

EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMER PURCHASE DECISION PROCESS

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Abstract

Although there are a variety of online social networks which provide facilities for consumers to interact with one another, get relevant information on products and services, comments, reviews, and rates that can help them in their purchasing decisions in different ways, most consumers are yet to fully understand how these social media networks can aid them to discover products and services that will adequately satisfy their needs and wants. Very few researchers had used the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology2 (UTAUT2) model to explain the purchase decision process of

consumers when engaging social media in Nigeria; hence, the need for this study. The main objective of this study was to investigate the effect of social media use on the purchase decision process of consumers (undergraduate students of Economics Department, Kaduna State University, Kaduna State). An exploratory survey was carried out on two hundred and fifty students and data was analysed using the Pearson Correlation tool to test the stated hypotheses. The study found out that Social Media use had significant effect on the purchase decision process of consumers (students). The study recommended that, consumers should engage and research more on a company's social media presence, its products and services before making a purchase decision, establish emotional connection with these businesses from their brand story and images on their social media platforms, participate in online surveys created by brands on their new or existing products as these feedbacks help the business to create better products, brands and services, among other recommendations.

Keywords: social media, consumer, social media marketing, consumer purchase decisions.

1. Introduction

The emergence and the development of online stores have turned internet users into actual consumers. Consumers have growingly become users of social media and are participating in a variety of activities, from consuming social media messages and content to sharing knowledge, experiences, opinions and discussion with other consumers online (Heinonen, 2011). Interconnectivity among people, organizations or countries has increased due to internet and social media. Social media provides a new channel to acquire product information through peer communication as consumers have the power to influence other buyers through reviews of products or services used (Kozinets, 1999). Online communities offer an opportunity for organisations to have a better customer relationship management system where businesses can improve performance (Ridings & Gefen 2004). Everyday people strive to satisfy their needs by making purchase decisions that can best meet these needs. Blackwell, Miniard & Engel (2001) defined Consumer Behaviour as “the activities people undertake when obtaining, consuming, and disposing of products and services”. Unfortunately, businesses encounter bottlenecks while delivery product message to their consumers and prospects which hampers the purchase decision process or repurchase decision of the consumers and prospects. Generally, businesses or individuals who use social networks for business communication to consumers can influence the purchase decision of consumers (Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard & Hogg, 2010). Social media sites are now a developing phenomenon in marketing, as businesses are utilizing them as advertising channels to target consumers especially teenagers and youths (Haque, Sarwar, Yasmin, Tarofder, & Hossain, 2015). Businesses are starting to appreciate the usage of social media sites as a part of their selling tactics to reach clients (Tanuri, 2010). The unpredictable behaviours of consumers in making purchase decisions are largely responsible for the adoption and use of e – commerce and social media marketing tools by businesses in order to maintain favourable consumer purchase intentions and to create more up-to-date and precise product purchase choices by inspiring an enlarged feeling of friendliness with clients, and shaping all vital dealings with potential clients (Davis Mersey, Malthouse, & Calder, 2010). Online social networks now ease the efforts of consumers to search for product information, evaluate product alternatives and make purchase decision for their products. In recent times, the

adoption and use of social network sites by businesses and consumers in Nigeria is growing rapidly, as many consumers depend on social media for different reasons and this action influences their online purchase behaviours. The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) is a theory that explains technology acceptance and adoption which was originally devised to clarify the factors that affect the acceptance and adoption of ICTs by workforces. However, it is now applied in the context of consumers' acceptance and use of technology and how it affects consumers' behavioural intention and behaviour. The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) by Vanketesh, Morris, et al (2003) was developed through the review, mapping and integration of eight dominant theories and models, viz: the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the Motivational Model (MM), the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), a combined Theory of Planned Behaviour/Technology Acceptance Model (C-TPB-TAM), the Model of PC Utilization (MPCU), the Innovation Diffusion Theory (IDT), and the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). By doing so, creators of the UTAUT hoped that future studies would need not to search, collate and integrate constructs from numerous technology acceptance models but instead could just apply the UTAUT to gain an understanding of a variety of problems related to Information system (IS) adoption and use. Despite the use of this theory to explain online consumer behaviour by researchers in advanced countries, there are few existing researches that have employed the UTAUT2 model to explain social media use and its effect on consumer behaviour, especially in developing countries like Nigeria. Therefore, this study has adopted the UTAUT2 model to investigate the effect of social media on the purchase decision process of selected undergraduate students of Economics Department, Kaduna State University, Kaduna State.

Objective of the Study

The major objective of this study was to investigate the effect of social media use on the purchase decision process of selected undergraduate students of Economics Department, Kaduna State University, Kaduna State. The specific objectives were:

- (1) To examine the extent to which Effort Expectancy (EE) in social media usage influenced consumers' purchase decision process.
- (2) To assess the extent to which Performance Expectancy (PE) in social media usage enhanced consumers' purchase decision process.
- (3) To evaluate how Hedonic Motivation (HM) in social media usage determined consumers' purchase decision process.
- (4) To evaluate how Social Influence (SI) in social media usage facilitated consumers' purchase decision process.
- (5) To assess the effect of social media use on consumers' purchase decision process.

Statement of Hypotheses

HYPOTHESIS 1: H_0 : Effort Expectancy (EE) in social media usage has no significant relationship with consumers' purchase decision process.

HYPOTHESIS 2: H_0 : Performance Expectancy (PE) in social media usage has no significant relationship with consumers' purchase decision process.

HYPOTHESIS 3: H_0 : Hedonic Motivation (HM) in social media usage has no significant relationship with consumers' purchase decision process.

HYPOTHESIS 4H₀: Social Influence (SI) in social media usage has no significant relationship with consumers' purchase decision process.

HYPOTHESIS 5: H₀: The usage of social media by consumers has no significant effect on their purchase decision process.

2. Literature Review

According to Hubspot 2012, 90% of Adults spend on the average, 4-6 hours in a week on social media connecting and sharing information about people, products, companies and brands., The social media handles commonly used includes facebook, tweeter, snachart, youtube, blogs, websites etc which have been categorised into; viz: Social Networking Sites, Social News or Bookmark sites, Media Sharing, Blogs, and Micro blogging. Each of these social media platforms has provided unique features and experiences to individuals and entities. Information gathering and sharing about businesses, their services and products are readily available on social media. (Ellison 2007; weber 2009, Baekdal 2009 & Dugan 2012). They are instrumental for social media marketing

Social Media Marketing is an umbrella term that can be described as the utilization of social media platforms as marketing tools. According to Weinberg (2009), Social Media Marketing is leveraging the 'social environment' through the 'media' to 'market' "businesses constituents". Information about the products and services of a company spread quickly without interfering with traditional marketing (eWOM) (Weinberg, 2009).

Consumer Purchase Behaviour and Decision

Consumers are individuals who purchase or consume products and services; buyers and consumers are sometimes used interchangeably but there is a slight difference. Buyers are the ultimate, industrial, or institutional purchasers while consumers are individuals who purchase for merely ultimate use, that is, the end-users for whom the products or services are ultimately designed for (Sternthal& Craig, 1982). Consumer buying behaviour is a process in which consumers decide and act accordingly to buy certain products for their use. So it is important for firms to keenly analyse consumer buying behaviours as it has a great impact on the firm's marketing strategy and its success. It is important for any firm to create a marketing mix that satisfies the customers.

The most prevalent theory of consumer purchase decision is the 'Utility Theory' which proposes that consumers make choices based on the expected outcomes of their decisions. Consumers are viewed as rational decision makers who are only concerned with self-interest (Schiffman&Kanuk, 2007; Zinkhan, 1992). The utility theory views the consumer as a 'rational economic man' (Zinkhan, 1992) and contemporary research on consumer behaviour has considered a wide range of factors which influences the consumer beyond purchasing. These activities commonly include; need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, the building of purchase intention, and the act of purchasing, consumption and finally disposal. The utility theory has evolved through a number of discernable stages over the past century in light of new research methodologies and paradigmatic approaches being adopted. Schiffman&Kanuk (2007), take a similar approach in defining consumer behaviour 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".

Consumers' Purchase Decision Process

Hawkins & Mothersbaugh (2010) defined Consumer Purchase Decision Process as “the several stages of concern or interest in the purchase process triggered by the need to consider a particular purchase”. Hence, Consumers follow all the steps in the purchase decision process. The communication situation in which consumers receive information can impact their purchase decision behaviour (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010). However, the central part of consumer behaviour is the consumers' purchase decision process in obtaining a product; this involves the following process or steps, viz;

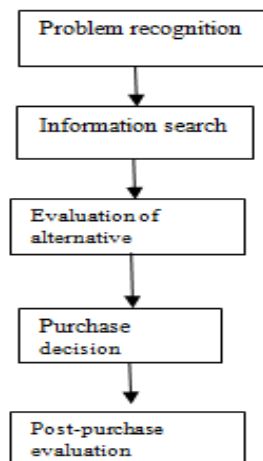


Figure 1.0 Source: (Kardes, Cronley, et al., 2011, pg 70)

Consumers' Purchase Decision and Problem Recognition

Problem recognition is the first step of consumers' purchase decisions process that may occur because consumer has a desire for something new (Kardes, Cronley, et al., 2011). Consumers' purchase decision begins with a problem. There are those problems which are easily recognized, defined, and solved (needs of food) but there are unexpected problem as well which are hard to solve (needs of car). There are different factors that affect problem recognition step such as social factors, cultural factors, reference groups, and environmental factors (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010).

Consumers' Purchase Decision and Information Search

Once a problem is recognized, consumers begin to seek about relevant information. There are two types of information searches; internal and external information search. Internal search involves the consumer's memory about the products, and external search includes word of mouth, stores visit, trial, online social networks and social media (Kardes, Cronley, et al., 2011). Nowadays, online environment effectively influences purchase decision process and the internet has become an important tool for information search. The different types of information search influence the direction of the search and decision made (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010).

Consumers' Purchase Decision and Evaluation of Alternatives

In this step consumers start to compare and evaluate several alternatives in terms of products features, their desires and needs. Sometimes consumers' choices are based on simple decision such as “buy the cheapest products” but there are some decisions that are complex and consist

of different processes and stages. In this stage consumers consider which alternative would be the best to fulfil their needs (Blythe, 2008).

Consumers' Purchase Decision and Product Choice (Purchase Decision)

Once consumers have found their relevant alternatives and evaluated them, they should make their choice among the alternatives. Consumers choose the certain products because the product appeals to them. The choice can be influenced by the gathered information from different sources; therefore, the internet is an effective tool in this stage (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010).

Consumers' Purchase Decision and Post-Purchase Evaluation

The quality of the decision becomes important in this stage of the process and how well the choice worked out. Consumers start to compare their perceptions of the product with their expectations (Kardes, Cronley, et al., 2011).

The Impact of Social Networks on Consumer's Purchase Decision

Consumers belong to or admire different online groups generally and those groups are able to change their purchasing decisions behaviour (Hogg, Askegaard, et al., 2006). According to Evans (2010), joint decision-making is when consumers take their decisions within the environment around them, such as environment of family, friends, and co-workers. In traditional communication, consumers make their purchase decisions based on information that they received through mass media (for instance, advertising, newspaper, television comment), but nowadays, online social networks can have power to affect consumers' purchase decision (Vanhuele, Wright & East, 2008).

There are two major social network groups that possess the power to influence consumers' purchase decision (Evans, 2010). They include; Reference groups (part of social network groups whose opinions or behaviour are important to consumers and have an impact on their behaviour. There are different types of reference groups; Formal groups (such as, cultural figure, parents, large and formal organizations) and Small/ Informal groups (they have greater impact on consumers' purchase decision because they are a part of their day-to-day life). However, Schiffman, Kanuk, et al (2008), categorized reference groups in several different categories with Virtual communities as one of them. The exchange of knowledge, experiences, and opinions of each individual within different virtual communities can help the products or services either sell faster or fail. Different social network groups are providing information to consumers to aid their purchase decisions.

All types of reference groups influence consumers' purchase decision in three ways: informational influence (seeking information about different kinds of brands); utilitarian influence (consumer's purchase decision is dependent on the satisfaction of members of the social group) and value expressive influence (the image others have on the consumer, which influence the consumer to choose particular brand) (Solomon, Bamossy, et al., 2010). According to a study by OTX (Online Testing exchange) on behalf of DEL Worldwide in 2008 (OTX, 2008), the study showed that various types of online social networks have become a new source of information and consumers rely on them as much as companies websites. The research indicated that 60 per cent of consumers perceive online Word-Of-Mouth (such as,

recommendations from other consumers online) powerful, valuable and could impact on their purchase decision. The companies that interact with consumers via online social networks have a greater opportunity to impact on consumers' purchase decision. Consumers would like to pass the information they received about different kinds of brands, products or services to other consumers. Consumers who searched information via online social networks and shared the information with others, are getting involved in online Word-Of- Mouth communication

Online social networks provide a place for consumers where they can share product opinions either positive or negative with one another in social interaction (Hennig- Thurau, Gwimmer& Walsh, 2004). It means they make their own recommendations, opinions and compare their experiences with other consumers (Kim &Srivastava, 2007). A recent research by Edison in 2011 on American users of online social networks showed that about 52 per cent of Americans have at least one or more social network profiles. The research also showed a quarter of online social networks who followed their favourite products, companies and services on these online social networks sites, of which 80 per cent of them used Facebook pages. The study suggested that online social networks have become information source for products and services.

The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT2)

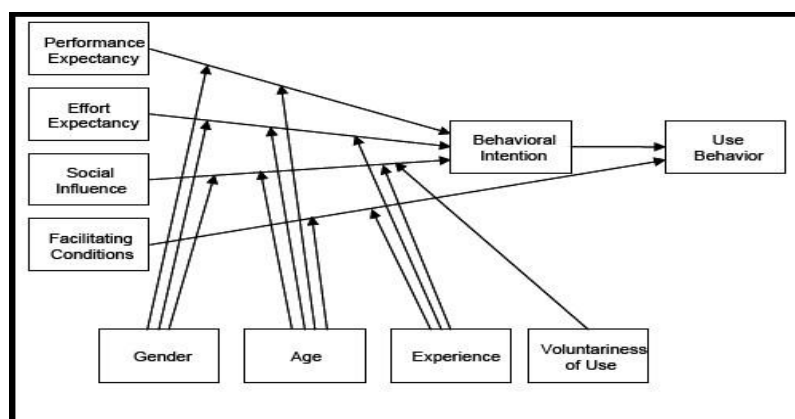


Fig. 2

Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT1) Model

(Source: Venkatesh, Morris, Davis & Davis, 2003; pg 428).

The unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT) is a unified model formulated by Venkatesh, Morris, Davis & Davis in 2003. It was developed by comparing empirical and conceptual differences of eight prominent models (Venkatesh, Morris, et al. 2003). UTAUT provides a unified view to explain user acceptance of new technology so that researchers no longer need to "pick and choose" one model while ignoring the contributions of other models (Venkatesh, Morris, et al. 2003). The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) proposed by Venkatesh, Morris, et al. (2003) extends Technology Acceptance Model(TAM) to take into account several new constructs (such as, Performance Expectancy, Effort Expectancy, Social Influence, etc) which bear significant influence on behavioural intention and the ultimate usage of technologies. UTAUT was formulated based on conceptual and empirical similarities across eight prominent competing technology

acceptance models: Davis' Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis 1989; Davis, Bagozzi&Warshaw 1989); Roger's Innovation Diffusion Theory (IDT) (Rogers 1995); Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Fishbein&Ajzen 1975); Motivation Model (MM) (Davis, Bagozzi&Warshaw 1992); Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen 1991); Combined TAM and TPB (Taylor & Todd 1995); Model of PC Utilization (MPCU) (Thompson, Higgins & Howell 1991; Triandis, 1977); and Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986; Compeau& Higgins 1995; Compeau, Higgins & Huff 1999).

Venkatesh& Davis (2000) extended the original TAM model to explain perceived usefulness and usage intentions in terms of social influence and cognitive instrumental processes. UTAUT encompasses two additional theoretical mechanisms by which the subjective norm can influence intention indirectly through perceived usefulness (internalization and identification). Subjective norm can be defined as the technology user's belief that individuals most important to the user, believe that he/she should or should not perform the behaviour to accept the technology. UTAUT theorizes that subjective norm will positively influence image if important members of a person's social group believe that he or she should perform behaviour to accept the new technology, it will lead the user to accept this new technology (Venkatesh& Davis, 2000). UTAUT1 contained four major determinants of intention and usage; Performance Expectancy (PE), Effort Expectancy (EE), Social Influence (SI) and Facilitating Conditions (FC) (Venkatesh, Morris, et al. 2003). The variables of gender, age, experience and voluntariness of use moderate the key relationships in the model (Venkatesh, Morris, et al. 2003). UTAUT was empirically validated amongst 4 businesses in various industries (the health sector was a notable exception) and cross-validated using data from another. UTAUT was able to explain 70% of technology acceptance behaviour which was a considerable improvement on previous models which routinely explained only 40% of acceptance (Venkatesh, Morris, et al. 2003).

According to Lewis, Fretwell, Ryan and Parham (2013), this model acts as a baseline which has been applied to research on many organisational technologies. Originally, UTAUT2 was derived from UTAUT1 model as suggested by Venkatesh, Morris, et al., (2003). The UTAUT2 offers a description for the acceptance and use of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) by clients (Venkatesh, Thong, et al. 2012) as a device to understand the factors that influence acceptance and adoption of ICTs by workforces. Compared to the UTAUT1 model, some earlier studies clearly showed that the UTAUT2 model accounted for nearly 25% of the variance in Behavioural Intentions (Zaremohzzabieh, Samah, Omar, et al., 2014); however, the expansions in the UTAUT2 model suggested a larger difference in the variance of Behavioural Intentions of users of ICT (56%–74%) and their Information Technology use (Venkatesh, Thong, et al., 2012).

In 2012, Venkatesh extended UTAUT2 to pay specific attention to the consumer use context instead of its original purpose which was technology acceptance and use of employees (Venkatesh, Thong, et al., 2012). UTAUT2 was extended to include Hedonic Motivation (HM), Price Value (PV) and Habit (HT). From this, UTAUT2 has improved the variance of behavioural intention by 18%and use of technology by 12% (Venkatesh, Thong, et al., 2012).Since UTAUT2 was introduced in 2012, there has been limited research in the UTAUT2 model implementation literature. Lewis, Fretwel, et al., (2013) employed the UTAUT2 model to address the adoption of information technology in the higher education classrooms of

United States. They found out that PE, EE, SI and HT are significant factors in the context of instructors' use of technology for classroom purposes. Ally and Gardiner (2012) applied the UTAUT2 in their conceptual paper. They also integrated the TAM model and developed new variables to specifically explain individuals' behavioural intentions towards the use of smart mobile devices and their focus group study was postgraduate students in Australia.

Venkatesh, Thong, et al., (2012), posits that the UTAUT2 model suggests seven major constructs that describe them from the perspective of the user of ICT instead of defining them from the perspective of the employees of an organisation. It considers that the discrete intention to use ICTs is influenced by Performance Expectancy (PE), Effort Expectancy (EE), Social Influence (SI), Hedonic Motivations (HM), Price Value (PV), Facilitating Condition (FC) and Habit (HT). The UTAUT2 model posits several individual difference variables, such as age, gender and experience to moderate UTAUT2 associations. Furthermore, Social Media Sites are introduced as an affluent learning curve, unrestricted to use form through PCs or cell phones, and needing less nonstop time and energy (Dunki&Xu, 2014). These structures permit the Social Media users to have extra support for erudition, device setting, and time to endure purchasing via Social Media Sites. Since this unified theory is based on prominent models which focus on the context of consumer use of technology, this study applied only four elements (PE, EE, SI and HM) of the UTAUT2 model to determine whether social media usage had effect on the purchase decision process of undergraduate students in the Department of Economics, Kaduna State University, Kaduna State.

Constructs of the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT2)

Performance Expectancy (PE)

PE is pronounced as the level to which a user considers Social Media Sites will be useful when making purchase decisions. In UTAUT, PE shares similar definition with Perceived Usefulness (PU) of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989). It is the greatest influencing factor of technology use intention by the customer (Venkatesh, Thong, et al. (2012). By using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), Sun, Cao, and You (2010) in China, established that PE (or PU) had a positive correlation to Behavioural Intention to use e-commerce. This statement was supported by Amaro and Duarte (2013), claiming that, PE had an influential element in predicting online travel purchasing activities. Nawi, Nasir, & Al Mamun (2016) studied the relationships of UTAUT constructs in social media usage on small business platforms by students' in Malaysia. They confirmed that the students with high PE had high Behavioural Intentions to use social media in their small businesses.

Effort Expectancy (EE)

EE is identified as the degree of ease of in using social media sites in their purchase decision. Due to the simplicity of Social Media Sites, EE is likely to perform a noteworthy role leading to immediate use of social media by young consumers. Venkatesh, Morris, et al, (2003), took perceived ease of use (PEOU) construct to describe and define as the degree of ease related with technology use. Earlier empirical study by Amaro& Duarte in 2013 claimed that EE (PEOU) had a positive correlation with online travel Purchase Intentions. Based on UTAUT model, Mandal& McQueen (2012) claimed that EE imposed a significant correlation on Behavioural Intentions by businesses to adopt social media for micro businesses. Furthermore, Hong, Sin, et al, (2015), carried out a survey among Malaysian university

students and recognized that EE significantly influenced university students' purchase intentions to adopt Facebook Commerce, using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS) approach.

Social Influence (SI)

SI is described as the level that a human is affected by other people (such as, family and friends) around him or her to decide whether or not to accept and engage Social Media Sites. SI is another construct that is similar to the subjective norm construct of Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) by Ajzen&Fishbein (1973). According to Venkatesh, Thong, et al. (2003), a subjective norm (SN) in the TRA model is a relatively similar concept with SI. Cheung & Lee (2010) found that Subjective Norm is an important factor in determining Behavioural Intention to use Social Media Sites for social connections and relationships. Brocke, Richter & Riemer (2009), claimed that social reason for students to connect with their friends and peers is certainly a tendency in verifying their Social Media acceptance. Litvin, Goldsmith, et al, (2008), claimed that social media sites served as vital information source when customers are making purchase decisions. Lee, Qu, et al., (2007) in Korea, discovered that SI (SN) had a significant influence on customer's intentions to purchase online tickets. In Malaysia, Hong, Sin, et al., (2015) indicated that SI had a significant correlation with the university students' purchase intention to accept Facebook Commerce.

Hedonic Motivation (HM)

HM is identified as the desire or enjoyment that develops when engaging social media sites while making purchase decisions. With the incorporation of HM (Perceived Enjoyment Construct (PEC) into the UTAUT2 model, Venkatesh, Thong, et al. (2012) claimed that the purpose was to complete the model of UTAUT which had only taken into consideration the extrinsic motivation value (Performance Expectancy). From the consumer use of information technology context, these researchers stated that both PE and HM constructs are considered crucial factors of information technology use. According to Brown & Venkatesh (2005), HM has been verified as an important factor in many consumer behaviour studies and previous Information System researches. Liao, Lin, et al (2007) emphasised that HM construct was significant due to the recognisable motivations attracting customers to visit a sellers' online websites. In Taiwan, Liao, Fei et al, (2007), discovered that online shopping motives of adults from HM did not only affect the search intention, but indirectly affected their purchase intention. Chiu, Wang, et al. (2014), demonstrated that HM was positively correlated to consumer's purchase behaviour in online shopping.

Facilitating Conditions (FC)

FC is the perception that organisational and technical infrastructure exists to support the use of technology (Venkatesh et al. 2003). Foon&Fah (2011) in using MLR found that FC significantly influenced the Behavioural Intention (BI) to adopt internet banking, based on questionnaires collected from respondents aged 21-50 years in Malaysia. Also, Wu, Chen, et al. (2010) found that FC significantly influenced the behavioural intention for 3G mobile telecommunication services. These empirical studies agreed that FC is a significant factor in influencing BI to adopt technology.

Price Value (PV)

PV is the trade-off between the cost paid for using the technology and the perceived benefits received (Dodds, Monroe & Grewal, 1991). Venkatesh, Thong, et al., (2012) highlights that PV in consumer decision making regarding technology use is an important factor influencing BI which is tested using PLS. Prata, Moraes & Quaresma (2012) collected user information about search, purchase and evaluation process in mobile apps store usage in Brazil via questionnaire and discovered that mobile apps price was the main reason for buying an app as it was perceived to be expensive. Furthermore, Munnukka (2004) conducted quantitative postal survey to customers of Telia Sonera's mobile services in Finland and discovered that PV had an influence over consumer use of mobile services by testing the result with MLR. However, Chong (2013) conducted a study via survey questionnaire regarding the cost that affected the intention to adopt m-commerce among users in China. SEM revealed that the cost related to downloading m-commerce apps negatively influenced adoption intentions. Tsu Wei, Marthandan, Yee, et al., (2009) in using multiple regression analysis identified that perceived cost negatively influenced the intention to use m-commerce among Malaysian users.

Habit (HT)

Habit is the extent to which individuals tend to execute behaviours automatically (Limayem, Hirt, et al., 2007). Venkatesh, Thong, et al. (2012) discovered that habit directly and indirectly had effects on BI to use technology. It was found that increased experience in usage led to habitual technology use. Liao, Palvia and Lin (2006), performed a postal survey in Taiwan and targeted undergraduate and graduate students, as well as, company employees using SEM and found that habit influenced the continuance intention to use e-commerce. Pahnla, Siponen and Zheng (2011) carried out a research and targeted students of University of Shanghai, China and noticed that habit influenced the use of Smart phones by using partial least square SEM technique. To further support this theory, Lewis, Fretwell, et al., (2013) found out that habit positively influenced the intention to use classroom technology.

Empirical Review

The influence of social media on buying behaviour can be on any service or product; quality, brand, advertising or price could affect consumer decision-making. A study by Forbes (2013) revealed that 97% of the purchase decisions of customers was based on recommendations from social media (Facebook & Twitter) by their contacts or friends on social media.

Another study by Vineraen, Cetina, et al., (2013), showed that social media allowed consumers and prospective consumers to communicate directly to a brand representative. They claimed that most consumers were using social media as tool to search and purchase items therefore, businesses used this advantage to advertise their products. The online consumer is a booming market worldwide and this was creating a globalized level of segmentation cross-culturally (Vinerean, Cetina, et al., 2013). If they have some problems on products or services, consumers could reach the company via social media, which is an easy way to connect and contact the company. Companies are challenged by how they choose to react to comments or responses on social media. Their reactions and responses can build strong brand images and get more consumers to purchase products or services. When a consumer wants to make decision on product, every single detail could be an influence to his/her decision-making.

Social media does not only affect consumers' decision making on products or services, but also helps in other fields of studies or careers, such as, political or juror impartiality and fair trials too. In context of the justice system, the accessible nature of the internet has resulted in jurors having the ability to consult an online social media source in order to aid their decision-making and deliberations (Romm Livermore, 2012). Social media helps jurors to broadcast their options about ongoing court sessions. Jurors find some information or any evidence that can support their decision and help them make decisions. This information may not be confirmed to be true, but at least, it will give the jurors the idea and know what other people think about the case. Today researchers have found that social media help jurors to have a wider vision of cases and can also influence the juror's decision-making (Romm Livermore, 2012).

Another study examined the effect of social media on a person's decision-making by sharing health information on news and social media. The study observed the coverage of influenza vaccination on Dutch news sites and social media websites. Dutch news sites and social media websites were promoting the campaigns of influenza vaccine during February, March, and April, 2012. From this study the results showed that news media and social media gave different tones in messages. News media reports tended to be more objective and non-judgmental, while social media messages were more critical of the behaviours of Internet users which influenced the success of vaccination campaigns and recommendations made by health authorities (Lehmann, Ruiter&Kok, 2013). However, the study concluded that it was a first step in e-Health announcements. People respond to the news on social media more than news media. It is attractive and influences people on their decision-making due to the internet and might be an important source of health information.

Studies on the effects of social media on transportation have found that many travellers used social media as a guideline for their trip. Survey carried out by eMarketer in 2007, showed that reviews of places, hotels, transportation, food, or restaurants had great effects on travellers' decisions (Kiilunen, 2013). Travel organisations and businesses have used social media as communication tools for their audience by posting travel information, uploading photos, warnings, advice, or sharing personal traveller reviews. These things influenced trip decisions and created future trip destination impressions. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of U.S. online travellers used ratings for their travel information, forty nine percent (49%) of them checked reviews and recommendations, eighteen percent (18%) used photos and friends' social network sites, twelve percent (12%) read blogs, and five percent (5%) watched videos (Kiilunen, 2013).

Researchers have applied, integrated and extended UTAUT to study technology acceptance and use, across a variety of settings. Zhou, Lu & Wang (2010) studied a sample of mobile service consumers. Venkatesh, Thong, Chan, et al. (2011) studied citizens' use of e-government services. Other studies included; technology support for idea generation and decision making in technology design by Brown, Denis, et al. (2010); filing of income tax by Carter & Schaupp (2008). Studies on the use of technology bordering on its adoption, initial use, or post-adoptive use by Zhou, Lu & Wang (2010) focused on user adoption of mobile banking while Venkatesh, Brown, Maruping&Bala (2008) included adoption, initial use, and

post-adoptive use. Some studies have examined technology acceptance and use in locations other than the Western countries, such as India (Gupta, Dasgupta, et al., 2008), China (Venkatesh& Zhang, 2010) and Korea (Im, Hong, & Kang, 2011). Other studies have focused on specific economic sectors, such as services (Im, Hong & Kang, 2011), education (Chiu & Wang, 2008), medical services and healthcare (Liang, Xue, Ke, & Wei, 2010), and the public sector (Dasgupta& Gupta, 2011). In general, research has repeatedly confirmed the robustness of UTAUT and its main effects. However, research has scarcely examined UTAUT in Social Media usage to study its effect on the purchase decision process of consumers.

3. Material and Methods

The exploratory survey design was adopted and data was collected using structured questionnaires and interviews. 250 respondents were drawn from the undergraduate Economics students of Kaduna State University using convenient random sampling technique and descriptive statistics (frequencies and simple percentages) were used for analysis while Pearson Correlation was also used to measure the relationship and test the stated hypotheses between the variables of interest. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 (5%) **Level of significance** and the

Decision rule was: reject the null hypothesis (H_0) if the p-value (probability value) is less than the level of significance. Do not reject H_0 if otherwise.

The researchers proposed a research model for this study in order to examine the extent to which performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence and hedonic motivation in using social media by students' had effect on their purchase decision process. These constructs had been extensively discussed in the earlier part of this study.

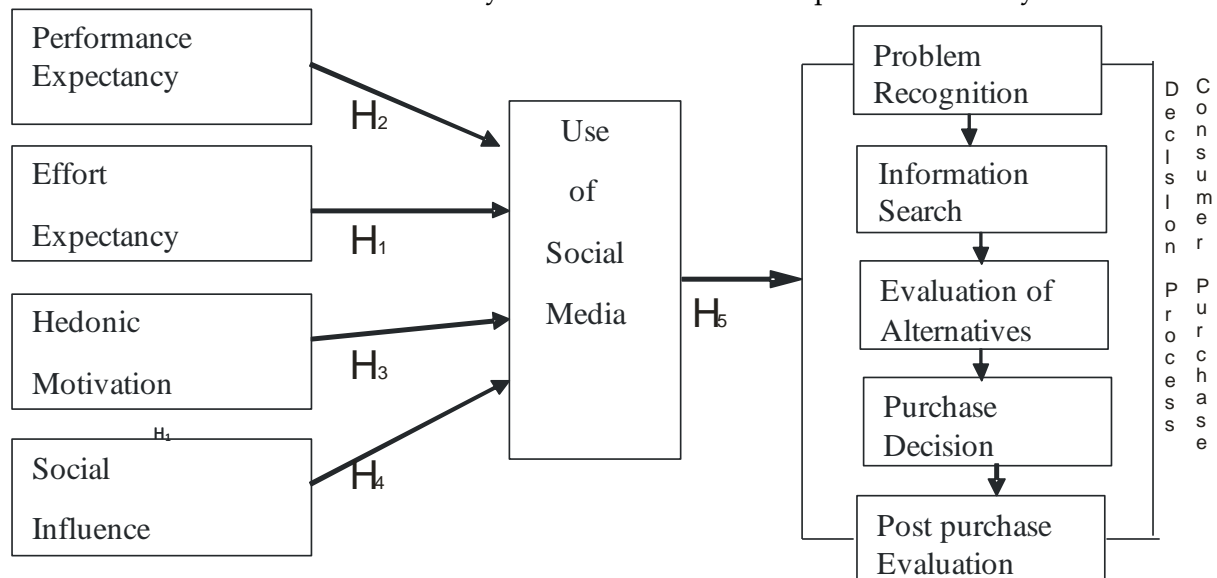


Fig. 3

Source: Researchers

4. RESULTS OF THE FINDINGS

Age of Respondents

Table 1

AGE		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	UNDER 18	19	7.9	7.9	7.9
	18 – 21	72	30.0	30.0	37.9
	22 – 25	83	34.6	34.6	72.5
	26 – 29	31	12.9	12.9	85.4
	30 AND ABOVE	35	14.6	14.6	100.0
	Total	240	100.0	100.0	

Table 1, showed that 85.4% of the respondents were below 30 years.

Gender of Respondents

Table 2

GENDER		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	MALE	132	55.0	55.5	55.5
	FEMALE	106	44.2	44.5	100.0
	Total	238	99.2	100.0	
Missing	System	2	.8		
Total		240	100.0		

Table 2 results shows that 55.5% and 44.5 % of the respondents were males and females respectively

Favourite Social Media Sites of Respondents

Table 3

FAVOURITE SOCIAL MEDIA SITE VISITED BY STUDENTS				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	y			

Valid	SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES (E.G FACEBOOK)	128	53.3	53.6	53.6
	MICRO BLOGGING (E.G TWITTER)	36	15.0	15.1	68.6
	BLOGS / FORUMS (E.G LINDA IKEJI BLOG)	31	12.9	13.0	81.6
	(C)BLOGS / FORSOCIAL NEWS / BOOKMARKING SITES (E.G NAIJAGIST)	34	14.2	14.2	95.8
	PHOTO & VIDEO SHARING SITES (YOU TUBE, FLICKR)	10	4.2	4.2	100.0
	Total	239	99.6	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.4		
Total		240	100.0		

Table 3 shows that majority of the respondents (53.6%) used face book while the rest used others.

Time spent daily on Social Media sites by Respondents

Table 4

TIME (APPROX.) SPENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA SITES PER DAY.

		Frequenc y	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	ZERO HOURS	34	14.2	14.3	14.3
	1 - 3 HOURS	119	49.6	50.0	64.3
	4 - 6 HOURS	55	22.9	23.1	87.4
	7 - 9 HOURS	22	9.2	9.2	96.6
	10 and MORE HOURS	8	3.3	3.4	100.0
	Total	238	99.2	100.0	
Missing	System	2	.8		
Total		240	100.0		

Table 4, showed 50% of the respondents spend 1-3 hours on social media daily while 14.3% don't spend any time on it.

Time spent daily on Mass Media by Respondents

Table 5

TIME (APPROX.) SPENT ON MASS MEDIA (TV, RADIO, NEWSPAPERS, ETC) PER DAY.

		Frequenc y	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	ZERO HOURS	32	13.3	13.5	13.5
	1 - 3 HOURS	108	45.0	45.6	59.1
	4 - 6 HOURS	50	20.8	21.1	80.2
	7 - 9 HOURS	32	13.3	13.5	93.7
	10 and MORE HOURS	15	6.3	6.3	100.0
	Total	237	98.8	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.3		
Total		240	100.0		

Thirty two (32) students spend zero hours on mass (traditional) media, one hundred and eight (108) students spend 1-3 hours, fifty (50) students spend 4-6 hours, thirty two (32) students spend 7-9 hours and fifteen students spend 10 and more hours daily on mass media.

Test of Hypothesis Results

The researcher tested the stated hypotheses in chapter one (1) of this study using the Pearson Correlation Statistical Tool to assess if there exists any significant relationships between the identified variables in the hypotheses.

Hypothesis One

H₀: Effort Expectancy (EE) in social media usage has no significant relationship with students' purchase decision process.

Correlations

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
PURCHASE DECISION PROCESS	4.4728	.80328	239
EFFORT EXPECTANCY IN USING SOCIAL MEDIA	3.9412	.98764	238

Correlations

		PURCHASE DECISION PROCESS	EFFORT EXPECTANCY IN USING SOCIAL MEDIA
PURCHASE DECISION PROCESS	Pearson Correlation	1	.136*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.036
	N	239	238
EFFORT EXPECTANCY IN USING SOCIAL MEDIA	Pearson Correlation	.136*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.036	
	N	238	238

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Since the P value (0.036) is less than the level of significance 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that Effort Expectancy (EE) in using social media by students has significant relationship with their purchase decision.

Hypothesis Two

H₀: Performance Expectancy (PE) in social media usage has no significant relationship with students' purchase decision process.

Correlations

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
PURCHASE DECISION PROCESS	4.6723	.56791	238
PERFORMANCE EXPECTANCY IN USING SOCIAL MEDIA	4.1833	.85798	240

Correlations

		PURCHASE DECISION PROCESS	PERFORMA NCE EXPECTAN CY IN USING SOCIAL MEDIA
PURCHASE DECISION PROCESS	Pearson Correlation	1	.247**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	238	238
PERFORMANCE EXPECTANCY IN USING SOCIAL MEDIA	Pearson Correlation	.247**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	238	240

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

Since the P value (0.000) is less than the level of significance 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that Performance Expectancy (PE) in using social media by student has significant relationship with their purchase decision process.

Hypothesis Three

H₀: Hedonic Motivation (HM) in social media usage has no significant relationship with students' purchase decision process.

Correlations

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
PURCHASE DECISION PROCESS	4.3544	.77631	237
HEDONIC MOTIVATION IN USING SOCIAL MEDIA	4.3025	.87202	238

Correlations

		PURCHASE DECISION PROCESS	HEDONIC MOTIVATION IN USING SOCIAL MEDIA
PURCHASE DECISION PROCESS	Pearson	1	.167*
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.010
	N	237	236
HEDONIC MOTIVATION IN USING SOCIAL MEDIA	Pearson	.167*	1
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	
	N	236	238

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Since the P value (0.010) is less than the level of significance 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that Hedonic Motivation (HM) is using social media by students has significant relationship with their purchase decision process.

Hypothesis Four

H₀: Social Influence (SI) in social media usage has no significant relationship with students' purchase decision process.

Correlations

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
PURCHASE DECISION PROCESS	3.9789	1.13290	237
SOCIAL INFLUENCE IN USING SOCIAL MEDIA	4.0253	.93394	237

Correlations

		PURCHASE DECISION PROCESS	SOCIAL INFLUENCE IN USING SOCIAL MEDIA
PURCHASE DECISION PROCESS	Pearson	1	.421**
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	237	237
SOCIAL INFLUENCE IN USING SOCIAL MEDIA	Pearson	.421**	1
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	237	237

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

Since the P value (0.000) is less than the level of significance 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that Social Influence (SI) in using social media by student has significant relationship with their purchase decision process.

Hypothesis Five

H₀: usage of social media by students has no significant effect on their purchase decision process.

Correlations

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
PURCHASE DECISION PROCESS	3.9494	.99871	237
SOCIAL MEDIA	4.3234	.88535	235

Correlations

		PURCHASE DECISION PROCESS	SOCIAL MEDIA
PURCHASE DECISION PROCESS	Pearson Correlation	1	.193**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
	N	237	233
SOCIAL MEDIA	Pearson Correlation	.193**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	
	N	233	235

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

Since the P value (0.003) is less than the level of significance 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that Social media use by students has significant effect on their purchase decision process.

5. Discussion Of Findings

Most of the respondents are below 30years and are almost equally spread between the genders. Facebook is the most used media and 80.2% of the respondents spend 1-7 hours daily on social media. In this research, Effort Expectancy, performance expectancy, hedonic motivation and social influences in using social media by students had significant relationships with their purchase decision process. Previous studies had also established these findings. The findings of this study are consistent with those of (Al-Qeisi, Dennis, Hegazy, & Abbad, 2015); Gupta, Dasgupta, & Gupta (2008), Nawi, Nasir, et al (2016); Heerink, Kröse, Wielinga, & Evers (2008); Hsu & Lin (2008); (Escobar-Rodríguez, & Carvajal-Trujillo, 2014). The result from investigating the effect of social media use on students' purchase decision process showed a significant relationship.

6. Conclusion

The conclusion from the findings was that there was a significant effect of social media on the purchase decision process of undergraduate students in the department of Economic, Kaduna State University, Kaduna State.

7. Recommendations

- Businesses should simplify their messages, presentations and contents to arouse more interest in their consumers when reviewing their product for purchase.
- Product information on social media sites of organisations should be useful to consumers when searching, evaluating and reviewing products for purchase.
- Businesses should solicit for consumers' inputs as well as their suggestions using their brand story, images and surveys on social media as these feedbacks help the business to create better products, brands and services.
- Social media platforms, messages and contents of organisations should have fun features and applications to stimulate purchase from online consumers.

- v. Businesses should consistently and continuously enhance and adjust their online message strategies on social network sites to meet the diverse expectations of their consumers and online visitors to stimulate purchase.

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