Article

Online Advertising Platforms and Customers Patronage of Online Retail Stores in Port Harcourt

Ebikoboere Otuogha Iyo [1]

1. **Department of Marketing, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Nigeria**
*   ebitamlolipre@gmail.com

Abstract: This study investigated the relationship between online advertising platforms and customers patronage of online retail stores in Port Harcourt. The population of the study comprised of 2,378,307 customers who patronized online retail stores in the Port Harcourt metropolis. A sample size of 400 was utilized for this study and this was derived using the Taro Yamane formula. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled Online Advertising Platforms and Customer Patronage Questionnaire (OATCPQ). Data collected were coded into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0, and were analyzed using descriptive analytical statistics such as Percentages, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used for testing the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha levels. The findings of the study showed that there was significant relationship between online advertising marketing and repeat purchase in online retail stores in Port Harcourt; there was significant relationship between online advertising and referrals in online retail stores in Port Harcourt; there was significant relationship between social media marketing and brand loyalty in online retail stores in Port Harcourt; internet access has significant influence on the relationship between digital marketing and customers patronage in online retail stores in Port Harcourt, amongst others. It was concluded that digital marketing enhances repeat purchase, referrals, and loyalty to a brand; also, sales margin and revenue generation by online retail stores could sky rocket if digital marketing platforms are employed to advertise their products Based on the findings, the researcher recommended that online retail companies that are using online platforms should systemize of notifying customers of their products, as it is vital for companies to stay connected with their customers.

Keywords: Online Advertising, Platforms, Customers Patronage, Online Retail Stores

1. Introduction

Online advertising platforms have revolutionized how businesses engage with consumers, offering diverse channels to promote products and services. These platforms enable targeted advertising, allowing companies to reach specific demographics with precision. For instance, Google Ads utilizes user search behavior to display relevant advertisements, enhancing the likelihood of consumer engagement. Similarly, social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram offer advertising solutions that leverage user interests and behaviors to deliver personalized ad experiences. The rise of e-commerce has further amplified the importance of these platforms, with companies like Amazon providing advertising services that integrate directly into the shopping experience, thereby influencing purchasing decisions at the point of sale. Additionally, emerging platforms such as TikTok and Snapchat have introduced innovative ad formats, capturing the attention of younger audiences through engaging and interactive content. The effectiveness of online advertising platforms is evident in their widespread adoption across various industries, as businesses seek to capitalize on the extensive reach and

sophisticated targeting capabilities these platforms offer. As digital consumption continues to grow, the role of online advertising platforms in marketing strategies is set to become increasingly pivotal.

The increasing patronage of online retail stores is influenced by various factors that shape consumer behavior in the digital marketplace. Key determinants include product availability, competitive pricing, promotional offers, and the ease of comparing options, all of which enhance the online shopping experience (Kalia et al., 2021). Additionally, elements such as product delivery efficiency, perceived security, and the quality of information provided significantly impact customer satisfaction and loyalty (Al-Debei et al., 2015). Understanding these factors is essential for online retailers aiming to attract and retain customers in a competitive environment.

Online retail stores face significant challenges in enhancing customer patronage, particularly due to the high rate of customers switching between platforms in search of quality products at competitive prices. The proliferation of online retail outlets has facilitated this behavior, prompting managers to reassess and innovate their marketing strategies to retain customers. Many have adopted digital marketing tactics such as social media marketing, email marketing, and search engine optimization to boost sales performance. For instance, a study focusing on online shopping malls in Port Harcourt found that these digital marketing strategies positively and significantly impact sales performance (Christian et al., 2023). Similarly, research on content marketing strategies among e-tailers in Port Harcourt indicated a positive relationship with customer patronage, emphasizing the effectiveness of infographics, mobile applications, social networks, and e-newsletters in influencing purchase intentions and customer retention (Otsu & Kalu, 2018). Despite these efforts, empirical studies examining the direct relationship between digital marketing platforms and customer patronage in Port Harcourt remain limited, highlighting a gap in the literature that warrants further investigation.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship that exist between online advertising platforms and customers patronage of online retail stores in Port Harcourt. The specific objectives of the study include the following

to determine the relationship between online advertising and repeat purchase in online retail stores in Port Harcourt.

to determine the relationship between online advertising and referrals in online retail stores in Port Harcourt.

to ascertain the relationship between online advertising and brand loyalty in online retail stores in Port Harcourt.

Research Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between online advertising and repeat purchase in online retail stores in Port Harcourt.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between online advertising and referrals in online retail stores in Port Harcourt.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between online advertising and brand loyalty in online retail stores in Port Harcourt.

Literature Review

Online Advertising

Online advertising has been characterized in several ways by various experts and authors. Khan and Islam (2017) defined online advertising as the transaction of items and

services via electronic devices from seller to purchaser. Khan and Islam (2017) characterized online advertising as the use of web-based and intuitive technologies to establish a relationship between businesses and their customers. Adede, Kibera, and Owino (2017) characterized online advertising as the use of marketing principles in conveying a company's offers using internet technology. El-Gohary (2010) contested Kotler's definition, asserting that online advertising does not just depend on the internet for product communication and customer relationship management; it incorporates both internet and electronic technologies. Adede et al. (2017) endorsed El-Gohary's perspective, asserting that online advertising involves interactive behaviors that foster client involvement without just depending on internet technology. Baker and Sinkula (2005) said that online advertising encompasses the use of electronic technology, including both online and offline actions to attain marketing objectives. Technology is essential for the execution of internet advertising. Dann and Dann (2011) said that firms aiming to engage in online advertising must use technology that encompasses electronic elements and interaction. Adede et al. (2017) said that companies aiming to implement online advertising principles must invest in resources, including technology and skills development, to enable successful online advertising practices. Certain firms are doing their marketing operations using electronic gadgets (Ngugi, 2013).

Online marketing is also known as online marketing. Internet marketing denotes the promotion of goods and services over the World Wide Web (Johns, 2009). Despite varying interpretations of online marketing, several experts agree that it encompasses a collection of strategies used by firms to promote goods and services over the internet. Recently, electronic marketing has been dynamic, with marketers actively devising diverse strategies to attract visitors to their websites, aiming to convert them into higher sales. These advancements include blogging and webpage design (Chaffey, Mayer, Johnston & Ellis, 2000). Chaffey, Mayer, Johnston, and Ellis (2000) assert that marketers continuously create diverse internet marketing tools to enhance sales performance and foster consumer loyalty. Online marketing has emerged as a cost-efficient strategy for firms to reach their current and prospective markets. The aim of internet marketing for several firms is to educate the public about their goods and services, conduct research, identify target audiences, and promote their offerings. Online marketing has achieved significant prevalence in industrialized nations. Conversely, emerging nations continue to fall behind, partially attributable to deceitful consumers (Kelly, 2000).

Repeat Purchase: Consumer acquisitions that substitute prior purchases that have been used are termed Repeat purchases. A repeat purchase might exemplify brand loyalty. When a customer is satisfied with a certain brand, they are likely to buy the same brand or a comparable product from that brand upon the need for replacement or replenishment. A repeat purchase may alternatively be termed a "sales replacement" or "repurchase" (Fournier, 2018). Repeat purchases resemble repeat sales and are associated with repeat consumers. Repeat purchases may include acquiring the same item from another vendor. Repeat customers are those who consistently patronize the same merchant and/or make recurrent purchases of same or brand-associated products. A fundamental principle in securing recurring sales is to provide superior customer service compared to competitors. A multitude of material has been produced to instruct sales executives on securing recurring orders. Whether as an individual salesman dependent on commissions and incentives or as a firm aiming to enhance earnings, facilitating repeat transactions is a crucial endeavor (Fornell & Larcker, 2016).

Repeat purchases consistently contribute to the enhancement of consumer happiness. Consequently, contemporary enterprises are using loyalty programs to stimulate recurring patronage. One method to enhance repeat purchases and cultivate client loyalty is via integrated relationships. This ensures recurring purchases, since clients are compelled to use the product again, regardless of their desire. FedEx exemplifies the effective use of integrated customer relationships. The firm implements computer

terminals in its customers' enterprises. It assists in delineating shipping needs for the business and monitoring the transportation of items. The connection extends to the inventory, accounting, and other elements of the customer's management system.

Repurchase in marketing is a significant mechanism for enhancing organizational profitability and fostering sustainable development. In contemporary marketing operations, repurchase is an individual's assessment of the likelihood of acquiring a certain service from the same organization, taking into account the consumer's present context and potential future conditions. Repurchase denotes the likelihood of using the prior service provider again in the future. Repurchase refers to a customer's inclination to acquire things from the same manufacturer over a certain duration. The idea of repurchase refers to the act of acquiring products and services from a certain retailer (Bilgili & Ozkul, 2015).

Referral: In marketing operations, referral denotes the practice of advertising items or services to new clients by recommendations, often via word of mouth. Referrals often occur naturally; however, organizations may shape this via effective techniques. In marketing, referral denotes the practice of promoting and substantially enhancing word-of-mouth recommendations, perhaps the most ancient and reliable marketing method. This may be achieved by incentivizing consumers and many other contacts to endorse goods and services from consumer brands, both digitally and in-person. Online referral marketing is the internet-based, or Software as a Service (SaaS), adaptation of conventional referral marketing. Utilizing web browser cookies and analogous technologies to monitor client activity online, referral marketing may enhance brand exposure, referrals, and eventually, income.

Numerous systems enable firms to assess their referral marketing return on investment (ROI) and to refine their campaigns for enhanced outcomes. Numerous contemporary systems provide consumers a consistent experience across both desktop and mobile devices. Offline referral marketers sometimes use manageable business cards. Tractable business cards often have QR codes that connect to online material for purchase, enabling the tracking of sales back to the individual whose card was scanned. Online referral marketing emphasizes consumer relationships. The internet serves as a prevalent medium for referral-based marketing. It provides several platforms for consumers to express their thoughts, product preferences, and experiences, including the company's website and social media channels like as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and Google. Marketers may incentivize referring parties by supplying pre-written texts. Advocates may provide their relatives and friends with customized links that include unique referral codes and promotional material via emails, blogs, and instant messaging. The corporation may provide incentives to supporters when their relatives and acquaintances make purchases via the link (Berry, 2014).

Brand Loyalty: Brand loyalty often hinges on consumer perception; it is a process in which a customer opts to consistently buy a product from the same firm rather than an alternative offered by a rival. For instance, some individuals always go for Coke in the supermarket, whilst others invariably choose Pepsi. A buyer would continuously buy the same product due to the perception of its superiority among alternative options. It is important to recognize that brand loyalty often pertains to a product rather than a corporation. For instance, while you may exhibit loyalty to your high Lander jeep, you could contend that a Harley outperforms a Honda motorbike (Berry, 2014).

The reasons for brand loyalty are very crucial for several reasons. Initially, it lowers manufacturing costs due to an increased sales volume. Secondly, organizations with brand-loyal consumers incur lower marketing expenses, allowing them to either keep more profits or allocate resources to other ventures. Third, corporations may use premium pricing to enhance profit margins. Loyal consumers are inclined to endorse items they like. Businesses must invest considerable effort to cultivate brand loyalty. It is essential to

persuade prospective clients that your product has a substantial advantage over competing offerings to warrant their ongoing purchases. Companies will seek to capitalize on brand loyalty established for one product to promote other items within their portfolio. The objective is to cultivate brand loyalty for a maximum number of goods (Fournier, 2018).

Brand loyalty refers to the inclination of customers to consistently choose one brand's goods over those of competitors. Consumer behavior patterns indicate that individuals would persist in purchasing items from a firm that has cultivated a trustworthy connection. Loyalty is very advantageous for companies, resulting in repeat purchases, increased revenues, and customer referrals. A devoted client base may provide a firm with a competitive edge, enabling it to surpass its rivals and achieve success in the marketplace. Brand loyalty fosters a robust client base, which then acts as a mechanism to outpace rivals and secure the competitive advantage necessary for success in the marketplace. Companies with strong brand loyalty see recurrent purchases of their goods and services, irrespective of fluctuations in price or convenience. Loyal clients of a certain brand are less susceptible to the marketing strategies of rivals, hence enhancing the likelihood that these customers will persist in using the goods and services of that firm. Additionally, organizations that have established robust brand loyalty have the potential to expand their client base. Devoted consumers might become brand advocates for the organization. Loyal clients are content with the brand and will disseminate brand awareness, hence offering the firm free promotion (Prasad & Dev, 2010). Brand loyalty is the emotional connection a client develops with a brand, influencing their inclination to acquire its products. According to Berry (2014), brand loyalty is a favorable emotional and/or behavioral reaction by a person towards a branded, labeled, or graded option, in their roles as user, decision-maker, and/or buying agent.

Empirical Review

Martin and Merisavo (2003) conducted a research examining the correlation between email marketing and brand loyalty within the cosmetics sector. The study's results indicated that the majority of consumers continually bought things due to continuous reminders via emails from the company. Johnston and Ellis (2000) contend that firms use email marketing as a mechanism to enhance brand loyalty by consistently reminding clients of items and services to promote ongoing sales. Thus, Commitment Trust Theory asserts that the firm must preserve a positive connection with its consumers. Hunt (2000) asserts that a firm should do follow-ups to ascertain client satisfaction with their experience, fostering relationships based on commitment and trust.

Kwak and Richard (2002) conducted research examining internet users' demographics and personality qualities that may affect online shopping behavior and product loyalty. The results indicated that income levels influenced internet purchase behavior. This indicates that a customer's financial level affects their loyalty to the items. These results corroborate contingency theory, which posits that there is no one optimal leadership approach, and that a leadership style beneficial in some contexts may not provide success in others. Effective leadership is crucial in ensuring that the firm prioritizes the delivery of quality products and services. This enhances product consumption by elevating satisfaction, hence fostering client retention (Hersey & Blanchard, 2004).

Brookes and Little (2007) examined the correlation between internet marketing and brand loyalty. They determined that web marketing offers a medium for promoting products and services to a diverse client base. It facilitates straightforward and simple access to an organization's goods and services efficiently. This contributes to the enhancement of business reputation, hence increasing brand loyalty. Halinen (2000) posits that customer attrition is associated with service quality; for example, poor service quality might impact customer satisfaction. Successful firms in customer retention provide high-

quality products and services that address the evolving demands of their clientele. Subpar service quality deters clients from purchasing products from an organization due to a deficiency in confidence and trust over the quality of the items and services provided. Organizations must endeavor to provide excellent products and services that fulfill client demands, hence ensuring customer retention.

Rohit and John (2000) noted that successful firms in customer retention use techniques specifically designed to attract and keep their clientele. For instance, digital loyalty programs, recognition prizes, and customer referral incentives. This fosters a robust connection between consumers and the company via enhanced relationships, confidence, and trust. Safaricom employs the strategy of using bonga points for customer retention. This approach aims to retain current clients and assure their continued usage of Safaricom services to enhance the company's revenues. Customers who use more airtime accrue a substantial quantity of bonga points, and conversely. This complicates client transitions to alternative service providers, since they risk the loss of accrued points that may have much more value if the connection were to persist. Nineteen consumers choose to maintain their loyalty and mitigate the danger of loss. Likewise, commitment trust theory elucidates that consumers have significant importance for the firm. They need to be handled in a way that conveys their worth. This captivates potential customers and maintains current ones. An example is the integration of contemporary technology to enhance customer service and decrease expenses.

Theoretical Framework

The paper adopted Uses and Gratification Theory (Katz, et al., 2004). The advent of technology digital, communication and social media has breath a new life into this aging theory of uses and gratifications (Musa, et al., 2016, Whiting & Williams, 2013; Yoo & Kim, 2013). Applying uses and gratification theory in digital and communication marketing is of great importance unlike the traditional media platform. The new media come up with new and varied options have the appropriateness of uses and gratification (Gallon, 2010). Pioneered by Katz, et al., (2004), uses and gratification provides innovations that motivates customer usage of certain media platform to maximal utility, benefit and gratification (Winner & Dominick 2011; Ajemah, 2011). Li, (2005) proposes that Uses and Gratification empowers customer to satisfy cognitive, affective and social integrative needs. Previous studies synthesized that uses and gratification hypothesis assert that digital and communication marketing enthrones social media interaction, information utility and information sharing, solution to customer problem, use and buying decision enhances self-actualization and co-creation education and customer empowerment (Asemah, 2011; Whiting & William 2013; Moran, 2016; Pullizu, 2017).

Mcquire (2004) posited that the uses and satisfaction theory has effectively elucidated consumer motivation and behavior within the realm of traditional media. Recent research has used the framework in the context of digital communication and new media (Flanagin, 2005). The proliferation of digital and social networking sites has garnered significant attention about its use and societal implications. The uses and gratification hypothesis posits that individuals actively engage with media and interact significantly with communication channels by creating profile groupings of linked uses and corresponding gratifications (Luo, 2002). The idea posits the reasons clients use a certain medium and the roles the medium fulfills (Katerra & Hanbul, 2002). Scholars and researchers comprehend uses and pleasure theory by differentiating between gratification gained and gratification sought (Kink & Hess, 2008). Gratification therefore denotes the appreciation that buyers really feel from using a certain media. In contrast, pleasure desired pertains to the appreciation that buyers anticipate receiving from a medium prior to engagement. Research indicates that pleasure achieved is a superior predictor of media use compared to gratification sought, and if a medium fulfills or surpasses the gratification desired by a user, recurrence will ensue (Kaye & Johnson, 2002; Brandzaeg & Heim, 2009).

2. Methodology

This research used a descriptive survey methodology using a correlational framework. This design was used to ascertain the link between the dependent and independent variables.

The study's populace consisted of 2,378,307 clients who used online retail outlets in the Port Harcourt metropolis (https://www.statista.com/statistics/1139883/digital-buyers-in-nigeria). This research used a sample size of 400. This was ascertained using the Taro Yamane formula (refer to appendix). A sample denotes a portion of the population that the researcher intends to examine (Field, 2005). Consequently, the sampling method used in this study was simple random sampling, ensuring that every customer had an equal opportunity to be picked for participation.

A structured questionnaire served as the primary tool for data collection. Data was gathered across three variables: the predictor variable, digital marketing tactics; the criterion variable, client patronage; and the moderator variable, customer retention. This correlational research used a cross-sectional design, and data was collected using a well constructed questionnaire. The tool used was named the Digital Marketing Platforms and Customer Patronage Questionnaire (DMPCPQ). The instrument had three sections: Section A gathered socio-demographic data of the respondents, Section B assessed the dimensions of digital marketing and customer patronage, and Section C quantified concerns related to consumer patronage. The DMTCPQ components were assessed using a 4-point Likert scale (Haque, 2002; Baridam, 2008). Data were finalized and encoded into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences, SPSS version 21.0. Data analysis used percentages, mean, standard deviation, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). The demographic data were evaluated using basic percentages, the research issues were examined using frequency, mean, and standard deviation, and the hypotheses were checked with Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC).

 Data Presentation

Table 1. Questionnaire Response Pattern

Number administered	Number returned	Number used	Percentage used
350	335	335	95.7%

Source: Field Survey (2024)

The table above indicates that out of 350 questionnaires were administered to the respondents, 335 were returned and 335 pieces of the survey were adequately filled and were utilized for the analysis representing 95.7% of the sample size.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant relationship between online advertising and repeat purchase in online retail stores in Port Harcourt

Table 2. Relationship between online advertising and repeat purchase

Correlations				
		Online Advertizing	**Repeat Purchase**	**Decision**
Online Advertising	Pearson Correlation	1	.591	Rejected
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	
	N	335	335	
Repeat Purchase	Pearson Correlation	.591	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	335	335	

*S= Significant p<0.05

The statistical testing of hypothesis four demonstrated a moderate positive link between online advertising and repeat purchases, shown by a correlation coefficient of r = 0.591 (59.1%). The null hypothesis, which posits no significant association between online advertising and repeat purchases in online retail outlets in Port Harcourt, was rejected, whereas the alternative hypothesis was accepted [(P = .000) p < 0.05].

Hypothesis 5: There is no significant relationship between online advertising and referrals in online retail stores in Port Harcourt

Table 3. Relationship between online advertising and referrals

Correlations		Online Advertizing	Referrals	Decision
Online Advertizing	Pearson Correlation	1	-.741	Rejected
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.006	
	N	335	335	
Referrals	Pearson Correlation	-.741	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006		
	N	335	335	

*S= Significant p<0.05

In the statistical analysis of hypothesis five, a significant negative connection was identified between online advertising and referrals, shown by a correlation coefficient of r = -0.741 (74.1%). The null hypothesis, asserting no significant association between online advertising and referrals in online retail establishments in Port Harcourt, was rejected, whereas the alternative hypothesis was accepted [(P = .006) p < 0.05].

Hypothesis 6: There is no significant relationship between online advertising and brand loyalty in online retail stores in Port Harcourt

Table 4. Relationship between online advertising and brand loyalty

Correlations		Online Advertizing	Brand Loyalty	Decision
Online Advertizing	Pearson Correlation	1	.811	Rejected
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	
	N	335	335	
Brand Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	.811	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	335	335	

*S= Significant p<0.05

The statistical analysis of hypothesis six demonstrated a robust positive link between online advertising and brand loyalty, shown by a correlation coefficient of r = 0.811 (81.1%). The null hypothesis, which posits no significant association between online advertising and brand loyalty in online retail outlets in Port Harcourt, was rejected, whereas the alternative hypothesis was accepted [(P = .006) p < 0.05].

3. Results

The following findings were identified:

There was a very moderate positive relationship between online advertising and repeat purchase in online retail stores in Port Harcourt [r = 0.591 (59.1%)]

There was a very strong negative relationship between online advertising and referrals in online retail stores in Port Harcourt [r = -0.741 (74.1%)].

There was a very strong positive relationship between online advertising and brand loyalty in online retail stores in Port Harcourt [r = 0.811 (81.1%)].

4. Discussion

Findings from this study revealed a moderate positive relationship between online advertizing and repeat purchase, thus, there was significant relationship between online advertizing and repeat purchase in online retail stores in Port Harcourt. This result corresponds with the findings of Elisa and Gordini (2014) who studied digital marketing metrics: theoretic aspects, empirical evidence and effectiveness of digital communication on 235 Italian firms. The result revealed that good online advertising has a positive effect on repeat purchase. Also, Yang et al., (2019) conducted empirical study on the impact of short video marketing on consumer's repeat purchase. The result shows that there is a strong significant correlation among knowledge, interest and emotional short video in enhancing repeat purchase from customers.

Findings from this study revealed a strong negative relationship between online advertizing and referrals, furthermore, there was significant relationship between online advertizing and referrals in online retail stores in Port Harcourt. This agrees with the findings of Bezbaruah & Trivedi (2020) who wrote on branded content; a bridge building generation z customers' relationship. The study investigated effect of branded online videos on generation z customers. The result shows that information branded online video have a strong significant effect on brand attitude which further result into customer referral. Also, Weerasinghe (2018) empirically examined the impact of digital marketing towards the customer online engagement in Sri Lanka. The results indicated a favorable association between digital marketing platforms and online engagement. Milhinhos (2015) examined the influence of digital marketing on the attitudes and purchasing behavior of online consumers. The situation of video lessons and user-generated digital content in Brazil. The study findings indicated that digital marketing on commercial product sites is relevant and positively influences customer attitudes and referrals.

This research demonstrated a robust positive correlation between online advertising and brand loyalty; however, it found no significant association between online advertising and brand loyalty in online retail outlets in Port Harcourt. This outcome aligns with the research conducted by Khanderwa et al. (2018), which examined consumer satisfaction levels in digital marketing, focusing on retail websites in Delhi, India. The findings indicated that internet marketing significantly influences client loyalty. Adede, Kibera, and Owino (2017) conducted research on electronic marketing methods, competitive landscape, and the performance of telecommunications businesses in Kenya. The results indicated that e-marketing had a substantial correlation with organizational success. The research indicated that the competitive environment substantially influences the link between e-marketing and organizational success

5. Conclusion

The study concluded that online advertising played a pivotal role in influencing repeat purchase, referrals, and brand loyalty among customers in online retail stores in Port Harcourt. It was observed that online advertising had a moderate positive relationship with repeat purchase, indicating that customers who engaged with online advertisements were more likely to make repeated purchases. This emphasised the effectiveness of online marketing strategies in fostering customer retention and driving sales.

However, the study revealed a strong negative relationship between online advertising and referrals, despite the significant influence of online advertising on customer engagement. This suggested that while online advertisements could enhance brand exposure and customer interaction, they might not directly encourage customers to refer

the brand to others. In terms of brand loyalty, a strong positive relationship was identified, underscoring the importance of online advertising in building lasting customer relationships. While online advertising positively influenced loyalty, the findings highlighted a complex dynamic where the significance of its impact varied. Thus, the study demonstrated that online advertising significantly contributed to shaping customer behavior and attitudes, but its effectiveness varied across different dimensions. Businesses were encouraged to optimize their advertising strategies to strengthen repeat purchases, referrals, and loyalty.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were stated:

Instagram is a digital application for sharing images. The program targets consumers seeking visually appealing photographs. Therefore, online retail platforms are advised to provide appealing and detailed photos and designs to enhance product information.

In posting informative advertisements on Facebook on a company, online retail companies should use high-quality advertisements with distinctive designs, while eschewing unneeded savings or low-quality commercials, as they may constitute anti-advertising and diminish brand value.

Customers need to be polled everyday to get recommendations for enhancing online retail operations and service delivery. This will replace the obsolete suggestion bins. Upon completion, online retail enterprises should use this to enhance framework trust and foster improved connections that will result in loyalty.

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