



# **Evaluation of the Influence of E-marketing on Patronage Behaviour and Its Attendant Challenges: A Case Study of Selected Hotels in Ado–Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria**

**S. J. Arohunsoro<sup>1</sup>, O. O. Ojo<sup>1</sup> and A. A. Shittu<sup>1\*</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>*Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti, Nigeria.*

## **Authors' contributions**

*This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Author AAS designed the study, performed the statistical analysis, wrote the protocol and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Author SJA managed the analyses of the study. Author OOO managed the literature searches. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

## **Article Information**

DOI: 10.9734/JSRR/2020/v26i130215

### Editor(s):

- (1) Professor, Dr. Ani Matei, Faculty of Public Administration, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Bucharest, Romania.  
(2) Dr. Snezana Stetic, Professor, College of Tourism, Belgrade, Serbia.  
(3) Dr. Levent SON Levent, Professor, Department of Applied Technology and Management, School of Silifke, The University of Mersin, Turkey.

### Reviewers:

- (1) Nicoleta Dospinescu, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University, Romania.  
(2) Smita Vashishta, India.  
(3) Emmanuel Etim, Lagos State University, Nigeria.

Complete Peer review History: <http://www.sdiarticle4.com/review-history/53405>

**Original Research Article**

**Received 15 November 2019**  
**Accepted 23 January 2020**  
**Published 17 February 2020**

## **ABSTRACT**

This paper evaluated the influence of E-marketing on patronage behaviour and its attendant challenges in some selected hotels. This study employed a descriptive survey research design. This research work employed the use of structured questionnaire that is closed ended. A total of 22 copies of questionnaire were administered in the research work to elicit information from the respondent. Purposive sampling was used to select 11 three star hotels in the study area. 2 Management staff was selected using purposive sampling technique from each of the 11 selected 3 star hotels in the study area. The data collected were analysed through the use of descriptive method of data analysis such as tables, percentage and charts. The study revealed that E-

\*Corresponding author: E-mail: Adewalerichard37@gmail.com;

marketing saves time and increases patronage level, E-marketing enhances patronage increase, quality website improves customer patronage and online advertising improves patronage level. However, it was also revealed that some of the challenges facing E-marketing includes no centrally acceptable payment method, Unstructured Presentation of Information, E-Marketing advertisements are poor, E-Marketing internet domain are weak as well as poor sensitization frustrates E-marketing. The study concluded that E-marketing is an important strategy to capture patrons who are use to online booking system and enhancement of convenient booking for online patrons who are relatively far from the locations of the hotels. However, the study recommended that the use of E-Marketing among establishments especially in hotels should be encouraged in order to capture people from far locations who need reservations at their own convenient time.

*Keywords: Challenges E-marketing; hotels; patronage.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Hospitality means providing service to others, which encompasses smiles, trust, caring and sharing the operation's success [1]. Attentive courteous, gracious and welcoming are few adjectives that can be applied to hospitality. Hospitality also means demonstrating consistent excellence and quality in people's skills including the staff and guests, product and ambiance. It should also mean profitably providing value and worth at any price level, while demonstrating the unique points of dissemblance [2]. Most of all, hospitality should be a "place", where the guests can still be exceptional individuals and where they can extend their own personality and style. Additionally, hospitality is not only a place but also a feeling where the service providers can build their own self-esteem and pride by providing positive memories and experiences to the guests [3].

As it is an era of information and communication technology (ICT), its tremendous growth has motivated hospitality industry to provide their services online. Internet and Information technology is the main reason behind the success of tourism and hospitality industry [4]. After the commercialization of the Internet at the end of the last century, it took very little time for various economic operators to recognize its marketing potential. By examining numerous operations of various economic operators around the world, it is possible to conclude that the Internet has gradually developed from a communication medium into a channel of sales and distribution, and finally into a platform for managing relationships with consumers and virtual communities [5].

## 2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The e-marketing can potentially provide distinct value to the hotels. These come from the offering of information online, the possibility of

establishing communications and exchange of information and the conducting of transactions online. The rapid adoption of Internet marketing by hotels has yielded myriad studies of hospitality Internet adoption and its impact on hotel operation [5,6]. The website marketing is particularly useful for dealing with intangible nature of the hotel service and to gain competitive advantage [7]. For tourism organizations, the website content allows them to engage customers' interest and participation, to capture information about their preferences, and to use that information to provide personalized services.

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of ICT in the tourism and hospitality industry. They were mainly focused on the role and importance of websites in the marketing of a tourist destination, the importance of social media for destination marketing organisations and destination choice. In addition previous studies cover topics related to the application of e-marketing in hospitality such as the effect of e-marketing on consumer behaviour, the application of e-mail marketing and web promotion in the hospitality industry. However, as the theory in the field of e-marketing is still in its infancy and not yet well established, there is a need for having more well-established studies that could be considered as a step towards theory building in the field of e-marketing. Since there is a lack of publications which deal with a general level of implementation of e-marketing in the hotel industry, it seemed justified to conduct research on the application of E-marketing in the hotel industry and thereby contribute to the study of this issue.

### 2.1 Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to find out the extent to which E-marketing influences consumer patronage behaviour and its challenges.

### 3. THE STUDY AREA

Ado Ekiti is located between latitudes  $7^{\circ}31' N$  and  $7^{\circ}47' N$  of the equator and between longitude  $5^{\circ}05' E$  and  $5^{\circ}23' E$  of the Greenwich meridian (Fig. 1). Ado Ekiti has length and breadth of 32 and 28 km respectively. It is about 199 km to the northern Ekiti and Erio to the North (43.5 km), Ijero to the north east (7.5 km), southern and south eastern to the south (59 km) and western Ekiti of the west (9 km). Politically, Ado Ekiti is the capital city of Ekiti state and has since 1996 enjoyed this status. Ado Ekiti has evolved and continued to enjoy urban status and adequately qualify to be called a city as it reflects a political, economic, social and

cultural identity than many modern urban areas lack.

The population of Ado Ekiti was put at 149, 472 (NPC1991) before the State was created after which was put at 308,621 as at 2006 census by the National Population Commission. In 2016, the estimated population of Ado Ekiti can be put at 420,234 using 2.5% growth rate. Root crops and grains are cultivated at near farms while tree crops such as rubber are cultivated in distant farms. Ado Ekiti region show spatial specification of agricultural production while the north east part such as Iworoko, Are, Afao and Igbemo are noted for rice, the east to southern part specializes in yam and cassava while the western part produces cocoa and plantain.

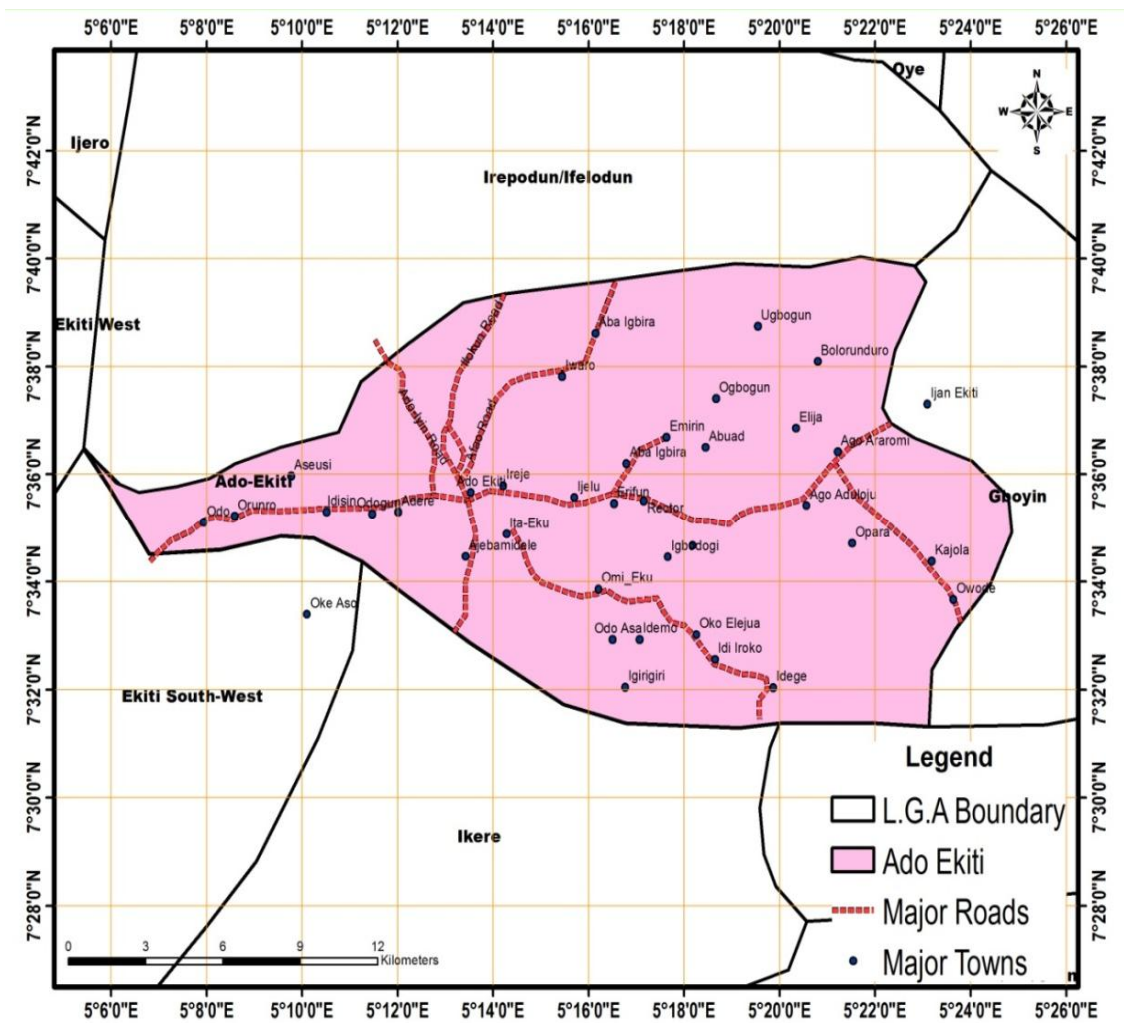


Fig. 1. Map of Ado Ekiti  
Source: [8]

#### 4. LITERATURE REVIEW

The terms e-Marketing, Internet marketing and online marketing, are frequently interchanged, and can often be considered synonymous. E-Marketing or electronic marketing refers to the application of marketing principles and techniques via electronic media and more specifically the Internet [9]. In the opinion of Unkovic and Zevevic [10], E-Marketing is the process of marketing a brand using the Internet. It includes both direct response marketing and indirect marketing elements and uses a range of technologies to help connect businesses to their customers. By such a definition, e-Marketing encompasses all the activities a business conducts via the worldwide web with the aim of attracting new business, retaining current business and developing its brand identity.

According to Hashim et al. [5], E-marketing refers to the use of the Internet and digital media capabilities to help sell your products or services. These digital technologies are a valuable addition to traditional marketing approaches regardless of the size and type of your business. As with conventional marketing, e-marketing is creating a strategy that helps businesses deliver the right messages and product/services to the right audience. It consists of all activities and processes with the purpose of finding, attracting, winning and retaining customers [5].

The hospitality industry is very broad, in fact, much broader than most other industries. Many business specialties are formed of only a handful of different businesses, even though this industry applies to almost any company that is focusing on customer satisfaction and meeting customers' recreational needs rather than the basic ones. The hospitality industry relies entirely on customers' being happy and satisfied and this is because these businesses are based on providing luxury services. Reliance on disposable income and leisure time is another major defining aspect of this industry. If there is a situation where income decreases due to a recession, then all the businesses related to the hospitality industry are usually the first businesses to suffer because customers will not have excessive money to spend to enjoy the services [11]. With e-marketing being at an early stage in most third world countries of the world, online shopping trend in Nigeria is not as advanced as it is in the UK and other developed countries. Although, the people engage in online banking (e-banking), most people are still not open to the idea of

shopping online and prefer to carry out their transactions traditionally, i.e. face-to-face. Previous researches on the slow adoption of e-marketing and online shopping have identified various contributing factors [12,12,14]. One of such factors is accessibility to the Internet.

A recent study on internet usage in the UK reveals that 82.5% of the total population are internet users and this greatly e-marketing (Internet World Stats, 2017). The increasing users of internet in Nigeria from 200, 000 in year 2000 to 98, 391, 456 in year 2017 revealed that the use of internet in the country is growing at a sporadic rate and still has the potential to grow higher [15]. Despite the growth of internet users in Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, NBS, (2017) submit that Ekiti State ranked 32nd out of the 36 States of the federation while Lagos State ranked 1st. Statistically, NBS (2017) revealed that the number of internet users in Ekiti State is 857,690 while that of Lagos State is 12, 957, 617. This greatly hinders the growth of e-marketing in Ekiti State.

Another factor affecting the use of e-marketing for online shopping in Nigeria is the lack of a nationally acceptable payment method for online goods and services. He suggests that the low level of e-Payment infrastructure in the country, serves as a hindrance to public participation in e-marketing. From previous researches carried out on e-payment in Nigeria, it is evident that the Automated Teller Machine (ATM) is the most prominent method of payment in Nigeria [16]. Most individuals have at least one bank ATM (cash) card because they find it to be a convenient means of banking without having to queue up in banks for cash. However, 2 states that though the use of the ATM is widely accepted nationwide, it is only a means for making local payments and not for e-marketing services such as online shopping and this has a negative effect on online shopping in Nigeria.

#### 5. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed the use of descriptive survey research design. This research work employed the use of structured questionnaire that is closed ended. A total of 22 copies of questionnaire were administered in the research work to elicit information from the respondent. Purposive sampling was used to select 11 three star hotels in the study area. However, 2 Management staff was selected using purposive sampling technique from each of the 11 selected

3 star hotels in the study area. The data collected were analysed through the use of descriptive method of data analysis such as frequency and percentage tables.

## 6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 showed the responses of respondent on E-marketing saving time and increasing patronage level. Respondents opined that E-marketing has indeed increased patronage level and saved time as affirmed by 68.1% of the respondents. Only 31.8% of the respondents however expressed that E-marketing does not

save time and has not increased patronage level in the establishment. Therefore, E-marketing has been discovered to save time and increase patronage level based on the analysis made.

Table 3 showed that patronage behaviour has increased because of the convenience brought by E-marketing. 72.7% of the respondents affirmed this assertion with just 27.2% expressing otherwise. This therefore, showed that patronage level has increased due to the convenience brought about by E-marketing.

**Table 1. 3 Star Hotels selected for the study**

S/N	Name of hotel	Address
1	Soteria Hotel	GRA Onigari, Ado Ekiti.
2	Hosanna Hotel	NTA road along Satellite campus, Ado Ekiti.
3	Banky Suites	Along Ado-Iworoko road, Ado Ekiti.
4	Home Away Hotel	Along Afao road, Ado Ekiti.
5	Royal Castle and Suites	Basiri along Iyin road, Ado Ekiti.
6	Festmag Hotel	Opposite Akure garage, Ado Ekiti.
7	De Jewels Apartment and Suites	Along Ijan road, Ado Ekiti.
8	Southwestern Hotel	Along Ijan road, Ado Ekiti
9	Radjut Hotel	Along Ado-Iworoko road, Ado Ekiti.
10	D'bliss Tit Hotel	GRA Onigari, Ado Ekiti.
11	Pathfinder Hotel	Behind De Head block industry, Ado Ekiti.

*Source: Author's Compilation, (2019)*

**Table 2. E-marketing saves time and increases patronage level**

E-marketing saves time and increases patronage level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	15	68.1
No	7	31.8
Total	22	100

*Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2019*

**Table 3. E-marketing enhances patronage increase**

Has patronage behaviour increased	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	16	72.7
No	6	27.2
Total	22	100

*Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2019*

**Table 4. Quality website improves customer patronage**

Quality website and improved level of patronage	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	12	54.5
No	10	45.4
Total	22	100

*Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2019*

**Table 5. Online advertisement improves patronage level**

Online advertisement and improved patronage level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	19	86.3
No	3	13.6
Total	22	100

*Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2019*

**Table 6. Customers feedback on E-marketing activities**

<b>Feedback on E-marketing</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Yes	10	45.4
No	12	54.5
Total	22	100

*Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2019*

**Table 7. Complaints on fraudulent online bookings of hotel**

<b>Complaints on fraudulent activities</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Yes	1	4.5
No	21	95.4
Total	22	100

*Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2019*

**Table 8. Payment method for online services**

<b>No centrally acceptable payment method</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Yes	14	63.6
No	8	36.3
Total	22	100

*Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2019*

Table 4 illustrated the responses of staff respondents of the establishment when asked about the quality of the hotel's website and how it improves patronage of the customers, they expressed that quality website has contributed to improvement of customer patronage. This assertion was confirmed by 54.5% of the respondents but 45.4% of the respondents negates the opinions of the other respondents. Therefore, quality website has improved customers' patronage in the establishment.

Table 5 showed that patronage behaviour has increased due to online advertisement. As affirmed by 86.3% of the respondents, online advertisement is a factor contributing to improved patronage level in the establishment. 13.6% of the respondents however, expressed otherwise. Therefore, online marketing has improved patronage level of customers to the hotel.

Table 6 indicated that the hotel does not receive feedback on E-marketing activities as they ought to. Although, 45.4% of the respondents revealed that they receive feedback on E-marketing activities, over half of the respondents however, expressed that they do not receive feedback from customers. It has therefore been discovered that many of the hotels does not does not receive feedback on E-marketing activities as they ought to. This can be attributed to the low level of awareness of the patrons on the use of e-marketing technology.

Table 7 expressed that there are barely cases reported to be fraudulent acts in the bookings of hotel rooms. 4.5% of the respondents revealed that there had been complaints of fraudulent acts on online hotel bookings but 95.4% of the respondents affirmed that there are no cases of fraudulent acts reported about the hotel. Therefore, many of the hotels does not record the cases of fraudulent activities on the bookings of hotel rooms in their establishment.

Table 8 showed that lack of centrally acceptable payment method for online services is one of the challenges confronting E-marketing as affirmed by 63.6% of the respondents, another 36.3% of the respondents however do not see the lack of nationally acceptable payment method for online services as a challenge to E-marketing. It was therefore discovered that the lack of centrally acceptable payment method for online services is a challenge confronting E-marketing in hotels in Ado-Ekiti. Many of the hotels makes use of different method of online payment which often makes it difficult for patrons to actually get use to one method, hence, there are several cases of complaints of inability to use one method or the other.

Table 9 indicated that unstructured presentation of information is one of the challenges facing E-marketing activities. 86.3% of the respondents affirmed the assertion while only 13.6% of the respondents expressed otherwise.

**Table 9. Unstructured presentation of information**

<b>Unstructured presentation of information</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Yes	19	86.3
No	3	13.6
Total	22	100

*Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2019*

**Table 10. Poor advertising and E-marketing**

<b>E-marketing advertisement are poor</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Yes	15	68.1
No	7	31.8
Total	22	100

*Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2019*

**Table 11. Weak internet domain and E-marketing**

<b>E-marketing internet domains are weak</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Yes	13	59.0
No	9	40.9
Total	22	100

*Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2019*

**Table 12. Poor sensitization and E-marketing**

<b>Poor sensitization frustrates E-marketing</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Yes	20	90.0
No	2	10.0
Total	22	100

*Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2019*

Therefore, it could be denoted that many of the hotels' information placed online are mostly unstructured which brings about difficulty to the patrons making use of those information or accessing them on the internet.

Table 10 indicated that poor advertising is a challenge to E-marketing as affirmed by 68.1% of the respondents, contrarily 31.8% of the respondents does not see poor advertising as a challenge to E-marketing. Thus, looking critically on the way online hotels bookings and reservations are being advertised, we can see that it can be compared to the way onsite booking are been advertised, this brings about low level of awareness by the people. Because many of the patrons often find it difficult to ascertain that a particular hotel makes use of online bookings and reservations.

Table 11 illustrates the fact that weak internet service is one of the challenges confronting E-marketing activities in the hotel. 59.0% of the respondents affirmed that weak internet services are a challenge to E-marketing while 40.9% of the respondents expressed otherwise. Many of the internet domains of many of the hotels are relatively substandard, hence, causing epileptic

nature of internet services especially when accessing their websites.

Table 12 revealed that over half of the respondents accounting for 90.0% revealed that the lack of sensitization about the benefits of E-marketing is a challenge to E-marketing. 10.0% of the respondents however do not see the lack of sensitization on the benefits of E-marketing as a challenge. Therefore, many of the hotels does not encourage their patrons to make use of their internet booking services, because they feel that many people are already use to onsite booking rather than online booking, and barely nothing is done towards re-orientating their patrons about this.

## **7. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION**

The study revealed that E-marketing saves time and increases patronage level, E-marketing enhances patronage increase, quality website improves customer patronage and online advertising improves patronage level. However, it was also revealed that some of the challenges facing E-marketing includes no centrally

acceptable payment method, Unstructured Presentation of Information, E-Marketing advertisement are poor, E-Marketing internet domain are weak as well as poor sensitization frustrates E-marketing. It can be concluded that E-marketing is an important strategy to capture patrons who are use to online booking system and enhancement of convenient booking for online patrons who are relatively far from the locations of the hotels.

## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Therefore, it is recommended that there should be encouragement of the use of E-Marketing among establishments especially in hotels in order to capture other people from far locations who need reservations at their own convenient time. There should also development of websites by different hotels so that their information can be easily accessible. Staff must also be trained in order to know how to use online marketing system as this will help to boost patronage and quality of service provided by the hotels.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

## REFERENCES

1. Pavlov O, Melville N, Plice R. Toward a sustainable e-mail marketing infrastructure. *J Bus Res.* 2008;61:1191–9.
2. Wang Y, Hwang Y, Fesenmaier D. Featuring internet marketing activities using change propensity analysis. *Journal of Travel Research.* 2006;45:158-166.
3. Hogan F. E-tourism: An innovative approach for all Small and Medium; 2008.
4. Hanson W. Principles of internet marketing. Cincinnati, OH: South Western College; 2000.
5. Hashim NH, Murphy J, Purchase S, O'Connor P. Website and email adoption by Malaysian Hotels. *Int J Hosp Manag.* 2010;29:194-196.
6. Scaglione D, Schegg D, Murphy D. The practice of statistics (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York: W.H. Freeman; 2009.
7. Baloglu S, Pekcan YA. The website design and internet site Marketing practices of upscale and luxury hotels in turkey. *Tourism Management.* 2006;27:171–176.
8. Ministry of Urban and Regional Planning, Ekiti State; 2019.
9. Strauss J, Frost R. E-marketing. 5<sup>th</sup> edition. Pearson prentice hall. *Journal of Travel Research.* 2009;45:158-166.
10. Unkovic U, Zevevic T. The ultimate web marketing guide, Pearson education. *Journal of Vacation Marketing.* 2011;11: 155-161.
11. Masterman O. Social media marketing in the hospitality industry: The role of benefits in increasing brand community participation and the impact of participation on consumer trust and commitment towards hotel and restaurant brands; 2016. Available:[http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=lib\\_dr\\_iastate\\_edu](http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=lib_dr_iastate_edu)
12. Folorunso O. Factors affecting the adoption of E-commerce: A study in Nigeria. *Journal of Applied Sciences.* 2006; 6(10):2224-2230.
13. Ayo CK. A framework for e-commerce implementation: Nigeria a case study. *Journal of Internet Banking and Commerce.* 2008;13(2):1-12.
14. Egwali E. E-commerce and value creation: Empirical evidence in Malaysia. Presented at the European Applied Business Research Conference, Rothenburg; 2009.
15. Ekwuemu H, Akgawu K. Electronic commerce adoption barriers in Small to Medium-sized Enterprises (SME) in developed and developing countries: A cross-country comparison. *Journal of Electronic Commerce in Organizations.* 2017;5(3):5-51.
16. Adeyeye M. E-commerce, business methods and evaluation of payment methods in Nigeria. *Electronic Journal Information Systems Evaluation.* 2017;11 (1):1-6.

© 2020 Arohunsoro et al.; This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

*Peer-review history:*  
The peer review history for this paper can be accessed here:  
<http://www.sdiarticle4.com/review-history/53405>