



MOBILE MARKETING AND CONSUMER'S PURCHASE DECISIONS AMONG STUDENTS OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN AKWA IBOM STATE

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ABSTRACT: *This study was carried out to assess the relationship between mobile marketing and purchase decisions of students in the tertiary institutions. The researchers adopted a survey research technique in the study. The population size was students of three tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State and a sample size of 366 employees was studied. The mobile marketing variables (independent variables) considered in the study were Short Message Service, Mobile Website and Social Media Marketing. The dependent variable was Consumer's Purchase Decision. Research questions were answered using frequency, mean and standard deviation. The hypotheses stated were tested using Spearman Correlation Coefficient at a 5% level of significance. From the data analysis, the major findings revealed a positive and significant relationship between the dimensions of mobile marketing variables (Short Message Service, Mobile Website and Social Media Marketing) and consumer's purchase decision of Nigerian students in the tertiary institutions. From the findings, it was concluded that there was a positive and significant relationship between mobile marketing and consumer's purchase decision of Nigerian students in Akwa Ibom State. In line with this, it was recommended that companies should endeavor to influence their customers' purchase decisions by making their products accessible through mobile devices platforms to interact with their customers and keep them informed of new product features.*

KEYWORDS: Mobile, Marketing, Consumer, Purchase, Decision.



INTRODUCTION

Marketing activities before now were done in traditional ways which involve the use of massive marketing communication, i.e., communication to a large number of potential customers at once via traditional media such as TV, radio, newspapers, journals, etc. (Etuk & Udonde, 2023a). But with the development of information technologies and the fact that the massive market has become fragmented, marketing experts had to change their access to the existing and potential clients. This development in information technologies has enabled direct communication with clients and companies have found useful information that can be used to create different kinds of products for each customer. New information technologies have created a new media which is the mobile devices. These mobile devices have changed our life day after day since its development and it covers most aspects of our life. Our life has become sophisticated and dependent on mobile devices since we are interacting with it on a daily basis to fulfill different kinds of tasks. This revolution from the traditional marketing of massive communication has set in motion in marketing activities to the modern way of marketing to a consumer, which is the creation of new media which involves the use of mobile devices applied in Mobile Marketing.

Mobile marketing is a digital marketing strategy which allows businesses to reach out to their target audience through their mobile devices. Companies might engage their customers through websites, email, text messages and mobile apps to deliver time sensitive content to their smartphones, tablets and other devices. It is the use of the SMS/MMS, social media, search engines, mobile devices, mobile application, location based services, display-base campaign, mobile video ads, mobile-compatible websites, Bluetooth, and Quick Response (QR) code to reach consumers. Other advantages from a marketer's point are the two-way communication, high ratio of personalization, higher rate of responsiveness and inexpensive way of reaching the right target groups at apparent time and place and which potentially will result in increased revenues and cost reductions. It is a new way of approaching customers and understanding how customers behave compared to traditional marketing. This marketing utilizes the mobile devices, internet and telecommunication tools to reach the target customer of the company. Since there are multitudes of internet users around the globe on a daily basis, different companies have designed their web pages which are accessible with computers, tablets, smartphones and other electronic devices. Thus, bringing a lot of opportunities for businesses as their products can reach a large group of people at a time (Etuk & Udonde, 2023a).

Paradoxically, while consumers adopt mobile devices as their constant companion to enhance private and social lives, marketers see mobile phones as a marketing channel. It offers an opportunity for marketers to exploit a new channel of reaching their customers and act as a gateway to a relationship between the consumer and the marketer, making it an ideal supplementary channel for distance selling and physical retailing (Shankar, Venkatesh, Hofacker & Naik, 2010). Mobile marketing is a new marketing channel which has been created during the evolution of e-commerce. It includes promotions sent through SMS text messaging, MMS multimedia messaging, downloaded apps using push notifications, in-app or in-game marketing, mobile websites or by using a mobile device to scan QR (Quick Response) codes. Appropriate use of mobile marketing tools can influence the purchase decision of an individual; this is because people are aware of products online and in this modern era; people are more focused on their mobile devices as they spend most of their time on it and this especially applies to young teens and the students.



The goal of any organization is to increase the purchase decisions of their consumers and this can be achieved through the adoption of various mobile marketing tools. The consumer's purchase decision is one of the stages in the consumer decision making process. This is the stage where the consumer finally makes an actual purchase after the alternatives have been evaluated. At this stage, mobile devices can be used by companies to influence consumers' purchase by making the purchase process easy and enjoyable for the consumers, making the consumers gain easy accessibility to their products, and introducing different payment methods to the consumers. Because mobile marketing is an easy and inexpensive way of reaching customers does not mean that consumers want to receive marketing messages and offers on their phones. This however calls for a thorough understanding of the whole concept of mobile marketing and which of the mobile marketing tools is most appropriate to use, the why and how consumers may want to participate in mobile marketing and how mobile marketing influences purchase decisions of Nigerian students in tertiary institutions, as this will help in developing successful mobile marketing strategies for an organization.

Statement of the Problem

In this 21st century, it is quite impossible to go about day-to-day business activities without perceiving the importance of mobile devices in enhancing both individual and organization performance. With respect to the paradigm shift (from traditional to mobile age), consumers have more than ever changed their media preferences and habits from TV and radio broadcast to various sophisticated mobile devices powered by the internet. Time is fast-changing at the rate where users' expectation and media consumption behaviour has shifted from traditional media of the AIDA model: as awareness, to interest, to desire and action to adoption of multiple touch screens with the advent of state-of-the art smart phones and tablets. The ability to effectively reach real world user audience segments at the right time and place has become the holy grail of modern marketing and mobile devices are the strategic channels used in driving this change.

Marketing to customers has taken a new dimension. Even with an excellent product, attractive price, successfully implemented promotion and distribution, it is very important to know how to approach the product or service to the customer because of the new market trends. It is pertinent for an organization in their bid to command customers' favourable purchase decisions to recognize and understand various electronic transitions so as to adopt appropriate mobile marketing strategies in reaching and serving multiple users. Mobile marketing has become the significant communication's tool and one of the most important advertising tools used in commanding this favourable purchase decision and there is a need for companies to leverage on the strategic lucrativeness of mobile marketing tools in order to increase purchase decision.

Customers on the other hand are looking for ways of meeting their needs conveniently without incurring additional cost and one of the ways of achieving this conveniently is through mobile marketing where they can comfortably stay at homes and offices to make enquiries and order for items without any physical contact (Etuk & Udonde, 2023a). Also, consumers have become more involved in the development of the products and services they purchase and that has shifted control from producers to consumers. One of the ways in which companies can conveniently meet their customers' needs is by making their products accessible through mobile devices. This involves the use of search engine optimization, social media marketing, email marketing, mobile apps, SMS/MMS and other channels to reach their target audience.



To increase consumer purchase decisions using mobile marketing, the right mobile marketing strategies that will influence purchase behaviour needs to be adopted. It was against this backdrop that the researcher carried out this study to articulate on what constitutes excellent mobile marketing in order to make for effective purchase decisions of students in tertiary institutions and to determine the relationship of mobile marketing strategies on purchase decisions.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to assess the relationship between mobile marketing and consumer's purchase decision of Nigerian students in the tertiary institutions. The specific objectives were:

- i. To ascertain the relationship between Short Message Service and Consumer's Purchase Decision among Nigerian students in the tertiary institutions.
- ii. To assess the relationship between Mobile Website and Consumer's Purchase Decision among Nigerian students in the tertiary institutions.
- iii. To ascertain the relationship between Social Media Marketing and Consumer's Purchase Decision among Nigerian students in the tertiary institutions.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated from the objectives of the study as stated below:

- i. What is the extent of the relationship between Short Message Service and Consumer's Purchase Decision among Nigerian students in the tertiary institutions?
- ii. Is there any relationship between Mobile Website and Consumer's Purchase Decision among Nigerian students in the tertiary institutions?
- iii. What is the extent of the relationship between Social Media Marketing and Consumer's Purchase Decision among Nigerian students in the tertiary institutions?

Hypotheses of the Study

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study.

HO₁: There is no significant relationship between Short Message Service and Consumer's Purchase Decision among Nigerian students in the tertiary institutions.

HO₂: There is no significant relationship between Mobile Website and Consumer's Purchase Decision among Nigerian students in the tertiary institutions.

HO₃: There is no significant relationship between Social Media Marketing and Consumer's Purchase Decision among Nigerian students in the tertiary institutions.



LITERATURE REVIEW

Mobile Marketing

Mobile marketing is relatively a new branch of marketing, referring to a two-way marketing communication between companies and customers that takes place via mobile devices such as smartphones, tablets or personal digital assistants (PDAs). Mobile devices are the most ubiquitous personal item in the world. It is central to the lives of most consumers, including the lives of young teens. The main function of a mobile phone is to allow users to talk to each other. However, the popularity of other mobile phone services, such as short message services (SMS), has grown very rapidly (Jayawardhena *et al.*, 2009). Mobile device is a device many consumers cannot seem to do without; they always have it on and check it almost everywhere they go. For these customers, the mobile phone is not only a personal device used to stay connected with friends but likewise an extension of their personality (Grant & O'Donohoe, 2007).

Mobile marketing is considered one of the latest and important digital marketing channels. It is the broadest, fastest, cheapest, and most actual marketing channel where users can earn information and features of attractive goods easily with the possibility of completing the buying and selling process without the need for the buyer to go to the place where the goods are (Alam *et al.*, 2015). Explicitly, mobile marketing provides access to customers to know their benefits and needs and influence their buying decisions (Tiffany *et al.*, 2018). For organizations, it allows them to communicate and interact with their audiences interactively and relevantly through any device or mobile network (Mohamed *et al.*, 2016). Mobile marketing has emerged as one of the exciting interactive communication mode channels between firms and customers and messages through such media can affect consumer's decision to buy.

According to Mobile Marketing Association (2009), mobile marketing is the set of practices that enables organizations to communicate and engage with their audience in an interactive and relevant manner through any mobile devices or network. Dushinski (2009) in his paper defined mobile marketing as a revolutionary tool for connecting companies with each of their clients via their mobile devices in the right time, in the right place and with appropriate direct message. Namazi (2011) described mobile marketing as a promotional activity designed to enhance the experience of mobile phone users. For businesses, it can be used to build brand awareness, develop a customer database, drive attendance of events, improve customer loyalty and even to increase revenue through the creation of applications that consumers are willing to pay for. Because it entails two-way or multi-way communication, mobile marketing is predominantly interactive in nature, and may include mobile advertising, promotion, customer support and other relationship-building deeds. Such interactive marketing activities are becoming progressively important in the changing business landscape.

Mobile marketing differs from traditional mass marketing across four elements. These are:

- ❖ **Scope of Audience:** Mobile marketing audiences are limited to owners of mobile devices who opt-in to accept communications.
- ❖ **Type and Format of Messages:** Bandwidth capacity and tight screen size constraints restrict the format and type of message possible.



- ❖ **Location Based Targeting:** Location-based and time-based targeting of messages are enabled through mobile devices.
- ❖ **Response Tracking:** Marketers can better track and quantify audience responses to mobile messages.

Mobile marketing has become a valuable addition to the traditional marketing approach that enables even small businesses to compete favourably with big businesses as it does not recognize the size and types of the businesses. The scope of mobile marketing is broader than that of traditional marketing. Mobile marketing creates a strategy that assists businesses to deliver the right messages of their product or services to the right audience and its activities and processes help to find, attract, win and retain customers because most of the marketing activities are done over the internet. The traditional marketing has limitations in coverage compared to mobile marketing because of the portability of the devices used in this marketing. This enables firms to continuously appeal to both their customers and prospective buyers because the internet facilities are all-round “24/7” service to its users (Etuk & Udonde, 2023a), which facilitate firms having a constant relationship with their customers worldwide, and their customers can shop or even order products at any time. Also, the cost of mobile marketing is nothing compared to traditional marketing, as many social media sites like Facebook, LinkedIn and Google plus allow businesses to advertise and promote their products or services almost free of charge. Mobile marketing also helps to advance businesses by creating accessibility and immediate communication between buyers and sellers, improve global audience reach, encourage multiple marketing channels usage and it helps to track results easily.

Discussing issues of mobile marketing, Nkpurukwe *et al.* (2020) opined that mobile websites and SMS are the integral components of mobile marketing. Others include mobile applications, mobile websites, display-base campaigns, mobile video ads, as dimensions of mobile marketing in evaluating its effect on business outcomes. However, from the foregoing, the researcher will consider the variables of mobile marketing for this study as Short Message Service (SMS), Mobile Website and Social Media Marketing to see how they affect consumer’s purchase decisions of students in tertiary institutions.

Mobile Marketing Variables

The three variables of mobile marketing for this study are: Short Message Service (SMS), Mobile Website and Social Media Marketing.

Short Message Service (SMS): This is also known as wireless advertisement. This is a text messaging service element of most telephone and mobile device systems. Mobile marketing uses SMS in sending promotional campaigns or transactional messages for marketing purposes using text messages. They are meant to communicate time-sensitive offers, updates and alerts to people who have consented to receive these messages from your business.

They serve the unique function of communicating very urgent information in a highly reliable way and it compliments other marketing strategies. Companies use SMS for advertising and communication purposes. Through SMS, companies can send messages to a network of mobile users all at once, or on an individual basis, while the company can also receive SMS from their customers, usually opting to participate in a marketing and sales campaign (Mobile Marketing Trends, 2012). Through SMS, businesses can effectively and efficiently promote their products



and services. SMS has grown into a mainstream communication tool for marketers to reach millions of consumers. This platform provides firms with unprecedented opportunities to connect with customers by leveraging the massive rise in the use of mobile phones in the world (Criteo, 2015).

Mobile Website: A mobile website is similar to any other website in that it consists of browser-based hypertext mark-up language (HTML) pages that are linked together and accessed over the Internet (for mobile typically Wi-Fi or 3G or 4G networks). The obvious characteristic that distinguishes a mobile website from a standard website is the fact that it is designed for the smaller handheld display and touch-screen interface (Human Service Solutions, 2011). It allows internet access from mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets. A mobile web is a version of desktop web that has been specifically designed to be compatible with mobile devices. MMA (2009) sees mobile web as a software that delivers an engaging and streamlined mobile experience that appeals to a mobile visitor who is using their smartphone or other mobile devices to connect to a company's brand. This website affords mobile users the opportunity to connect through a market network to the internet using interconnect applications. Apart from becoming informed about products and services, customers want to partake in the service or product design process; they want a seamless access to innovations in the market. Since it is impossible to have stores located on every nook and cranny, business firms must provide customers with online access to almost everything they would find in the physical shop in order to create value for customers.

Social Media Marketing: Social media marketing (SMM) refers to the use of social networks to market a firm's products. According to Etuk and Udonde (2023a), social media marketing is an attempt to use social media channels (MySpace, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp and Twitter) to persuade clients that one's firm's goods and/or services are worthwhile. Social media marketing is the promotion of goods and services through social media platforms. Uford, Charles and Etuk (2022) shared that social media sites provide an electronic forum that gives individual consumers the opportunity to comment personally about the product, as well as access to product information that simplifies their purchase decisions. Social media marketing is the creation of attractive content on different social media sites to create awareness and gain attention; it entails marketing through online communities and social networks as conflicting to traditional marketing mediums like radio, television and print media (Etuk & Udonde, 2023a).

Consumer's Purchase Decision

The consumer's purchase decision is one of the stages in the consumer decision making process. The consumer decision-making process consists of five stages which are: need recognition, information search, evaluations of alternatives, purchase behaviour/decision and post-purchase behaviour. After alternatives have been evaluated, purchase decisions become the next stage in the consumer decision-making process. The purchase decision is mainly influenced by the previous stages of the consumer decision-making process (Etuk & Udonde, 2022).

At the purchase decisions level, marketers provide their consumers with their products and ensure that the purchasing process is easy and convenient for consumers (Bui *et al.*, 2021). By using digital technology, digital marketing channels such as email marketing, social media, online advertising and mobile services can improve the consumer spending experience at the



purchase level by making the product ordering process, purchasing and payment more appropriate. All of these improvements may enable the consumers to save time and money.

Factors Influencing Consumer's Purchase Decision

According to Etuk and Udonde (2022), certain factors influence a consumer in their purchasing decision, specificities and characteristics in their shopping habits, purchase intentions, the brands he buys or the retailers he goes to. Some of the factors that can lead a consumer in their purchase decision are:

1. Marketing factors such as product design, pricing, promotion, packaging, positioning and distribution.
2. Personal factors such as age, gender, education and upbringing.
3. Psychological factors such as buying motives, perception and attitudes.
4. Situational factors such as physical surroundings, social surroundings and time factor.
5. Social factors such as social status, reference group, social media and family.
6. Cultural factors such as religion and ethnicity.
7. Lifestyle factors such as status, income and identity.
8. Geographical factors such as region, country and urban or rural.

A consumer's purchase decision is a result of each of these factors and by understanding and identifying the factors that influence their customers, companies have the opportunity to develop a strategy, a marketing message (Unique Value Proposition) and advertising campaigns more efficient and in line with the needs of their target consumers (Etuk & Udonde, 2022).

Mobile Marketing and Consumer's Purchase Decision

After evaluating alternatives, consumers give a final decision and purchase the goods they decide. The purchase decision is already affected by previous decision-making processes but marketers still have a chance to have an impact on the consumers who are already at the purchase stage. Regarding this stage, marketers can make their products available to their consumers and they can also be sure to make the purchase process easy and enjoyable for the consumer. All of these advances may help customers to save time and money. Marketers who use their consumers' by-gone behaviours have a better chance to have an impact on the purchase stage. That is because most of the consumers move to the purchase stage by leaving traces such as conducting a search, adding a product to the basket and leaving it or commenting on a product page. In the buying stage, a marketer's work is to make their products available to their customers and be sure to make the purchase process stress-free and enjoyable for his/her customers.

Also, using mobile marketing can easily attract many customers in order to increase the sales and profit. Customers are more aware of products and they like online purchasing because of several reasons, such as lack of time and the ability to compare different products. In modern times, people are attentive to the mobile phone as they spend most of their time on it, and this



especially applies to young people (Eke, 2022). Therefore, businesses should take advantage of this known fact and intensify the visibility of their brands. Moreover, most of the customers state that the availability of social media platforms on their mobile phone has made them more conversant about brands when making purchasing decisions. It shows that social media platforms on mobile phones make the purchasing process stress-free than ever before for the customers in helping them to make a purchasing decision of goods and services.

Factors Affecting the Adoption of Mobile Devices in Nigeria

Despite the usefulness of mobile devices, certain factors still hinder the adoption/usage of mobile devices in Nigeria. Some of these factors are:

Perceived Benefits: A mobile device which is perceived as aiding better performance of tasks while offering cost benefits (cost can also be in the form of time) is expected to have a higher rate of adoption. This means the lower the perceived benefits, the lower the rate of adoption. These perceived benefits could to some extent influence the attitude and enthusiasm to explore and embrace mobile devices. For instance, a consumer will readily adopt a mobile device if he is aware that he can comfortably stay at the comfort of his home to access and make purchases of a product.

Effort Expectancy: Effort expectancy is the degree of ease associated with the use of a mobile device. The complexities in learning and interacting with a mobile device and the time and effort required to perform a particular purchase can slow the rate of adoption of a mobile device if perceived to be complex and difficult to use.

Performance Expectancy: This is the degree to which an individual believes that using a mobile device will help him or her to attain gains in purchase performance. If a mobile device fails in meeting the purchase performance of an individual, the individual will in return decline its usage.

Lack of Awareness of a Diverse Range of Mobile Devices: A lot of individuals are yet to be familiar with the existence of some mobile devices. This is quite surprising for a group of people who are seen as part of the most educated and elite in the community. For people to make use of mobile devices, they have to be aware of them and the communication channels used in creating this awareness of an innovation could determine the rate of its adoption.

Social Influence: This is the degree to which an individual perceives the importance others believe he or she could obtain from using a mobile device. An individual can adapt to use what others in his circle mainly use, so as to comfortably identify himself with the group and participate in discussions.

Conceptual Model

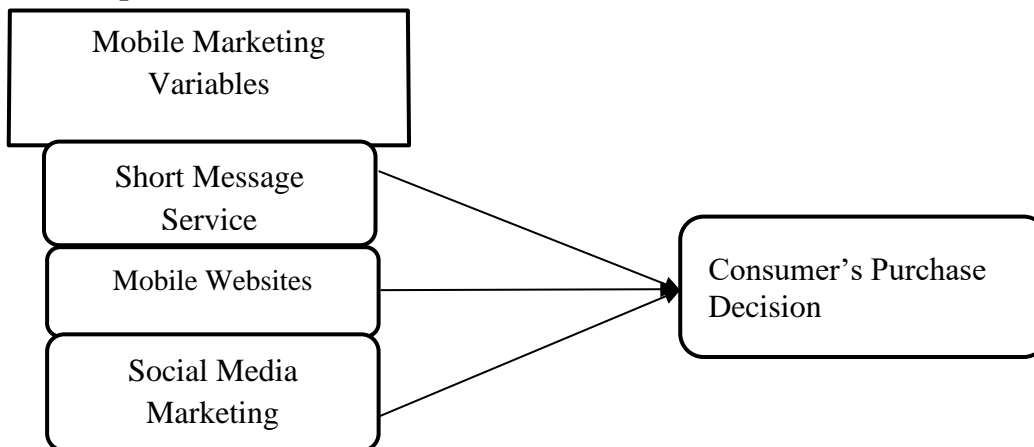


Figure 2.1: Researcher Model: Mobile Marketing and Purchase Decision Model.

Source: *Researcher's Conceptualization, (2023)*

Theoretical Review

Engel-Kollat-Blackwell (EKB) Model (Engel *et al.*, 1968)

This theory was introduced by Engel, Kollat and Blackwell in 1968 as a theoretical framework for the assessment of consumer behaviour. This theory states that the consumer-decision-making process is influenced and shaped by a number of factors and determinants, categorized in three broad categories, namely individual differences, environmental influences and psychological processes. The Engel, Kollat, Blackwell (EKB) Model enlarges on the Theory of Reasoned Action and lays out a five-step procedure that customers use when making a purchase. The first step, input, is where customers absorb most of the marketing materials they view on television, newspapers or online. Then, he or she moves into information processing, where the consumer relates the input to past experiences and expectations. Consumers then move to the decision-making stage after a period of thought, choosing to make a purchase based on rational intuition. Consumers are affected in the decision-making phase by process indicators and external influences, including how the customer envisions his or herself after the purchase.

Under the EKB Model, marketers have two periods where their effort is the most valuable. During the first information stage, marketers must provide customers with sufficient information about the product to motivate the customer to keep the company's products under consideration for purchase. Marketing becomes a factor again in the phase of external forces. Lifestyle brands are very good at instilling the desire in the customer to look or feel a certain way with the product, even if the brand's product is not primarily different from that of the competitor.



Empirical Review

Several studies in the area of mobile marketing and purchase behaviour have been carried out by renowned authors, for instance, Nicolaas (2016) in his study on the influence of mobile marketing on consumer attitude study among students of Sam Ratulangi University. The aim of the study was to determine the outcome of mobile marketing on consumer attitudes among mobile phone users in Sam Ratulangi University. Data collection method for the study was a structured questionnaire. Multiple regression analysis was used to test hypotheses and to find out the influence of the dependent variable and the independent variables. The result of the research revealed that entertainment and credibility has a significant influence on the consumer attitude by using mobile marketing (except for information). The researchers recommended that businesses that use these marketing strategies to send a message through the mobile need to better understand the demographic characteristics of customers in order to develop marketing programs via cellular.

Al-Hawary and Obiadat (2019) in their study of the Impact of Mobile Marketing on Customer Loyalty in Jordan aimed to identify the impact of mobile marketing on the customer's loyalty in Jordan. The study population comprised the customers shopping through mobile in Jordan; a sample of 403 customers was used for the study. The study results showed a statistically significant influence of Mobile Marketing on Customers' Loyalty, and there is a statistically insignificant effect of Localization on Customers' Loyalty. Based on these results, the researchers came up with some recommendations related to the fields of mobile content design, sharing information and benefit from the experiences and solving customer's problems. Based on their findings, the researchers recommended marketers and decision-makers to use specialized experts in the field of mobile content design, in particular, to create a consistent and unified view of the customer when developing mobile ads or information content and experience, to support their desirability for customers, and to share the knowledge base between diverse mobile marketing channels to enhance and protect their credibility by ensuring the right information is available, regardless of channel, to put consumers in control of their experience, giving them entree to the right answers, wherever they are.

Nkpurukwe *et al.* (2020) studied mobile marketing strategies and customer patronage of mobile telecommunication services in Nigeria. The aim was to examine the relationship between mobile marketing strategies and customer patronage of mobile telecommunication services. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design in a structured questionnaire to collect data from 400 accessible telecom subscribers across the 4 major telecom operators which include: MTN, Glo, Airtel, and 9 Mobile. A total of four hypotheses were formulated and Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient tool was used with the help of SPSS version 21.0 in statistically testing them. Findings discovered a positive and significant relationship between the dimensions of mobile marketing strategies and that of customer patronage. The researchers concluded that mobile marketing is an active tool in improving purchase intention and referral. Therefore, the researchers recommended that telecom operators who want to increase patronage of subscribers should implement mobile websites and SMS marketing as these tools have been verified to have a massive capacity to enhance purchase intention and customer referral.



Gap in the Empirical Literature

In all the studies reviewed, both locally and internationally conducted by previous researchers, none of the studies examined mobile marketing and purchase decisions of students in tertiary institutions by taking into consideration the mobile marketing variables as stated in the present study. For instance, Al-Hawary and Obiadat (2019) studied the Impact of Mobile Marketing on Customer Loyalty in Jordan. The study of Nicolaas (2016) on the influence of mobile marketing on consumer attitude among students of Sam Ratulangi University in Manado and the study of Nkpurukwe *et al.* (2020) were done in mobile telecommunication services in Nigeria. There exists a variability of findings in their studies which may be as a result of the industry studied, location of research and time. Thus, the present study would contribute to the literature by taking into consideration the effect of mobile marketing on purchase decisions of Nigerian students in tertiary institutions using three mobile marketing variables: Short Message Service, Mobile Website and Social Media Marketing, and would provide insights for conclusion and recommendations. Thus, the reason for this study.

METHODOLOGY

The survey research design was utilized for the study. This is because it will assist the researcher to collect valuable information from members of a population concerning their opinions about variables of interest to the researcher and useful in designing the questionnaire.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised students who study in the three tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State: University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State University and Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic. Akwa Ibom State is one of the 36 states in Nigeria and lies in the South-South part of Nigeria with Uyo as its capital. Out of this overall population, only undergraduates and postgraduate students who at the time of this study attended lectures in the afore-mentioned universities and have a mobile device were used as respondents for this study.

Sample Size/Sampling Techniques

Given the largeness of the infinite population, it would be impossible to carry out a study of the whole population. The sample size was determined using the Top-man Formula for sample sizes where the population is finite but not known.

$$n = \frac{Z^2 (pq)}{e^2}$$

where n=sample size

Z = value of Z-score associated with the selected degree of confidence (1.96 for 95% confidence level)

e = estimated standard error (5%)

p = probability of success (0.5)



q = probability of failure (1-p)

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2(0.5)(1-0.5)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{(3.8416)(0.5)(0.5)}{0.0025}$$

$$n = 384.16$$

Since the sample size cannot be in fraction or decimal, the sample size will be approximated to the nearest whole numbers. Thus, $n = 384.16 = 384$ (approximation). Therefore, the sample size of 384 respondents was used where 384 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the students of the three tertiary institutions undertaking bachelor and postgraduate degree programmes. The judgement sampling method was used to obtain a sample size of 384 respondents. Each respondent was invited to participate in the survey; the participation by the respondents was voluntary. Upon obtaining respondent's consent, he/she was asked to complete the self-administered questionnaire. Three hundred and eighty-four (384) copies of the structured questionnaire were distributed to 128 respondents in each of the three institutions in Akwa Ibom State.

Sources and Nature of Data

Data for this research was collected from primary sources. This is because the researcher adopted the survey research design for the study. The primary data were obtained with the use of questionnaires designed to enable respondents to express their independent opinions. The data was collected from students in the chosen tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State.

Design and Administration of Research Instrument

The questionnaire copies were distributed to 384 students in the chosen tertiary institutions. The choice of respondents was based on proximity, effective coverage and cost minimization. Out of the 384 questionnaires distributed, 358 copies of the questionnaire were successfully retrieved in usable form. The survey instrument had three sections: The first section contained background information about the respondents including their gender, age, name of the institution and marital status. The second section was made up of items designed to elicit information relating to the relationship between mobile marketing and student purchase decision in Akwa Ibom State. These include questions that will measure the use of SMS, Mobile Websites and Social Media Marketing. The third section included questions about consumer purchasing decisions. The data collecting questionnaire was a close-ended questionnaire where the researcher gave the respondents options from where they choose the one or ones that most represent their views, opinions, attitudes or behaviour. A five-point Likert scale was adopted by the researcher for the questionnaire which was rated as follows:

Strongly Agreed (SA) = 4

Agreed (A) = 3

Disagreed (D) = 2



Strongly Disagreed (SD) = 1

Undecided (UD) = 0

Empirical Specification of Model

The model for the study and all the variables are stated below:

The dependent variable is: Purchase Decision (PD) while the independent variables are: Short Message Service (SMS), Mobile Website (MW) and Social Media Marketing (SMM). Below is the model:

$$PD = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SMS + \beta_2 MW + \beta_3 SMM + e_t \quad \text{Equation (3.1)}$$

where: β_0 = Intercept of PD; β_1 , β_2 and β_3 = Coefficient of each of the independent variables; e_t = Random error terms.

Method of Data Analysis

The questionnaire was edited for consistency and completeness, data were analyzed and explained to suit the objectives. The Spearman rank order correlation coefficient was used in testing the hypotheses formulated for the study at a 0.05 level of significance. Spearman rank order correlation coefficient was used to test the hypotheses. This is because it is more effective in ascertaining if the two non-parametric data samples with ties are correlated.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Presentation and Analysis of Empirical Results

Under this segment, the various demographic data and their responses from the respondents were presented and analyzed using simple percentages in order to ascertain the characteristics of respondents that made up the population of the study. These were shown accordingly;

i Frequency Distribution Statistics showing the demographic data of Respondents

Table 4.1: Profile of Respondents

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage %
Questionnaire Distribution		
Questionnaire distributed	384	100
Questionnaire retrieved/used	366	95
Not returned	18	5
Gender		
Male	125	34
Female	241	66

**Age Bracket**

18 and below	41	11
19-25	101	28
26-35	128	35
36 and above	96	26

Name of Institution

University of Uyo	127	35
Akwa Ibom State University	123	34
Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic	116	31

Marital Status

Married	108	30
Single	258	70

Educational Qualification

First degree or its equivalent	190	52
Post graduate degrees	120	33
National diploma or its equivalent	56	15

(n=358)

Source: *Researcher's computation (2023)*

From Table 4.1, out of the three hundred and eighty-four (384) copies of questionnaire distributed, 366 (95%) were successfully retrieved and in usable form while 18 (5%) were not retrieved. Therefore, 95% respondents became a good representation for the study. The respondent's age varied from 18 years and below (11%), 19-25 years (28%), 26-35 years (35%), 36 years and above (26%) of which 34% (125) are male and 66% (241) are female. The respondent's statistics showed that 35% (127) of the respondents are students from the University of Uyo, 123 (34%) are from Akwa Ibom State University and 116 (31%) are from Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic. The marital status showed 30% (108) of the respondents are married while 70% (258) are single.

Data retrieved from educational qualification showed that participants with a first degree or its equivalent seemed to be the highest number with 190(52%) respondents. Respondents with postgraduate degrees were 120(33%) in total and participants with national diploma or its equivalent were 70 (20%) in total. As regards the mobile marketing, data received show that 125 (34%) of the respondents are familiar with the Short Message Service, 90 (25%) are familiar with the Mobile Website and 151 (41%) respondents are familiar with the Social Media Marketing Data. On how often they use their mobile devices to make purchases, data show that 88(24%) respondents make purchases annually with their mobile devices while 98 (27%) of the respondents indicated that they make purchases every four months via mobile devices. 108 (30%) respondents make monthly purchases. Every two weeks 20(5%) respondents make purchases using their mobile devices and only 52(14%) respondents make purchases on weekly bases (A sample copy of the questionnaire can be seen in Appendix I).

Judging from this demographic data, most of the respondents are female students with the age range of 26-35 years and are single with a first degree and the highest mobile marketing variables they are familiar with is social media marketing.



ii Frequency Distribution Statistics Showing Response from the Respondents

Table 4.2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Short Message Service (SMS)

S/N	Question items	MEAN	SD
1	I receive personalized messages from companies.	3.404	1.1109
2	The personalized messages help communicate time-sensitive offers, updates and alerts to people.	3.832	1.0005
3	SMS advertising is the best method for advertising.	3.594	1.0463
4	SMS advertising influences my purchase attitudes and decision.	3.878	1.0108
Short Message Service (SMS)		3.6802	.86042

Source: *Field Survey Data, I (2023)*

Short Message Service construct was measured using four questionnaire items which were developed on a five-point Likert scale. The item labels are shown in Table 4.2. The mean of the four items was calculated to obtain the overall mean response on the Short Message Service construct (Grand Mean). The overall mean response on the items (3.68) shows that the dimension of SMS on purchase decisions is judged fairly well. The customers see the variable as influencing their purchase attitudes and decisions.

Table 4.3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Mobile Website (MW)

S/N	Question items	MEAN	SD
5	Online access via mobile website helps in creating value to customers.	3.515	1.0377
6	Mobile websites have a way of influencing customer purchase decisions.	3.946	.9750
7	Availability of mobile web encourages seamless engagement between buyers and sellers.	3.840	.9921
8	Buyers' attitudes are influenced by mobile websites available.	3.388	1.2105
Mobile Website (MW)		3.6753	.84366

Source: *Field Survey Data (2023)*

Mobile website was measured using four questionnaire items which were developed on a five point Likert scale. The item labels are shown in Table 4.3. The mean of the four items was calculated to obtain the overall mean response on the Mobile Website construct (Grand Mean). The overall mean response on the items (3.67) shows that the dimension of MW on purchase decisions is judged fairly well; as such, the customers see the variable as influencing their purchase attitudes and decisions.



Table 4.4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Social Media Marketing (SMM)

S/N	Question items	MEAN	SD
9	Social Media Marketing influences one's purchase decision	3.734	1.0674
10	I received satisfaction from making orders using social media platforms	4.002	1.0360
11	Businesses that have social media platforms are more convenient to patronize	3.944	1.0726
12	I get enough information about a company's product through their social media platforms.	4.034	1.0079
Social Media Marketing (SMM)		3.9293	.84920

Source: *Field Survey Data (2023)*

Social Media Marketing construct was measured using four questionnaire items which were developed on a five point Likert scale. The item labels are shown in Table 4.4. The mean of the four items was calculated to obtain the overall mean response on the Social Media Marketing construct (Grand Mean). The overall mean response on the items (3.93) shows that the dimension of SMM on purchase decisions is judged fairly well and the customers see the variable as influencing their purchase attitudes and decisions.

Data Analysis

Here, the numerous data collected were analysed and presented in accordance with the requirements stated vividly in chapter three of the study.

Reliability: A convenience sample of 38 respondents was used to pretest on a test-retest basis. The questionnaire was used to calculate the correlation coefficient, an estimate of the reliability of the data collection instrument. Using the Cronbach alpha, correlation coefficient of 0.822 was obtained. This established the internal consistency of the instrument.

Validity: The questionnaire had to undergo face and content validity before being administered on the respondents. The content validity was estimated as the questionnaire items were scrutinized by three senior lecturers in the department of marketing.

Test of Hypotheses

The hypotheses stated in this study were tested using Spearman Correlation Coefficient. The result of the statistical testing was used to either accept or reject the null hypothesis formulated at 5% level of significance.



Hypothesis One

HO₁: SMS has a positive and significant relationship with the Consumer's Purchase Decision of Nigerian students in tertiary institutions.

Table 4.5: Correlation Analysis Showing the Relationship between SMS and Consumer's Purchase Decision

		Correlations		
Spearman's `Rho	SMS		SMS	Consumer's Purchase Decision
		Correlation coefficient	1.000	.770**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	Consumer's Purchase Decision	N	366	366
		Pearson correlation	.770**	1.000
		Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	366	366

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

Source: SPSS Computation Output, (2023).

Based on the result in Table 4.5, the correlation coefficient ($r = 0.770$) between SMS and Consumer's Purchase Decision of students in tertiary institutions is strong and positive. The significant value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) reveals a significant relationship. Based on this, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant strong relationship between SMS and Consumer's Purchase Decision of students in tertiary institutions.

Hypothesis Two

HO₂: MW has a positive and significant relationship with the Consumer's Purchase Decision of Nigerian students in tertiary institutions.

Table 4.6: Correlation Analysis Showing the Relationship between MW and Consumer's Purchase Decision

		Correlations		
Spearman's Rho	MW		MW	Consumer's Purchase Decision
		Correlation coefficient	1.000	.855**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	Consumer's Purchase Decision	N	366	366
		Pearson correlation	.855**	1.000
		Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	366	366

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

Source: SPSS Computation Output (2023)



Based on the result in Table 4.6, the correlation coefficient ($r = 0.855$) between MW and Consumer's Purchase Decision of students in tertiary institutions is strong and positive. The significant value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) reveals a significant relationship. Based on this, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant strong relationship between MW and Consumer's Purchase Decision of students in tertiary institutions.

Hypothesis Three

HO₃: SMM has a positive and significant relationship with the Consumer's Purchase Decision of Nigerian students in tertiary institutions.

Table 4.7: Correlation Analysis Showing the Relationship between SMM and Consumer's Purchase Decision

		Correlations		
Spearman's Rho	SMM		SMM	Consumer's Purchase Decision
		Correlation coefficient	1.000	.805**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	366	366	
	Consumer's Purchase Decision	Pearson correlation	.805**	1.000
		Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.
N		366	366	

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

Source: SPSS Computation Output (2023)

Based on the result in Table 4.7, the correlation coefficient ($r = 0.805$) between SMM and Consumer's Purchase Decision of students in tertiary institutions is strong and positive. The significant value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) reveals a significant relationship. Based on this, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant strong relationship between SMM and Consumer's Purchase Decision of students in tertiary institutions.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Various hypotheses as proposed in the research were subjected to statistical tests. Results from these tests were discussed and compared with previous findings from related studies in this section. Findings from the test of H_{01} showed that a positive and significant relationship exists between short message service and consumer's purchase decision ($R = 0.770$). We therefore reject the null hypothesis and accept that of the alternative. This is because the probability value is less than the stated level of confidence ($P < 0.05$). This finding is consistent with that of Etuk, Udoh and Eke (2021). It is imperative to state that the above results also corroborate the study of Eren (2008) who found out that SMS marketing is a tool that effectively enhances customer patronage and repeat buying. With SMS, advertising marketers have the opportunity to engage users, which in turn shapes their attitude and purchase intention.



Also, H_{02} test indicated that mobile websites have a strong and positive relationship with consumer's purchase decisions ($R = 0.855$). We therefore reject the null hypothesis and accept that of the alternative. This is because the probability value is less than the stated level of confidence ($P < 0.05$). This shows that availability of mobile web encourages seamless engagement between buyers and sellers. This finding is also consistent with that of Nkpurukwe *et al.* (2020). In their study, it was mentioned that the usage rate of mobile devices in transacting business is increasing geometrically. They stated that service organizations must see mobile websites as a pipeline for seamless engagement with users and this engagement level brings about the desired response from users in terms of purchase intention and word-of-mouth referrals.

Furthermore, findings from H_{03} revealed that a positive and significant relationship exists between SMM and consumer's purchase decision ($R = 0.805$). These results revealed that SMM has a positive and significant relationship with purchase decisions of students in tertiary institutions. We therefore reject the null hypothesis and accept that of the alternative because the probability value is less than the stated level of confidence ($P < 0.05$). This implies that businesses that have social media platforms are more convenient to patronize. The finding is in tandem with that of Etuk *et al.* (2022). They found out that there is a significant relationship between social media marketing and the decision making process.

CONCLUSION

From the data analysis, it is obvious that mobile marketing is a viable marketing communication tool that can influence purchase decisions positively. In line with the findings of the study, the following conclusions were reached: the study has established that mobile marketing has a positive significant effect on purchase decisions of Nigerian students in the tertiary institutions. This positive significant effect implies that an increase in SMS, MW and SMM will result in an increase in purchase decision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made from the findings of the study.

- i. SMS is seen as having a positive effect on purchase decisions and, as such, companies should continue sending personalized messages to their customers in order to help communicate time-sensitive offers, updates and alerts to their customers.
- ii. The study revealed that MW has a significant effect on purchase decisions. On this note, companies should ensure the availability of mobile websites in order to encourage seamless engagement between buyers and sellers.
- iii. From the study, the SMM variable is seen as having a significant effect on purchase decisions and, as such, the company should create social media platforms for their products in order to provide enough information about their product through their social media platforms.



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