

BUSINESS SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH E-COMMERCE: A MYTH OR REALITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract. A succinct exploration of business sustainability via an e-commerce platform was examined in the study. Its myth and reality permeate its adoption, use, and acceptability within the context of our economic, social, and environmental assumptions were also validated. To achieve its aim, exploratory methodology, which compared benefits and challenges among the three main elements – business, users, and authority; in the application of the e-commerce platforms and channels in the country was examined. The result showed mixed outcomes. On one side, there are huge benefits to businesses in adopting e-commerce while on the other, challenges such as optimal patronage due to cultural trust gaps, user-confidence, poor connectivity, and government selective policy drive. Based on this outcome, it is concluded that; business sustainability via e-commerce in the country is relatively weak and can be improved upon if, end-users policy drive is taken into serious consideration.

Keywords: business, e-commerce, ICT, sustainability, internet, exploratory.

JEL Classification: L81, L84, L86, M21.

Introduction

In today's modern business environments, the adoption of internet technology (world wide web) has become sine-qua-non for e-commerce to thrive. Unlike in the past, where physical presence is fundamental to consummate business transactions, today, huge transactions are carried out and consummated in the comfort of one's room. Since its inception and full adoption in 1997, the internet had been the gateway through which the wheel of e-commerce thrives (Scarcella, 2019; Olah et al., 2018; Hallikainen & Laukkanen, 2018; Kutz, 2016; Ibikunle, 2013; Jain et al., 2016; Mirescu, 2010).

Literally, e-commerce means electronic commerce and implies business carried out electronically. However, literature is far from reaching consensus as to its uniform meaning (Verkijika, 2018, Krstić et al., 2018; Husung, 2016; Yang et al., 2016). Globally, the adoption of e-commerce to consummate business deals have remained

a vital breakthrough within the business environments but not without some sustainability concerns. Specifically, e-commerce growth recorded a 2 percent in total of \$17.10 billion in quarter one in 2014, and rose to \$92.80 billion amounting to 6.2 percent in 2016 in the United States of America (United States Census Bureau, 2016). Similarly, online retail sales were \$409.8 billion, \$448.5 billion, \$488.9 billion and \$530.6 billion in 2017 through 2020 respectively (Forrester, 2015).

Theoretically, this study rest on some selective technological theorem, which, in turn influences the dynamics of business sustainability. For instance, the creative innovation, social action and innovative diffusion theories are some of it pillars. The dynamics of creative innovation underpin the pivotal act of solving problems through societal actions. This, likewise, diffuses into the society at varying capacity.

In Nigeria, attempt at sustaining business entity also rest upon these basic theoretical assumptions (Central

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Bank of Nigeria, 2020). As such, business has experienced oscillatory trends overtime in growth, expansion and sustainability at every stage introduction of a new technological innovation. In fact, it is recorded that barely five percent of companies rarely survive the first five years of its establishment (Okunlola et al., 2020a; Babajide et al., 2020).

Thus, electronic business trend shows that, in 2019, internet business consummated was #84.15 billion. Though, this was a rise from #74.04 billion in 2014. The trend did showed that it hover in the up-down-like fashion. Likewise, a rise in transaction to the tune of #91.58 billion, #132.36 billion, #184.60 was recorded in 2015 through 2017 but was not sustained in 2018, plunging to #404.60 billion respectively. This is in inverse proportion of the yearly increase of individuals with internet access from 7.9 million in 2009 to 28.2 million in 2019 in Africa-wide, according to International Telecommunication Union (ITU), (2019) data and; in spite of varying e-business platforms.

Imperatively, concerns raised as to the merit and demerits of business sustainability via e-commerce platforms has far-reaching implications on Nigeria business environment, for end-users and government. In other words, the way business is conducted and interact/socialize with the economy for its sustainability is mutually inclusive (Olah et al., 2018; Nisar & Prabhakar, 2017).

To this end, pertinent questions of whether business operations are sustainable via e-commerce and its various channels, or, whether increase in adoption/acceptance by the end-users can lead to superior profit for organizations in lieu of disruptive technological age, or, whether optimal benefit accruable to authority can be fully harnessed amongst others or not, in Nigeria, remains vital concern to which this study is commitment. Thus, following the introduction is the literature review. Next to this is the methodology, conclusion and recommendation.

1. Literature review

1.1. Business sustainability concept

Business and sustainability are co-joined concepts. Neither the former nor the latter is fully exhaustive in their meaning (Hayes, 2020; Nidumolu et al., 2015). First, Hayes (2020), refers to business as an organization or enterprise carrying out commercial, industrial or professional services for profit or non-profit purposes. Likewise, an individual effort aimed at producing, selling or rendering services for a profit can also be said to be business activities (Abraham, 2006). Also, Akintoye (2019), Qi et al. (2019), Mahjan and Bose (2018), describes business as an idea generation nurtured to maturity for economic gains.

In other words, nurturing of business idea inferred, ordinarily, that business is sustained over time (Abraham, 2006; Al-Tuwaijri et al., 2004). Thus, the continued strategically repositioning of business enterprise to meet the needs of all stakeholders, while still remaining perpetually profitable and adapting/adopting new ways/methods is termed, sustainability.

Nidumolu et al. (2015), says sustainability entails protecting and strengthening the foundations of business for long-term success through constant planning and aligning with social and environmental factors that could affect the corporate existence of the business.

In essence, business sustainability may be seen as the process of maintaining and managing an organization through paying attention to internal and external disruptive factors inimical to its progress and existence (Akintoye, 2019; Qi et al., 2019; Mahjan & Bose, 2018; Rezaee, 2017; Rome, 2017; Tonello & Singer, 2015). Likewise, Li and Pichaud (2019), Bergquist (2017), Deljavan Anvari and Norouzi (2016), Theyel and Hofmann (2015), Alyoubi (2015), asserted that business sustainability depends on how well a business manoeuvre across its operational environments.

1.2. E-commerce concept and historical brief

Electronic commerce popularly referred to as e-commerce gained its accessibility to the internet from the early development in Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) network. As at the time, EDI was mainly used in restricted form particularly within the science and engineering fields for data exchanges (Mirescu, 2010). This incidence date back 1955 and up till early and mid-1960s (Verkijika, 2018; Krstić et al., 2018; Nisar & Prabhakar, 2017; Olah et al., 2016; Ndonga, 2012; Nnaemeka, 2011).

However, further advancement in the development of EDI brought about the internet around 1970s–1980s and, later e-commerce. Though, the infancy age of the internet could only saw to the development of protocols for enhanced user-interface. Thereafter, further advancement in this direction led to internet business commercialization with enhanced routing Internet Protocol (IP) (Jankalová & Jankal, 2018).

Similarly, for ease of interaction with the computer system, the Graphical User Interface (GUI) such as windows, icons and menus were developed and agreed upon. There is also the development of the Hypertext Markup Language, a standardized system for tagging text files to achieve font, colours, graphics and hyperlink effect on world wide web also came into existence. All of these would later pave way for smooth usage of the world wide web (www). Ironically, the e-commerce will not come into full existence until 1991 when the restrictions on commercial usage for all data interchanges networks – internet was removed (Jankalová & Jankal, 2018; Macchion et al., 2017; Olah et al., 2018).

1.3. Theoretical outlook

The creative innovation (disruption), social action and innovation diffusion theories are some of the identified theory linked to the concept of business sustainability in the literature. Though, these theories are independently postulated, they are however interwoven. The study discusses that of the creative disruption and innovation diffusion; its pillar thus rest of the latter.

Creative Disruption: The concept of creative innovation theory also known as the theory of creative disruption is created to Schumpeter in 1934. It is used to explain the interrelationship of firms within a market. Accordingly, Schumpeter, tried to explain the why and how, organizations thrive or compete among each other in order to sustain larger market share. In this wise, each organization, must thrive at all times to outsmart one another. In doing this, these organizations get involved in creating products with superior acceptability and with which brings least cost to their operations. This is also done in anticipation and expectation that the products will be acceptable. In its simplistic form, Okunlola et al. (2020a) assert that creative disruption explains the act where individuals, groups, organizations or inventors seizes opportunities in innovating, which, ultimately, yield optimal benefits.

Innovation Diffusion Theory: Everett Rogers is created to have propounded the innovative diffusion theory in 1962 (Ogbo et al., 2019). The foundation rest on the reasons, acceptability and sustainability of the use and adaption of the newly introduced innovation or technology. It seeks to explain whether the newly introduced technology will be accepted, the reason it will be accepted, how, why and at what rate. Basically, the theory entails the acct of moving from knowing about an innovation, developing an outlook about it, to, accepting or rejecting it, implementing and accepting/confirming it – which is known as the innovation–decision process. This process, accordingly to Rogers, are shared among: “innovators”, newly adopters’, “early acceptance population”, late acceptance population’ and “idlers”.

Today, business sustainability is hinged upon this principle. The dynamism with which business environment revolve requires the introduction of a perceived better way of reducing cost (innovation) and optimizing profit. As such, the extent to which this newly introduced innovation diffuses along customer-class rest on the overall sustainability of the business.

1.4. Types and mechanism of e-commerce businesses

The various types and model of operation of e-commerce include:

- Biz-to-Consumers (B2C): The B2C e-commerce is that dedicated to retails sales. It is the one where the middleman is completely eliminated. Here, goods marketed/advertised online are ordered by the final consumer through the internet and delivered at appropriate location.
- Biz-to-Government (B2G): This form of e-commerce represents how private-public business are connected and conducted. It is simply the relationship between private sector and government using the online/internet platform.
- Government-to-Biz (G2B): This is in reverse form of the B2G. Here, it simply tells us the e-commerce or business relationship between government and the public sector.
- Biz-to-Biz (B2B): This how business to business consummate business transaction using the e-commerce platform.
- Buyer-to-Buyer (B2B): Here, business is consummated purely on buyer-to-buyer basis. For example, the Amazon is a buyer of goods and also sale same to buyers as well.

Notably also, and in recent time, e-commerce thrives on the use of some allied internet platforms called apps (see Table 1), which are accessed from a common trusted pool (markets), which are then installed in individual gadgets. This is unlike in the past where, interested consumer only visit the company’s website.

1.5. Conceptual link-chain between business sustainability and e-commerce

Dai et al. (2018), Deljavan et al. (2016), Macchion et al. (2017), Olah et al. (2016), are among scholars whose observations, identified key environmental exposures that business sustainability through e-commerce brings, in

Table 1. Some list of global e-commerce apps by country

America	China	Singapore	Indian	Nigeria	Africa
Amazon	Junjie	Shopee	Amazon.in	Jumia	Jumia
E.bay	TMall	Lazada	Flipkart	Konga	Takealot
WalMart	JD	Carousell	Amazon.com	PayPorte	Konga
Etsy	Pinduoduo	Qoo10	Alibaba	VConnect	Bidorbuy
Home Depot	Vipshop	Amazon	Olx	Kara	Iroking
Target	RED			Printivo Store	Olx
Best Buy				OLX	Kalahari
Macy’s				Jiji	Mpayer
Lowe’s					Uber
					Property24
					Dealdey

spite of its enormous advantages. One of such exposures are inescapably linked to trade volume leading to vast road usage, improver waste disposal, investment cost in setting up an e-commerce platform, proper legal framework, data and identity theft, crime to mention a few. Invariably, these are summed-up as the economic, social and environmental cost-benefits relationship.

By economic point of view, organizations are better placed with ability to reach a wide-range of client and customers globally. This brings business expansion and possible increase in profitability. It also encourages use of electronic gadgets and reduce cost both ways. Similarly, e-commerce enhances social interactions especially for social related businesses. For example, with the advent of e-entertainment, artists are able to sale more of their products via online. Also, e-commerce enhances better environment on one hand by reducing the need for traveling on the part of the buyers (See Figure 1).

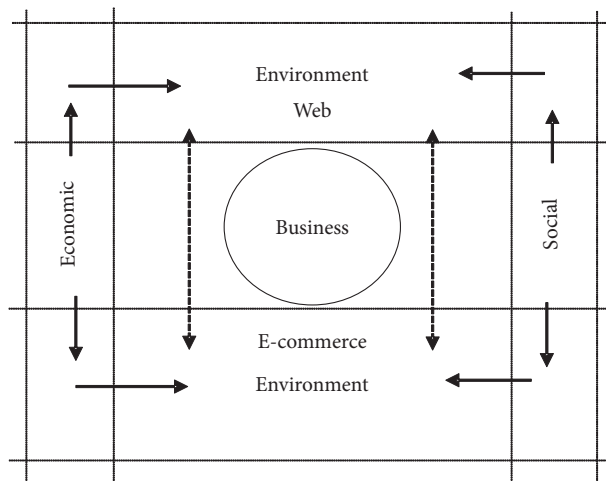


Figure 1. E-commerce link chain (source: authors' compilation)

1.6. Nigeria business sustainability trajectory

Without doubt, the country size in the continent serves a veritable advantage for business to thrive especially as it concerns e-commerce traffic. However, internet technology, which is a pre-requite to entrenching e-commerce is still far from been completely adopted owing to the peculiar and associated demerits of its adoption (Lawal & Ogbu, 2015). For instance, internet penetration in Nigeria stands at 41.8 percent in 2019 according to Clement (2020) in Statista report. However, this is an improvement from its initial figure of 23.7 percent in 2005, 27.7 percent in 2016, 32.2 percent in 2017, and 36.9 percent in 2018 respectively according to the same report. However, internet penetration is projected to reach a 65.3 percent by year 2025.

Internet usage for business sustainability will require financial inclusion at primary, secondary and tertiary level for optimal benefits (Okunlola et al., 2020b). Until lately, the adoption and usage of some e-commerce platforms for business owners were poor. For instance, the mobile

money (M-money) platforms, mobile agents (M-Agents)/ mobile cash (Mcash), E-Billspay, Automatic teller machine (ATM) transfers, point-of-sales (POS), web-pay, Remmita, Interswitch, NAPS, NIP, Konga, Jumia, Jiji, Olx, Central-Pay, Opay, Safeborder, Uber, Taxify, and so on, were initially fairly accepted. But, until lately, its impact was been felt in areas such as education, marketing, transportation, advertisement, business, and government. However, more recently, more and more people are seeing the merits to which business can be sustained using the e-commerce platforms, at least to create value addition (Ogbo et al., 2019; Ibam et al., 2018). This is also not to say that its demerits have disappear.

According to the Central Bank of Nigeria CBN (2020) data released, the share of e-transactions on some e-commerce platforms have improved tremendously. However, some have failed to perform largely due to earlier concerns raised. For instance, WebPay platform pose mixed traffic amounting to #84.15 billion in 2009. This amount nosedive for the better of subsequent years. Precisely, it dropped to #25.05 billion, #59.61 billion, #31.57 billion, #47.32 billion and #74.04 billion in 2010 through 2014 respectively. But it rose again in 2015 to #91.58 billion through to #404.6 billion in 2018. Most of other platforms demonstrated similar trend in the usage.

Table 2. Some e-commerce channels in Nigeria

Uber	Ajebo Market	M-Agent	Remitta	Olx
Next cash & Carry	Webpay	Konga	Jiji	Olx
Taxify	Uber	Opay	Safe Brder	E-bills pay
Jumia				

The Table 2 above shows some of the e-commerce online platforms and channels through which businesses are consummated in Nigeria. However, there are several more of these platforms, the study only picked common and often used ones. Specifically, also, the channels represent different businesses in Nigeria. They include: transportation, consumables, financial transaction and so on.

Having examined the Nigerian business experience in relation to e-commerce, it becomes clear through the data in Table 3 and 4 that, not all platforms/channels that enhances e-commerce activities are truly functional. This, inter-alia, rises doubt about business sustainability in terms of e-commerce. In spite of this, what this suggest is the possibility that the larger consumer still uses cash as against the e-commerce channels/platforms. Recall that, e-commerce businesses are captured through payment, and best, these payments are represented in their various platforms represented in the table. A cursory glance shows that mostly used platforms for consummating e-commerce business are webpay, mobile pay, Nigeria Inter-bank settlement system (NIP), Nigerian Inter-bank Settlement System Electronic Fund Transfer (NEFT).

Table 3. Value and volume of consummated e-commerce transaction in Nigeria

	ATM		POS		Web Pay		Mobile Pay		NIP		NEFT	
	Vol	Val (₦' B)	Vol	Val (₦' B)	Vol	Val (₦' B)	Vol	Val (₦' B)	Vol	Val (₦' B)	Vol	Val (₦' B)
2009	109,161,646	548.60	918,256	11.03	2,703,516	84.15	1,809,251	1.27	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.
2010	60,133,610	399.71	1,072,426	12.72	1,601,086	25.05	1,156,533	6.65	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.
2011	347,569,999	1,561.74	2,100,673	31.02	1,932,355	59.61	3,649,374	18.98	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.
2012	375,487,756	1,984.66	2,555,045	48.01	2,276,464	31.57	2,297,688	31.51	4,452,098	3,891.03	28,741,726	13,660.03
2013	295,292,940	2,828.94	9,402,255	161.02	2,900,473	47.32	15,812,435	142.80	17,111,532	10,844.92	30,034,009	14,307.32
2014	400,102,507	3,679.88	20,817,423	312.07	5,587,081	74.04	29,156,406	346.47	40,829,854	19,921.50	29,816,817	14,616.58
2015	433,587,623	3,970.25	33,720,933	448.51	7,981,361	91.58	43,933,362	442.35	71,643,166	25,649.06	28,935,605	13,087.09
2016	590,238,934	4,988.13	63,715,203	759.00	14,088,247	132.36	47,053,252	756.90	153,616,450	38,109.06	29,754,182	14,584.80
2017	800,549,099	6,437.59	146,267,156	1,409.81	28,991,097	184.60	47,804,561	1,102.00	370,870,672	56,165.67	31,034,624	14,946.46
2018	875,519,307	6,480.09	295,890,167	2,383.11	50,815,901	404.60	87,086,260	1,830.70	729,437,055	80,423.03	26,760,852	11,030.96

Table 4. Value and volume of consummated e-commerce transaction in Nigeria

	m-Cash		E-BillsPay		Remita		NAPS		Central Pay	
	Vol	Val (₦' B)	Vol	Val (₦' B)	Vol	Val (₦' B)	Vol	Val (₦' B)	Vol	Val (₦' B)
2009	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.
2010	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.
2011	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.
2012	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.
2013	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.
2014	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.
2015	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.
2016	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.
2017	77,832	0.62	905,941	550.75	39,706,264	13,529.50	11,900,008	4,960.35	375,356	5.00
2018	229,328	1.20	1,053,342	500.21	44,461,846	18,495.99	13,525,152	6,091.95	1,260,380	8.10

However, caution is taking on the part of ATM because its e-commerce function is limited to transfer. Most of these consummated transactions are in their billions and from 2009. This suggest that, the value is high but not without its oscillatory movements across platforms. Particularly, the of point of sales maintained constant growth from the period in review (2009–2018). In values, total amount consummated using POS was #11.03 billion against that of #84.15 billion using Webpay at the same year. The M-pay was the least in that same year posing #1.27 billion. Throughout the period, the use of business transaction consummated using the point-of-sales increased tremendously. That is, in 2010, it was #12.72 billion, #31.02 billion in the following year. It rose to #48.01, #161.02, #312.07 billion, #448.51 billion in 2012 through 2015 until reaching #2,383.11 billion in 2018.

Similarly, e-commerce business consummated through the mobile-transfer (Mobilepay) follow similar trend for the period captured from the CBN (2019) data. From 2009, Mpay was #1.27 billion and rose considerably throughout the period reaching all-time high in 2017 and 2018 at #1,102.60 and #1,830.70 billion respectively. Conversely, Webpay, showed an oscillatory movement in its total amount. From 2009, the value was #84.15 billion and oscillated over time until reaching #91.58 billion in 2016 and increased all through the year reaching # 404.06 billion in 2018.

However, every other platforms and channels showed unsatisfactory trend in their usage. For instance, usage in NIP and NEFT were not available for the early part of the period of similar platforms and suggest critical economic, social or environmental factors as the case may be. Though, usage was later recorded in the years 2012 through 2018, business consummated in this period suggest possible acceptability by the people in the later part of its introduction. Conversely, m-cash, E-billsPay, Remita, NAPs and Central Pay, all showed no available record for the better parts of the period. Indeed, between 2009 and 2016, no record was provided until 2017 and 2018.

Overall, the varying degree of circumstances to which the platforms and the channels were adopted, accepted and actually used suggests certain assumptions. For instance, the economic impact on both sides (consumers/organizations or businesses) suggests that in the early introduction of these platforms, mixed outcome was identified. First, on the part of the business, the huge investment committed to creating these platforms did not yield instant return on investment on some of the platforms. Guesses suggest that they were not accepted at the early instance of introduction but on till later days. However, trend shows that some of these platforms are still far from being accepted, at least, as shown from the record.

Secondly, the social impact falls more on the consumers where it was not only economically reasonable to use these platforms but socially fanciful to adopt. That is, the adoption and usage of these platforms became a thing of social class or status at one point. Lastly, the positive environmental impact suggest that both the business and

the consumers have easy access of communication without physical presence, longer distance can be covered at a press of a button of any technological gadgets, safety and security in terms of reason to travel on a longer journey to the business's locations and theft of cash and so on.

1.7. Some empirical review

Scanty literature between business sustainability and e-commerce in Nigeria exist. More so, the adoption of the concept is barely new and because of the nature of variables often generated, it makes empirical insight tasking than the mostly exploratory and case study approach often conducted by most researchers Saraswati et al. (2022), Okunlola et al. (2020), Babajide et al. (2020b), Olah et al. (2018); Jere et al. (2014), Ayalew et al. (2010).

For instance, In Ethiopia, Ayalew et al. (2010) examined the readiness of the economy in adopting e-commerce for business operations. In the comparative review used, the study largely and only affirmed the readiness of the country to adopt the new technology in spite of the economic status of the country.

Similarly, a case of adoption with associated disenfranchisement made the vocal point of Jere et al. (2014) study in South Africa. Accordingly, the trio found out that the existence of advancement in technology, which had affected the way business is being consummated (especially through e-commerce), has far-reaching implications on certain communities without technological penetration in South Africa. The case study exercise examined the successful deployment, adoption and use of one app – ICT4D technology in some communities whereas, this same app failed to be fully utilized in other communities. Essentially, Jere et al. (2014) advocated for the deployment, training and use of the ICT4D technologies in these communities especially among the small-scale business in other to take the e-commerce advantage and sustain their businesses.

Also, Olah et al. (2018) study did a review and case study analysis on the level to which sustainability in e-commerce is desirous within the elements of economic, social and environmental in Kenya and Jordan. The findings concluded that a win-win situation is essential to sustain the impact of e-commerce of the three elements. Other commentators who aligned with Olah et al. (2018), conclusion include Yakasai (2017), Ibam et al. (2018), and Yakasai (2017) but with focus on Nigeria and Egypt.

Particularly, Yakasai (2017) observed the overall business environment benefits that e-commerce can offer. It linked the relationship between business and customer together in a win-win circumstances such that sustainability is ensured.

Ibam et al. (2018) on their own showed that Africa, and indeed Nigeria, can leverage on the benefits accruable to business sustainability through e-commerce. Again, these authors did a review and exploratory study, which informed their conclusion from comparative studies.

Indeed, Yakasai (2017) study was advisory in nature. According to him, advantage of business sustainability

through e-commerce in Egypt can be harnessed, maintained and expanded through massive investment in technological infrastructure. The study thus advised necessary stakeholders to invest massively in the new digital age.

Further, Okoye and Obi (2015) study observed the link between e-commerce and entrepreneurship sustenance in Nigeria. Like previous study, this study also did an expository research and, findings suggest that a need for entrepreneurs to embrace e-commerce is crucial for their business sustainability. Particularly, the study emphasized the need for government to expand their policy base in the area of information communication technology and e-commerce and allied businesses for optimal benefits.

In a similar vein, three cardinal objectives of challenges, opportunities and solutions associated with e-commerce for business sustainability in Nigeria was the concern of Lawal and Ogbu (2015). Again, a comparative study of advantages and disadvantages was examined and solution was premised based on the review.

Recently, Ogbo et al. (2019) did a study to determine how e-commerce enhances value creation among traditionally open market retailers in Enugu state, Nigeria. And differently from other methodology, a mixed method of descriptive and survey was used to analyze a Bill Goldden sample determination technique of sample size from the group. Their result also confirmed earlier commentators that the use of e-commerce are adequate tools at creating value addition. This outcome is also corroborated in Bitrus (2019), where it was concluded that information communication technologies are veritable tools in aspiring growth economically.

2. Research method, data analyses, and result

The study adopted the exploratory research methodological approach. Under this approach, the researcher formulated a problem needing investigation or develop a working operationalized concept for informed decision making (Kothari & Gaurav, 2015). The major emphasis is for the development of new ideas and insights. Thus, relevant extant literature covering local and international sources were used as directional guide. Basically, a theoretical review is made of the suitability and acceptability of the concept of e-commerce in Nigeria. This is then further linked to business sustainability. It reviewed varying e-commerce platforms globally and compared with those available in Nigeria, it also reviewed how they have been accepted in performing routine business activities in the country. The study, thus, came to a concluding evidence from the review to recommend possible ways of improving the privileges inherent in the e-commerce concept in sustaining business activities in the long-run.

Conclusions

On the whole, having succinctly reviewed extant studies on whether businesses are sustained via e-commerce application or not in Nigeria, the demystified myth and reality conclusion is mixed on all sides of the divide. The

study, through its exploratory position, examined the economic, social and environmental impact of e-commerce as a tool of sustaining businesses. The findings suggest that the consumers – who are the major factor behind the development of appropriate platforms and channels by businesses, are completely unavoidably averse to the use of some of the platforms or any newly introduced technological channels, for fears of trust gaps, negative experiences, and inadequate regulations among others. This actions often limit potential business sustainability in the advent of time, more often, at the speed at which new technology development finds its way into the business space. Likewise, business owners are perturbed such that, immediately investment return serves as the motivating drive in investing in new technology. Other possible concerns include that of general maintenance, replacement cost, unfavourable government disposition towards business over-arching customers among others. Practically, this action culminate into slow business growth leading to inability to sustain such business in the country. In conclusion, the study concluded that the benefits that the e-commerce adoption has on business sustainability is far from being optimized in Nigeria.

Recommendation

On the basis of the conclusion, it is worthy of note that, the only reason why e-commerce adoption is still far from being optimized in Nigerian business environment, rest on its initial and earlier insinuations of trust-gaps between businesses and users, business and government regulations & regulators, uncondusive business environment, infrastructural deficit, to say the least. From the exploratory review, the study, thus, recommends that the issue of trust-gaps pointed out in the literature are extensively addressed. Likewise, friendly business environment and provision of adequate and appropriate infrastructure should be mandatorily provided. Moreso, online security gaps, online cash-theft, legal implications, policy direction in favour of the end-users both in the use of internet services and e-commerce platforms are made as the central-point of optimal adoption.

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