

Digital Marketing and Consumer Buying Behaviour in Nile University of Nigeria, Abuja

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ABSTRACT: *This research examines the impact of digital marketing on consumer buying behavior in Nile University. A survey design was adopted. Population of this study comprise of students and staff of Nile University. This study used online instrument for collecting data so as to achieve the intended goals. Questionnaires were sent out using Convenience sampling Technique via Online Google form through e-mails, WhatsApp and Facebook. A total of 120 responses were collected. The Data collected for this study was analyzed quantitatively using descriptive statistical (SPSS Version 23). The findings show that students and staff in Nile University are in the know of digital marketing and have bought products through various digital channels. The overall results indicate that social media has a more significant impact on consumer buying behavior than other digital channels in Nile University of Nigeria. It is recommended that businesses in Abuja should enhance their social media, websites and e-mail marketing strategies, as it will help expand their customer base and increase the patronage of their products and services, customer relationship management, and profitability.*

KEYWORDS: digital marketing, social media, websites, email marketing and consumer buying behavior.

INTRODUCTION

In today's world, technology has taken over and has made marketing easy. Digital marketing has become a crucial component of marketing strategies for businesses of all sizes and industries. Due to rapid growth of digital platforms and technological advancements and its ability to influence and shape consumer decision-making, organizations have gone digital in their marketing strategies and several digital channels used to reach consumers. Consumers can stay at the comfort of their space and get goods delivered with little effort. Digital marketing helps facilitate the opinions of individuals about products or services. Digital marketing enables the opinions of individuals about certain products or services to be accessible to the rest of the community of Internet users (Chopra, Gupta, & Manek, (2020). Digital marketing can help influence people's buying behavior based on online opinions or comments. Feedback from customers helps to make decisions for the optimal improvement of products or services. In this form, consumers have information about all products or services on the market and are enabled to compare these products or services through available information (Puriwat, & Tripopsakul, (2021). Digital marketing is checked in this way.

Digital marketing boosts sales and consumer loyalty (Alexander, (n.d.) 2019). Digital marketing is the component of marketing that uses the Internet and online-based digital technologies such as desktop computers, mobile phones, and other digital media and platforms to promote products and services (Wikipedia 2019). Due to rapid growth of digital platforms and technological advancements and its ability to influence and shape consumer decision-making, in recent years, the study has gained importance. Present day technological breakthroughs have produced obstacles as well as possibilities for established firms, also an ideal ground for new initiatives to arise. Technology is changing the way we do things and make marketing decisions. Technological advancement has greatly influence marketing. This presents an opportunity to create brand awareness, build relationships, and drive conversions.

Technological developments have created opportunities for existing businesses and opening new businesses. The emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic was a driver for adaptation to technology, where businesses adapted the way of doing business by transforming into more digital businesses (Schutte, & Chauke, (2022). Marketing products and services are always challenging due to their high cost. Traditional marketing is characterized as high-cost marketing, where the expansion of companies is also challenging due to low sales and awareness of the goods or services offered. In contrast to traditional marketing, digital marketing is a profitable opportunity for companies to promote their products or services due to the relatively low cost. Due to the high competition, businesses claim to expand in the context of market size by attracting or retaining their customers to be profitable (Schutte, & Chauke, (2022).

By gathering data from surveys, experiments, and analysis of consumer behavior, researchers aim to provide intuition into the compounded relationship between digital marketing and consumer buying behavior. This study will help businesses make informed decisions about their digital marketing strategies, enabling them to better understand and cater to their target audience's preferences and needs. Overall, the research provides valuable insights into the changing dynamics of consumer decision-making and helps businesses adapt and thrive in the digital era. The overall objective of this research is to examine the impact of digital Marketing on consumer buying behavior in Nile University. The specific objectives are to:

- i. examine the impact of Social media marketing on consumer buying behavior in Nile University.
- ii. investigate the impact of Website marketing on consumer buying behavior in Nile University.
- iii. assess the impact of Email marketing on consumer buying behavior in Nile University.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital Marketing

Digital marketing uses technology to become involved with customers by distributing information online through various digital channels. Digital marketing began in the late 1990s, and it became the dominant form of company marketing in 2014 (Davenport et al., 2020). Digital marketing is defined as the sale and purchase of information, products, and services through a computer or internet network (Rao & Ratnamadhuri, 2018). The capacity to contact the targeted customer via social media and search engines is the most significant benefit that digital marketing has over traditional marketing (Sinha & Singh, 2018) is a marketing type carried out through electronic platforms using any

technological device (American Marketing Association. (2022), Krishen, et al (2021) thanks to digital marketing, products promotion has become an increasingly important component in the new digital age.

Digital marketing took advantage of the existence of technology by providing online content, and it connects with the consumer through digital channels. The biggest advantage that digital marketing has over traditional marketing is the ability to reach target customers using search engines and the lower cost compared to traditional marketing (Agus et al., 2021). In the modern world, digital marketing is essential in increasing and expanding sales of products or services as a new marketing type. Through these marketing channels, businesses have been changed using digital channels and technology to realize marketing activities (Tümer, Aghaei, 2019).

Due to the efficiency and integration of digital platforms, customers increasingly prefer to make purchases through digital devices instead of going to physical stores (Krishen, 2021), as well as being considered as a convenient communication channel by marketers to promote products and services to a target market, through a computer or the Internet (Agus, et al., 2021). Their products to achieve the target market, digital marketers use digital channels, such as social media, email marketing, online, and mobile marketing (Tümer, Aghaei, 2019). The most common digital marketing tool used today is Search Engine Optimization (SEO) its role is to maximize the way search engines like Google find your website (Wikipedia, 2019). The concept of digital marketing was pioneered by the SoftAd Group (now ChannelNet) during the 1980s. The phrase "digital marketing" was originally coined to delineate an epoch of marketing that commenced in the 1990s, closely linked with the advent of the Web 1.0 platform and the establishment of the Internet (Avantika Monnappa (2020).

Social Media

Transformed processes in marketing have replaced traditional customer decision purchases following changes as a result of information technology evolution. Digitalization changes the purchase decision making process of a consumer. Aliyu (2019) explains how 42% of the worlds are active social media users and in Nigeria, about 19 million of the populations are active mobile social users. Social media enables companies to better communicate with their customers, to build relationships and become more personal, and, at the same time, to attract the attention of potential customers (Michaelidou, Siamagka, & Christodoulides, (2019). Social media marketing is a new way of marketing through which businesses can very easily target their target customers (Keerthi Krishna, (2018), as well as how these conversations can be generated, promoted, and converted into revenue (Lukman, et al., 2021), Djakasaputra, et al (2021). It creates a more effective overview by introducing analytics applications on official social networking platforms (Keerthi Krishna, 2018). This marketing type is referred to as a subset of web-based internet marketing activities and internet advertising campaigns (Rao, & Ratnamadhuri. 2018).

Various social media platforms, such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, enable marketers and customers to engage in discussions and appeal for the purchase of products and services (Al-azzam, & Al-Mizeed, (2021). Online advertising is considered a very interesting field for marketing researchers through which the product or service reaches the global target market (Kusumawati, et al (2019). This marketing type is a type of promotion that persuades customers to make purchase

decisions and provides sufficient information about the specifics of products or services (Al-azzam, & Al-Mizeed. (2021). the advantage of online advertising is that promoting products or services goes beyond local markets and reaches global targets. It is flexible, enabling firms to update information about their products and services (Kusumawati, et al (2019).

The arrival of the internet and social media has changed the traditional consumer behavior. As an essential factor, social media has influenced consumer behavior because strategies and tools for communicating with customers have changed. Organizations have always worked for seeking consumer attention, and the arrival of social media has provided a new ground for it. The high competition has forced both companies and marketers to explore new ways to reach their customers leading to the development of social media marketing (Nadda, Dadwal & Firdous, 2019). Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Pinterest, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, WhatsApp, Snapchat, etc are common social media websites used.

Websites

Website is the main sources of electronic marketing. A website is a collection of web pages and related content that is identified by a common domain name and published on at least one web server which are typically dedicated to a particular topic or purpose, such as news, education, commerce, entertainment or social networking (Wikipedia 2023). Websites is one of the channels that make up digital marketing, businesses and organizations uses this to reach target audiences, market and promote their products. Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is the most common digital marketing tool used today is. Its role is to maximize the way search engines like Google find your website (Wikipedia, 2019). Website marketing is used to advertise companies' activities which are products and/or services. Website marketing strategy is a plan that helps to utilize all that is available. This gives unique benefits that the traditional marketing channels don't give, it is also cost effective. Customers visit website to get all the information about products and services. Website marketing strategy helps reach a larger number of buyers, build deeper connections with customers, get a higher ranked content, drives more traffic to the website and increase the chances of capturing more sales.

Email Marketing

Email has been used for marketing purposes for a long time since it was invented. Email marketing in comparison to other forms of digital marketing is considered cheap; it is also a way to rapidly communicate a message such as their value proposition to existing or potential customers (Wikipedia 2023). Every e-mail that is sent to a client, whether it was a current customer or a potential one, might be regarded as email marketing (Olanrewaju, 2021). This tactics entails businesses informing customers via email of their new activities, promotions and goods and services (Desai V. (2019). Email Marketing is used to deliver target information to target customers at a convenient time (Omar, A. M., & Atteya, N 2020). This marketing enables businesses to send emails to meet customer needs, and direct use emails to communicate promotional funds for audience connection. According to Chaffey D (2018) approximately 49 percent of emails are opened on a mobile device, and it is anticipated that this percentage will continue to rise in the not too distant future. Email marketing has emerged as a crucial tool in the digital marketing landscape which allows businesses to connect directly with their target audience, engage them effectively, and drive conversions (Henderson, N.C. 2023). In its widest logic, email marketing can be considered for every email sent to potential or existing consumers (Rai,

2018). Nevertheless, understanding the needs, time, and interesting letters based on consumer preferences can help raise a positive attitude towards email ads that remind of challenges to practitioners (Bokde & Seshan, 2019).

Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior is described as the dynamic interaction of affect and cognition, behavior, and the environment through which humans exchange components of their life (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019). Consumer buying behavior refers to all the thought, feelings, decisions and actions that an individual embarks upon before or while buying any product, service or idea (Singh, 2020). Consumer buying behavior refers to individual reactions before and after the buying and consumption of a product (Stoner V. 2019). Various elements influence how customers react to a particular marketing or advertising effort such as the medium or channels used and how it is used. These issues grow in the digital world, adding to the difficulty of using this medium, customer perceived value, ethics, customer engagement, and behavioral economics are some of the elements influencing consumer behavior (Dowling *et al.*, 2019). Consumer buying behavior involves the psychological processes that consumers go through in recognizing needs, finding ways to solve these needs and making a purchase decision on whether to buy or not. (Silverman, 2019).

Theoretical Framework

Digital marketing has become an essential part of the marketing strategy for most organizations. The use of digital marketing tools to reach out to the customers has grown exponentially over the last decade. Digital marketing allows organizations to reach out to their target audience through various channels including websites, social media, email, search engine optimization, and many others. Impact of digital marketing on consumer buying behavior has been widely studied; however, there is still a need to develop a theoretical framework that can help understand the complex relationship between digital marketing and consumer behavior. The theoretical framework that explains the impact of digital marketing on consumer buying behavior is based on several theories, including social learning theory, and the technology acceptance model.

Social learning theory:

The social learning theory (SLT) postulates that individuals' behavior is influenced by the observation and imitation of others' behavior. In the context of digital marketing, individuals can observe the behavior of others through reviews, recommendations, and social media posts. Individuals can also learn from the behavior of their online peers, such as the number of likes, shares, and comments on a specific product or service.

Technology acceptance model:

The technology acceptance model (TAM) postulates that "individuals behavior is influenced by their perceived usefulness and ease of use of a particular technology. In the context of digital marketing, individuals' behavior towards a particular product or service is influenced by their perception of the usefulness and ease of use of the digital marketing tools used to promote that product or service".

The theoretical framework presented here can help in understanding the complex relationship between digital marketing and consumer behavior. The theory of social learning, technology acceptance model provide insight into various factors that influence consumer behavior towards digital marketing.

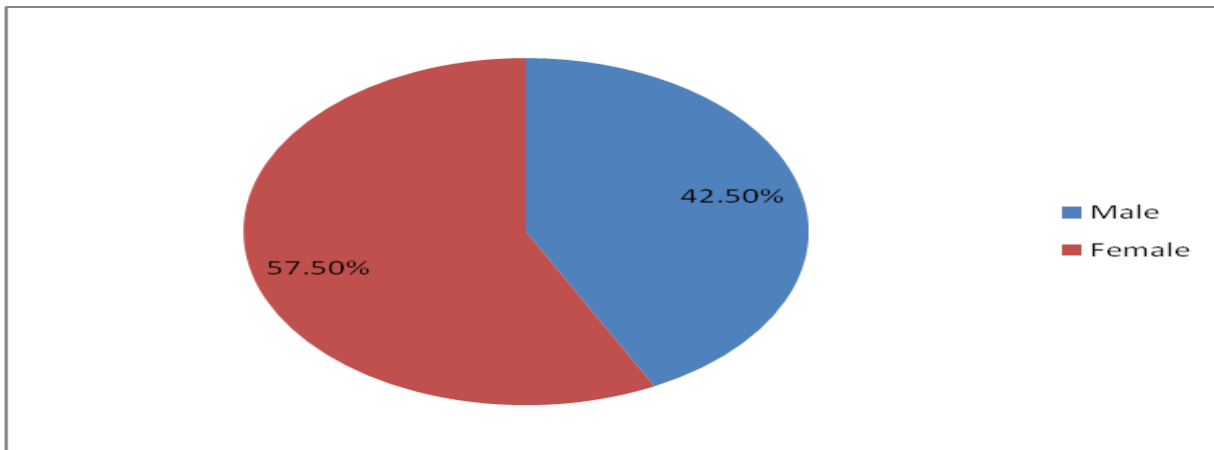
Organizations can use this knowledge to develop effective digital marketing strategies that align with their customers' buying behavior.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a survey design. Population of this study comprise of all digital users in Nile University, Nigeria. This study used online instrument for collecting data so as to achieve the intended goals. Questionnaires were sent out using Convenience sampling Technique via Online Google form through e-mails, WhatsApp and Facebook. A total of 120 responses were collected. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data collected quantitatively using (SPSS version 23).

Results and Discussion

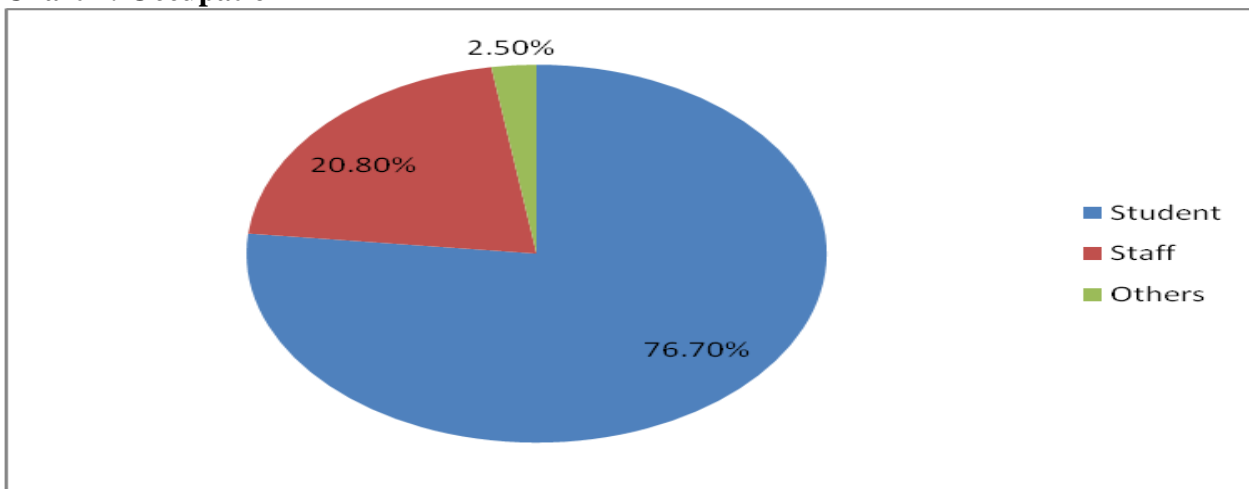
Chart 1: Gender



Source: Survey Data, November, 2023

Interpretation: The charts shows that female took 57.5% of the total sample while 42.5% are male.

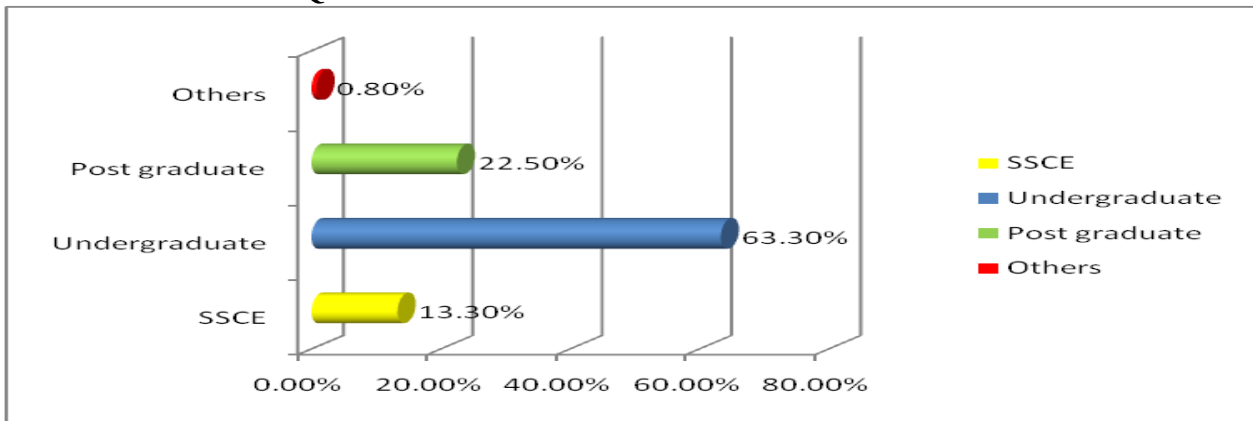
Chart 2: Occupation



Source: Survey Data, November, 2023

Interpretation: The charts says that the 76.7% digital media has influenced are students, but also it shows that staff spend time on these platforms as well which shows that occupation has no significant impact on digital marketing channels. The 2.5% others could be shop owners, sales persons etc in Nile University.

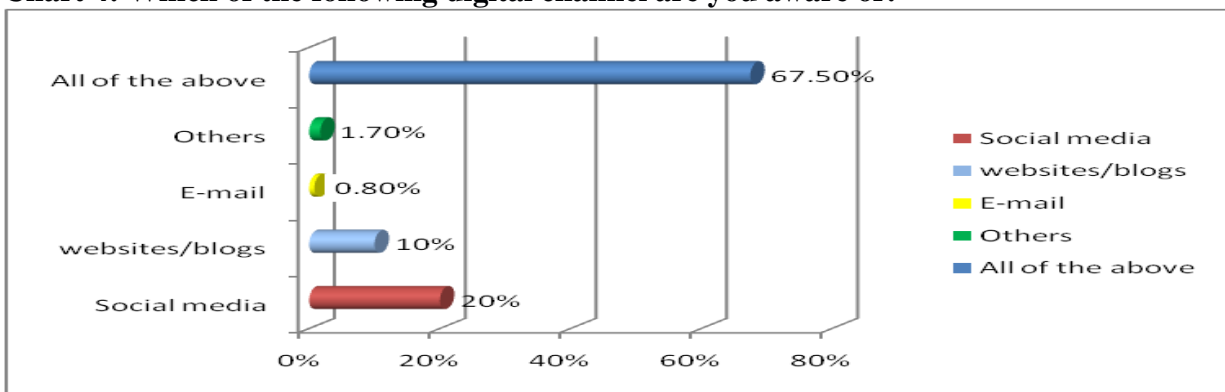
Chart 3: Educational Qualification



Source: Survey Data, November, 2023

Interpretation: The diagram shows that maximum respondents of 63.3% are undergraduates, 22.5% Postgraduates, 13.3% are SSCE holders while the least are others with 0.80%

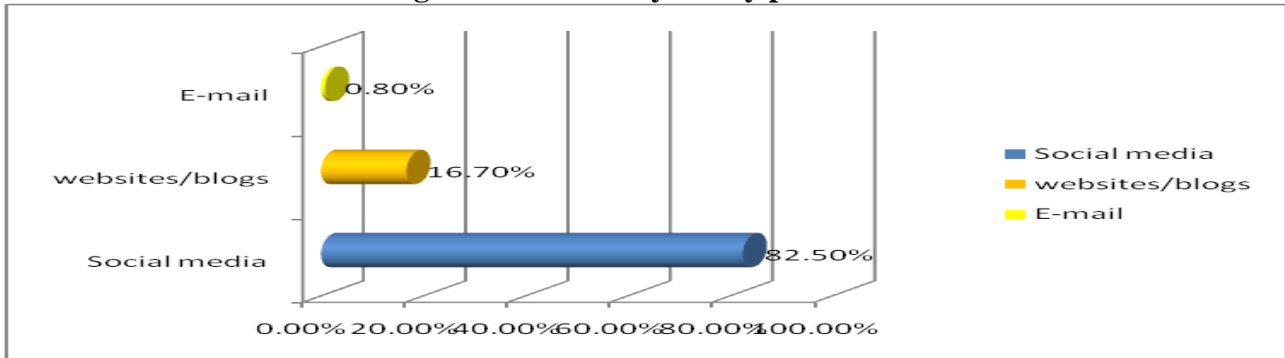
Chart 4: Which of the following digital channel are you aware of?



Source: Survey Data, November, 2023

Interpretation: The chart shows that highest respondents of 67.5% are aware of all the digital media platforms. This awareness reveals advancement of technology and awareness creation of digital marketing. This can help organizations to promote products or services online. From the survey it was seen that social media have the most influence on consumers of 20%.

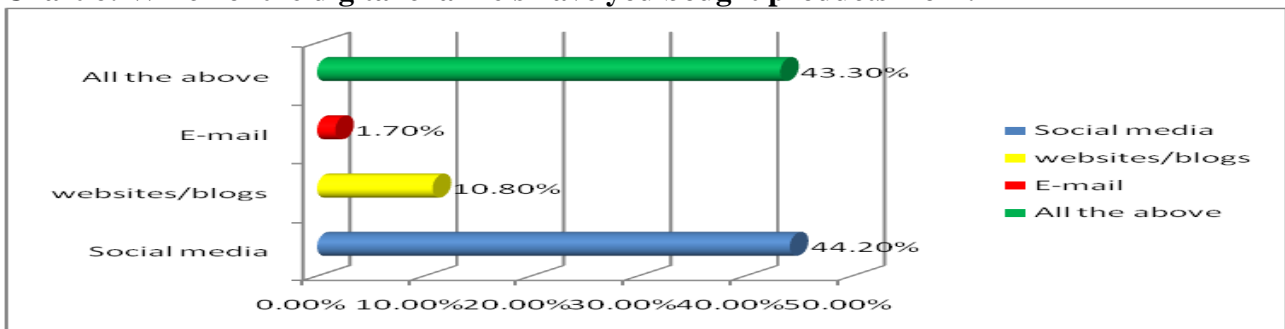
Chart 5: From which of the digital channels do you buy products from the most?



Source: Survey Data, November, 2023

Interpretation: From the chart, majority of customers prefer to purchase their products online and social media took 82.5% as their medium to buy their products from. Websites/blogs takes 16.70%. Organizations should create more awareness on the use of websites as a channel of digital marketing.

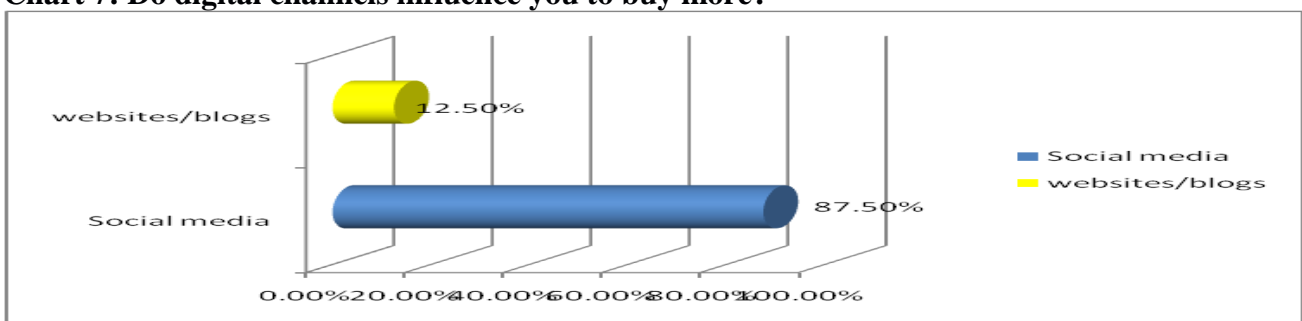
Chart 6: Which of the digital channels have you bought products from?



Source: Survey Data, November, 2023

Interpretation: This chart shows that 44.2% respondents have purchased products online through social media, 43.30% customers have purchased products from all the channels. This depicts how and the channels through which customers prefer to purchase their products online

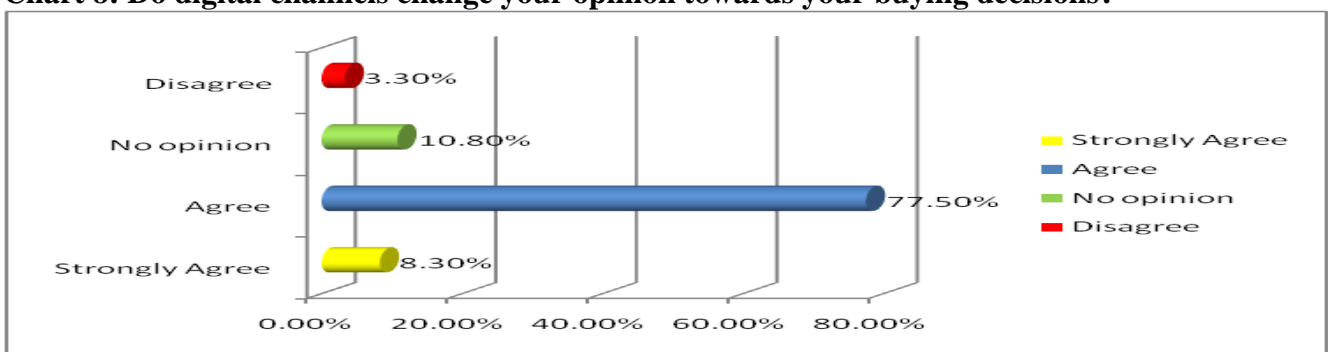
Chart 7: Do digital channels influence you to buy more?



Source: Survey Data, November, 2023

Interpretation: The above diagram shows that social media has influenced 87.5% of customers to buy more which help in influencing customers and making them loyal too. Though social media might influence them to buy more in consumers’ standpoint, there is no complete dependence on social media to buy these products. Still, users find social media more interactive and informative. These are the techniques to win customer’s mind and has transformed the purchasing patterns. Websites/blogs took 12.5%.

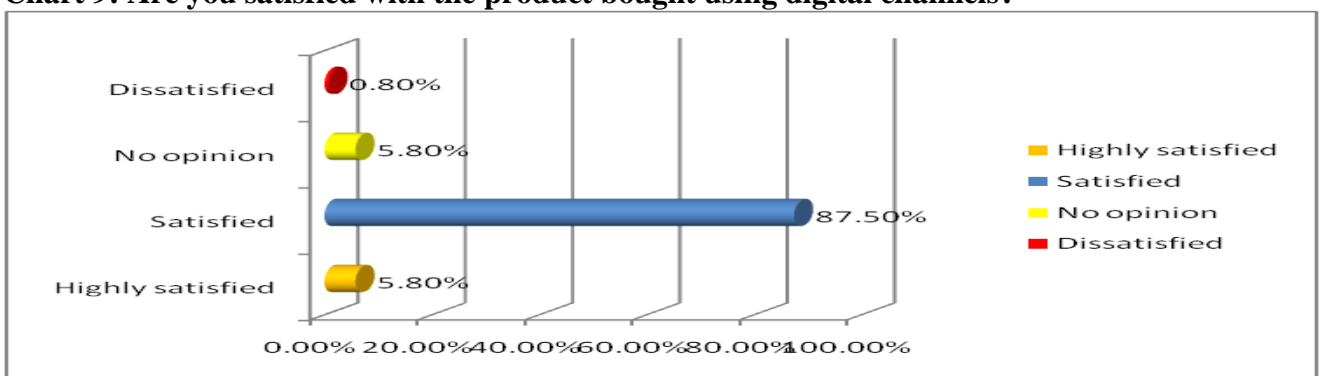
Chart 8: Do digital channels change your opinion towards your buying decisions?



Source: Survey Data, November, 2023

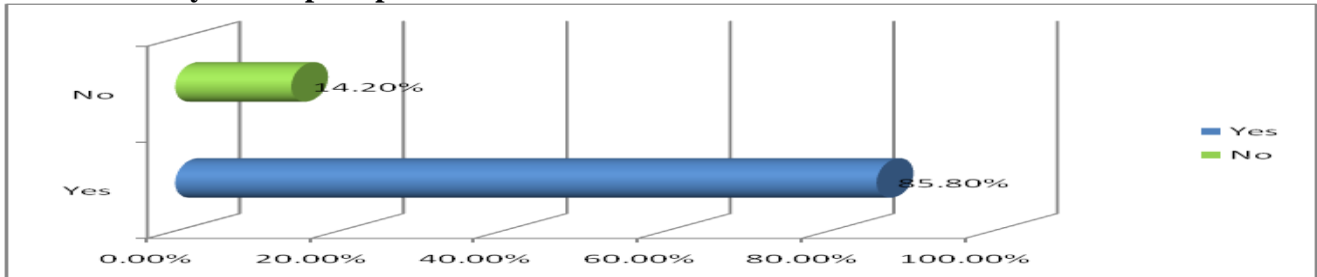
Interpretation: This chart shows that 77.5% respondents believe that digital channels have changed consumers’ opinion to purchase a particular product or service, 8.3% strongly agreed, 10.8% are of no opinion about it whereas only 3.3% respondents were found to have ‘disagreed’ for the change in their opinion which itself makes it clear, that what impact this digital media has imposed on consumers and their purchasing patterns.

Chart 9: Are you satisfied with the product bought using digital channels?



Source: Survey Data, November, 2023

Interpretation: The chart above clearly shows that 87.5% respondents are satisfied by buying their products and services online, 5.8% are strongly satisfied. This question will help businesses and organizations understand how respondents felt after shopping online which will help to understand if they would continue it or not as a successful survey is not complete without taking feedback from the customers. 5.8% of people have no opinions.

Chart 10: Do you compare products within different websites?

Source: Survey Data, November, 2023

Interpretation: From the chart above, it is seen that 85.80% of people do compare products within different websites and medias before or ahead of buying anything. The diagram shows that various factors like delivery time, availability of products, price, delivery time, quality, the mode of payments and return policy might make customers to compare products within different websites with the intention that after purchase problems are reduced to the barest minimal or no problem at all. Also, that people get values for anything purchased via the digital channel. 14.20% opted no for an answer as this could be due to their trust and reliability on one website/brand or otherwise.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The topic understanding the impact of digital marketing can never be overemphasized due to its influence on consumer buying behavior in general. This study examines the impact of digital marketing on consumer buying behavior in Nile University of Nigeria, Abuja. The findings shows that students and staff in Nile university are in the know of digital marketing and have bought products through various digital channels and where the overall results indicate that social media has the most significant influence on consumer buying behavior in Nile University of Nigeria than websites and Emails. From the findings of the study, it is recommended that businesses in Abuja should enhance their social media, website marketing and e-mail marketing strategies, as it will help expand their customer base and increase the patronage of their products and services, customer relationship management, and profitability. Businesses should create more awareness about their website. Also, this will give customers confidence and security about the digital channels they purchase products and services from.

Implications of the Study

This study contributed to concepts through broader perspectives on the concepts of digital marketing and consumer behaviour. Another contribution of this study is the support of diffusion of innovation theory. This study supports this theory because the adoption rate of a new innovation will depend on how an organization's perception of its relative advantage, compatibility, triability, observability and complexity. Digital marketing is an innovation that has progressively rendered itself in pervasive ways cutting across several educational institutions and other sectors of the economy to attract and retain customers. Also, the finding that digital marketing has a positive and significant effect on consumer behaviour is an important contribution to empirical knowledge.

Areas for Further Studies

For more rigorous research, future studies should evaluate the dimensions of the study's independent and dependent variables. Furthermore, this study just looked at consumer behaviour; future research should look into the relationship between digital marketing and Supply Chain Capability in Private Universities in Nigeria.

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