

THE INFLUENCE OF FACEBOOK ADVERTISING ON CUSTOMERS' PATRONAGE INTENTION OF RETAIL BUSINESSES IN SOUTH-EAST NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of Facebook advertising on customers' patronage intention of retail businesses in South-East Nigeria, focusing on four core constructs: product information, social interaction, entertainment, and perceived usefulness. The main objective was to determine how these advertising dimensions shape customers' intention to patronize retail offerings promoted via Facebook. A descriptive survey design was adopted, with the population comprising Facebook users who follow or engage with retail business pages in the region. Out of 325 questionnaires, 208 were correctly completed and returned, yielding a response rate of 64.07%. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, normality tests, reliability and validity checks, and multiple regression using SPSS. Findings revealed that all four variables significantly and positively influenced patronage intention: product information ($\beta = 0.236$, $p < 0.001$), social interaction ($\beta = 0.185$, $p = 0.001$), entertainment ($\beta = 0.222$, $p < 0.001$), and perceived usefulness ($\beta = 0.241$, $p < 0.001$). Together, they explained 55.1% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.551$). The study recommends that retail businesses in South-East Nigeria design integrated, audience-tailored Facebook advertising strategies that emphasize product information, promote user interactivity, incorporate entertainment, and highlight functional value to enhance customers' engagement, trust, intent and patronage.

Introduction

In today's digital marketing landscape, Facebook advertising has become an influential tool for businesses seeking to connect with their customers through personalized, interactive, and engaging content. Several studies across different countries have attempted to establish the link between Facebook advertising and customer patronage intention using key advertising constructs such as product information, social interaction, entertainment, and perceived usefulness. For instance, *Chen et al., (2002)* and *Zhu and Tan (2019)* demonstrated that product information in online advertisements significantly influences consumers' trust and their likelihood to engage in repeat purchases. Similarly, *Jibril et al. (2019)* and *Trattner and Kappe (2012)* found that social interaction, fostered through likes, comments, and shares, drives consumer engagement and positively affects patronage intention. Regarding entertainment *De Vries et al., (2012)* and *Gaber and Wright (2014)* showed that entertaining content like humour, videos, and contests enhances users' emotional connection to brands and promotes favourable consumer intentional behaviour. *Chiu et al. (2014)* and *Escobar-Rodríguez and Bonsón-Fernández (2017)*, highlighted that perceived usefulness, consumers' belief in the value and

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relevance of advertising content, predicts stronger purchase and patronage intentions, especially when the content is tailored and relevant.

However, most of these studies were conducted in developed countries or among general consumer segments, limiting their applicability in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly Nigeria. While studies such as *Akpan et al (2015)* and *Chukwu and Uzoma (2014)* have examined Facebook advertising in Nigeria, they failed to holistically analyse the simultaneous effect of product information, social interaction, entertainment, and perceived usefulness on customer patronage intention within retail settings. Retail businesses in South-East Nigeria, a region known for its vibrant trading culture and competitive retail environment, have embraced Facebook to varying degrees. Yet, many businesses underutilize the platform's potential to deliver informative, interactive, and engaging advertising content. There is limited empirical evidence on how these key advertising constructs influence customer intent to engage, revisit, or recommend retail brands advertised on Facebook in the region.

Hence, this study addresses the gap by investigating the relationship between Facebook advertising dimensions such as product information, social interaction, entertainment, and perceived usefulness on customers' patronage intention of retail businesses in South-East Nigeria. It aims to provide context-specific insights that can inform retail marketing strategies, enhance digital consumer engagement, and promote sustainable customer relationships in the region.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses formulated for the study are stated in null forms:

- H01:** Product information does not have a significant impact on patronage intention of retail businesses in South East.
- H02:** Social interaction does not have a significant influence on patronage intention of retail businesses in South East.
- H03:** There is no significant relationship between entertainment and patronage intention of retail businesses in South East.
- H04:** Perceived usefulness does not have a significant influence on patronage intention of retail businesses in South East.

Literature Review

Facebook Advertising and Patronage Intention

Evidence within extant literature have shown studies that revealed the correlation between Facebook advertising and customer patronage intention of retail businesses in South East Below is a review of existing literature indicating the relationship between Facebook advertising and customers' patronage intention of retail businesses: a study of Retail stores in South East. Facebook is the most popular social media network website on the Internet with the highest number of users. Since its inception in 2004 up to 2016, it has reached more than 1.59 billion monthly active users around the globe. This global reach and popularity attracted retail businesses to advertise their products and services irrespective of their nature and size of business. In comparison to other social media network website on the Internet, it is considered and rated best by firms (Qazi, 2018). Studies shows Facebook advertisement has a significant, direct association and impact with patronage intention of the potential customers (Chu *et al.*, 2013; Van-Tien *et al.* 2014).

Jung *et al.* (2016), revealed that Facebook advertisement offers an aligned match of company offerings with customers' needs & wants more effectively than traditional advertising. They found a positive and significant relationship of Facebook advertisement with purchase intentions of the customers. Besides this, the studies of Leung, Jaafar and Sulaiman (2017) and Qazi *et al.*, (2017) found a positive and significant relationship of Facebook advertisement with purchase intentions of the customers. Hence the following relationship of Facebook advertisement and customer patronage intention is well established.

Product Information

Product information is the details about a product or service shared with users through advertisements. It creates an informative narrative that captures attention, builds trust, and influences purchase decisions (Barker, 2021). Chen *et al.*, (2002) describe it as the extent to which social media content provides resourceful and helpful information. Research has long established the link between information provision and advertising acceptance (Bauer & Greyser, 1968). Attaining information is a major reason consumers use the internet (Maddox, 1998), with information levels positively related to attitudes toward websites (Chen *et al.*, 2002). While traditional media has emphasized information delivery (Rubin, 2002), its role in online and social domains has gained recent attention. Information seeking is a key gratification

in online brand communities (Muntinga *et al.*, 2011), and consumers often use social media to obtain direct information about a brand or product (Lin & Lu, 2011; Park *et al.*, 2009).

Users engage more with advert messages containing product details supplemented by social proof (Zhu & Tan, 2019). Marketers design advertisements to inform consumers combining factual details with persuasive appeals (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). Effective advertising presents prices, features, availability, and deals with studies showing that integrating personal and informational content engages consumers most effectively (Lee *et al.*, 2018).

Social Interaction

Social media platforms like Facebook are vital for social interactions, real-time communications, and providing useful content that aids decision-making. Customers are influenced by these platforms largely due to brand image and interaction levels (Jibril *et al.*, 2019). Studies show luxury brands use influencers, celebrities, and PR to drive interaction (Sohail & Al-Jabri, 2017), while confidence and familiarity reduce perceived risks in online purchasing (Yin, Wang, Xia & Gu, 2019). With vast volumes of content, social media significantly motivates consumer buying intentions.

Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube foster interaction and relationship building (Trattner & Kappe, 2012). Social benefits and integration are key motivations for users (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004). Many firms join rapidly growing platforms, particularly Facebook, to engage customers through comments, feedback, and discussions, fuelling the rise of advertising networks (Dolan *et al.*, 2015). Since 2004, Facebook has become a paradigmatic marketing medium. Nearly half of its 400 million active users log in daily, spending over 500 billion minutes monthly. Consequently, businesses worldwide including Nigerian retailers adopt Facebook advertising as a core marketing strategy.

Entertainment

Entertainment is a core dimension of value on social networks, linked with intangible features and shopping pleasure (Ertemel & Ammoura, 2016). It functions as a communicative tool that shapes purchasing attitudes, builds positive impressions, and sustains customer follow-up (Kang, 2005). Online shopping is considered enjoyable, with entertainment increasing willingness to purchase and fostering loyalty (Buzeta *et al.*, 2020). Marketers attract consumers through humorous, emotional, and informative social media content (Azar *et al.*, 2016). Entertainment also encourages long-term use of platforms (Abbas *et al.*, 2020), with

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marketers using videos, games, and contests to enhance user engagement (Lee & Ma, 2012). Facebook advertisements with entertaining features encourage user participation and content contribution (Cheung *et al.*, 2020). Entertainment further reduces stress and provides joy, meeting emotional needs (Lee *et al.*, 2018). Features such as live streaming, chats, reviews, humorous videos, and games add value.

Research highlights entertainment as a key antecedent of patronage intention. It enhances social media content popularity (De Vries, Gensler & Leeflang, 2012) and improves attitudes toward retail businesses. Entertaining adverts, like funny pictures, polls, or interactive games, boost likes, shares, and brand familiarity (Gaber & Wright, 2014). Overall, entertaining adverts are positively received, making them essential for effective Facebook marketing campaigns (Abdulrahim *et al.*, 2012).

Perceived Usefulness

Perceived usefulness refers to how consumers relate specific information to themselves, with leading messages attracting greater attention and influence (Tam, 2005). On Facebook, users share personal information, preferences, and activities, which enables businesses to tailor messages through evolving data-gathering technologies (Baek & Mariko, 2012). Research shows that perceived usefulness positively affects advert evaluation (Yang *et al.*, 2013) and enhances customer performance perception (Sin *et al.*, 2012). When products are perceived as valuable, purchase intentions increase since consumers expect benefits to outweigh costs (Kamil & Musah, 2017). Perceived usefulness also predicts customer attention and interactivity toward Facebook's targeted adverts (Jung, 2017). Retailers are therefore advised to improve perceived usefulness by providing valuable product information that enhances patronage, loyalty, and retention (Escobar-Rodríguez & Bonsón-Fernández, 2017). Overall, perceived usefulness is a critical driver of purchase intentions and patronage through Facebook adverts (Bansal & Jain, 2017; Chiu *et al.*, 2014).

Patronage Intention

Patronage intention refers to the motives driving customers' preferences and tendencies to buy from a brand or marketer (Younus *et al.*, 2015; Nguyen & Dinh, 2017). It is essentially a customer's plan to purchase products or services in the future (Arifani & Haryanto, 2018) and serves as a valuable tool for predicting purchasing patterns and shaping promotional strategies (Sangurde, 2019). Grewal *et al.*, (1998) define it as the probability that customers intend to purchase a product, while Schiffman and Kanuk (2009) argue it depends on product

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value and peer recommendations on social media. Extensive studies affirm patronage intention as a critical measure of customer behaviour and willingness to buy (Esmaeilpour & Mohseni, 2019; Angkouw & Rumokoy, 2016). It is influenced by perceived risk, trust, and attitudes toward brands (Arli, 2017). On Facebook, company pages and sponsored adverts enhance brand awareness and consumer intentions (Martinez-Navarro & Bigné, 2017; Voorveld *et al.*, 2018). Ultimately, patronage intention reflects behavioural intentions shaped by product value, recommendations, and consumer attitudes (Taylor & Baker, 1994).

Theoretical Review

The Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) posits that individuals actively seek media content to satisfy needs such as information, entertainment, and social interaction (Katz *et al.*, 1974). Applied to Facebook advertising, it explains how motivations shape patronage intentions. Although criticized for overemphasizing active audiences (Sundar & Limperos, 2013), UGT remains valuable for understanding advertising gratifications in digital contexts (Ducoffe & Curlo, 2000).

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) emphasizes perceived usefulness and ease of use as key determinants of technology adoption (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh & Davis, 2000). In Facebook advertising, consumers engage when ads are informative, relevant, and easy to navigate (Kim & Park, 2019; Ventre & Kolbe, 2020). TAM thus provides a strong framework for explaining how personalized, user-friendly adverts influence purchase intentions (Shareef *et al.*, 2019).

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) links attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control to behavioural intention (Ajzen, 1991). In Facebook advertising, attitudes toward ad content, peer approval, and seamless shopping experiences shape purchase intentions (Duffett, 2015; Ebrahim, 2020). Despite criticism for neglecting impulsive decisions (Zhao & Balagué, 2015), TPB remains effective for predicting online consumer engagement and conversion behaviours (Lim *et al.*, 2017).

Empirical Literature Review

Ogotu (2015), Examined the relationship between internet advertising and purchase intention of university students in Kenya. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to test for relationships among variables with the independent sample t – test analysis used to determine attitudinal differences among male and female respondents. Results showed Internet advertising had a significant and positive relationship with attitude towards Internet

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advertising. The study established interactivity, credibility, entertainment and irritation as significant Internet advertising factors that had an association with attitude towards Internet advertising in both the unified model that included both male and female respondents and the female only model. Whereas interactivity, credibility and entertainment had a positive association in both models, irritation had a negative association with attitude towards Internet advertising.

Chukwu, Mirdi and Uzoma (2014). Examined the impact of social media networks on consumer patronage in Nigeria: a study of Jumia and Konga Nigeria, a cross-sectional survey research design was adopted with questionnaire being the data collection instrument. The data collected were analysed and presented in tables. The hypotheses were tested using ANOVA and chi-square statistical tools at 5% level of significance and specified degrees of freedom. Among others, the findings revealed that there is a significant difference in the perceptions of the entire consumers and that consumers patronize online retailers very significantly. The study concluded that consumers would continue patronizing online retailers at a crescendo despite their varying perception of internet usage.

Sulaiman, Mas'od, Idris and Chin (2020). Examined the influence of Facebook features and activities on consumers' purchase intention using statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS). The results show that all Facebook features and activities which is number of likes, friend's recommendation, comment posting, sharing posting and Facebook advertisement have significant relationships on Gen Y's intention to purchase.

Qazi (2018). Examined the Facebook users: investigating the moderating role of brand impact of Facebook advertisements on purchase intentions of mobile origin and perceived product value using descriptive statistics and analysis. The finding show positively moderates relationship between homepage impression mobile Facebook advertisement, social impression mobile Facebook advertisement and organic impression mobile Facebook advertisement and purchase intentions.

Haris, Rahim, Haris, and Zahari, (2021). Empirically examined the use of Theory of Planned Behaviour to predict purchase intention towards Taobao. Using, questionnaire, Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS SEM). Research findings indicate that attitude and subjective norms are statistically significant determinants for respondents' purchase intention towards purchasing behaviour using Taobao. The results provide insights for micro-businesses in Malaysia who

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have the intention to purchase in Taobao to see it as a potential platform in search of eligible suppliers and purchase their product sourcing.

Gap in Literature

Despite growing recognition of Facebook as a viable advertising platform for retail businesses worldwide, gaps remain in understanding its influence on customers' patronage intention in Nigeria. Much prior research, including studies by Duffett (2014) and Bandara & Navodani (2021), has been situated in Western and Asian contexts, which do not fully reflect the socio-economic, cultural, and technological realities of sub-Saharan Africa. Consequently, findings from such regions may lack direct applicability to Nigeria.

While earlier studies examined isolated factors such as social interaction, entertainment, or informativeness, little research has jointly assessed the combined influence of product information, entertainment, social interaction, and perceived usefulness on patronage intention in Nigeria's retail ecosystem. Furthermore, Nigerian studies (like Akpan *et al.*, 2015; Chukwu & Uzoma, 2014) emphasize general attitudes or usage patterns without linking advertising features to patronage intention. This study addresses these gaps through a holistic, context-specific analysis in South-East Nigeria.

Methodology

This study adopted a cross-sectional descriptive survey design to examine the relationship between Facebook advertising variables and customers' patronage intention. Data were collected at a single point in time to evaluate the prevailing situation (Michael *et al.*, 2012; Okeke *et al.*, 2008). The study was conducted in South-East Nigeria (Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States), with a combined population of about 23.5 million. Each state has distinct socio-economic features: Anambra, an industrial hub; Ebonyi, agriculturally dominant; Enugu, historically educational; Imo, rich in oil and minerals; and Abia, a commercial center.

The population comprises Facebook users patronizing retail stores in the region. Since no official index exists, the population size is unknown. A quota sampling method was adopted to ensure representation across gender, age, and education. A pilot test with 20 respondents yielded a 70% positive rate. Using the Topman Rank formula at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, a sample size of 323 was derived and rounded up to 325.

Data were collected from primary (structured questionnaire) and secondary (journals, articles) sources. Validity was confirmed through expert review, while reliability via test-retest produced Cronbach's alpha of 0.876. Questionnaires were administered through Google Forms

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distributed on WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, and email. Data will be analyzed with SPSS v23 using descriptive statistics and Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression. Patronage intention serves as the dependent variable, while product information, social interaction, entertainment, and perceived usefulness are independent variables.

Results and Discussion

This section presents and analyses the data collected from 208 respondents, who form the captive sample of this study. Out of the 325 questionnaires distributed, 208 were correctly completed and returned, representing a 64.0% valid response rate, which is acceptable for social science research. We present the respondents' demographic data and the descriptive statistics of the study's core variables: product information, social interaction, entertainment, perceived usefulness, and patronage intention. It includes frequency distributions, mean scores, and standard deviations for each item, offering insights into respondents' perceptions of Facebook advertising dimensions.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	110	52.9%
	Female	98	47.1%
Age Group	18–24 years	68	32.7%
	25–34 years	80	38.5%
	35–44 years	40	19.2%
	45 years and above	20	9.6%
Educational Qualification	SSCE/OND/NCE	42	20.2%
	HND/B.Sc	122	58.7%
	M.Sc/PhD	44	21.1%
State of Residence	Abia	40	19.2%
	Anambra	52	25.0%
	Ebonyi	32	15.4%
	Enugu	44	21.1%
	Imo	40	19.2%

Table 4.1 shows a fairly even gender distribution, with males (52.9%) slightly more represented than females (47.1%). Most respondents (71.2%) fall within the 18–34 age group, indicating a youthful and likely digitally active sample. Over half (58.7%) have HND/B.Sc degrees, showing a generally well-educated population. All five South-East states are fairly represented, with Anambra (25%) having the largest share.

Validity Analysis (Construct Validity via Factor Loadings)

Construct validity was examined using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). Items were expected to load at least 0.60 on their intended constructs.

Factor Loadings for Construct Validity

Construct	Item Codes	Factor Loading Range
Product Information	PI1–PI5	.72 – .84
Social Interaction	SI1–SI5	.68 – .81
Entertainment	EN1–EN5	.74 – .85
Perceived Usefulness	PU1–PU5	.71 – .88
Patronage Intention	PI1–PI5	.75 – .86

All items loaded well above 0.60 on their respective constructs, indicating strong convergent validity. This suggests that each item reliably measures the latent variable it was designed to assess.

Reliability Analysis (Internal Consistency)

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach’s Alpha. A threshold of .70 was used to confirm acceptable internal consistency (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Cronbach’s Alpha for Reliability

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach’s Alpha
Product Information	5	.842
Social Interaction	5	.811
Entertainment	5	.867
Perceived Usefulness	5	.855
Patronage Intention	5	.860

All constructs demonstrated high internal consistency ($\alpha > .80$), validating the reliability of the instrument used for data collection.

Hypotheses Testing and Model Validation

Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.742	.551	.540	.462

The model explains 55.1% of the variance in patronage intention, showing strong explanatory power of the four Facebook advertising constructs combined.

ANOVA Summary

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	78.023	4	19.506	91.146	.000
Residual	63.517	203	0.313		
Total	141.540	207			

The F-statistic (91.146) is significant at $p < 0.001$, confirming the model’s overall statistical significance.

Regression Coefficients

Predictor	β Coefficient	t-Value	(p-value)
(Constant)	1.184	5.097	.000
Product Information	.236	4.318	.000
Social Interaction	.185	3.482	.001
Entertainment	.222	4.072	.000
Perceived Usefulness	.241	4.115	.000

All predictors are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Perceived usefulness ($\beta = 0.241$) has the strongest effect, followed closely by product information ($\beta = 0.236$) and entertainment ($\beta = 0.222$), while social interaction also has a positive significant impact ($\beta = 0.185$).

Hypotheses Validation Summary:

Hypothesis	Statement	Result
Ho1	Product information does not significantly impact patronage intention.	Rejected
Ho2	Social interaction does not significantly influence patronage intention.	Rejected
Ho3	Entertainment has no significant relationship with patronage intention.	Rejected
Ho4	Perceived usefulness does not significantly influence patronage intention.	Rejected

Interpretation:

All four variables significantly and positively influence patronage intention ($p < .001$). Perceived usefulness ($\beta = .241$) had the strongest effect, followed closely by product information ($\beta = .236$), entertainment ($\beta = .222$), and social interaction ($\beta = .185$). This confirms the predictive importance of informative, engaging, useful, and interactive Facebook advertising content on consumer behaviour.

Discussion of Findings

This section discusses the findings from hypothesis testing in line with the theoretical framework and existing literature. The objective was to determine how four dimensions of Facebook advertising; product information, social interaction, entertainment, and perceived usefulness, influence patronage intention among retail customers in South-East Nigeria. All

four hypotheses were supported, as each variable demonstrated a positive and meaningful relationship with patronage intention.

The first hypothesis, which proposed that product information in Facebook advertising does not significantly influence patronage intention, was rejected. Respondents confirmed that clear, detailed, and accurate product descriptions, such as pricing, images, and specifications positively influenced their buying decisions. This finding aligns with the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), which suggests that audiences actively seek media that fulfill their cognitive needs (Katz *et al.*, 1974). It also supports Bauer & Greyser's (1968) long-standing assertion that advertising performs both persuasive and informative functions, especially in digital contexts where physical inspection of products is absent. In the retail environment of South-East Nigeria, where consumers face high uncertainty in online transactions, reliable and accurate product information fosters trust and reduces purchase hesitation.

The second hypothesis, stating that social interaction does not significantly influence patronage intention, was also rejected. Respondents acknowledged the importance of likes, shares, comments, and peer reviews in shaping their perceptions and actions. This result aligns with findings by Trattner & Kappe (2012) and Jibril *et al.* (2019), who emphasized the role of electronic word-of-mouth in consumer decision-making. From the perspective of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), these results reflect the influence of subjective norms, how social cues and peer approval affect behavioural intentions. In the collectivist South-East Nigerian context, social validation remains a powerful determinant of purchase decisions, as consumers are more likely to trust products advertised via a retail store endorsed by their networks than by anonymous advertising.

The third hypothesis, concerning entertainment, was similarly rejected. Respondents valued emotional and creative elements like humour, games, storytelling, visuals, and music in Facebook adverts. These features made the ads enjoyable and memorable, supporting UGT's entertainment gratification principle. Entertainment not only captures attention but also enhances recall and positive brand associations, which are critical in highly competitive digital markets. This is particularly relevant in South-East Nigeria, where culture and storytelling deeply influence communication and persuasion. As the digital space becomes increasingly crowded, entertaining content distinguishes itself by engaging consumers on an emotional level and sustaining their interest in products and brands.

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The final hypothesis, on perceived usefulness, also revealed a significant relationship with patronage intention. Respondents appreciated advertisements that saved them time, highlighted discounts, or helped them discover relevant products. This finding aligns with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which recognizes perceived usefulness as a central driver of behavioural intent (Davis, 1989). In the fast-paced retail environment of South-East Nigeria, consumers tend to respond positively to utility-driven adverts that provide functional value, reduce search costs, and improve purchase efficiency. By combining convenience with relevance, Facebook adverts that emphasize usefulness can foster stronger consumer responsiveness and loyalty.

Taken together, the findings demonstrate that Facebook advertising influences consumer behavioural intention through a mix of cognitive, social, emotional, and functional gratifications. For retailers in South-East Nigeria, this implies that designing advertisements which integrate informative content, opportunities for interaction, entertaining features, and functional value is essential to building trust, engagement, and long-term loyalty. The interplay of these factors reflects the convergence of UGT, TPB, and TAM, providing a comprehensive framework for understanding digital consumer behavioural intention in emerging economies.

Conclusion

The study examined the influence of Facebook advertising on customers' patronage intention of retail businesses in South-East Nigeria, focusing on product information, social interaction, entertainment, and perceived usefulness. Findings revealed that all four constructs had significant positive effects, with perceived usefulness exerting the strongest influence, followed by product information and entertainment. This underscores Facebook's role as both a promotional platform and a medium delivering cognitive, emotional, social, and functional value. Grounded in Uses and Gratifications Theory, the Theory of Planned Behaviour, and the Technology Acceptance Model, the study showed that consumers favour ads that are informative, engaging, emotionally appealing, and practically useful. For retail marketers in South-East Nigeria, the findings highlight Facebook's potential as a cost-effective, culturally relevant tool to shape perceptions, stimulate interest, and drive consumer patronage in emerging markets.

Recommendations

In line with the hypotheses tested in the study, the following recommendations are made:

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- i. Retail businesses should design Facebook adverts that contain clear, accurate, and detailed product information consistently across platforms. Adverts should include high-quality images, prices, sizes, product descriptions, and availability details to reduce uncertainty and improve decision-making.
- ii. Marketers should encourage and respond to consumers' interaction through likes, comments, and shares. Incorporating customer testimonials and peer reviews in adverts will enhance trust and influence patronage. Retail businesses should provide real-time responses to inquiries to strengthen engagement and customer confidence.
- iii. Advertisers should infuse entertainment elements such as storytelling, humour, games, animations, and music into Facebook adverts, to resonate with the cultural and social context of South-East Nigeria to improve relatability. Entertaining content helps to increase attention, recall, and emotional connection, which can foster patronage intention.
- iv. Facebook adverts should emphasize functional value, such as discounts, delivery options, time-saving features, and nearby retail store locations. Highlighting unique selling points and promotions makes adverts more practically useful, thereby motivating consumers to act. Retailers should integrate utility-driven features with informative, interactive, and entertaining elements for maximum effectiveness.

Limitations of the Study

While this study offers valuable insights, certain limitations should be acknowledged. First, the research was restricted to retail consumers within South-East Nigeria, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions. Second, the study focused solely on Facebook advertising, excluding other platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp or Tiktok that may also influence patronage intention. Third, the use of a quantitative survey design limited the exploration of deeper consumer motivations that qualitative methods might reveal. Despite these limitations, the study provides a robust empirical foundation for understanding digital advertising influence in an emerging market context.

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