

Marketing Competence Strategy And Consumer Buying Behaviour Of Selected Retail Firms In Delta State

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Abstract: *The study examined effect of marketing competence on consumer buying behaviour of selected retail firms in Asaba Delta State. The specific objective are to examine the effect of artificial intelligence competence on consumer buying behaviour, determine the impact of social media competence on consumer buying behaviour and ascertain the effect of networking competence on consumer buying behaviour. The study used cross sectional survey research design method. The population of the study was 58 and a sample size of 50 was obtained through the Taro Yamane formula for sample size determination with the simple random technique used. After data cleaning, data of 50 respondents were finally used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics, simple percentage and chi-square statistical analysis were used for data analysis and hypothesis testing. The study findings reveal that there is a positive significant relationship between marketing competence measures identified and consumer buying behaviour of selected retail firms in Asaba Delta State. The study concludes that marketing competence system bears a positive and significant influence on consumer buying behaviour. The study recommends that considering the size and characteristics of the surrounding population, level of competition, access to transportation, availability of parking, easy accessibility and long opening hours while making online store (apps) decision enables retail to reduce transaction cost and can increase consumer purchase pattern*

Key Words: Marketing Competence, Consumer Buying Behaviour, Customer bonding, Social Media and Networking

INTRODUCTION

Every company is trying its best to develop both internal and external market linkages/market segments/customer focus /ideas and knowledge sources to satisfy customer's needs as well as to sustain its competitive advantage. Due to rapid changes in technology and environment, innovation has become a common theme for planning, designing and developing production processes and services launched into the market so as to respond to customers' needs effectively. Marketing competence indicates the company's better financial stability, performance and survival ability than its rival companies (Agarwal, Cockburn & McHale 2019).

Consumer behaviour on the other hand is described as the dynamic interaction of affect and cognition, behaviour, and the environment through which humans exchange components of their life (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019). More so, Different industries and sectors have employed core competencies to influence the buying behaviour of consumers. The results attain were attained, with some recording positive and others poor performance based on adoption level of core competencies. Thus, this study aimed at expanding literature by looking at the retail sector and its performance as influenced by core competencies. This study explored how retail sector players can improve their overall performance by looking how marketing competence stimulates the buying behaviour of consumers.

Statement of the Problem

The lack and slowness of the researchers to research the concepts related to the development of marketing literature. Experts in the field of marketing do less epistemology of new concepts that can improve marketing competence and consumer buying behaviour. Thus, it is very important for scientists to always contribute and develop the latest concepts about marketing, especially in the field of marketing network theory. The development of new concepts is expected to help businesses to create more effective marketing competencies following the conditions or environment of a very dynamic business. This dynamic environment needs to be anticipated, to maintain the survival of a business. Failure to anticipate the environment means the company's future is uncertain. So a company that can stay long is a company that can anticipate the business environment.

Most firms in today's business fail to engage in networking which allow firms to meet customer preferences and needs that can lead firms to perform better. For firm to achieve well it must innovate as innovation is the implementation of new ideas, new products/services, competencies or new process which the firm peruse for successful development. Many studies on innovation stressed that marketing competence as a business routine which affects the ability of a firm to survive, grow and excel. Therefore for firms to utilize its networking capability it must be able to stimulate consumer buying behaviour. Therefore, marketing

competence must become more creative and seize possibilities to attract customers. This study there seeks to address the effect of marketing competence on consumer buying behaviour of selected retail firms in Delta State.

Research Objectives

The general objective of the study is to examine the effect of marketing competence on consumer buying behaviour. The explicit objectives of the study are to:

- i. examine the effect of artificial intelligence competence on consumer buying behaviour
- ii. determine the impact of social media competence on consumer buying behaviour
- iii. ascertain the effect of networking competence on consumer buying behaviour

LITERATURE REVIEW

Marketing Competence

Marketing competence plays a pivotal role in determining organizational success. This goes beyond merely crafting sophisticated marketing strategies that specify where, when, and how a company intends to compete. It also involves the organization's capacity to effectively implement those strategic choices (McKee, 2019). To make the most of limited resources, firms must develop and apply relevant marketing competencies that align with their overall goals and objectives (McKee, 2019). Scholars have identified two interrelated dimensions of marketing competence: the formulation of marketing decisions and the execution of those decisions. Accordingly, marketing leaders must decide which resources to utilize, determine optimal allocation, and establish clear priorities that reflect the firm's ambitions (Piercy & Lane, 2017; Iyadi & Ojumude, 2023). Strong marketing competencies are essential for translating strategic vision into actionable objectives, defining measurable goals, and determining success benchmarks. However, this process is often challenged by conflicting or incompatible performance criteria, which can complicate the path to achieving desired business outcomes (Igwebuike & Iyadi, 2021).

Artificial Intelligence Competence

The effectiveness of an organization's marketing efforts is closely tied to the quality of its market research. Conducting thorough research requires a comprehensive understanding of industry dynamics, customer behavior, competitive actions, and input from various stakeholders. To achieve this, organizations often rely on data drawn from a variety of sources, such as internal databases, public reports, and digital platforms like social media. Extracting meaningful insights from such diverse data sets increasingly depends on artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities. Integrating AI tools into market research and strategic decision-making enhances the quality and precision of marketing choices (Pietronudo et al., 2022). For instance, natural language processing (NLP), a branch of AI, enables marketers to interpret customer sentiments and behavioral patterns by analyzing textual data (Sharma et al., 2022). This insight supports the delivery of personalized marketing content and enables the development of products and services tailored to specific customer needs. This study proposes that AI proficiency plays a crucial role in strengthening an organization's marketing information management capacity. Through AI, firms can process a variety of market data types and generate insightful visualizations to support executive-level decision-making (Farrokhi et al., 2020).

Social Media Competence

Social media refers to digital platforms and tools—rooted in Web 2.0 technologies—that support content creation, sharing, and user interaction, thereby fostering connection and communication among individuals within a network (Delello & Mokhtari, 2020). As highlighted by these authors, social media encompasses several key characteristics. One of its primary functions is enabling dialogue among users, which helps cultivate relationships through posts, comments, and shared content (Iyadi & Oruakpor, 2023). Additionally, social media promotes user engagement by facilitating conversations, collaboration, and exchanges centered on common interests (Capriotti et al., 2021; Hadoussa & Menif, 2019). Despite the growing adoption and sophistication of these platforms, a number of organizations continue to restrict access to social media within the workplace. This ongoing restriction contributes to the ambiguity surrounding the role and impact of social media in professional settings, particularly in marketing. As such, there remains a need to examine which platforms are most relevant and impactful for marketing activities. The academic literature often categorizes social media into distinct types or groupings, based on their functions and usage patterns (Iyadi, 2023).

Networking Competence

The concept of networking competence can be interpreted in various ways depending on the observer's perspective and the context in which it is examined. Generally, it involves the use of internet-based platforms and digital tools that allow individuals to publish and share a wide range of content, including text, audio, and video, over the web (Computer Economics, 2010). It is commonly understood as a suite of online applications that support user interaction, collaborative efforts, and the creation and exchange of content generated by users themselves (García-Morales, Martín-Rojas, & Garde-Sánchez, 2020). This digital interaction fosters the development of online communities where individuals can communicate ideas, exchange information, and share personal stories or media (Fuchs, 2017; Morris, 2020).

Safko and Brake (2009) describe networking competence as the behavioral patterns and practices of individuals engaging in online conversations to disseminate information and insights through interactive media. At its core, it also refers to leveraging social media platforms to market a company's offerings (Barefoot & Szabo, 2010). According to Ahmad (2011), networking competence can be broken down into three main categories: spreading information, enhancing brand recognition, and cultivating relationships. One of its defining features is the low barrier to entry—anyone can participate freely, without needing a physical space. As such, it facilitates faster and more efficient information dissemination compared to traditional methods, enabling real-time interaction that supports relationship development.

Ghose, Ipeirotis, and Li (2019) further expand this concept by introducing components such as review sharing, social engagement, content informativeness, and management of social media accounts as integral aspects of networking competence. Feedback from users—ranging from experiences and suggestions to opinions and direct messages—is often visible through comments and posts on these platforms (DeAndrea et al., 2018; Kapoor et al., 2018). Active participation in these online spaces includes activities like posing questions, engaging in dialogue, and expressing opinions, which together shape the interactive nature of social media (Patel, 2019). Additionally, the informative dimension of social media includes multimedia elements such as videos, images, audio, and written content—widely used by users for educational and engagement purposes (Ntale, Mathenge, & Gikonyo, 2020).

Users often share personal content such as vacation stories or travel experiences through various digital platforms, including social media and content-sharing websites (Theocharidis et al., 2019). To connect with customers and maintain visibility, organizations frequently maintain accounts on major platforms like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube, using these channels to engage audiences and build brand loyalty (Kim & Chae, 2018; Diffley & McCole, 2019).

Consumer Buying Behaviour

Consumer behavior can be understood as a complex and evolving interplay between emotions, thought processes, actions, and environmental factors that shape how individuals engage in the exchange of goods, services, and ideas (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019). More specifically, consumer buying behavior encompasses the range of thoughts, emotions, decisions, and actions that individuals experience before and during the purchase of a product, service, or concept (Singh, 2020). It also includes how individuals respond both before and after consumption, highlighting the full spectrum of the consumer experience (Stoner, 2019; Iyadi & Christopher, 2022). Several factors influence these responses, particularly in marketing and advertising contexts—such as the type of platform or communication channel and how it is utilized. In the digital era, these dynamics have become more complex, making it increasingly challenging to interpret consumer responses. Key considerations now include perceived value, ethical concerns, customer engagement levels, and insights from behavioral economics—all of which significantly shape how consumers behave and make decisions (Dowling et al., 2019).

Theoretical Review

Resource Based View Theory

This theory traces its origins to Edith Penrose's influential work, *The Theory of the Growth of the Firm* (1959), where she emphasized the strategic importance of utilizing a firm's internal resources to drive growth and competitive advantage. The concept was further developed by Wernerfelt (1984), who argued that the effective use of internal resources is fundamental to creating value within the firm. Building on this foundation, Barney (1991) highlighted that not all resources contribute equally to sustained competitive advantage—only those that meet specific criteria can offer long-term benefits. These critical resources must be difficult to replicate and identifiable through the strategic efforts of an organization's leadership.

For a company to capitalize on such resources, continuous investment in employee development and capability-building is essential. In contexts like Micro Cap Holdings, this may involve allocating resources to research and development, which in turn enhances human capital. Later, Barney (2001) assessed the evolution of the resource-based view (RBV) over the decade from 1991 to 2001, stressing the need for managers to pinpoint resources that fulfill the VRIN criteria—valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable, and non-substitutable—and to actively cultivate these assets.

At its core, the RBV framework positions internal resources as central to achieving superior firm performance. When a firm possesses resources that align with the VRIN framework, it is more likely to secure and maintain a competitive edge. This theory encourages managers to concentrate on their firm's core strengths while continually seeking and nurturing resources that support the achievement of strategic and behavioral goals.

Empirical Review

This section reviews selected empirical studies and highlights gaps in the literature that form the foundation for the current research.

Suleiman, Ikenze, and Gambo (2024) explored the influence of digital marketing on consumer purchasing behavior within Nile University. The researchers employed a survey methodology, targeting both students and staff members of the institution. Data collection was conducted using an online questionnaire distributed through convenience sampling via Google Forms, with links shared through email, WhatsApp, and Facebook. Out of the distributed forms, 120 valid responses were gathered. Quantitative analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics with SPSS version 23. The findings indicated that the majority of respondents

were familiar with digital marketing and had previously made purchases through various digital platforms. Notably, the study revealed that social media exerted the most substantial influence on consumer behavior compared to other digital channels at Nile University. Based on these insights, the researchers recommended that businesses in Abuja should enhance their use of social media, websites, and email marketing to broaden their customer base, increase product patronage, improve customer relationship management, and ultimately boost profitability.

In a separate study, Bitrus (2022) investigated the determinants of consumer buying behavior in Maiduguri, Nigeria. The study focused on variables such as pricing, motivation, cultural relevance, and religious orientation, assessing their impact on purchase decisions. Using a survey research design, data were collected via questionnaires distributed to 385 respondents across provision stores in the area. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Results showed that price, motivation, and perceived cultural value had a statistically significant and positive relationship with consumer buying behavior. However, religious orientation did not have a mediating effect on the relationships among the variables studied. The author suggested that future research should explore additional variables that could influence consumer attitudes and purchasing confidence, especially in a global context.

Furthermore, Saula, Onu, and Akinlabi (2022) assessed the effect of social networking platforms on the performance of hospitality businesses in Nigeria, with a particular focus on the hotel industry. A survey approach was utilized to evaluate how the adoption of social media tools has influenced firm outcomes in this sector. The study employed stratified and purposive random sampling to select eleven five-star hotels. Applying the Krejcie and Morgan formula, the researchers determined a sample size of 307 respondents drawn from a population of 1,490 managerial and supervisory staff. The research instruments underwent both content and construct validity checks, and reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's Alpha. Hypotheses were tested using bivariate regression with SPSS version 26. The findings revealed that social media platforms significantly enhanced the performance metrics of hotel businesses, including market share, customer base, revenue, profitability, and occupancy rates. Additionally, the study concluded that many Nigerian hotels had formally adopted social networking tools to drive growth. Consequently, it recommended that hospitality firms increase their use of diverse social media platforms to penetrate niche markets and enhance strategic outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed cross sectional survey research design method which is descriptive in nature. Cross sectional survey research design method is also considered because it permits the collection of data through questionnaire admitted to a sample of respondents and that the data collected by the design would be used to suggest reasons for a particular relationship between variables and produce models for those relationships. In this study, the target population comprised of 58 employees of selected retail outlets in Asaba, Delta State (Gabs and Shoprite). The sample size of this study consists of fifty eight (58) members (respondents) of the organizations under study. The stratified random sampling technique was adopted with the view to minimize the degree of bias and sidedness of the respondent's opinion on the study on the period of questionnaire distribution.

Questionnaire with closed ended questions was used to collect primary data from the respondents. The respondents recorded their opinion within closely defined alternatives on a 5 point Likert scale. Data were entered into a data analysis tool which is the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) computer software for analysis. The choice of SPSS over other statistical software was because it is user friendly.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Data Presentation

The data generated in this study through the questionnaire are presented and analyzed manually. In analyzing these data, responses were converted into numeric figures and percentages. Here, is to critically analyze and present the gathered information, inform of data on the research study "assessment of marketing information system on firm's profitability. In consonance with the chosen sample size stated in chapter three of this study, total number of fifty (50) copies of structured questionnaire was administered to the respondents which were returned and properly filled as shown in the table below:

Table 1: Questionnaire Distributions

Event	N0	%
Questionnaire Administered	50	100%
Total Responses	50	100%

Source: Analysis of field survey, 2025.

Table 2: Genders of Respondents

Gender	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Male	21	42
Female	29	58
Total	50	100

Source: field survey 2025.

From the above table 2, it shows that (42%) of the sample population were male and (58%) were female. However, this information shows that there were more female than male respondents.

Table 3: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Bracket	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
18-25years	10	20
26-35 years	24	48
36-45 years	9	18
46-55 years	5	10
Above 56 years	2	4
Total	50	100

Source: field survey 2025.

The table above shows that 10 respondents, representing 20% in the age bracket of 18-25 years, while 24 respondents representing 48% were between 26- 35 years, which is the highest frequency. 9 respondents representing 18% were between age brackets of 36-45 years, while 5 respondents representing 10% were 46-55 years and 2 respondents representing 4% were above 56 years, 6-55 years and 2 respondents representing 4% were above 56 years.

Table 4: Marital Status

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Married	20	40
Single	29	58
Separated	0	0
Divorced	1	2
Total	50	100

Source: field survey 2025.

The table above shows that 20 respondents representing 40% were married, 29 respondents representing 58% were single has the highest frequency of the sample size. While 1 respondent representing 2% indicated divorced has the lowest frequency of the total sample size.

Table 5: Category of Management

Category of Management	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Top	13	26
Middle	15	30
Lower	22	44
Total	50	100

Source: field analysis, 2025.

Data Analysis of Research Questions

Table 6: Intelligent Systems can help Employees' better serve Customers by drawing on Analytics

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	22	44
Agree	18	36
Disagree	8	16
Strongly Disagree	2	4
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The above table shows that 40 respondents representing 80% which is the majority agree that intelligent systems can help employees' better serve customers by drawing on analytics. However, only 10 respondents representing 20% of the total respondents gave a negative response.

Table 7: A.I improves customer experience by providing tailored content and offers and excellent customer service to each consumer

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	30	60
Agree	15	30
Disagree	3	6
Strongly Disagree	2	4
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The above table shows that 45 respondents representing 90% which is the majority agreed that marketing A.I improves customer experience by providing tailored content and offers and excellent customer service to each consumer. However, only 5 respondents representing 10% of the total respondents gave a negative response.

Table 8: Intelligent Systems have boost Operational Efficiency

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	33	66
Agree	10	20
Disagree	5	10
Strongly Disagree	2	4
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The above table shows that 43 respondents representing 86% which is the majority agreed that intelligent systems have boosted operational efficiency. However, only 7 respondents representing 14% of the total respondents gave a negative response.

Table 9: Intelligent Systems have led to increased Productivity, Ethical and Regulatory Considerations

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	27	54

Agree	21	42
Disagree	1	2
Strongly Disagree	1	2
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The above table shows that 48 respondents representing 96% which is the majority agreed that intelligent systems have led to increased productivity, ethical and regulatory considerations. However, only 2 respondents representing 4% of the total respondents gave a negative response

Table 10: Social Media Interaction Practices by firms has encouraged clients to interact with the Brands Communicated

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	39	78
Agree	11	22
Disagree	-	-
Strongly Disagree	-	-
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The above table shows that 50 respondents representing 100% which is the total respondents agreed that social media interaction practices by firms has encouraged clients to interact with the brands communicated.

Table 11: Social Interaction has boost your engagement rate, which increases your overall Brand Visibility

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	38	76
Agree	10	20
Disagree	1	2
Strongly Disagree	1	2
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The above table shows that 48 respondents representing 96% which is the majority agreed that social interaction has boost your engagement rate, which increases your overall brand visibility. However, only 2 respondents representing 6% of the total respondents believed

Table 12: Email sent by firms have made you have stronger relationship with brands

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	22	44
Agree	18	36
Disagree	7	14
Strongly Disagree	3	6
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The above table shows that 40 respondents representing 80% which is the majority agreed that email sent by firms have made you have stronger relationship with brands. However, only 10 respondents representing 20% of the total respondents gave a negative response.

Table 13: Email platforms allow you to directly connect and communicate with your current and future brands

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	16	32
Agree	33	66
Disagree	1	2
Strongly Disagree	-	-
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The above table shows that 49 respondents representing 98% which is the majority agreed that Email platforms allow you to directly connect and communicate with your current and future brands. However, only 1 respondent representing 2% of the total respondents gave a negative response.

Table 14: There is established connections and regularly contribution with other retail organizations

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	20	40
Agree	19	38
Disagree	5	10
Strongly Disagree	6	12
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The above table shows that 39 respondents representing 78% which is the majority agreed that there is established connections and regularly contribution with other retail organizations. However, only 11 respondent representing 22% of the total respondents gave a negative response.

Table 15: Networking increase the chances of new business opportunities

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	21	42
Agree	25	50
Disagree	1	2
Strongly Disagree	5	10
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The above table shows that 44 respondents representing 88% which is the majority agreed that networking increase the chances of new business opportunities. However, only 6 respondent representing 12% of the total respondents gave a negative response.

Table 16: Networking provides businesses with access to new opportunities for growth and development

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
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Strongly Agree	29	58
Agree	13	26
Disagree	7	14
Strongly Disagree	1	2
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The above table shows that 42 respondents representing 84% which is the majority agreed that networking provides businesses with access to new opportunities for growth and development. However, only 8 respondent representing 16% of the total respondents gave a negative response.

Table 17: Networking expands business opportunities by fostering connections, creating brand awareness, and facilitating collaboration

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	19	38
Agree	16	32
Disagree	6	12
Strongly Disagree	9	18
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The above table shows that 35 respondents representing 70% which is the majority agreed that networking expands business opportunities by fostering connections, creating brand awareness, and facilitating collaboration. However, only 15 respondents representing 30% of the total respondents gave a negative response.

Table 18: Correlation Showing Direction of Relationship for Marketing Competence and Consumer Buying Behaviour

		Marketing Competence	Consumer Buying Behaviour
Marketing Competence	Pearson Correlation	1	.899**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	146	146
Consumer Buying Behaviour	Pearson Correlation	.899**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	1	118

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

Source: SPSS Version 23.0 Output

Table 18, shows that marketing competence has a very strong and positive relationship with consumer buying behaviour ($r = 0.899$). The correlation is positive, implying that when marketing competence increases, retail firms in Delta State experience a corresponding increase in their consumer buying behaviour. The significance (p - value) is $(0.000) < (0.05)$ level of significance; hence the researcher concludes that there is a very strong positive relationship between marketing competence and consumer buying behaviour of selected retail firms in Delta State, Nigeria

Table 19: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.972 ^a	.946	.945	.24066

a. Predictors: (Constant), Artificial Intelligence, Networking competence , Social Media Competence

Source: SPSS Version 23.0 Output

This sub-section examined the relative influence of marketing competence on consumer buying behaviour. The co-efficient of determination (R^2) showed relatively the highest number of significant variables in conformity with a priori expectation. Table 19 depicts a linear regression analysis of marketing competence and consumer buying behaviour. It was found that the R value is (0.972), R square (0.946), adjusted R (0.945) and the standard error of the estimate value is (0.24066). The high R value revealed that marketing competence accounted for (94.6%) change in consumer buying behaviour of selected retail firms in Delta State while the remaining 5.4 % is explained by other factors outside the model.

Table 20: ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	f	Sig.
Regression	143.234	3	47.745	824.353	.000 ^b
1 Residual	8.224	142	.058		
Total	151.459	145			

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Buying Behaviour

b. Predictors: (Constant), Artificial Intelligence, Networking Competence, Social Media Marketing Competence

Source: SPSS version 24.0 Output

Furthermore, in Table 20, the analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed a regression sum of square value of (143.234) which is higher than the residual sum of squares value of (8.224). This implies that the model involving the marketing competence accounted for most of the variations in the consumer buying behaviour of selected retail firms in Delta State. The F calculated value of (824.353) depicts the significance and reliability of the model developed through the regression analysis results. In addition, the significant P-value of (0.000) is smaller than (0.05). This implies that there is significant evidence to extrapolate that marketing competence is related to consumer buying behaviour.

Test of Hypotheses

The multiple-regression analysis was used to test the three research hypotheses on whether to reject or accept the null hypotheses. Therefore, this section tested and interpreted the hypotheses formulated in this study. The decision rule in the test of hypotheses is to accept the null hypothesis where the t-calculated is less than (<) t-tabulated 0.05 significance level. Thus, where t-calculated is greater (>) t-tabulated, then the null hypothesis is rejected and the research hypothesis accepted.

Table 21: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.183	.074		2.496	.014
Artificial Intelligence	.105	.030	.125	3.470	.001
1 Networking Competence	.298	.033	.337	9.020	.000
Social Media Comoetence	.530	.048	.566	11.149	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Buying Behaviour

Source: SPSS Version 23.0 Output

Table 18 shows that marketing competence strategies has a very strong and positive relationship with consumer buying behaviour ($r = 0.899$). The correlation is positive, implying that when marketing competence increases, retail firms in Delta State experience a corresponding increase in their consumer buying pattern. The significance (p - value) is (0.000) < (0.05) level of significance; hence the researcher concludes that there is a very strong positive relationship between marketing competence strategy and consumer buying behaviour

H01: artificial intelligence competence does not have significant effect on consumer buying behaviour

Table 4 shows that artificial intelligence has a calculated t-value of 3.470 and a corresponding sig. value/probability value (PV) of 0.000. From the decision rule, since t-calculated = 3.470 is greater than t-tabulated (0.05, 258) = 1.96; then the null hypothesis is rejected; and therefore, artificial intelligence have significant effect on consumer buying behaviour of selected retail firms in Delta State Nigeria. Thus, this finding implies that an increase in ($\beta = 0.105$) of consumer buying behaviour was attributed to a unit increase in artificial intelligence of selected retail firms in Delta State.

H02: networking competence does not have significant effect on consumer buying behaviour

Table 21 shows that networking competence has a calculated t-value of 9.020 and a corresponding sig. value/probability value (PV) of 0.000. From the decision rule, since t-calculated = 9.020 is greater than t-tabulated (0.05, 258) = 1.96; then the null hypothesis is rejected; and therefore, networking competence significantly influences consumer buying behaviour of selected retail firms in Delta State. Thus, this finding implies that an increase in ($\beta = 0.298$) of consumer buying behaviour was attributed to a unit increase in networking competence of selected retail firms in Delta State.

H03: social media competence does not have significant effect on consumer buying behaviour

Table 21 shows that social media marketing has a calculated t-value of 11.149 and a corresponding sig. value/probability value (PV) of 0.000. From the decision rule, since t-calculated = 11.149 is greater than t-tabulated (0.05, 258) = 1.96; then the null hypothesis is rejected; and therefore, social media competence significantly influences consumer buying behaviour of selected retail firms in Delta State. Thus, this finding implies that an increase in ($\beta = 0.530$) of consumer buying behaviour was attributed to a unit increase in social media competence of selected retail firms in Delta State.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

This study was undertaken to assess marketing competence on consumer buying behaviour, using selected retail firms operating in Asaba Delta State, as a case study for its analysis. Marketing competence was highlighted using three dimensions (artificial intelligence, social media and networking) on how they affect the consumer buying behaviour of retail outlets. The study problem evolved from the increasing relevance of marketing intelligence factors, which in turn improve the profitability of the organization. Three (3) research questions and three (3) hypotheses were designed to guide the study analysis. The scope of the study was carefully done to be representative of the operations in the organization. The study is of immense significance and value to practitioners, academicians, and stakeholders who are desirous of better understanding, developmental application and evaluation of marketing competence systems to achieving set goals and objectives of the organization. A review of related literatures was carried out in chapter two. The third chapter highlighted the methodology employed in gathering presentation analysis and interpretation of relevant data. The chapter four, collected data were presented and analyzed. The analysis of the data presented revealed indicating that there are significant effects between marketing competence dynamics identified in this study and consumer buying behaviour.

Conclusion

The study concluded that dimensions of marketing competence adopted in this study had significant effect on consumer buying behaviour.

Social media competence was found to have significant effect on consumer buying behaviour. Social media networking platforms as a in the Nigerian retail sector has greatly impacted market share, client portfolio, turnover and profit, occupancy rate, and overall behaviour of customers. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Pinterest are being utilised by the retail firms as significant social media channels.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from the analysis, the study recommends the following:

- i. management of retail firms may utilise social media platforms to generate and establish product awareness, attract and retain consumers, and increase sales, so contributing to a positive market growth curve.
- ii. the study further recommends that consumers should be enlighten on the importance of the products they intend to buy in line with their faith to avoid making purchases only on advertisement seen without properly knowing the benefit of the products one is buying.
- iii. by considering the size and characteristics of the surrounding population, level of competition, access to transportation, availability of parking, easy accessibility and long opening hours while making online store (apps) decision enables retail to reduce transaction cost and can increase consumer purchase pattern

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