



Analysing the Mediating Effect of Social Media on Online Shopping Using Partial Least Square

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Online shopping has become more popular due to increased internet usage, and social media has dramatically influenced and modified customer behavior and decisions to buy from online businesses. Because people are busy and have hectic schedules, online shopping has become increasingly popular in the twenty-first century. Therefore, this study aimed to examine the mediating effect of social media on online shopping behavior in Nigeria.

Methodology: The study used quantitative approach and self-administered questionnaires were used to collect data from 380 online shoppers. The study employs the partial least square structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) approach to identify critical dimensions influencing online shopping behavior in Nigeria and to explore the correlational relationships among constructs.

Results: The results and applications of PLS-SEM evolve a variety of findings; advertising had an insignificant effect on online shopping behavior, while a positive relationship was found between advertising and social media effect. Similarly, the proposed relationship between social media effect and online shopping behavior is supported. In contrast, the projected relationship between trust and online shopping behavior is significant. Finally, the result revealed a strong correlation between trust and online shopping behavior.

Implication: The study contributed to the existing literature and have significant practical implications that can help managers and marketers of online stores to take measures on factors that may influence online shopping behavior in Nigeria.

Keywords: social media, trust, smart-PLS, online shopping

INTRODUCTION

Digital marketing requires the use of social media (Langan et al., 2019) provides excellent benefits that enable businesses to connect with millions of customers worldwide (Bhagaswara, 2021). Companies utilize social media to broaden their marketing efforts and reach new clients (Ancillai et al., 2019). Online stores use social media to connect with customers and persuade them to buy their goods and services. The digitization platform has changed user dynamics and consumption behaviors by increasing the importance of the Internet in everyday life and changing consumer habits (Schnauber-Stockmann & Mangold, 2020; Sharma & Sharma, 2020). Integrating social media with online stores offers the benefit of generating traffic to the

website (Nasidi et al., 2021a; Quesenberry, 2020). Consumers may click on the goods and be redirected to the online shop website by sharing material on social media.

Social media addiction gives online stores an advantage to reach out to their potential consumers. Social media addiction is a type of Internet addiction in which people feel compelled to use social media in excessive amounts. Individuals addicted to social media are typically too worried about it and are motivated by an uncontrolled need to get on and utilize it (Mwangi et al., 2019; Owan et al., 2020). Mood, cognition, physical, and emotional reactions, as well as interpersonal and psychological difficulties have all been linked to social media addiction (Kolhar et al., 2021; Rasmussen et al., 2020; Zhao & Zhou, 2021). It has been stated that social media addiction affects roughly 12% of users across social networking sites (Moore & Craciun, 2021).

Online shopping has grown more popular because of the rise in internet usage and social media addiction. And integration of social media in business and advertising activities (Akar & Dalgic, 2018; Bala & Verma, 2018). In Nigeria, using social media in promoting online stores is enormous because of the reasonable number of people using the platforms. As of January 2020, there were 27.00 million social media users in Nigeria (Datareportal, 2020). Despite advantages in the Nigerian market, many factors influence buying intent in an online transaction. Many of these factors are linked to a facet of confidence gained in online marketing. The trust instilled in customers by a brand's website significantly impacts their shopping behavior. Thus, this research aims to investigate the mediating effect of social media in the relationship between advertising and trust in online shopping in Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Advertising and Online Shopping

Advertising means promoting various goods, services, or ideas to the general public or a particular target audience (Juska, 2017; Murwonugroho & Yudarwati, 2020; Quesenberry, 2020). The primary purpose of advertising is to increase revenues, attract new buyers, and retain existing ones (Aslam & Karjaluo, 2017; Luo et al., 2021). Advertising is paid communication that reaches large audiences through non-personal mass media and other communication channels (Briandana & Dwityas, 2020). Advertising is typically characterized as one-way, paid promotional communication in any form of mass media. Advertising helps in promoting online shopping behavior among consumers. The research established the relationship between advertising and online shopping (Domazet, 2020; Kim & Huh, 2017; Okiyi et al., 2020; Wiese & Akareem, 2020).

Trust and Online Shopping

Trust is individual confidence in other people's values, measured by their presumed honesty, virtue, and competence (Eneizan et al., 2020; Munshi, 2019; Nasidi et al., 2021b). The level of trust directly impacts attitudes, and the higher the level of trust, the stronger the attitude (Suleman & Zuniarti, 2019). Several empirical kinds of research have established the relationship between trust and online shopping (Alharthey, 2020; Haque & Mazumder, 2020; Jiang et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2017; Nassar et al., 2017; Singh & Matsui, 2017; Stouthuysen et al., 2018). Moreover, it has been examined that trust has a significant favorable influence on consumer online shopping decisions (Bhatti et al., 2021; Gera et al., 2021; Qalati et al., 2021; Suhartanto et al., 2018).

Mediating Role of Social Media Effect

Three prerequisite steps must be met (Tryon, 2018). First, the independent variable (IV) must be linked to the dependent variable (DV). The second stage, the independent variable, must link to the mediating variable, and the last stage is that the mediating variable (MV) must connect with the (DV). According to Hayes (2015), the presence of a direct relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable should not be used as a criterion for assessing mediation since mediation can be significant even without a direct connection. Hayes (2017) argued that a non-significant direct result could not be considered a preventing procedure in the mediation test cycle. The researchers choose social media as a mediator because it influences online shopping. Studies examined that social media significantly affects online shopping (Hajli, 2014; Harrigan et al., 2021; Hossain, 2019; Naeem, 2021; Ryu & Park, 2020; Wibowo et al., 2021). Based on the empirical literature reviewed, the conceptual model was developed in [Figure 1](#).

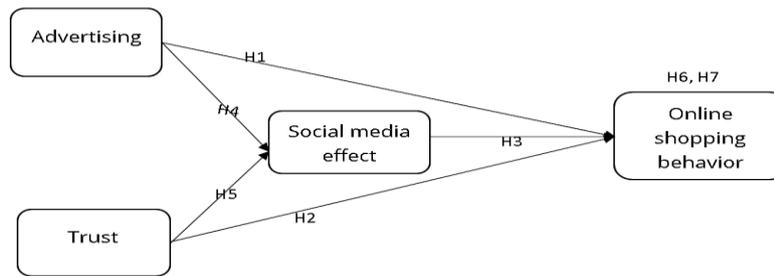


Figure 1. Conceptual model

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

Technological Determinism Theory (TDT)

This research is founded on technological determinism theory (TDT). The theory maintains that changes in communication technology would eventually result in significant changes in a system's culture and social media (Dafoe, 2015; Servaes, 2014). One of this theory's premises is that its relevance is determined by how individuals use or utilize it. According to Hauer (2017), many young people may not have a specific reason for using the Internet, but they assume that since a friend is addicted to it, it is inappropriate for them to be online. While surfing the web, teenagers see or read about their heroes or heronries, most of whom are from cultures other than their own.

Theory of Planned Behavior

The theory of reasoned action (TRA) influenced the creation of the theory of planned behavior (TPB) (Nasiru & Abubakar, 2020; Wibowo et al., 2022; Yim & Byon, 2021). TPB is made to forecast and explain human behavior across a variety of information technology platforms. According to TPB, a person's attitude, subjective norms (SN), and perceived behavioral control (PBC) toward doing specific acts directly impact their actual behavior. The individual's impression of ease or difficulty in doing the behavior of interest is referred to as PBC (Gu & Wu, 2019). Understanding the complexity of online shopping behavior will involve an interlacing of TPB and TRA.

METHODOLOGY

A quantitative technique was applied in the research. The population for this study is made up of Kano metropolis internet shoppers. According to an online sample size calculator, a minimum sample size of 380 is necessary. Respondents were chosen using a simple random sampling method. To minimize sample size error and handle the non-response issue, the questionnaire distribution was raised by 10% and applied to the above minimum sample size specified by the calculation to make it 418. The sample size was increased by 10% to account for other unavoidable flaws such as incomplete filling and the inability of some respondents to return questionnaires (Dewaele, 2018). Therefore, 418 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents. A total of 367 questionnaires were completed and returned. The questionnaires were adapted from previous researches (Alalwan, 2018; Doodoo & Wu, 2019; Fossen & Schweidel, 2019; Kim & Kim, 2021; Qalati et al., 2021). The data gathered through the questionnaire were analyzed using partial least structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) in this study.

Validity and Reliability

The Cronbach's alpha values for the overall measurement and convergent validity are provided in **Table 1** for each construct's validity and reliability. **Table 1** shows that the model's AVE value for all constructs is significantly higher than 0.5, which is the proposed cut-off AVE value (Hair Jr et al., 2020). Furthermore, according to Sarstedt et al. (2019), the composite reliability ratings for both structures were higher than the recommended value of 0.700. The composite results ranged from 0.885 to 0.937. Finally, Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.809 to 0.918, satisfying the 0.700 cut-offs (Hair Jr et al., 2020).

Table 1. Cronbach's alpha (CA), composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE)

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted
Advertising	0.88	0.904	0.511
Online shopping behavior	0.916	0.933	0.669
Social media effect	0.864	0.894	0.515
Trust	0.917	0.931	0.63

Table 2. Fornell-Larcker criterion analysis to check discriminant validity

	Advertising	Online shopping behavior	Social media effect	trust
Advertising	0.715			
Online shopping behavior	0.684	0.818		
Social media effect	0.679	0.648	0.717	
Trust	0.521	0.744	0.587	0.794

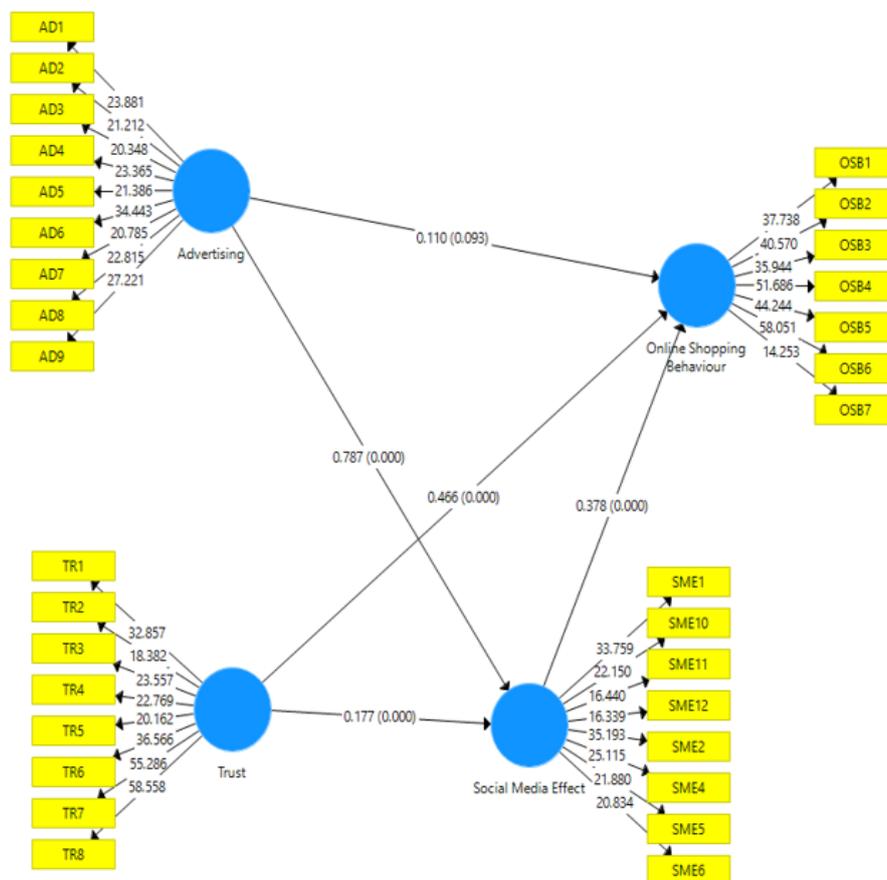


Figure 2. SmartPLS standardized result

The reliability was tested utilizing the internal consistency technique by evaluating the composite reliability values. All variables demonstrated composite reliability (values better than 0.7). The Fornell-Larcker test (Table 2) was used to assess discriminant validity, whereas the AVE (average variance explained) was used to examine convergent validity. According to the requirements for discriminant validity, the square root of AVE should be greater than the correlation between latent variables for each latent variable.

STRUCTURAL MODEL ANALYSIS

The analysis method is converted into SmartPLS 3.0.0 graphics. Figure 2 shows the diagram; in addition, the arrows that link the constructs of this study are decided by the direction of the hypotheses suggested in the framework. The single-headed arrows are used to verify the causal effect of the study construct. Furthermore, Figure 2 explains the standardized estimate for the structural model of this report, showing the factor loading for each item and the mediating effect of social media.

Table 3. Summary of path coefficients

Relationship	Beta value	Standard deviation (SD)	t-Statistics (O/SD)	p-Value
Advertising -> Online shopping behavior	0.110	0.063	1.743	0.082
Advertising -> Social media effect	0.787	0.023	34.556	0.000
Social media -> Online shopping behavior	0.378	0.066	5.735	0.000
Trust -> Online shopping behavior	0.466	0.036	12.817	0.000
Trust -> Social media effect	0.177	0.028	6.35	0.000

Table 4. Summary of the R²

Endogenous construct	R square	R square adjusted
Online shopping behavior	0.704	0.702
Social media effect	0.795	0.794

Table 5. Mediation effect

	O	M	SD	t-Statistics (O/SD)	p-Value
Advertising ->Social media ->Online shopping behavior	0.297	0.296	0.054	5.495	0.000
Trust ->Social media-> Online shopping behavior	0.067	0.066	0.015	4.438	0.000

Note. O: Original sample; M: Sample mean; SD: Standard deviation

Table 3 summarized the study's effects using the SmartPLS structural equation model (SmartPLS SEM). It demonstrates the relationship between the path coefficients, standard deviation (STDEV), probability value (p-value), and each research construct's outcome. The analysis revealed that advertising had a negative and statistically insignificant direct effect on online shopping behavior with a path coefficient (Beta value=0.11; t-value=1.743; p=0.082). This result indicated that hypothesis 1 is supportive. Hypothesis 2 reported positive relationship between advertising and social media effect (Beta value=0.787; t-value=34.556; p=0.000). Hypothesis 3 supported the proposed relationship between social media effect and online shopping behavior (Beta value=0.378; t-value=5.735; p=0.000). Hypothesis 4 reinforced the projected relationship between trust and online shopping behavior (Beta value=0.466; t-value=12.817; p=0.000). Lastly, a strong correlation between trust and social media (Beta value=0.177; t-value=6.35; p=0.000) supports hypothesis 5.

According to the model, the squared multiple correlation (R²) coefficient for latent variables was tested to examine the variance of the latent variables. The squared multiple correlations (R²) result is shown in **Table 4**, indicating that hypothesized model explained statistically significant variance for the endogenous variables.

Mediation Effect

Table 5 showed the significant study of indirect effect and total effect path coefficients from the bootstrapping procedure (with 450 tests, 5,000 subsamples, and no sign changes). The results showed that social media has a significant role in mediating the relationship between advertising and online shopping behavior with a path coefficient (Beta value=0.297; t-value=5.495; p=0.000). The last hypothesis indicated that social media has a significant relationship between trust and online shopping behavior with a path coefficient (Beta value=0.067; t-value=4.438; p=0.000).

CONCLUSION

The paper proposed mediating effect of social media on the relationship between advertising, trust and online shopping behavior using SmartPLS as a tool of analysis. Advertising and trust have been hypothesized to directly affect social media and online shopping behavior, while social media is anticipated to mediate advertising and trust in online shopping behavior. The findings stated that advertising had a positive and statistically significant direct effect on online shopping behavior; also, the relationship between advertising and social media is substantial. Moreover, the result revealed the relationship between trust and online shopping. Furthermore, the findings indicate that social media have an impact in influencing online purchasing behavior. The study contributed to the existing literature and have significant practical implications that can help managers and marketers of online stores to take measures on factors that may influence online shopping behavior in Nigeria. Managers must be conscious that social media is the most important factor that pushes online shopping behavior.

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