

Electronic Marketing and Customer Engagement of Online Retailers in Rivers State

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Abstract

This study focused on the influence of electronic marketing on customer engagement of online retailers in Rivers State. A causal study was prepared to handle the two (2) hypotheses formulated for the study. The survey research method was adopted for the study on a population comprised 10 online retail firms in Rivers State. The simple sampling technique was used to draw three respondents each from the sampled companies as respondents for this study. A 5-point likert-scale questionnaire was administered to 30 respondents, of which 30(100%) were returned and useful for analysis. The study adopted descriptive statistics and simple regression and analysis of variance for data analysis. The spearman rank order was the test statistic, using SPSS22.0 for all statistical analysis. The results revealed that electronic marketing has a very strong, positive and significant influence on customer commitment and customer advocacy. The study therefore, concludes that, Electronic marketing significantly influence customer engagement of online retail companies in Rivers State. The study management of online retailers should, inter alia, initiate and implement effective electronic marketing in order to enhance on customer engagement of online retailers in Rivers State.

Key Word: *Electronic marketing, customer engagement, customer commitment, customer advocacy and online retailers*

Introduction

Electronic marketing is a new concept used by modern businesses. The firms are increasingly using this newborn medium to market their product and services and sharing new products ideas and information. Firms and businesses are adopting information technology and internet to market their products and adoption has gained the attention of researchers, practitioners and policy makers (Gohary, 2012). Businesses are using internet and electronic media as support to their marketing efforts and as a result e-marketing is growing at very rapid pace. In other way we can say that IT revolution has changed the way of doing businesses altogether. Different authors have defined e-marketing differently. Smith & Chaffey (2005) defined it as “Achieving marketing objectives through applying digital technologies. While Strauss and Frost (2001) defined it as “The use of electronic data and applications for planning and executing the conception, distribution and pricing of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational goals. ”While reviewing related literature most researchers seem to confuse the term e-marketing with e-commerce, e-business and internet marketing. All the terms are used interchangeably, describing almost the same concept. While e-marketing is a term which is broader in scope. All above mentioned concepts come under the umbrella of e-marketing and it also includes mobile marketing, intranet and extranet etc (Dehkordi *et al.*, 2012).

As we enter into 21st century, we can see that way of doing businesses has been changed completely and internet is responsible for such change (Ainin & Ismawati, 2003). It has provided numerous opportunities to both individuals and companies, like now consumers can purchase from a wide variety of goods and services and they can compare the prices offered by different suppliers for same product or service. So, now consumers can choose and buy more easily and readily. On the other hand, firms are having opportunity to expand their current markets and enter into new ones, introduce new product & services and compete even in global environments. Success stories of those companies who have gained a big market share through internet presence emphasized over the fact that companies should have online presence. We cannot ignore success story of Amazon.com. The company gained a lion's share of market through internet presence (Ya-Ping, 2012). Nowadays, internet and other related computer devices like smart phones, mobile phones and emails are in the reach of most of the people and even people log on to social networking sites on daily basis (Raad *et al.*, 2010). The phenomenon has unfolded an important fact that Internet presence is essential for firm's progress and even for its survival (Ya-Ping, 2012).

Electronic marketing is “a form of internet marketing that involves creating and sharing content on social media networks in order to achieve your marketing and branding goals. Electronic marketing includes activities like posting text and image updates, videos, and other content that drives audience engagement, as well as paid social media advertising” (Word stream, 2019).

Electronic marketing is “the set of connectivity-enabled applications that facilitate interaction and the publication, exchange, and co-creation of information among firms and their networked communities of customers” (Larson & Watson, 2011) in Phuoc & Bashar (2015), retailing is a catalyst for economic development and social growth. Electronic marketing is considered one of the most effective multi-channel marketing approaches sought after by firms for the attainment of set goals and objectives (Seimodei, Okwandu & Nadube, 2021). It makes significant contribution to economies through job creation, foreign direct investment and creating linkages with other sectors of the economy (Mokhlis, 2014). As a major source of employment retailing offers a wide range of career opportunities. Retailing supports co-operation and collaboration between manufacturers and consumers because of their vantage position in the value chain. Retailers are often well positioned to create new consumption patterns and relationships in distribution channels (Castaldo *et al.* 2009).

Customer engagement has been recognized as an emotional connection between a company and its customers focused on interaction with customers and their participation. The key element to customer engagement is knowledge exchange, so information and communication technologies provide immense opportunities for organizations to exchange knowledge and engage with customers Vivek, 2009, Abeysekara (2016). Marketing is a well-developed methodological science and is constantly changing its rules according to the needs and developments taking place in and around it. To establish itself in the new era, it has begun adapting the new methods of virtues to come to terms with the new paradigms of business. The role of marketing in the development of business is intact but the way it was executed is radically changing due to contributions made by satellite communication and extensively developed scientific devices.

The marketplace has been undergoing a transformation and companies are facing a new digital marketplace (Berman, 2012). Retail firms as active intermediaries between manufacturers and end users of products. (Jones, Comfort & Hillier, 2009), provides a wide range of services to manufacturers and consumers. Retailers also increase the efficiency of exchanges and lead to higher performance by facilitating delivery of products to consumers at places convenient and accessible to them (Sharma, 2014). Thus, creating a place, time and possession utilities. Retailing is a catalyst for economic development and social growth. It makes significant contribution to economies through job creation, foreign direct investment and creating linkages with other sectors of the economy (Mokhlis, 2014). As a major source of employment retailing offers a wide range of career opportunities.

Retailing supports co-operation and collaboration between manufacturers and consumers because of their vantage position in the value chain. Retailers are often well positioned to create new consumption patterns and relationships in distribution channels Castaldo *et al* (2009). At the core of retailing is the development and maintenance of long-term relationships with customers through the creation of superior customer value and satisfaction, Gupta, Mittal and Nayyar, (2011). In order to attract new customers, retain current ones and effectively run a retail concern; retailers resort to various service delivery strategies. Bawa, Gupta, & Sharma, (2013). The importance of delivering

superior customer value is acknowledged in marketing literature, Cravens, Greenley, Piercy, and Slater, (1997). A clear understanding of the concept of customer value becomes essential for the success of value-based strategies, Wycoff (1985).

Notably, previous researches in this regard include- Dehkordi, Rezvani, Rahman, Fouladivanda, and Jouya (2012) investigated e-marketing and its operation on firm's promotion and understanding customer's response. Also, Dilts, Hauserand and Hausknecht (2016) examined the hybrid multichannel approach to internet marketing: think globally, act locally. Again El-Gohary, Trueman, and Fukukawa (2010) examined the understanding the factors affecting the adoption of e-marketing by small business enterprises. Again, Egele, Ikechi, and Ozo (2017) investigated the impact of electronic marketing on retail outlet performance In Nigeria: a survey of online retail outlets in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. While, Etim, James, Arikpo and Okeowo (2021) tried to establish the relationship between e-marketing strategies and performance of small and medium-sized enterprises. However, none of these studies attempted to link electronic marketing and customer engagement. Hence, the focus of the current study is to determine the influence of electronic marketing on customer engagement of online retailers in Rivers State, using customer commitment and customer advocacy , as metrics of customer engagement. The following hypotheses are formulated to guide the study

H₀₁: Electronic marketing does not have significant influence on customer commitment of online retailers in Rivers State

H₀₂: Electronic marketing does not have significant influence on customer advocacy of online retailers in Rivers State

Conceptual Framework

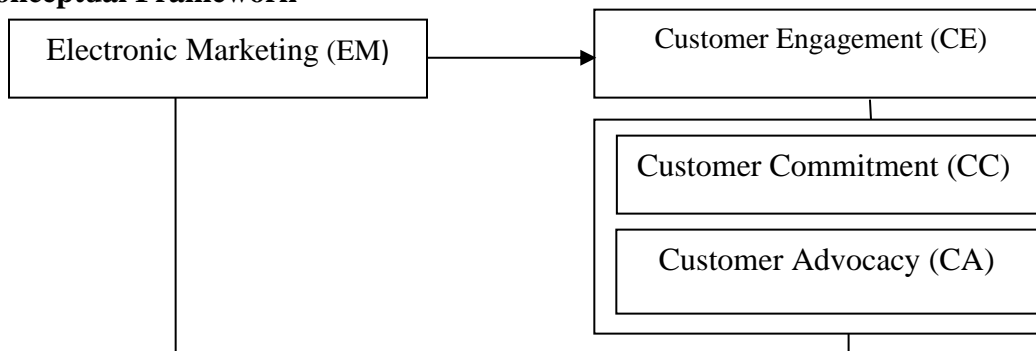


Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework of the influence of between electronic marketing on customer engagement of online retailers in Rivers State.

Sources: Researchers conceptualization (2023)

Theoretical Foundation/ the Wheel of Retailing Theory McNair (1958)

The theory illustrates the forces that shape retail developments as espoused by McNair (1958). It details how new retail developments start off with crude facilities, little prestige and a reputation of cutting prices and margins. As they grow and mature in business, they acquire more expensive spaces with more elaborate services that force them to impose higher margins on offerings until

they reach high level in price scale resulting into uncompetitive offerings. The wheel of retailing revolves when new retailers emerge as low-status, low-price and low-margin making the original institutions vulnerable to new competition. Replacement of institutions' founders by second generation management who are less cost conscious and concerned more with stores' appearance and image create upward pressure on costs and prices thereby compounding the stores' uncompetitiveness (Findley & Sparks, 2002).

The theory explains the decline of certain types of retailers and introduction of others through the life cycle of shopping centres (Abrudan & Dabija, 2009) and is applicable to the current study in aiding understanding of the effect of competition in an environment. Survival of companies in competitive environments therefore requires adaptation without which they risk failure. Though informative, the theory is criticized for not being applicable to all economies but more in developed and growing economies (Brown, 1991). Moreover, convenience stores, planned shopping malls and specialty stores do not follow the pattern and enter into the market with high margins and high cost but remain competitive. Despite the critique, the theory serves as a useful reminder that organizations that operate in dynamic and competitive environments must adapt to changes and increasingly anticipate change or run the risk of inevitable decline (Abrudan & Dabija, 2009).

Concept of Electronic Marketing

Many different definitions have been presented for e-marketing and each of the definitions approach e-marketing concept from a particular view: Electronic marketing refers to using internet and related technologies along with other marketing tools in order to carry out the traditional marketing operations and activities, finding customer, communicating with them and delivering value to them (Gilmore *et al.*, 2017). Stan (2003) defines e-marketing as electronic application of traditional marketing mix elements. In another definition, Strauss and Raymond (2001) believe that e-marketing is the very traditional marketing which utilizes IT in achieving its goals and increases marketing efficiency. E-marketing is the application of internet and other digital technologies in achieving marketing goals (Chaffey *et al.*, 2000). Smith and Chaffey (2001) define e-marketing as achieving marketing goals through applying electronic communications technology. This technology includes internet, e-mail, e-books, databases and mobile phones. Electronic marketing is the business activities that are conducted for satisfying consumers' needs using the internet or electronic media. Javadian, *et al* (2011) in a research investigated four main e-marketing tools including: mobile marketing, e-mail marketing, website marketing and marketing through social networks websites that are used to implement and improve e-marketing and understanding their different impacts on consumer's perception.

The results showed that marketing through mobile phone has been changed a lot with introducing smart cell phones and provided many advantages for companies. Marketing through e-mail is a unique way of distributing advertisement messages and creating value for customers because of cheap price, cost-effectiveness and abundance of addressees. Marketing through website is a necessity for companies because of its natural capacities. Social networks are combinations of text,

picture and video and that help companies increase their productivity and create value for their customers. Social networks facilitate relationships between companies and customers and using this tool, companies can understand their customers 'needs and discover their products' weaknesses and strengths in electronic world and from the customers' idea. Abdel and West (2009) stated that using e-marketing results in advantages like market development and costs reduction. Findings have shown that e-marketing orientation (EMO) has been made up of both philosophical and behavioral elements. By means of conceptualizing EMO and simplifying its measurement, marketers will be able to try their activities and evaluate their attempts.

They are also able to determine some place to concentrate their resources in order to improve e-marketing processes. Edward, (2008) stated that e-marketing methods are mostly used by SMEs but e-marketing diversity is low in such organizations. They also showed that in most small companies (MEs), distribution is very symmetric and only traditional marketing tools were used. Companies that are powerful in branding, pricing, product diversity, internationalization and achieving new technologies, can support advanced e-marketing in higher levels. Research results indicated a positive relationship between evaluated organizational performance factors and application of electronic marketing especially in small companies (MEs). Makash (2013) proposed that any showcasing action in the web ought to consider electronic marketing. E-marketing essentially contributes in the economy of business assets as contrast with conventional advertising channels. Numerous SME's can't manage the cost of the huge promoting Budget (especially in retreat), human assets and their time assets are restricted as well. E-marketing is fundamentally less expensive.

E-marketing incorporates utilization of showcasing standards and procedures through electronic media and all the more particularly web (Faisal *et al.*, 2009). Hatem (2011) highlighted, However electronic marketing (E-Marketing) is still a moderately new idea, especially for associations working in creating nations that have restricted assets, awful foundation, and solid rivalry and can't bear to settle on indiscreet speculations or wrong choices. In this manner, there is a need to have a much clearer understanding of E-Marketing issues and additionally its chances for such associations; and how these advances can be utilized to complete the association promoting exercises and techniques in a more viable and effective route than dependence on customary showcasing practices. E-Marketing can be seen as logic and a current business practice included with promoting of merchandise, administrations, data and thoughts through the Internet and other electronic means. By assessing the applicable writing it is recognized that meanings of E-Marketing fluctuate as indicated by each scientist's perspective, foundation and specialization.

Concept of Customer Engagement

Engagement has been used to assess social media performance, and it is synonymous with sustained attention (Damian-Okoro, Didia & Poi, 2021). Firms are recognizing the pressing need to focus on building personal two-way relationships with customers who foster interactions

(Kumar et al., 2010). Customer engagement has been recognized as an emotional connection between a company and its customers focused on interaction with customers and their participation. The key element to customer engagement is knowledge exchange, so information and communication technologies provide immense opportunities for organizations to exchange knowledge and engage with customers (Vivek, 2009). Vivek *et al.*, (2012) defined customer engagement as the intensity of individual participation and connection with the offers and activities of the organization initiated either by the customer or by the organization.

Bowden (2009), understood customer engagement as a psychological process that models the underlying mechanisms by which customer loyalty toward a service brand is formed in new customers, as well as the mechanisms by which that loyalty may be maintained for repeat purchase customers of a service brand. More recently, the particular case of online customer engagement was defined by Mollen and Wilson (2010) as the cognitive and affective commitment of the customer to an active relationship with the brand as personified by the website or other computer - mediated entities designed to communicate brand value. Each of these concepts represents a single theoretical scope, which has complicated the achievement of greater conceptual advances, reflecting the lack of absolute consensus, Hollebeek (2013). However, from earlier definitions, it may indeed be concluded that the majority use a multidimensional perspective on engagement with three dimensions: cognitive, emotional and conation Vivek *et al* (2012), although the self expression of these generic dimension can vary in accordance with the specific concept of engagement that is used, as well as the relative importance of each one in accordance with the context Brodie *et al* (2013).

The domain of customer engagement and its conceptualization has varied from customer behavior at a particular time to a long-term relationship. Customer engagement is “apsychological state that occurs by virtue of interactive, co-creative customer experiences”Brodie *et al* (2011). Customer engagement behaviors “go beyond transactions, and may be specifically defined as a customer’s behavioral manifestations that have a brand or firm focus, beyond purchase resulting from motivational drivers” VanDoorn *et al*(2010). Customer engagement may also be a cycle involving processes over time (Sashi,2012) and “may emerge at different levels of intensity over time, thus reflecting distinct engagement states” (Brodie *et al.*,2013).they further opine that although, the self expression of these generic dimension can vary in accordance with the specific concept of engagement that is used, as well as the relative importance of each one in accordance with the context Brodie *et al* (2013).

Abeyssekara, (2016). Defining the behavioural rather than the psychological may be preferable, it does not preclude the relevance of psychological constructs (e.g involvement, satisfaction, brand love, cognitive and affective commitment) but rather allows these constructs to fluctuate independently with unique antecedents and consequences, and relate to customer engagement as key antecedent or outcome (Pansari & Kumar, 2016). Defining customer engagement as behaviours outside the core transactions also has the benefit clearly distinguishing the concept

from behavioural loyalty i.e repeat purchases and other transaction focused behaviour frequently studied in marketing (Dick & Basu,1994).

2.5.1 Customer Commitment

Customer commitment: Is the customer's engagement or continuous obligation to buy the same product or use the same company. It is also the customer's desire and effort to maintain a relationship with the company. Commitment in a relationship has two major dimensions: affective commitment and calculative commitment (Gatafsson *et al*, 2005). Calculative commitment is more rational and results from a lack of choice or switching costs. For example a customer who enjoys a particular from jumia patronize Alibaba because of a lack of alternatives and regularly purchase from them, Wetzels., *et al* (2000). Commitment is the core concept in the relationship marketing paradigm and it is an enduring attachment to a sever. Meyer & Allen (1997) posit that the interpretation of commitment is not unanimous when referring to its attitudinal and behavioural nature.

This view, stands in contrast to viewing it as a multidimensional construct, though mostly applied to a business to business setting Wetzels *et al* (2000). Therefore, it can be interpreted that the unidimensional view is referring to a customer to business context. In addition, commitment has been taken as unidimensional, Gwinnet and Gremeler (2002). Despite the different views on commitment in the literature, most views support three dimension of commitment, regardless of the subject being studied (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). The three dimensions of Commitment reflect different underlying psychological states, namely, affective commitment continuance commitment and normative commitment. Affective commitment refers to the desire and willingness to stay with an organization. Fuller (2005) also found it to be positively related to repurchase intentions.

Continuance commitment is bound by the tangible and intangible costs to stay with the organization. Calculative commitment leads to higher levels of customer loyalty and enduring relationships with sellers. Affective commitment is more emotional and results from the trust and reciprocity of relationship. Affective commitment leads to higher levels of trust and emotional bonds in relationships with sellers, Sashi, (2012).Customer loyalty may be considered the result of affective commitment to a product brand, or company while customer delight is the result of affective commitment to a product, brand, or company. If customers are loyal as well as delighted, that is, customer commitment to a seller encompasses both calculative and affective commitment, and then the customer and seller are in an enduring relational exchange with strong emotional bonds, Sashi (2012).

2.5.2 Customer Advocacy

Customer advocacy can be viewed as the top of a pyramid; total quality management and customer satisfaction are at the base of the pyramid. Customer advocacy is evolving terminology in modern

marketing. Advocates use constructive word of mouth. Hayes (2008) narrates the progress of the company to customer advocates. Conferring to WalzCeluch (2010), advocacy is merely word of mouth but it is confident word of mouth, talking upright about the company and commending it to others. Jaffe (2010) recommended to companies that they should concentrate more on advocates in order to decrease the cost of fascinating new customers. Optimistic word of mouth is more operative in service sector where customers are not certain about the services until they purchase it. Walz and Celunch (2010), advocacy is the willingness of the customer to give strong recommendations on products, services or brands, they are acting as advocates on behalf of or service supplier Susanta *et al* (2013).

When customers enthusiastically provide positive recommendations on products, services or brands, they are acting as advocates on behalf of that object; Fullerton (2005). Advocacy is a major step forward in the evolving relationship between a firm and its customers. The growth in customer power and the new marketing strategies of firms require that scholars examine research strategies. The philosophy of marketing is different. Traditional marketing will be based on understanding customers needs and then convincing them to buy the firms products, but Advocacy is based on maximizing the customers interest and partnering with customers Urban., (2004). Concept of altruism view that advocacy is a behaviour provides valuable information to the other party voluntarily without expecting compensation directly or indirectly as a moral obligation that a person must provide benefits for others Susanta *et al* (2013).

From the perspective of organizational citizenship behaviours voluntary advocacy is unrelated to the organizations reward. Based on the theory of impression management, advocacy is to influence the behaviour of others by showing his favorite against an object and condition themselves better so that others will follow. Advocacy research is important because it will be the strategy of business choice for responding to the new realities that customer hold controls of the company. Potential customers see information from peers or even strangers as more unbiased and reliable than those of an economic entity (Brown & Peter., 1987 Susanta *et al.*, 2013). Delighted customers may keep their delight themselves or in a connected world interact with others in their social networks to spread the word about their positive experiences with a product brand or company. Loyal customers lacking an emotional bonds to the seller they regularly patronize many not offer unsolicited encomiums about the product, brand, or company to others despite their enduring relationships with the seller or they may offer recommendations when presented with the opportunity to do so or a purely rational basis free emotional attachment, Sashi (2012).

Empirical Review of Electronic Marketing and Customer Engagement

Damian-Okoro, Akani, Brown and Akani (2023) investigated the relationship between search engine marketing and social media performance of online retailers in Rivers State. Specifically, the study was to ascertain the relationship between search engine marketing and social media performance of online retailers in Nigeria. Search engine optimization and pay per click were dimensions of search engine marketing while traffic and visit frequency were proxies of social media performance. The study adopted an explanatory research design and the population of the study was 20 online stores in Rivers State. The Pearson moment correlation was used as the test statistics. The study revealed that search engine marketing has a positive and significant relationship with social media performance with

online retailers in Rivers State. Nadube and Labari (2019) examined the relationship between social media credibility and customer engagement of money deposit banks. It adopted an explanatory research design. The person product moment correlation was used for data analysis. The study found there is a strong, positive and statistically relationship between social media credibility and customer engagement of deposit money banks. Also, social media credibility is a correlate of customer commitment and customer advocacy. Farook and Abeysekara (2016) examined the influence of social media marketing on customer engagement. The result shows that media and content type of post exert a significant effect on customer online engagement. Damian-Okoro, Didia and Poi (2021) examined the relationship between cognitive social media engagement and e-marketing effectiveness of health care firms in Nigeria. The study adopted an explanatory research design. Pearson product moment correlation (PPMC) was used to test the hypotheses. The study found that there is a significant positive relationship between cognitive social media engagement and e-marketing effectiveness of health care firms in Nigeria.

Methodology

The study adopted the cross sectional descriptive survey research design. This was a descriptive survey on social media marketing and customer engagement of online retailers in Rivers State. This type of design will be used because one or more variables, apart from the independent variable in question, could be the actual cause of observed variation in the dependent variable as a result of customer engagement employed by the online retailers. Population of a study was the universe of objects, persons, events of things being studied and from which a sample is drawn (Nwankwo, 2011). The population of this study was the entire element under investigation and the entire elements that constitute a population must share common features in terms of geography, demography, sociology and duration (Iyama, 2012). The population of this study consists of 10 registered online retailing firms in Rivers State. The population of the study was small. Thus, the entire element in the population was studied. Specifically, purposive sampling technique was employed, and the respondent were marketing/sales, customer service and logistics, totaling of thirty (30) respondents. The questionnaire was structured in a 5 point likert scale ranging from high extent to low extent. Validity is the degree to which result obtained from the analysis of the data actually represents the phenomenon under study .Kothari (2004), pointed out validity measures the accuracy of the instruments obtained the anticipated data which can meet the objectives of the study. In this study the researcher used Cronbach's alpha reliability test method to measure internal consistency of the variables. results was reported as shown in Table 3.1.The Alpha coefficient for the composite scale and the subscales are all above the threshold ($\alpha \geq 0.70$) for them to be all reliable.

Table 3.1 Reliability Analysis of the Research Instrument

S/N	Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach,s Alpha
1.	Electronic Marketing	3	0.728
2.	Customer Engagement	3	0.728

3.	Customer Commitment	3	0.719
4.	Customer Advocacy	3	0.728

Source: *Researcher Field Data (2023).*

H₀1: electronic marketing does not have significant influence on customer commitment of online retailers in Rivers State

H₁1: electronic marketing has a significant influence on customer commitment of online retailers in Rivers State

Table 4.0: Influence of electronic word of mouth on customer commitment (N=30).

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the estimate
1	.872	.764	.703	45343

a. Predictors: (Constant), Electronic marketing

b. Dependent Variable: Customer Commitment

Since for hypothesis one, the significant is .000 which is less than 0.05; there is a significant, influence of electronic marketing on customer commitment with the R (Coefficient of Correlation) that there is 87.4% direct relationship between electronic marketing and customer commitment. R-square value of 764% shows that electronic marketing can influence customer engagement to a high degree. The researcher also used ANOVA to test the hypothesis in this section. The results were presented in table 1.1.

Table 4.1: One Way ANOVA for electronic marketing and customer commitment (N=30).

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	77.074	1	77.074	374.879	.0000
With in Groups	23.849	29206			
Total	100.94	30			

a. dependent variable: customer commitment

b. Predictor: Electronic marketing

Table 4.10 shows that there is difference in mean between electronic marketing $F(dfB,dfw) = F(430,1) = 374.879$, $p < 0.05$. Significant value is 0.01, $r(1,30)$. This agrees with the regression result in Table 4.0. As can be seen from Table 4.0: electronic marketing has a positive and significant influence on customer commitment. The sign of the regression coefficient is positive

indicating that when electronic marketing increases, the customer commitment of the focal companies also increases. This does not agree with the stated hypothesis 1 (There is no significant influence of electronic marketing on customer commitment, therefore, the researcher rejects the hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis that there a significant influence of electronic marketing on customer commitment. The Significant value is 0.01,r(1,30). Therefore the researcher concludes that significant influence of electronic marketing on customer commitment, implying that as the electronic marketing increases, it will lead to customer commitment, the focal company’s customers to enhance online retail outlet performance.

H₀₂: electronic marketing does not have significant influence on customer advocacy of online retailers in Rivers State.

H₂: electronic marketing has a significant influence on customer advocacy of online retailers in Rivers State

Table 4.2: Influence of electronic marketing on customer advocacy (N=30).

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the estimate
1	.810	.656	.653	.50668

a. Predictors: (Constant), Electronic marketing

b. Dependent Variable: Customer Advocacy

Since for hypothesis two, the significant is .000 which is less than 0.05; there is a significant, influence of electronic marketing with the R (Coefficient of Correlation) that there is 81% direct relationship between electronic marketing and customer advocacy. R–square value of .65.6% shows that electronic marketing can influence customer advocacy to a high degree. The researcher also used ANOVA to test the hypothesis in this section. The results were presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.3: One Way ANOVA for the difference in mean between electronic word of mouth and customer advocacy (N=30).

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	55.771	1	55771	281.139	.0000
With in Groups	23.849	29	57		
Total	100.94	30			

a. dependent variable: customer advocacy

b. Predictor: Electronic marketing

Table 4.3 shows that there is difference in mean between electronic marketing and customer advocacy $F(dfB,dfw) = F(30,1) = 221.139$, $p < 0.05$. Significant value is $0.01, r(1,30)$. This agrees with the regression result in Table 4.2. As can be seen from Table 4.3: electronic marketing has a positive and significant influence on customer advocacy. The sign of the regression coefficient is positive indicating that electronic marketing and customer advocacy are directly related. This does not agree with the stated hypothesis 2 (There is no significant influence of electronic marketing on customer advocacy, therefore, the researcher rejects the hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis that there a significant influence of electronic marketing on customer advocacy. The Significant value $F(dfB,dfw) = F(30,1) = 221.139$, $p < 0.05$. Significant value is $0.01, r(1,30)$ Therefore the researcher concludes that significant influence of electronic marketing on customer advocacy, implying that as the electronic marketing and customer advocacy are directly related.

Discussion of Findings

This result is in line with the result of Damian-Okoro, Akani, Brown and Akani (2023) investigated the relationship between search engine marketing and social media performance of online retailers in Rivers State. The study revealed that search engine marketing has a positive and significant relationship with social media performance with online retailers in Rivers State. Also, Nadube and Labari (2019) who examined the relationship between social media credibility and customer engagement of money deposit banks. The study found a strong, positive and statistically relationship between social media credibility and customer engagement of deposit money banks. Also, social media credibility is a correlate of customer commitment and customer advocacy. Farook and Abeysekara (2016) investigated the influence of social media marketing on customer engagement. The result shows that media and content type of post exert a significant effect on customer online engagement

Conclusion

This study investigated the influence of electronic marketing on customer engagement of online retailers in Rivers State. From the findings the study concludes that e-marketing influences customer engagement of online retailers in Rivers State.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion the study therefore recommended that management of online retailers should, inter alia, initiate and implement effective electronic marketing in order to enhance on customer engagement of online retailers in Rivers State.

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