
ONLINE ADVERTISING AND CONSUMERS' PATRONAGE OF FEMALE WEARS IN PORT HARCOURT METROPOLIS

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ABSTRACT

This study examined effect of online advertising on consumers' patronage of female wears in Port Harcourt metropolis. The specific objectives of the study are to evaluate effect of social media advertising, email advertising and mobile advertising on customers' purchase behaviour. The study formulated and tested three hypotheses. An explanatory research design was adopted in study. The population of study comprised residents of Port Harcourt metropolis. A sample size of 500 residents participated in the study. A structured questionnaire served as the research instrument. The formulated hypotheses were tested using one way ANOVA, Pearson correlation, and linear regression. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 served as test statistic. The study found that social media advertising, email advertising and mobile advertising significantly affect customers' patronage of females wears in Port Harcourt metropolis. Thus, the study concludes that customers' reliance on online advertising significantly enhance patronage of female wears; and recommends that marketing firms of female wears that seek enhanced patronage of their female wears should in addition to the traditional advertising methods, integrate online advertising into their advertising.

Keywords: Consumers' Patronage, Female Wears, Nigeria Consumers, Online Advertising

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of new technologies have changed the nature of advertising over (Chai et al., 2011). Online advertising has emerged as one recent facet of product advertising; and has become a crucial platform engaged by firms enhance brand awareness and equity. In fact, improvements in global connectivity has given firms impetus to promote products over the Internet. Interestingly, literature remark that there is a tremendous growth in firms' adoption of online advertising.

Online shopping has gained a wide acceptance among customers. Thus, many firms now resort to online advertising to reach online shoppers. However, Jogi and Vashisth (2021) report that organizations also use social sites to make their product popular among consumers. In spite of the unique roles of traditional advertisement, the commonality in the use of online advertising is indicative of its high preference.

Yaveroglu and Donthu (2018) remarked that sequel to the Internet revolution, firms now sees it as a veritable platform to make their products accessible to the world. The popularity of the use of the Internet is not necessarily hinged on its ubiquity, it is rather premised on the unique advantages it offers. Chandon and Chtourou (2005) assert that Internet interactivity confers superiority on online advertisement. On the basis of this feature, users are able to interface with firms in their bid to obtain more product information.

Among other advantages, online advertising offer flexibility, unrestricted access and global reach. This has made online advertising a tool of choice in firms' bid to gain the attention of consumers with differing attitudes and behaviours and across cultures. However, the ubiquity of online advertising notwithstanding,

there is a relatively scarce supply of studies designed to ascertain the effectiveness of online advertising on consumers purchase behaviour, especially in this clime. Bakshi and Gupta (2013) aver that the US, Asia and Europe dominates studies on customers' attitude towards online advertising.

The objective of this study is thus, to establish the roles of online advertising in customers' patronage of female wears. The specific objectives are to examine the:

1. Influence of social media marketing on customers' purchase of female wears;
2. Extent to which email marketing determines customers' patronage of female wears; and
3. Level of influence mobile advertising exert on customers' patronage of female wears.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Concept of Online Advertising

Traditionally, firms advertise in order to introduce new products as well as take hold of customers in the market. Interestingly, despite the lack of customers' trust in firms that deploy online advertisement, many customers still consider online advertisement as a veritable source of information. Online advertising connotes firms' adoption of online platforms for advertising purposes. These online platforms in most cases rely on use of social media. The most common social media platforms for online advertising include but not limited to Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest, Others are YouTube and Google banners on different websites.

Online advertising is enabled by Internet revolution which in the early 20th century. Advances in information technology heralded the emergence of the Internet; and the emergence of the Internet served as the launch pad for businesses to advertise goods and services to global audience. Due to its reach and low cost, management of most corporations realized that taking advantage of the Internet was the best option to attract customers. In fact, literature recognise online advertising as the most effective means of reaching global customers. Ateke and Isaac (2020) presented the Internet as a disruptive innovation that has significantly altered the way business is conducted, giving firms the leeway to effect value creation and delivery and giving consumers a wide array of choices.

Literature acknowledge that customers attitude towards online advertising could be entertaining, informative, credible, economic and value corrupting (Ewanlen & Obeki, 2021). Ninan (2008) asserts that proper and effective advertising always help firms improve their brand image and increase market share. Among others, literature identifies likeability, brand image, persuasiveness, celebrity endorsement and product information as factors that contribute to online advertising efficiency.

Halley and Balldinger (2011) specifically identified entertainment and product information as major reasons for the likeability of advertised products. The foregoing suggests that entertainment and product information are principal factors that influence the capacity of online advertising to affect consumers buying behaviour. Anusha (2019) reports that internet advertising increases products awareness, and reduces the cost of creating product awareness.

Literature is replete with common forms of online advertisement. The most frequent ones are social media advertising, email advertising and mobile advertising. These are adopted as dimensions of online advertising in this study.

Social Media Advertising

Social media advertising simply refers to the use of social media for advertising purposes. Azeem, and Haq (2012) conceive social media advertising as a concept that implies the use of social networks, online communities, blogs, wikis or any other online collaborative media for advertising purposes. Firms' usage

of social media for advertising is essentially hinged on organizations leveraging on social media capacity to gain traffic.

Literature suggests that the interactivity of the Internet empowers social media for advertising purposes. It is commonly believed among industry watchers that consumers rely on the interactivity of Internet in their utilization of digital channels. Social media advertising is reputed for playing a pivotal role in changing consumers' perception. Bagozzi et al. (2000) opines that social media effectiveness is enhanced when organizations' concrete and timely information are seamlessly transmitted to customers. Moreover, Hanafizadeh et al. (2012) identify entertainment, customization, interaction, word of mouth and trend as the unique properties of social media.

Empirical evidence attest to the importance of social media advertising in facilitating customers' product purchase. Specifically, Yaveroglu and Donthu (2008) reports that a significant positive relationship exists between social media advertising and consumer perception. Relatedly, Singh (2016) report that there is a positive correlation between social media advertising and consumer behaviour; Wong and Tang (2008) states that the proliferation of social media assists customers in engagements with brands.

Furthermore, Li and Moussraux (2013) concludes that social media serves as a crucial avenue to generate vital information to customers; while Chui et al. (2005) reports that social media have significant effect on consumers' trust; while consumers' trust significantly affect perceived usefulness of social media for advertising purposes and customers' intention to buy. In lieu of the foregoing, we study hypothesize that:

Ho₁: Social media advertising has no significant relationship with customers' patronage of female wears

Email Advertising

Since its introduction in the 1990s, email advertising has attracted continuous praise for being one of the most advanced and recognized advertising channels of the new century. Its role as both a tool and a channel of digital advertising have been recognized (Ateke & Isaac, 2020). Heinonen (2011) advocate that email advertising though not as popular nowadays, was reputed for driving direct marketing. The primary purpose of firms' adoption of email advertising were not restricted to establishing new relationships with customers but also maintaining them to the extent of creating customer loyalty. Chittenden and Rettie (2003) assert that email advertising is commonly recognized as a new and powerful mode of digital advertising. It is generally recognized as a convenient channel for attracting consumers.

Chandon and Chtourou (2005) report that for every dollar a firm spends on email advertising, it has the capacity to generate about 300 to 400 per cent worth of profit. The authors asserts that email advertising is more effective than social media advertising. In spite of the perceived advantage of email advertising, experience has shown that it is not embraced by all firms.

Aziz and Ariffin (2010) report that in comparison to other digital channels, email is the most efficient means of online advertising. This notwithstanding, not all firms that embrace email advertising report positive results. Mir (2012) and Singh and Bamoriya (2012) found customers are often guilty of mixing up email advertising efforts with firms regular newsletters. In spite of this, Dutta-Bergman (2006) remark that email advertising is a veritable tool for increasing sales. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

Ho₂: Email advertising has no significant relationship with customers' patronage of female wears.

Mobile Advertising

Mobile advertising is commonly seen as advertisements sent to and presented on mobile devices. Priyanka. (2012) perceives mobile advertising as a component of mobile commerce. To Campbell et al. (2011) mobile advertising is radically different from traditional advertising. The authors argue that the features of mobile

advertising enables firms not only to send unique, personalized and customized messages, but also empowers customers to engage in discussions while facilitating transactions.

Experience has shown that the deployment of mobile devices for communication purposes empowers mobile advertising to be highly interactive (Hsu, 2012). The interactive nature of mobile advertising suggests that a customer may reply to an advertisement through a variety of options, including phoning, sending an SMS, MMS or an email, or logging into the advertiser's web page.

Mobile advertising has gained common usage among firms for enhanced market performance. In spite of this reality, it is expedient to ascertain the influence of mobile advertising has on firms' performance. Several empirical investigations on the roles of mobile advertisement on customers purchase decisions abound. Chanthinok (2018) study reports that mobile advertising exerts positive significant influence on all forms of business outcomes. Consequently, we hypothesize that:

Ho₃: Mobile advertising has no significant relationship with customers' patronage of female wears

Theoretical Framework

This study takes its bearing from stimulus-response (S-R) theory. S-R also known as classical conditioning model is a classic psychological model used to explain how individuals behave (Sapkota, 2019). This theory is concerned with the study of connections between stimuli and behaviour. S-R theory acknowledges that certain stimuli trigger responses from consumers. Such stimuli could be external objects, situations or cues that consumers perceive, whilst responses are consumers reactions to these stimuli (Sapkota, 2019). The theory posits that consumers react largely to external stimuli when faced with purchasing situations (Schiffman & Kanuk 2010).

Priyanka (2012) explained that S-R theory as a learning process whereby stimuli encourage actions. This suggests that consumers' actions depend on the types of stimuli they are exposed to. One interesting aspect of this theory is that it only focuses on external cues to the neglect of internal cues. Empirical evidence has shown that brand attributes, marketing communications and social influences are external stimuli that affect individuals' behaviour.

METHODOLOGY

This is an explanatory study. This choice of this research design is predicated on the fact that it enables the examination of effect of common forms of online advertising on customers' patronage. The population of study is the entire residents of Rivers state, Nigeria. However, the target population are residents of Port Harcourt metropolis. According to the Nigeria Population Commission (2021), the estimated population of Port Harcourt metropolis is 3,324,694. On the basis of Saunders et al. (2009) assertion, a sample size of not less than 500 would be considered adequate for a population of more than 500,000. On this premise, this study adopts 500 as its sample size.

The study adopted and modified the instrument of Sapkota (2019). The questionnaire consists sections one and two. Section one solicits respondents personal data while section two contains statements that measures the forms of online advertising and customers patronage. The adopted and modified draft questionnaire was subjected to pilot test in Choba, a suburb in Rivers State. The findings of the pilot survey informed the extent of modifications made to the final questionnaire. The final copy of the questionnaire was subjected to Cronbach alpha test. The report shows that the instrument is .792 reliable in consistently reporting findings which is above the tolerable limit of .600.

Five hundred (500) copies of the instrument were randomly distributed to respondents in Port Harcourt metropolis. The drop and pick later method was used in the administration of the research instrument. A

copy of the questionnaire was either drop at the residence or offices of respondents. 400 copies were retrieved while 380 copies were found usable. This represents 76% return rate.

On the measurement of research variables, social media advertising, email advertising and mobile advertising, served as measures for online advertising while years of shopping online serve as a measure for consumer patronage. Respondents were expected to state the extent of agreement or otherwise on a seven point Likert- type of scale using 1, Strongly Disagree (SD), 2, Disagree (D), 3, Somewhat Disagree (SWD) 4, Neither Agree nor Disagree (ND), 5, Somewhat Agree(SWA) 6, Agree (A) and 7, Strongly Agree (SA). The collected data were presented with descriptive statistic. The formulated hypotheses were tested using one way ANOVA, Pearson correlation, and linear regression. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 served as test statistic.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Table 1: Respondents' characteristics

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	180	47
Female	200	53
Age Bracket		
Below 20 years	30	8
21-30 years	80	21
31-40 years	110	29
41-50 years	82	22
Above 51 years	78	20
Marital Status		
Single	129	33.9
Married	145	38.2
Engaged	106	27.9
Highest Educational Level		
Secondary	98	25.7
Polytechnic	122	32.1
University	160	42.2
Occupation		
Private Employee	75	19.7
Public Employee	85	22.3
Self Employed	95	25.0
Student	34	8.9
Unemployed	46	12.1
Retiree	45	11.8
Annual Income(# Million)		
Below 2.00	112	29.5
2.1- 3.0	65	17.1
3.1-4.0	81	21.3
4.1-5.0	77	20.3
Above 5	45	11.8
Online Shopping Experience		
Below 5 years	89	23.4
5 – 10 years	86	22.6
11-15 years	85	22.4
Above 15 years	120	31.6

Table 1 shows that the most predominant (29%) age bracket is 31-40. Closely following (22%) is 41-50 years. The least frequent (8%) are respondents under 20 years of age. Table 1 also shows that the most predominant (29%) age bracket is 31-40. Closely following (22%) is 41-50 years. The least frequent (8%) are respondents under 20 years of age. On the basis of respondents' marital status, majority (38%) of the

respondents are married while the engaged was the least (28%). Similarly, the respondents' highest educational level reveals that university education was in majority (42%) while secondary education was the least (26%). Also, the occupation of the respondents show that about 45% employees in the private sector as the most dominant while student (8%) was the least. In the same vein, respondents with annual income below #2million was the most frequent (30%) while income earners of above #5million was the least (12%). Finally, on the basis of respondents online purchase experience, the result shows that 120 (32%) have above 15 years online shopping experience while 86(23%) respondents has between 5-10 years.

Table 2: Descriptive and correlation values of proxies of online advertising and customer patronage

Variables	Mean	Standard Dev.	1	2	3	4
Customers Patronage	3.126	.543	1			
Social Media Advertising	3.802	.491	.761**	1		
Email Advertising	3.071	.439	.521**	.447**	1	
Mobile Advertising	3.108	.574	.492**	.462**	.397**	1

Table 2 reveals that social media advertising has the highest mean score (3.802). This is closely followed by customers' patronage (3.126) while email advertising report 3.071 as the least mean score. Similarly, the study reveals that the standard deviation vary from .492 to .671. The Pearson correlation analysis test was conducted to ascertain the strength of relationship between customers' patronage and forms of online advertising. The result shows positive relationship between forms of online advertising and customers' patronage. Specifically, social media advertising and customers patronage reports a strong (.671**) relationship while email advertising exhibit a moderate (.521**) relationship. Finally, mobile advertising report a weak (.492**) relationship with customers online patronage.

Table 3: Summary of results of test of hypothesis one

R= .605	R ² =. 582	F= 4.231	Sig. F=.001
Variable	Beta	T	Sig.
Customers Patronage	.671	7.432	.001
Regression Model Y	= 1.321+.671(Social media marketing)		

Table 3 show the summary of results of tests conducted to verify the Ho₁. The ANOVA test reports an F value of 4.231, while the coefficient of determination I =.605 and the adjusted R² =.582 in the linear regression analysis. The adjusted R² in the linear regression analysis implies that the model explain about 58% variation in the dependent variable while the F value 4.231 in the ANOVA test indicate the capability of the model to estimate the relationship (Hair et al., 2006). In addition, Table 3, reveals a p value of .001. This is below the tolerable limit of .005. The value indicate the existence of significant relationship between social media advertising and customers' patronage.

Table 4: Summary of results of test of hypothesis two

R= .413	R ² =.387	F= 1.171	Sig. F= 002
Variable	Beta	T	Sig.
Customers patronage	.521	5.063	.002
Regression Model Y	= 1.321 +.521(Email marketing)		

The result of ANOVA test in Table 4, reports F value =1.171. It also reports R= .413 and adjusted R²= .387 in the linear regression analysis. Also Table 4, reveals a p value = .002. This value is below .005 level of significance. This p value therefore connotes a significant relationship. Similarly, the adjusted R² =.387 implies that the independent variable can account for about 39% changes in the dependent variable. Also, the F value 1.171 attests to the ability of the model to explain the relationship (Hair, *et al*, 2006). This mathematical relationship is presented in Table 4.

Table 5: Summary of results of test of hypothesis three

R =.434	R ² = .398	F=1.095	Sig. F. = 000
Variable	Beta	T	Sig.
Customers Patronage	.492	2.091	.000
Regression Model Y	= 2.001+.435(Mobile advertising)		

Result in Table 5, shows an R value of .434 and adjusted R² =.398 in the linear regression analysis. These statistics imply that the model can explain about 40% variation in the dependent variable. In the same vein, Table 5, reveals an F value of 1.095 in the ANOVA test. The F value in an ANOVA test indicates the capacity of a model to establish relationships (Hair, *et al* 2006). Furthermore, the p value of .000 as in Table 5 is far below the tolerable limit of .005. This indicates the existence of significant relationship between mobile marketing and customers' patronage. This relationship is mathematically expressed in Table 5.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The essence of this study is to ascertain the effectiveness of online advertising in stimulating customers' patronage of female wears. The study was conceived to determine the extent of customers' reliance on online advertisement in their purchase of female wears. Interestingly, the item of purchase is feminine. As a result of the nature of product, the a priori expectation was that females would form the dominant respondents. The finding of this study contradicts this expectation. In fact, the study reveals nearly equal gender representation in reliance on online advertising in the purchase of female wears. Specifically, the study reports that about 47% of male relied on online advertising to make online purchase of female wears. This finding is consistent with that of Mahmood (2012) that male respondents exhibit nearly the same attitude towards online advertising.

With respect to the research objectives, the study reveals that the various forms of online advertising show positive significant relationship with customers' patronage of female wears. Specifically, customers' reliance on social media advertising account for about 58% variation for patronage decision. The finding suggests that there are about 42% other factors that account for changes in patronage of females wears. This finding is as expected. Experience has shown that a single variable may not entirely influence the patronage of an item. Furthermore, our findings are consistent with the report of Asraar–Ahmed and Sathish (2015) that the adoption of social media for advertising purposes have a greater possibility of generating higher rate of return on advertising expense compared to other medium of online advertisement. In the same vein, Hsu (2012) found that firms use Facebook an effective tool in creating brand awareness. The consequence is that an increase in brand awareness has the capacity to result in greater brand patronage.

On the influence of email advertising on customers' patronage of female wears, the study report a positive significant relationship. The study reports that customers' reliance on email advertising contribute about 38% change in purchase of female wears. This finding is as expected. In fact, it is consistent with the report that online advertisement positively influences customers' patronage (Dutta-Bergman, 2006). However, our findings contradicts the assertion of Aziz and Ariffin (2010) that email advertising is the most efficient compared to other forms of online advertising. A close comparison of the findings of this study reveals that email advertising is the least efficient. The most probable reason could be associated with the product of purchase, situation/condition of purchase and the peculiarities of the respondents. Another probable reason for this finding could be the inability of respondents to distinguish between email advertising effects and firms' newsletters (Mir, 2012).

Finally, on the influence of mobile advertising on customers' patronage, the study report that mobile advertising can account for about 40 % variation in customers' patronage of female wears. This finding is consistent with expectation as experience has shown that numerous factors exist that could positively influence customers buying behaviour.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Contingent upon the evolution of information technology and cheap access to the Internet, firms are shifting from traditional advertising to online advertising. Firms' preference for online advertisement is premised on operational cost, media reach, the interactive nature of online adverts and its general appeal to youth. Consequently, it is pertinent for all discerning marketing managers to seek understanding of the effectiveness of online advertising on customers purchase behaviour. As a result of the unique attributes of the Internet, marketing literature recognize it as a vital medium for changing consumers' perception.

Against this backdrop, this study examined the effect of online advertisement on customers' purchase of female wears. The study surveyed residents of Port Harcourt metropolis. This study found online advertising effective in simulating customers' purchase. Specifically, the study found significant relationships between social media advertising, email advertising and mobile advertising and customers' purchase of female wears. The study therefore concludes that customers' purchase of female wears in Port Harcourt metropolis is dependent on online advertising; and recommends that firms desirous of targeting buyers of female wears should in addition to traditional advertising, embrace online advertising as this would enable them achieve their anticipated objective.

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