



## **PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF E-MARKETING ON PRODUCT DISTRIBUTION, PROFITABILITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION OF RETAIL FIRMS IN LAGOS, NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

*The study examined the perceived influence of social media marketing on product distribution, profitability and customer satisfaction of retail firms. The study employed the descriptive survey design. The population of the study was 480 retail firms' customers and 20 retail firms' managers. A purposive sampling technique was used to draw 10 key referrals who were used as initial samples. This referral (snowball) sampling was used to generate an additional 470 respondents bringing the final sample to 480 respondents (Customers) and 20 managers. The main instrument for data collection was a four point rating scale questionnaire with 28 items. The questionnaire was validated by three experts. Cronbach alpha method was used to determine the reliability of the questionnaire, which yielded coefficient of 0.81. Three research questions guided the study and three hypotheses were tested. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data collected to answer the research questions and an Independent sample t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 significant level. The findings revealed that social media marketing influenced retail firms' product distribution, increased their profitability level and influenced their customer satisfaction. The study further revealed that there was no significant difference between the mean responses of experienced and inexperienced retail firms' managers on the perceived influence of social media marketing on the profitability of retail firms. It was concluded that the use of social media facilities will increase retail firms' brand awareness. Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, it was recommended among others that Retail firms' managers should ensure they make use of social media facilities effectively to enable them market and distribute their products to numerous customer of different level, age, sex and demography.*

**Key words:** *Technology, Social media, Product distribution, Profitability, Customer satisfaction*

### **Introduction**

Globalization and technology have changed the face of retailing business with many retail firms fully embracing e-commerce and connecting with their customers all over the globe. Retail firms fill the gaps among the manufacturers, wholesalers and customers. Retail firms are responsible for the distribution of finished products to the consumer as well as the public. In response to the dynamic and competitive nature of retail business, retailers are increasingly exploiting diverse range of strategies and technology to improve and differentiate shopping experience for their customers. Consumers on the other hand are taking advantage of mobile and digital technology to receive targeted offers and make comparison of product quality to enable them make informed purchased decision.

On-line retail in Nigeria came into the scene about six years ago and became very popular with the advent of key players like Jumia and Konga. Over time the sector became flooded with different niche markets. It was recorded that there have been at least 500 e-commerce businesses launched across Nigeria. (Adekunle, 2019). Failure to recognize potential benefits of online marketing might cause loss of productivity, revenue and communication. Retail firms' managers must incorporate e-marketing into their business plan to decrease the possibility of failure, grow their business and become more profitable.

Social media marketing is the use of social media platforms and websites to promote a product or services. It is the use of social media platforms like Facebook, instagram, linkelin to interact with customers to build brands, increase sales and drive website traffic. Social media market is a type of e-marketing that allows retail firms to advertises their products in all social media platforms, blogs and websites to connect with customers in different demography at the same time. Social Media is a website or application that



allows its users to create and share content while engaging with other users (Hudson, 2020). Yadav & Rahman (2017) stated that social media marketing (SMM) is described as a process by which companies create, communicate, and deliver online marketing offerings via social media platforms to build and maintain stakeholder relationships that enhance stakeholders' value by facilitating interaction, information's sharing, offering personalized purchase recommendations, and word of mouth creation amongst stakeholders about existing and trending products and services. Paswan (2018) pointed out that Social Media Marketing can be used to engage target groups, build brand visibility, and build relationships with customers.

Social media marketing is a form of digital marketing that involves creating and sharing content on different social media platforms such as Facebook, Youtube, Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter. Statista, 2019; Coles, (2014). states that these social media platforms make it possible to engage with followers in real-time and find out their needs, thoughts, and feelings at any given time, which makes social media a great tool for any affiliate to utilize Social media has become an everyday part of life where those who use social networks in Nigeria spend about five hours per day browsing them (Joseph 2021). Social Media is currently one of the most important and most reliable sources of information for consumers and enterprises (World Internet Project, 2013). Previous research has also shown that investments in marketing are moving away from traditional marketing areas towards digital areas (Baines & Fill 2014).

Social media marketing (SMM) is a digital marketing technique that takes advantage of social technological platforms for the use of marketing activities (Baines & Fill 2014). They further stated that Social media is changing the way consumers take part in offerings; nowadays anyone can comment, share and create information on brands or people. Also, enterprises can no longer control how they are perceived on the marketplace. Another definition of social media marketing is "online resources that people use to share content: video, photos, images, text, ideas, insight, humor, opinion, gossip and news" (Alharbie 2015). Social media marketing enables organizations to advertise their products with low or no income, compared to traditional marketing where advertisers will pay large amounts of money to advertise their products. Social Media Marketing is relatively new strategy that enables businesses to reach millions of customers at little cost (Khan & Jan 2015). According to Hamound (2016) Social Media Marketing is a process of conversation with others to build relationships. Social Media Marketing is a complementary strategy to the old marketing way, which is applied on social media sites. Fernandes and Raposa (2017).

Bandyopadhyay Profit (2016) stated that successful Social Media Marketing will increase brand awareness through customer engagement as well as be cost savings strategy to help with small business performance. Tuten (2021) seems Social Media Marketing as the use of Social Media technologies to create, communicate, deliver, and trade value-added offerings to company's stakeholders. Kadam and Ayarekar (2014) pointed that Social Media Marketing provides a number of intangible benefits that are long-term. Social Media Marketing is a beneficial distribution channel to end-users (Vanden Eijnden, Lemmens, & Valkenburg, 2016).

The distribution channel is a collection of interdependent businesses and individuals through which manufacturing enterprises sell products to end consumers. Distribution experience and competency in distribution management is one of the criteria that is taken into consideration and mostly used by the manufactures during selection of proper distribution channels (Saremi & Zadeh, 2014). Manufacturer's success cannot be reached from their own effort alone, their success or failure is determined and increasingly reliant upon their marketing channel members or distributions' like agents, wholesalers and retailers performance and how effectively and efficiently their products are reaching to the intended consumers or sold (Singh & Inran, 2014). Many manufacturers believe it to be worthwhile to evaluate distribution channel members' sales capabilities more directly by appraising their sales people (Hamid & Seydeh, 2014).

Regularly, manufacturers face a decision of whether to add a new distribution channel in addition to their current channels. With the popularity of the Internet, many suppliers sell products directly online. Contrastingly, the introduction of an internet channel may also have unintended negative effects for firms that fail to adjust their overall channel design to accommodate the new direct channel. Despite these negative effects, integrating digital tools and technologies into existing business models and adopting current business models to new technologies are the most important strategies to address the challenges of the popularity of digital tools and technologies threatening existing business models (Leeflang et al. 2014).

Profitability is the most important principle of commerce Mousavi-Khaneghah (2013). Managers, investors, and financial analysts apply profit as an index for evaluating management effectiveness and for decision making. Financial and manufacturing programs, activities, and decisions are reflected in a firm's



profitability (Dehghan, Ghafoorifard, Shamsi, & Seyed Heydari, 2015). Profitability reflects a business venture's capacity to make a profit through the use of production factors and capital (Leon 2018). For firm to meet its set goals, they have to be profitable. According to Dhliwayo (2016) business survival relies on its profitability. A business goes through a strategy crisis, profitability crisis, and solvency crisis before failure.

Satisfied customers usually rebound and buy more. Besides buying more they also work as a network to reach other potential customers by sharing experiences (Hague & Hague 2016.) As a way to determine the effectiveness of organization, customer satisfaction measures products and service to meet customer expectation. According to Yoon (2010) Customer satisfaction, the feeling of customers using a product or service is one of the most popular research topics in marketing and e-commerce studies. Customer satisfaction is of two different conceptualizations; transaction specific satisfaction (satisfaction based on a specific purchase occasion) and cumulative satisfaction (satisfaction based on overall evaluation of multiple purchases and purchase experience of a service over an extended period) (Abd-El-Salam, et al, 2013). Ibojo and Asabi (2015) stated that in order to achieve customer satisfaction there is need to know and understand the needs of the market and meet and fulfill them.

In the world of business today, it is observed that, electronic method of buying and selling comes with lots of convenience and saves business men and women a lot of problems. Yet, the expected geometric growth of the new technology is being bogged down by a combination of factors. One of the major challenges Nigerian online retail firms is tackling with low internet connection of social media marketing. Users get bored when they repeatedly download applications in a large website. Secondly, lack of a good security platform for conducting e-business in the country which exposes organizations in the e-marketing sector to avoidable losses which significantly affect the declared profits of firms. The specific benefits inherent in social media marketing also pose risks with regards to privacy and security of personal information. Development of regulations for online marketing policy is not really in place because of technological development.

Despite the benefits of social media marketing, overcoming trust issues with regards to security is a major obstacle in selling and buying online. Marketers that deliver goods to their customers at home are at the risk of insecurity, same goes to the customers, bringing someone they do not know into their houses could be very huge risk. Many marketers and customers have fallen victim of kidnappers and murderers through buying and delivering of goods and services online. Spamming is also one of the biggest challenges of social media marketing through which confidential data can be easily stolen by hackers. Many accounts of the people have been defrauded by hackers through online marketing and many customers feel uncomfortable with the idea of conducting e-commerce and sharing personal information through wireless and hand-held devices. High cost of shipping goods to and from Nigeria and unreliable distribution and delivering processes are also major issues with online retail in Nigeria. It is observed that the perceived risk in E-commerce has a negative effect on buying and selling products online.

With the enthusiasm customers have towards social media marketing, there is a need to build customers' confidence in buying products on social media. Otherwise, the confidence of customers may be eroded. It is rational to say that customers are not satisfied with buying products/receiving services on social media and profitability of retail firms is declining but the extent to which customer satisfaction and profitability of retail firms are affected by network availability, security, efficiency, privacy and value of products and services need to be investigated, hence the need for this study.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions are raised and to be answered in the course of the study:

1. To what extent does social media marketing influence product distribution of retail firms?
2. To what extent does social media marketing influence profitability of retail firms?
3. To what extent does social media marketing influence customer satisfaction of retail firms?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following research hypotheses are formulated and to be tested at 0.5 level of significant.

- H<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of retail firms' managers and customers on the extent of the influence of social media marketing on product distribution of retail firms.
- H<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of experienced and inexperienced managers on the extent of the influence of social media marketing on profitability of retail firm.



H<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of retail firms' managers and customers on the extent of the influence of social media marketing on customers' satisfaction of retail firms.

### Method

This study used the descriptive survey design with 10 experienced retail firms' managers, 10 inexperienced retail firms' managers and 480 customers who are residents in Lagos State. The population of the study comprises retail firms' managers and customers which include government officials, business men/women, civil servants, students and others who patronize retail firms in Lagos State, Nigeria. The researchers knowing the population to be infinite first selected 10 key informants who possess e-marketing knowledge using purposive sampling. These key informants used the chain referral and respondent driven mechanism (snowball sampling) to select 480 respondents bringing the total sample used in this study to 500.

The questionnaire consisted of 28 items based on the purpose of the study. The instrument was validated by three experts made up of two senior lecturers and a Professor from the Department of Business and Entrepreneurship Education, Faculty of Education, Kwara State University, Malete. A pilot study was conducted in Ogun State using 20 retail firms' customers and 5 managers. The data from the customers and managers were correlated using Cronbach alpha which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.81. The items of the research questions were placed on modified four-point Likert scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE), and Very Low Extent (VLE). The scales were scored with 4 points, 3 points, 2 points, and 1 point respectively. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions and an independent sample t-test statistic was employed to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Positive decision rule for this study was established at a mean of 2.50 and above while any mean less than that was regarded as negative. Hypothesis of no significant difference was accepted when the observed probability value was greater than or equal to 0.05 level of significance. Where the calculated probability value was less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected.

### Results

Research Question 1: To what extent does social media marketing influence product distribution of retail firms?

**Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of responses on the extent social media marketing influence product distribution of retail firms**

S/N	Item Statements	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remark
1.	Social media marketing gives customers opportunity to have quick access to variety of products	3.32	0.69	High extent
2.	Buying products through social media marketing makes it easy for customers to compare price of products in different retail firms	3.21	0.70	High extent
3.	The speed of purchasing and delivering products through social media marketing is commendable	3.09	0.71	High extent
4.	It is easy to get information about products through social media marketing	3.36	0.65	High extent
5.	Social media marketing makes it easy for customers to buy products	3.26	0.56	High extent
6.	Buying products through social media marketing reduce cost and stress	2.97	0.76	High extent
7.	Products are always well packaged	3.15	0.66	High extent
8.	The distributors maintain professionalism	3.03	0.65	High extent
9.	Products are always delivered in good condition	3.01	0.60	High extent
10.	Customers get adequate information about products before purchase	3.09	0.62	High extent
<b>Weighted average</b>		<b>3.15</b>	<b>0.66</b>	<b>High extent</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2023



The data in Table 7 show the mean and standard deviation of responses on the extent to which social media marketing influence product distribution of retail firms. The table reveals that the respondents indicate that social media marketing gives customers opportunity to have quick access to variety of products to high extent and buying products through social media marketing makes it easy for customers to compare price of products in different retail firms to high extent. Similarly, the respondents indicate that the speed of purchasing and delivering products through social media marketing is commendable to high extent. These were supported by mean scores of 3.32, 3.21 and 3.09. The respondents also indicate that it is easy to get information about products through social media marketing to high extent and social media marketing makes it easy for customers to buy products as well as reduce cost and stress. These were also supported by mean scores of 3.36, 3.26 and 2.97. In addition, the respondents indicate that products are always well packaged, and the distributors maintain professionalism to high extent, same way products are always delivered in good condition and customers get adequate information about products before purchase to high extent. These were supported by mean scores of 3.15, 3.03, 3.01, and 3.09. All the 10 item constructs have standard deviation ranging from 0.56 to 0.76. This means that the responses of the respondents are not widely spread as they are close to their respective mean scores. The Table has a calculated weighted average mean and standard deviation score of 3.15 and 0.66 respectively which means that the respondents indicated high extent for all the constructs. This implies that social media marketing positively influenced product distribution of retail firms to high extent (mean = 3.15, SD = 0.66).

Research Question 2: To what extent does social media marketing influence profitability of retail firms?

**Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of responses on the extent social media marketing influence profitability of retail firms**

S/N	Item Statements	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remark
11.	Social media marketing improves retail firms' sales	3.20	0.64	High extent
12.	Marketing products on social media reduces retail firms' marketing cost	2.95	0.71	High extent
13.	Insecurity in the country affects profitability of retail firms	3.15	0.67	High extent
14.	Marketing products on social media is expensive	2.57	0.80	High extent
15.	The use of social media increases retail firms' sales turnover	3.20	0.57	High extent
16.	Products delivering process used by retail firms is less expensive and reduces cost of delivering	2.76	0.74	High extent
17.	Marketing products on social media improves firms' profitability	3.19	0.62	High extent
18.	Nigeria's business environment is favourably to retail firms	2.76	0.81	High extent
19.	Getting feedback from customers can help to improves firms' productivity which can lead to profitability	3.43	0.58	High extent
<b>Weighted average</b>		<b>3.02</b>	<b>0.68</b>	<b>High extent</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The data in Table 8 show the mean and standard deviation of responses on the extent to which social media marketing influence profitability of retail firms. The table reveals that the respondents indicate that social media marketing improves retail firms' sales to high extent and marketing products on social media reduces retail firms' marketing cost to high extent but insecurity in the country affects profitability of retail firms to high extent. These were supported by mean scores of 3.20, 2.95 and 3.15. The respondents also indicate that marketing products on social media is expensive to high extent, however the use of social media increases retail firms' sales turnover to high extent and products delivering process used by retail firms is less expensive and reduces cost of delivering to high extent. These were also supported by mean scores of 2.57, 3.20 and 2.76. In addition, the respondents indicate that marketing products on social media improves firms' profitability to high extent and Nigeria's business environment is favourable to retail firms to high extent, same way getting feedback from customers can help to improve firms' productivity which can lead to profitability to high extent. These were supported by mean scores of 3.19, 2.76, and 3.43. All the nine item constructs have standard deviation ranging from 0.57 to 0.81. This means that the responses of the respondents are not widely spread as they are close to their respective mean scores. The Table has a calculated weighted average mean and standard deviation score of 3.02 and 0.68 respectively which means that the respondents indicated high extent for all the constructs. This implies that social media marketing positively influenced profitability of retail firms to high extent (mean = 3.02, SD = 0.68).

Research Question 3: To what extent does social media marketing influence customer satisfaction of retail firms?



**Table 3: Mean and standard deviation of responses on the extent social media marketing influence customer satisfaction of retail firms**

S/N	Item Statements	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remark
20.	Customer service representative makes customers feel valued as a customer	3.27	0.61	High extent
21.	Customers have clear understanding of how to resolve a warrantee issue	2.59	0.75	High extent
22.	Customers are satisfied with the purchase experience	2.86	0.55	High extent
23.	Retail firm's customer service is commendable	2.94	0.58	High extent
24.	I will recommend buying products online to friends/family	2.83	0.69	High extent
25.	Service received through social media marketing always meet customers expectation	2.61	0.62	High extent
26.	There is an avenue for feedback to ascertain customer satisfaction through social media marketing	2.86	0.61	High extent
27.	Customers are satisfied with the distribution channels	2.89	0.48	High extent
28.	Retail firms' website is easy to navigate	2.91	0.56	High extent
<b>Weighted average</b>		<b>2.86</b>	<b>0.61</b>	<b>High extent</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The data in Table 9 show the mean and standard deviation of responses on the extent to which social media marketing influence customer satisfaction of retail firms. The Table reveals that the respondents indicate that customer service representative makes customers feel valued to high extent and customers have clear understanding of how to resolve a warrantee issue to high extent, same way they are satisfied with the purchase experience to high extent. These were supported by mean scores of 3.27, 2.59 and 2.86. The respondents also indicates that retail firm's customer service is commendable to high extent, and they will recommend buying products online to friends/family, same way service received through social media marketing always meet customers expectation to high extent. These were also supported by mean scores of 2.94, 2.83 and 2.61. In addition, the respondents indicate that there is an avenue for feedback to high extent to ascertain customer satisfaction through social media marketing which results to customers' satisfaction to high extent with the distribution channels, also retail firms' website is easy to navigate to high extent. These were supported by mean scores of 2.86, 2.89, and 2.91. All the nine item constructs have standard deviation ranging from 0.48 to 0.75. This means that the responses of the respondents are not widely spread as they are close to their respective mean scores. The Table has a calculated weighted average mean and standard deviation score of 2.86 and 0.61 respectively which means that the respondents indicated high extent for all the constructs. This implies that social media marketing positively influenced customer satisfaction of retail firms to high extent (mean = 2.86, SD = 0.61).

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean response of retail firms' managers and customers on the extent of the influence of social media marketing on product distribution of retail firms.

**Table 4: Summary of t-test on product distribution of retail firms**

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	Df	p-value	Decision
Managers	20	2.79	0.27	3.589	498	0.000	H <sub>04</sub> Rejected
Customers	480	3.16	0.46				

Source: Field survey, 2023

*P*<0.05

The data in Table 13 reveal that there are 20 retail firms' managers and 480 retail firms' customers. The responses of the managers and customers indicated that retail firms' customers had higher mean score ( $\bar{x} = 3.16$ ; SD = 0.46) than retail firms' managers ( $\bar{x} = 2.79$ ; SD = 0.27). Their responses are close to the mean as the standard deviations are very low. The table revealed that there was significant difference in the mean rating of retail firms' managers and customers regarding the extent social media marketing influence product distribution of retail firms ( $t_{18} = 3.589$ , *P*<0.05). At 0.05 level of significance and with DF of 498. Therefore, the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of retail firms' managers and customers on the extent of the influence of social media



marketing on product distribution of retail firms was rejected. This implied that retail firms' managers and customers differ in their responses regarding the influence of social media marketing on product distribution of retail firms.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean responses of experienced and inexperienced managers on the extent of the influence of social media marketing on profitability of retail firm.

**Table 5: Summary of t-test on profitability of retail firms**

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	Df	p-value	Decision
Experienced	10	2.91	0.23	0.632	18	0.535	H <sub>02</sub> Not Rejected
Inexperienced	10	2.85	0.20				

Source: Field survey, 2023 P>0.05

The data in Table 14 reveal that there are 10 experienced retail firms' managers and 10 inexperienced retail firms' managers. Both experience and inexperienced retail firms' managers responses indicated that social media marketing positively influenced profitability of retail firms ( $\bar{x} = 2.91$ ; SD = 0.23) and ( $\bar{x} = 2.85$ ; SD = 0.20). Their responses are close to the mean as the standard deviations are very low. The table revealed that there was no significant difference in the mean rating of experienced and inexperienced retail firms' managers regarding the extent affiliate marketing influence profitability of retail firms ( $t_{18} = 0.632$ , P>0.05). At 0.05 level of significance and with DF of 498. Therefore, the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of experienced and inexperienced retail firms' managers on the extent of the influence of social media marketing on profitability of retail firms was not rejected. This implied that both experienced and inexperienced retail firms' managers did not differ in their responses regarding the influence of social media marketing on profitability of retail firms.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean responses of retail firms' managers and customers on the extent of the influence of social media marketing on customer's satisfaction of retail firms.

**Table 6: Summary of t-test on customer satisfaction of retail firms**

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	Df	p-value	Decision
Managers	20	2.81	0.31	0.738	498	0.461	H <sub>06</sub> Not Rejected
Customers	480	3.87	0.35				

Source: Field survey, 2023 P<0.05

The data in Table 15 reveals that there are 20 retail firms' managers and 480 retail firms' customers. The responses of the managers and customers indicated that social media marketing have positive influence on customers satisfaction of retail firms ( $\bar{x} = 2.81$ ; SD = 0.31) and ( $\bar{x} = 2.87$ ; SD = 0.31). Their responses are close to the mean as the standard deviations are very low. The table revealed that there was no significant difference in the mean rating of retail firms' managers and customers regarding the extent social media marketing influence customer satisfaction of retail firms ( $t_{498} = 0.738$ , P>0.05). At 0.05 level of significance and with DF of 498. Therefore, the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of retail firms' managers and customers on the extent of the influence of social media marketing on customer's satisfaction of retail firms was not rejected. This implied that retail firms' managers and customers did not differ in their responses regarding the influence of social media marketing on customer's satisfaction of retail firms.

**Discussion of Findings**

The study revealed that retail firms' managers and customers in Lagos State rated the extent of the influence of social media marketing on products distribution of retail firms to be highly influenced. The findings also revealed that there was significant difference between the mean rating of retail firms'



managers and customers regarding the extent social media marketing influence product distribution of retail firms which shows that retail firms' customers had higher mean than retail firms' managers. Therefore, the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of retail firms' managers and customers on the extent of the influence of social media marketing on product distribution of retail firms was rejected. This implies that the use of social media platform like face book, instagram, and whatsapp increases retail firms' product distribution.

These findings corroborate that of Paswa (2018) who pointed out that social media marketing can be used to engage target groups, build brand visibility, and build relationships with customers. Social media marketing gives retail firms opportunity to inbound traffic by reaching out to numerous customers. So many people from different places all over the world use social media to get information about products and services. Syndicating content on as many platforms as possible allows people from different demography to organically reach their business. Marketing products on social media improved search engine ranking and also enables organization to effectively open their business to a wider variety of versatile consumers all over the globe. Tuten (2021) seen social media marketing as the use of social media technologies to create, communicate, deliver, and trade value-added offerings to company's stakeholders. Social media marketing is a beneficial distribution channel to end-users (Vanden et al (2016).

The next findings of research purpose, question, and hypothesis two revealed that both experience and inexperienced retail firms' managers in Lagos State agreed that social media marketing positively influenced profitability of retail firms. The findings also revealed that there was no significant difference in the mean rating of experienced and inexperienced retail firms' managers regarding the extent social media marketing influence profitability of retail firms Therefore, the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of experienced and inexperienced retail firms' managers on the extent of the influence of social media marketing on profitability of retail firms was not rejected. This implied that both the experienced and inexperienced retail firms' managers agreed that marketing products on social media influences retail firms' profitability level.

These findings corroborated that of Bandyopadhyay (2016) who stated that successful social media marketing will increase brand awareness through customer engagement as well as be cost savings strategy to help with small business performance. Social media marketing is possibility the most cost-efficient part of an advertising strategy. Signing up and creating a profile is free for almost all social networking platforms, and any paid promotions organization decide to invest in area relatively low cost compared to other marketing tactics. Being cost effective is an advantage for organization because they can see a greater return on investment and retain a bigger budget for other marketing and business expenses. Social media marketing helps to improve firms' profitability, by utilizing the service of influencer marketing, consumers tend to trust reliable and authoritative niche figures. Publishing quality content and making videos to emphasize the importance of the content consistently to popularize firms' products is a great way to improves sales. According to Stanly and Wasilewski (2017) profit of an organization, big or small, are the computational outcomes of two variables: sales and cost.

The result of the last finding which is on the influence of social media marketing on customer satisfaction of retail firms revealed that customers are satisfied with buying products through social media platforms. The findings also revealed that there was significant difference in the mean rating of retail firms' managers and customers regarding the extent social media marketing influence customers' satisfaction of retail firms. Therefore, the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of retail firms' managers and customers on the extent of the influence of social media marketing on customers' satisfaction of retail firms was not rejected. This implied that retail firms' managers and customers agreed that social media marketing influence customers' satisfaction of retail firms.

These findings corroborated Venciute (2018) who stated social media in a marketing context consist of customer engagement, enhancing relationships with cus4omers, information dissemination, and enhanced reach and targeting. Social media platforms help to improve customer satisfaction of a firm. Creating a voice for the firm through the platform helps to humanize the firm. Customers appreciate it when they post comments on a firm's pages, and receive a personalized response rather than an automated message. Social media helps organization to address issue using interpersonal dialogue. Social media marketing enable firms to keep customers informed of problems or promotions and it also gives the firms opportunity to get feedback from customers. According to Yadav & Rahman (2017) social media marketing is a process by which companies create, communicate, and deliver online marketing offerings via social media platforms to build and maintain stakeholders' value by facilitating interaction, information sharing, offering personalized purchase recommendation, and word of mouth creation amongst stakeholders about exiting and trending products and services.



### Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that globalization and technology are the keys driver of change in retail business and have increased the efficiency of e - commerce. Retail firms must not relay on their traditional ways of distributing their products but must embrace and use social media marketing to make their businesses know globally. Utilizing social media platforms will enable retail firms to effectively distribute their products, increased their firms' profitability and satisfied their customers. Based on the findings from the analyses, it is evident that social media marketing positively influenced products distribution, profitability and customer satisfaction of retail firms and this will help many retail firms to embrace e- commerce rather than sticking only to the traditional method of doing business. It will increase retail firms brand awareness and enable them to reach out to numerous customers all over the globe. This will increase retail firms sales turn over. The use of social media will reduce retail firms cost of advertising their products and that will increase the profitability level of retail firms.

The study implies that if retail firms do not use social media facilities to promote their products so that they can reach out to customers all over the globe, their brands will just be known locally and their sales will reduced. Retail firms will spend lots of money on advertising their products which will reduce the profitability level of the firms.

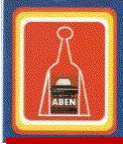
### Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Retail firms' managers should ensure they make use of social media facilities effectively to enable them market and distribute their products to numerous customer of different level, age, sex and demography. They should ensure the quality of products they market on social media and delivered to the customers meet the standard of standard organization of Nigeria.
2. Retail firms should ensure they build customer trust by providing quality products and making sure the quality of products they marketed on social media are same as products delivered. This will enable them have more customer loyalty which will increase their sales turnover and leads to improvement in the firms profitability.
3. Retail firms should ensure they build a good customer relationship with their customers by answering questions and responding to customer concerns on their websites. They should also provide good quality products /services to satisfy their customers. They should also put in place good security measures to protect their distributors who delivered products to customers and the customers.

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