

AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS ON E-TAILING AND CUSTOMER PATRONAGE: A PARTICULARS REFERENCE TO PORT HARCOURT MALL, RIVERS STATE - NIGERIA

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Abstract *The study empirically investigated the relationship between e-tailing influence and customer patronage with a particulars reference to Port Harcourt Mall, Rivers State – Nigeria. The study population comprised seventy (70) respondents from Port Harcourt shopping mall, also, Krejcie and Morgan, 1970 statistical techniques was adopted to determine the sample size of fifty - nine (59), and data for the study were collected through administered questionnaire, validity and reliability of the instrument were employed. Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient was adopted for the testing of the hypotheses with the assistance of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The result revealed that Business -to –consumer (B2C), Businesses -to –business (B2B), and Consumer -to –consumer (C2C) has significant positive relationship with customer patronage. The study concluded that e- tailing is progressively prevalent due to the suitability and its propositions to consumers and retailers. The study recommended that Government should provide enabling environment to facilitating e-tailing business as a digital technology for fastest and quickest means of purchasing, selling and delivering of goods and services. E-tailing firms should adopt the following e-tailing strategy such as social media platform to reach out target market to increase customer patronage. Firms that are into e-tailing business should improve on their mobile devices that can impact on customers which will affect positively on activities such as product display, product quality, prices and benefit visual display in order to increase firms customer patronage, entice new customer and retain existing customers.*

Keyword: e—tailing, customer patronage.

INTRODUCTION

Globally, invention and development of digital technology in the historical decade has impacted strongly in being's information dissemination and business operations including identifying business models and formation of novel business prototypes. The retail firms has also been influenced by the mounting marketable effect of the digital technology following in the development of e-retailing as currently the quickest and fastest developing adoption of Internet. According to Internet World Stats,(2014),brainchild of e-tailing platform have been persuading Business-to-Consumer (B2C), Business-to- Business(B2B), and Consumer- to- Consumer firms to participate in digital marketing is apparent in contemporary times .E-tailing as model change in marketing activities geared towards attaining firms profitability with the smallest conceivable cost (Ngo, 2015) cited in in Anwuri, and Haniel (2020).

According to Ganesh, *etal* (2010), Electronic tailing is a digital -based sales platform where consumers are able to purchase and vend products and services online directly from a business (firms) without physically checking the products and services In view of Orapin,(2009) cited in Anwuri, and Haniel (2020), e-tailing is application of digital platform for purchases and sales of products and services through online devices. Liao and Cheung (2001), further stressed that the purpose of e-tailing is to enable consumer achieve and improve more suitable replacements to brick and mortar store shopping.

Liu (2007), added that since the voyage of customers starts online, retailers originate a method to vend straight or directly from the Internet. In spite of Ha and Stoel (2009), e-tailing is very significant because it permits customers to purchase and sell products and services at any time

or period and provide shopping experience including providing fastest and quickest shopping experience.

Many firms today operate through the application of e-tailing technology such as Port Harcourt shopping mall Konga, Jumia, EBay, Amazon, etc the purposes of firms adopting e-tailing devices was to provide shopping experience to the customer for availability of variety of products and services, convenient, fast and quick service delivery, prices, product quality and attributes etc. E-tailing influence profitability through customer patronage is sluggish and this is troublesome particularly as these firms invest extremely in internet to better the consumers. Therefore, the study was to examine the e-tailing influence on customer patronage: A Particulars Reference to Port Harcourt Mall, Rivers State – Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Truthfully, discovery and invention of e-tailing in marketing operations as business paradigm shift has influence many business activities. Modern Marketing business operations possesses online innovation which expose marketing business to great highs and active role in effective business performance. E-tailing have been a platform for survival of many business entities. But the challenges of e-tailing, e-tailing cannot provide the same shopping experience that physical stores offer. The cybernetic setting for e-tailing complicated numerous entities using digital platform at a time which resulted poor flow and inconsistency flow of business operations. The websites and social networking sites used in the business transactions was overcrowded. Also, with e-tailing, customer have to wait for their products to be delivered, some products end up broken or delivered after a long period of time and this leads to negative reviews and a broken brand image for the e-tailing store.

Conceptual framework

The following is the conceptual framework for the study.

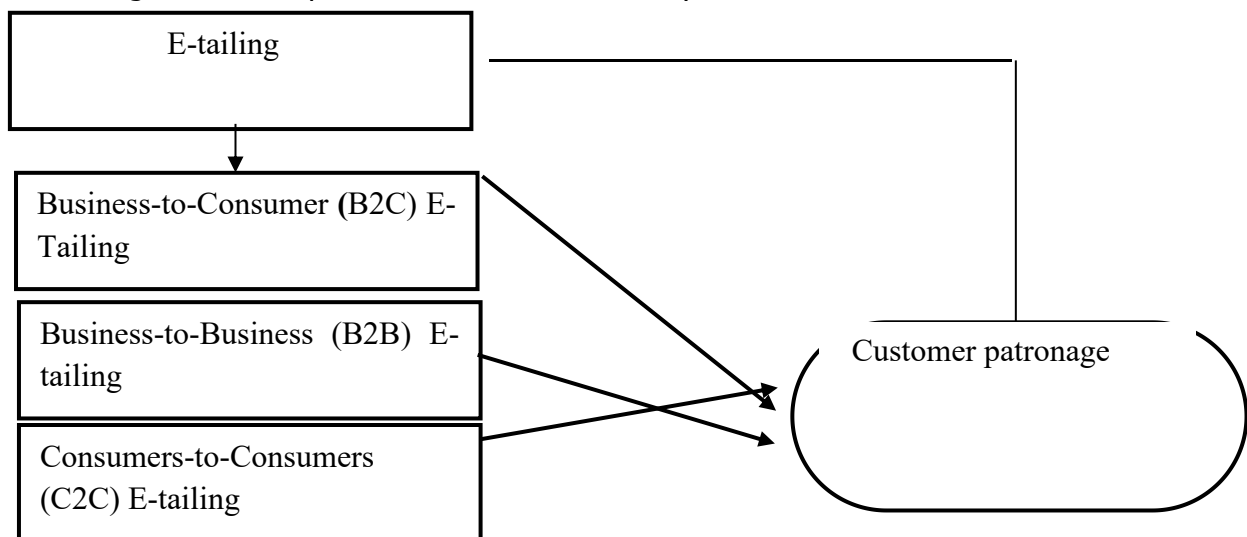


Fig.1 The operational model

Operational model of the relationship between e-tailing and customer patronage: A Particulars Reference to Port Harcourt Mall, Rivers State - Nigeria adopted from literature review ,(2024)

The Study Objectives

The study general objective was to examine the relationship between e-tailing and customer patronage: A Particulars Reference to Port Harcourt Mall, Rivers State - Nigeria. The specific objectives are:

1. To investigate the extent of relationship exist between business -to –consumer (B2C) e-tailing and customer patronage.
2. To evaluate the extent of relationship exist between businesses -to –business (B2B) e-tailing and customer patronage.
3. To investigate the extent of relationship exist between consumer -to –consumer (C2C) e-tailing and customer patronage.

Research Hypotheses

Ho₁: there is no significant relationship exist between business -to –consumer (B2C) e-tailing And Customer Patronage.

Ho₂: There Is No Of Significant Relationship Exist Between Businesses -To –Business R (B2b) E-Tailing And Customer Patronage.

Ho₃: There Is No Significant Relationship Exist Between Consumer -To –Consumer (C2c) E-Tailing And Customer Patronage.

Literature Review

Conceptual Explanation

e-tailing

Globally, e-tailing has created impact on consumptions of goods and services particularly those consumers that make purchase decision daily. E-tailing is the practice of selling and buying of goods and services digitally. It encompasses the complete procedure of purchasing and selling products online, from browsing and selection to payment and delivery (Lin, (2007) cited in Ziaullah, (2014).According to Mcnair, (2018), e-tailing is progressively prevalent due to the suitability and its propositions to consumers and retailers. E-tailing comprises buying and selling of products and services online, and e-tailing models include online marketplaces, branded stores, and flash sale websites.

E-tailing offers a variety of benefits for both businesses and consumers which include: Global reach, Products and service availability, Lower Overheads. Increased product visibility, Ease of transaction, and Customer Insights (Jainy, 2024).

Dimension of E-tailing

The following are the Dimension of E-tailing

Business-to-Consumer (B2C) E-Tailing

Business-to-consumer e-tailing is the most common of all e-commerce that firms are typically familiar to Internet operators. Business-to-consumer (B2C) e-tailing encompasses businesses selling products or services to other businesses through online platforms (Jainy, 2024).According Ranganathan, and Ganapathy,. (2002), cited in Ziaullah,*etal* (2014), Business-to-consumer (B2C) e-tailing transactions take place when a consumer buys a product or service from a business's website,

In view of Khurana, (2019). Business-to-Consumer (B2C) refer to digital sales and purchases of product or service and the transactions are often bulk or wholesale orders. B2B e-tailers characteristically offer businesses with a digital platform where customer orders, access product catalogues, and manage their accounts, and this comprised devoted websites, customer portals, or online marketplaces.

Business-to-Business (B2B) E-tailing

Generally, in order to grow the best e-tailing business model for B2B transactions, companies must offer quantity discounts, reasonably fast shipping, and ensure that the reliability of transaction. According to Jainy, (2024). Business-to-business (B2B) e-tailing is a business model that occurs when a business purchases a product or service from another business's website, for its own use or to use as a component in its own products.

In view of Chad, (2011), Business-to-business e-tailing encompasses firms sells products and services to other firms such retailers comprise consultants, software developers, freelancers, and wholesalers. Business-to-Business (B2B) denotes firm's e-commerce sales to other firms, this encompasses exchanges between business entities for profit maximization comes from the sale of goods or services to businesses.

Consumer-to-Consumer (C2C)

According to Wienclaw, (2013), Consumer -to-Consumer model of business which deals with the retail features of e-commerce (that is) the sale of goods or services from consumer to the consumer through online device or platform. Consumer s-to-Consumer refer to e-tailing business model established by business entities through electronic business relationships between consumer and consumers (DeLone *etal*, 2014).

According to abanoglu, (2021). Consumer-to-Consumer (C2C) denotes e-tailing business that involves all electronic dealings of products or services conducted between Consumer-to-Consumer (C2C). Usually, these contacts are conducted through a third party, which provides the online platform where the transactions are actually carried out. In view of Khurana, (2019), Consumer-to-Consumer (C2C) model is leveraged by a consumer for vending products and services to other consumers through the electronic medium.

Customer patronage

The core aim of every business entity is to satisfy customers and earn profit. Profit maximization in every business concern occur as a result of increase in customer patronage. The concept customer refer to individual purchase good and service for personal consumption or for further uses. Customer patronage is a way of evaluating or determining a firm's market, sales volume, profit margin and customer retention and loyalty level (Anwuri, & Haniel, 2020).

In view of Kalu (2006), Bake *et al.*, (2002), cited in Ozuru, and Akani, (2021), customer patronage is refer to strong-minded customer in behavioral standings which could also refer to "the act of being a steady customer to a shop. Customer patronage is ability of customers to repurchase, deliver word of mouth and continuous purchase.

Empirical review

More than a few studies has been exposed by several scholars on the above subject such as Ziaullah, *etal*,(2014), Online Retailing: Relationship among e-tailing system quality, e-satisfaction, e-trust and customers commitment in China: The purpose of this study is to propose and demonstrate an integrative model of e-tailing system quality, e-satisfaction, e-trust and commitment in China. Customer's commitment is fundamental to the survival and profitability of e-tailing. Perhaps, study variables have considerable importance on e-tailers performance. The data were collected from a sample of 383 students at universities in China during the first quarter of 2014. We used confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) to evaluate the hypotheses about the relationship among model constructs. Thus all the hypotheses developed in the study were positively confirmed except one, reinforcing the theory and previous research in this field. The result indicates that system quality is positively associated with e-trust and e-satisfaction, similarly e-trust influences positively to both types of commitment. However, e-satisfaction has positive effect on affective commitment, but it has not significant positive connection with continuance commitment in our study.

Ranjit.,*etal* R (2016). Online Store Selection Attributes and Patronage Intentions: An Empirical Analysis of the Indian E-Retailing: Objectives: This research aims to develop a multi-criteria based evaluation and subsequent prioritization of online retail patronage attributes of Indian consumers for improving the performance of the online stores. Methods/Statistical Analysis: The relative importance and ranking of online retail patronage intentions of Indian customers were done through a literature review, discussion with experts, and the Analytical Hierarchy Process

(AHP) approach. In all, 16 e-retail attributes were identified and further divided into five-factor categories. Then their prioritization was done using AHP approach in the context of the Indian e-retailing industry to overcome the drawbacks of perception based evaluation measures. Findings: The empirical results suggest that Indian customers place a very high importance on outcome quality followed by service recovery. The results of the study support the notion that Indian consumers are more utilitarian and are more apprehensive about the risks of online transaction in the context of Indian culture which is predominantly skewed towards uncertainty avoidance. As online retail store managers cannot allocate equal amounts of efforts and resources to each individual online store attributes due to the limitation of resources, the findings of this study will help online retail managers in providing insights into patronizing intentions of Indian customers towards online store attributes. The results of the study also offer Indian retail managers in effective utilization of scarce resources in developing online stores considering the Indian culture and context. Application/Improvements: The results will help managers to focus and improve the performance of the online stores based on relative importance and patronage intentions of Indian customers

Gladson, and Doris (2018), Online Advertising and Customer Satisfaction of E-Tailing Firms in Nigeria. This study examined the Impact of Online Advertising on Customers Satisfaction of E-tailing Firms in Nigeria. A survey research design was adopted. The source of data used in this study was mainly primary data from the issuance of questionnaire and secondary data from the review of relevant literature bothering on both variables which formed the basis for the argument. Out of a total of three hundred and eighty four (384) copies of questionnaire distributed, two hundred and eighty five (285) copies was used for analysis and analyzed using Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings of the study reveal amongst others that there is a positive and strong relationship between online advertising and customers' satisfaction; and online advertising significantly affects customer satisfaction. The study concludes that online advertising influenced satisfaction of the customers to a strong extent. However, online advertising is a key determinant of customer satisfaction as it is considered as a point of interaction between customers and the company from which they buy their products. A heuristic model was proposed to show our contribution to knowledge that the relationship between e-mail marketing and measures of customer satisfaction is very strong and is moderate on all other tested hypotheses. And the study recommends that advertising managers of e-tailing firms must develop and formulate e-mail marketing programs that will satisfy the needs of consumers and advert should be placed on stations and places where consumers can easily identify with them and make a purchase. Suggestions for further studies were outlined.

Anwuri, and Haniel (2020), content marketing strategies and customer patronage of e-tailers in Port Harcourt: The aim of this research was to examine the relationship between content marketing strategies and customer patronage of e-tailers in Port-Harcourt. In course of fulfilling this purpose, the topic extensively dealt with the concepts of how these content marketing strategies influence customer patronage. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design in developing the research plan. While a total of 1,148,665 constituted the study population, 400 customers of online shops were administered copies of the research instrument. Data gotten were analyzed using Spearman's Correlation Coefficient. The study found a moderate to strong, positive and significant relationships between content marketing strategies and customer patronage. It was concluded that purchase intentions and customer retention to a large extent can be influenced by info graphics, mobile applications, social network and e-newsletter of online shops. The study therefore recommended that online shops seeking to improve retention and repurchase should endeavour to engage the identified content marketing strategies as this will increase the possibility of achieving higher customer patronage.

METHODOLOGY

The study is an empirical analysis on e-tailing influence and customer patronage: A Particulars Reference to Port Harcourt Mall, Rivers State – Nigeria. This study adopted both survey approach, explanatory strategy, and correlational research design.

Conversely, the population for the comprised seventy (70) respondents including micro and macro unit of analysis from Port Harcourt shopping mall which was registered as a business entity in Rivers State Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC). Krejcie and Morgan (1970) determining statistical table was used to determine Fifty nine (59) sample size. The instrument of data collection were administered questionnaire, personal oral interview and observation. The primary data source is made up of three dissimilar sections: **Section A:** is questions on demographic respondents **Section B:** is made up of questions on the predictor variable and its dimension questions. Finally, **Section C:** are questions on the criterion variable. The instrument employed a four likert scale point: strongly agree (SA)= 4 agree (A)=3 disagree (D) =2 strongly disagree (SD) =1The study adopted Validity and reliability of instruments, reliability of instrument was tested through cronbach’s alpha statistical approach that revealed the following result: e-tailing (0.82) business -to- consumer (B2C) (0.78) business -to- business (B2B) (0.87) consumer -to- consumer (C2C) (0.79), and customer patronage (0.89) given a reliability coefficient greater than 0.7 or which the obtained excellent value greater than > 0.7 which is putative as a consistent degree required for statistical analysis (Nunnally, 1978), and Pearson coefficient correlation analysis was used to test the hypotheses. The table below illustrate the variables and Cronbach alpha test result.

Table1: Cronbach alpha Result

Constructs	Cronbach alpha	cases	No of items
E-tailing	.82	59	4
B2C	.78	59	4
B2B	.87	59	4
C2C	.79	59	4
Customer patronage	.89	59	4

Source, Survey Data Result, 2025 SPSS 22.0

Summary of Demographic Distribution of the Respondents

The respondents physiognomies (n = 59) Male and Female respondents shows (45.4. %) and (54.6%) respectively. Age bracket of 30 – 40 years indicates (31.5%), followed by the 40 - 50 years (18.5%), 50 - 60 years indicated (20.9 %), and 60 - 70 years shows (29.1%).The majority of the respondents are HND/B.sc holders (43.3.%), followed by MBA/MSc (20.2%) and others (36.5%). The highest income level ₦ 70,000 – ₦ 80,000, indicated (40.1.%), and followed by N 90,000 – N 100,000 (24.5%), N 100,000 ₦ 110,000 (18.1%) and above ₦ 110,000 represented by(17.3%). Majority of the respondents are 6 -7 years, follow by 4- 5 and years, 5 - 6 years of experience in firm represented by (43.4.7%), (29.7%), (26.9%) respectively.

Test of hypotheses, Result and Discussions Findings

Table 2: Correlations between business to consumer (B2C) e-tailing and customer

	Patronage.	
	B2C	Customer patronage
B2C Spearman correlation coefficient	.316**	1

Sig.(2-tailed)		
N	0.002	
	59	59
Customer patronage		
Spearman correlation coefficient		
Sig.(2-tailed)	1	316**
N		0.002
	59	59

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 2 indicates that, Spearman’s correlation coefficient ($r = 316^{**}$, which is higher than the PV 0.002) and the positive sign of the correlation coefficient discovered that, there was a strong and correlation between business to consumer and customer patronage. Therefore, there is Correlations exist between business -to –consumer (B2C) e-tailing and customer patronage ($r = >316$, $p = < 0.002$). The null hypothesis one was rejected at .05 alpha levels

Table3:Correlations Between Business to Business (B2B) e-tailing and Customer Patronage.

	B2B	Customer patronage
B2B		
Pearson correlation coefficient	224**	1
Sig.(2-tailed)	0.000	

N	59	59
Customer patronage		
Pearson correlation coefficient	1	224**
Sig.(2-tailed)		0.000
N	59	59

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 3 indicates that, Spearman’s correlation coefficient (r) =224**, which is higher than the PV 0.000 and the positive sign of the correlation coefficient discovered that, there was a strong and correlation between businesses -to –business (B2B) e-tailing and customer patronage. Therefore, there is Correlations exist between businesses -to –business (B2B) e-tailing and customer patronage. (r=224, p=< 0.000). The null hypothesis two was rejected at .05 alpha level.

Table 4 : Correlations bbetween customer to customer (C2C) -tailing and Customer patronage.

	C2C	Customer Patronage
C2C		
Pearson correlation coefficient	322**	1
Sig.(2-tailed)	0.007	
	59	59
Customer patronge		
Pearson correlation	1	322**
Sig.(2-tailed)		0.007
N	59	59

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 4 indicates that, Spearman’s correlation coefficient (r) =322**, which is higher than the PV 0.007) and the positive sign of the correlation coefficient discovered that, there was a strong and correlation between consumer -to –consumer (C2C) e-tailing and customer patronage. Therefore, there is Correlations exist between consumer -to –consumer (C2C) e-tailing and customer patronage. (r=322, p=< 0.007). The null hypothesis three was rejected at .05 alpha level.

FINDINGS

The coefficient correlations analysis reveals that e-tailing has significant positive relationship with customer patronage. Also, business -to -consumer (B2C) has significant positive relationship with customer patronage ($r = > 0.316$, $p = < 0.002$). Businesses -to -business (B2B) has significant positive relationship with customer patronage. ($r = > 0.224$, $p = < 0.000$), and consumer -to -consumer (C2C) has significant positive with customer patronage.. ($r = > 0.322$, $p = < 0.007$).

CONCLUSION

The study objective was to examine the relationship between e-tailing influences on customer patronage of Port Harcourt Mall, Rivers State - Nigeria. According to the literature review, e-tailing is progressively prevalent due to the suitability and its propositions to consumers and retailers. That e-tailing comprises buying and selling of products and services online, and e-tailing models include online marketplaces, branded stores, and flash sale websites (McNair, 2018). Therefore, the study concluded that dimension of e-tailing business -to -consumer (B2C) Businesses -to -business (B2B) and consumer -to -consumer (C2C) has significant positive relationship with customer patronage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study findings and conclusion the following recommendation are made;

1. Government should provide enabling environment to facilitating e-tailing business as digital technology for fastest and quickest means of purchasing, selling and deliver of goods and service.
2. E-tailing firms should adopt the following e-tailing strategy such as social media platform to reach out target market to increase customer patronage.
- 3 Firms that are into e-tailing business should improve on their mobile devices that can impact on customers which will affect positively on activities such as product display, product quality, prices and benefit visual display in order to increase firms customer patronage, entice new customer and retain existing customers.

Contribution to knowledge of the Study

This study has contributed in the mounting integer of literature. Precisely, founded on the findings from the study, the scholar suggests model to show our contribution to knowledge. From **Figure 1**. We perceive that there is significant relationship between e-tailing dimension and customer patronage with a Particulars Reference to Port Harcourt Mall, Rivers State – Nigeria.

Suggestions for Further Research

The study was conducted to understand the e-tailing influence on customer patronage. A further research should be conducted to supplementary examine the e-tailing strategies and customer patronage more comprehensive analysis of e-tailing firms in South – south Nigeria and this will add more knowledge and importance for field of academic.

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