

Impact of Blogger on Consumer Buying Habit in Nigeria

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Abstract: This study examined the impact of blogger on consumer buying habit in Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was used in this study and a total number of One Hundred and Ten (110) respondents who are online users on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. The simple random sampling method was used to select respondents randomly. The result of the findings showed that majority of the respondents agree that a more popular blogger has a more positive influence on purchase intention compared with a less popular blogger ($X = 2.35$, $SD = 1.99$) and the higher the number of followers, the more a blogger is perceived as an expert ($X = 1.94$, $SD = 0.98$). The result of the hypothesis showed a positive significant correlation ($r = .694$, $p < .05$) between blogging and consumer buying habit. The study recommended that bloggers should adopt strategies that will assist in increasing the number of visitors and followers to their blogs.

Keywords: Blogging, consumer behaviour, social media, online purchase

Introduction

Marketing communication processes are critical to the organization because of the contribution they make in meeting customers' needs, which helps determine the organization's profitability and continued existence. Customers want not only reasonable prices, but also personalized relationships (Jakada, 2006). Marketing communications techniques, when used effectively, can provide a competitive edge for the organization while increasing sales and profits while saving time, money, and stress. Marketing communication concentrates on interaction that tends to revolve around the customer and assists the customer in making a purchase decision. The procedure strengthens customer relationships and protects the organization from competitive forces that could drive customers away (Messah & Immaculate, 2011). Marketing communication procedures are the methods used by businesses to notify, persuade, and remind customers about the products, services, and product lines with which they do business. Purchasers can learn how and why a brand is used, as well as who uses it and when. If effective marketing communication processes are used, the brand and corporate image can be enhanced. The procedures are intended to inform and convince potential customers in order to influence the behavior of that target audience (Abubakar, 2014). If used appropriately, advertising and marketing channels can contribute significantly to the growth of a business in many ways, including increased income, sales volume on investment, and the maintenance of goodwill (Gassmann, Kausch & Enkel, 2005). Blogs are a popular social media platform as well as a significant marketing tool (Hsu & Tsou, 2011). Organisations develop blogs to allow customers to communicate with the organization as well as among themselves in order to foster partnerships among members who share common values and standards (Nambisan & Watt, 2011). Because of the internet's impact on information delivery, seller-centric advertising and marketing messages are no longer as effective.

According to Lee and Koo (2012), customers agree with their peers more than they concur with businesses, and they are more likely to use information supplied by their peers to evaluate merchandise/offers before making a purchase decision. When customers share their product and service perspectives, other potential customers can investigate those opinions to appraise the features of the products/services before purchasing. Blogs have evolved into an important tool for communication in modern society, from seeking advice to conveying personal opinions on a subject. According to a recent social media research, 77% of internet customers analyze blogs and 74% search online for consumer digital criticism before making purchases. Almost 150 million blogs have been posted to the internet, with over 27,000 new blogs being created every 24 hours (Social media blog, 2013).

The advancement of digital technologies has allowed customers to connect and interact with one another via the internet, but it has also encouraged customers to express their thoughts and opinions on products and businesses (Goldsmith & Horowitz, 2006). Bloggers are a powerful entity in the marketplace since they can persuade customers through word of mouth (Stockberger-Sauer & Hoyer, 2009). They are more likely to be competent about a product line than a particular product (Shoham & Ruvio, 2008). Because bloggers are becoming more significant in consumer decision making, it is essential to comprehend how they affect their followers.

According to Vilopponen, Winter, and Sundqvist (2006), customer blogs and online news sources are probably to impact early adopters since they are more motivated to search information from external sources like the internet rather than internal sources like family and friends. According to Phau and Lo (2004), innovators will typically use innovative brands as a trial before promoting it to later buyers. They also asserted that inventors are more likely to serve as promoters of new fashion to adopters via word of mouth. When consumers are planning to purchase goods, they look for pertinent information to weigh and assess various options.

Customer blogs and online news outlets as indicated by Vilopponen, Winter, and Sundqvist (2006), are expected to have an effect on early adopters because they are more inclined to look for information from external sources such as the internet rather than internal

groups like family and friends. According to Phau and Lo (2004), innovators will traditionally test creative brand names before promoting them to later buyers. They also claimed that innovators are more inclined to act as word-of-mouth promoters of new fashion to adopters. and e-mail.

Statement of the Problem

With steadily increasing competition in the marketplace, there is a greater need to comprehend a customer's purchasing decision process and shed light on the components that eventually influence a customer's choice between various companies or brand names (Leppaniemi & Karjaluo, 2005). Blogging has become an important part of a customer's shopping decision-making process; notwithstanding, the impact of blog recommendations on consumer purchase decisions is still unclear.

Despite the importance of blogs as a strong social media outlet and marketing tool, few research studies have been conducted in this area. According to the studies examined, there is a high proportion of similar research by global online research firms such as Knowledge Networks (2011) and Technorati's (2008). Other studies examined focused on various aspects of social media, such as Kaplan and Haenlein (2009), who investigated the difficulties and opportunities of social media. Sanna and Heidi (2012) conducted an investigation on the impact of blogs on young women's online purchasing behavior when buying fashion items from stores; moreover, the study was limited to women only and centered on fashion items.

Objectives of the Study

- i. To examine how customer perception of the blogger influence their buying habits.
- ii. To examine ways in which the popularity of the blogger impact customers buying habit.

Research Questions

- i. Does customer perception of the blogger influence their buying habits?
- ii. In what ways does the popularity of the blogger impact customers buying habit?

Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between blogging and consumer buying habit

Concept of Blogging

Blogging is regarded as a top internet medium that influences people's buying decisions all over the world (Schroeder, 2014). Consumers are technologically savvy and well-informed about the utility of their purchasing decisions (Cina, 1989). With advanced technical empowerment on both sides, the consumer-seller relationship is constantly changing. These factors have drastically transformed customer expectations, fueled demand for significant improvement, led to the development of more customized and unique technologies, and resulted in improved experiences and services. Consumers seek experiences that are customized to their personal needs while shopping. In modern day's retail business era, creating and sustaining a superior shopping experience are recognized as the primary goals of several firms (Hong, 2015).

Consumer Buying Behaviour

According to Michael Solomon's concept, consumer behavior is a broad field that encompasses the examination of individuals or groups in the process of choosing, purchasing, using, or disposing of products or services to meet their needs and desires. Solomon (2011), p. 33. Consumers are defined as anyone of any age who participates in any of the purchasing stages. According to Solomon, consumer buying behavior is the study of purchasing behavior that occurs when a customer chooses to buy a product. It is an intrinsic thought process (also known as the purchasing process) that commences with the consumer acknowledging a need or desire to buy something. Consumer purchasing behavior is more complex than the transaction in which the consumer purchases the product. It also entails researching the factors that led up to the purchase. It also encompasses post-purchase actions in which the consumers evaluate the experience before deciding whether to return to that retailer in the future. (Solomon, 2011, pp. 34-36).

Buying Behaviour in Social Media

Since the main technological advances of the last decade, the world of purchasing and selling has seen a significant shift from a seller-dominated "push" promotional style in which the seller "pushes" the products to the customer to a more consumer-friendly "pull" marketing style in which the buyer wields the majority of the power. Due to the internet, consumers can conduct thorough research and compare numerous businesses in the hopes of selecting the most suitable option. They have a wide range of choices and are no longer limited to the physical stores nearby. This also implies that the manner in which consumers and suppliers interact with one another has shifted (Solomon, 2011, p. 95). Social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube can

also have a significant impact on pre-purchase operations. Customers can not only find comprehensive and useful product feedback from past users, but they can also find great deals for products by logging into their accounts. Because of the large number of users, businesses have recognized the power of social media channels as a marketing device and are now investing sufficient money in putting banner ads on the webpage of targeted customers.

Influence of Bloggers Perception on Customer Buying Intention

The method by which people select, organize, and interpret stimuli to establish a purposeful and coherent view of the world is referred to as a person's concept. People understand things due to their own expertise and proven record, instead of what is truly real or true. Consequently, it is not uncommon for two visitors to comprehend the same thing differently. As a result, in order to inspire the factors that affect consumers' purchasing decisions, marketers must recognize this variability (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2015). Perception, according to Kotler et al. (2009), affects consumers' honest behavior. Individuals who are extremely motivated will acknowledge environmental cues associated with their needs and understand more about their brand options in order to more favorably evaluate them (Loken, 2006). Personal behavior is influenced by a few stimuli, but most people instinctively avoid those stimuli (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2015). This suggests that consumers are progressively blocking information, and marketers presume it is hard to engage their intended audience.

Theoretical Framework

The Theory of Reasoned Action

This study used the theory of reasoned action (TRA) (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) to understand factors that influence consumer attitudes toward blogging. TRA has been highly influential in explaining attitude-intention-behavior relations. Attitude is determined by two beliefs: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. On the other hand, TRA is an intention model from social psychology that is concerned with the primary determinants of behavior (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). According to TRA, attitude toward the behavior is determined by the person's salient beliefs about the consequences of performing the behavior multiplied by the evaluation of those consequences. Subjective norms have to do with one's perceptions that referent groups and individuals believe certain behaviors should or should not be performed (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975).

Research Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was used in the study. The survey research design was chosen since data was collected using an online structured questionnaire, which did not require any variable modification in the study. The population of this study are online users on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. The study made use of simple random sampling technique. A total number of One Hundred and Ten (110) respondents were selected for this study. Data collected was analyzed using SPSS version 21.0. Research questions were analyzed using frequency table, percentages, mean and standard deviation while hypothesis was analyzed using Pearson Correlation.

Data Analysis

Research Question One:

Does customer perception of the blogger influence their buying habits?

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Table 1: Does customer perception of the blogger influence their buying habits?

Responses	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Stand Dev
Blogs have made it easy for people to share their experiences and thus give their reviews about a product	48 (43.6%)	58 (52.7%)	4 (3.6%)	-	1.28	0.87
Blog helps attract audience	61 (55.5%)	43 (39.1%)	6 (5.5%)	-	2.29	0.97
Blog helps to create a platform to advertise products to people globally	51 (46.4%)	38 (34.5%)	20 (18.2%)	1 (0.9%)	1.76	0.87
Blogs create an avenue to review products thereby influencing consumer buying behaviour	21 (19.1%)	55 (50.0%)	19 (17.3%)	15 (13.6%)	1.87	0.69

Table 1 shows that 48 (43.6%) of the respondents strongly here, 58 (52.7%) agree while 4 (3.6%) disagree that Blogs have made it easy for people to share their experiences and thus give their reviews about a product, 61 (55.5%) of the respondents strongly agree, 43 (39.1%) agree while 6 (5.5%) disagree that Blog helps attract audience, 51 (46.4%) of the respondents strongly agree, 38 (34.5%) agree, 20 (18.2%) disagree while 1 (0.9%) strongly disagree that Blog helps to create a platform to advertise products to people globally. Furthermore, 21 (19.1%) of the respondents strongly agree, 55 (50.0%) agree, 19 (17.3%) disagree while 15 (13.6%) strongly disagree that Blogs create an avenue to review products thereby influencing consumer buying behaviour

Research Question Two:

Table 2: In what ways does the popularity of the blogger impact customers buying habit?

Responses	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Stand Dev
A more popular blogger has a more positive influence on purchase intention compared with a less popular blogger	57 (51.8%)	50 (45.5%)	3 (2.7%)	-	2.35	0.99
The higher the number of followers, the more a blogger is perceived as an expert	31 (28.2%)	64 (58.2%)	14 (12.7%)	1 (0.9%)	1.94	0.98
The higher the number of followers, the more a blogger is perceived as trustworthy	42 (38.2%)	59 (53.6%)	5 (4.5%)	4 (3.6%)	1.87	0.69
The number of likes a blog has received affects my buying intentions	37 (33.6%)	52 (47.3%)	12 (10.9%)	9 (8.2%)	1.74	0.71
A higher credibility causes a greater impact of the perceived persuasive intent	23 (20.9%)	46 (41.8%)	21 (19.1%)	20 (18.2%)	1.78	0.69

From table 2, it was revealed that 57 (51.8%) of the respondents strongly agree, 50 (45.5%) agree while 3 (2.7%) disagree that a more popular blogger has a more positive influence on purchase intention compared with a less popular blogger, 31 (28.2%) of the respondents strongly agree, 64 (58.2%) agree, 14 (12.7%) disagree while 1 (0.9%) strongly disagree that the higher the number of followers, the more a blogger is perceived as an expert, 42 (38.2%) of the respondents strongly agree, 59 (53.6%) agree, 5 (4.5%) disagree while 4 (3.6%) strongly disagree that the higher the number of followers, the more a blogger is perceived as trustworthy, 37 (33.6%) of the respondents strongly agree, 52 (47.3%) agree, 12 (10.9%) disagree while 9 (8.2%) strongly disagree that the number of likes a blog has received affects my buying intentions. In addition, 23 (20.9%) of the respondents strongly agree, 46 (41.8%) agree, 21 (19.1%) disagree while 20 (18.2%) strongly disagree that a higher credibility causes a greater impact of the perceived persuasive intent.

Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between blogging and consumer buying habit

Pearson Correlations of blogging and consumer buying habit

		Blogging	Consumer buying habit
Blogging	Pearson Correlation	1	.694**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	110	110
Consumer buying habit	Pearson Correlation	.694**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	110	110

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The result of the hypothesis showed a positive significant correlation (r = .694, p <.05) between blogging and consumer buying habit. This implies that blogging positively enhances consumer buying habit.

Conclusion

This study examined the impact of blogger on consumer buying habit in Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was used in this study and a total number of One Hundred and Ten (110) respondents who are online users on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. In this study, the simple random sampling method was used to select respondents randomly. The result of the findings showed that majority of the respondents agree that Blogs have made it easy for people to share their experiences and thus give their reviews about a product, it has helped attract audience and create a platform to advertise products to people globally. Also, majority of the respondents agree that a more popular blogger has a more positive influence on purchase intention compared with a less popular blogger ($X = 2.35$, $SD = 1.99$) and the higher the number of followers, the more a blogger is perceived as an expert ($X = 1.94$, $SD = 0.98$). The result of the hypothesis showed a positive significant correlation ($r = .694$, $p < .05$) between blogging and consumer buying habit. This finding supports Kotler et al. (2009) who reported that perception influences consumers' sincere behavior.

Recommendation

- i. It is recommended that bloggers should adopt strategies that will assist in increasing the number of visitors and followers to their blogs.
- ii. Bloggers should concentrate on their areas of expertise and professionalism. To provide reliable and insightful information, they should spend time conducting research by reading related magazines, blogs, newsletters, eBooks, and sources of information.

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