

**PRODUCT INNOVATION, CUSTOMER EXPECTATION AND PURCHASING INTENTION
AMONG USERS OF HANDSETS IN MAKURDI METROPOLIS**

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Abstract

The study examines product innovation, customer expectation and purchasing intention among handset users in Makurdi Metropolis. The study adopted an Ex Post Facto design to examine the variables. Data were collated from handset users in Makurdi metropolis. The sample consisted of 321 participants made up of 167 (52.0%) male and 154 (48.0%) female with ages ranging from 18-61 years (\bar{x} =35; SD =13.01). Participants were selected through simple random sampling technique. Three standardized psychological instruments namely: Product Innovation Inventory, Customers Expectation Scale and Purchase Intention Scale were used. Data collated were analysed using regression analysis. Results revealed that, Product Innovation positively and significantly predicted purchasing intention among handset users in Makurdi metropolis. Customer expectation positively and significantly predicted purchasing intention among handset users in Makurdi metropolis. Jointly, product innovation and customer expectation positively and significantly predicted purchasing intention among handset users in Makurdi metropolis. Study recommended amongst others that, periodically product innovation be carried out to meet the growing need of customers. Customers should be positive and firm with their expectations of the product to be met. There are dire needs for product innovation and customer expectation as they are key indicators for purchasing intention.

Keywords: Product Innovation, Customer Expectation, Purchasing Intention, Handset Users.

Introduction

Users of handsets do have varying reasons of purchasing the product depending on customer's information of the product, how the product is designed and package, pricing and the desired expectation of a product. Purchasing intention is key factor in business as it relates to the patronage and meeting the desired customer expectation and satisfaction of the given product. Purchase intention can be defined as the probability of a consumer buying a product after an evaluation of competing brands (Tirtiroglu & Elbeck, 2008). It is a kind of decision-making that studies the reason to buy a particular brand by consumer (Shah, 2012). Also, a situation where consumer tends to buy a certain product in certain condition. Customers purchase decision is a complex process. It usually relates to the behaviour, perceptions and attitudes of consumers (Morinez, 2007). Customers purchase decision is a complex process and purchasing intention is a key point for consumers to access and evaluate the specific product. Ghosh (1990) states that purchase intention is an effective tool to predict buying process and may be changed under the influence of product innovation, pricing and customer expectations of the perceived product. It is unarguably that customer expectation and product innovation are key consideration in total quality management of a company hence they determine company's returns. More so, consumers are affected by internal or external motivations during the buying process (Gogoi, 2013). If customers' expectations are met of the product, they are satisfied but when the expectations are not met, they are dissatisfied with the product. Handset users in Makurdi metropolis are not left out in this purchasing intention. Once an individual bought a phone, he/she has a desired expectation that the product would meet. The capacity of the camera pixel and the clarity, the storage capacity of the phone, battery capacity and durability, the physical features of the

phone such as the colour, shape, size, design, amongst others determine how satisfied or unsatisfied the product would bring to the user (Kawa, Rahmadiani., & Kumar, 2013).

Purchase intention is therefore complex process and is related to the product innovation (design) customer expectation and the general behaviour, perceptions and attitudes of consumers. Purchasing intention which is futuristic in nature can be a powerful tool of having high or low patronage of the product. Patronage would be high if expectations are met; low when the perceived expectations are not met. Consumers assess and evaluate the specific product based on the perceived expectations. In addition, consumers are affected by internal or external motivations during the buying process (Gogoi, 2013) .

In evaluating the purchase intention, product innovation is a key factor to be considered in the buying process of the Handsets. Product innovation refers to the creation of something new (Johannessen, Oslen & Lumpki, 2001). Innovation is the process of making new products and offering new services or adding new value to existing ones (Cassey, Guing; 2007) and is based on the results of new technology developments, new combinations of existing technology or the utilization of other knowledge acquired by the company (Rajinish, 2008). It is the process of making new products and offering new services, or adding new value to existing ones. With the increasingly fierce market competition, enterprise's products are also constantly upgrading in order to get the needed customer expectations and satisfaction. However, different enterprises have different innovative products' design ways. Some companies apply innovative technology in the products' built-in system, while other enterprises will make innovative technology as plug-in peripheral products (Zhang, & Tang, 2017).

In juxtaposing purchase intention away from product innovation, customer expectation is yet another variable of interest to this research and is key variable in influencing purchasing intention of handsets users in Makurdi metropolis and beyond. Customer expectation is a key word in business although many companies and organisations pay little attention to it, perhaps focusing more on product or services. Expectation is the result of forecasting, where a person or individual predicts what would happen in the future and consequently expects this prediction to come true about a product or services (Morwitz, 2014). Customers have expectation of the products and services they buy and they expect the desired result of the product or service in return. In other words, Customer expectations are pre-trial beliefs about a product (Olson & Dover 1979) that serves as standards or reference points against which product performance is judged. Also , it is defined as beliefs about service delivery that serve as standards for the judgment of the actual service delivered to the customer (Hill, 2000 ; Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler, 2009).When the expectations are met, they are satisfied when the expectations are not met they are dissatisfied with the product or service. Customer expectations influence the purchasing intention of many products especially handsets amongst others. Pizam (2010) explained that there are three levels of customer satisfactions based on how well expectations are met to include:

- i. Meeting: When expectations are met, they are satisfied.
- ii. Exceeding: When expectations are exceeded, they are delighted
- iii. Not meeting: When expectations are not met, they are dissatisfied and think of alternative product.

The quest for customer satisfaction is derived from the needs of the product (Handset) How satisfied or dissatisfied the customer is depends on product innovation and customer expectation. For instance a customer who has many expectations about handset would love many features like the quality of the cameral pixel, design, any many software applications like: Twitter, Snap Chat, Instagram, WhatsApp amongst others hitherto for used basically for receiving and making calls. Apart from receiving/making calls, therefore, handset manufacturer brought in many product innovation about handsets. You snap pictures, video calls/recording, check emails, and engage in social media chat like facebook, twitter, Instagram , snapchat, WhatsApp, amongst others (citation). Without product innovation such features would not be possible with the introduction of the Global Mobile System (GSM) in Nigeria over the decade ago. In contemporary society handset innovation has become major factor in determining the desirability (expectations) of customers. Different brands and innovations of handsets flood our markets. Iphone, Samsung , Infinix, Techno, Nokia, Itel, Gionee amongst others are constantly innovating their products to meet customer expectations

Statement of the Problem

Apparently, there are different brands of Handsets available in the markets today such as, iPhone, Samsung, Infinix, Tecno, Gionee, LG, HTC, Huawei, Nokia, Itel, amongst others with product innovation setting the pace for the needed customer expectations. From window application phones to android applications for iPhones, and much more higher are all geared towards meeting customer expectation and satisfaction. More often than not a mere observation by researcher revealed that users of handsets have diverse purchasing intention in relation to handset. Recent visits to Katsina Ala street, Railway GSM markets, High Level and The O.G Winners Plaza Wurukum where a high bive of activities of handsets market take place in Makurdi Metropolis called for the study of this nature. Customers purchase decisions are indeed complex process. However this is largely depended on the product innovation and customer expectation of the product. How best the product meets the desired expectation influence the purchasing intention of the product brand. More so, handsets users do complain of product not meeting their expectations hence the need for product innovation by the manufacturers of the product through 360 degree feedback. Some customers after purchase of the product, they discovered that the camera pixel, battery durability and the general application of the phone were dissatisfied hence their expectations were not met. Also, literature suggest that many customers of handset users do keep changing their brand of handset due to the growing needs of the modern technological advancement. Also, since the quest of human nature, man has always been craving for more of the latest product and services, thus, calls for the study of this nature.

Aim and Objectives

The aim of this study is to examine influence of, product innovation and customer expectation on purchasing intention among handsets users in Makurdi Metropolis. Specifically, the study has the following objectives to accomplish:

- i. to examine the influence of product innovation on purchasing intention among handsets users in Makurdi Metropolis.
- ii. to determine the influence of customer expectation on purchasing intention Handsets users in Makurdi Metropolis.
- iii. to ascertain the joint influence of product innovation and customer expectation on purchasing intention among handset users in Makurdi Metropolis.

This study anchored on the following theories to buttress the purchasing intention:

Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975)

The Theory of Reasoned Action centres its analysis on the importance of pre-existing attitudes in the decision-making process in buying behaviour. The core of the theory posits that consumers act on a behaviour based on their intention to create or receive a particular outcome that is beneficial to his want or need. In this analysis, consumers are rational actors who choose to buy things or act in their best interests. According to the theory, specificity is critical in the decision-making process. A consumer only takes a specific action when there is an equally specific result expected. From the time the consumer decides to buy a product (handset) he/she therefore reasoned based on the preexisting belief and attitude on how the handset would meet his expectation before purchasing.

Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen 1985) is the extended model of Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) TBP as the measuring structure of what stimuli should an individual has to attract in the purchasing intention and that perceived behavioural control is playing an important role for the stimuli. Ajzen (1985) posited that “perceived behavioural control refers to people’s perception of the ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour of interest such as that of purchasing intention of the handset. Perceived behavioural control can vary depending on situations and actions. Users of handset perceived behavioural control by his set of beliefs about a the brand of handset product to purchase at a given time If he/she perceives that a particular brand of handset would give quality picture, good battery, storage capacity and software applications then he/she is likely to buy the product.

Literature Review

Product Innovation and Purchasing Intention

Awan. & Zahra (2014) Impact of innovation on customer behaviour and purchasing Intention : A case study of Pakistan Electronic Limited using 200 Participants and the results revealed a significant and positive relationship between innovation and purchase intention. More so, Shiao (2014)'s research on the impact of product innovation on behaviour intention: The measurement of the mediating effect of the brand image of Japanese Anime doll using 600 consumers for the study. The result shows that product innovation had a positive and significant influence on purchase intention through the mediating role of brand image. Zhang, Y., & Tang, P. (2017) researched on The effects of product innovation locus on consumers adoption of new products—based on regulatory focus and information processing fluency using 140 students in China and the findings revealed that there was a significantly influence of product innovation on purchase intention ($M = 4.724$), $P = 0.006 < 0.05$.

Expectations and Purchasing Intention

Researchers have proposed six stages before deciding to buy the product, which are: awareness (advertisement) knowledge, interest, preference, persuasion and purchase (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010) ; Kawa, 2013). Customers always think that purchase with a low cost, simple packaging and little known product is a high risk since the quality of these products is not trustable (Gogoi, 2013) and when buying there are certain expectations that the product should be met. There has been a consensus in the extant literature that expectations serve as standards with which subsequent experiences are compared, resulting in evaluations of satisfaction or quality product or service. When customers are satisfied with the product there would be a high probability of their repurchase intention and loyalty. On the contrary when the expectations are not met, they are dissatisfied and look for the alternative which is key in total quality management of the company (Sutton, 1998).

Based on the extant literature, the following hypotheses were formulated thus:

- i. Product innovation will significantly predict purchase intention among handset users in Makurdi metropolis
- ii. Customer expectation will significantly predict purchase intention among handset users in Makurdi metropolis.
- iii. Product innovation and customer expectation will jointly and significantly predict purchase intention among handset users in Makurdi metropolis.

Method

Design

The study explored an Ex Post Facto research design to examine influence of product innovation and customer expectation on purchasing intention among handset users in Makurdi metropolis. This was due to the fact that the independent variables in the study was not manipulated to see their effects on the dependent variable. The design also involved the use of questionnaire to collect data for the study. Criterion variable (dependent) variable in the study was Purchase intention , while the independent variables for the study were product innovation and customer expectations. Both variables were used as a single construct.

Sampling Techniques

Simple random sampling was used to draw participants for the study. Simple random sampling is a non-probability sampling techniques where all the population for the study has the likelihood of being selected or chosen for the study.

Participants

Three hundred and twenty one (321) participants were used for the study through simple random sampling technique. Male were 167 (52.0%) while female were 154 (42.0%). Their ages ranged from 18- 61 years with mean 35, $SD = 13.01$. Marital status indicated that Singles were 163 (50.8%), married 145 (52.2%) and separated were 13 (4.0%). More so, their religion indicated that Christianity were 252 (78.5%), Islam were,

61 (19.0%) while 8 (2.5%) were of African Traditional Religion. Educational background revealed that 26 (8.1%) had Post Graduate Certificates, First Degree Holders were 87 (27.1%), NCE/ND were 114 (35.5%), SSCE 67 (20.9%) while FSLC were 27 (8.4%).

Instruments

The study made use of three instrument namely: Product Innovation Scale, Customers Expectation Scale and Purchase Intention Scale with Lickert scale of response ranging from strongly “Disagree” to “Strongly Agree. Product Innovation inventory was developed by Alegre, Lapiedra and Chiva (2006). The scale has 12 items that measures product innovation in three facets : Efficiency, Efficacy and product innovation performance. The psychometric properties of the scale yielded a cronbach alpha of 0.89 on efficacy, 0.85 on efficiency and 0.70 on product innovation performance. The scale has 5-point licket scale that answers 1- much worse 3-all the same level and 5 much better. items that measured product innovation of the Handset products. The scale has the reliability coefficient at Alpha level of .85.

Customer Expectation Inventory developed Francis (2002) was adopted and used with little modification. The questionnaire contains 12-items that elicit responses from participants on customer expectations of product or services. The scale has 4 domains to include: ownership conditions, delivered products, customer service and security. The 12- item Scale uses 5-points Likert response starting from:1- strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree. The internal consistency of the scale yielded a reliability coefficient at Cronbach Alpha of .85. When pilot study was conducted, one item was deleted from the scale for lack of reliability coefficient of less than .30 as recommended.

Purchasing Intention Scale developed by Spears and Sigh (2004) was adopted and used for the study. The scale has 15 item using 5- point Lickert scale responses of measurement to include, 1- strongly disagree to 5- strongly agree. The scale has 15- items originally but when pilot study was conducted 2 items were removed for lack of reliability coefficient of less than .30 making 13 items for the scale. The psychometric properties of the test yielded a reliability coefficient of .97.

Procedure

Pilot study was conducted using 35 participants at Wadata area of Makurdi metropolis. This was done in order to validate the research instruments for the general study and the product innvotion scale, all the twelve items were retained and used for the general study. All the items had reliability coefficient ranging from .37 above. Customer Expectations Scale, when pilot study was conducted, 1-item was removed making total 11-item for the general study. While scale on purchase intention, out of the fifteen items, two were deleted for lack of reliability coefficient of less than .30. More so, for pilot study, Product Innovation Scale yielded reliability coefficient .79; Customer Expectation Scale yielded reliability coefficient of .87 and. 91 for Purchasing Intention Scale. Three hundred and thirty-five (335) copies of the questionnaire were distributed by researchers with the help of two research assistants who were graduates and adequately trained on how to administer questionnaire. However 321 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved and computed for data analyses. Stipends were offered to two research assistants at the end. The duration for the administration of the copies of the questionnaire lasted for two months and the retrieval process lasted concurrently for the same two months of the administration of the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 23.0) was used for analysis. Simple linear regression analysis and multiple linear regression analyses were used to test hypotheses in significant level of either 0.5 or 0.1 and the results presented therein.

Results

Hypothesis one stated that product innovation will significantly predict purchasing intention among handsets users in Makurdi metropolis and the results presented in Table1 below:

Table 1: summary of simple linear regression scores showing the prediction of purchasing intention among Handset users in Makurdi metropolis

Predictor variable	R	R ²	Df	F	B	t	Sig
Constant	.152	.023	1 319	7.535		9.017	.006**
Product innovation					.152	2.745	.006**

****P<.01**

Results from Table 1 shows that there was a positive and significant prediction of product innovation on purchasing intention among handset users in Makurdi metropolis. [F(1,319) = 7.535; P<.01]. This result implies that product innovation predicts purchasing intention among handset users in Makurdi metropolis.

More so, R=.152 ,R² =.023, the value of R =.152 shows the level of prediction of product innovation on purchasing intention R²=.023. Thus, shows that product innovation accounted for a paltry amount of 2.3% variability in explaining purchasing intention. The β value indicated the direction of relationship and there was a positive influence of product innovation on purchase intention. Thus an increase in the level of product innovation leads to an increase in the purchasing intention. Following the result therefore, hypothesis one was confirmed.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that customer expectation would significantly influenced purchasing intention among handset users in Makurdi metropolis and results presented in Table 2

Table 2: Summary of simple linear regression scores showing influence of customer expectation on purchasing intention among handsets users in Makurdi metropolis

Predictor variable	R	R ²	Df	F	B	t	Sig
Constant	.136	.018	1 319	6.008		8.983	.015*
Customer expectation					.136	2.451	.015*

***P<.05**

Results from Table 2 shows that there was a positive and significant prediction of customer expectation on purchasing intention among handset users in Makurdi metropolis. [F(1,319) = 6.009; P<.05]. This result implies that customer expectation predicts purchasing intention among handset users in Makurdi metropolis. An increase in the level of customer expectation leads to a corresponding increase in purchase intention among handsets users in Makurdi Metropolis.

More so, R=.136 ,R² =.018, the value of R =.136 shows the level of prediction of customer expectation on purchasing intention . R²= .018 shows that customer Expectation accounted for 1.8% variability in explaining purchasing intention. The β value indicated the direction of relationship and there was a positive influence of customer expectation on purchase intention. Thus an increase in the level of customer expectation leads to an increase in the purchasing intention. Following the result therefore, hypothesis two was confirmed.

Hypothesis three sought to examine if product innovation and customer expectation will jointly and significantly predict purchasing intention among handsets users in Makurdi Metropolis. This hypothesis was tested using multiple linear regression analysis and results are presented in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Summary of multiple linear regression scores showing joint influence of product innovation and customer expectation on purchasing intention

Predictor variable	R	R ²	Df	F	B	t	Sig
Constant	.177	.031	2	5.124			.006**
			318				
Product Innovation						2.045	
					.120		.042*
Customer expectation					.096	1.635	.103

****P<.01; *P<.05**

Table 3 above shows the results of a multiple regression scores and the results revealed that there was a significant and positive joint influence of product innovation and customer expectation on purchasing intention among handset users in Makurdi Metropolis. [F (2,318) = 5.124; P<.01]. Meaning that product innovation and Customer expectation jointly predicts purchasing intention among handset users in Makurdi metropolis.

[R=.117, R² =.031, the value of R =.117 shows the level of prediction of product innovation on purchasing intention. R² = .031 shows that product innovation accounted for 3.1% variability in explaining purchasing intention. The β value indicated the direction of relationship and there was a positive influence of product innovation on purchase intention. Thus, an increase in the joint level of product innovation and customer expectation lead to a corresponding increase in the purchasing intention. Following the result therefore, hypothesis three was confirmed.

Discussions

Hypothesis one predicted that product innovation would have significant influence on purchasing intention among handset users in Makurdi metropolis was confirmed. Product innovation have significant influence on purchasing intention. To buttress this result, Awan, and Zahra (2014) studied on impact of innovation on customer behaviour and purchasing intention found out a positive influence. Similarly, Cassey, and Guing (2007) add credence to this present finding who found out a significant influence of product innovation on purchasing intention.

Hypothesis two sought to find out if customer expectation would predict purchasing intention among handsets users in Makurdi metropolis was confirmed. There was a significant influence of customer satisfaction on purchasing intention. A satisfied customer has a likelihood of re-purchase intention and loyalty hence one’s expectations are met. Findings by Thai (2015) on determinants of customer expectations of service:

implications for fostering customer satisfaction supported this result. There is a significant influence of customer expectation on purchasing intention among handsets users in Makurdi metropolis. More, so the results by Gogoi (2013) who researched on customer expectations and purchasing intention supported this present finding. There is a significant influence of customer expectation on purchasing intention among handsets users in Makurdi metropolis. This is owing to the fact that once customer expectations of the handset is met, they become satisfied and there are more likelihood of repurchasing the same brand of the handsets.

Hypothesis three predicted joint influence of product innovation and customer expectation on purchasing intention among handsets users in Makurdi metropolis and the result was confirmed. Jointly, product innovation and customer expectation are predictors of purchasing intention. To support this result, the theory of reasoned action can be used to buttess this finding. The importance of pre-existing knowledge, attitudes and decision-making process in buying behaviour is entirely a reasoned action. A customer who believed that product innovation would meet the expectations thus, it is reasonable to have purchasing intention. Consumers generally act on a behaviour based on their intention to create or receive a particular outcome that is of great importance to his/her admiration or expectations. More so, theory of planned behaviour by

Ajzen (1985) is sacrosanct. A customer who has to explore the stimuli of product innovation and customer expectation as key drivers in the purchasing intention of handsets will likely have customer loyalty and purchase intention. Thus a perceived behavioural control is playing an important role for the planned behaviour believing that the innovative product would meet customer expectation thereby influencing the buying behaviour.

Conclusion and recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the study concludes as follows:

- i. Product innovation was a positive predictor of purchasing intention among handset users in Makurdi metropolis. Thus the study recommended that innovation of product (handset) be done periodically to meet the growing needs of the customers.
- ii. Customer expectation was found to be a positively and significant predictor of purchasing intention among handset users in Makurdi metropolis. Thus, the study recommended that having firm expectation of a brand of handset that their needs should be met would be strengthened and encouraged by customers. This would lead to customer loyalty and satisfaction which are key ingredients of purchasing intention.
- iii. Product innovation and customer expectation were found to be joint predictors of purchasing intention among handset users in Makurdi Metropolis. Thus, the study recommended the dire need for product innovation and constant innovative ideas of handsets and meeting high expectations of customer be encouraged at all times with a view to increasing purchasing intention.

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