

INTERNET-MEDIATING MARKETING AND SOCIO- SECURITY OF YOUTHS NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study examined internet mediating marketing and socio security of youths in Rivers State, Nigeria. The explanatory survey research design was adopted. The target population of this study was three thousand and five hundred (3,500) registered entrepreneurs engaged in e-information services across the twenty-three (23) Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria. The sample size comprised of three hundred and forty-six (346) respondents. This was obtainable using the Krejcie and Morgan Sample Size Determination of 1970. Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient was used for bivariate analyses (testing the hypotheses one to three). The findings revealed that internet mediating marketing positively influence and tends to promote socio-economic security in terms of financial security (steady income generation, income multiplicity, ample saving culture & sufficient emergency fund balance). The research therefore, recommended that government should encourage youths who are e-information service provider by supplying them with steady power supply.

Keywords: Internet Mediating Marketing Social Security, Steady Income.

INTRODUCTION

The researcher's observation of the business/entrepreneurial trend in Rivers State also attests to the fact that the level of awareness and engagement in internet-driven entrepreneurial activities appears to be very low. Apart from Port Harcourt City and Obio-Akpor Local Government Areas where there are a few notable centres of netpreneurship activities (Garisson Computer Village, MTN Computer Village, and the tertiary institutions), netpreneurial engagement appears to be very scanty across the remaining 21 Local Government Areas of the State. The researcher also observed that there are skeletal appearances of entrepreneurship set-ups in the Headquarters of each of the Local Government Areas (which are little more urbanized than the rural areas which are grossly underdeveloped). It is not surprising to see that netpreneurship engagement is still at a low pace across the State in view of the low level of digital literacy, power supply, and network condition in the state and Nigeria at large. Instead of giving priority attention to building the digital capabilities of the citizens and the environment for more netpreneurial small scale businesses to spring up, Government and politicians appear to be more interested in giving peanuts to the hungry and stranded masses in the name of financial empowerment programmes. This has left the average Rivers State resident to live from hand to mouth not knowing how to leverage on internet resources for entrepreneurship advantage.

Internet-mediated marketing has expanded the boundaries of business from national to international as clients and customers from different continents meet to transact commercial activities. Nevertheless, the globalized world has provided netpreneurs the opportunity to have a internet-mediated marketing platforms as a business communication tool in common. By using this tool, the budget is not limited to the access to the platform but directly proportional to the scope of consumers they want to reach and therefore, the investments they are enabled to undertake ([Krskova, 2017](#)). Consumer behavior is a key factor to determine the value they are acquiring throughout the purchasing process from the "consideration stage", all along until the "purchase". If it turns out that consumers get value from its purchase, then the possibility of creating loyalty increases. This can be promptly addressed through the adoption of internet-mediated marketing practices by organizations. Internet-mediated marketing platforms such as whatsapp based,

facebook based, websites and e-payment services have to be structured and led by what the enterprise wants to communicate, otherwise its outcome will be inefficient and the tool obsolete (Rhein, 2017). When using an internet-mediated marketing strategy, the company needs to build a structured framework. The strategy should be implemented once the institution knows what it wants to communicate and the market to which it is directed. According to Bruyn (2008), internet marketing has four main aspects that are found in a business platform: Web/mobile marketing, Search Engine Optimization (SEO), social networks, and Customer Relationship Management (CRM). However, for the purpose of this study, the researcher considered whatsapp based marketing, facebook marketing, use of websites and electronic payment services as further step of internet-mediated marketing practices.

Hypothesis

Ho₁: Internet-mediated marketing practices do not have any significant influence on social security of youths in Rivers State.

Internet Mediated Marketing Practices

According to Gronroos in Geiger and Martin (2014) the relationship marketing at an operational level rests on three cornerstones: direct contact with customers and other stakeholders, a database to store customer information, and a customer-oriented service system. Each of these practices can be supported by the internet; consequently, it is argued that the internet could offer a unique opportunity for firms to put into practice relationship marketing. Thus, Western civilization proliferate the use of internet to market activities of an organization. Notably, due to the rapid increase in usage of internet, more and more organizations are beginning to transfer parts of their business transactions and communications to the web. Although the new technology still displays some serious limitations such as the notorious bandwidth problem, missing transnational policies and the security issue of electronic transactions, to name but a few, the world wide web is bound to occupy a central place in tomorrow's business world. Reasons being, it is premeditated to serve customers and companies' visitors effectively and efficiently. To this end, internet-mediated marketing practices came to being.

In line with the above, internet-mediated marketing is the innovative practice of reaching customers and selling goods and services through the aid of dedicated websites, social media platforms, and e-payment systems. Among other internet mediated marketing tools, netpreneurs here make use of Whatsapp, Facebook, Websites and Electronic Payment platforms to reach out to both prospective and existing customers. Goods and services are being traded here. Complaints and other customer related issues are communicated on this platform as prompt redresses are offered to customers. With this platform, one does not need to go to the physical office (building) where the business is situated. All that is expected of the customer or client as the case may be is just to have dealings with the organization through an internet-mediated mechanism. The internet and its related technologies enable organizations to easily access information about customers, competition and to share innovative ideas from various sources beyond spatial and temporal boundaries (Min, Seokwoo & James, 2012). Thus, the Internet can acts as a transformer of the traditional marketing practices into a more efficient and effective internet marketing orientation process in the Internet-mediated marketing environment through both generative learning and adaptive learning.

Internet-mediated marketing are aimed at telling entrepreneurs how to go about establishing a place in the cyber market space. Netpreneurial driven individuals have envisaged the potentialities of reaching to customers and organizational claimants at ease through the adoption of internet as a folk stick to strive in business. Of course, recently it has been observed that most organizations whose presences are registered in the internet community make more money than their counterparts who do not operate online amidst the pandemic corona virus (COVID 19) which has claimed thousands of lives across the globe. The internet is a medium that lends itself in various

aspects to use as a tool for relationship marketing (Geiger & Martin, 2014). The internet represents a physical network where the interaction between business partners can take place without major physical impediments, in real time and democratically, which among others are done through whatsapp, facebook and websites mediated marketing platforms. Here, the internet-mediated marketing applications present a medium where information costs are relatively low for both sides, especially when information searches are repeated, and communication costs are often insignificant. Netpreneurs use this as ideal medium to assist the communicational requirements of relationship management.

Furthermore, compared to more traditional marketing media such as advertising or direct mail, the internet enables the customer to initiate the communication, making her a more active part of the relationship. More so, as regards to websites, an internet-mediated marketing practice is perceived as leading to a more 'direct' relationship than traditional media, especially if email is integrated within a web site. Using the internet as a medium for service delivery can be enhanced through the usage of whatsapp, facebook and websites. For example customer care or after-sales support can significantly speed up service turnaround and enhance service delivery effectively. Cotter et al, (2015) emphasize that the internet-mediated marketing makes it possible to direct customers and partners to other members of the marketing network through so-called hyperlinks. Such a deliberate effort to connect network members can add further value to the business interaction. From a technological point of view, the internet makes it remarkably easy to capture up-to-date customer information at an often unprecedented level of detail, to store and retrieve this information in databases or data warehouses and to update it on a regular basis. More than other modes of communication, the internet can therefore play a focal role in a company's customer intelligence machinery, which in turn allows the company to develop a better understanding of customer requirements (Christodoulides & Jevons 2011; Min et al, 2012).

With the proliferation and rampant use of internet-enabled gadgets and the growing need for people to transact businesses over the internet, a lot of netpreneurship opportunities might be lying untapped by citizens and residents of Rivers State, Nigeria. It is quite disturbing that inspite of such opportunities, many citizens and residents of Rivers State still live under constant fear and uncertainty about their socio-economic circumstance. It is possible that some smart minds are already tapping into such opportunities but we are not to find empirical explanation of how netpreneurship has impacted on socio-economic security in Rivers State, Nigeria. Google search by the researcher shows that the relationship between netpreneurship and socio-economic security in Rivers State is grossly understudied. This is the gap in literature which the present study seeks to close.

Social Security

Traditionally, social security denotes any government system that provides monetary assistance to people with an inadequate or no income (David, 2003). Merriam Webster dictionary refers to it as the principle or practice or a program of public provision (as through social insurance or assistance) for the economic security and social welfare of the individual and his or her family. This implies that it can be tied to an individual, household, community or society as large. Kagan (2020) views it as a term used for the [Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance \(OASDI\)](#) program in the United States, run by the Social Security Administration (SSA), which is a federal agency. While best known for retirement benefits, [it also provides survivor benefits](#) and disability income. It is independent of a lump-sum pension. The ILO (2013c) defines social security as the protection that a society provides to individuals and households to ensure access to health care and to guarantee income security, particularly in cases of old age, unemployment, sickness, invalidity, work injury, maternity or loss of a breadwinner. Social security may be seen as any programme of social protection established by legislation, or any other mandatory arrangement, that provides individuals with a degree of income security when faced with the contingencies of old age, survivorship,

incapacity, disability, unemployment or rearing children. It may also offer access to curative or preventive medical care (ww1.issa.int). None of the above definitions clearly defines the abstraction the researcher is trying to paint in this work. The definitions of social security as delineated by aforementioned authors have been able to highlight the fact that social security is tied to economic security and social welfare of the individual. This does not fit in this study. Hence, the researcher defines social security as the sense of relative peace and safety as evidenced by serious decrease in incidents of kidnapping, rape, youth restiveness, and drug abuse. The researcher's definitive concern among others is how often individuals are socially secured in terms of kidnap, rape, youth restiveness and drug abuse. This implies that an individual might be socially secured in terms of health care, guaranteed income security particularly in cases of old age, unemployment, sickness, invalidity, work injury, maternity or loss of a breadwinner, yet he is prone to vices such as kidnap, rape, restiveness, drug abuse and human trafficking. Therefore, he or she is socially unsecured. Social security deals with the maximization of peace and safety in their society and how well they are protected from the direct or indirect indulgence in kidnap, rape, restiveness and drug abuse. When individuals emancipate from such vices, then they are said to be socially secured. According to Ewilly et al (2014) social vices such as habits or behaviours of immoral activities are not good for human existence. Illicit practices such as cultism, robbery, ritual killing, kidnapping, smoking and drug peddling etc. create fears to individuals in societies, thus giving them the sense of insecurity especially when they are unable to curtail them.

Reduction in Kidnapping Rate

Asuquo (2009) noted that the term "kidnapping" is difficult to define with precision, because it varies from State to State and jurisdiction to jurisdiction. It is the forcible seizure, taking away and unlawful detention of a person against his/her will. It is a common law offence and the key part is that, it is an unwanted act on the part of the victim. It is a restriction of someone else's liberty which violates the provision of freedom of movement as enshrined in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, where every other law takes its cue from. Thus, it is a social insecurity element existing in the society. Abraham (2013) defined kidnapping as an act of seizing, taking away and keeping a person in custody either by force or fraud. However, it includes snatching and seizing of a person in order to collect a ransom in return or settle some scores of disagreement among people.

Reduction in Restiveness

The English Dictionary defines restiveness as impatient under delay, duress or control; refusing to move, especially in a forward direction. It is also the perpetration of disorder in a given circumstance or society. This act is mostly domiciled among youth in the society. Youth restiveness is the extreme form of deviant behaviour among youth which is socially unacceptable in any society. Youth restiveness involves the combination of actions, behaviours, attitudes exhibited by youths which are socially unacceptable and unwholesome in the society (Igbo & Ikpa 2013). Similarly, Elegbeleye (2005) views it from the angle as a "sustained protestation embarked upon to enforce desired outcome from a constituted authority by organized body of youths". It is accompanied by disruption of law, conflict and violence. The common features of these organized bodies of youth are the resort to violence, and one would agree that their activities posed great challenges to the security of the country. The violent nature of these youth activities has been responsible for the wanton destruction of valuable infrastructures, kidnapping and loss of lives.

Reduction in Drug Abuse

Drug abuse or substance abuse refers to the use of certain chemicals for the purpose of creating pleasurable effects on the brain (Ananya, 2019). The National Cancer Institute dictionary refers to drug abuse as the use of illegal drugs or the use of prescription or over-the-counter drugs for purposes other than those for which they are meant to be used, or in large amounts. Drug abuse may lead to social, physical, emotional, and job-related problems. To this end, we define reduction

in drug abuse as a decline in how often people take drinks and other substances that makes them misbehave. Drugs of abuse are usually psychoactive drugs that are used by people for various different reasons which may include:

1. Curiosity and peer pressure, especially among school children and young adults
2. The use of prescription drugs that were originally intended to target pain relief may have turned into recreational use and become addictive
3. Chemicals may be used as part of religious practices or rituals
4. Recreational purposes
5. As a means of obtaining creative inspiration.

Need for Achievement Theory

Need for achievement theory was propounded by McClelland in 1961. It is a well-known need-based theory of motivation, as opposed to hierarchy of needs or satisfaction-dissatisfaction.

The theory states that human beings have a need to succeed, accomplish, excel or achieve. Also, need for achievement is the desire to obtain excellent results by setting high standards and striving to accomplish them. It is a consistent concern with doing things better. According to Sinha (2015), McClelland identified the following six characteristics of high need achievers:

1. High-need achievers have a strong desire to assume personal responsibilities for performing a task or finding a solution to a problem.
2. High need achievers tend to set moderately difficult goals and take calculated risks.
3. High need achievers have a strong desire for performance feedback.
4. They have need for achievement for attaining personal accomplishment.
5. They look for challenging tasks.
6. The high need-achievement individuals are not buck-passers.

The need for achievement is satisfied [intrinsically](#) with a feeling of personal accomplishment when getting something done in the world. Thus, the concept is quite broad and can be applied in most circumstances. For instance, in a culture that values well-being or [human development](#), an individual may feel achievement by bringing about greater levels of achievement in other individuals in the society. Evidence for the theory seems fairly strong, with [meta-analyses](#) confirming a positive relationship between need for achievement and netpreneurship entry and performance (socio-economic security). There is also meta-analytic evidence that the need for achievement is stronger in entrepreneurs (netpreneurs) than in managers (Steward & Roth, 2007). Thus, netpreneurs are driven by this need to achieve and excel amidst today's technological driven era where netpreneurial businesses are infusing the business world. While there is no research evidence to support personality traits, there is evidence for the relationship between achievement motivation and netpreneurship (Finogenow, 2017). Achievement motivation may be the only convincing personological factor related to new venture creation which is not far-fetched from netpreneurship. Risk taking and innovativeness, need for achievement, and tolerance for ambiguity had positive and significant influence on netpreneurial inclination, as it involves e-business (e-information services, software services and internet-mediated marketing practices) through the aid of internet for business activities while enhancing socio-economic security.

METHODOLOGY

The explanatory survey research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study consisted of consisted of Three Thousand and Five Hundred (3,500) registered entrepreneurs engaged in e-information services across the twenty-three (23) Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria. The sample size of the study was three hundred and forty-six (346) respondents. This was obtainable using the Krejcie and Morgan Sample Size Determination of 1970. Thus, bivariate analysis was done using Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient through SPSS.

Results

Ho₁: Internet-mediated marketing practices do not have any significant influence on social security of youths in Rivers State.

Table 1 Correlations of Internet-Mediated Marketing Practices and Socio Security

		Internet-Mediated Marketing Practices	Social Security			
Spearman's rho	Internet-Mediated Marketing Practices	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.412**	.888*	.776**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	320	320	320	320
	Social Security	Correlation Coefficient	.412**	1.000	.775**	.776**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	320	320	320	320
		Correlation Coefficient	.888	.775**	.024	.627**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
		N	320	320	320	320
		Correlation Coefficient	.776**	.776**	.627**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	320	320	320	320

**** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Source: SPSS Output.**

Column two of table above reveals r value of 0.412 at a significance level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating internet-mediated marketing practices and social security of youths. Since the significance value 0.00 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (Ho₁) which states that internet-mediated marketing practices do not have any significant influence on social security of youths in Rivers State is rejected and the alternate hypothesis (Ha₁) accepted. This implies that there is a moderate positive correlation between internet-mediated marketing practices and social security of youths in Rivers State. The correlation value of 0.412 indicates that the correlation is a moderate or relatively strong correlation.

Internet-mediated Marketing Practices and Socio-Economic Security

The test of hypothesis one revealed that **internet-mediated marketing practices** has high influence on socio security in terms of social security of youths in Rivers State. This finding showed that youth who practices internet-mediated marketing bring about corresponding socio-economic security in terms of social security of youths of youths in Rivers State. These findings are in agreement with the findings of Asuquo, (2009), In the course of netpreneurs doing their business, they pay attention in focusing on their activities, as such they are not inclined to permeate social insecurity such as rape, drug abuse, youth restiveness, kidnapping. With, such indulgence, reduction of such societal anomalies is said to reduce, hence promoting socio-economic security in terms of social security, financial security and job security of youths in Rivers State, Nigeria.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the analysis, the study concluded that internet-mediated marketing influences socio-security of youths in Rivers State. Internet-mediated marketing practices

(whatsapp-base marketing, facebook marketing, use of websites & electronic payment services) tends in promoting socio-economic security in terms of social security (reduction in rape, kidnapping, restiveness & drug abuse). Local Government Areas who fail to encourage youths who are internet-mediated marketing by steady power supply, granting loans and offering scholarship, might face the risk of increasing socio-economic insecurity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. The government of Rivers State and the federal government of Nigeria should create a fallowing environment for electronic information services such as big data analysis services, plagiarism tests services, and cybercafe services. This will help to meaningfully engage the youths and young adults, thereby enhancing reduction in rape, restiveness, kidnapping, and drug abuse, amongst others.
2. Whatsapp-based marketing, Facebook marketing, and electronic payment services should be utilized by youths in order to keep them meaningfully busy, ensuring social security, financial security, and job security.
3. Governments across states and the entire nation of Nigeria should organize free intensive netpreneurship trainings for youths and young adults, so as to drive their focus towards creating lasting netpreneurial businesses for themselves that are capable of ensuring job security, social security, and as well as social security.

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