

Attitude of Students Towards Online Shopping of Agricultural Products in Selected Tertiary Institutions in Ogun state, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the attitude of students towards online shopping in selected tertiary institutions in Ogun state. One hundred and thirty-five respondents were sampled using multistage and simple random sampling procedures. Variables measured included their attitude towards online shopping, the factors that affect their decision to make purchases online, and the constraints that hinder the students from shopping online. Data were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, chi-square and PPMC at $p=0.05$. The majority of the respondents specified that the convenience and time-saving advantage (82.8%) and being able to access the Internet (76.6%) influenced their decision to shop online. Furthermore, a majority of the respondents indicated network instability (71.9%) and concern for safety of payment using debit/credit card (64.4%) as constraints hindering them from purchasing online. There was a significant relationship between constraints hindering the students from making purchases online ($r=-0.230$) and their attitude towards online shopping. The high interest in purchasing agricultural products online in the nearest future implies that if conscious efforts are made to eliminate the perceived constraints, e-commerce strategy can be successfully utilized for selling agricultural products.

Keywords: E-commerce in agriculture, online shopping attitude towards agricultural products.

Introduction

The tremendous way in which the Internet has changed the world cannot be overemphasized. Never has it been easier to access information through many media, which have made the world to be regarded as a global village. The Internet possesses enormous amount of information which makes it one of the most valuable tools available to the individual for research and education. It simplifies tasks, makes

jobs easier, and more importantly has become a great tool employed to avoid the hassles of banking, providing the opportunity for transactions to be made quickly and safely. This technology and the knowledge on how to apply it in the area of business gave rise to the concept of electronic commerce (Mirescu, 2010).

According to Ayo, Adewoye and Oni (2011), electronic commerce, otherwise called e-commerce, is the use of the Internet for marketing, identification, payment and delivery of goods and services. It involves the transmission of funds and data over an electronic network and is one of the criteria of revolution of information and communication technology (ICT) in the field of economics (Yaser, 2013). This alternative and revolutionary way of conducting business has provided opportunities for organisations to reach consumers in a very direct way while enabling consumers' immediate access to these electronic markets. It has dramatically reduced many limitations of traditional commerce, chief of which is geographical constraint and locational importance, as retailers are now able to sell their products all over the world (Kareem, Owomoyela and Oyebamiji 2014).

For many people, e-commerce has become one of the preferred ways of shopping because of its ease and convenience. Customers are able to access details and descriptions of products or services they intend to buy from the online catalogue and thereafter make a purchase at any point in time, all from the comfort of their homes. Furthermore, e-commerce provides buying options that are quick, convenient and user-friendly with the ability to transfer funds online, which help customers to save time. This has been a catalyst to accelerate economic growth in many developed countries around the world.

According to Lawal and Abdulkadir (2012), the adoption of business-to-business e-commerce in developing countries differs greatly from developed countries considering that developing countries often lack the necessary financial, legal and physical infrastructures for the development of e-commerce. However, the statistics reported by Media Reach OMD (2014) reveal that Nigeria has recorded a growth rate of 102% in Internet adoption and usage between 2009 and 2013. As at September 2015, Nigeria was recorded to have over 97 million Internet users (NCC, 2015).

Due to this rapid rise in the number of Internet users, a greater opportunity abounds for e-commerce activity to thrive in Nigeria. More importantly, e-commerce has the potential to improve the economic performance of the agricultural sector because of its obvious benefits and ability to surmount the challenges of marketing agricultural products. However, this platform is yet to be maximized for the sales of agricultural products in Nigeria.

The Nation (2015) reports that while there are indications that e-commerce in agriculture is emerging as a lucrative area in online shopping sector, the development of e-commerce in the agricultural sector still lags far behind other sectors in Nigeria. Although there are online agricultural stores like HarvestPlus and SlimTrader, these are not tailored to serve the needs of the end consumers. In a list of top twenty online shopping stores in Nigeria created by BuzzNigeria (2015), only two (Supermart.ng and Gloo.ng) reportedly conducted sales of food items, and there is still no record of any survey on them.

Attitudes have been known to play a significant role in the adoption of a technology or innovation. Through motivation and perception, attitudes are formed and consumers make decisions (Haque, Sadeghzadeh and Khatibi, 2006). Considering that online shopping is still at its infant stage in Nigeria, there is a need to examine consumers' attitudes towards the online shopping platform and the factors that influence these attitudes.

A 2014 report by Nielsen Group stated that millennials (that is, persons between ages 21-34) made up to 50% of the respondents who made plans to make an online purchase across every product category measured in the Nielsen's Global Survey of E-commerce. Kaymu (2015) reported that persons aged 18-34 years constituted 69% of the customers in Nigeria who visited the online shop and are more interested in shopping online more than the other age groups. The majority of this group falls into the category of undergraduate students in institutions of higher education (Emeka-Nwabunnia, Ibeh and Ogbulie, 2014; Okebukola, 2008).

Since attitudes directly influence decision making, understanding consumers' attitudes and their buying behaviour is critical for companies when they market products or services. The attitude and buying behaviour of consumers affect how agricultural businesses will develop strategies and allocate resources towards boosting sales, meeting customers' needs and satisfying them, thereby maximizing this shift from shopping in physical stores to shopping online. It is against this backdrop that this study examined the attitude of students towards online shopping in selected tertiary institutions in Ogun state. The specific objectives were to:

1. Determine the frequency of online shopping done by students in Ogun state;
2. Ascertain the products purchased online by students in Ogun state;
3. Establish the students' sources of information on online shopping;
4. Determine the attitude of the students towards online shopping; and
5. Determine the factors that promote and hinder their decision to make purchases online.

Methodology

This study was carried out in Ogun state, Nigeria. The population for the study consisted of all undergraduates in tertiary institutions in Ogun State. A multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select samples for the study. In the first stage, Odeda and Obafemi-Owode local government areas (LGAs) were purposively selected due to the concentration of the three different levels of tertiary institutions. In the second stage three institutions, namely, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Moshood Abiola Polytechnic, Ojere and Federal College of Education, Osiele were selected. At the third stage, three departments were randomly selected from each tertiary institution and lists of students in each department compiled which gave a students' population of 2700 students. At the final stage, random sampling technique was used to select 5% of the students' population in each department which give a total sample of 135 respondents. Structured questionnaire was used to interview the selected respondents.

The dependent variable for this study was the attitude of students towards online shopping which was measured on 16-item attitudinal statements derived from a set of

factors posited by Kotler and Armstrong (1996) to be factors that determine consumer's purchasing behaviour. These factors include economic factors (level of income), social factors (influence of friends and family), cultural factors, personal factors and psychological factors. Data were analysed using frequency, percentage and mean to describe the study's variables. Also, a relationship was tested between respondents' selected personal characteristics and their attitude to online shopping (using chi-square test). Furthermore, correlational analysis was carried out between constraints to online shopping and respondents' attitude using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC).

Results and Discussion

Personal Characteristics of the Respondents

Data in Table 1 show that the majority of the students (91.8%) were between 16-25 years with a mean age of 21.4 years. This is the age group that is active on the Internet. This is consistent with the study conducted by Emeka-Nwabunnia et al. (2014) which reported that the majority of Nigerian students are between ages 15-24. Data in Table 1 further shows that 50.4% of the respondents were males while 49.6% were females. More than half (54.8%) earned a monthly stipend between N5, 000-15,000 implying that students in this study area have low income or monthly stipend which might likely affect their decision to purchase online.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to personal characteristics

Characteristics	Respondents
Age (years)	
16-20	55 (40.7)
21-25	69 (51.1)
26-30	11 (8.1)
Sex	
Male	68(50.4.)
Female	67(49.6)
Level of income (₦)	
<5,000	37(27.4)
5000-15000	74 (54.8)
15000-20000	11 (8.1)
>20 000	13 (9.6)

Source: Field surveys, 2016

Figures in parentheses are percentages

Frequency of Online Shopping among Respondents

Table 2 reveals that 14. 1% of the respondents shopped online twice a month, 14.1% shopped monthly, 12.5% shopped every three months, and 23.4% shopped every six months while 35. 9% of respondents shopped online only once a year. When asked how long they had been shopping online, the majority (56.3%) of the respondents indicated they had been shopping less than a year, 40.6% had been purchasing

online for 1-5 years while only 3.1 % had been online shopping over five years ago. This implies that the concept of e-commerce and online shopping is still at its infant stage among students in this study area.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by the frequency of shopping online

Variable	Respondents
How long have you been shopping online?	
<1 year	36 (56.3)
1-5 years	26(40.6)
>5 years	2 (3.1)
Frequency of shopping online	
Twice a month	9 (14.1)
Monthly	9(14.1)
Every three months	8 (12.5)
Every six months	15(23.4)
Once a year	23(35.9)

Products shopped online by respondents

Table 3 reveals that almost half of the respondents (45.3%) who shopped online purchased clothing and accessories, 39.1% purchased electronic goods while one-quarter (25%) purchased computer products and software. Other product categories included cosmetics and perfume (20.3%), household goods and furniture (7.8%), books (6.3%), cinema and theatre tickets (1.6%) and travel tickets (1.6%). Only 7.8% of the respondents purchased food and drinks online. This corroborates the online shopping report by Philip Consulting (2014) that the top selling items are fashion products, mobile phones and services (including restaurant and spa) and implies that online shopping is still considered as a platform for purchasing luxury goods.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by product category

Product category	Respondents
Clothing and accessories	29(45.3)*
Electronic goods	25 (39.1)
Computer products and software	16 (25.0)
Cosmetics and perfume	13(20.3)
Household goods and furniture	5 (7.8)
Books	4(6.3)
Cinema and Theatre tickets	1 (1.6)

* Multiple response

Source: Field survey, 2016 Figures in parentheses are percentages

Online Shopping for Agricultural Products by Respondents

Table 4 shows that only 15.6% of respondents had ever searched online for any e-store selling agricultural products (food items). Furthermore, the majority of respondents (96.3%) had never bought agricultural products online while only 3.7% had. This is consistent with the earlier result in Table 3, implying that most of the students in the study area do not purchase agricultural products online. This further corroborates the report of The Nation (2015) that the development of e-commerce in the agricultural sector still lags far behind other sectors in Nigeria. However, more

than half of the respondents (57.8%) indicated that they would like to purchase agricultural products online in the nearest future. This indicates that students of tertiary institutions in the study area are favourably disposed to the possibility of shopping for agricultural products online which is an encouraging factor for the agricultural sector.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents on shopping agricultural products online

Variable	Percentage of respondents indicating yes
Have you ever searched online for agricultural products (food items)?	21(15.6)
Have you ever bought any agricultural products online?	5(3.7)
Would you like to buy agricultural products in the nearest future?	78(57.8)

Respondents' Sources of Information on Online Shopping

Data in Table 5 shows that more than half of the respondents (57.8%) obtained information on what type of products to buy and where to buy them from social media like Facebook, Twitter and BlackBerry Messenger (BBM), 35.9% obtained information from their friends and family, 12.5% obtained information through links sent to their email boxes, 9.4% obtained information from traditional media such as TV and radio while only 1.6% obtained information from browsing through various web stores. This therefore makes it imperative for prospective online agribusinesses to maximize the use of social media tools for marketing their products.

Table 5: Distribution of respondents by the sources of information on online shopping

Sources	Respondents
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, BBM)	37(57.8)*
Friends and family	23 (35.9)
Links via emails	8 (12.5)
Traditional media	6 (9.4)
Browsing through web stores	1 (1.6)

*Multiple response

Source: Field survey, 2016

Figures in parentheses are percentages

Attitude of Students towards Online Shopping

Information in Table 6 show that the majority of the respondents were favourably predisposed to online shopping because it saves time (M=3.95), affords them access to more product varieties (M=3.84), enables them to compare prices more easily (M=3.65) and access information about products online (M=3.64), and is more convenient than shopping at the physical stores (M=3.50). However, some were unfavourably predisposed because they perceive that online shopping is not safe (M=2.99), they do not have enough information about purchasing over the Internet (M=2.93), the delivery fees are too high (M= 2.85) and that it is risky not to see the actual products before purchase (M=2.53).

Overall, the majority (54.1%) of the respondents had a positive attitude towards online shopping while 45.9% had a negative attitude towards online shopping. This implies that the respondents are favourably predisposed to the concept of online shopping, which is likely due to the increased access and use of the Internet fast-tracked by the advent of internet-enabled mobile phones among young people.

Table 6: Distribution of respondents' attitude towards online shopping

Statements	Mean	Standard deviation
Shopping online is cheaper than going to the physical stores	3.47	1.19
I don't see a reason to buy products over the Internet	3.44	1.20
Shopping online saves time	3.95	1.14
It is risky for me not to see the actual product before buying	2.53	1.17
Shopping online is more convenient for me than the physical stores	3.50	1.28
I prefer going shopping with someone rather than shopping alone	2.49	1.21
Shopping online is not safe	2.99	1.19
I can compare product prices more easily online	3.65	1.25
Delivery fees are too high	2.85	1.15
I don't have enough access to the Internet	3.40	1.21
Shopping online is safe	3.41	1.14
I don't have enough information about purchasing over the Internet	2.93	1.15
I prefer to shop online in order to avoid crowds usually present in physical stores	3.47	1.27
I have access to more information about products online	3.64	1.16
It is risky for me to give my debit/credit card information online	2.39	1.16
I am able to access more product varieties online	3.84	1.16
Overall Attitude		
Positive	73(54.1)	
Negative	62(45.9)	

Field survey, 2016 Figures in parentheses are percentages

Factors that Promoted and Hindered Respondents' Decision to make Purchases Online

The majority of the respondents (82.8%) indicated that the convenience and time-saving advantage of online shopping influenced their decision to purchase goods online, and 76.6% indicated being able to access the internet influenced their decision to purchase goods online (Table 7). Other factors that affected respondents'

decision to purchase online included being able to compare prices online before making a purchase (75.0%), privacy and confidentiality of information afforded by shopping online (73.4%), goods not available in local stores (65.6%), Internet usage proficiency (62.5%), and level of income (62.5%).

Data in Table 7 also show that 71.9% of the respondents stated network instability as a constraint hindering them from shopping online while 64.4% indicated concern for safety of payment using debit/credit card as a constraint. Other constraints perceived by the respondents included (64.4%), risk of the delivered goods looking different from the ones displayed online (63.7%), distrust for online retailers (56.3%), high cost of Internet access (51.1%), high cost of delivery (51.1%) and lack of promptness in delivery (45.2%).

Table 7: Distribution of respondents on the factors that affect their decision to make purchases online

Factors	Respondents
Convenience and time saving	53 (82.8)
Accessibility to the Internet	49 (76.6)
Being able to compare prices online before making purchase	48(75.0)
Privacy and confidentiality of information	47(73.4)
Goods not available in local stores	42 (65.6)
Level of income	40 (62.5)
Internet usage proficiency	40 (62.5)
Constraints	
Network instability	97(71.9)
High cost of Internet access	69(51.1)
Safety of payment using debit/credit card	87 (64.4)
Lack of promptness in delivery	61 (45.2)
High cost of delivery	69 (51.1)
Distrust for online retailers	76 (56.3)
Delivered goods looking different from the ones seen online	86 (63.7)

Relationship between Respondents' Personal Characteristics, Constraints to making Online Purchases and their Attitude to Online Shopping

There was no significant relationship between students' ages ($r = 0.151$), sex ($\chi^2 = 3.263$) and their attitude towards online shopping (Table 9). However, there was a significant relationship between students' level of income ($\chi^2 = 10.472$) and their attitude towards online shopping. This corroborates the findings of Zuroni and Goh (2012) and infers that age and sex do not influence students' attitude towards online shopping, whereas the level of income does. This, perhaps, is due to the fact that online shopping is still viewed as a market place for luxury goods in Nigeria.

Table 8: Relationship between the personal characteristics of respondents, constraints to making online purchases and their attitude towards online shopping

Variables	r-value	DF	χ^2
Age	0.151*	-	-
Sex	-	1	3.263
Level of income	-	4	10.472
Constraints	-0.230*	-	

*P ≤ 0.05

There was a significant negative relationship ($r=-0.230$; $P \leq 0.05$) between constraints hindering respondents from making purchases online and their attitude towards online shopping. This is in line with the studies carried out by Aminu (2013) and Hooria (2014) implying that a higher respondents' attitude towards online shopping will be fuelled by less constraints faced.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The students mostly shopped online once in a year and patronized mostly clothing and accessories with intention to buy agricultural products online in the future. The convenience and time-saving advantages mostly influenced their decision to shop online. Although the students had a positive attitude towards online shopping, they are likely to be constrained mostly by network instability, concern for the safety of their debit/credit card and delivered goods looking different from the ones seen online. The attitude of the students is significantly influenced by their level of monthly stipend and the constraints to shop online. The following recommendations are made;

The high interest of the students to purchase agricultural products online in the nearest future suggests that Business-to-Consumer e-commerce (Online shopping) should be exploited by agribusinesses for growth and productivity.

The social media should be fully utilized for marketing and advertising agricultural products and their web-stores since the majority sourced information from this medium.

Prospective online agricultural retailers and marketers should work towards building a strong and reliable e-commerce platform in order to build consumer trust and loyalty.

The government and the Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) should work towards creating policies that will reduce cost of Internet access and enhance Internet security and stability.

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