



SOCIAL MEDIA CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN THE NIGERIA SERVICE INDUSTRY

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Abstract

Social media has continued to gain traction in marketing and business hence business firms continue to use them in stimulating customer engagement. This study was informed by the need to explore social media customer engagement and customer satisfaction in the service industry in Nigeria with emphasis on Anambra State. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design and was based on a captive sample of 90 respondents. This study found that there is a significant positive relationship between customer vigour; dedication; and absorption, and social media interaction. It also found out that there is a strong positive relationship between social media interaction and social involvement and with customer satisfaction. Data were collected structured questionnaire and the gathered information were analysed with multiple regression analysis. The results show that the four independent variables of vigour, dedication, absorption and social media interaction significantly and positively impact customer satisfaction with services. Discussions were made and recommendations were also made.

Key words: social media, customer engagement, customer satisfaction, vigour, dedication, absorption and social media interaction

1. Introduction

Social media are as multiple as they are varied ranging from Facebook, Youtube, WhatsApp, TikTok and others and their development was informed by the developments and advances in information and communication technology (ICT). The use of social media has been tremendous as they are now ubiquitous even among business/marketing firms all over the world. According to statista.com, the global active social media users as at Jun 21, 2022 stood at 4.7 billion; while the global social media penetration rate is estimated at 58.4%. as of January 2022, Nigeria had 32.9 million active social media users. Statista.com further reports that WhatsApp is the most popular platform used in the country, with over 90 million users; Facebook, You Tube, and Instagram followed as the most used social media platforms in Nigeria. The social media also referred to as owned media is gaining popularity as veritable online activities among customers globally; as marketing firms follow their customers and pursued customer engagement with their customer



base with the social media platforms (Kujur & Singh, 2017). The notion of customer engagement relates to the wider spectrum of customer involvement and activism in value co-creation hence it has been attracting the attention of both academics and practitioners. According to Żyminkowska (2019), customer engagement took an important position as a topic of discourse in marketing academia in 2010 and was catalysed by the Marketing Science Institute (MSI). Żyminkowska (2019) report that special issues on the subject of customer engagement attracted the attention of leading marketing journals like the *Journal of Service Research*; *Journal of Marketing Management 2016*; and *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* among others. The concept was also included in the agenda of the most reputable marketing conferences within Europe and the United States of America (Żyminkowska, 2019). This study was motivated by the need to explore social media customer engagement in the service industry and stem from the fact that the service industry is the biggest segment of the Nigerian economy accounting for 43.79% of gross domestic product in (see Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Statistical Bulletin, 2021), hence a research of social media customer engagement in the sector is very imperative.

Numerous works have already been done to conceptualize and operationalize the CEB in marketing literature, there are still important gaps to be addressed. Within the African context, very few studies: Agyei et al (2020) and Glavee-Geo (2019) have been conducted. While majority of the studies have been conducted on customer engagement in diverse areas, only few studies (example: Kujur & Singh, 2017 and Cheung, Lee & Kim, 2011) have dwelt on social media customer engagement. Cheung et al (2011) study has involvement and social interaction as antecedents of customer engagement; vigour, dedication and absorption as components of customer engagement; while online social participation and word of mouth were the outcomes/consequences or behavioural engagement. This study adapted the Cheung et al. model utilising vigour, dedication, absorption and social media interaction and customer satisfaction as the outcome of social media customer engagement in the service industry. The main objective of this study is to explore social media customer engagement and customer satisfaction in the Nigeria service industry with select customers from Anambra State.

1.1 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated for the study and are stated in alternate forms only:

H₁: There is a significant positive relationship between vigour and customer satisfaction.

H₂: There is a significant positive relationship between dedication and customer satisfaction.

H₃: There is a significant positive relationship between absorption and customer satisfaction.

H₄: There is a significant positive relationship between social media interaction and customer satisfaction.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Social Media Customer Engagement

Social media usage is gaining traction creating in turn online social communities where consumers share information and feelings and disseminate information concerning their enthusiasm or lack of it about their favourite brand with their friends, contacts and other acquaintances. Cheung et al. (2011) state that consumers freely join online brand communities in social platforms and social networking sites to be engaged in these online social platforms through ongoing communication processes (e.g., providing positive comments or videos, pictures related to the brand or company,



and the like). The advent and popularity of social media is the reason customer engagement is receiving significant attention in recent times among marketers and practitioners. Social media is gaining traction and has become an important channel for online consumer engagement. Like many new concepts, customer engagement as a concept still lacks clear definitions and applications; even as it has become commonplace among academics and practitioners in marketing. Organisations all over the world investing and continuously investing in social media and brands to grow and expand their online customer fan base. Additionally, having social media presence online facilitates a number of advantageous networks and platforms for the brand owners in relation to advertising, product development and market intelligence by observation and analysis of the user generated content (UGC) (in Kujur & Singh, 2011). Organisations and businesses can easily develop loyalty if they appreciate and understand customer engagement better than their competitors (Smith & Zook, 2020). While Dwivedi (2015) define customer engagement as consumers' positive fulfilling, brand-use-related condition of mind demonstrated by vigour, dedication and absorption, Pansari and Kumar (2018) refers to customer engagement as customers emotional attachment to a firm and its product offerings. There appears to be no unified definition of the concept of customer engagement which many believe is normal for emerging new concept and tool. What is not in doubt however is that customer engagement has significant impact on customer co-creation and loyalty intentions. Customer engagement in an online social platform is defined as *the level of a customer's physical, cognitive, and emotional presence in connections with a particular online social platform* (Cheung et al. 2011, p.3).

2.2 Theoretical Review and Framework

Understanding the theory of customer engagement is a good way to enhance our understanding of the differences between customer engagement and other customer relationship constructs (Pansari & Kumar, 2018). Several theories and models have been employed by researchers in trying to explain and understand the phenomenon of customer engagement. Some of these are Service-dominant logic, customer engagement model, consumer involvement profile and three H's model. Others are the theory of planned behaviour (TBP), unified technology acceptance and use theory; and Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2014) dialogue, access, risk assessment, and transparency (DART) model, uses and gratifications (U&G) theory among others. Customer engagement is defined as customer activism in value cocreation and the import of the S-D logic in this study can be seen in the axioms especially axioms 2, that value is cocreated by multiple actors including the beneficiary; axiom value is always uniquely determined by the beneficiary. It is also paramount to note axiom 1: that service is the fundamental basis of exchange. Thus, customer engagement is about customer involvement and activism in cocreating and defining value. While agreeing with Newman and Harrison (2008) Cheung et al. that a multidimensional perspective of customer engagement model could best capture the breadth and complexity of this construct. This study adapted the model from the work-in-progress of Cheung et al. (2011) model utilising vigour, dedication and absorption as components/antecedents of engagement; social media interaction as the mediating variable; and social involvement and customer satisfaction as the outcomes/consequences of customer engagement.

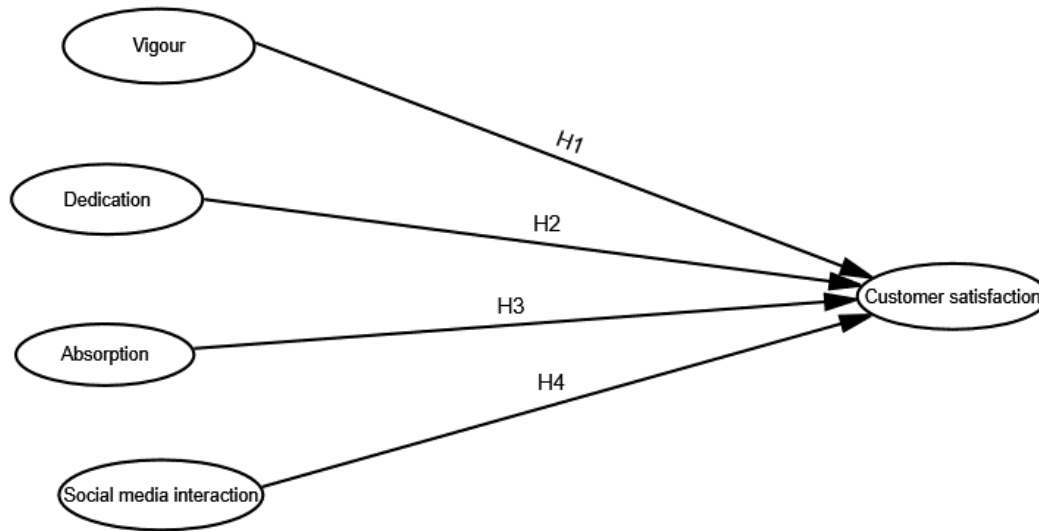


Figure 1: The research conceptual model

The three key dimensions of customer engagement are explained: vigour (physical) relates to the level of energy and mental resilience in using an online social platform, zeal to invest time and effort in one's position and role as a customer; absorption (cognition) implies being actively and fully and deeply engrossed in an online social platform; and dedication (emotion) relates to the sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge towards an online social platform (Cheung, et al. 2011). Social media involvement is part of the antecedents of customer engagement. By observing conversations and interactions on social media, a firm can appreciate customers' needs and this will lead to involvement of members of the online brand community in the co-creation of value through the generation of ideas (in Kujur & Singh, 2017). Online social media interaction and participation is among the outcomes and behavioural components of customer engagement. decisions. With personal interactions and participations, firms can relate with customers directly and have better ideas about the source of problems, preferences, and needs; as the terms engagement and participation have become the central non-transactional constructs, used to describe the nature of participants' experiences (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013). Social Involvement: Through customers' feedback or by observing conversations on online social media, a firm can learn about customers' needs, potentially leading to the involvement of participants or members of the online community in the co-creation of value through the generation of ideas (Palmer & Koenig-Lewis, 2009). Interaction relates to customers' online and off-line participation with the brand as well with other customers outside of purchase (So, King & Sparks, 2014). It is identified as one of the characteristics that define customer engagement literature. we define customer satisfaction is a customer deep commitment to buy and rebuy a preferred product or service over a period of time and to communicate positively to friends and acquaintances about the firm and or its brand. Leong, Syuhaily and Laily, (2017) noted that the competition in the service and hospitality industry has led to firms discovering consumer loyalty as a key success factor. In general, customer satisfaction is one of the outcomes of customer engagement as gleaned from literature and as used in this study.



2.3 Empirical Review

Patterson, Yu and Ruyter (2011) study was on understanding customer engagement in services. The aim of the paper was to establish a conceptual understanding of customer engagement. Drawing from management, marketing, applied psychology literature and marketing practitioners' views, an initial working definition of customer engagement was formed. Customer engagement describes the level of a customer's various "presence" in their relationship with the organisation. The presences include physical presence, emotional presence and cognitive presence. Customer engagement is conceived as a higher-order construct which consists of four components, namely, vigour, dedication, absorption, and interaction. Given the intangible nature of services and that a degree of customer provider social interaction is typically required in delivery of services, we contend the construct has high relevance in service industries. Eight related marketing constructs were identified and compared to customer engagement. The paper discussed key reasons for devoting research attention to customer engagement. These are that customer engagement focus on the affective element of the customers adding that the similar benefits of enhancing relationship closeness may also be obtained by enhancing customer engagement. The paper also maintain that the overall customer engagement possesses broad and unique characteristics that may enable customer engagement to offer unique contributions to the service industries, where customers are often part of the product and service delivery process.

Cheung, et al. (2011) study based on conceptual model and scale development as it relates to social media customer engagement. They noted that the rise of new online social media channels in the last few years has altered the ways customers communicate and exchange information and emphasised that customer relationship management through social media engagement has become an important dimension of successful electronic marketing strategies. Their study was motivated by the paucity of theory-guided empirical research in customer engagement in online social media platforms adding that consensus as to the definition, forms, dimensionality and operationalisation of customer engagement is still lacking even as the subject continue to attract considerable attention in the academia. The authors presented a conceptual model of customer engagement and also propose a rigorous approach in scale development and validation. The work contributes to the development of online community literature as well as to the repository of usable research instruments. Our study was based on a modified variant of the instrument.

Kujur and Singh (2017) study engaging customers through online participation in social networking sites noted that brands are developing presence in online social networking sites to meet customer engagement, brand awareness and word of mouth. The study was motivated by the need to analyse the factors that condition consumers interactions with branded content. They applied use and gratification (U&G) theory to seek explanation on why people actively participate in media usage and interact highly with the communication media. The study which was based on 394 respondents relied both online and offline questionnaire while structural equations modelling was utilised for analysis. The outcomes show that the U&G theory significantly explains consumers' attitude to social networking sites. The outcomes also show that content characteristics of the network sites: vividness, interactivity, entertainment and information have direct impact on the consumers' online participation and engagement behaviour whilst incentive show no impact. The results of the study also show that positive attitude toward SNA, vividness, interactivity, information and entertainment show partial mediation effect on the consumers' online participation and engagement behaviour while incentive show full mediation effect. The study concluded that



the social media users with positive attitude toward network activities are more likely to surf the Net and feel more engaged. Our study relies on engagement model and uses mediated moderation analysis to assess social media engagement behaviour.

Salem (2021) study on relationship marketing constructs that enhance customer retention in the service industry was based on 188 copies of questionnaire collected from service guests in Malaysia to evaluate the structural relationships between the relationship marketing constructs: conflict handling, trust, and customer commitment and performance of the measurement model using SmartPLS 3.2.3. Importance-performance map analysis (IPMA) was used to identify measures that could be utilized to enhance management activities. The outcomes of the study indicated that customer retention is directly influenced by conflict handling, whereas customer engagement is directly affected by trust, conflict handling, and commitment. However, conflict handling, commitment, and trust indirectly affected customer retention via customer engagement. The IPMA also revealed several aspects to help decision-makers and managers prioritize their actions efficiently. The study concluded that service managers prioritize their customers' complaints and resolve them effectively. Leong, et al. (2017) studied on the relationship between consumer involvement and consumer engagement behaviour with consumer loyalty in Tourism and Hospitality Industry proposed that the newly emerged term of consumer engagement behaviour acts as the mediator of the relationship between consumer involvement and consumer loyalty. They adopted the theory of Service-Dominant Logic while the supporting foundations are Consumer Engagement Model, Consumer Involvement Profile, and 3H's Model. The study concluded that consumer involvement and consumer engagement behaviour influence consumer loyalty in tourism and hospitality industry. The above review help through some light on constructs and theories that help explain and define social media customer engagement and also help to define how the constructs relate and impact engagement behaviour and customer satisfaction.

3. Methodology

This adopted quantitative research methodology which involve collecting data with structured questionnaire and analysing quantitatively. The study also adopted survey research design and this type of survey adopted is the cross-sectional survey research since data were collected at one point within the last quarter of 2022. The data were collected from customers of the services organisations visited like transport companies, hotel guests, and event centres. Data were also from some service providers like rentals and related business registered with the Anambra State Ministry of Commerce and also registered with the Chambers of commerce. This was done in the two major towns in the state: Awka, the state capital and Onitsha, the commercial nerve centre of the state. The study was based on four core predictor variables: consumer vigour, dedication, absorption and social media interaction as well as customer satisfaction which is DV. Three core predictor variables were measured with six items each while social media interaction was measured with five items each. The DV was measured with four items. All the items were measured with five-point Likert scale. Four socio-demographics: gender, age, education and occupation were included in the study. The population of the study is infinite; and the sample size was determined using the number of cases to number of IVs (see: Pallant, 2016). This study has four IVs hence the sample size is: $n = 50 + 8m$, where 50 is a constant and m is the number IVs. The sample size is $50 + 8 * 4$, which is 82, which is rounded up to 90 respondents. To make sure this sample size was used in our analysis we relied on number of contacts which is approximately 140 contacts based on



expected response rate of 65% (see: Hair, Bush & Ortinau (2006). Discriminant validity was checked using inter-item cross correlation while reliability was checked using Cronbach alpha statistics. The data collected were analysed with multiple linear regression (MLR) analysis which is a parametric regression and this was done with the aid of Microsoft Excel 2019 version.

4. Results and Discussions

The researcher drop-off-pick-up method in distributing the questionnaire in the various parks of Peace Mass Transit operates in Anambra State. The sample size for this study is 90 and same number of questionnaires were returned as duly filled and usable based on about 140 contacts. Four socio-demographic variables were used in the study: gender, education and occupation. On gender, 65(71.9%) are males while 25(28.1%) are females. The results also show that 52(57.5%) of the respondents are within 20-30 years age bracket; 28(30.6%) fall within 31-40 years age bracket; 6(7.0%) are within 41-50 years age bracket while the only 4(4.8%) are above 51 years. On education, 8(9.0%) have basic education, 13(14.6%) have ND/NCE, 44(48.3%) are holders of HND and BSc, while 25(28.1%) are holders of postgraduate qualifications. The implication of this is that the respondents are well educated to appreciate the import of the study and gave valid information. Lastly on occupation, 64(70.8%) of the respondents are civil/public servants, 21(23.6%) are private firm’s employees while 5(5.6%) are self-employees. Our respondents are balanced among the various employment categories. The next thing is that we look at the discriminant validity of the constructs using correlation matrix, that is inter item correlation. The implications of these are that our respondents comprise majorly young and middle age who are internet and social media savvy; and that majority of the respondents have reasonable education to understand the import of the study.

	<i>Vigour</i>	<i>Dedication</i>	<i>Absorption</i>	<i>SMI</i>	<i>CS</i>
Vigour	1				
Dedication	0.588253	1			
Absorption	0.342663	0.57913385	1		
Social Media Interaction	0.421452	0.60818313	0.6189041	1	
Customer Satisfaction	0.561251	0.65958681	0.4772395	0.55629548	1

The correlation matrix or inter-item correlation above was employed to check for collinearity and discriminant validity. High correlation of 0.7 and above between a DV and IV is good but high correlations between IVs of 0.7 and above show signs of collinearity (see: Pallant, 2016). The correlations between IVs as shown are below the 0.7 threshold hence there is no problem of collinearity in our constructs. This is also an indication that our variables/constructs have discriminant validity and therefore merit high further analysis. The next thing we look at is the reliability analysis.

Reliability Analysis with Cronbach Alpha

Constructs	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha
Vigour	6	0.825



Dedication	6	0.778
Absorption	6	0.814
Social Media Interaction	5	0.734
Customer Satisfaction	4	0.901

Cronbach alpha statistics/correlation was employed to check internal reliability and consistency between the construct items. As shown in the table above, Vigour has alpha value of 0.825; Dedication has alpha value of 0.778; absorption has alpha value of 0.814; Social media interaction has alpha value of 0.734; and the dependent variable, customer satisfaction has alpha value of 0.901. All these are well above the alpha threshold value of 0.6 and this is an indication that our items and their constructs have internal consistency reliability and therefore merit further analysis. No item or construct need to be eliminated in further analysis. The next is the MRA analysis and hypotheses validation.

SUMMARY

OUTPUT

<i>Regression Statistics</i>	
Multiple R	0.7125442
R Square	0.5077192
Adjusted R Square	0.4845531
Standard Error	0.5253254
Observations	90

<i>ANOVA</i>					
	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	4	24.1928223	6.04820	21.9164	1.8738E-12
Residual	85	23.4571776	0.27596		
Total	89	47.65			

The first output/information from MRA is Model Summary and from this we see that Multiple R that is coefficient of multiple correlations is 0.713 which is high. The coefficient of determination (R Square) is 0.5077 while the Adjusted R Square is 0.4846. This means that between 48.5% to 50.8% of variations in attitudes towards customer satisfaction are accounted for by the four independent variables. ANOVA as part of regression output provides the statistical test for the overall model fit in terms of the F ratio (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010). This is equivalent to the null hypothesis that all correlations between dependent variable (DV) and independent variables (IVs) are zero. For this analysis our F ratio is 21.916 which is significant at .000 hence



the null hypothesis that Multiple R between IVs and DV are zero is rejected. Based on this we proceed to interpret the coefficients and use them to validate the hypotheses.

	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Standard</i>				<i>Upper</i>
	<i>s</i>	<i>Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Lower 95%</i>	<i>95%</i>
Intercept	-9.556E-05	0.42327223	-	0.99982	-0.8416742	0.841483
Vigour	0.2530037	0.09482286	2.66817	0.00913	0.06447047	0.441537
Dedication	0.4566828	0.14127534	3.23257	0.00174	0.17578958	0.737576
Absorption	0.1311360	0.05544797	2.36502	0.01348	0.03245712	0.316181
Social Media Interaction	0.2209093	0.10595736	2.08488	0.03768	0.06929312	0.511111

Vigour ($\beta = 0.253$; t-value = 2.668; p-value = 0.009), the p-value is well below the 0.05 margin of error and the 95 per cent confidence interval has no zero in-between hence H_1 : there is a significant positive relationship between vigour and customer satisfaction is validated and accepted. Dedication ($\beta = 0.457$; t-value = 3.233; p-value = 0.002), the p-value is well below the 0.05 margin of error and the 95 per cent confidence interval has no zero in-between hence, H_2 : there is a significant positive relationship between dedication and customer satisfaction is fully validated and accepted. Absorption ($\beta = 0.131$; t-value = 2.365; p-value = 0.013), the p-value is well below the 0.05 margin of error and the 95 per cent confidence interval has no zero in-between hence, H_3 : there is a significant positive relationship between absorption and customer satisfaction is fully validated and accepted. Social media interaction (SMI) ($\beta = 0.221$; t-value = 2.085; p-value = 0.038), the p-value is below the 0.05 margin of error and the 95 per cent confidence interval has no zero in-between hence, H_4 : There is a significant positive relationship between social media interaction and customer satisfaction is well accepted and validated.

5 Conclusions, Discussions and Implications

This study found that there is a significant positive relationship between customer vigour and social media interaction; that there is a significant and positive relationship between customer dedication and social media interaction; and there is a significant and positive relationship between customer absorption and social media interaction. These findings agree with Cheung, et al 2011 and Cvijikj and Michahelles (2013) earlier cited in the literature. The findings also agree with Kujur and Singh (2017) in part. The study also found that there is a significant and positive relationship between social media interaction and customer social involvement; that there is a significant and positive relationship between customer social media interaction and social involvement. These findings agree with Kujur and Singh (2017). Social media has continued to gain traction in marketing and business hence business firms continue to use them in engaging their customers and building trust and relationships. Social media platforms like Facebook by usage rate has emerged as the single largest community in the world. This implies that business



firms continue to use it in reaching to their target customers and engaging them. The findings of this study show that customer vigour, dedication and absorption have significant effect on social media interaction which in turn has significant and positive effect on social involvement and customer satisfaction. The findings of this study also show that social media interaction mediates the relationships between customer vigour, dedication, and absorption; social involvement and customer satisfaction but the media is partial. While the moderating variables: age and education contribute increased variance extracted at social involvement and customer satisfaction there was no enhancement of the R-square at the mediating variable. The findings of this study have several implications for social media customer engagement marketing. First, social media marketers need to focus on creating and enhancing customer vigour, dedication and absorption which includes videos, images and status which draws attention of social media users to view the social platforms and social media brand pages. This would keep customers engaged both with visual and audio of the human sensory in platforms and cyber space. This is because vigour, dedication and absorption values were found to be significant in impacting social media interaction.

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