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**INFLUENCE OF ONLINE CUSTOMERS' FEED-
BACKS AND REVIEWS ON CONSUMERS'
PURCHASING DECISIONS AMONG
RESIDENTS OF ENUGU-SOUTH LGA:
A STUDY OF JUMIA NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of online customers' feedbacks and reviews on consumers' purchasing decisions among residents of Enugu-South LGA with focus on Jumia Nigeria. The study was anchored on the Uses and Gratification theory while survey was adopted as the research design. The population of the study were residents in Enugu-South LGA which is 267,300 while the sample size of 384 was drawn using the Australian calculator. Using the multi-stage sampling technique, the researchers were able to distribute the copies of questionnaire to the selected respondents in the LGA. Findings from this study revealed that residents in Enugu South at an average mean of 1.8(N=380) have positive and favourable attitudes toward online feedbacks and reviews on Jumia's marketing site. Online reviews and feedbacks on Jumia were found to be very important for customers buying decision-making at an average mean of 2.6(N=380). Customers depend on comments and opinions from other customers to purchase a product or not; therefore, it has a strong influence on their purchase decisions. Result analysis also indicated that at an average mean value of 2.7 (N=380) trust, popularity and credibility of customers' making reviews and feedbacks were factors that influence respondents' purchasing behavior. Following the findings, the study recommends that customers should engage more often in writing and reading feedbacks

and reviews on online stores. Also customers should make credible comments as opposed to misleading and exaggerated reviews so that potential customers can form the right attitudes towards a product. It further recommends that sellers should improve their product and service delivery to get positive reviews and feedback from customers.



INTRODUCTION

Several scholars have agreed that technological developments have improved communication and information dissemination in recent times (Nazmine, Khalid, Aemen, Chishti & Tareen, 2021; Shonhe & Jain, 2017). These scholars believe that the evolution of technology has impacted the society and changed the lives of people in far-reaching ways. These advancements in technology according to Nazmine *et al.* (2021) birthed what is known as the “New Media” which constitute all social media platform that allows people to interact and share information.

The rise of social media is reflected in all aspects of life including in the sales of goods and services giving birth to digital marketing. The main objective of digital marketing is to attract customers and allow them interact with the brand through digital media (Ighomereho & Ofunre 2019). Interestingly, today, people can sit in the comfort of their homes and purchase products online without going through the stress of working in a shop or a super market.

Evidently, consumers share their marketing experiences through the various social media platform. They talk about the products they purchase and the experience they encounter during the buying process which might be favourable or unfavourable. Companies have adopted the use of customers’ reviews and feedback to ascertain people’s perception about their product (Eze, Nnabuko & Etuk, 2014; Zu & Zhang, 2010).

Jumia is arguably being one of Nigeria's top digital marketplace and online e-commerce platform that enables consumers to order products from anywhere (Oyesola, 2021). The company which started operation in 2012 allows customers to make reviews and share their thoughts about certain products purchased (Jumia, 2021). This is in order to develop a good product experience and for customers to get the right value for their money. Also, apart from writing feedbacks, there's a section for star ratings where customers can rate a product from 1-to 5 based on their experience (Jumia, 2020).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The development of the Internet according to Zhu and Zang (2010) has created opportunities for customers to share their experiences through reviews and feedbacks. Jumia is one of the many online and mobile shops allow customers to review, give feedbacks and rate products purchased on their website (Jumia, 2021). Additionally, there have been studies carried out on the effect of online marketing on the behaviour of consumers (Ogonna, Okolo, Nebo & Ojieze, 2017) and factors influencing consumer intention

to shop online in Nigeria (Usman & Kumar, 2020) nonetheless, only a few studies have been conducted in the area of online customers' feedbacks and online reviews in Nigeria and how it impacts consumers' purchase behaviour. It is against this backdrop that this study sought to examine the influence of online customers' feedbacks and reviews on consumers' purchase decisions in Enugu-South.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent are residents of Enugu South exposed to feedbacks and reviews on Jumia?
2. What is the attitude of residents in Enugu South towards online feedbacks and reviews on Jumia?
3. To what extent do online reviews and feedbacks on Jumia services influence customers to patronize Jumia products and services?
4. What factors determine the influence of online reviews and feedbacks of Jumia services on customers' purchasing decisions?

ONLINE PRODUCT REVIEWS AND FEEDBACKS

Several authorities in the marketing and communications field have argued that technological advancement has changed the communication landscape such that customers and marketers are beginning to involve in online marketing activities such as advertising (Onwude, Onyebuchi, Obayi & Okafor, 2021).

Before the advent of the Internet, consumers sought the opinion of other consumers through face-to-face communication before they expose themselves to a particular brand (Pollach, 2006). Evidently, advances in technology have allowed various businesses which Jumia is part of to reach a wider audience as well as allow buyers to search for products online and give their feedbacks on the product (Olasanmi, 2019). Online customers' feedback and review as defined by Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh & Gremler (2004) is any positive or negative statement made by customers about a product or company, which is made available to people through the internet; with this potential consumer would make purchase or not.

Furthermore, Shaddha and Nilesh (2021) argued that online reviews and feedbacks can be grouped into three stages namely; creation, exposure and evaluation. For Ojiaku and Anayo (2017) online reviews include narrative text, comments and star ratings usually ranging from one to five. For instance, when we visit certain websites of brands, we are often asked to rate a product or service based on our experience; a times, we are requested to give star ratings.



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CONSUMER PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR/DECISION

According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2004) and Solomon, Bamossy, Askegarrrd and Hogg (2006), consumer behavior can be defined as the behaviour that consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating, and disposing of products and services that they expect will satisfy their needs. In other words, consumer behaviour is concerned with the stages consumers go through in order to identify, select, buy, and use a product or service based on their wants. Dada (2021) established that the purchase behaviour of consumers influences their purchasing decision. The author noted that customers' needs are influenced by their family and friends, attitude, belief, financial status and their choice.

According to Oyesola (2021) Jumia is an online e-commerce platform that enables consumers to order products from anywhere they are (Oyesola, 2021). The company which started operation in 2012 allows customers to make reviews and share their thoughts about certain products purchased. This is in order to develop a good product experience and for customers to get the right value for their money (Jumia 2021).

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Several scholars have researched online customers' feedbacks and reviewed consumers' purchase behaviour. Among the studies was done by Ojiaku and Anayo (2017) on the impact of online consumer reviews on patronage intention towards Internet retailers in Nigeria. The study discovered that review valance and positive reviews affect the purchase behaviour of consumers. Shraddha and Nilesh (2021) established that online feedbacks affects consumers and influences their purchase decision process. Before customers make purchases, they first check reviews from other customers and that positive reviews are important for every industry.

Eze, Nnabuko and Etuk (2014) stated that online comments of customers have a strong impact on brand awareness, association and brand loyalty. The researcher established that a favourable brand experience could lead to positive comments online. On their part Chen and Xie (2004) agrees that information made by consumers help other customers in finding products that match their preferences. Further analysis indicated that online reviews made by customers prevent marketers from controlling the information about a product.

This study shares similarities with that of Chen & Xie (2004) as they both focus on online feedbacks and reviews. Secondly, they both utilized similar survey research designs. However, Chen and Xie (2004) used the agency theory.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study employed the Uses and Gratification Theory which was propounded by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumer and Micheal Gurevitch in 1974. The theory explains that the media audience uses the media for their personal needs and based on their belief. That is, the audience consumes messages they want to consume as opposed to the media dictating what the audience consumes (Anaeto, Onabajo & Osifeso, 2012).

In relation to the study, consumers have the privilege to make online reviews and feedback after purchase as well as view online comments concerning products. For example, if the need of a student is to purchase a textbook, a student uses the online media not to search for daily news and information placed by new agencies but to search for a textbook of his or her choice. In the same vein, customers use the media to interact with each other concerning an online product as against other functions; hence, their messages and interaction have a way of influencing their decisions as against advertising and placement of products by the media.

METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted in this study was the Survey Design because it is suitable to get the opinion of respondents. The population of the study comprises residents in Enugu-South Local Government Area which according to National Population Commission report of 2016 is 267,300. Sample size of 384 respondents was drawn using the Australian Bureau of Statistics Sample Size Calculator while the multi-stage sampling technique was used in the selection of respondents from the Enugu-South Local Government who purchase products from Jumia online stores. The selected districts from Enugu-South were Ugwuaji, Amechi, Akuke, Obeagu and Awkunanaw. The researcher employed the use of questionnaire for data collection which was face validated by an expert. The instrument for this study was termed reliable after a comparison experiment was done using the test re-test method. Data presented were analyzed using tables, frequencies, simple percentages and mean score.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The researcher administered 384 copies of the questionnaires to respondents. however only 380 (98.9%) copies were returned valid for this study, while 4 (1.0%) were invalid and thus nullified as a result of improper responses from respondents. Seemingly, the data analysis for this study was based on the retrieved 380 copies of the questionnaire representing 98.9%.

Research Question One: What is the extent to which residents in Enugu South are exposed to feedbacks and reviews on Jumia?

To answer this research question, the table below presented views of respondents on their exposure to feedbacks and reviews on Jumia.

Table 1: Respondents view on their exposure to feedbacks and reviews on Jumia

Option	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Decision
I am aware of product reviews and feedbacks by Jumia customers online	108	201	51	20	380	3.0	Accepted
I have seen product reviews and feedbacks by Jumia customers online	154	179	32	15	380	3.2	Accepted
I always read product reviews and feedbacks from Jumia customers whenever I visit Jumia online store to purchase any product	169	149	10	52	380	3.1	Accepted
I do not really read product reviews and feedbacks by Jumia customers online whenever I want to make online purchases	33	64	205	78	380	2.1	Rejected
Average Mean						2.8	Accepted

Source: Field Survey 2022

Criterion Mean = 2.5

Decision Rule: If the calculated mean, is greater than or equal to the benchmark, the decision is accepted but if the calculated mean is less than the benchmark, the decision is rejected.

From the data analysis above, result revealed that residents in Enugu South are highly exposed to feedbacks and reviews on Jumia. First, the majority of respondents agree that they are aware of Jumia reviews and feedbacks and they often see reviews and feedbacks from other customers. Secondly, before they purchase any product on the site, they are pushed to check reviews and feedbacks made by other customers.

Research Question Two: What is the attitude of residents in Enugu South towards online feedbacks and reviews on Jumia?

The table below answered the question on the attitude of residents of Enugu-South towards online feedbacks and reviews on Jumia.

Table 2: Respondents opinion on their attitude towards online feedbacks and reviews on Jumia

Option	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Decision
I consider customers' reviews and feedbacks about products on Jumia online stores as very useful and informative to guide my purchasing decisions	223	107	48	12	380	3.4	Accepted
I do not consider customers' reviews and feedbacks about products on Jumia online stores as useful and necessary	-	52	128	200	380	1.6	Rejected
I believe that customers' reviews and feedbacks about products on Jumia online stores may be subject to manipulation by Jumia. So, I do not bother considering them while making purchasing decisions	52	-	146	182	380	1.0	Rejected
Customers' reviews and feedbacks about products on Jumia online stores may be biased. So, I do not bother considering them while making purchasing decisions	26	26	130	198	380	1.9	Rejected
Average Mean						1.8	Rejected

Source: Field Survey 2022

Criterion Mean = 2.5

Decision Rule: If the calculated mean is equal to or greater than bench mark, the decision is accepted but if the calculated mean is less than the bench mark, the decision is rejected.

The previous table showed that residents of Enugu-South find reviews and feedbacks on Jumia useful and informative in guiding the purchase decision on what to purchase or not. They do not agree that such reviews are manipulative and biased.

Research Question Three: To what extent do online reviews and feedbacks on Jumia services move customers to patronize Jumia products and services?

To answer this research question, the table below presented views of respondents on the extent at which online reviews and feedbacks on Jumia services move customers to patronize them.

Table 3: Respondents' response on how feedbacks and reviews on Jumia move customers to patronize Jumia services

Option	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Decision
I am moved to purchase a product on Jumia because of the positive reviews and feedbacks by satisfied customers	180	140	48	12	380	3.2	Accepted
I will purchase what I need to purchase on Jumia online stores regardless of whether customers' reviews and feedbacks are positive or negative	40	19	109	212	380	1.7	Rejected
I have purchased a product I needed from Jumia online stores despite negative reviews and feedbacks by some customers	47	205	113	15	380	2.5	Accepted
I have decided not to go ahead and purchase a product I needed from Jumia online stores because of negative reviews and feedbacks by customers	200	146	5	29	380	3.3	Accepted
Average Mean						2.6	Accepted

Source: Field Survey 2022

Criterion Mean = 2.5

Decision Rule: If the calculated mean is equal to or greater than bench mark, the decision is accepted but if the calculated mean is less than the bench mark, the decision is rejected.

Result from table 3 indicated that customers are pushed to purchase a product on Jumia based on the positive reviews and feedbacks by satisfied customers. More so, they do

not agree with the notion that they will purchase Jumia products regardless of whether customers' reviews and feedbacks are positive or negative. However, they agree that they have decided not to go ahead and purchase a product from Jumia as a result of poor reviews.



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Research Question Four: What factors determine the influence of online reviews and feedbacks on Jumia services on customers' purchase decisions?

The table presented below answer the question on the factors that determine the influence of online reviews and feedbacks on Jumia services on customers' purchase decision.

Respondents' view on factors that influence review and feedbacks on Jumia services on customers' purchasing decisions.

Option	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Decision
The popularity and credibility of the customers who made reviews and feedbacks about products on Jumia online stores can determine how such reviews may affect my purchasing decision	178	456	56	22	380	3.2	Accepted
Once I see a negative review about a product on Jumia online stores, I will not purchase the product even when the feedback is from an unknown person	166	121	80	13	380	2.8	Accepted
If there are more positive reviews and few negative reviews about a product on Jumia online stores, I will go ahead and purchase the product	163	146	42	29	380	3.1	Accepted
One or few negative comments about a product on Jumia online stores will turn me off from purchasing the product even when there are many positive feedbacks on the same product	7	21	217	135	380	1.7	Rejected
I will take feedbacks from personal friends, family and colleagues about products on Jumia online stores more seriously than I would take online feedbacks from people I do not know	142	114	72	52	380	3.2	Accepted
Average Mean						2.7	Accepted

Source: Field Survey 2022

Criterion Mean = 2.5

Decision Rule: If the calculated mean is equal to or greater than bench mark, the decision is accepted but if the calculated mean is less than the bench mark, the decision is rejected.

Analysis of data revealed that respondents' buying decision is determined by the popularity and credibility of the customer making reviews. This is why respondents are more likely to purchase a product with reviews from family members, friends or colleagues. They also agreed that they will purchase a product with more positive reviews and few negative comments. However, they also accepted the assertion that they do not purchase a product once they come across negative a review from unknown customers.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The extent to which residents in Enugu South are exposed to feedbacks and reviews on Jumia.

The result from the mean analysis on the above statement shows that residents in Enugu-South are highly exposed to feedbacks and reviews on Jumia by the average mean of 2.8(N=380) as the majority of the respondents agree that they are aware of product feedbacks and reviews by Jumia customers online. It also revealed that they come across and read product reviews and feedbacks about Jumia online and this influence their purchasing behaviour. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Ojiaku & Anayo (2017) that indicated that people often come across reviews and feedbacks and which affects the behaviour of customers.

The attitude of residents in Enugu South towards online feedbacks and reviews on Jumia

Communicating result from data analysis, it was revealed that at an average mean of 1.8(N=380) the attitude of respondents towards online feedbacks and reviews on Jumia is relatively positive. This is because the respondents consider customers' reviews and feedbacks about products on Jumia online stores as very useful, necessary and informative when they want to make a purchase decision. Similarly, they disagree that those customers' comments about products on Jumia online stores may be subject to manipulation or bias by Jumia. This shows that they have a positive perception and acceptance of reviews and feedbacks.

Corroborating this result, Shaddha & Nilesh (2021) discovered that consumers have a positive disposition towards online reviews and feedbacks as they first check feedbacks before they purchase any product. Chen & Xie (2004) also maintained that people who purchase products online often look at reviews and feedbacks before they go-ahead to purchase the product. This implies that customers' reviews have an influence on their attitude and behaviour.



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The extent to which online feedbacks and reviews on Jumia influence customers to patronize Jumia services

Further analysis of data indicated that at an average mean of 2.6(N=380), the extent to which online feedbacks and reviews on Jumia influence customers to patronize Jumia services was very high. This tells that reviews have a high stronghold on the purchase intention of respondents. Majority of the respondents do not agree that they will purchase products whether reviews are positive or negative.

The study of Ojiaku & Anayo (2017) agrees with the findings as it established that reviews affect the purchase intention of consumers. It also discovered that positive reviews affect the purchase behaviour of consumers. Chen & Xie (2004) also supported this stand by maintaining that the information made by consumers help other customers in finding products that match their preference. Hence, consumers view reviews and feedbacks from other customers as they are necessary to know and purchase products that they find useful. In the same vein, Shaddha & Nilesh (2021) noted that consumers are active participants in sharing opinions about the advantage and disadvantage of a product.

The factors that determine the influence of reviews and feedbacks on Jumia services on customers' purchasing decisions

Result from data analysis revealed that at a mean value of 2.7 (N=380) trust, popularity and credibility of customers' making reviews and feedbacks are factors that influence respondents' purchasing behaviour. Raham et al., (2020) and Shin (2007) supporting this finding argued that the higher the credibility of a source, the positive attitude formed towards a products. That is, customers trust can positively increase customer purchase intention. Therefore, when people who make reviews make truthful and credible reviews, customers' purchase behaviour are more likely to be influenced.

CONCLUSION

The rise of technology has allowed for buying and selling taking place online via various platforms and this concept has allowed people to share their opinions about products and services. From the analysis of the data generated from this study, the obvious conclusion is that the influence of online reviews and feedbacks on the purchase behaviour of residents in Enugu South is very high. The analysis shows that residents have a high disposition towards online feedbacks and reviews as they constantly view comments from other customers before they purchase a product. This means that the opinions or comments from other customers influence their choice of purchase. In addition, a good number of customers find online reviews and feedbacks very helpful and prefer to read reviews and feedbacks from other customers before making a purchase.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following are recommended:

- Since customers' exposure level towards online feedbacks and reviews is high, they should continue to engage in writing and reading reviews and feedbacks in online stores. This will spur sellers and manufacturers to improve their products based on the reviews and feedbacks from customers.
- From a brand perspective, since customers have a positive attitude towards online reviews, brands should ensure they address negative reviews and feedbacks as fast as possible to avoid consumers having an in favorable attitude towards a product.
- Since online feedbacks and reviews are important in influencing the purchase behaviour of customers, brands should improve their product and service delivery to get positive reviews and feedbacks from customers to maintain customer loyalty and improve sales.
- Customers should know they have a unique role to play by ensuring that they make truthful and credible reviews so that other buyers will not be misled. Customers should also desist from making exaggerated comments about products so that subsequent and potential customers can form the right attitude towards a product.



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