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Social Media Marketing and Customer Purchase Decisions in Enugu State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between social media marketing and customer purchase decisions in Enugu State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to examine the relationship between social media advertising and customer purchase decisions, and ascertain the relationship between social media engagement and customer purchase decisions in Enugu State. The study was conducted among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Enugu State and adopted a descriptive survey research design. Primary data were collected through the administration of structured questionnaires. The population of the study comprised 1,102 respondents, while a sample size of 284 was determined using Freund and Williams' statistical formula at a 5% margin of error. Out of the 284 questionnaires distributed, 244 were correctly completed and returned. The data collected were presented and analysed using descriptive statistics, while the hypotheses were tested using the Z-test statistic. The findings revealed that social media advertising had a significant positive relationship with customer purchase decisions in Enugu State, Nigeria ($Z = 7.752$, $p < .05$). Similarly, social media engagement had a significant positive relationship with customer purchase decisions ($Z = 8.087$, $p < .05$). The study concluded that social media marketing plays an important role in influencing customer purchase decisions in Enugu State, Nigeria. Based on the findings, the study recommended that businesses in Enugu State should invest more in effective social media advertising through platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and WhatsApp. They should develop attractive advertisements, provide accurate product information, offer promotional incentives and target their advertisements towards potential customers to encourage purchasing decisions.

Keywords: *Customer purchase decisions, social media advertising, social media engagement, social media marketing.*

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Introduction

The development of marketing has undergone significant changes over the years, moving from traditional forms of communication to technology-driven promotional activities. Traditionally, businesses relied on newspapers, magazines, radio, television, billboards and face-to-face interactions to communicate information about their products and services to consumers. Although these methods provided opportunities for businesses to create product awareness and attract customers, they were often limited by geographical coverage, communication costs and the inability to obtain immediate feedback from consumers (Okolo et al., 2024). The emergence of the internet and subsequent technological advancements transformed marketing activities by providing businesses with opportunities to communicate directly with consumers through digital channels. The development of social networking platforms further strengthened this transformation by enabling businesses to share information, interact with customers, receive feedback and establish relationships with existing and potential consumers.

Social media marketing refers to the use of social networking platforms and other digital social channels to communicate promotional messages, create brand awareness, interact with customers and influence consumer behaviour. It involves activities such as online advertising, promotional content, product demonstrations, customer reviews, interactive communication and electronic word-of-mouth. Unlike traditional marketing, social media marketing encourages two-way communication between businesses and consumers, allowing customers to respond to promotional messages, ask questions, share experiences and obtain information before making purchasing decisions. Anukwe et al. (2025) observed that social media marketing activities, including interactive content and business responsiveness, are relevant to customer engagement and customer-related outcomes among small and medium-sized enterprises in South-East Nigeria.

Globally, social media marketing has become an important component of contemporary business communication because of increasing internet accessibility, smartphone adoption and changes in consumer information-seeking behaviour. Businesses use platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube and WhatsApp to advertise products, communicate promotional offers, display product features and interact with consumers. These platforms provide consumers with opportunities to obtain product information, compare alternatives, examine customer experiences and evaluate promotional messages before deciding whether to purchase particular products. Consequently, social media has become an important source of commercial information and a platform through which businesses attempt to influence consumer preferences and purchasing behaviour.

In Nigeria, the adoption of social media marketing has increased as businesses seek cost-effective ways of reaching customers and competing in an increasingly digital business environment. Small businesses, supermarkets, fashion retailers, electronic dealers, restaurants and online stores use social networking platforms to promote their products and maintain communication with customers. Achi et al. (2025), in their study of Nigerian undergraduate students, examined the effects of Facebook, YouTube and TikTok on purchase intention for cosmetic products. Their study demonstrated the relevance of social media platforms in exposing consumers to promotional information and influencing their interest in advertised products. Similarly, Olaleye and Kolade (2025) investigated the impact of social media marketing on customers' purchase decisions in selected online supermarkets in Lagos State, Nigeria. Their findings highlighted the importance of social media marketing in contemporary retail activities.

In South-East Nigeria, social media marketing has become relevant to businesses seeking to expand their customer base, improve communication and promote their products beyond their immediate geographical locations. Businesses operating in the region increasingly use digital platforms to display products, announce promotional offers, communicate with customers and obtain feedback. Anukwe et al. (2025) examined social media marketing and customer engagement among small and medium-sized enterprises in South-East Nigeria. Their study identified interactive content, influencer partnerships and responsiveness as relevant factors in developing customer engagement and improving customer-related outcomes. Although the study considered broader social media marketing activities, it provides regional evidence of the importance of digital communication in business relationships.

In Enugu State, social media marketing provides businesses with opportunities to communicate with consumers, promote their offerings and develop relationships with existing and prospective customers. Commercial establishments in Enugu metropolis and other parts of the state, including supermarkets, fashion outlets, electronic shops, restaurants and online retail businesses, can use social media platforms to advertise products and respond to customer enquiries. The increasing use of these platforms makes it important to understand whether promotional messages and online interactions translate into customer purchase decisions. Mazeli (2025), in a study of online retail consumers in Enugu Metropolis, examined social media engagement tools and customer loyalty. The study identified interactive content, real-time communication, user-generated content and visual storytelling as important engagement tools associated with customer loyalty. Although customer loyalty differs from customer purchase decisions, the study provides useful contextual evidence concerning the relevance of social media engagement to consumer relationships in Enugu State.

Social media advertising is one of the important dimensions of social media marketing. It refers to the paid or sponsored promotion of products and services through social networking platforms. It involves the presentation of promotional messages, images, videos and sponsored posts to selected audiences based on factors such as location, interests, demographics and online behaviour. Businesses use social media advertising to communicate product features, prices, availability, discounts and other promotional information. Effective social media advertisements may attract consumer attention, improve product awareness and provide information that assists customers in evaluating available alternatives. Ladokun et al. (2025), in their study of students at The Polytechnic, Ibadan, examined the relationship between social media advertising and student buying behaviour. Similarly, Tiwari et al. (2025) established the relevance of advertising informativeness, entertainment and electronic word-of-mouth to consumers' attitudes towards social media advertising and purchase intentions.

Another important dimension is social media engagement. Social media engagement refers to the level of interaction and participation demonstrated by customers when responding to business-related content on social networking platforms. It includes activities such as liking, commenting, sharing posts, asking questions, participating in discussions and responding to promotional campaigns. It also involves the responsiveness of businesses to customer enquiries, comments and complaints. Social media engagement provides opportunities for businesses to understand customer needs, obtain feedback and establish continuous communication with consumers. Basalamah et al. (2025) found that social media engagement positively influenced purchase intention among consumers of

Indonesian beauty products. Chung (2025) also demonstrated that the value of user-generated content could influence consumer purchase behaviour indirectly through attitudes towards and adoption of such content.

Customer purchase decisions refer to the choices and actions consumers undertake when deciding whether to purchase particular products or services. The process generally involves recognising a need, searching for information, evaluating available alternatives, selecting a preferred product and completing a purchase. These decisions may be influenced by product quality, price, personal preferences, brand reputation, customer reviews, promotional messages and recommendations. In the contemporary business environment, social media platforms provide consumers with additional information that may influence their evaluation of products and their final purchasing choices.

The relationship between social media marketing and customer purchase decisions is therefore important to businesses seeking to understand the effectiveness of their digital promotional activities. Social media advertising may influence purchase decisions by exposing customers to relevant product information and promotional offers, while social media engagement may influence their decisions by encouraging interaction, providing clarification and creating opportunities for customer feedback. However, exposure to advertisements and interaction with business content do not necessarily guarantee that customers will make purchases. Consumers may consider other factors, including affordability, product quality, credibility and personal preferences.

It is against this background that this study examines the relationship between social media marketing and customer purchase decisions in Enugu State, Nigeria, with particular attention to social media advertising and social media engagement.

Statement of the Problem

Ideally, social media marketing should provide businesses with effective opportunities to communicate with customers, create product awareness, promote their offerings and influence customer purchase decisions. Through social media advertising, businesses can reach targeted audiences with information about product features, prices, availability and promotional offers. Similarly, social media engagement should enable businesses to interact with customers, respond to enquiries, obtain feedback and provide information that assists consumers in making informed purchasing decisions. These activities are expected to improve the effectiveness of business communication and strengthen the relationship between promotional activities and customer purchasing behaviour.

However, despite the increasing adoption of social media marketing by businesses in Enugu State, concerns remain about the extent to which social media advertising and social media engagement translate into customer purchase decisions. Some businesses invest resources in online advertising without adequately evaluating whether the advertisements influence customers' choices. Consumers may view advertisements without making purchases because of factors such as high prices, doubts about product quality, inadequate product information or limited trust in online sellers. Repeated exposure to promotional messages may also fail to produce purchasing decisions where the advertisements are uninformative, unattractive or irrelevant to consumers' needs.

Similarly, although businesses use social media platforms to encourage customer interaction, inadequate engagement may limit the effectiveness of their marketing activities. Delayed responses to enquiries, failure to

address complaints, uninformative comments and limited communication may discourage customers from considering advertised products. Furthermore, customers may interact with business posts by liking, commenting or sharing content without necessarily developing the intention or making the decision to purchase the products. Therefore, the existence of social media engagement does not automatically establish that it influences customer purchase decisions.

Although previous studies have examined social media marketing and consumer behaviour in different locations, their findings are not sufficient to explain the relationship between social media advertising, social media engagement and customer purchase decisions among social media users in Enugu State. For instance, Ladokun et al. (2025) examined student buying behaviour in Ibadan, while Olaleye and Kolade (2025) investigated customers' purchase decisions in selected online supermarkets in Lagos State. Anukwe et al. (2025) examined customer engagement among businesses in South-East Nigeria, while Mazeli (2025) focused on customer loyalty among online retail consumers in Enugu Metropolis. These studies provide useful evidence, but they differ in geographical coverage, research focus and outcome variables.

If these issues are not adequately examined, businesses in Enugu State may continue to invest resources in social media promotional activities without clearly understanding how advertising and customer engagement relate to purchasing decisions. This may result in ineffective promotional expenditure, poor customer conversion and missed opportunities to improve business performance. Businesses may also find it difficult to identify the aspects of their social media activities that deserve greater attention.

It is against this background that this study seeks to examine the relationship between social media marketing and customer purchase decisions in Enugu State, Nigeria, specifically by investigating the relationship between social media advertising and customer purchase decisions, as well as the relationship between social media engagement and customer purchase decisions.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine the relationship between social media marketing and customer purchase decisions in Enugu State, Nigeria.

The specific objectives are to:

i. Examine the relationship between social media advertising and customer purchase decisions in Enugu State, Nigeria.
ii. Ascertain the relationship between social media engagement and customer purchase decisions in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study:

i. What is the relationship between social media advertising and customer purchase decisions in Enugu State, Nigeria?
ii. What is the relationship between social media engagement and customer purchase decisions in Enugu State, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses will be tested at a 5% level of significance:

H_{o1}: Social media advertising has no significant relationship with customer purchase decisions in Enugu State, Nigeria.

H_{o2}: Social media engagement has no significant relationship with customer purchase decisions in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to be useful to the following groups:

Business Owners and Managers: The study will provide information on the relationship between social media advertising, social media engagement and customer purchase decisions. This may assist business owners and managers in evaluating their digital promotional activities, improving customer communication and allocating marketing resources more effectively.

Marketing Practitioners: The findings will provide useful insights into how social media advertising and engagement relate to consumer purchasing behaviour. Marketing practitioners may use the findings to improve promotional content, customer interaction and online communication strategies.

Customers: The study may improve customers' understanding of the role of social media advertisements and online interactions in their purchasing decisions. It may also encourage consumers to evaluate promotional information, product claims and online business communication before making purchases.

Researchers and Students: The study will serve as a source of academic information for researchers and students interested in social media marketing, consumer behaviour and customer purchase decisions. It may also provide a basis for further studies on digital marketing and purchasing behaviour in Nigeria.

Government and Relevant Agencies: The findings may provide useful information to agencies responsible for business development and consumer protection when developing policies and programmes relating to digital marketing, online business communication and consumer awareness.

Scope of the Study

The study examines the relationship between social media marketing and customer purchase decisions in Enugu State, Nigeria. The independent variable is social media marketing, while the dependent variable is customer purchase decisions.

Social media marketing is operationalised through two dimensions: social media advertising and social media engagement. Social media advertising is examined in terms of customers' exposure to online advertisements, the informativeness of promotional messages, the attractiveness of advertisements and the relevance of advertised products. Social media engagement is examined through customer interaction with business content, including likes, comments, shares, enquiries, feedback and business responsiveness.

Customer purchase decisions are examined in relation to customers' evaluation of products, consideration of available alternatives, selection of products and purchasing choices following exposure to social media marketing activities.

The geographical scope of the study is Enugu State, Nigeria. The study focuses on social media users in the state who have been exposed to business advertisements, promotional messages or business-related interactions on social networking platforms.

Operational Definition of Terms

Social Media Marketing: The use of social networking platforms and online communities by businesses to promote products, communicate with customers and influence consumer behaviour.

Social Media Advertising: The paid or sponsored promotion of products and services through social networking platforms using text, images, videos and other promotional content.

Social Media Engagement: The interaction and participation of customers with business-related content on social media, including liking, commenting, sharing, asking questions and providing feedback.

Customer Purchase Decisions: The choices and actions consumers undertake when evaluating products, selecting alternatives and deciding whether to purchase particular products or services.

Social Media Platforms: Digital networking applications and websites, including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube and WhatsApp, through which users communicate and share information.

Customer Interaction: The communication and participation that occur between customers and businesses through social media platforms.

Electronic Word-of-Mouth: Product- or service-related opinions, experiences, recommendations and reviews shared by consumers through digital platforms.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Review

Concept of Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing refers to the use of social networking platforms and online communities by businesses to communicate with customers, promote products and services, create brand awareness and influence consumer behaviour. It involves the development and sharing of promotional content, online advertising, customer interaction, product demonstrations and the dissemination of customer experiences through digital platforms. Social media marketing has changed the traditional relationship between businesses and consumers by providing opportunities for direct communication, immediate feedback and continuous interaction.

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube and WhatsApp enable businesses to reach existing and potential customers without relying exclusively on traditional promotional channels. Businesses can use these platforms to display products, communicate prices, announce discounts, introduce new products and respond to customer enquiries. Consumers can also interact with promotional content, share their experiences and obtain information from other users before making purchasing decisions.

Anukwe et al. (2025) explained that social media marketing activities, including interactive content and business responsiveness, are important in promoting customer engagement and improving customer-related outcomes among small and medium-sized enterprises in South-East Nigeria. Similarly, Tiwari et al. (2025) established that the informativeness and entertainment value of social media advertisements, together with electronic word-of-mouth, are relevant to consumers' attitudes towards advertising and purchase intentions.

Social media marketing is important because it allows businesses to communicate promotional information to a wider audience, maintain customer relationships and obtain feedback about their products. It also provides consumers with access to information that may assist them in evaluating available alternatives. In this study, social media marketing is examined through two dimensions: social media advertising and social media engagement.

Dimensions of Social Media Marketing

Social Media Advertising

Social media advertising refers to the paid or sponsored promotion of products, services and brands through social networking platforms. It involves the presentation of promotional messages, images, videos and sponsored posts to selected audiences based on characteristics such as location, age, interests and online behaviour. Businesses use social media advertising to communicate product features, prices, availability, discounts and other promotional information to potential customers.

One major feature of social media advertising is its ability to reach specific audiences. Unlike some traditional advertising methods, social media platforms provide businesses with opportunities to direct promotional messages towards groups of consumers who may have an interest in particular products. This can help businesses improve the relevance of their advertisements and communicate product information to potential buyers.

Social media advertising can influence customer purchase decisions by increasing product awareness, providing relevant information and creating interest in advertised products. Advertisements that contain clear product descriptions, attractive images, useful demonstrations and understandable promotional offers may assist consumers in evaluating products. Repeated exposure to relevant advertisements may also remind customers about available products and encourage them to consider purchasing them.

Ladokun et al. (2025) examined social media advertising and student buying behaviour at The Polytechnic, Ibadan. Their findings indicated that social media advertising significantly influenced the buying behaviour of the students studied. Similarly, Achi et al. (2025) examined the effects of Facebook, YouTube and TikTok on purchase intention for cosmetic products among Nigerian undergraduate students. Their research provides evidence of the relevance of social media platforms to consumers' exposure to promotional information and purchase intentions.

Tiwari et al. (2025) also examined the influence of social media advertising on sustainable purchase intentions. Their findings identified electronic word-of-mouth, advertising entertainment and informativeness as important factors influencing consumers' attitudes towards social media advertisements and their purchase intentions. These findings suggest that the quality and relevance of advertising content are important considerations in understanding how social media advertisements relate to purchasing behaviour.

For the purpose of this study, social media advertising refers to customers' exposure to and evaluation of business advertisements on social media platforms, particularly in relation to the informativeness, attractiveness and relevance of promotional messages.

Social Media Engagement

Social media engagement refers to the level of interaction and participation demonstrated by customers when responding to business-related content on social networking platforms. It includes activities such as liking, commenting, sharing posts, asking questions, participating in discussions, responding to promotional campaigns and providing feedback about products and services.

Social media engagement also involves the responsiveness of businesses to customer enquiries and comments. When businesses provide timely responses, clarify product information and address customer concerns, they create opportunities for meaningful communication with consumers. Such interactions may improve customers' understanding of products and provide additional information that can support their purchasing decisions.

Social media engagement is important because it encourages two-way communication between businesses and customers. Through customer comments, questions and feedback, businesses can identify consumer preferences, understand complaints and improve their marketing activities. Customers may also obtain useful information from the experiences and opinions shared by other users.

Anukwe et al. (2025) examined social media marketing and customer engagement among small and medium-sized enterprises in South-East Nigeria. Their study identified interactive content and business responsiveness as important factors associated with customer engagement and customer-related outcomes.

Similarly, Mazeli (2025) examined social media engagement tools and customer loyalty among online retail consumers in Enugu Metropolis. The study identified interactive content, real-time communication, user-generated content and visual storytelling as engagement tools that significantly and positively influenced customer loyalty. Although loyalty is different from purchase decisions, the findings demonstrate the relevance of customer interaction to business relationships within the Enugu environment.

Basalamah et al. (2025) also found that social media engagement positively influenced purchase intention among consumers of Indonesian beauty products. Their findings indicate that customer participation and interaction with social media content can strengthen consumers' willingness to purchase products.

In this study, social media engagement refers to the interaction and participation of customers with business-related content on social media platforms, including liking, commenting, sharing, asking questions and receiving responses from businesses.

Concept of Customer Purchase Decisions

Customer purchase decisions refer to the choices and actions consumers undertake when deciding whether to purchase particular products or services. These decisions involve a process through which consumers recognise their needs, search for information, evaluate available alternatives, select preferred products and complete purchases.

The purchase decision process is influenced by several factors, including product quality, price, brand reputation, product availability, personal preferences, customer reviews and promotional information. In contemporary business environments, social media platforms have become important sources of information that consumers may consider during the purchasing process.

Consumers can obtain product information through online advertisements, customer reviews, product demonstrations and interactions with businesses. They may also compare products, examine prices and evaluate

the experiences of other customers before making purchasing decisions. Consequently, social media marketing may contribute to the information available to consumers during the product evaluation process.

Olaleye and Kolade (2025) examined the impact of social media marketing on customers' purchase decisions in selected online supermarkets in Lagos State, Nigeria. Their findings demonstrated the relevance of social media marketing to customers' purchasing decisions. Chung (2025), in a study of social media users in Vietnam, found that the value of user-generated content influenced consumer purchase behaviour indirectly through attitudes towards and adoption of such content.

Customer purchase decisions are important to businesses because they indicate whether promotional activities and other marketing efforts are associated with customers' actual purchasing choices. Businesses therefore need to understand the factors that influence consumers' decisions and provide relevant information that can assist them in evaluating products.

For the purpose of this study, customer purchase decisions refer to customers' choices concerning products and services after considering information, promotional messages and interactions encountered on social media platforms.

Relationship Between Social Media Advertising and Customer Purchase Decisions

Social media advertising and customer purchase decisions are related because advertisements provide consumers with information that may influence their evaluation and selection of products. Through online advertisements, businesses communicate product features, prices, availability, promotional offers and other relevant information that may attract consumer attention.

Informative and attractive advertisements may increase product awareness and encourage consumers to consider advertised products. Where advertisements provide relevant and credible information, consumers may become more familiar with product features and develop greater confidence in evaluating available alternatives.

Social media advertising may also influence purchasing decisions by reminding consumers about products they have previously considered. Promotional messages, discounts and product demonstrations may encourage customers to reassess their preferences and make purchasing choices.

Ladokun et al. (2025) found that social media advertising significantly influenced the buying behaviour of students at The Polytechnic, Ibadan. Tiwari et al. (2025) also identified advertising informativeness and entertainment as important factors influencing consumers' attitudes towards advertisements and purchase intentions.

However, the influence of social media advertising may depend on the quality of the information provided, the credibility of the advertiser, the relevance of the product and the purchasing power of consumers. Therefore, this study examines whether social media advertising has a significant relationship with customer purchase decisions in Enugu State.

Relationship Between Social Media Engagement and Customer Purchase Decisions

Social media engagement may influence customer purchase decisions by creating opportunities for interaction, information exchange and communication between businesses and consumers. Through likes, comments, shares, enquiries and feedback, customers can participate in business-related discussions and obtain additional information about products.

Customer engagement may also help businesses address concerns that could discourage purchasing. For example, customers may ask questions about product prices, quality, availability and delivery arrangements. Timely and useful responses may improve customers' understanding of the products and assist them in evaluating available alternatives.

Furthermore, interactions among customers may provide additional information through reviews, recommendations and shared experiences. Such interactions can influence customers' perceptions of products and businesses.

Basalamah et al. (2025) found that social media engagement positively influenced purchase intention among Indonesian beauty product consumers. Chung (2025) also established that the value of user-generated content influenced consumer purchase behaviour indirectly through attitudes towards and adoption of the content.

Mazeli (2025) found that social media engagement tools positively influenced customer loyalty among online retail consumers in Enugu Metropolis. Although loyalty is not the same as purchase decisions, the study provides evidence of the relevance of online interactions to consumer relationships within the geographical context of the present study.

Nevertheless, customer engagement does not always result in purchasing decisions. Customers may interact with business content for information, entertainment or social reasons without necessarily purchasing the advertised products. Other considerations, including price, product quality, affordability and personal needs, may also determine whether an interaction leads to a purchase.

Therefore, this study seeks to establish the relationship between social media engagement and customer purchase decisions in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on the Uses and Gratifications Theory and the Stimulus–Organism–Response Theory. These theories provide explanations of how individuals use media platforms and how marketing stimuli may influence their internal evaluations and behavioural responses.

Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz et al., 1973)

The Uses and Gratifications Theory was developed by Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1973). The theory explains that individuals actively select and use media to satisfy particular needs and expectations. These needs may include information, entertainment, social interaction, personal identity and other forms of gratification.

The theory views media users as active participants rather than passive recipients of information. Individuals select media channels and content based on the benefits they expect to obtain from them. When media content satisfies their needs, they may continue using the platform or seek similar information in the future.

In the context of social media marketing, customers use social networking platforms to obtain product information, examine advertisements, compare available alternatives, watch product demonstrations and interact with businesses and other consumers. Customers may also follow business pages to receive information about new products, promotional offers and other commercial activities.

The theory is relevant to this study because customers in Enugu State may use social media platforms to satisfy their information needs before making purchasing decisions. Social media advertising may attract customers who seek

information about products, while social media engagement may satisfy their need for interaction, clarification and feedback.

The theory therefore provides an explanation of why customers may pay attention to social media marketing content when it offers information and interactions that are relevant to their needs.

Stimulus–Organism–Response Theory (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974)

The Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) Theory was developed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974) in their work on environmental psychology. The theory explains how external environmental stimuli influence an individual's internal emotional and cognitive states, which may subsequently produce behavioural responses.

The theory consists of three major components: stimulus, organism and response.

Stimulus (S): This refers to external factors that influence an individual's internal evaluation. In social media marketing, stimuli include advertisements, promotional messages, product images, online reviews, interactive posts and business responses to customer enquiries.

Organism (O): This refers to the internal feelings, perceptions, evaluations and emotional reactions of individuals when exposed to external stimuli. In this study, it includes customers' interest in advertised products, perceptions of product information, evaluation of promotional messages and responses to online interactions.

Response (R): This refers to the behavioural outcome that follows an individual's internal evaluation. In this study, the response is represented by customer purchase decisions, including the consideration, selection and purchase of products.

The theory is relevant because social media advertisements and engagement activities expose customers to different forms of marketing stimuli. These stimuli may influence customers' perceptions and evaluations of products before they decide whether to purchase them.

For example, an informative social media advertisement may attract a customer's attention and provide useful product information. Similarly, a business's prompt response to customer enquiries may clarify product details and assist the customer in evaluating the product. These experiences may influence the customer's eventual purchasing choice.

The S-O-R Theory therefore provides a suitable explanation of how social media advertising and social media engagement may relate to customer purchase decisions in Enugu State.

Theoretical Anchor of the Study

Although both theories provide useful explanations of social media marketing and consumer behaviour, the present study is primarily anchored on the Stimulus–Organism–Response Theory of Mehrabian and Russell (1974).

The theory provides a direct framework for explaining the relationship between the independent and dependent variables of the study. Social media advertising and social media engagement represent external marketing stimuli that customers encounter on digital platforms. These stimuli may influence customers' internal evaluations, perceptions and interest in products, which may subsequently contribute to their purchase decisions.

The Uses and Gratifications Theory provides complementary support by explaining why customers actively use social media platforms to obtain information and interact with businesses. However, the S-O-R Theory is adopted as the

principal theoretical foundation because it provides a clearer explanation of the process through which marketing stimuli may lead to consumer responses.

Empirical Review

Social Media Advertising and Customer Purchase Decisions

Ladokun et al. (2025) examined social media advertising and student buying behaviour at The Polytechnic, Ibadan, Nigeria. The study adopted a survey research design and selected 327 final-year students from eight departments. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, regression analysis and Pearson correlation. The findings revealed that social media advertising had a significant influence on the buying behaviour of the students. The study concluded that social media advertising was an important marketing tool for influencing students' purchasing behaviour. The study is relevant to the present research because it examined social media advertising and consumer buying behaviour within a Nigerian educational environment. However, its geographical focus was limited to students of The Polytechnic, Ibadan, whereas the present study focuses on social media users in Enugu State.

Tiwari et al. (2025) examined how social media advertising influences sustainable purchase intentions in the digital age. The researchers collected data from 501 young female consumers who had encountered social media advertisements. The study adopted a quantitative approach and analysed the data using structural equation modelling. The findings revealed that electronic word-of-mouth, advertising entertainment and informativeness were important factors influencing consumers' attitudes towards social media advertisements and purchase intentions. The study established that informative and entertaining advertisements, supported by positive online recommendations, could encourage consumers to consider purchasing advertised products. The study is relevant because it provides evidence of the importance of advertising content in influencing consumer responses. However, its focus was on sustainable purchase intentions among young female consumers rather than customer purchase decisions among the wider population in Enugu State.

Olaleye and Kolade (2025) investigated the impact of social media marketing on customers' purchase decisions in selected online supermarkets in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study adopted a survey research design and collected data from 397 University of Lagos students selected through stratified sampling. Questionnaires and secondary sources were used for data collection, while descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis were employed to analyse the data. The findings demonstrated that social media marketing significantly influenced customers' purchase decisions. The study is relevant to the present research because it examined purchasing decisions within the Nigerian retail environment. However, it investigated social media marketing generally rather than examining social media advertising as a distinct dimension in Enugu State.

Achi et al. (2025) examined the effects of social media on purchase intention for cosmetic products among Nigerian undergraduate students. The study focused on Facebook, YouTube and TikTok as social media platforms through which consumers encountered cosmetic product information and promotional content. The researchers examined the relationship between the use of these platforms and students' purchase intentions. The study is relevant to the present research because it provides Nigerian evidence of the relationship between social media exposure and consumers' interest in advertised products. However, its focus on cosmetic products and undergraduate students

differs from the present study, which examines customer purchase decisions among social media users in Enugu State.

Social Media Engagement and Customer Purchase Decisions

Basalamah et al. (2025) examined the effect of social media engagement and beauty influencers on purchase intentions for Indonesian beauty products. The study adopted a quantitative research approach and collected data from 104 consumers who actively followed beauty product influencers on social media. A structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale was used for data collection. The findings revealed that social media engagement positively influenced purchase intention and mediated the relationship between beauty influencers and purchase intention. The study demonstrated that customer participation and interaction on social media could strengthen consumers' willingness to purchase products. The study is relevant because it provides evidence of the relationship between social media engagement and consumer purchase intentions. However, it was conducted in Indonesia and focused on beauty products, whereas the present study examines social media users in Enugu State.

Chung (2025) investigated how user-generated content on social media platforms shapes consumers' purchase behaviour. The study collected data from 445 social media users in three major cities in Vietnam and analysed the responses using partial least squares structural equation modelling. The findings showed that the perceived functional, social and emotional value of user-generated content influenced consumers' attitudes towards and adoption of such content. Although the study did not establish a direct effect of perceived user-generated content value on purchase behaviour, it identified indirect effects through consumers' attitudes and adoption of the content. This suggests that customer participation in creating and sharing online content can influence purchasing behaviour through intermediate processes. The study is relevant to the present research because user-generated content represents an important aspect of social media engagement. However, its geographical and contextual focus differs from that of the present study.

Anukwe et al. (2025) examined the impact of social media marketing and customer engagement among small and medium-sized enterprises in South-East Nigeria. The study adopted a quantitative survey design and collected data from SME operators and customers across the five states in the South-East geopolitical zone. The researchers employed regression analysis and structural equation modelling to examine the relationship between social media marketing activities, customer engagement and customer-related outcomes. The findings identified interactive content, influencer partnerships and business responsiveness as relevant factors in promoting customer engagement and improving customer outcomes. The study is particularly relevant because it provides evidence from the same geopolitical region as the present research. However, its geographical coverage extended across the five South-East states and its focus was on customer engagement and broader customer outcomes rather than the specific relationship between social media engagement and customer purchase decisions in Enugu State.

Mazeli (2025) investigated social media engagement tools and customer loyalty among online retail consumers in Enugu Metropolis. The study adopted a quantitative survey design and collected data from 374 respondents using a structured online questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation and simple linear regression were used to analyse the data. The findings revealed that interactive content, real-time communication, user-generated content and visual storytelling significantly and positively influenced customer loyalty. The study is relevant because

it was conducted in Enugu Metropolis and examined social media engagement activities among online retail consumers. However, its dependent variable was customer loyalty rather than customer purchase decisions. The present study therefore extends the discussion by examining the relationship between social media engagement and customer purchase decisions.

Summary of Empirical Review

The empirical studies reviewed demonstrate that social media advertising and social media engagement are relevant to consumer purchasing behaviour and other customer-related outcomes.

The studies by Ladokun et al. (2025), Tiwari et al. (2025), Olaleye and Kolade (2025), and Achi et al. (2025) provide evidence that social media advertisements and promotional content can influence consumers' buying behaviour, attitudes and purchase intentions. In particular, informative, entertaining and relevant advertisements may improve consumers' evaluation of advertised products and encourage purchasing considerations.

Similarly, the studies by Basalamah et al. (2025), Chung (2025), Anukwe et al. (2025) and Mazeli (2025) demonstrate the relevance of customer interaction, user-generated content, business responsiveness and online participation to customer-related outcomes. The findings indicate that social media engagement can contribute to positive consumer responses, although its influence on purchasing behaviour may occur directly or through intermediate factors such as attitudes and content adoption.

However, the reviewed studies differ in their geographical coverage, research populations, measurement approaches and dependent variables. Some examined purchase intentions rather than actual purchase decisions, while others focused on customer loyalty, engagement or general consumer behaviour. These differences indicate the need for further research focusing specifically on social media advertising, social media engagement and customer purchase decisions in Enugu State.

Gap in Empirical Review

Despite the contributions of the empirical studies reviewed, some gaps remain that justify the present study.

Geographical Gap: Several Nigerian studies have examined social media advertising and consumer behaviour in locations such as Ibadan and Lagos. Although Anukwe et al. (2025) covered the South-East geopolitical zone and Mazeli (2025) examined online retail consumers in Enugu Metropolis, there remains a need for a study specifically examining the relationship between social media advertising, social media engagement and customer purchase decisions among social media users in Enugu State.

Conceptual Gap: Some previous studies examined general social media marketing, customer engagement, customer loyalty or consumer purchase intentions. These studies did not consistently examine social media advertising and social media engagement as two distinct dimensions of social media marketing in relation to customer purchase decisions. The present study addresses this gap by examining the two dimensions separately.

Measurement Gap: Several previous studies concentrated on purchase intention, which refers to consumers' willingness or plans to purchase products, rather than their purchase decisions. Although purchase intention may contribute to actual purchasing behaviour, the two concepts are not identical. This study focuses on customer purchase decisions and examines how social media advertising and social media engagement relate to customers' purchasing choices.

Contextual Gap: Some previous studies focused on specific consumer groups, including students, young female consumers, beauty product customers and online retail consumers. Their findings may not fully explain the purchasing behaviour of the wider population of social media users in Enugu State. The present study therefore adopts a broader population of social media users who have encountered business-related marketing activities. Consequently, the present study seeks to address these gaps by examining the relationship between social media marketing and customer purchase decisions in Enugu State, Nigeria, with particular attention to social media advertising and social media engagement.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Enugu State, Nigeria. Enugu State is located in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria and has three senatorial districts: Enugu East, Enugu North and Enugu West. The state has commercial activities involving retail businesses, supermarkets, fashion outlets, electronic shops, restaurants and online businesses. Many of these businesses use social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and WhatsApp to advertise their products, communicate with customers and promote sales. The area is therefore suitable for examining the relationship between social media marketing and customer purchase decisions. The study used the descriptive survey design approach. The primary source of data was the administration of questionnaire. The population of the study comprised of 1103 social media users in Enugu State who have been exposed to business advertisements, influencer promotions or other marketing activities on social media platforms. These individuals are considered appropriate respondents because they have the experience required to provide information on how social media marketing relates to their purchasing decisions.. The adequate sample size of two hundred and eighty four (284) using Freund and William's statistic formula at 5 percent margin of error. Two hundred and twenty two (222) staff returned the questionnaire and accurately filled. That gave 78 percent response rate. The validity of the instrument was tested using content analysis and the result was good. The reliability was tested using the Pearson correlation coefficient (r). It gave a reliability co-efficient of 0.750 which was also good. Data was presented and analyzed by mean score and standard deviation . The hypotheses were analyzed using Z – test statistic tool.

Data presentation and Analyses

Data Presentation

The relationship between social media advertising and customer purchase decisions in Enugu State.

Table 1: Responses on the relationship between social media advertising and customer purchase decisions in Enugu State.

		5 SA	4 A	3 N	2 DA	1 SD	∑FX	- X	SD	Decision
1	Social media advertisements influence my decision to purchase products and services.	550 110 49.5	232 58 26.1	42 14 6.3	32 16 7.1	24 24 10.8	880 222 100%	3.96	1.352	Agree
2	Attractive advertisements on Facebook, Instagram and TikTok encourage me to consider purchasing advertised products.	535 107 48.2	232 58 26.1	42 14 6.3	48 24 10.8	19 19 8.6	876 222 100%	3.95	1.324	Agree

3	Information provided in social media advertisements helps me choose between competing products.	565 113 50.9	232 58 26.1	42 14 6.3	34 17 7.7	20 20 9.0	893 222 100%	4.02	1.302	Agree
4	Special offers and discounts advertised on social media influence my purchasing decisions.	565 113 50.9	232 58 26.1	42 14 6.3	34 17 7.7	20 20 9.0	893 222 100%	4.02	1.302	Agree
5	Repeated exposure to social media advertisements increases my likelihood of purchasing advertised products	560 112 50.5	232 58 26.1	42 14 6.3	32 16 7.2	22 22 9.9	888 222 100%	4.00	1.325	Agree
	Total Grand mean and standard deviation							**3.99**	**1. 321**	

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 1, 168 respondents out of 222 representing 75.5 percent agreed that Social media advertisements influence my decision to purchase products and services with mean score of 3.96 and standard deviation of 1.352. Attractive advertisements on Facebook, Instagram and TikTok encourage me to consider purchasing advertised products 165 respondents representing 74.3 percent agreed with mean score of 3.95 and standard deviation of 1.324. Information provided in social media advertisements helps me choose between competing products 171 respondents representing 77.0 percent agreed with mean score of 4.02 and standard deviation of 1.302. Special offers and discounts advertised on social media influence my purchasing decisions 171 respondents representing 77.0 percent agreed with mean score of 4.02 and 1.302. Repeated exposure to social media advertisements increases my likelihood of purchasing advertised products 170 respondents representing 76.6 percent agreed with a mean score of 4.00 and standard deviation 1.325.

The relationship between social media engagement and customer purchase decisions in Enugu State.

Table 2: Responses on the relationship between social media engagement and customer purchase decisions in Enugu State.

		5 **SA**	**4** **A**	**3** **N**	**2** **DA**	**1** **SD**	**∑FX**	**-** **X**	**SD**	**Decision**
1	Interacting with businesses on social media influences my decision to purchase their products.	590 118 53.2	232 58 26.1	42 14 6.3	28 14 6.3	18 18 8.1	910 222 100%	4.10	1.255	Agree
2	Responses to my questions and comments on social media encourage me to buy from a business.	550 110 40.5	208 52 23.4	42 14 6.3	56 27 12.2	19 19 8.6	875 222 100%	3.93	1.349	Agree
3	Positive comments and discussions about products on social media influence my purchasing decisions.	570 114 51.4	208 52 23.4	42 14 6.3	44 22 9.9	20 20 9.0	884 222 100%	3.98	1.338	Agree
4	Sharing and interacting with product-related posts increase my interest in purchasing the products.	525 105 47.3	208 52 23.4	42 14 6.3	60 30 13.5	21 21 9.5	856 222 100%	3.86	1.384	Agree

5	Active communication between businesses and customers on social media encourages me to purchase their products.	545 109 49.1	208 52 23.4	42 14 6.3	58 29 13.1	18 18 8.1	871 222 100%	3.92	1.345	Agree
	Total Grand mean and standard deviation							**3.958**	**1. 3342**	

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 2: 176 respondents out of 222 representing 79.3 percent agreed that Interacting with businesses on social media influences my decision to purchase their products with mean score of 4.10 and standard deviation of 1.255. Responses to my questions and comments on social media encourage me to buy from a business 162 respondents representing 63.8 percent agreed with mean score of 3.93 and standard deviation of 1.349. Positive comments and discussions about products on social media influence my purchasing decisions 166 respondents representing 74.8 percent agreed with mean score of 3.98 and standard deviation of 1.338. Sharing and interacting with product-related posts increase my interest in purchasing the products 157 respondents representing 70.7 percent agreed with mean score of 3.86 and 1.384. Active communication between businesses and customers on social media encourages me to purchase their product 161 respondents representing 72.5 percent agreed with a mean score of 3.92 and standard deviation 1.345.

Test of Hypotheses

Test of Hypotheses One : Social media advertising has no significant relationship with customer purchase decisions in Enugu State, Nigeria.

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Social media advertisements influence my decision to purchase products and services.	Attractive advertisements on Facebook, Instagram and TikTok encourage me to consider purchasing advertised products.	Information provided in social media advertisements helps me choose between competing products.	Special offers and discounts advertised on social media influence my purchasing decisions.	Repeated exposure to social media advertisements increases my likelihood of purchasing advertised products
N		222	222	222	222	222
Uniform Parameters[a,b]	Minimum	1	1	1	1	1
	Maximum	5	5	5	5	5
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.507	.493	.520	.520	.516
	Positive	.108	.086	.090	.090	.099
	Negative	-.507	-.493	-.520	-.520	-.516
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		7.551	7.349	7.752	7.752	7.685
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

a. Test distribution is Uniform.

b. Calculated from data.

Decision **Rule:**

Since the calculated z-value (7.752) > critical z-value (.000) at the 5% significance level, we reject the null hypothesis

Decision:

Furthermore, comparing the calculated Z- value ranges from 7.349 < 7.752 against the critical Z- value of .000 (2-

tailed test at 95percent level of confidence) the null hypothesis were rejected. Thus the alternative hypothesis was accepted which states that **Social media advertising had significant positive relationship with customer purchase decisions in Enugu State, Nigeria**

Test of Hypotheses Two: Social media engagement has no significant relationship with customer purchase decisions in Enugu State, Nigeria.

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Interacting with businesses on social media influences my decision to purchase their products.	Responses to my questions and comments on social media encourage me to buy from a business.	Positive comments and discussions about products on social media influence my purchasing decisions.	Sharing and interacting with product-related posts increase my interest in purchasing the products.	Active communication between businesses and customers on social media encourages me to purchase their products.
N		222	222	222	222	222
Uniform Parameters[a,b]	Minimum	1	1	1	1	1
	Maximum	5	5	5	5	5
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.543	.495	.514	.473	.491
	Positive	.081	.086	.090	.095	.081
	Negative	-.543	-.495	-.514	-.473	-.491
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		8.087	7.383	7.651	7.047	7.316
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

a. Test distribution is Uniform.
b. Calculated from data.

Decision Rule: Since the calculated z-value (8.087) > critical z-value (.000) at the 5% significance level, we reject the null hypothesis

Decision:

Furthermore, comparing the calculated Z- value ranges from 7.047 < 8.087 against the critical Z- value of .000 (2-tailed test at 95percent level of confidence) the null hypothesis were rejected. Thus the alternative hypothesis was accepted which states that **Social media engagement had significant positive relationship with customer purchase decisions in Enugu State, Nigeria.**

Discussion of Findings

The result of hypothesis one revealed that social media advertising had a significant positive relationship with customer purchase decisions in Enugu State, Nigeria ($Z = 7.752$, $p < .05$). This implies that social media advertising plays an important role in influencing customers' purchasing decisions. The finding suggests that informative advertisements, attractive promotional messages and relevant product information shared through social media platforms can influence customers' interest in products and their decisions to purchase them.

This finding is consistent with the study of Ladokun et al. (2025), who examined social media advertising and student buying behaviour at The Polytechnic, Ibadan, Nigeria. Their findings revealed that social media advertising had a significant influence on the buying behaviour of the students. Similarly, Tiwari et al. (2025) examined how social media advertising influences sustainable purchase intentions in the digital age. Their findings revealed that electronic word-of-mouth, advertising entertainment and informativeness were important factors influencing consumers' attitudes towards social media advertisements and their purchase intentions. These findings support the present study by demonstrating that social media advertising is relevant to consumer purchasing behaviour. Therefore, effective social media advertising can help businesses in Enugu State communicate product information, attract potential customers and encourage purchasing decisions.

The result of hypothesis two revealed that social media engagement had a significant positive relationship with customer purchase decisions in Enugu State, Nigeria ($Z = 8.087$, $p < .05$). This implies that customers' interactions with business-related content on social media platforms are significantly associated with their purchasing decisions. Such interactions include liking, commenting on and sharing business posts, asking questions and receiving timely responses from businesses. These activities may improve customers' access to product information, strengthen their interest in advertised products and assist them in making purchasing decisions.

This finding is consistent with Basalamah et al. (2025), who examined the effect of social media engagement and beauty influencers on purchase intentions for Indonesian beauty products. Their findings revealed that social media engagement positively influenced purchase intention and mediated the relationship between beauty influencers and purchase intention. Similarly, Anukwe et al. (2025) examined the impact of social media marketing and customer engagement in South-East Nigeria. Their findings highlighted the importance of interactive content, influencer partnerships and business responsiveness in promoting customer engagement and positive customer-related outcomes. Furthermore, Chung (2025) investigated how user-generated content on social media platforms shapes consumers' purchase behaviour. The findings established that the perceived value of user-generated content influenced consumer attitudes and adoption of such content, which subsequently affected purchase behaviour through indirect relationships. These findings support the present study by demonstrating the relevance of customer interaction, online participation and business responsiveness to consumer purchasing behaviour. Therefore, businesses in Enugu State should encourage meaningful interactions with customers through social media platforms to strengthen customer relationships and improve purchasing decisions.

Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary of Findings

i. Social media advertising had a significant positive relationship with customer purchase decisions in Enugu State, Nigeria, $Z = 7.752$, $p. < .05$. This implies that increased exposure to social media advertisements, attractive promotional messages, product information, and online advertising campaigns can positively influence customers' decisions to purchase products and services.

ii. Social media engagement had a significant positive relationship with customer purchase decisions in Enugu State, Nigeria, $Z = 8.087$, $p. < .05$. This implies that interactions between businesses and customers through comments,

likes, shares, direct messages, feedback, and online discussions can positively influence customers' willingness to purchase products and services.

Conclusion

The study concluded that social media marketing plays an important role in influencing customer purchase decisions in Enugu State, Nigeria. Specifically, social media advertising and social media engagement had significant positive relationships with customer purchase decisions. This indicates that effective online advertising, attractive promotional messages, interactive content, timely responses to customer enquiries, and continuous communication with online audiences can influence customers' purchasing behaviour. The study therefore concludes that businesses that effectively utilise social media platforms to advertise their products and engage customers are better positioned to attract potential buyers, build customer confidence, strengthen customer relationships, and encourage purchase decisions. Consequently, social media marketing should be regarded as an important marketing strategy for improving customer purchase decisions and business competitiveness in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were proffered:

i. Businesses in Enugu State should invest more in effective social media advertising through platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp. They should develop attractive advertisements, provide accurate product information, use promotional offers, and target their advertisements towards potential customers to encourage purchase decisions.

ii. Businesses in Enugu State should improve their social media engagement by responding promptly to customer enquiries, answering comments, conducting online polls, sharing interactive content, and encouraging customer feedback. This will help build stronger relationships with customers, improve confidence in their products, and encourage purchase decisions.

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