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## Social Networks and Consumer Buying Behaviour

By

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### Abstract:

*The increasing adoption of social networking platforms has transformed how organizations engage with consumers and influence purchasing behaviour. The study examined the influence of social networks on consumer buying behavior in the Nigerian telecommunications industry with a specific focus on customers of MTN Nigeria PLC in Ilaro, Ogun State. The study investigated four key dimensions of social networking: content creation, customer engagement, relationship building and data analysis, and their influence on consumer buying behavior. A descriptive research design was adopted, while primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale. The study targeted an infinite population of MYN consumers, and a sample size of 385 respondents was determined using Cochran's formula. Data were analysed using appropriate statistical techniques to test the research objectives and hypotheses. The findings revealed that relationship building had a positive and statistically significant effect on consumer buying behaviour ( $\beta=0.087, p=0.039$ ), indicating that stronger customer relationship enhance consumers' purchase decisions. In contrast, content creation ( $\beta=0.063, p=0.215$ ), customer engagement ( $\beta=0.042, p=0.385$ ), and data analysis ( $\beta=-0.030, p=0.493$ ) showed no statistically significant influence on consumer buying behaviour. The study concludes that although social networks remain valuable marketing tools, organization should prioritize relationship-building strategies over mere content generation, engagement metrics, or data collection to achieve meaningful improvements in consumer buying behavior. The study recommends that telecommunication firms strengthen personalized customer relationships, implement customer loyalty programmes, and integrate relationship marketing into their social media strategies to improve customer retention, satisfaction and competitive advantage.*

**Keywords:** Social Networks, Consumer Buying Behaviour, Relationship Building, Content Creation, Customer Engagement, Data Analysis.

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The advancement of digital technology and the pervasive utilization of the internet have profoundly altered customer interactions, decision-making processes, and brand engagement. The development of social networks as influential venues has significantly altered consumer behavior. Social networks, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (now X), LinkedIn, and TikTok, have become indispensable tools for consumers and advertisers, with millions of users actively participating. These platforms serve not only for communication and enjoyment but are now pivotal in influencing how consumers acquire information, develop opinions, and make purchasing choices.

Social networks denote online platforms enabling users to establish personal profiles, communicate with others, share content, and engage in virtual communities (Boyd & Ellison, 2020). These platforms enable the dissemination of information and viewpoints among peers, profoundly influencing consumer perceptions of products and services. Kaplan and Haenlein (2020) assert that



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social networks facilitate user-generated content and promote connection, hence impacting customers via peer recommendations, reviews, likes, shares, and influencer marketing.

Clinton and Ellison (2022) define social networks as online platforms that enable users to create public or semi-public profiles, establish connections with other users, and access and navigate their network of connections within the system. These platforms are defined by user-generated content, peer-to-peer interactions, and instantaneous information dissemination. In this context, social networks enable interactive contact between firms and consumers, directly and measurably influencing purchasing behaviour. The significance of social networks in influencing consumer purchasing behavior cannot be overstated. Contemporary consumers are extensively interconnected and increasingly depend on social media platforms to investigate product choices, peruse reviews, assess alternatives, and finalize purchases. Mangold and Faulds (2024) contend that social media has evolved into a hybrid component of the promotional mix, facilitating the influence of both firm-controlled and user-generated information on customer decisions. Within the telecommunications sector, firms such as MTN Nigeria must acknowledge that a substantial fraction of their customers' purchasing decisions—such as selecting data plans, subscribing to promotions, or changing service providers—are shaped by their exposure to social networks. The digital revolution has initiated a new epoch of connectedness, dramatically transforming the dynamics of communication, trade, and consumer behavior. Social networks are at the forefront of this shift, having expanded from simple platforms for personal connection into powerful instruments that influence human decision-making, particularly in the marketplace. Social networks like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (now X), TikTok, YouTube, and WhatsApp have evolved into vital platforms for social interaction and integral elements of contemporary marketing strategy. Companies, especially prominent telecommunications entities such as MTN Nigeria, now acknowledge the significant potential these platforms have for reaching, engaging, and converting consumers. Consumer buying behavior encompasses the processes and decisions consumers undertake in the selection, acquisition, utilization, and disposal of goods and services (Solomon, 2021). In the realm of social networks, consumer behavior is progressively shaped by the content they observe, hear, and read on these platforms. Research indicates that consumers place greater trust in peer reviews, social media influencers, and online word-of-mouth compared to conventional advertising techniques (Cheung & Thadani, 2022).

## **Statement of the Problem**

Given these issues, it becomes clear that although MTN Nigeria has a strong social media presence, there are underlying challenges in how it utilizes content creation, user engagement, relationship building strategies, and data analytics to influence consumer buying behavior. The failure to address these problems may continue to result in wasted marketing resources, ineffective campaigns, and declining customer satisfaction, which ultimately weakens the brand's competitive advantage.

## **Objective of the Study**

The main objective of this study is to determine the significance effect of social networks on consumer buying behavior in view of MTN Nig plc. Derive from the above main objective are the following specific objectives:

- i. To investigate the significant effect of content creation on consumer buying behavior.
- ii. To determine the significant effect of engagement on consumer buying behavior
- iii. To examine the significant effect of relationship building on consumer buying behavior.
- iv. To evaluate the positive effect of data analysis on consumer buying behavior.

Based on the above objectives of the study developed the following research questions were formulated.

- i. To what extent does content creation on consumer buying behavior? ii. What is the significant



effect of engagement on consumer buying behavior? iii. To what degree does relationship building on consumer buying behavior? iv. To what level does data analysis on consumer buying behavior?

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Conceptual Review**

#### **Concept of Social Networks**

Social networks have become essential to modern society, shaping how individuals connect, communicate, and see themselves. The notion of social networks, while popularized by the emergence of the internet and digital platforms, is fundamentally grounded in sociological theory and has developed throughout time to include both offline and online contacts. A social network fundamentally denotes a structure consisting of persons or organizations, termed "nodes," interconnected by many forms of interdependency, including friendship, kinship, similar interests, financial transactions, or related beliefs (Wasserman & Faust, 2024). The intensity, frequency, and orientation of these connections can profoundly affect information dissemination, social impact, and behavioral results inside the network.

The emergence of digital technology has revolutionized conventional social networks, leading to the creation of online social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram. These platforms have broadened the scope of personal and professional networks, allowing users to sustain ties across geographical boundaries and time zones (boyd & Ellison, 2023). danah boyd and Nicole Ellison characterize social network sites as online platforms that enable users to (1) create a public or semi-public profile within a defined framework, (2) specify a roster of other users with whom they have a connection, and (3) access and navigate their own connections as well as those established by others within the platform.

These internet networks have transformed communication and emerged as potent instruments for information transmission, marketing, activism, and political mobilization.

#### **Social Networks Strategies**

In the contemporary digital landscape, social network techniques have become essential instruments for individuals, organizations, and enterprises aiming to enhance communication, cultivate relationships, and shape behavior. Social networks, both offline and online, serve not only as communication platforms but also as dynamic ecosystems where strategic interactions can produce substantial social, economic, and political advantages.

Developing effective social network tactics commences with comprehending the fundamental structure and dynamics of social networks. A social network, as described by Wasserman and Faust (2024), comprises a collection of actors—individuals, groups, or organizations—interlinked by social ties. The strategic utilization of these ties enables actors to acquire resources, disseminate information, and exert influence with greater efficacy. Consequently, social network tactics encompass intentional measures designed to optimize the advantages gained from network positioning, connectedness, and influence.

Mark Granovetter's (1973) thesis of the "strength of weak ties" is a fundamental concept that underpins social network strategy. Granovetter asserts that weak relationships—casual or distant acquaintances—are more advantageous than strong ties in disseminating new knowledge due to their ability to link individuals to diverse social networks. Furthermore, Boyd and Ellison (2023) emphasize the significance of profile curation and network exposure in digital contexts. An essential technique for individuals, particularly professionals and influencers, is to cultivate personal branding via tailored content, frequent engagement, and active involvement in community dialogues. This not only enhances credibility but also fortifies social capital, which Coleman (2023)



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defines as the value obtained from interpersonal relationships and networks of mutual trust.

## **Importance of Social Networks**

Social networks have emerged as a pivotal force in contemporary society, shaping the ways individuals interact, communicate, and collaborate across personal, professional, and cultural spheres. The significance of social networks surpasses technological advancement; they constitute the essential framework for the formation, maintenance, and utilization of human interactions to attain individual and communal objectives. Regardless of being offline or digital, social networks are essential for social cohesiveness, information transmission, economic opportunities, and emotional support. The significance of social networks is grounded in traditional sociological theory. Georg Simmel (1950) was one of the pioneers in examining the relational essence of society, contending that social institutions emerge from interactions among individuals. This theoretical framework established the basis for contemporary social network analysis, highlighting the importance of connections and relationships. Furthermore, during crises, the significance of social networks becomes increasingly evident. In emergencies, like natural disasters or public health crises, social networks function as essential platforms for disseminating correct information, coordinating assistance, and preserving social connections. During the COVID-19 epidemic, social networks facilitated connections, provided information, and offered emotional support despite physical distancing (Merchant & Lurie, 2020).

## **Elements of Social Networks**

### **Content Creation**

In the modern digital era, social networks have transformed business-consumer interactions, with content production being a pivotal factor in this change. As enterprises endeavor to attract, retain, and convert audiences into devoted customers, content has evolved from a mere communication tool to a strategic asset for shaping consumer purchasing behavior. The kind, quality, and consistency of material disseminated on social networking platforms significantly influence consumer perception, brand loyalty, and, ultimately, purchase behavior.

Content production on social media refers to the development and distribution of relevant, valuable, and engaging material customized to a particular audience. Kotler and Keller (2023) assert that content is a fundamental element of brand storytelling, allowing organizations to effectively convey their values, goals, and products. Brands can emotionally engage their audience and impact customer decision-making through movies, photos, infographics, blog entries, or user-generated content. Kaplan and Haenlein (2020) assert that successful social media material must be genuine, coherent, and crafted to encourage engagement. Their research demonstrates that interactive and engaging content boosts visibility and improves brand likability, both of which are crucial indicators of customer purchasing behavior. When customers find material that aligns with their needs and aspirations, they are more inclined to engage with the business and ultimately make purchasing decisions.

The efficacy of content is further enhanced by the principle of emotional appeal. Ashley and Tuten (2025) assert that emotional storytelling using visual material significantly enhances engagement rates, perhaps leading to greater client loyalty and repeat patronage. Content that provokes comedy, nostalgia, inspiration, or empathy tends to perform better on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook, fostering greater connection between the company and the customer.

### **Engagement**

In the contemporary digital landscape, where consumer interactions predominantly occur on virtual platforms, engagement has become a pivotal factor in comprehending the influence of social networks on consumer purchasing behavior. In the competitive realm of social media marketing, engagement, characterized by the intensity of connection between consumers and content, has



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emerged as a crucial factor influencing customer interest, trust, and loyalty. Meaningful involvement enables social networks to surpass their function as mere communication tools and become into significant influencers of consumer behavior. Engagement on social networks is complex, involving likes, shares, comments, mentions, direct messages, and involvement in brand-related dialogues. Brodie (2023) defines engagement as "a psychological state that arises from interactive, co-creative" processes.

## **Relationship Building**

In the dynamic realm of digital marketing, establishing relationships has emerged as a fundamental aspect in comprehending the impact of social networks on customer purchasing behavior. Social networking platforms, originally intended for social interaction and connection, have progressively transformed into venues where businesses cultivate enduring relationships with clients. The building of strategic relationships is crucial in influencing consumers' initial purchases and their subsequent loyalty to a brand.

Relationship development entails the establishment of robust, individualized, and continuous relationships between enterprises and their clientele. Morgan and Hunt (2024) assert that relationship marketing is predicated on trust and commitment, both of which are vital for sustaining long-term consumer engagement. Social networks provide an optimal platform for organizations to cultivate these qualities by facilitating bidirectional communication, transparency, and authenticity in consumer engagements.

Establishing relationships on social media typically involves personalized messages, posts expressing consumer gratitude, behind-the-scenes content, and regular interaction with user generated content. These activities foster the establishment of a brand community, which Muniz and O'Guinn (2021) characterize as a "specialized, non-geographically bound community, founded on a structured set of social relationships among brand enthusiasts." These online brand communities serve as platforms for customers to engage with the brand and one another, reinforcing the emotional connections that foster loyalty and regular spending. In conclusion, relationship cultivation is a crucial factor in the influence of social networks on consumer purchasing behavior. It includes trust, communication, customisation, and emotional connection, all of which are essential for cultivating and sustaining loyal client bases. Businesses that utilize social platforms to engage with their consumers and prioritize the cultivation of genuine relationships will be more likely to achieve continuous patronage, a favorable brand reputation, and sustainable growth.

## **Data analysis**

In the contemporary data-centric marketing environment, the significance of data analysis in assessing the influence of social networks on customer purchasing behavior is paramount. Enterprises increasingly depend on social media to interact with consumers, the capacity to gather, analyze, and employ data from these platforms has become a strategic imperative. Data analysis allows organizations to transform raw data into actionable insights that illuminate customer behavior, tastes, and trends, so improving the efficacy of marketing initiatives designed to boost patronage. Social media sites provide an extensive volume of data each day, encompassing likes, shares, comments, and both demographic and psychographic user profiles. Furthermore, data analysis enables organizations to monitor engagement indicators and assess the efficacy of their social media operations. Metrics including click-through rates, conversion rates, sentiment analysis, and client feedback serve as quantifiable indicators of effective initiatives. Tuten and Solomon (2025) say that marketers that consistently examine these variables are better equipped to make educated decisions that match with consumer needs and market demands. These insights



enable organizations to customize their social media communication, thereby enhancing relationships with current customers and drawing in prospective ones.

## **Concept of Consumer buying behavior**

Consumer purchasing behavior is seen as an integral component of marketing and packaging perspectives (Dudovskiy, 2022). Marketing efforts and packaging aesthetics, including the quality of materials, printed information, brand image, and appealing colors and imagery, are thought to influence customer purchase behavior to some extent. Numerous elements influence the customer buying behavior process; nevertheless, we provide only a select handful here. Consequently, it can be contended that, when considered individually, the aforementioned elements may not influence customer purchasing behavior.

Consumer purchasing behavior is a process through which an individual or group selects, acquires, utilizes, or discards products, services, or experiences to fulfill their preferences or needs. Kotler (2024) stated that consumers may articulate one intention while exhibiting a different behavior. Comprehending consumer behavior is a challenging endeavor. Solomon (2023) asserted that marketers may affect consumer behavior. Kurtzbard and Soldow (2020) discovered that cultural elements significantly influence customer behavior among uncontrolled variables. Consumer buying behavior encompasses the physical, mental, and emotional behaviors involved in the selection, purchase, and utilization of products or services to fulfill wants and desires. It is the aggregation of consumers' attitudes, interests, and behaviors toward the acquisition of any products or services (Sethna & Blythe, 2021).

Consumer buying behavior examines the purchasing entities and exchange mechanisms involved in the acquisition, utilization, and disposal of products, services, and concepts. Dudovskiy (2022) defines consumer behavior as the behaviors individuals undertake in the current or future utilization of diverse market products, encompassing goods, services, ideas, and retail environments. A greater brand preference typically leads to increased revenues and profitability. Alamro and Rowley (2023) contend that a consensus on the notion of brand preference is lacking. They assert that various authorities define brand choice differently and propose distinct correlations between brand preference and other branding characteristics. Keller (as referenced in Alamro & Rowley, 2023) posits brand preference as a precursor to brand loyalty and brand equity, while Chang and Ya Ming (2021) regard brand preference as a result of brand loyalty and brand equity.

Brand preference, as defined by Dadzie and Boachie-Mensah (2023), is the metric of brand loyalty whereby a consumer opts for a certain brand in the presence of competing brands, however is willing to consider alternatives if that brand is inaccessible. They argue that it may also be seen as the tendency to select a specific brand of goods over others with similar composition and pricing or preference attributes. Rahman and Azhar (2023) define brand choice as comprising two components, specifically stated. Preference, determined by the significance of numerous connected variables, and revealed preference, which is defined as the consumer's actual choice.

## **Content creation and Consumer buying behavior**

In the digital era, content production serves as a fundamental element in effectively using social networks to influence consumer purchasing behavior. The connection between content development and consumer purchasing behavior is founded on content's capacity to capture attention, establish trust, foster engagement, and cultivate loyalty, all of which are vital in the very competitive digital marketplace. Content production denotes the process of producing and disseminating pertinent media, including text, photographs, videos, and interactive formats, across social platforms to engage a certain audience. As stated by Pulizzi (2022), content marketing is a strategic approach that emphasizes the creation and dissemination of valuable, pertinent, and consistent information to



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engage and maintain a specifically defined audience, eventually aiming to stimulate profitable consumer behavior. This strategy on social networks involves businesses creating genuine, useful, and engaging material customized for their clientele. Superior content enhances brand recognition and credibility. Consistent production of informative blog entries, behind-the-scenes films, customer testimonials, or product demos enables organizations to establish a distinctive brand voice and presence. Ashley and Tuten (2025) assert that engaging content enables brands to distinguish themselves and cultivate thought leadership within their sector. This acknowledgment may influence buyers to prefer certain brands over alternatives during their shopping decisions. Social networks enable organizations to utilize user-generated content (UGC) into their content strategy. Motivating customers to submit their photographs, testimonials, and narratives associated with the business enhances authenticity and strengthens emotional bonds. As per Pansari and Kumar (2025) assert that emotional involvement cultivated through content mirroring the customer's voice is a significant predictor of consumer loyalty and repeat patronage.

## **Engagement and Consumer buying behavior**

Engagement is not a passive result; it is an active measure of client interest and emotional attachment. Brodie (2021) posits that customer involvement embodies a psychological condition arising from collaborative, co-creative encounters with a business. This is evident on social networks through instantaneous communication and tailored interactions that cultivate a sense of community and trust. Customers who feel acknowledged and appreciated are more inclined to consistently support a brand. Effective engagement tactics encompass timely responses to consumer requests, publicly and respectfully resolving issues, and honoring user contributions through the reposting of user-generated material or recognition of dedicated followers. These actions enhance clients' feelings of belonging and happiness, which are crucial for encouraging repeat business. Hollebeek, Glynn, and Brodie (2024) assert that highly engaged customers are more inclined to purchase and promote the brand, hence enhancing word-of-mouth marketing. Social media are more likely to foster not only heightened sales but also enduring loyalty and advocacy. As digital technologies advance, engagement will persist as a crucial factor influencing consumer purchasing behavior inside the social media domain.

## **Relationship building and Consumer buying behavior**

In the digital era, characterized by intense competition and fragmented customer attention, relationship cultivation via social networks has become a pivotal influence on consumer purchasing behavior. Social media platforms provide businesses with a distinctive opportunity to cultivate and maintain relationships with prospective and current customers through direct, ongoing, and personalized engagement. This transition from transactional interactions to relational engagements has markedly transformed how brands foster loyalty and promote repeat patronage. Relationship development is founded on the concept that enduring interactions and emotional bonds with clients yield greater value than transient sales. Morgan and Hunt (2024) assert that relationship marketing is founded on trust and commitment—two fundamental pillars that affect a customer's intention to persist in engaging with and purchasing from a company. Social networks offer essential tools for cultivating trust, such as real-time communication, transparency, and responsiveness.

## **Data analysis and Consumer buying behavior**

In the evolving digital landscape, data analysis has become indispensable in the strategic use of social networks to enhance Consumer buying behavior. As businesses strive to understand and meet customer expectations more effectively, the insights derived from social media data have become a cornerstone for decision-making, customer engagement, and loyalty-building strategies. Data analysis empowers organizations to track behaviors, preferences, and feedback in real time enabling personalized experiences that drive customer satisfaction and repeat patronage.



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Social networks generate vast amounts of data daily ranging from likes, shares, and comments to detailed user profiles and sentiment expressions. Harnessing this data through analysis helps brands decipher patterns, predict consumer behavior, and respond proactively to market demands. In conclusion, data analysis serves as the analytical backbone of social network strategies that drive Consumer buying behavior. By leveraging data to understand, anticipate, and personalize the customer experience, businesses can foster stronger relationships, enhance satisfaction, and boost loyalty. As the digital landscape continues to evolve, organizations that effectively utilize social media analytics will be best positioned to cultivate and sustain long-term patronage in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

## **2.2 Theoretical Review**

### **Social Exchange Theory**

Social Exchange Theory (SET), established by Peter Blau in 1964, offers a fundamental paradigm for comprehending the dynamics of interactions between enterprises and customers, particularly inside social networks. Blau's theory asserts that human relationships are established through a subjective cost-benefit analysis and the evaluation of alternatives. Individuals participate in relationships they deem rewarding and tend to evade those viewed as costly or providing diminished advantages. Furthermore, Homans (1958), an antecedent of Blau's theories, asserted that the greater the rewards of a social encounter, the more frequently it will be replicated. In the realm of Consumer buying behavior, this indicates that when customers perceive social media interactions as rewarding—be it through promotional offers, recognition, or valuable content—they are inclined to persist in their support for the brand. Therefore, social trade transcends simply transactions, encompassing profound relational and psychological dimensions. Social Exchange Theory emphasizes that client engagement and loyalty on social networks are not arbitrary; instead, they result from deliberate and reciprocal value exchanges. When businesses provide content, attention, and responsiveness that customers deem useful, customers are inclined to reciprocate with trust, loyalty, and continued patronage, so confirming the efficacy of relational marketing in the digital era.

## **2.3 Empirical Review**

Newman (2023) examined the effect of internet marketing on the conversion rate of deposit money banks in Nigeria. Blog, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn were used as the dimensions of social media marketing. The study revealed a gap from the literature that social media marketing and organizational efficiency of banks in Nigeria has not been extensively studied in Nigeria. The study used the conversion rate as a dependent variable. The study adopted descriptive and inferential statistical tools to analyze the data and test the hypotheses. A questionnaire was used to elicit information from the respondents. The population of the study consisted of all the 22 banks approved by CBN. The study sampled 159 respondents from 22 banks in Nigeria and validly used 133 respondents representing 83.65% response rate for data analysis. The study found that banks use a blog, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn to conduct their marketing activities for brand promotion and persuasion of customers to patronize them. The study revealed that Blog has a positive but insignificant effect on conversion rate. The study discovered that Facebook has a positive and significant effect on conversion rate. The study revealed that Twitter has a positive and significant effect on conversion rate. The study found that LinkedIn has a positive and insignificant effect on conversion rate. The study concludes that as banks use blogs, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn to create awareness about their products and services on the internet. The study recommends that bank managers should use Blog, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn by encouraging all the bank staff to participate in social media marketing which in turn covers more ground for the enhancement of conversion rate leading to the conversion rate of banks.



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## **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

The research design used in this study is descriptive. According to factors in a setting, a descriptive study design is a research strategy that observes and describes subject behavior from a scientific point of view (Sharma, 2019). Because it would aid in determining the effect of social networks on consumer buying behavior in Nigeria in light of MTN, this study uses a descriptive research design. The population of this study are all MTN reachable customers in Ilaro, Ogun State. As there is no way of knowing how many customers there are, the target market for this study is regarded as an infinite population. The infinite population is also referred to as an uncountable population because it is impossible to count the individual members of the population (Kozak, 2020).

The sample technique for this study is simple random sampling technique. Purposive sampling is the basic sampling technique where we select a group of subjects (a sample) for study from a larger group (a population).

The sample size for an infinite (unknown) population when the percentage of population is 5, confidence level 95 and confidence interval is 0.05, using Cochran (1977) formula is presented below:

$$SS = \frac{[Z^2 pq]}{e^2}$$

Key Interpretations:

Where,

SS = Sample size

$Z^2$  = The abscissa of the normal curve

p = estimated proportion of an attribute that is presented in the population q = 1-p

e = Desired level of precision

Z = From the z-table, we have the value of confidence level, that is 1.96 by applying given data in the formula:

$$SS = \frac{(1.96)^2 \times 0.05 \times (1 - 0.10)}{0.05^2}$$

$$SS = 385$$

The researcher obtained a sample size of Three Hundred Eighty Five (385) from the infinite population.

The data collected for the study comprises of primary and secondary data. The research instrument for this study is questionnaire which is a primary source of data. The secondary data refers to a way of sourcing data that are already in existence. Examples includes relevant textbooks, magazines, academic journals, academic papers, academic reports, internets etc.

Since a questionnaire is the primary data collection method in this study, it is critical that the questions are pertinent to the goals of the investigation. Due to this clause, the questionnaire used in this study was split into three parts. Section A of the questionnaire asks about the respondents' demographics, and Section B asks about elements of social network while Section C asks about consumer buying behavior using 5-points Likerts Scale; Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD) were made available for respondents to tick appropriately.

Validity test implies the extent to which the research instrument measure, what it is intended to measure. This study adopted face validity test. Face validity is the extent to which a test is subjectively viewed as covering the concept it purports to measure.

A reliability test was conducted on the instrument to determine how consistent the responses were. The researcher utilized test/retest method of reliability testing whereby the questionnaire was



administered at two different times to the same group of respondents. The data collected were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) reliability technique.

**Table 1: Instrument Reliability Test**

| Variable                 | Cronbach Alpha | No. of Items |
|--------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Content creation         | 0.728          | 5            |
| Engagement               | 0.825          | 5            |
| Relationship building    | 0.708          | 5            |
| Data analysis            | 0.739          | 5            |
| Consumer buying behavior | 0.881          | 5            |

**Source: SPSS Output, 2026.**

The result of the analysis shows that the Cronbach's Alpha value for content creation is 0.728, 0.825 for engagement, 0.708 for relationship building, 0.739 for data analysis and 0.881 for consumer buying behavior. These values are high and it can be concluded that the questionnaire is reliable and can be used for the research work.

The demographic data will be presented in inferential statistics and presented with the use of graphs and charts while the hypotheses will be tested with multiple regression analysis using SPSS version 25.0. The variables included both dependent and independent variables.

### Model Specification

The model specification is formulated below;

$$Y = f(X)$$

Y = Dependent Variable (Consumer buying behavior)

X = Independent Variable (Social Networks)

Therefore,

$$CP = f(SN)$$

$$CP = f(CC, EG, RB, DA)$$

$$CP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CC + \beta_2 EG + \beta_3 RB + \beta_4 DA + \mu$$

Where;

CBB = Consumer buying behavior

SN = Social Networks

CC = Content Creation

EG= Engagement

RB = Relationship Building

DA= Data Analysis

$\beta_0$  = constant term

$\beta_1 - \beta_4$  = Coefficient of Independent Variables

$\mu$  = error term.

The  $\varepsilon$  = error term represented the unknown variables or those hard to measure but had an effect on the dependent.



## 4.0 RESULTS

### Table 2: Model Summary

Model R R Square Adjusted R Square Std. Error of the Estimate

1 .148<sup>a</sup>.022 .012 .38308

a. Predictors: (Constant), relationship building, data analysis, engagement, content creation

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

The R-Square value ( $R^2 = .022$ ) in Table 2 indicates that the combined effect of the independent variables relationship building, data analysis, engagement, and content creation accounts for only about 2.2 percent of the total variation in the dependent variable. This implies that these predictors have a weak explanatory power in influencing the outcome, while about 97.8 percent of the variation is attributed to other factors not captured in the model. The Adjusted R Square (.012) further confirms that after adjusting for the number of predictors, the explanatory strength remains minimal.

### Table 3: ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model Sum of Squares df Mean Square F Sig. 1 Regression 1.253 4 .313 2.134 .076<sup>b</sup>Residual 55.765 380 .147

Total 57.018 384

a. Dependent Variable: consumer buying behaviour

b. Predictors: (Constant), relationship building, data analysis, engagement, content creation

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

The associated probability value of the F-statistics [ $F(4, 380) = 2.134$ ;  $P = .076$ ] is greater than the 0.05 significance threshold. This implies that the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant statistical relationship between relationship building, data analysis, engagement, content creation, and consumer buying behaviour cannot be rejected at the 5 percent level. Therefore, it is concluded that the combined effect of the independent variables does not have a statistically significant influence on consumer buying behaviour.

### Table 4: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

| Unstandardized Coefficients                     | Standardized Coefficients |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Model                                           | 1 (Constant) 3.270 .356   |
| B Std. Error Beta t Sig.                        | 9.180 .000                |
| creation .063 .051 1.243 .215 .064              |                           |
| Data analysis -.030 .044 -.035 -.686 .493       |                           |
| Engagement .042 .048 .045 .870 .385             |                           |
| Relationship Building .087 .042 .107 2.071 .039 |                           |

a. Dependent Variable: consumer buying behavior

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 4 reveals both the relative effect and significance of each explanatory variable on the dependent variable. Relationship building (RB) emerges as the most potent factor in predicting consumer buying behaviour (a unit increase in RB results in a 0.087 increase in consumer buying behaviour and is statistically significant at  $p < .05$ ). This is followed in order of magnitude by content creation (CC) (a unit increase in CC results in a 0.063 increase in consumer buying behaviour), engagement (EG) (a unit increase in EG results in a 0.042 increase in consumer buying behaviour), while data analysis (DA) is found to have a negative effect on consumer buying behaviour (a unit increase in DA results in a  $-0.030$  decrease in consumer buying behaviour). However, apart from relationship building, the other predictors are not statistically significant in



influencing consumer buying behaviour at the 5 percent significance level.

## **Discussion of Findings**

The relevant hypotheses were tested using multiple regression model with least square method.

The stated hypotheses are:

### **Hypothesis 1**

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no extent to which content creation influences consumer buying behaviour.

H<sub>1</sub>: There are extents to which content creation influences consumer buying behaviour.

**Decision Rule:** The result of the analysis in the coefficient table reveals that the associated probability value of content creation is .215, which is higher than 5%. This implies that the null hypothesis will be accepted at the 5% significance level and the alternative hypothesis rejected with 95% confidence interval. It is therefore concluded that content creation has no significant impact on consumer buying behaviour.

### **Hypothesis 2**

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no extent to which data analysis influences consumer buying behaviour. H<sub>1</sub>: There are extents to which data analysis influences consumer buying behaviour.

**Decision Rule:** The result of the analysis in the coefficient table reveals that the associated probability value of data analysis is .493, which is higher than 5%. This implies that the null hypothesis will be accepted at the 5% significance level and the alternative hypothesis rejected with 95% confidence interval. It is therefore concluded that data analysis has no significant impact on consumer buying behaviour.

### **Hypothesis 3**

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no extent to which engagement influences consumer buying behaviour. H<sub>1</sub>: There are extents to which engagement influences consumer buying behaviour.

**Decision Rule:** The result of the analysis in the coefficient table reveals that the associated probability value of engagement is .385, which is higher than 5%. This implies that the null hypothesis will be accepted at the 5% significance level and the alternative hypothesis rejected with 95% confidence interval. It is therefore concluded that engagement has no significant impact on consumer buying behaviour.

### **Hypothesis 4**

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no extent to which relationship building influences consumer buying behaviour. H<sub>1</sub>: There are extents to which relationship building influences consumer buying behaviour.

**Decision Rule:** The result of the analysis in the coefficient table reveals that the associated probability value of relationship building is .039, which is less than 5%. This implies that the null hypothesis will be rejected at the 5% significance level and the alternative hypothesis accepted with 95% confidence interval. It is therefore concluded that relationship building has a significant positive impact on consumer buying behaviour.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This research aim is examining the significant effect of social networks on consumer buying behavior in Nigerian Telecommunication industry focusing on customers of MTN Nigeria Plc in Ilaro, Ogun state. Four research questions and four hypotheses were generated for the study and tested. According to the findings, there is a positive and significant relationship between social networks on consumer buying behavior in Nigerian Telecommunication industry, thereby supporting the major objective.

Objective one determined the significant effect of content creation on consumer buying behaviour. The findings revealed that a unit increase in content creation will lead to a 0.063 increase in consumer buying behaviour with a probability value of 0.215, which was greater than 0.05. The



study therefore concluded that content creation has no significant effect on consumer buying behaviour in the service industry.

Objective two examined the significant effect of data analysis on consumer buying behaviour. The findings revealed that a unit increase in data analysis will lead to a  $-0.030$  decrease in consumer buying behaviour with a probability value of 0.493, which was greater than 0.05. The study then concluded that data analysis has no significant effect on consumer buying behaviour in the service industry

Objective three ascertained the effect of engagement on consumer buying behaviour. The findings revealed that a unit increase in engagement will lead to a 0.042 increase in consumer buying behaviour with a probability value of 0.385, which was greater than 0.05. The study therefore concluded that engagement has no significant effect on consumer buying behaviour in the service industry.

Objective four found out the significant effect of relationship building on consumer buying behaviour. The findings revealed that a unit increase in relationship building will lead to a 0.087 increase in consumer buying behaviour with a probability value of 0.039, which was less than 0.05. The study then concluded that relationship building has a significant effect on consumer buying behaviour in the service industry.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are put forward:

Firstly, service-based organizations should strengthen their relationship building strategies by creating personalized customer experiences, providing effective after-sales services, and introducing loyalty programs. This will foster stronger emotional connections with customers, leading to increased patronage and long-term consumer loyalty.

Secondly, firms should enhance content creation efforts by producing consumer-centered, interactive, and value-driven materials. Rather than focusing only on promotional content, organizations should create educational, engaging, and relatable content that aligns with consumer needs and preferences, thereby improving visibility and gradually encouraging buying behaviour.

Furthermore, businesses should leverage data analysis more strategically. Instead of limiting data to collection and storage, firms should invest in advanced analytics tools and skilled professionals who can transform consumer insights into actionable strategies. This will help design personalized offers, anticipate consumer demand, and ultimately improve consumer satisfaction and purchasing outcomes.

Lastly, organizations should redesign their customer engagement approaches to be more interactive and participatory. Two-way communication platforms, social media interactions, gamification techniques, and real-time feedback mechanisms should be adopted to stimulate active consumer involvement. This will not only improve brand-consumer relationships but also enhance the chances of influencing actual purchase behaviour

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