media platforms, content marketing, and e-commerce. These are salient elements that define the system of digital marketing today. With the help of website, customers are provided adequate information and colourful adverts. Yasmin *et al.* (2015) posited that consumers now have access to adequate information at desired time and place. In fact, it extends to effective channels of distribution through which consumers get their parcels within a specified time. Jumia, Konga, Amason, Aliexpress and Jiji have strong website through which producers, consumers, and sellers can communicate and trade regardless of their location. Millions of people all over the world shop with ease and convenience without stepping out of their homes.

Digital marketing is not only limited to online buying and selling alone. It also involves advertising and search for favourable brands. Search Engine Optimization provide critical avenue for search of favourable brands. In fact, any marketing activities taking place online symbolizes digital marketing. In Kogi State today, majority of small enterprises take advantage of social media (instagram, Tiktok, telegram, facebook and twitter) for

showcasing or advertising their products. Social media provides the business with good contact with large number of customers. This is because it promotes marketing activities online with less effort.

The choice of Digital Marketing Instrument (DMI) has predictive power over consumers behaviour. Darley and Blankson (2010) posited that despite the proliferation and the growing body of academic and non-academic literature on online consumer behaviour, studies that systematically synthesize research findings from a theoretical marketing and consumer behaviour perspective remain limited. Consumer behaviour encompasses the purchasing and other consumption-related activities of individuals participating in the exchange process. This behaviour is typically goal-oriented and purposeful, driven by the intention to acquire products or other desired resources. Aiswarya and Krishnan (2017) added that consumer behaviour can be measured with respect to brand attribute, brand attitude and purchase intention. Melović *et al.* (2020) added that consumers consider the DMI of firms before developing purchase intention.

Despite the benefits attached to digital marketing, consumers tend to behave in different ways. It is observed that consumers make choice of digital marketing platform which may be website, email marketing, social media, content marketing and e-commerce. This choice may be driven by the ease of use or fear of fraud or possibly technology in use. Alharbi and Steve (2014) noted that bad mind-set toward technology will eventually push a user not to use digital marketing. It must be noted that the increasing digital marketing problems is concomitant with the increasing or advancement in digital technologies. Firms with little knowledge or no experience in respect of internet technologies may not be able to attract and strengthen customer bonds (Yasmin *et al.*, 2015; Noyola-Medina *et al.*, 2018; Yu & Yuan, 2019). Natchaya and Siriluck (2010) posited that consumer behaviour has been altered; as buyers no longer trust brands and have lost faith in online stores. Scientific work on content marketing is still lacking (Puro, 2013). The behaviour of consumers may also be influenced by how efficient they find the cost of ordering their product, the trust they have concerning the e-marketing platform and shopping experience.

Husain and Adamu (2014) draw attention to the need for implementing social media as it is easily accessible by the consumers. Due to the abuse that is eminent with the social media platform, consumers may have lost faith in its use for purchasing. Literarily, shift consumers purchasing behaviour can be influenced by content, images, discounts, promotions, and influencers in the social media platform. Suresh and Chitra (2016) highlighted that social media has significantly increased the consumption of service marketing by reaching and influencing consumers across various age groups and lifestyles, shaped by their purchasing power and behavioral patterns. Similarly, Ioană and Stoica (2014) emphasized that social media impacts consumer behavior throughout the buying process—from initial purchase decisions to post-purchase actions—often reflected in product reviews and expressions of dissatisfaction. The behaviour of consumers towards patronizing products on the website seems not encouraging in Kogi State. Web advertisers have much task to do to institute a favourable shift in the behaviour of consumers towards making decision to buy on the internet. Also change in consumer behaviour is noticed due to little confidence in content marketing. This study was carried out to fill the gap.

The following research questions were identified:

- i. To what extent does social media marketing enhance consumers buying behaviour in Kogi State?
- ii. To what extent does website marketing enhance consumers buying behaviour in Kogi State?

The primary objective of this study is to examine the impact of digital marketing on consumer buying behaviour in Kogi State. Specifically, the study seeks to: (i) determine the relationship between social media marketing and consumers buying behaviour in Kogi State; (ii) ascertain the relationship between website marketing and consumers buying behaviour in Kogi State. The study formulated the following hypotheses:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Social media marketing has no significant relationship with consumers buying behaviour in Kogi State.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Website marketing has no significant relationship with consumers buying behaviour in Kogi State.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### Concept of Digital Marketing

Browsing the internet at any time provides consumers with convenience and entertainment, as it brings a vast marketplace directly to their fingertips. According to Mahalaxmi and Ranjith (2016), digital marketing encompasses the use of platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, as well as websites, microblogs, and search engines. It involves promoting products or services through digital technologies via the Internet, mobile applications, display ads, and other digital channels. Banerjee and Dash (2011) emphasized that digital marketing leverages the internet to reduce transaction costs, cater to customer needs more effectively, and enable behaviors that are independent of time and location. Kotler et al. (2016) noted that digital marketing facilitates the dissemination of information about a company's offerings through online platforms. Kaur et al. (2019) observed that people from all income groups engage in online shopping due to the availability of diverse product options, flexible pricing, and various payment methods, making the process more convenient. As a result, businesses are increasingly benefiting from the round-the-clock nature of online transactions, leading to greater interest and substantial investments in digital marketing, which has, in turn, significantly boosted their profit margins. Mahalaxmi and Ranjith (2016) added that "digital marketing has been considered a new form of marketing and provided new opportunities for firms to do businesses".

The online market is a global marketing environment where all consumers locate the producers of their preference brand through possible transactions. Communication in the online marketing environment seems to be very effective. Advertising has become easier through digital marketing at a low cost. Mahalaxmi and Ranjith (2016) expressed that advertisers directly communicate with potential customers in a rapid velocity, regardless of their geographical location. This implies that advertising on digital marketing provides global awareness about a particular brand. In most cases, consumers advertising online are faster than every other means. Consumers get to accumulate knowledge faster online because of their internet sophisticated skill and use of advance technology.

However, the concept of digital marketing cannot be extricated from the concept of technology. Digital marketing has its cradle in technological advancement. Importantly, the advancement in technology has

concomitantly speeded up the existence of social media platforms, online product display app, blogs and marketing sites

### **Social Media Marketing**

Social media is an online communication platform that enables users to interact, share content, and access information. It encompasses various types, including social networking sites, forums, and social bookmarking platforms. Popular examples include Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest, Google Plus, and Wikipedia, all of which have become deeply embedded in everyday life. As noted by Dann and Dann (2011), social media is structured around key elements such as communication media, content, and social interaction. Its rise has transformed the way knowledge is shared and communication is conducted, making it easier for individuals to disseminate valuable information to large, global audiences.

In the business world, social media plays a crucial role in promoting products and services, building brand awareness, retaining customers, and attracting new ones. Social media marketing, a subset of internet marketing, involves creating and distributing content across social platforms to achieve branding and marketing objectives. By leveraging social networking tools, businesses enhance their brand visibility, strengthen customer engagement, and expand their market reach.

### **Website Marketing**

Website marketing refers to the strategy used to promote products and services online and through web channels. It involves a variety of internet platforms, technologies, and content delivery methods (Chincholkar & Sonwancy, 2017). Web experience is a primary determinant of buyer influence. Poorly designed and inefficient websites pose a significant risk not only to a business's online ambitions but also to its offline operations. For traditional firms seeking to expand their reach through an online presence, ensuring a high-quality user experience is crucial and demands careful consideration.

A business website serves as the primary channel for delivering the online experience. According to Hayder (2017), websites that offer an exceptional user experience are thoughtfully designed to meet customers' product needs and expectations while also guiding them seamlessly through the purchasing journey. Rather than functioning merely as digital brochures or product catalogs, websites should be regarded as vital instruments for customer service and persuasive engagement.

Visually appealing and user-friendly websites, coupled with effective design, high-quality information, and excellent customer service, can draw visitors and convert them into customers (Chincholkar & Sonwaney, 2017). While the availability of relevant information is a key factor in consumers' website preferences, overloading users with excessive content should be avoided. Well-crafted, informative content—particularly detailed product information—along with attractive visual design, positively influences customer satisfaction and encourages repeat purchases (Sam & Sharma, 2015). Another crucial component that enhances consumers' propensity to shop online is the online payment method. Customer service is also recognized by several researchers as a key website element (Liu & Guo, 2010).

### **Concept of Consumer Behaviour**

Consumers are the most important determinant of any existing market. This is the reason why they are regarded as the king. Njuguna (2018) stated that “the nature of various theories assumes in the market place consumers engage in various roles which ensures exchange of goods and services; and that the major role consumers play include providing information as the user of the product to the disposer, while consumers are purchasing goods and services they engage in making decision to ensure they reap the maximum benefit out of any commodity”. This is a reflection of exhibited behaviour on the part of the consumers. In similar way, Njuguna (2018) defined consumer behaviour as the “ways in which individual clients, organization or groups are involved in the purchasing process to ensure they satisfy their needs and wants”. Chand (2015) offers perspectives into how goods and services can be improved or launched, establishing the best market value, assessing distribution channels, shaping advertising messages and designing and enhancing other marketing practices. Following the pattern of consumer behaviour, many businesses invest their resources towards developing effective strategies and consumer retention. Consumers are mainly categorized as individual consumers and industrial consumers (Njuguna, 2018). Investing in “understanding their trends such as behaviour and buying pattern is important in a competitive environment which will ultimately enable an organization survive in competitive market” (Njuguna, 2018). Prachi (2013) identified economic, psychological, and sociological factors as key determinants that significantly influence consumer behavior.

### **Unified Theory of Acceptance**

This study is grounded in the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), developed by Venkatesh et al. (2003) after synthesizing eight existing models of technology acceptance. The primary aim of the UTAUT model is to enhance the predictive power of user acceptance and usage behavior toward technology. According to Venkatesh et al. (2003), the key determinants influencing an individual's intention to use technology include performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions—factors that shape perceived behavioral control. Additionally, Kasse and Balunywa (2013) noted that gender, age, and experience serve as moderating variables that affect the relationship between these core determinants and technology usage behavior.

### **Empirical Review**

Abdulraheem and Imouokhome (2021) investigated the impact of social media platforms on consumer buying behavior at Shoprite Nigeria Limited. Employing a descriptive research design, the study selected a sample size of 384 respondents using Cochran's (1977) formula for an infinite population. Data were analyzed using multiple regression analysis. The findings revealed that social media platforms significantly influence consumer purchasing decisions at Shoprite. The study concluded that social media is a vital tool for shaping consumer behavior and recommended that the organization increase its investment in social media engagement to better connect with its target audience.

Similarly, Varghese and Agrawa (2021) explored the influence of social media on consumer buying behavior using a survey research design and descriptive statistical analysis. The study found that social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter have become prominent spaces for connection, content sharing, and opinion exchange. It concluded that consumer opinions and feedback shared online can be shaped and influenced by strangers on these platforms, affecting offline perceptions as

well. Moreover, the study emphasized that social media empowers consumers to generate content through online interactions, positioning them as key players in building or damaging a brand's reputation.

Sulaiman et al. (2021) conducted an empirical investigation into the effect of digital advertising on consumer buying behaviour in Lokoja Metropolis. The study was guided by two key objectives: first, to examine the influence of digital advertising platforms on consumer buying behaviour; and second, to assess the impact of digital advertising information on purchasing decisions. Employing a descriptive survey design, the researchers targeted customers within Lokoja who engage in online shopping activities. A sample size of 399 respondents was determined using the Yaro Yamane formula, based on the 2006 population census of 195,520 residents in Lokoja. Respondents were selected through simple random sampling, and data were gathered using structured questionnaires. To analyze the data, correlation and regression techniques were applied at a 0.05 level of significance. The results revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between digital advertising platforms and consumer buying behaviour ( $r = 0.973$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Furthermore, digital advertising information was also found to significantly affect consumer purchasing behaviour ( $r = 0.887$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ). The study concluded that timely online updates, the encoding of digital messages, the quality of information on social media platforms, and buyer-specific patronage data significantly influence consumer decision-making processes. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended that business organizations develop comprehensive digital advertising strategies as part of their promotional mix to effectively engage the digitally inclined consumer base.

Hayder (2017) analyzed Website Characteristics that Influences Consumer Buying Behaviour. The study adopted survey research design. The study employed descriptive statistics and Regression analysis on data. Findings showed that all web site factors have influences on consumer buying behaviour. The study recommends that online retailers should emphasize site factors that best suit the involvement/experience profile of their primary users.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive research design, involving the distribution of questionnaires to survey participants and collect responses for analysis. The target population comprised managers of selected registered small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Kogi State with a strong digital orientation. These managers were selected based on the geographical distribution of their enterprises within the state. A total of 345 SMEs operating in sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, wholesale/retail trade, and food services were identified (source: [businesslist.com.ng/state/kogi](http://businesslist.com.ng/state/kogi)). Each enterprise had approximately four managers, bringing the total study population to 1,380. The sample size was determined using the sample size table developed by Bartlett, Kotrlik, and Higgins (2001), resulting in a sample of 306 respondents. A multistage random sampling technique was employed to select participants. All 306 distributed questionnaires were completed and returned, yielding a 100% response rate. The data collected were analyzed using multiple regression. The sample size used is reflected in Table 1, based on a margin of error of 0.05 and a confidence level corresponding to  $t = 1.96$ .

### Sample Size

**Table 1**

S/N	Population Size	Continuous Data			Categorical Data		
		Margin of Error = 0.03			Margin of Error = 0.05		
		Alpha=.10	Alpha=.05	Alpha=.01	p.50	p.50	p.50
		T=1.65	T=1.96	T=2.58	t=1.65	t=1.96	t=2.58
1	100	46	55	68	74	80	87
2	200	59	75	102	116	132	154
3	300	65	85	123	143	169	207
4	400	69	92	137	162	196	250
5	500	72	96	147	176	218	286
6	600	73	100	155	187	235	316
7	700	75	102	161	196	249	341
8	800	76	104	166	203	260	363
9	900	76	105	170	209	270	382
10	1000	77	106	173	213	278	399
11	1500	79	110	183	230	<b>306</b>	461
12	2000	83	112	189	239	323	499
13	4000	83	119	198	254	351	570
14	6,000	83	119	209	259	362	598
15	8,000	83	119	209	262	367	613
16	10,000	83	119	209	264	370	623

Source: Bartlett, Kotrilik and Higgins (2001)

**Model Specification**

The model in the study is given in the following general form:

The coefficient of the variables measured the marginal effects of the independent variable (digital marketing) on consumer buying behaviour.

$$CBB = f(SMM + WSM) \dots\dots\dots i$$

In specific form, equation (1) translates into equation 2 thus:

$$CBB = a + \beta_1 SMM + \beta_2 WSM + e \dots\dots\dots ii$$

Where,

a = Constant

CBB= Consumers Buying Behaviour

SMM = Social Media Marketing

WBM= Website Marketing

f = a function to be specified

i = cross sessional

$\beta_1, \beta_2$ , are regression coefficients which determine the contribution of the independent variables.

e = residual or stochastic term.

**DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

**Test of Hypotheses**

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Social media marketing has no significant relationship with consumers buying behaviour in Kogi State.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Website marketing has no significant relationship with consumers buying behaviour in Kogi State.

**Regression results on the choice of digital marketing instruments and consumers buying behaviour**

**Table 2**

CBP1	Coef.	Std. Err.	T	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
SMM	.4568846	.0581299	7.86	0.000	.3425181	.571251
CNM	.375859	.0618324	6.08	0.000	.2542082	.4975098
_cons	.2809958	.1400249	2.01	0.046	.0055069	.5564847
<b>Source</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>Number of obs = 306</b>		
Model	391.479937	2	130.493312	F(3, 319)	= 115.77	
Residual	359.56031	319	1.12714831	Prob > F	= 0.0000	
Total	751.040248	322	2.33242313	R-squared	= 0.5213	
				Adj R-squared	= 0.5167	
				Root MSE	= 1.0617	

Source: Field Survey (2022)

The table 2 shows the regression results for the influence of the choice of digital marketing instruments on consumers buying behaviour in Kogi State (given that R<sup>2</sup>-value= 0.5213). This indicates that the choice of digital marketing instruments explains 52.13% variations in consumers buying behaviour in Kogi State. The model excluded 47.87 %; suggesting that there are additional variables that can be used to predict the variations in consumer buying behaviour that was not captured in this model. Strong bias is corrected by the adjusted R<sup>2</sup>-value (0.5167), which results in the representation of the population. The F-statistic, denoted as F(3, 319), indicates the degrees of freedom associated with the regression model. The associated p-value (Prob > F) demonstrates that the regression model is statistically significant at the 1% level (p < 0.01). The high F-value of 751.04 reflects a strong model fit, thereby rejecting the null hypothesis, as the p-value is less than 0.001.

**Discussion of Findings**

Table 2 indicates that social media marketing exhibits a positive linear relationship with consumer buying behaviour, as evidenced by the regression coefficient (β = 0.4569; p < 0.01). The statistically significant p-value confirms that this relationship is meaningful at the 1% level. This finding implies that a 45.7% variation in social media marketing usage is associated with a corresponding change in consumer buying behaviour in Kogi State. Based on this result, the null hypothesis—which posits no significant relationship between

social media marketing and consumer buying behaviour—is rejected. These findings align with those of Varghese and Agrawa (2021) and Abdulraheem and Imouokhome (2021), who similarly observed that social media platforms significantly influence consumer purchasing decisions.

Furthermore, Table 2 reveals that website marketing also has a positive linear relationship with consumer buying behaviour, with a regression coefficient of  $\beta = 0.1374$  and a p-value of 0.05. This suggests that a 13.7% increase in website marketing efforts is likely to yield a 13.7% improvement in consumer buying behaviour in Kogi State. Thus, as website marketing efforts increase, consumer responses become more favourable. Based on the statistical evidence, the null hypothesis asserting no significant relationship between website marketing and consumer buying behaviour is also rejected. This outcome supports the earlier findings of Sulaiman et al. (2021) and Hayder (2017), who similarly found a significant and positive relationship between website marketing and consumer purchasing behaviour.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study established that selected digital marketing tools significantly affect consumers' purchasing decisions. Two major tools of digital marketing were investigated. Empirical evidence shows that a substantial linear association exists between social media marketing and consumers' buying behaviours in Kogi State. Website marketing was proven to have a robust and favourable linear association with customers' purchasing patterns in Kogi State. This indicates that when website marketing changes, more consumers' purchasing patterns will also change correspondingly. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- (i) More effort should be tailored towards increasing the use of social media marketing, as this will enhance a positive buying behaviour by customers.
- (ii) Website marketing has a strong influence on consumers buying behaviour, hence, managers of enterprises should use this medium as a way of marketing their products to esteem customers.

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