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SOCIAL INFLUENCE AND HEDONIC MOTIVATION AS DETERMINANTS OF ONLINE SHOPPING ADOPTION AMONG TERTIARY INSTITUTION STUDENTS IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This evaluated the influence of social influence and hedonic values on online shopping behaviour/adoption among tertiary education students in south-south Nigeria. Studies have been conducted on the technology acceptance model but none on the specific components of social influence and hedonic values. A cross sectional research design was adopted for this study and it was appropriate because it will help to describe current practices regarding the subject matter. Partial Least Squares and Structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was used to test the hypotheses and Warp-PLS 6.0 software was used. The results show that these components impact seriously on online shopping adoption. The ongoing campaign aimed at encouraging Nigerians to adopt e-transaction and carry less cash is a step in the right direction.

Key words: social influence, hedonic motivation, online shopping intention.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Internet stores vast amounts of information, serves as a communication and transaction medium, and provides the benefit of asynchrony (i.e., the Internet marketer is available for shoppers any time of the day or night) (Swaminathan et al., 1999). The wide variety of information on the Internet allows consumers to browse products/services extensively, tailor specific information to their needs, compare prices, place/change orders, and receive feedback without travelling to a physical retailing entity

(Turner, 1999). The Internet, as an extensive shopping channel, provides consumers with a number of benefits over traditional retail channels. According to Clement (2019) the number of internet users in Nigeria for the year 2018 is 92.3 million and forecasting 187.8 million by the year 2023 (www.statista.com, 2019). The average internet users in 2017 are 72.4 million to 92.3 million in 2018, which means there are around 20 million potential online shoppers. It has been seen that there is an explosive growth of internet users. While Konga.com, the second leading E-commerce website for



online shopping in Nigeria, said for the year 2018, the e-company has a customer pool of 750,000 online shoppers. However, there are only 200,000 active customers (www.abbakin.com, 2019). Although considerable research has addressed technology acceptance, little research has examined social influence and hedonic values influences on online shopping adoption. Our research relies on social influence and hedonic shopping values which are important constructs that was tested on the adoption of online shopping. Thus, this study will help marketers to understand the determinant factors that influence users and to create the right policies and actions to attract customers to use this service. It is logical to expect that consumers' dependence on various information sources in the traditional shopping setting may also apply to the online shopping setting. Thus, online consumers may differ in their social influence and hedonic shopping values associated with purchasing different types of products, experience, innovativeness, the shopping value depending on the availability of information required to make the purchase decision on the online shopping (Chine, Nnedum & Ike, 2018; Nnedum & Ezeokana, 2005; Okorie, Nwaizugbo, Okeke, & Nnedum, 2021).

From that act above, there is a clear gap exists between number of internet users and the number of online shoppers which can be seen. This is a challenge for Marketers. Therefore, understanding consumer's social influence and hedonic shopping values for internet shopping is a very important component for understanding e-commerce (Sims & Xu, 2012). A number of prior studies have attempted to identify factors that either encourage consumers to engage in online shopping or discourage them from online

shopping. The results have indicated that positive incentives to shop online (convenience, competitive prices, excitement, etc.) are common, whereas factors discouraging online shopping vary and are hard to identify (Doolin, et al, 2005). Studies (Venkatesh, et al., 2003) have also relied on the unified acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT) with components such as performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence and hedonic shopping values among others. No study has separated has attempted these components in isolation. Therefore, this work studied social influence and hedonic values as determinants of online shopping among tertiary education students in South-south Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Online Consumers

Compared to offline shoppers, online shoppers have been found to be more willing to innovate and take risks and are generally more impulsive (Dobre & Milovan-Ciuta, 2015). According to Virvalaite, et al, (2015), the likelihood of engaging in online shopping is positively correlated to compulsive behaviour and limited self-regulating ability of a consumer. Furthermore, features of the Internet and online shopping, such as visual sensory stimulation being available at all times, could weaken self-regulation amongst consumers (Pontes, et al., 2016) and the instantly available online stores fulfil shopping urges when and where they occur. Lee and Barnes (2016) have also argued that these features of online shopping could be a more important determinant of online consumer behaviour than the rational economic or personal characteristics, such as cost and convenience in the online shopping environment.



Another determinant of online consumer behaviour is involvement and experience with online shopping. Foscht, et al, (2013) identified two groups; experienced online consumers (those who have made purchases online) and inexperienced online consumers (those who have likely browsed online for products on the Internet, but have not made purchases). The distinction is made to investigate online purchase intent and online repurchase intent, as it is expected that risk perception will differ based on previous experience with online shopping. Experience with previous purchases has a significant effect on future purchase behaviour (Foscht et al., 2013). Experienced online shoppers are consumers who often make purchases online, who are familiar with the characteristics of this retail channel and who have previously been found to display different buying behaviours from inexperienced online consumers (Hernandez, et al, 2011). Although experienced online consumers perceive risks when shopping online, these risks may not significantly affect Internet patronage behaviours. Consumers who do not have previous experience with online shopping are termed 'new users.' Such consumers are often found to be more involved in the online purchase process and expected to perceive more risk with online shopping, whereas experienced online consumers have used online shopping channels successfully and know that it is safe and easy to use. Inexperienced online consumers are assumed to be more sensitive to the risks associated with online shopping. Hence perceived risk is predicted to have a greater influence on the potential online patronage behaviours of inexperienced online consumers than that of experienced online consumers. The current study addresses this prediction by focusing on

consumer social influence and hedonic values as an influence on online shopping intention among undergraduates in south-south geo-political zone of Nigeria.

2.2 Online Consumer Behaviour

To establish an online presence, marketers need to understand exactly who their consumers are, what their spending patterns look like and which products they prefer. Similar to business operations, consumption habits have undergone major changes (Richa, 2012) and researchers and academics agree that demographic, social, economic and cultural changes in the past, beyond the control of retailers, have had a significant effect on consumer behaviour (Constantinides, 2006). Okari (2015) identify two groups of uncontrollable factors and three groups of controllable factors that underpin the online buying process. Okari (2015) regard consumer and environmental characteristics as uncontrollable by the consumer, whereas product, medium and merchant characteristics are regarded as controllable factors. Consumer characteristics refer to factors of individual to a consumer, for example demographics, values and behavioural characteristics, whereas environmental characteristics include social influences and mass media. To elaborate on the three groups of controllable factors that affect online consumer behaviour, Cheung and Lee (2013) describe product characteristics as knowledge about the product, product type and price. Medium characteristics refer to web-specific characteristics, such as ease of navigation, interface and network speed. Lastly, merchant characteristics include factors such as service quality, privacy and reputation of the online retailer.



A consumer's decision to purchase or repurchase online is also affected by the online shopping experience. Chandra and Sinha (2013) define the online shopping experience as a process of four stages (home page, product catalogue, order form and customer service), embracing elements such as searching, finding, browsing, selecting, comparing and interacting with the online retailer. Thus, the online experience is arguably more complicated than the physical shopping experience, considering that the consumer is not only a shopper, but also an information technology user (Wu, 2013). For traditional retailers expanding their business onto an online platform, their online experience requires special attention. Many consumers easily change their perception of an online retailer due to adverse experiences, which often leads to complaint behaviour, critical to consumer loyalty and retention. Taking into account that it is five to eight times more expensive to acquire a new consumer than to retain an existing consumer (Wessels & Drennan, 2010), the online experience remains critical. The consumer's impression of the online experience can be influenced by design, emotions and atmosphere during interaction with the website. Such elements are meant to induce consumer goodwill and loyalty and affect the final online purchase decision of the consumer (Constantinides, 2006).

2.3 Technology Acceptance

We are currently seeing a new generation of young people who grew up with the Internet and digital technologies and don't know a life without it (Howe & Strauss, 2000). This new generation of young people is called the Net generation, Generation Y, the Millennial Generation or Digital Natives. These youngsters have a natural aptitude and high

skill levels pertaining to the use of new technologies, even more so for those who were born in the U.S. and Canada from the early 1980s to the late 1990s (Oblinger, et al, 2005). Their inclination to certain types of entertainment, certain learning styles, social choices, modes of communication and overall styles, are characterized by their early and pervasive exposure to technology (Saiedian, 2009). When it comes to learning preferences, Digital Natives favour receiving information quickly, they are really good at quickly processing information, they choose to multi-task, they have a preference for non-linear access to information, they dislike traditional lectures, favour active rather than passive learning, they depend largely on communications technologies in order to access information and perform social and professional interactions, they expect to be occupied by their environment with participatory, sensory-rich, investigative activities (physical or virtual), are more concerned with visual media opportunities for input, they favour learning by doing, instead of telling or reading, and they like to discover rather than being told (Jones & Shao, 2011; Liebenberg, et al, 2018).

One should not make the mistake of describing all of today's students as the Net generation, because not all of them had or still have access to state-of-the-art, omnipresent technology. In Africa, Internet penetration for households in 2019 was a mere 28.2%, (Bogdan-Martin, 2019), therefore African students do not fit the description of the Net generation. With 47.1% of Nigerian households using the Internet (Clement, 2019), Nigeria was ranked 74 out of 80 in 2019 amongst developing countries (USNews, 2019). There was a significant rise in Internet user in Nigeria and it can be rationalized by the rise of mobile



broadband subscriptions from 26 per 100 inhabitants in 2012 to 59.5 per 100 inhabitants in 2018 (UN Broadband Commission, 2019). Research conducted at a South-west, Nigeria, assessing student's utilization computer on over 1526 students in 2019, found that a lot of students entering Nigerian universities for the first time are not sufficiently equipped with the computer skills that are needed during their first year of study (Ebijuwa & Mabawonku, 2019). Furthermore, African students are most vulnerable of being disadvantaged, because of their lack of former skills (Nash, 2009). The claim that drastic changes need to be made by educators as well as universities, because of students' completely different approach to learning is not new and it continues to have an ongoing significance. However, there is a need for a more carefully critical and nuanced understanding of the outcomes of new technologies on the habits and subject positions of learners and teachers in higher education (Bayne & Ross, 2011) and according to Jones and Shao (2011) "There is no evidence that there is a single new generation of young students entering Higher Education and the terms Net Generation and Digital Native do not capture the processes of change that are taking place".

1. Social Influence

Social influence is defined as the extent to which consumers of technology perceive that people who are important to them (e.g. relatives, friends) think they should use the technology (Venkatesh, et al., 2012), and this study adopts this definition. Moreover, social influence is equivalent to subjective norm in the Theory of Reason Action and Theory of Planned Behaviour, where it is an important factor that affects the adoption of a system

(Venkatesh et al., 2003). Likewise, since online shopping apps are not a mandatory technology, in the sense that the consumers have the free choice to use them, social influence has the potential to affect the behavioural intention to use online shopping apps. Folarin and Ogundare (2016) found that social influence is a significant determinant of the consumers' behavioural intention to use e-commerce, and that social influence affects the consumer's intention to use e-commerce in Nigeria. This factor is defined as the degree to which an individual perceives *important others* (such as bosses, peers, subordinate, etc.) and believes that he or she should use e-commerce. Social influence construct has been used in UTAUT model (Venkatesh, et al., 2003) and model of PC utilization (Thompson, et al, 1991).

2. Hedonic Motivation (HM)

Hedonic Motivation is defined as "the fun or pleasure derived from using a technology" (Venkatesh, et al., 2012), and in previous technology acceptance studies it has been shown to be an important factor in determining the acceptance of technology (Brown & Venkatesh, 2005). Moreover, if a technology creates pleasure and fun while the user is using it, users are able to gain enjoyment, which influences their behavioural intention to pursue the technology (Lee, 2008). Venkatesh, et al. (2012) proved Hedonic Motivation as a significant factor that affects the behavioural intention to use mobile internet in a consumer context. Similarly in an online shopping service context in a study by Yang (2010) it was concluded that hedonic factors are critical determinants of the online shopping consumer usage, and that hedonic performance expectancy is gained by the users thought the fun obtained by using



various features and functions in online shopping technology.

Based on the above review, the following hypotheses are formulated for the study and are stated in alternate forms:

Ha₁: Social influence of undergraduates in south-south geo-political zone of Nigeria has no significant influence on online shopping adoption.

Ha₂: Hedonic motivation of undergraduates in south-south geo-political zone of Nigeria has no significant influence on online shopping adoption.

3. METHOD

A cross sectional survey design was adopted for this study so as to obtain the opinion of young consumers on the adoption of online shopping, evaluating the influence of unified theories of acceptance and use of technology and perceived risk. A cross sectional survey design was appropriate because it will help the researcher to look at data at a single point. This study adopted the single methods for data collection, where quantitative methods (survey) were used in order to enhance greater validity of the research by ensuring that there are no gaps to the information or data collected (Saunders, et al, 2009). The study employed cross sectional survey research design study because it provided numeric descriptions of the population and described events as they were (Oso & Onen, 2009).

The researcher used primary data collection method which was questionnaire to elicit consumer's perceived risk and technology acceptance on online shopping intention. The study covered undergraduates of selected federal and state universities in south-south geo-political zone of Nigeria which was easy

for us to distribute and retrieve the questionnaire and then analysed the situation. The was based on a sample of 600 respondent tertiary institution students and relied on questionnaire for data collection and each of the two independent variables and the dependent variable were measured with a number of items on a five-point Likert scale. Social influence has 3 items, hedonic value has 3 items. All questions were on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree), 3 (uncertain or not applicable) to 5 (strongly agree). Five questions were used to measure the depending variable which is intention to purchase. Research questionnaire consisted of a 5 Point Likert Scale (1=Strongly Disagree (SD), 2=Disagree (D), 3=Uncertain/Not applicable (U), 4=Agree (A), 5=Strongly Agree) (SA). The Likert scale is a scale that is commonly used for questionnaires, and is mostly used in survey research. The administrations of the instrument were through personal distribution by the researcher and field assistant. The researchers visited some of the institutions at his disposal while using his colleagues for those at far reach to administered the copies of questionnaires. Partial Least Squares Structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was used to test the hypotheses and Warp-PLS 6.0 software was used.

4. Results and Discussions

A total of 600 copies of questionnaire were distributed to the students/respondents of the selected universities within the South-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Of this number 420 copies representing 70 per cent response rate, were returned and certified usable. This response rate is considered quite high for a study of this nature and was informed by the method adopted by the researcher. In terms of



reliability, the two IVs and the DV show Cronbach alpha values of 0.7 and above, thus confirming internal consistency of the constructs.

H₀₁: Social influence (SI) of undergraduates in south-south geo-political zone of Nigeria has no significant influence on online shopping adoption (OSA). The path SI → OSA has coefficient = .142, p-value = .002 which is well below the .05 margin of error and t-value = 2.961. The 95% confidence interval of .048 and .236 did not straddle a zero in between hence we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate and conclude that social influence (SI) of undergraduates in south-south geo-political zone of Nigeria has a significant influence on online shopping adoption (OSA) of the undergraduate students.

H₀₂: Hedonic motivation (HM) of undergraduates in south-south geo-political zone of Nigeria has no significant influence on online shopping adoption (OSA). The path HV → OSA has coefficient = .195, p-value = <.001 which is well below the .05 margin of error and t-value = 4.100. The 95% confidence interval of .102 and .288 did not straddle a zero in between hence we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypotheses and conclude that hedonic motivation (HM) of undergraduates in south-south geo-political zone of Nigeria has a significant influence on online purchase intention (OPI) of the undergraduate students.

The relationship between social influence and online shopping adoption. Results from the structural model indicated no significant relationship between social influence and online shopping adoption, for neither the context of clothing and fashions. This result is in contrast to what was expected (i.e., a negative relationship between social

influence and online shopping adoption). Because social influence does not seem to affect the technology acceptance of online consumers in this study, it implies that consumers were not influenced by friends and families with regards to the performance of product purchased online. The relevance of social influences is supported by research from Celik (2011), who proved that social factors have a direct effect on performance expectancy, in the context of online shopping in Turkey. Indeed, the opinion of internal sources (e.g., family and friends) about the usefulness of online shopping is perceived by consumers as personally meaningful, supporting the results of this study. Nevertheless, the role of social influence can become irrelevant, according to Zhang *et al.* (2006), when consumers are confident about purchasing online and become less influenced by others. This study reveals that Nigeria are still not completely confident about purchasing fashion clothing online and are influenced by internal sources.

The relationship between hedonic values/motivation and online shopping adoption. Hedonic values significantly affect the behavioural intention to use online shopping for fashion and clothing which is in alignment with Venkatesh *et al.* (2012), Yang (2010). Therefore, from the results of this study it can be inferred that if the users of online shopping fashion and clothing find the various features and functions in online shopping for fashion and clothing with fun, the users have the intention to use online, and the intention to use will increase the more they find the online shopping fashion and clothing entertaining. Hence, Hedonic Motivations plays a factor of importance in when it comes to determining the intention to use online shopping.



5. Conclusions and Implications

Online shopping is becoming more and more popular because of easy use, availability of products and services 24 hours of a day and high variety of products are available on the internet. This research work evaluated the influence of social influence and hedonic values/motivation on online shopping adoption among tertiary institution students in south-south Nigeria. The correlation result finding of social influence is 0.142, it shows that there is positive correlation between social influence and online shopping adoption. It also reflected that social influence increases the interest towards online shopping behavior. The correlation findings of hedonic motivation are 0.195, it shows that there is a positive correlation between hedonic motivation and purchase intention towards online shopping behavior. It can say that higher the hedonic motivation of the interest towards online shopping behavior. The findings of this study are given the clear picture to online retailers and will help to formulate their online marketing strategies according to the specific online risk factors involved in online shopping. Thus, social influence and hedonic motivations/values are significant determinants of online shopping adoption. Breaking the yolk of cultural barrier requires a massive, multimedia advertising campaign that positions online shopping as an efficient and effective alternative to the traditional shopping, and which demonstrates the various benefits of online shopping can help change the current entrenched brick and mortar (physical) shopping habits of many Nigerians. Nigerian governments, at all levels, should sensitize Nigerians on the importance and benefits of adopting the Internet in all facets of our life and not only as a tool of shopping. The ongoing campaign

aimed at encouraging Nigerians to adopt e-transaction and carry less cash is a step in the right direction. As part of initiatives to achieve a higher penetration rate of the Internet government, through partnership with the local manufacturers of PC, should make PC ownership affordable to all and sundry. Though the costs of Internet connections have reduced substantially, further slash in the acquisition costs and service charges by the Internet Service Providers (ISP) and telecoms companies should be encouraged through appropriate incentives by government to the providers. As a way of reducing costs of doing business in Nigeria and further achieving reduction in the price of the Internet service, federal government should improve the current epileptic electricity supply in the country.

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