

Let's Go 'Shoppie' — Social Media Shopping's Cool! Nigerian Students' Acceptance of Online Shopping via Social Media

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Abstract

Advancements in information and communication, especially Web 2.0 have provided consumers and businesses with tremendous opportunities to utilize social media platforms effectively. Although both consumers and online retail stores have a wide variety of online platforms to do shopping and run modern, seamless businesses and reach consumers instantly around the world respectively, social media platforms have proven to be one of the most preferred online environments by many consumers. Despite the potential of online shopping via social media, limited attention is focused on this booming research area in Nigeria. Hence, the present study aimed to close the literature gap by to investigating consumer acceptance of social media shopping. Employing the UTAUT model perspective, a survey questionnaire was designed and administered face-to-face to 380 undergraduate students selected using purposive sampling method from two Nigerian universities: University of Maiduguri and Yobe State University. Consumers' intention to do social media shopping was moderately high, with WhatsApp being the most preferred social media application for doing online shopping followed by Facebook.

Keywords: consumers, Facebook, online shopping, social media shopping, WhatsApp

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1. Introduction

The employment of social media as business platforms is a critical strategy in boosting an online retail shop's reach and efficiency (Logan 2014). In this article, the term 'social media shopping' is interchangeably used with 'online shopping via social media'. Internet-based technologies and social media provide online firms with the opportunity to overcome the limitations of size, consumer reach and compete effectively with large, conventional (offline) retail firms. Social media possess great potential to increase both local and international opportunities for online retail shops (Kietzmann, Hermkerns, McCarthy & Silvestre 2011) if used strategically.

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) social media and other Internet-based technologies and applications increase ability of online retail firms to compete with other companies both locally and nationally (as promotional tool), create the possibility and opportunity for more diverse people to start a business and offer convenient and easy way of doing business transactions round the clock. For instance, in recent decades, product retailers across the world have been increasingly using internationalisation strategies to enhance their competitiveness in market, increase sales and make profits. One of such strategies is the usage of social media to run a business online (Anic & Jovancevic 2004).

Online shopping is gaining acceptance among online goers worldwide. So is the case in Nigeria, especially among middle-income earners and students of tertiary institutions of learning. Online shopping is gaining huge acceptance in many of parts of the world since the past seven to eight years (Edwin & Peter 2014). In the last five to six years, a couple of online retail shops, namely Konga Nigeria and Jumia Nigeria have emerged in the country and are leading in the online enterprise. The emerging online stores sell a wide assortment of household products and consumables (mostly imported from abroad) such as electrical and electronic devices, mobile telecommunication devices and fashion material (Agwu & Carter 2014; Chukwu & Uzoma 2014). However, according to the researchers online shopping is still considered as a very recent enterprise in the Nigerian virtual marketplace. For example, a recent study by Ibrahim, Hassan and Yusuf (2018a) concludes that even though online shopping is gaining increasing acceptance in the country, the acceptance pace is still considered as moderate.

Consumer acceptance of online shopping, especially via social media (social media shopping), is influenced by many factors including company's marketing/communication strategy, products price and quality and online privacy/security (Ibrahim *et al.* 2018a). Online shopping enables consumers to visit online stores, purchase products and make payment through credit cards, debit cards money transfer or cash on delivery and get delivery at their door steps. Consumers can compare prices before making a purchase by visiting online stores of competing online retail stores or e-tailers (Aminu 2013 2011). These motivating benefits have made many shoppers adopt the Internet as a means of shopping, especially among urban dwellers with high literacy level, supporting infrastructure, high income and high Internet penetration rate (Aminu 2013; Katole 2011).

1.1. Internet and Facebook Usage among Nigerians

Internet penetration in Nigeria is progressively spreading, particularly with the proliferation of mobile phone data and Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) services. According to the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), by February 2015 there were over 83 million active mobile Internet subscriptions on global system mobile telecommunication (GSM) networks. Cited in Internet World Stats (IWS) (2017), according to NCC Nigeria has a population of 191, 835,936 population, 91,880,032 Internet users (which is 47.9% of the population as at December 2016), 16 million active Facebook users (as at June 2016) and 8.3% penetration rate, the country has the largest population of Internet and Facebook users in Africa (Reuters 2015 Sept. 10). According to Freedom on the Net Report (FOTN) the ICT market in Nigeria has expanded considerably over the past decade, with the number of licensed Internet service providers (ISPs) rising from 18 in 2000 to 189 as by the end of March 2015 (FOTN 2015; Reuters 2015 Sept. 10).

Social media have been defined as a form of electronic communication (such as Internet, websites or mobile phones usually for social networking and blogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages and other content such as pictures and videos (Agichten, Carlos, Donato & Aristides 2008). Tang and Whinston (2012) defined social media as the means through which people interact by creating, sharing and exchanging information and ideas in (online) virtual communities and networks. Social media introduce substantial and pervasive changes to communication between organisations, communities and individuals (Kietzmann *et al.* 2011). Furthermore, social media differ from traditional/industrial media in quality (Tang & Whinston 2012) and reach, frequency, usability, immediacy and permanence (Nigel, Graham & Hodges, 2012) all of which are enhanced by the Internet, hence online retailers' preference for doing business social media (Nigel *et al.* 2012). Facebook is one of the most widely used social networking sites by individuals and businesses. Accessing Facebook is increasingly becoming much easier, whether through smartphones or other mobile devices (Niedermeier, Wang & Zhang 2016) which contributes to its popularity with over 1.49 billion monthly active users as of 2015 (Ibrahim, Hassan & Pate 2018b) and more than 1.8 billion active users worldwide (Statista 2017).

Despite the wider acceptance of social media platforms as strategic media for online business enterprise in globally (Agwu & Carter 2014; Aminu 2013), most of the limited available literature on online shopping in Nigerian context have made little reference to the use of social media as potential online enterprise media, thus leaving a wide literature gap that needs to be closed. Hence, this study aims to achieve three objectives as follows:

- to determine the level of the consumers' intention to do social media shopping;
- to determine the consumers' usage pattern of social media shopping; and
- to identify the preferred social media applications for doing social media shopping.

2. Literature Review

2.1 A Theoretical Analysis of Consumer Acceptance of Technology

Understanding consumer acceptance and usage of information and communication technology (ICT) has become an advanced field of research (Benbasat & Barki 2007; Venkatesh, Davis & Morris 2007). Many theoretical models have been developed from theories in psychology and sociology to explain technology acceptance and usage. The extended version of the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT²) which was formulated by Venkatesh, Thong & Xu in 2012 was the focus of this study. However, because the UTAUT model (which was earlier developed by Venkatesh, Morris, Davis & Davis in 2003) is very much linked to most of the core concepts of the UTAUT² model, a preview discussion on the UTAUT model was made before boiling down to the adopted model (UTAUT²).

The UTAUT was developed through a comprehensive review and synthesis of some prominent theories/models of technology usage. The model has determined the critical factors and contingencies that are related to the prediction of behavioural intention to use a technology, primarily in organisational contexts. In three longitudinal field studies of employee technology acceptance, the UTAUT model predicted about 70% of the variance in behavioural intention to use a technology and about 50% of the variance in technology usage (Venkatesh *et al.* 2003).

The UTAUT model has been one of the most adopted technology adoption models served as a baseline model and has been applied to the study of a variety of technologies in both organisational and non-organisational settings (Brown & Venkatesh 2005; Neufeld, Dong & Higgins 2007). The model was developed, based on a review of the extant literature as a comprehensive synthesis of prior technology acceptance research by Venkatesh *et al.* (2003). The model has four key constructs (i.e., performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence and facilitating conditions) that affect behavioural intention to use a technology.

The four constructs and definitions from the original UTAUT model were adapted to the consumer technology acceptance and use context (UTAUT2). Brown and Venkatesh (2005) have defined the four key constructs. According to their definition performance expectancy is the degree to which using a technology will

provide benefits to consumers in performing certain activities; effort expectancy is the degree of ease associated with consumers' usage of technology; social influence is the extent to which consumers perceive that important others (e.g., family and friends) believe they should use a particular technology; and facilitating conditions is consumers' perceptions of the resources and support available to perform a behaviour. Furthermore, TAUT and UTAUT², performance expectancy, effort expectancy and social influence are theorised to influence behavioural intention to use ICT, while behavioural intention and facilitating conditions are theorised to determine usage. Moreover, individual difference variables, namely age, gender and experience are theorised to moderate various relationships in the model.

In the UTAUT² model, three new constructs were added to extend the original UTAUT model. The new constructs are hedonic motivation, price value and habit (Venkatesh *et al.* 2012). Hedonic motivations defined as the fun or pleasure derived from using a technology, and it has been shown to play a key role in determining technology acceptance and usage (Venkatesh *et al.* 2012). Price values defined as consumers' cognitive trade-off between the perceived benefits of the technology applications and the monetary cost for using them (Venkatesh *et al.* 2012). The price value is positive when the benefits of using a technology are perceived to be greater than the monetary cost; and such a price value has been found to have a positive impact on the usage of technology (Brown & Venkatesh 2005). Habit has been defined as the extent to which people tend to perform behaviours automatically because of learning (Venkatesh *et al.* 2012).

Consumer behaviour and information systems (IS) research have theorised and found various constructs related to hedonic motivation (e.g., enjoyment) are important in consumer product and technology usage (Brown & Venkatesh 2005; Nyssen, Pedersen & Thujones 2005). Integrating hedonic motivation will complement the UTAUT model's strongest predictor that emphasises utility (i.e., performance expectancy). Studies have found that in consumer contexts, unlike workplace contexts, users are responsible for the costs of products, and such costs, besides being important, can influence consumer adoption decisions (Chan, Gong & Thong 2008; Coulter & Coulter 2007). Therefore, adding a construct related to price/cost was theorised to complement the UTAUT model's existing resource considerations that focus only on time and effort (e.g., effort expectancy).

Furthermore, recent literature has challenged the role of behavioural intention as the key predictor of technology usage and introduced a new theoretical construct (i.e., habit) as another critical predictor of technology usage (Davis & Venkatesh 2004; Limaye, Hirt & Cheung 2007). Thus, integrating the habit construct into UTAUT will complement the theory's focus on intentionality as the overarching mechanism and key driver of behaviour.

2.2 Social Media and Consumer Online Shopping

The terms social media or social networks originate from sociology. In a business context however, social networks refer to two or more connected business relationships, where an exchange exists between business partners (Michaelidou, Siamagka & Hristopoulos 2011). Recent and new developments in ICTs such as the advent of Web 2.0 has created new and more effective ways to communicate, collaborate and share content (Enders, Hungenberg, Denker & Mauch 2008). Social media and specifically, social networking sites (SNSs) such as Facebook and Twitter have since 2009 become popular online activity in terms of average time spent, especially in developed and many developing societies (NielsenWire 2010). Currently, there are more than 200 SNS (Sareah 2015); and in 2016, Facebook was ranked the biggest social networking site with the largest number of users the first in terms of popularity, with over 1.8 billion active users globally as at January 2017 and with more than 70 million small and medium businesses using it (Statista 2017). In addition, it is estimated that larger companies spend as much as \$100 million on Facebook advertising annually (Michaelidou *et al.* 2011; Sareah 2015).

Social media, otherwise known as user-generated communication now have grown to become a prevalent source of information. They have changed the tools and strategies companies use to communicate; and have highlighted that nowadays information control lies with the customer (Mangold & Faulds 2009). A study conducted by Cone (2008) shows that 93% of social media users believe that companies should have a social media presence, while 85% of them think that companies should interact with customers via SNSs. Progressively many companies are now penetrating the social networking platform online, offering direct links from their corporate websites to Facebook, Twitter and Google+, and use these tools to promote their products and support the creation of social shoppers (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010). In 2010, it was estimated that that advertising spending on Facebook and MySpace was expected to reach \$605million and \$435million respectively, while a large portion of the expenditure was to be used in building and maintaining asocial network presence (Michaelidou *et al.* 2011; Williamson 2009).

Despite the popularity of SNS, their importance in shaping commercial online interaction (Mislove, Marcon, Gummadi, Druschel & Bhattacharjee 2007) and their potential to support online marketing communities and brands (Christodoulides 2009), research into the effect of social media marketing communication factors on Nigerian online consumers is very limited. Anecdotal evidence (see Shih 2011) suggests that social media is

important for not only business-to-consumers (B2C) but also to business-to-business (B2B) companies. B2C companies can use social media and specifically SNS such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn to communicate with their customers and suppliers, build relationships and trust, as well as to identify prospective partners in terms of B2C retailing (Shih 2011). Furthermore, it is notable that while B2B online marketing is valued much higher than B2C marketing (Kalapesi, Willesdof & Zwillenberg 2010), the interest in, and subsequent adoption of social media by B2B organisations has been found to be slow compared to their B2C counterparts (Michaelidou *et al.* 2011).

2.3 Consumer Behaviour in Social Media Shopping

Past research has confirmed that social media influence consumers' buying behaviour (Sema 2013). Product quality, brand, advertising or price could affect consumers' decision-making. A study was conducted by Western Kentucky University to analyse the type of product purchased by consumers and the cost of items. The results indicate that consumers buy either inexpensive or expensive items based on recommendations from social media by their contacts or friends on social networking sites (Forbes & Vespoli 2013). From this, marketers could consider that social media influence purchase behaviour. According to the findings of another study on social media shopping 59% of the respondents used Facebook as their social media tool when they received a product recommendation from their network of friends, while 37% of them used Twitter to purchase products. Hence, the study concluded that social media influence the buying behaviour of consumers (Sareah 2015; Sema 2013).

Studies in the relationship between social media and consumer decision-making suggest that social media affect firms' advertising attitudes, brand attitudes and purchasing intentions of consumers (Sema 2013). However, Taining (2012) argued that social media would not necessarily affect consumer's decision-making, but that they might possess a mediating effect. Moreover, social media can build brand attitudes that affect buying behaviour. The good presentation of products can lead the consumers to make decision on their purchases. When consumer's friends on social media share or recommend services or products, it affects product brand attitude and influences their decision-making (Sareah 2015).

However, according to Yang (2012) cited in Sema (2013), advertising on social media, which is provided by commercial sources affect both consumer brand attitudes and purchasing intention. Thus, online retailers can plan their marketing strategies. Many marketers use social media for marketing campaigns. Social media have been identified as one of the easiest ways to communicate with consumers. Social media are not only for advertising, they can also be used by marketers as a tool for brands or services to connect with consumers. A study found that social media allow consumers and prospective consumers to communicate directly to a brand representative. Since most consumers use the social media as a tool to search and purchase items, companies and brands or services use this advantage to advertise their products (Vinerean, Cetina, & Tichindelean 2013).

Furthermore, social media provide the opportunity for consumers to reach a company via their social networking site fan pages, which is an easy way to connect and contact them. Consumers can challenge companies by how they chose to react to comments or responses on social media. Their reactions and responses can build strong brand images and get more consumers to purchase their products or services. When a consumer wants to make decision on product, for example, every single detail could be an influence on their decision-making (Sema 2013). Consumers' motives for engaging in social media can provide insights into the consumers' activities. A study has identified three main gratifications or motives that consumers have for using the Internet as a medium namely, information, entertainment and sociality (Heinonen 2011). According to Krishnamurthy and Dou (2008) cited in Sema (2013), the motivation is classified into two main groups: i) rational motives (which include knowledge sharing and advocacy) and ii) emotional motives (which include social connection and self-expression).

Consumers' online behaviour has been linked with their activities on social media. Nowadays consumers use the Internet as a tool to achieve their motivations. Their motivations may have connection with their old friends, business or comment reviews to support their purchase decision-making. Consumers' reviews on social media is regarded as a second-hand resource to support their purchase decision-making because they want value from their expenditure. For example, a product consumer's social networking site audience can see his or her reviews on such consumables as garment, toiletries, cosmetics, books and cars (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010; Sema 2013).

In addition to the usage of social media to run online business, a change in purchasing habits has increased the relevance of online business. A research study found that the Internet has fundamentally changed customers' notions of convenience, speed, price, product information and service (Kotler, Armstrong, Wong & Saunders 2008). According to the findings of the study this translates into two major trends: i) an increasing share of all retail purchases is influenced by digital channels (such as social media) and ii) a growing number of consumers directly purchases from online shops (Klapdor 2013).

Online stores offer consumers certain benefits that cannot be offered by physical stores. These benefits attract many consumers to online shopping from all over the world. Prior studies have indicated that e-stores

offer consumers more diverse product choices, customised products, service information, shopping convenience, 24-hour shopping services, time saving, competitive pricing and privacy (Katole 2011; Shang, Chen & Shen 2005). According to Aminu (2013), a research study conducted by The Nielsen Company (2011) found that 72% of respondents shopped online because of 24 hour-service; 66% shopped online because online products can be compared easily; 57% shopped online because of easy delivery; and 50% shopped online because of better price. Furthermore, a research survey conducted in many countries indicated that at least 85% of Internet users had purchased online in European and North American countries; 96% of them had purchased online in Austria; 70% of them had purchased online in Asia Pacific; and 74% of them had purchased online in South Africa (The Nielsen Company 2012).

However, Nigeria and other African countries were not covered by the research survey for obvious reasons, which may include poor Internet infrastructure, high level of illiteracy, cultural barrier, security issues, inadequate regulatory framework, etc. (Aminu 2013). These factors may have led to the low Internet penetration in those countries, and therefore, made online shopping inaccessible and cumbersome among consumers. In addition, these and similar other challenges, may have negatively affected the acceptance of online shopping among Nigerian consumers. Cited in Aminu (2013), a study conducted by Ayo, Adewoye and Oni (2011) in online shopping behaviour of consumers in Nigeria has indicated that only 23.3% of them had ever purchased goods online and 37% of them had never visited any online shop; 18% of them had visited only one to two online shops. The findings further revealed that 24.6% of the consumers had visited three to five online shops; 12.6% of them had visited between six and 20 online shops and 7.8% of them had visited more than 20 online shops. Evidently, these statistics are very low compared with those of consumers who had shopped online in Asia/Pacific, Europe, South Africa and USA as mentioned above.

Following the increasingly greater research attention the concept of online shopping is gaining globally, many organisations are seeking to realise the potential of online shopping and to engage in the e-marketplace (Rowley 2000). However, for companies conducting business online, being successful depends on identifying potential of online retails of their products. Not all products have potential for selling online (Smith & Brynjolfsson 2001). Hence, online shops should adopt a suitable strategy not for only selecting their relevant goods, which have enough potential for online sales but also a strategy for product marketing and consumer communication online. Therefore, understanding which factors determine potential of online sales of a specific product and which product marketing and consumer communication strategy to adopt in the virtual marketplace is critical.

3. Material and Methods

3.1 Study Population, Sampling Procedure and Location of Study

Using Cochran's (1977) sampling technique, the researcher selected 380 undergraduate students from a population of 37,000 students drawn from two Nigerian public universities, namely University of Maiduguri in Borno State and Yobe State University in Damaturu. However, after the field work 352 questionnaires were retrieved out of which 23 were sorted out as data clumsy, leaving the researcher with only 329 survey forms which were used in the analysis. Given that this study is exploratory, and social media shopping is still not so widely accepted by many Nigerians (FOTN 2015), only students that had made shopping via a social media platform in the previous two to three months from the time of questionnaire administration were selected.

The research data was collected through the administration of a survey questionnaire. The selection of participants was based on purposeful sampling to gather data from relevant individuals. Purposeful or convenience sampling is a sampling method in which the researcher samples cases or individuals that differ in some characteristics or traits. This procedure also requires the researcher to identify the characteristics and then find sites or individuals that display different dimensions of those traits (Creswell 2014; Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls & Ormston 2013).

This study was conducted on the campuses of the two pre-mentioned Nigerian universities, University of Maiduguri and Yobe State University Damaturu. Those two universities were chosen because of the following reasons: i) both universities are in the northeastern region of the country; and ii) both universities have a catchment area that is populated with educationally disadvantaged peoples that have relatively less access and exposure to Internet and online shopping (Hamilton-Ekeke & Mbachu 2015; Mathew, Ogedebe & Adeniji 2013). Therefore, since this study is exploratory, it is expected that those two universities would be suitable, and the study would generate fair findings from a group of consumers that is located at a place that has relatively lower level of acceptance of online shopping in the country (Hamilton-Ekeke & Mbachu 2015; Mathew *et al.* 2013).

3.2 Development of the Research Instrument

The questionnaire was designed with four sections. Given that this study focuses on the descriptive information of the research, Section 1 of the research instrument consists of six items used to obtain information about the respondents' demographic characteristics, which was measured using a combination of closed-ended and open-

ended questions. Section 2 was measured using three items, with a five-point Likert-type scale which ranges from (1) Rarely to (5) Always. This section measures the respondents' pattern of social media shopping, specifically their usage frequency and the kinds of item they often purchase online. Section 3 was gauged using five items with a five-point Likert-type scale which ranges from (1) Strongly Disagree to (5) Strongly Agree. This section measures the respondents' intention to shop online. Lastly, Section 4 of the instrument measures the respondents' preferred social networking sites to do shopping. The section consists of only one semi-structured question which was gauged with a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from (1) Rarely to (5) Always. The five-point Likert scale has been adjudged one of the most appropriate and often used measurement scales in quantitative studies (Babbie 2016; Creswell 2014; Sekaran 2016).

3.3 Data Analysis and Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

A quantitative data analysis approach was adopted hence, a research survey instrument that consists of close-ended questions was used to collect the data. Given that this paper focuses on the descriptive data of the research study, the data was analysed using the descriptive statistics tools of SPSS (statistical package for social sciences) version 22. This research instrument was not subject to another pre-testing because it has been adopted in many similar studies (e.g., Venkatesh *et al.* 2012; Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry 1986) with remarkable results. Each of the independent and dependent variable scales yielded a very high Cronbach alpha $\alpha = .996$ and $\alpha = .973$ respectively as suggested by Malhotra (2004) and Nunnally (2010).

3.4 Determining Consumer Acceptance of Social Media Shopping

The actual level of the respondents' social media shopping acceptance was determined by subtracting the lowest mean value from the highest mean value scored in the use intention scale (refer to Table 3). Then, the mean difference was used as the lowest threshold, while the highest possible mean value score (which is 5.00, since a Five-point Likert scale was adopted) was used as the highest threshold (see Babbie 2016).

3.5 Conceptual Framework

Since this study focuses on consumers' perceptions toward the acceptance of social media shopping, the UTAUT² was adopted with some adjustments as permitted in the literature (see AlAwadhi & Morris 2008; Venkatesh, Morris & Ackerman 2000). The UTAUT² model focuses on consumer acceptance/intention to accept technology. The model was formulated from a combination of many ICT adoption models. The model was developed by Venkatesh *et al.* (2012) and it consists of seven key predictors or independent variables (IVs) namely, performance expectancy (PE), effort expectancy (EE), social influence (SI), facilitating conditions (FC), hedonic motivation (HM), price value (PV) and habit (HT). The dependent variable is intention to accept social media shopping.

Given that still literature on Nigerian social media shopping is growing, this study was intended to be exploratory. Hence, for convenience purposes the mediator variable (behavioural intention) was adopted as the dependent variable while all three moderator variables (gender, age and experience) were dropped from the model and focused on the direct effect of the predictors on the dependent variable (see Figure 1).

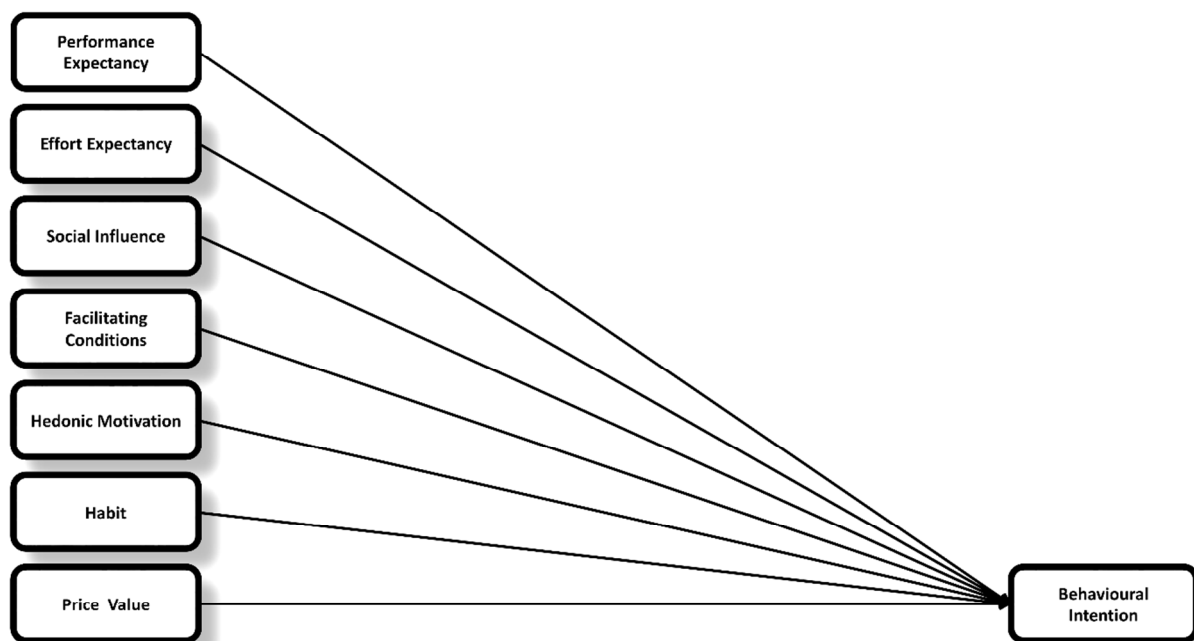


Figure 1. The Conceptual Framework of this Study, showing the direct effect paths from the independent variables to the dependent variable (adopted from Venkatesh *et al.* 2012 with modifications)

2.1 Establishment of HMS

Towards achieving a higher level of efficiency and competitiveness in manufacturing operations, the European Community (EC), European Free Trade Association (EFTA), Australia, Canada, Japan, and the United States (US) founded an international collaborative research programme called Intelligent Manufacturing Systems (IMS) in 1993. This programme consists of six major projects, wherein the fifth one is entitled “Holonc Manufacturing Systems: system components of autonomous modules and their distributed control”. It is important to emphasise that HMS does not represent a new technology, as it is merely a conceptual modelling approach to connect and make use of existing technologies with human interfaces (McFarlane 1995). HMS became one of the first fully endorsed IMS projects in 1997, and so the International HMS Consortium was formed and dedicated to replicate in manufacturing the strengths that holonic systems provide to living organisms and societies. These holonic strengths encompass stability in the face of disturbances, adaptability and flexibility in the face of change, and efficient use of available resources. Succinctly, autonomy and cooperation are known as the prime attributes of HMS (Valckenaers *et al.* 1997; Bongaerts 1998).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Respondents' demographic information: Many of the respondents (54.4%), that is, slightly more than a half of them, were male. The frequency distribution of the male respondents' age shows that most of them were youth, below the age of 30 years. Many (39.7% and 30.7%) of them belonged to the 22-to-25-year-old and 26-to-29-year-old age groups respectively. Only 2.2% of them belonged in the older age group, 30-35 years old, which was 25.2% less than the group of youngest students (27.4%). The mean age was 24 years, three months old ($M = 24.03$, $SD = 4.05$) as shown in Table 1.

The age frequency distribution indicates that most of the respondents were youth, below the age of 30 years old. Many (40.7%) of the female respondents belonged to the youngest age group, 18 to 22 years old. Only 1.3% of them were aged 30 to 33 years old, which is less than the percentage of their male counterparts by nearly 1%. The female respondents' mean age was 22 years, five months old ($M = 22.05$, $SD = 5.09$) as shown in Table 1.

The educational qualification distribution of the respondents shows that quite many (48.9%) of them held a secondary school certificate (WAEC/NECO/GCE) and that many (32.5%) of them held a Diploma certificate. Only 9.4% and 9.1% of them held HND and NCE certificates respectively. The results further show that many (36.8%) of them were in final year of a bachelor's degree (400 Level). Only 11.2% of them were in the first year (100 Level). Surprisingly, the results indicate that all (100%) of the respondents were full-time students, with none of them having any occupation (job) other than being student. However, as expected, a clear majority (90.6%) of them were single, not married as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents (n = 329)

S/No	Variables	Frequency	%	Mean	SD	
1	Gender			1.10	.490	
	Male	179	54.4			
	Female	150	45.6			
2	Age Category, Male			1.99	.707	
	18 – 21	49	27.4			
	22 – 25	71	39.7			
	26 – 29	55	30.7			
	30 – 33	4	2.2			
	Total	179	100			
	<i>Mean Age: M = 24.03, SD = 4.05</i>					
3	Age Category, Female			1.86	.799	
	18 – 21	61	40.7			
	22 – 25	56	37.3			
	26 – 29	31	20.7			
	30 – 33	2	1.3			
	Total	150	100			
<i>Mean Age: Mean = 22.05, SD = 5.09</i>						
4	Highest Educational Qualification			3.51	1.72	
	WAEC/NECO/GCE	161	48.9			
	NCE	30	9.1			
	Diploma	107	32.5			
	HND	31	9.4			
5	Current Educational Level			2.51	0.57	
	100 Level	37	11.2			
	200 Level	86	26.1			
	300 Level	85	25.8			
	400 Level	121	36.8			
	Occupation			2.51	0.57	
	Student	329	100			
	6	Marital Status			1.78	.412
		Married	31	9.4		
		Single	298	90.6		

4.1.2 *Pattern of respondents' social media shopping:* Table 2 indicates that many (39.5% and 38.3%) of the respondents had visited the social media pages of their favourite online shop frequently and always respectively. Only 9.7% of them visited the social media fan pages of their favourite online shop rarely. The moderate mean value (M = 2.99, SD = 1.21) indicates that many of the respondents had visited the social media fan pages of their favourite online shops sometimes before.

The result further indicates that 26.4% of the respondents rarely purchased any products online. However, 24.0% of them had purchased products online frequently. Only 3.3% of them purchased any product online always, while 23.4% of them had purchased products online sometimes as shown in Table 2. The mean value (M = 1.40, SD = .490) which is very low, indicates that most of the respondents did not use to purchase products online often.

Most (53.2%) of the respondents had recently purchased electrical/electronic devices, equipment and appliances online. Many (46.8%) of them had recently purchased clothing material online as shown in Table 2. The mean value (M = 2.56, SD = 1.97) which is moderate, indicates that many of the respondents used to purchase products online sometimes.

Table 2: Pattern of Respondents' Social Media Shopping (n = 329)

Note: Open-ended questions were used to generate these data. n = Sample size % = Percentage SD = Standard deviation						
Frequency (%)					Mean	SD
Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequently	Always		
Frequency of visiting social media fan pages of favourite online shops						
32 (9.7)	9 (2.7)	32 (9.7)	130 (39.5)	126 (38.3)	2.99	1.21
Frequency of purchasing products on social media from favourite online shops						
87 (26.4)	75 (22.8)	77 (23.4)	79 (24.0)	11 (3.3)	1.40	.490
Product(s) recently purchased from favourite online shop						
Clothing			Electrical/electronics			
Frequency (%)	Mean	SD	Frequency (%)	Mean	SD	
154 (46.8)	2.45	1.56	175 (53.2)	2.56	1.97	

4.1.3 Respondents' intention to do social media shopping: The findings of the study in Table 3 indicate that the item that gauged the respondents' belief that social media shopping would be useful for them scored the highest mean value (M = 3.02, SD = 1.16) while the item that gauged the respondents' belief that they would always rely on social media shopping to purchase the most important things they needed scored the least mean value (M = 1.49, SD = .502). The overall mean value of the scale (M = 2.28, SD = .825) was rather low, suggesting that most of the respondents were reluctant to do social media shopping.

Table 3: The Respondents' Intention to do Social Media Shopping (n = 329)

Note: Five-Point Likert scale was used as follows: 1) Strongly Disagree 2) Disagree 3) Neither Agree nor Disagree 4) Agree 5) Strongly Agree			SD = Standard deviation n = Sample size					
S/No	Item	5-Point Likert Scale (% of Frequency)					Mean	SD
		1	2	3	4	5		
1	I believe social media shopping would be useful for me.	23 (7.0)	26 (7.9)	20 (6.1)	125 (38.0)	135 (41)	3.02	1.16
2	I would recommend social media shopping to someone who seeks my advice.	24 (7.3)	23 (7.0)	28 (8.5)	110 (33.4)	144 (43.8)	2.99	1.15
3	I would rely on social media shopping to purchase many of the stuff I need.	21 (6.4)	80 (24.3)	36 (10.9)	137 (41.6)	55 (16.7)	2.20	.744
4	I would often rely on social media shopping to purchase the most important stuff need.	53 (16.1)	83 (25.2)	46 (14.0)	102 (31.0)	45 (13.7)	1.69	.572
5	I would always rely on social media shopping to purchase the stuff need whenever they are available.	74 (22.5)	95 (28.9)	54 (16.4)	66 (20.1)	40 (12.2)	1.49	.502
<i>Overall Mean</i>							2.28	.825

Table 4 shows the level of the respondents' acceptance of social media shopping. The overall mean value of the use intention scale was M = 2.28, SD = .825 (refer to Table 3), which falls between the lowest mean value and the highest mean value scored (i.e., 1.54 and 3.02). Therefore, the respondents' level of acceptance of social media shopping was moderate.

Table 4: Level of Respondents' Acceptance of Social Media Shopping

Level	Mean Range	Mean	SD
Low	1.00 – 1.53	2.28	.825
Moderate	1.54 – 3.02		
High	3.03– 5.00		

4.1.4 Respondents' preference of social media shopping: Table 5 shows that WhatsApp was the most preferred social media application by most of the respondents to do social media shopping as shown by the very high mean value ($M = 4.14$, $SD = 1.09$). WhatsApp was followed by Facebook, which recorded a high mean value ($M = 3.76$, $SD = .784$). The least used social media site was Google+, which recorded a very low mean value ($M = 1.99$, $SD = .473$). These results are a bit surprising because Facebook was presumed to be the most preferred social networking site for doing social media shopping given its popularity in the country (Ibrahim *et al.* 2018a) and globally (Sareah 2015).

Table 5: Respondents' Preferred Social Media Platforms for Social Media Shopping (n = 329)

Note: Five-Likert scale was used as follows: 1) Never 2) Rarely (1 day per week) 3) Occasionally (2 – 3 days per Week) 4) Frequently (4 – 5 days per week) 5) Always (6 – 7 days per week)			SD = standard deviation; n = Sample size					
S/No	Application Used for doing Social Media Shopping	5-Likert Scale (% of frequency)					Mean	SD
		1	2	3	4	5		
1	WhatsApp	3 (0.9)	13 (4.0)	20 (6.1)	33 (10.0)	260 (79.0)	4.14	1.09
2	Facebook	3 (0.9)	10 (3.0)	17 (5.2)	102 (31.0)	197 (59.9)	3.76	.784
3	Google+	17 (5.2)	112 (34.0)	92 (28.0)	65 (19.8)	43 (13.1)	1.99	.473
<i>Overall Mean</i>							<i>3.30</i>	<i>.782</i>

4.2 Discussion

Responding to call for an empirical investigation to be conducted to determine the level and pattern of social media shopping among Nigerian consumers to close a literature void, the present research study was carried out. The demographic data indicates that most of the 329 respondents were male (54.4%), though the percentage difference with the female respondents was small, less than 10%. This shows a near-balance in gender distribution among the undergraduate respondents that participated in the research. Most of the respondents were young, aged between 22 and 29 years old. However, many of the male respondents were a bit older than many of the female respondents. Therefore, it is not surprising that the male respondents' mean age was 24 years old while that of the female respondents was 22 years old. Quite many of the respondents held a secondary education certificate (WAEC/NECO/GCE) or an HND certificate and are in a final year grade (Level 400). Similarly, quite many of them held Diploma and NCE certificates. However, majority of them were single, full-time students and having no any other defined occupation(job) than being students.

The social media shopping usage pattern of the consumers is rather a simple one, as the frequency of usage and kinds of products purchased online are as expected. Many of the respondents visited the social media pages of their favourite online stores and had purchase clothing material such as garments and their accessories online recently, while only fewer of them had purchased electrical/electronic devices online. Generally, however, not quite many of them purchase products online often. This may be linked to the fact that most of the respondents were full-time students and were not having any defined income-earning job. It is also believed that this phenomenon could influence their purchasing behaviour specifically, and social media shopping acceptance generally.

A clear majority of the consumers indicate that they prefer WhatsApp to do social media shopping. This is indicated by the very high mean value ($M = 4.14$, $SD = 1.09$) (refer to Table 5). Trailing behind it is Facebook, with a high mean score of $M = 3.76$, $SD = .784$. These results are a bit unexpected, though very interesting. The literature has invariably shown that Facebook tops the list of the most used and popular social networking sites in Nigeria (Emmanuel 2015; FOTN 2015; Ibrahim *et al.* 2018b) and globally (Alhabash & Ma 2017; Ellison & Boyd 2013) by individuals and businesses.

Even the present study had presumed that the findings would support the researchers' presumptions. Importantly, WhatsApp has three distinguishing characteristics which according to Alhabash and Ma (2017) and Ellison and Boyd (2013) make it less favourable to e-tailers and other online businesses, especially medium and

large businesses. The characteristics are as follows:

- it is rather more personal than Facebook is,
- it offers a great deal of personal privacy to users than Facebook does and
- it uses users' mobile phone numbers to connect individual users, unlike Facebook which relies on users' openly sending friend request to others and/or users openly following others.

Based on these corroborating evidences, these findings suggest that most of the online stores or businesses whose services most consumers patronise are either small or micro businesses. Among all the social networking sites used by the consumers to do social media shopping, Google+ is the least preferred.

However, overall, the consumers' level of the usage of those social media platforms to do social media shopping is interestingly high ($M = 3.30$, $SD = .782$). Most of the consumers show an appreciably moderate intention to accept social media shopping, especially if access to online businesses, income and access to Internet are improved. Furthermore, the high cumulative mean value ($M = 3.30$, $SD = .782$) of the scale determining the consumers' preferred social media sites for online shopping indicates that a lot of them accepted social media shopping.

Although the researchers sought the consumers' perception of the use of 11 social media applications, they responded to questions on the use of only three applications appreciably, with responses to the remaining eight (BlackBerry Messenger, Tango, Telegram, WeChat, Foursquare, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter) being grossly negligible, hence they were ignored. This suggests that (i) most consumers rely on just a few social media platforms to do social media shopping, (ii) most of the online businesses which most consumers patronise have minimal online presence (i.e., have fan pages in only a few social networking sites), or (iii) the novelty of social media shopping in the country (Emmanuel 2015; FOTN 2015) still influences the consumers' preference of access environment.

5. Conclusion

With a clear majority of the online consumers being persons of young age, most of them have indicated positive perceptions toward social media shopping, especially with the results indicating a moderate usage pattern level and acceptance intention. This is not surprising, as generally, the emergence of online business and shopping is still considered as novel in Nigeria despite its being the nation with one of the highest Internet penetration rates and social media usage in Africa (FOTN 2015). With the discovery of WhatsApp social media application as the most preferred platform for doing social media shopping by most consumers, it is expected that many low-income consumers can access the category online businesses that use WhatsApp as a business platform, e.g., small and micro businesses (see Alhabash & Ma 2017; Ellison & Boyd 2013).

Many socio-economic factors such as widespread poverty among the people, unfavorable business (investment) environment and poor economy (Emmanuel 2015) may have been some of the key constraints militating against the development and wider and rapid acceptance of social media shopping in the country. Nevertheless, this finding implies that more and more Nigerian consumers would be willing to visit the social media fan pages of their favourite online stores and do shopping if, e.g., Internet services and access to the online stores' social media pages are favourably affordable in addition to improved income and living conditions. Therefore, this study concludes that social media shopping is increasingly gaining acceptance among Nigerian consumers. However, not quite many of them are able to purchase products online seemingly due to poor access to online technologies, low technology use skills and harsh socio-economic factors. It is therefore, recommended that online stores should increase their presence and improve their access for consumers via social media applications.

Future research should focus on determining the factors affecting the acceptance of social media shopping in the country and involve none-students as participants. A key implication of this study's findings to future research is that despite the growing acceptance level of social media shopping in Nigeria, its levels of acceptance and use in other parts of the world e.g., in emerging economies such as Brazil, India, Malaysia, Singapore and South Korea is tremendous () such that it could emerge as a unique genre of online shopping soon.

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