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Adoption among MSMEs during Pandemic

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PRERANA: Journal of Management Thought and Practice

PRERANA in Sanskrit means hope and inspiration. The primary objective of PRERANA journal is to enhance the standard of management education by drawing from conceptual and empirical research based articles reflecting current industry practices. PRERANA shall include contributions from eminent members of the academia and sharing of practices by experts from industry. The Journal will also contain book reviews, editorial abstracts and executive summaries of recent publications in management.

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FROM THE EDITOR (S)

It gives us immense pleasure to place before you the fifteenth volume and first issue of '**PRERANA: Journal of Management Thought and Practice.**' The objective of **PRERANA** is to disseminate contemporary developments in the field of management in the form of empirical research that tests, extends or builds management theory and contributes to management practice. **PRERANA** encourages manuscripts that present strong empirical and theoretical contributions to the management field. Preference is given to submissions that test, extend, or build strong theoretical frameworks. **PRERANA's** international and multi-disciplinary review team ensures maintenance of standards of excellence with regard to the quality of contents. This edition contains five research articles on Entrepreneurship, Ethical Product Marketing, Foreign Direct Investments, Crypto Currency and Digital Marketing.

Aun, Isaac Iortimbir and his co-researchers from Nigeria, conducted a study on 'Effect of gender on the characteristics and activities of street entrepreneurs in Ilorin, Nigeria.' The study was conducted to examine the similarities and differences in the socio-demographic characteristics and activities of male and female street traders in Ilorin city with the aim of providing information that will be useful in addressing the challenges of street trading in the study area. Based on their study results, it is concluded that when planning for any intervention or policy targeted towards street trading, the peculiarities of male and female street traders should be put into consideration.

Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) play a crucial role in the growth of developing economies. Kartini Kumar & Senthil Kumar from Malaysia, in their research article titled "Influence of Foreign Direct Investments on ASEAN-5 Stock Markets: A Pre-pandemic Perspective" have measured the impact of FDI inflows and outflows on the ASEAN-5 stock markets prior to the onslaught of the Covid-19 pandemic. FDI and stock market data from 2004 to 2018 was scrutinised using regression analysis. The study found a positive relationship between Singapore and Thailand, FDIs did seem to affect the Malaysian stock market. However, the relationship was found to be negative in Indonesia and Philippines. The study concluded that considering the importance of transnational capital investments in the building of an economy it is essential for the growing economies to provide an investor friendly environment.

Beena Narayan & Paras Milind Bhirud in their study on 'Responsiveness of Cryptocurrency among potential investors of Maharashtra' made an attempt to study how people perceive crypto currency as a basis for earning money, and whether is it a consistent source to trade and earn. The study showed respondents with less than thirty years age group are more interested in crypto currency trading whereas respondents more than thirty years are more risk averse. The older generation, above fifty years age group, considers crypto currency trading as pure gambling. The study recommends that investors need to stay up to date with user interface changes of apps and policy changes by broking firms.

Sowmiya V and Savitha Nair in their article on 'Drivers and Challenges of Digital Marketing Adoption among MSMEs during Pandemic' investigated the challenges MSMEs face during the COVID-19 Pandemic and how technology adoption has aided them in successfully managing their businesses. Data was collected through interviews with MSME

entrepreneurs in Coimbatore and a review of prior research on the adoption of digital marketing between 2017 -2022. According to the study Employee Layoffs, lack of knowledge of digital platforms, lack of skilled labour, and financial crunch were the major challenges affecting digital marketing adoption among MSMEs.

We thank all the authors for their contributions towards **PRERANA** – Volume 15, Issue 1, March 2023.

We look forward for novel, insightful and crafted conceptual work that challenges conventional wisdom concerning all aspects of organizations from academicians, bureaucrats and business executives for publishing in **PRERANA**.

- **Dr P Sadhasivam** – *Chief Editor*

- **Dr S Kavitha** – *Associate Editor*

EFFECT OF GENDER ON THE CHARACTERISTICS AND ACTIVITIES OF STREET ENTREPRENEURS IN ILORIN, NIGERIA

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Olaposi, Titilayo Olubunmi Ph.D.***

ABSTRACT

Street trading is a thriving and growing phenomenon in developing countries. It is an important occupation for the urban poor especially in Nigeria where street trading forms a very important segment of the informal, unorganized sector. Whereas, it has been submitted that the entrepreneurial activities of male and female entrepreneurs vary in some ways and that the outcomes of such activities also vary, no known study has investigated how gender influences the activities of street traders in Nigeria. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the similarities and differences in the socio-demographic characteristics and activities of male and female street traders in Ilorin city with the aim of providing information that will be useful in addressing the challenges of street trading in the study area. Cross-sectional survey design was employed for the study. The data were gathered using structured questionnaire on three major roads in Ilorin metropolis, the capital city of Kwara State, Nigeria. The results showed that male and female street traders are significant to the study, although similar in many of their socio-demographic characteristics; differ in some socio-demographic characteristics and activities. Therefore, the study concluded that when planning for any intervention or policy targeted towards street trading, the peculiarities of male and female street traders should be put into consideration.

INTRODUCTION

Since the concept of the informal economy has been introduced by Hart (1973), the phenomenon has attracted much discussions and research. Although ‘informality’ troubles policymakers in developing countries because it is seen as being associated with low productivity and poverty and although cross-sectional differences in rates of informality do seem to suggest that development is associated with declining informality, informality is persistently increasing in many countries of the world instead of decreasing. More than 60% of workers and 80% of enterprises in the world operate in the informal economy (ILO, 2020). This is so because many people are unable to find other jobs or start businesses in the formal economy (ILO, 2015). A significant representation of operators in the informal sector, are the people who in the bid to end hunger, choose to sell their goods on streets in cities. Street traders

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(also called street entrepreneurs or street vendors) are persons engaged in hawking goods such as shoes, toiletries, clothes, foods and beverages to the general public, on the street, sidewalk, pavement and any other public place. They usually carry out their trading activities from a temporary built up structure or by moving from place to place; most especially in the midst of heavy traffic.

Street trading is a thriving and growing phenomenon in developing countries. It is an important occupation for the urban poor especially in Nigeria where street trading forms a very important segment of the informal, unorganized sector. Street trading thrives because it is easier to operate on the street. It has relatively low barriers to entry and also needs low start-up costs. Street traders are often those who are unable to get regular jobs in the remunerative formal sector on account of their low level of education and skills; but are trying to solve their livelihood issues through their meagre financial resources. However, some people that are employed in formal organizations also engage in street trading to augment their incomes.

The subject of street trading generally has been widely researched into. The nature of street trading has been investigated (Bamigboye, 2015; Waziri and Umar, 2016). Waziri and Umar (2016) identified three categories of street trading practice in Maiduguri. These were hawking, fixed-spot business and shop extensions. Hawking is the carrying of goods and wares on heads or with hand pushed wheel barrows and move about the streets. They reported that hawkers in Maiduguri consist of males and females of various socio-demographic characteristics and that more than 50% of the street hawkers were aged below 30 years.

Previous studies have looked into the economy of street vending, examining how street vending is an important source of income for urban poor households (Iyenda, 2005); how it provides efficient services for the urban poor (Suriansyah, 2005); and how such income contributes to women's economic autonomy (Salway, et al. 2005; Mitra 2005). Agada, Fems, Duke and Okoyan (2018) found that street vending had contributed to the social, political and economic life of some people and has become a foundation for the retail economy in cities especially for those who are unable to have a safe and proper employment. This corroborates Anetor (2015) who reported that street selling has made a significant impact to Nigerians' socio-economic lives. Some prior authors have also documented the usage of street trade as a means of income and employment opportunities (Amoo, Ola-David, Ogunrinola & Fadayomi, 2012). According to Amoo et al. (2012), grounds for street hawking include failure to get formal occupations, financial restraints in securing admission to college level, and joblessness of the family's breadwinners.

The negative effects of street vending also, has been investigated. Bromley (2000) submitted that street trading contributes to vehicular and pedestrian congestion that cause traffic accidents, increase pollution and impede the flow of police, ambulance, and other emergency vehicles. He also asserted that street

vending often results in the blockage of the routes of egress from crowded buildings such as theaters and stadia thus, increasing the scale of tragedy in the event of a major fire, explosion, or toxic gas escape. The author further submitted that street food vendors pose major public health problems because they often expose their goods to the sun, air pollution and contamination by passers-by. Chukuezi (2010) indicated that street merchants' activities were linked to a range of health risks. Adedjei et al. (2014), who studied the spatial effects of street trading in Osogbo, Nigeria, backed with this claim. They discovered that street trade has major negative consequences for accessibility, resulting in the construction of unlawful constructions, solid waste, traffic congestion, vehicle accidents, and the vandalism of city amenities. Waziri and Umar (2016) reported that uncontrolled street trading in the city may be responsible for environmental problems such as obstructions of traffic, pollution and poor sanitary conditions of streets.

The health risks associated with street trading activities among Nigerian women have been researched into. Amoo et al. (2012) investigated the health concerns related with street hawking among Nigerian women in metropolitan areas. They found that street trading could lead to accidents, musculoskeletal disorders, pains, psychological disorders, tiredness, respiratory problem due to inhaled combustible flame from the vehicles and other air pollution health problems. Amoo et al. (2012) added that women trading in streets are also exposed to hazards such as harassments which may be in form of bullying, beating, seizure of wares, forceful extortions and possibly, rape.

The issue of children hawkers has been investigated. Umar (2009) studied the impact of street trading on the girl child and found that it exposes the girl child to all forms of abuses that range from, rape and harassment to molestation. The author also reported that the girl child becomes street wise and this culminates to quest for sex and other immoral and criminal behaviour. Furthermore, it was revealed that female children have high proclivity to forego their education and therefore lose the privileges of school. Clark and Yesufu (2012) also examined the matter of children selling on the street. The findings of their study show a bigger number of kid street hawkers combining labor with schooling. Ugochukwu, Okeke, Onubogu, and Edokwe (2012) discovered a contradicting outcome in their own investigation. They discovered that all children street sellers' parents had a low socioeconomic standing, and that selling took place around school time for the family's financial benefit. In Nigeria, Ojo and Olufemi (2013) looked into the effects of child street hawking. They discovered that parents' education levels, jobs, and family sizes were all linked to the problem of child hawkers in the research area.

Investigations on gender issues have established that both male and female engage in street trading. In Maiduguri, Waziri and Umar (2016) found that more than 70% of street traders were male. Whereas in Osogbo, Adedjei, Fadamiro and

Adeoye (2014) reported that about 60% of the street traders were female. The issue of disparity in male and female education in Nigeria may be responsible for this. It is a well-known fact that differences exist between enrollment of males and females in all levels of education and that the dropout rate of girls is higher than that of boys. This fact was established by Ogunjuyigbe, Ojofeitimi, and Akinlo (2006).

Whereas, it has been submitted that the entrepreneurial activities of male and female entrepreneurs vary in some ways and that the outcomes of such activities also vary, no known study has investigated how gender influences the activities of street traders in Nigeria. Hence, to be able to formulate policies that would effectively address the challenges being faced by the Nigerian street traders, knowledge of the disparities between the activities of the two genders is germane. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the similarities and differences in the socio-demographic characteristics and activities of male and female street traders in Ilorin city with the aim of providing information that will be useful in addressing the challenges of street trading in the study area. This is based on the notion that gaining a yet better understanding of the role of gender may further our understanding of street trading. This study's findings have important implications for city planning, government policy and programmatic interventions.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

Gender/sex and Gender Differences or Sex Differences

The question of whether male and female differ in their abilities, activities and capabilities has been the focus of considerable research in recent decades. Many scholars have investigated issues revolving around the role of "gender" or "sex" in the operations and outcomes of entrepreneurial ventures. The expression "gender differences" and sex differences" have been used in many of such studies.

The distinction between the terms "sex" and "gender" is not so clear to many people. Pryzgodna and Chrisler (2000) surveyed 137 participants in the United States of America; they asked the question "How do non-psychologists define gender, think about gender, and use the word gender?" The study found results that indicated a variety of understandings and beliefs about gender that range from the common response that "gender" is the same as "sex" to some less common responses that associate gender with females or discrimination. Various definitions of gender have been refined and reworked by scholars for years (Nicholson, 1994; West & Zimmerman.1991).

While "sex" refers to biological differences between males and females, "gender" refers to the cultural differences expected (by society / culture) of men and women according to their sex (McLeod, 2014). In other words, "Sex" refers to the biological aspects of being male and female and "Gender" refers only to

behavioural, social, and psychological characteristics of men and women (Pryzgoda & Chrisler, 2000).

The biological approach suggests there is no distinction between sex and gender, thus biological sex creates gendered behaviour. The biological approach explains that every human is a consequence of his/her genetics and physiology (McLeod, 2015). Shaywitz, Shaywitz, Pugh *et al.* (1995) used magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans to examine differences between the brains of men and women. He found that while men and women carried out language tasks, women used both hemispheres but men used only the left hemisphere. Women may find it more difficult to get inspired for their business ambitions at established institutions, according to Zoltan, Elena, Saul, and Jan (2011), and are compelled to be self-motivated by working in their own businesses.

Disparities in the entrepreneurial activities of male and female entrepreneurs, on the other hand, have been documented, and according to earlier reports, these are due to a variety of circumstances. The following are some of the discrepancies found in the existing literature: (i) Lack of assistance appears to have a greater impact on women than on men (Heilman & Chen, 2003; Shinnar *et al.*, 2012). (ii) that fear of failure has a smaller negative impact on the propensity to engage in start-up activities for men than for women (Langowitz & Minniti, 2007; Wagner, 2007); (iii) that women hold themselves to a higher standard of competence and are less likely to engage in start-up activities than men (Langowitz & Minniti, 2007; Wagner, 2007); (iv) that women hold themselves to a higher standard of competence and are less likely to engage. The gender gap in entrepreneurship is mostly due to this gender difference in self-assessment (Thébaud, 2010). Young girls regard themselves as having a lower level of self-efficacy in carrying out entrepreneurial tasks, according to Wilson, Kickul, and Marlino (2007), and consequently engage in start-up activity to a significantly lesser amount than young males. Women are said to be less interested in participating in start-up activities (Langowitz & Minniti, 2007; Veciana, Aponte & Urbano, 2005). In the context of international trade, empirical evidence has shown that compared to firms owned by men, female-owned businesses may be less likely to export (Orser and Carrington, 2006).

According to Giudice (2015), the typical personality profiles of males and females differ in a number of ways. According to the author, on average, males are more dominant, assertive, risk-prone, tough-minded, cold-hearted, emotionally stable, utilitarian, and open to abstract ideas. Females are more nurturant, warm, altruistic, submissive, risk-averse, tender minded, emotionally unstable, and open to feelings and aesthetic experiences.

The fact that men and women entrepreneurs differ in their business growth intent had been debated. Some researchers, for instance, Cassar (2006) found that women entrepreneurs had lower estimates of future revenues than did men while

Menzies et al. (2004) reported that no statistically significant differences exist between women and men in their expressed preferences for unrestrained business growth. Findings from the study of Zampetakis, Bakatsaki, Kafetsios and Moustakis (2016) make it clear that business growth intention is a complex phenomenon that may be influenced by gender. They explain that women make decisions related to the growth of their businesses using a different process than men do.

Crozon and Gneezy (2009) reviewed the literature on gender differences in economic experiments and found that women are more risk averse than men. They also found that the social preferences of women are more situationally specific than those of men and that of women are neither more nor less socially oriented, but their social preferences are more malleable.

HYPOTHESES

H1 : Gender does not have any significant association with socio-demographic characteristics of the street traders.

H1_i : Gender has no significant association with traders' age.

H1_{ii} : Gender does not have any significant association with marital status.

H1_{iii} : Gender has no significant association with the number of children.

H1_{iv} : Gender does not have any significant association with the number of dependents.

H1_v : Gender has no significant association with the category of street trading.

H1_{vi} : Gender does not have any significant association with highest educational qualification.

H1_{vii} : Gender has no significant association with previous employment status

H1_{viii} : Gender does not have any significant association with the type of traders' residence.

H1_{ix} : Gender has no significant association with length of street trading period.

H1_x : Gender does not have any significant association with traders' perception of street trading.

H1_{xi} : Gender has no significant association with traders' level of achievement.

H2 : There is no positive association between gender and the activities of the street traders.

H2_i : Gender does not have any significant association with nature of business

- H2_{ii} : Gender has no significant association with interaction with government.
- H2_{iii} : Gender does not have any significant association with plans to grow business.
- H2_{iv} : Gender has no significant association with having regular customers.
- H2_v : Gender does not have any significant association with factors influencing business location.
- H2_{vi} : Gender has no significant association with reason for street trading.
- H2_{vii} : Gender does not have any significant association with daily savings.
- H2_{viii} : Gender has no significant association with daily profit.

METHODOLOGY

Cross-sectional survey design was employed for the study. The data were gathered in December 2019. The respondents of the study were street traders who operated in three major roads in Ilorin, the capital city of Kwara State in Western Nigeria. Ilorin is a commercial, manufacturing and transportation centre. It is also an agricultural area where produce such as rice, sorghum, corn, cassava, yams, peanut and livestock are grown. Also, manufacturers in Ilorin produced products such as matches, textiles, processed foods, cigarettes and handicrafts. In January 2020, the population of Ilorin was estimated to be eight hundred and fourteen thousand, one hundred and ninety-two (814, 192) (world Population Review, 2020).

Twenty-eight (46.7%) (14 male, 14 female) of the traders were selected at Taiwo Road, 12(20.0%) (5 male, 7 female) at Tanke Road, while the remaining 20(33.3%) (11 male, 9 female) were selected at the Ahmadu Bello Way (See Figure 1 and Table 1). Sixty street traders were selected for the study using simple random sampling technique. However, due to the nature of the research, to be able to compare the characteristics of male street traders with those of the female street traders effectively, half (50%) of the selected traders were male and the second half (50%) were female. The participants of the study were selected based on oral informed consent. The research instrument used was a structured questionnaire containing fifty questions. The respondents that were literate completed the questionnaire without the intervention of the researchers; while the not so much literate respondents were guided to complete the questionnaire. For instance, the questions were interpreted into the local language for illiterate respondents and the researchers assisted in filling respondents' responses into the questionnaire.

The word gender is used in this study to mean either male or female. This follows the biological approach which suggests that there is no distinction between sex and gender (McLeod, 2015).

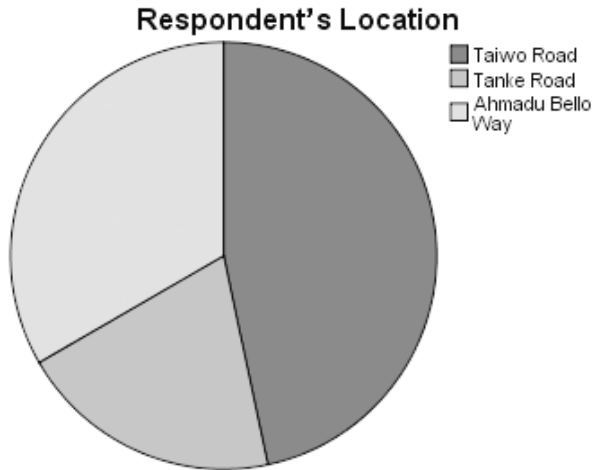


Figure1: Distribution of Respondents' Location

Table 1: Distribution of respondents' location in relation to their

			Respondent's Location			Total
			Taiwo Road	Tanke Road	Ahmadu Bello Way	
Respondent's gender	Male	Count	14	5	11	30
		% within Respondent's gender	0.467	0.167	0.367	1
	Female	Count	14	7	9	30
		% within Respondent's gender	0.467	0.233	0.3	1
Total		Count	28	12	20	60
		% within Respondent's gender	0.467	0.2	0.333	1

RESULTS

Respondents' Sociodemographic characteristics

Most (71.7%) of the respondents were between the ages 18 and 40 years. Four of the respondents within 18 – 25 years were male and 11 were female. Six male were within 26 – 32 years and 7 were female. Seven male were within 33 – 39 years and 8 were female. Thirteen male and 4 female respondents were above 40 years of age. In summary, 17(28.33%) male and 26(43.33%) female respondents were younger than 40 years of age. Overall, 43(71.7%) respondents were under 40 years of age. These findings suggest, according to the African Youth Charter (AYC), that most of the selected street traders were youths; AYC recognizes every person between the ages of 15 and 35 years as youths (AYC, 2006).

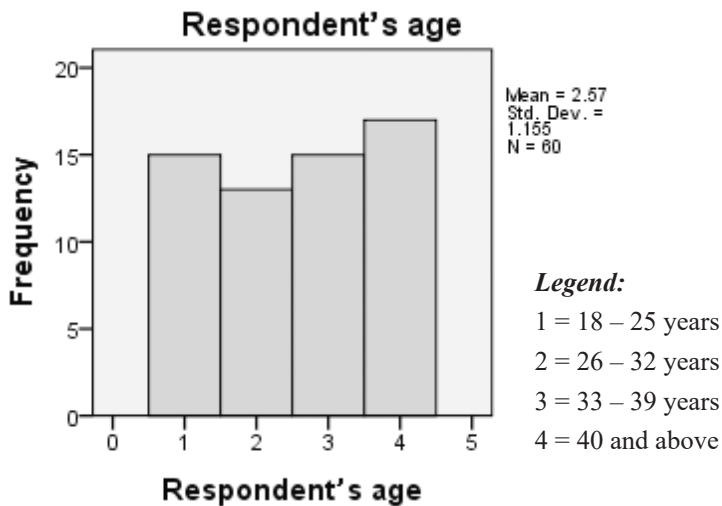


Figure 2: Histogram Showing Distribution of Respondents' Age

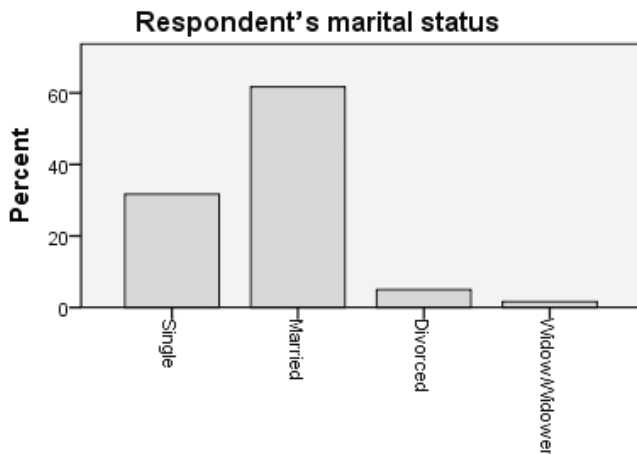
Table 2: Distribution of respondents' age in relation to their gender

			Respondent's age				Total
			18-25	26-32	33-39	40 and above	
Respondent's gender	Male	Count	4	6	7	13	30
		% within Respondent's gender	0.133	0.2	0.233	0.433	1
	Female	Count	11	7	8	4	30
		% within Respondent's gender	0.367	0.233	0.267	0.133	1
Total		Count	15	13	15	17	60
		% within Respondent's gender	0.25	0.217	0.25	0.283	1

Nineteen (6 men, 13 women) of the respondents were single while 37 (21 men, 15 women) were married, 3 (2 men, 1 woman) were divorced and just one respondent fell in the category of widow/widower. Overall, most (37: 61.7%) of the respondents was married and a higher percentage of the married traders were male.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents' marital status in relation to their gender

			Respondent's marital status				Total
			Single	Married	Divorced	Widow/ Widower	
Respondent's gender	Male	Count	6	21	2	1	30
		% within Respondent's gender	0.2	0.7	0.067	0.033	1
	Female	Count	13	16	1	0	30
		% within Respondent's gender	0.433	0.533	0.033	0	1
Total		Count	19	37	3	1	60
		% within Respondent's gender	0.317	0.617	0.05	0.017	1



Respondent's marital status

Figure 3: Bar Chart showing Distribution of Respondents' Marital Status

A lower number of the respondents, 19 out of 60 (31.7 %), more specifically, 23.3% of the male respondents and 40.0% of the female had the West Africa Senior School Certificate. The remaining 68.3% had tertiary education. More male (76.7%) had tertiary education than their female counterparts (50.0%). Overall, it is clear from the results that the street traders were not illiterates, even some of them (18.3%) had master's degrees, but there is a disparity between the educational qualifications of male and female traders.

Table 4: Respondents; highest educational qualification

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	WASSCE	19	31.7	31.7	31.7
	OND/NCE	14	23.3	23.3	55
	B.SC./HND	16	26.7	26.7	81.7
	M.SC	11	18.3	18.3	100
	Total	60	100	100	

Table 5: Distribution of respondents' highest education qualification in relation to their gender

			What is your highest educational qualification?				Total
			WASSCE	OND/ NCE	B.SC./ HND	M.SC	
Respondent's gender	Male	Count	7	8	8	7	30
		% within Respondent's gender	0.233	0.267	0.267	0.233	1
	Female	Count	12	6	8	4	30
		% within Respondent's gender	0.4	0.2	0.267	0.133	1
Total		Count	19	14	16	11	60
		% within Respondent's gender	0.317	0.233	0.267	0.183	1

Nineteen of the study's respondents had no offspring; 16(26.7%) of them had 1 – 2 children, 21 (35.0%) had 3 – 4 children and 4 of them reported that they had more than 7 children. Six (20.0%) out of 30 men and 13 (43.3%) out of 30 women had no children. Nine (30.0%) men and 7(23.3%) women had 1 – 2 children. Twelve (40.0%) men and 9(30.0%) women had 3 – 4 children. Three (10.0%) men and 1(3.3%) women had seven and more children. Overall, most (70.0%) of the male respondents had 1 – 4 children while more than 40% of the female respondents did not have any child. However, the 43.3% of the women that had 1 – 4 children is quite worthy of note. Also, it could be noticed from the table that 50.0% of the males had more than three (3) children, while 33.3% of the female respondents had the same number of children.

Table 6: Distribution of respondents' number of children in relation to respondents' gender

			Number of children				Total
			None	44958	45019	7 and above	
Respondent's gender	Male	Count	6	9	12	3	30
		% within Respondent's gender	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.1	1
	Female	Count	13	7	9	1	30
		% within Respondent's gender	0.433	0.233	0.3	0.033	1
Total		Count	19	16	21	4	60
		% within Respondent's gender	0.317	0.267	0.35	0.067	1

Apart from having biological children, the street traders had other dependents. It is worthy of note that even those that reported that they did not have any child claimed that they had dependents. Twenty-five percent [7 (23.3%) male and 8 (26.7%) female] of the street traders had 1 -3 dependents, 38.3% [10 (33.3%) male and 13 (43.3%) female] had 4 – 6 dependents, 26.7%[9 (30.0%) male and 7 (23.3%) female] had 7 – 9, while 10.0% [(13.3%) male and 2 (6.7%) female] had 10 and more dependents. The mean is 2.2 and standard deviation is 0.94. This suggests that overall each street trader has at least 2 dependents.

Table 7: Distribution of respondents' other dependents in relation to respondents' gender

			Number of other dependents				Total
			44986	45081	45176	10 and above	
Respondent's gender	Male	Count	7	10	9	4	30
		% within Respondent's gender	0.233	0.333	0.3	0.133	1
	Female	Count	8	13	7	2	30
		% within Respondent's gender	0.267	0.433	0.233	0.067	1
Total		Count	15	23	16	6	60
		% within Respondent's gender	0.25	0.383	0.267	0.1	1

STREET TRADING ACTIVITIES

Respondents' nature of business

The street traders were found to be involved in diverse trading activities. However, most of them were into sales of commodities such as food and snacks (10.0% male, 26.7% female), groceries (10.0% male; 33.3 female), home gadgets and accessories (30.0% male; 3.3% female), wears (13.3% male; 16.7% female), and toiletries (3.3% male; 6.7% female). Some others were into photography (10.0% male; 0.0% female), banking activities (16.7% male; 3.3% female), and vulcanizers (6.7%; 0.0%). These figures show that female street traders were more into selling of food, snacks and groceries (60.0%); while the men were more into home gadgets and accessories (30.0%). Other men are also involved in the selling of things that women sell such as food/snacks and groceries.

Table 8: Distribution of respondents' nature of business in relation to their gender

			Nature of business									Total
			Selling Food and Snacks	Selling Groceries	Gadget and Accessories	Agent Banking	Selling Wears	Selling Toiletries	Vulcanizers	Photographer	Others	
Respondent's gender	Male	Count	3	3	9	5	4	1	2	3	0	30
		% within Respondent's gender	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.167	0.133	0.033	0.067	0.1	0	1
	Female	Count	8	10	1	1	5	2	0	0	3	30
		% within Respondent's gender	0.267	0.333	0.033	0.033	0.167	0.067	0	0	0.1	1
Total		Count	11	13	10	6	9	3	2	3	3	60
		% within Respondent's gender	0.183	0.217	0.167	0.1	0.15	0.05	0.033	0.05	0.05	1

Respondents' previous employment status

Fifteen (25.0%) of the respondents claimed to be employed in a salaried job prior to the commencement of their street trading activities but the majority (75.0%) reported that they were never employed. Out of the total sixty respondents, 26.7% of thirty male respondents and 23.3% of thirty female respondents were previously employed. The remaining 73.3% male respondents and 76.7% female respondents were not previously employed. This shows that most of the street traders, both male and female, were not previously employed. The result suggests that male respondents are not significantly different from female respondents.

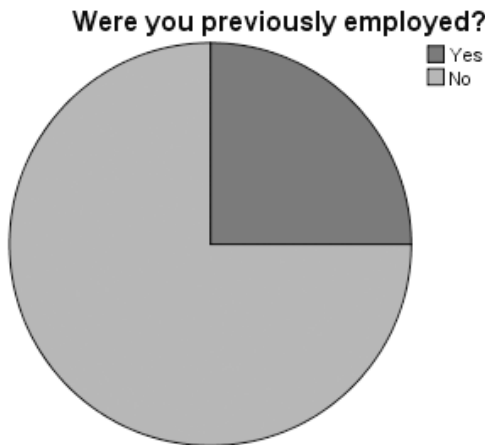


Figure 4: Distribution of Respondents' Previous Employment Status

Table 9: Respondents previous employment status in relation to their gender

			Were you previously employed?		Total
			Yes	No	
Respondent's gender	Male	Count	8	22	30
		% within Respondent's gender	0.267	0.733	1
	Female	Count	7	23	30
		% within Respondent's gender	0.233	0.767	1
Total		Count	15	45	60
		% within Respondent's gender	0.25	0.75	1

This study shows that most [78.3%] street traders in Ilorin make more money than some salary earners in Nigeria. Only 21.7%of the traders (13.3% of male respondents; 30.0% of female respondents) earn below 30, 000 Naira per month minimum wage. Out of the remaining 78.3%, 16.7%(20.0% of male traders and 13.3% female) reported that they did generate a profit of 30,000 – 59, 999 Naira per month; 18.3% (13.3% male; 23.3% female) generated 60, 000 – 69,999 Naira; 10.0% (16.7 male; 3.3%\$ female) generated 70,000 –99,999; 15.0% (10.0% male and 20.0% female) generated 100,000 – 129,999; 10.0% (13.3% male; 6.7% female) generated 130,000 – 159,999 and 8.3% (13.3% male; 3.3% female) generated 160,000 and above. Overall, it could be noticed from the table that 53.3% of the male traders gained more than 70,000 Naira per month, while just 33.3% of the female traders gained the same amount of money.

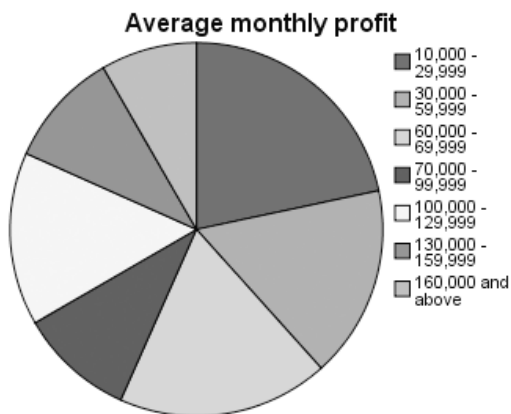


Figure 5: Average respondents' monthly profit (in Naira)

Table 10: Respondents' average monthly profit (in Naira) in relation to gender

			Average monthly profit							Total
			10,000 - 29,999	30,000 - 59,999	60,000 - 69,999	70,000 - 99,999	100,000 - 129,999	130,000 - 159,999	160,000 and above	
Respondent's gender	Male	Count	4	6	4	5	3	4	4	30
		% within Respondent's gender	0.133	0.2	0.133	0.167	0.1	0.133	0.133	1
	Female	Count	9	4	7	1	6	2	1	30
		% within Respondent's gender	0.3	0.133	0.233	0.033	0.2	0.067	0.033	1
Total		Count	13	10	11	6	9	6	5	60
		% within Respondent's gender	0.217	0.167	0.183	0.1	0.15	0.1	0.083	1

Table 11a: Daily savings of street traders

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0 - 999	3	5	5	5
	1,000 - 1,999	20	33.3	33.3	38.3
	2,000 - 2,999	11	18.3	18.3	56.7
	3,000 - 3,999	8	13.3	13.3	70
	4,000 - 4,999	14	23.3	23.3	93.3
	5,000 - 5,999	4	6.7	6.7	100
	Total	60	100	100	

Out of the profits generated, the respondents reported that they made some daily savings. Most(95.0%) claimed to save more than N1000 (one thousand Naira) per day. More specifically, 3.3% of the male respondents and 6.7% of the female street traders did not have any savings. 26.7% male and 40.0% female saved less than 2000 Naira. The rest 70.0% male and 53.3% female saved amounts that were greater than 2000 Naira per day. This result shows that the male traders saved larger amounts of money than their female counterparts.

Table 11b: Daily savings of respondents in relation to gender

			How much do you save per day?						Total
			0 - 999	1,000 - 1,999	2,000 - 2,999	3,000 - 3,999	4,000 - 4,999	5,000 - 5,999	
Respondent's gender	Male	Count	1	8	5	4	10	2	30
		% within Respondent's gender	0.033	0.267	0.167	0.133	0.333	0.067	1
	Female	Count	2	12	6	4	4	2	30
		% within Respondent's gender	0.067	0.4	0.2	0.133	0.133	0.067	1
Total		Count	3	20	11	8	14	4	60
		% within Respondent's gender	0.05	0.333	0.183	0.133	0.233	0.067	1

Few (3.3%) of the traders lived in houses built with the proceeds of their street trading businesses. Others lived in their parents' houses (15.0%), rented houses (45.0% and some were living with their friends (36.7%). More female traders (20.0%) lived with parents than the male traders (10.0%). The two, 3.3% of the 60 traders that lived in personal houses were male.

Table 12: Respondents' nature of residence in relation to gender

			Where do you live?				Total
			Parent House	Rented House	Managing with friend	Personal house	
Respondent's gender	Male	Count	3	14	11	2	30
		% within Respondent's gender	0.1	0.467	0.367	0.067	1
	Female	Count	6	13	11	0	30
		% within Respondent's gender	0.2	0.433	0.367	0	1
Total		Count	9	27	22	2	60
		% within Respondent's gender	0.15	0.45	0.367	0.033	1

Most (68.3%) of the traders had traded on the streets for more than five years. In regard to years of engagement in street trading, the difference between male and female traders was not wide. Nine (30.0%) out of 30 male traders and 10 (33.3%) out of 30 female traders had engaged in street trading for between 1 – 5 years.

Others had been on the street for between 6 – 21 years and even more. The results indicate that the traders have stayed long on street business.

Table 13: Gender versus length of street trading experience

			How long have you been vending on the street?					Total
			1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	21years and above	
Respondent's gender	Male	Count	9	9	7	2	3	30
		% within Respondent's gender	0.3	0.3	0.233	0.067	0.1	1
	Female	Count	10	8	6	5	1	30
		% within Respondent's gender	0.333	0.267	0.2	0.167	0.033	1
Total		Count	19	17	13	7	4	60
		% within Respondent's gender	0.317	0.283	0.217	0.117	0.067	1

Two major reasons were given for doing street business. These were personal preference (28.3%) and lack of capital to engage in rent/lease a shop (33.3%). Most of the male street traders (40.0%) but only 26.7% of the female respondents reported that they were into street business because they lacked capital to either rent or lease a shop space. Whereas more female (30.0%) said they were into street trading as a result of personal preference. Only 26.7% of the male traders gave that same reason. The rest of the traders did not have any cogent reasons.

Table 14: Gender versus reason for doing business on the street

			Why are you doing your business on the street?			Total
			Personal preference	No money to rent shop	Others	
Respondent's gender	Male	Count	8	12	10	30
		% within Respondent's gender	0.267	0.4	0.333	1
	Female	Count	9	8	13	30
		% within Respondent's gender	0.3	0.267	0.433	1
Total		Count	17	20	23	60
		% within Respondent's gender	0.283	0.333	0.383	1

The major factors which influenced the traders' choice of their business location were: (i) pedestrian population (26.7%; 20.0% male, 33.3% female), closeness to

major roads (20.0%; 23.3% male, 16.7% female), and Closeness to sources of input materials (16.7%; 20.0% male, 13.3% female).

Table 15: Gender versus factors influencing business location

			What factors dictated your choice of business location?						Total
			Pedestrian population	Closeness to large firms	Capital availability	Closeness to targeted buyers	Closeness to major road	Closeness to source of input	
Respondent's gender	Male	Count	6	3	5	3	7	6	30
		% within Respondent's gender	0.2	0.1	0.167	0.1	0.233	0.2	1
	Female	Count	10	4	4	3	5	4	30
		% within Respondent's gender	0.333	0.133	0.133	0.1	0.167	0.133	1
Total		Count	16	7	9	6	12	10	60
		% within Respondent's gender	0.267	0.117	0.15	0.1	0.2	0.167	1

The street traders claimed they had made some achievements from the proceeds of their business. Their major achievements include: Long term investments (28.3% of 60 respondents; 36.7% of 30 male and 20.0% of 30 female traders), children's upkeep (25.0%), self-sponsored education (16.7%). Other achievements include: siblings' upkeep (11.7%), survival (3.3%) and some unspecified others (15.0%).

Table 16: Gender versus Street Traders' achievement

			What have you achieved with street vending e.g. buy television, radio, land, built house, support children in school etc.						Total
			Survival	Siblings' upkeep	Self-sponsored education	Childrens' Upkeep	Long term investment	Others	
Respondent's gender	Male	Count	0	4	2	7	11	6	30
		% within Respondent's gender	0	0.133	0.067	0.233	0.367	0.2	1
	Female	Count	2	3	8	8	6	3	30
		% within Respondent's gender	0.067	0.1	0.267	0.267	0.2	0.1	1
Total		Count	2	7	10	15	17	9	60
		% within Respondent's gender	0.033	0.117	0.167	0.25	0.283	0.15	1

More female (93.3%) respondents had regular customers than male respondents (73.3%) (Table 16).

Table 17: Gender versus possession of regular customer

			Do you have regular customers?		Total
			Yes	No	
Respondent's gender	Male	Count	22	8	30
		% within Respondent's gender	0.733	0.267	1
	Female	Count	28	2	30
		% within Respondent's gender	0.933	0.067	1
Total		Count	50	10	60
		% within Respondent's gender	0.833	0.167	1

Some of the traders have plans to quit street trading soon (28.3%; 40.0% of the male and 16.7% of the female) and even very soon (23.3%; 16.7% of the male and 30.0% of the female). However, almost half of the respondents (48,3%) do not have intention to quit soon. Actually, 13.3% (16.7% of the male and 10.0% of the female) never wanted to quit street trading, another 13.3% (10.0% male and 16.7% female) did not know when they would quit and 21.7% (16,7% of the male and 26.7% of the female) indicated that they would quit in some years to come. Overall, a higher percentage of males (56.7%) indicated desire to quit the business soon than their female counterparts (46.7%).

Table 18: Gender versus time to quit street trading

			When will you quit street vending?					Total
			Very Soon	Soon	I don't Know	Years to come	Never	
Respondent's gender	Male	Count	5	12	3	5	5	30
		% within Respondent's gender	0.167	0.4	0.1	0.167	0.167	1
	Female	Count	9	5	5	8	3	30
		% within Respondent's gender	0.3	0.167	0.167	0.267	0.1	1
Total		Count	14	17	8	13	8	60
		% within Respondent's gender	0.233	0.283	0.133	0.217	0.133	1

Findings of the study showed that most of the traders (70.0% of the male & 76.7% of the female) had some form of interaction with the government. The respondents reported that the local government collected some levy from them on a daily basis.

Test of Hypotheses

Table 19: Table showing p-values for respondents' socioeconomic characteristics

Serial Number	Characteristic	p-Value
1	Respondent's age	0.006*
2	Marital Status	0.039*
3	Number of children	0.062
4	Number of dependants	0.360
5	Category of street trading	0.613
6	Highest educational qualification	0.201
7	Previous employment status	0.770
8	Type of trader's residence	0.314
9	Length of street trading period	0.886
10	Respondents' perception of street trading	1.000
11	Level of achievement	0.038*

*Significant at $p \leq 0.05$

Table 20: Influence of gender on activities of street traders

Serial Number	Activities	p-Value
1	Nature of business	0.082
2	Interaction with the government	0.567
3	Plan to grow business	0.647
4	Having regular customer	0.038*
5	Factors influencing business location	0.192
6	Reason for street trading	0.721
7	Amount saved per day	0.107
8	Monthly profit	0.118

*Significant at $p \leq 0.05$

Chi Square tests show that positive and significant associations exist between gender and respondents' age, marital status and level of achievement. Therefore H1(i), (ii) and (xi) are accepted while the rest of the hypotheses are not accepted.

Also, as presented on Table 19, the results showed that there is a positive and significant association between gender and 'having regular customer.' Therefore, H2 (iv) is accepted while the other hypotheses are not accepted.

DISCUSSIONS

The study was designed to establish similarities and differences in the characteristics and activities of male and female street traders in Ilorin city in Kwara State Nigeria. Equal number of male and female respondents was selected for the study.

Findings from the study showed that more male respondents (66.9%) were above 33 years of age while the larger portion of the female respondents (60.0%)

were below 33 years of age. This may be due to the fact that some parents do not send female children to school and so, girls engage in trading in streets earlier than their male counterparts. This confirms the report of Ogunjuyigbe, Ojofeitimi, and Akinlo (2006) that differences exist between the enrolment of males and females in all levels of education in Nigeria. This fact is corroborated by another finding of this study that more male respondents had tertiary education than their female counterparts. Viewed with the lens of the sustainable development goals (SDGs), it is obvious that Nigeria needs to intensify efforts on the achievement of goal 4 which is: to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning as well as goal 5 which is to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Another significant finding of this study is that a higher percentage of the male street traders had more children than their female counterparts. This may be due to their more advanced age or the fact that a higher number of the male traders are married or because some men have multiple wives/mothers of children. This makes it essential for men to earn more income than women to be able to take care of their many children. This may explain why male street traders engage in trades that could earn more money than the women's petty businesses. Findings from this study showed that female street traders were more into selling of food, snacks and groceries while the men were more into home gadgets and accessories. This in turn affects their revenue generation as well as savings and achievements from the trade. Findings from this study showed that more male traders gained a profit that is higher than 70,000 Naira per month than the female traders. No wonder it was also found that the male traders saved larger amounts of money than their female counterparts. The fact that female traders engage in petty businesses corroborates the assertion of some previous studies that Women appear to be disproportionately affected by a lack of assistance compared to men (Heilman & Chen, 2003; Shinnar et al., 2012).

Both male and female street traders claim to achieve some things from the trade; however, the results showed that some male traders had more concrete achievements than female traders. Some men have built personal houses from the trade and some had long-term investments. The female traders reported that they sustained themselves and their children, none reported to have built a house.

The study also showed that more female street traders had regular customers for their businesses than the male traders. This may be due to the fact that "Females are more nurturant, warm, altruistic, submissive, ..." (Giudice (2015).

CONCLUSION

This study has shown that male and female street traders are similar in many of their socio-demographic characteristics, but differ in some socio-demographic characteristics and activities. Therefore, this study concludes that when planning

for any invention or policy targeted towards street trading, the peculiarities of male and female street traders should be put into consideration.

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EFFECTS OF ETHICAL PRODUCT MARKETING ON CONSUMERS' BRAND LOYALTY FOR FMCG COMPANIES - A STUDY OF NESTLE NIGERIA PLC

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ABSTRACT

Despite various benefits accrued to compliance with ethical marketing by FMCG organizations in achieving brand loyalty, there is a lack of effective usage of ethical practices on the side of marketing organizations. Marketing efforts on products sometimes vary from agreed norms, the exchange process breaks down, resulting in customers' unhappiness, lack of trust. Consequently, customers are dissatisfied, which may result in lawsuits. This study investigates the impact of ethical product marketing on customer brand loyalty. A field study was done to collect data from Nestle Nigeria PLC customers. Data for this study were gathered from 116 respondents that are consumers who had several contacts with the items and brands of Nestle Nigeria PLC. To analyze the data, structural equation modeling (SEM) was adopted. The findings showed that variables of a product's ethical marketing such as product quality and safety, honesty, and integrity have a substantial influence on consumer value brand relationships and ultimately brand loyalty. The study therefore recommends that organizations should show honesty and integrity on their product features and labels, and marketing organizations should ensure that their products are of good quality and safe for consumption.

INTRODUCTION

Ethics is concerned with how actions affect other people and organizations. Aspects of axiology called ethics and morality are concerned with what is right and beautiful as well as desired or preferred human behaviour. An ethical product is one in which morality is the driving force behind its development. All ethical products are those that are made without the use of any unethical or immoral procedure, material, person, or animal. The connection between customers and the organizations is governed by modern norms or standards of conduct, which are the subject of ethics. Ebitu & Beredugo (2015) define ethics as a collection of moral principles or values that an organisation uses to guide the behaviour of both its employees and itself in all of its business endeavours, both internally and externally. According to Turyakira (2018), "common decency" includes traits like integrity, honesty, and

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justice and embraces ethics in the context of corporate business. Being ethical is considered as being part of the organizational culture, which depends on the idea that businesses should have an impact on society in ways other than just maximising profits. Value creation must be the foundation of the organization's existential philosophy (Mahbod, Nikoomaram & Hamdi 2022). Non-value-added operations are eliminated as part of the organization's value creation plan for society and consumers, and a chain of tasks and procedures is established that starts with the needs and wants of society and the customer and ends with customer satisfaction (Gopaldas 2015)

A marketing strategy known as ethical marketing aims to balance societal good and corporate profitability. In this strategy, the company's marketing procedures also take into account the demands and interests of local residents. In ethical marketing, the business aims for more than just product introduction and sales promotion. It also partakes in social pursuits (Barati, Gharibi, Hosseinzadeh & Pooya 2021). The majority of businesses are under pressure from clients in the modern world to include ethical marketing in their business plans. Organizations have responsibility for influencing both their own and their consumers' cultural values when they practice ethical marketing.

Managers have discovered that they cannot achieve their objectives, including customer satisfaction and market leadership, without simultaneously creating value for customers, the community, and the company. To effectively influence consumers is the aim of ethical marketing. It arouses feelings of hope and assurance. Once more, it encourages brand loyalty (Bublitz & Peracchio 2015). Compared to other marketing ideas, ethical marketing is more creative (Hastak & Mazis 2021)

Corporate marketing strategies' main objective is to build consumer loyalty. Product reviews and favourable consumer perceptions of the company are typical measures of brand loyalty. The main objective is to get a competitive edge in the market. In today's ever evolving marketing environment, it is becoming more and more important for firms to cultivate strong relationships and brand loyalty with customers. Businesses should be ethical when communicating their brand message and providing their products to customers.

When marketing efforts vary from agreed norms, the exchange process can break down, resulting in client unhappiness, a lack of trust, and a breakdown in an exchange process, as a consequence, customers are dissatisfied, there is a lack of confidence, and lawsuits are filed. Marketing ethics extends beyond legal concerns. Although we frequently attempt to distinguish between legal and ethical challenges, the line between the two is frequently blurred in decision-making.

Marketers must be able to recognize these challenges and determine how to fix them. Product-related ethical problems often arise when marketers fail to disclose dangers associated with produced items or information regarding the purpose,

worth, or usage of a product. When marketers neglect to notify customers about current circumstances or changes in product quality, ethical difficulties arise.

This study therefore examined the components of product qualities and safety with brand love and purchase intention. It was also investigated whether ethical product marketing had an impact on customer brand loyalty.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Berger and Berger,(2011) define marketing ethics as “the conduct of marketing executives in their interactions with organizational members, consumers, rivals, and the sides, as well as the inclusion of public opinion in the exchange process.”

Ethical marketing practices assist marketers on what to do when faced with a challenge concerning ethics (Cuomo, Foroudi, Tortora, Hussain & Melewar, 2019). According to Gaski (2015) “ethical marketing is a code of values and behavior employed in marketing operations.

Companies are scrutinized in the court of public opinion, and their actions are constantly checked to see if they fall into the category of right and good or otherwise. Consumers are also more environmentally and socially aware of happenings (Strong, 1996). Consumers demand organic, eco-labeled, fair-trade goods when making purchase decisions, reflecting their ethical beliefs, values, and orientation (Yoganathan et al., 2019; Summers, 2016; Khan et al., 2016). It is clear that ethical consumerism which is a movement against an organization’s bad practices, is heavily influenced by ethical judgments and moral obligations (Andersch et al. 2019), and that it allows consumers to take an active role in self-governance to be responsible consumers (Fuentes & Sörum, 2019).

Consumer perceptions of an organization’s ethicality are based on six domains: consumers, employees, environment, the overseas community, the local community and economy, and the business community (Brunk& de Boer 2020). Consumers’ views of a company, brand, and products are influenced by ethical perceptions. Consumers are therefore more likely to buy a brand if they have a positive perception of its ethical practices.

CONSUMER-BRAND RELATIONSHIP QUALITY, PERCEIVED PRODUCT QUALITY, AND BRAND LOYALTY

Through a process in which consumers and goods, as two equal parties, interact in and engage with one other to promote trade in a marketplace, the quality of a consumer-brand relationship is developed. The quality of a consumer’s relationship with a brand refers to the relationship’s intensity, depth, continuity, and impact. Examples of the qualities of a consumer-brand relationship include brand impact, brand identity, personal connections, brand trust, interdependence, satisfaction, and brand commitment (Tanveer, Khan & Ahmad, 2021). A hierarchy of common

components, including cognitive, affective, and conative components, is suggested by earlier models of this link. Relationships between consumers and brands are established and maintained through these actions. Important factors that affect the strength of consumer-brand connections include purchase experience, emotional exposure, act experience, cognitive beliefs, and brand commitment (Aaleya, Farooq & Muhammad, 2021).

PERCEIVED PRODUCT QUALITY

A consumer's appraisal of the overall performance, excellence, or superiority of a product, together with their type of attachment with it, are all considered to be components of perceived product quality. Perceived quality is different from actual quality, product-based quality, and production quality (Dunfee, Smith & Ross, 2019). The consumer's perception of a product's overall contents, such as reliability, compliance, performance, features, commitment, design, durability, and strength, is known as perceived product quality.

BRAND LOYALTY

Consumers that have a strong dispositional devotion to their brand will reject situational pressures and marketing initiatives that might lead to brand switching behaviour (Saeed, Ahmed, & Mukhtar, 2001). Although true buying behaviour has not yet developed, affective loyalty is described as the consumer's desire and attachment for a particular brand. The significance of brand loyalty in boosting and attaining long-term business success was emphasised by Oliver (1999). Building a devoted customer base has grown to be an important marketing goal and the basis for gaining a competitive advantage.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

The study adopt the theory of preference Unitarianism which was developed by Singer (2011). He contends that one solution to ethical quandaries is practical ethics based on 'preference utilitarianism' or the principle of equal consideration. Preference utilitarianism "believes that we should do whatever, on balance, advances the preferences of those affected" (Singer, 2011). Putting it differently from an ethical standpoint, one's preferences should generally respect the preferences of other affected parties.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Turyakira (2018) examined the ethical climate of small and medium-sized businesses in developing nations with the aim of evaluating business ethics, the importance of the ethical climate to SMEs, the ethical challenges and dilemmas faced by SMEs, particularly in developing nations, and offering solutions to these

problems. Peer-reviewed articles from recent journals were analysed to determine the elements of business ethics, the importance of the ethical climate to SMEs, the ethical challenges and dilemmas faced by SMEs, and the suggested solutions to these challenges and dilemmas. The study concluded that commercial enterprises cannot continue to ignore business ethics.

METHODOLOGY

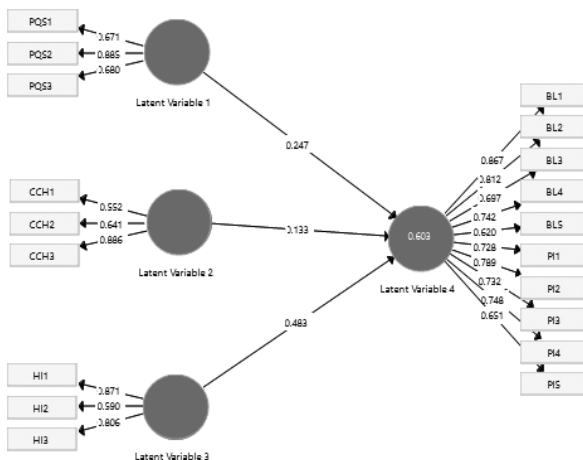
DATA COLLECTION AND INSTRUMENTS

The survey contains a series of demographic questions, with a five-point Likert scale to elicit responses from respondents on the dependent and independent variable. Accidental sampling method was employed to administer questionnaires to 180 consumers who visited a particular retail outlet to purchase Nestle Nigeria PLC products within forty-eight hours. 116 of the questionnaire were usable due to multiple responses and skipped too many questions recorded in 64 questionnaires. A pull of Nestle Nigeria PLC consumers who are aware of the company's ethical marketing situation and had previous experience with the company's brands (e.g., Milo, Golden Morn, Nescafe, Maggi, etc.) was undertaken.

Frequencies, factor analysis (FA) and partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS- SEM) were employed in the study.

DATA ANALYSIS

HYPOTHESIS TESTING



Source; PLS version 3.3

Fig 1: Path Diagram showing latent constructs and observed variables

Note the following:

- Latent variable 1 : Product quality and safety
- Latent variable 2 : Customer complaint handling
- Latent variable 3 : Honesty and Integrity
- Latent variable 4 : Brand loyalty (Brand trust and Purchase intention)

Table 2 Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Product quality and safety	0.819	0.705	0.793	0.565
Customers Complaint Handling	0.569	0.727	0.743	0.501
Honesty and Integrity	0.743	0.704	0.805	0.585
Brand Loyalty	0.908	0.918	0.924	0.551

Source: PLS version 3.3

The table 2 above shows the reliability and validity of the research instrument.

The Cronbach Alpha and Composite Reliability are used for testing the reliability of the construct. This is one of the modern research techniques. The Cronbach Alpha (CA) ranges from 0.569 to 0.908 with a majority higher than 0.70, except Customer complaint handling which proved not to be a reliable variable of measuring consumer brand loyalty according to the survey. While that of composite reliability whose values range from 0.743 to 0.924 are also higher than 0.7, this shows that the data is reliable. The average variance extracted which is a measure of the amount of variance that is captured by a construct in relation to the amount of variance due to measurement error has its values ranging from 0.501 to 0.585, which is higher than 0.50, this attests to the discriminant validity of the construct.

Table 3 Discriminant Validity Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	Product Quality and safety	Customer Complaint Handling	Honesty and Integrity	Brand loyalty
Product Quality and safety	0.752			
Customer Compliant Handling	0.646	0.708		
Honesty and Integrity	0.673	0.691	0.765	
Brand loyalty	0.658	0.626	0.741	0.742

Source: PLS version 3.3

It can be inferred from table 3 that discriminant validity exists between product quality and safety, and customer complaint handling because the value is 0.646 which is less than 0.7. Two variables that do not have discriminant validity are Honesty and integrity, and brand love.

Table 4 Path Coefficients

	Product Quality and safety	Customer Complaint Handling	Honesty and Integrity	Brand loyalty
Product Quality and safety				0.247
Customer Compliant Handling				0.133
Honesty and Integrity				0.483
Brand loyalty				

Source; PLS version 3.3.3

Path coefficients show whether the effect of the independent variable on a dependent variable is significant. Product quality and safety are significant in measuring brand loyalty as its p-value, which tells us about the precise significance (0.247), is greater than (0.05), its T statistics value (0.496) is less than the T critical value of 1.96 at 5% significance level. The other two variables customer complaint handling, and Honesty and integrity are also significant in measuring brand loyalty as their p-value, which tells us about the precise significance are 0.133 and 0.483 respectively. Therefore, we can say that all the three variables, i.e Product quality and safety, customer complaint handling, and Honesty and integrity are significant measures of brand loyalty.

From the analysis, it was observed that all the constructs which are used in the questionnaire are reliable and valid, except customer complaint handling. In summary, it can be concluded that all the null hypotheses which we constructed based on the literature review were rejected except Ho2 (customer complaint handling does not affect consumer brand loyalty) which was supported. This is because the independent variable in each hypothesis is found to have a positive significant relationship with the respective dependent variable. However, the strength of the relationship was different for every hypothesis. Product quality and safety, and honesty and integrity have a positive influence on consumer brand loyalty.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- ▶ Product quality and safety has an effect on consumer brand loyalty of FMCGs (Supported)
- ▶ There is a significant relationship between Customer complaint handling and consumers purchase intentions (Rejected)
- ▶ Honesty and integrity have an effect on consumers' brand loyalty (Accepted).
- ▶ The findings are in harmony with Ebitimi (2017) studies.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the effect of ethical product marketing. Responses gotten on this research work show that ethical products are favorites of consumers. They tend to buy more of such products that appear to be safe, as well as maintain the minimum qualifications. They also like to be attended to nicely and with courtesy whenever they come in contact with company representatives. The interpretation of results represents how consumers of Nestle Nigeria PLC view the company's marketing activities in terms of ethical compliance. The results have shown that being ethically compliant is one of the ways of achieving corporate and brand loyalty.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made based on the findings;

- i. Organizations and appropriate Government agencies should ensure that quality and safe products are produced by the organizations for the consumers, through proper monitoring.
- ii. When employees engage in unethical activity, disciplinary action should be taken, but ethical behavior should be rewarded to motivate people to do their best on the job.
- iii. Organizations should show honesty and integrity on their product features and labels, adequate and needed information should be written on the products.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

One of the major challenges in the course of this research is a lack of funds and limited time.

This study focuses on brand loyalty which is influenced by the ethical brand view. Future research may look at a variety of additional, but no less significant, outcomes such as brand equity, brand image, and customer satisfaction.

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INFLUENCE OF FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENTS ON ASEAN-5 STOCK MARKETS: A PRE-PANDEMIC PERSPECTIVE

Kartini Kumar*, Senthil Kumar**

ABSTRACT

Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) play a crucial role in the growth of developing economies by directly financing the infrastructure development projects and by investing in the stock markets. While the benefits of infrastructure projects are realized over a long time period the impact on stock markets is felt on a daily basis. It is essential to measure the quantum and direction of this impact in order to facilitate framing of FDI policies by the concerned economies. This study measures the impact of FDI inflows and outflows on the ASEAN-5 stock markets prior to the onslaught of the Covid-19 pandemic. FDI and stock market data from 2004 to 2018 was scrutinized using regression analysis. While a positive relationship was observed in the case of Singapore and Thailand, FDIs did seem to affect the Malaysian stock market. However, the relationship was found to be negative in Indonesia and Philippines. Considering the importance of transnational capital investments in the building of an economy it is essential for the growing economies to provide an investor friendly environment.

Keywords: Foreign Direct Investment, FDI, ASEAN-5, Stock Market, Developing Economies, ASEAN

INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on the relationship between foreign direct investments and stock market performance of the ASEAN-5 economies viz. Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand and Philippines. Index data from Kuala Lumpur Composite Index (KLCI), Indonesia Stock Exchange Index (IDX), Singapore Straits Times Index (STI), Stock Exchange of Thailand Index (SET), and Philippines Stock Exchange Index (PSEI) were used as dependent variables. FDI data i.e. inflow, outflow and net flow, were used as independent variables to understand how and to what extent FDI influenced the ASEAN-5 stock markets.

Foreign direct investments (FDI) were an investment of controlling ownership in a business in one country by an entity based in another country. FDI was a key element for international economic integration because it creates stable and long-lasting relationship economies. FDI was an important medium for the transfer of technology between countries, promoting international trade through access of foreign markets and important structure for economic development. Developed countries remain the leading source of FDI, since 1991. FDI was an important

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source in the economies of the developing countries. FDI stimulates the economic growth and hence it has a positive impact on the development of the stock market according to Adam & Twenebeoh (2009) and Kalim & Shahbaz (2009).

Theoretically, the impact of FDI outflows on domestic investment can be achieved in the home country through financial markets and manufacturing activities. FDI outflows can raise domestic interest rates under imperfect financial market conditions by removing funds from home countries and making borrowing more difficult for domestic companies. In addition, companies seeking to invest abroad can reduce domestic exports by shifting their production to other countries. A major contribution of this study is that this is the first attempt to focus on FDI aspect at ASEAN-5 level and also consider the three elements of FDI viz. inflow, outflow and net flow. Figure 1 shows the increase in FDI inflows in ASEAN-5 economies from 2016 - 2018.

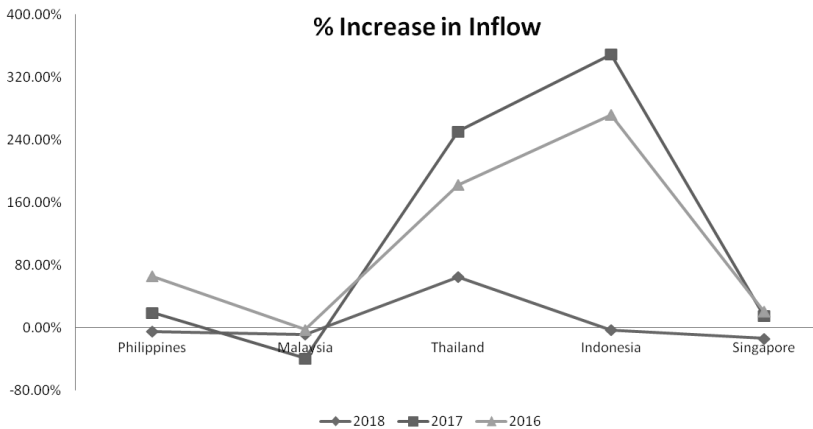


Figure 1: Comparison of FDI inflows of ASEAN-5 countries

Many previous studies have investigated the impact of stock market and FDI in a narrow context but not by comparing ASEAN-5 countries (Iddrisu & Immurana & Halidu (2015); Abdullah (2010); Adam (2009); Analizi (2014); Shahbaz & Lean & Kalim (2015); Abubakar & Danladi (2018)). According to these studies, there is a relationship between FDI and stock markets but the results are different across different countries because they identify FDI differently in certain countries. However, ASEAN-5 such as Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Philippines, and Indonesia were not fully studied because of the geographic limitations. ASEAN is an open and small economy, where FDI plays an important role in promoting economic growth. The findings would be useful for investors and policy makers to develop a good financial structure and attract higher investments.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

There were various theories that try to explain why FDI flows from developed countries to developing countries. The first modern theory of FDI can be traced back to Stephen Hymer. In his 1960's dissertation (published posthumously in 1976), he uses industrial organization and imperfect competition theories to explain firms' motivation to perform FDI. Hymer (1960) starts his theory with an analysis of the special features of the multinational corporations (MNCs) specific advantages include but was not possessed by their domestic counterparts. Those MNCs specific advantages include but were not limited to brand names, trademarks, management and marketing skills, restricted or advanced technologies, access to low-cost financing, and economies of scale.

The possession of these advantages were indispensable of foreign firms to perform FDI because they were at a disadvantage compared to local firms. Local firms had advantages over foreign firms because they know the local environment better. They have knowledge of local market conditions, the legal and institutional framework of doing business, and local business customs. Of course, foreign firms can get all the knowledge possessed by local firms, but only at cost and this cost may be considerable.

Furthermore, foreign firms incur costs from operating at a distance because they are concerned with the difficulties of operating in the host country's unfamiliar business practices. Therefore, if FDI should occur and be profitable, it must be the case that foreign firms have certain advantages over the local firms. And some market imperfections must impede local firms' access to foreign firms' advantages. Therefore, FDI can be considered as a strategic action by the firm to take advantage of market imperfections and also an instrument to avoid market imperfections.

Hymer also mentioned the difference between two kinds of long term private international capital movements which were direct investment and portfolio investment. The difference was the issue of control. Control was defined as occurring if the investors own twenty five percent of the equity of the foreign firm. Hymer (1976). If the investor directly controls the foreign enterprise, Hymer called it a direct investment. On the other hand, if the investor has less than 25 % of the equity or does not control it, the investments were termed a portfolio investment. It was carried out mainly to exercise gains from interest rate differentials, capital gains, and diversification of market risk through purchases of bonds and stocks.

Kindleberger (1969) also argues that FDI occurs in the absence of conditions of perfect competition because when perfect competition conditions exist, local firms would have advantages over foreign firms due to the proximity of their operation to their decision making centers. Therefore, no firms could survive in foreign operations. For FDI to flourish there must be some imperfections in markets for goods or factors.

EMPIRICAL STUDIES ON FDI AND STOCK MARKET

Claessens (2002) thought to see FDI as substitute in the stock market to overcome the setbacks in the investments through the capital markets where shareholders right was not protected. From this perspective, it could be concluded that FDI should be negatively correlated with the development of stock market. It was argued that FDI goes to countries with good macroeconomics tools to help develop the domestic finance system.

Kayam & Hisarcikilar (2009) study the factors of determining FDI outflows in Turkey from 1992 to 2005. They used the gravity model to determine that investments were in the form of horizontal investments aimed at reaching faraway market and that the distance between Turkey and the host country increased, investments were also increased. According to their findings, the host country negatively affects FDI outflows from developing countries. Agarwal (2003) found that the return of equity has a significant and positive impact on institutional foreign investor (FII). However, the volume of investments, foreign investors play a vital role in market and book their profits, they can purchase financial assets when prices decline and sell asset prices when asset prices rise. There was therefore the possibility of two way causality between FDI and return on equity.

Chakraborty (2001) as researched on 'FII flows to India: Nature and causes' concluded that in the beginning of liberalization FII flows have grown steadily. The author has analysed these flows and their relationship with other variables and found that FII was the major variables in the Indian stock market and their impact on the domestic market was increasing. Adam & Tweneboeh (2009) conduct research on the impact of FDI on the development of the stock market in Ghana, the primary technique used to analyzes, including impulse response function and variance decomposition from Vector Error Correction Model (VECM). Data analysed from 1991 to 2006 on a quarterly basis and there was a long term relationship between FDI, nominal exchange and the long term on the stock market development.

Stevens & Lipsey (1992) researched on the FDI outflows and domestic investments showed a strong positive correlation using company-level data relating to seven US domestic and foreign operations and over a period of 16 to 20 years. Although these studies have used different methodologies and datasets, the endogeneity of the external FDI was a common empirical methodological problem and may have an important impact on the estimated effects of the external FDI. Hence, it is essential to further probe the influence of FDI on the stock markets especially that of the developing economies.

METHODOLOGY

All of the research data and information are secondary data pertaining to 2004 - 2018. For this research, most of the data were collected from the World Bank

website and Investing.com. FDI inflow, outflow and net flow were considered as independent variables (Adam & Tweneboah (2009), Analizi (2014); Shahbaz & Lean & Kalim (2018). Whereas, the stock index returns from ASEAN-5 economies were considered as the dependent variables (Samsi (2017), Baker & Foley & Wurgler (2010); Shahbaz & Lean(2015)).

Kuala Lumpur Composite Index (KLCI) performance was used as a proxy for Malaysian stock market performance. While Singapore Index (SGX) was the proxy for Singapore stock market performance, Indonesia Stock Exchange (IDX) was used as a proxy for Indonesia stock market performance. Likewise, Philippine Stock Exchange Composite Index (PSEi) and Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET) index performance were used as proxies for Philippines and Thailand stock markets. FDI inflow (Adam & Tweneboah(2009); Analizi, (2014)), outflow (Onder & Karal (2013)) and net flow were all measured in USD for ease of comparison.

With the data and key statistics from World Bank and Investing.com, this research measured the percentage of foreign direct investments of five ASEAN countries which were Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and Singapore. Based on the population, this research identified the stock market performance based on the growth of inflow foreign direct investments (INFLOW), outflow foreign direct investments (OUTFLOW) and net flow foreign direct investments (NETFLOW) for each country.

Correlation analysis and regression analysis were done using SPSS software. Coefficient of correlation describes the linear relationship of two continuous variables. Extreme coefficients range from -1 (perfectly negative) to + 1 (perfectly positive). This analysis helps explain the linear relation between the variables and the equation. In other words, regression analysis helps us to understand how the typical value of the dependent variables changes if one of the independent variables varies, while the other independent variables use the independent ones.

DISCUSSIONS

Descriptive statistics for the three groups of variables (NETFLOW, OUTFLOW and INFLOW) are provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the three independent variables

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
NETFLOW	Philippines	15	2.2667	1.86956
	Malaysia	15	2.1333	1.80739
	Thailand	15	1.6000	1.12122
	Indonesia	15	2.1333	1.35576
	Singapore	15	1.9333	1.48645
	Total	75	2.0133	1.52894

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
INFLOW	Philippines	15	2.4667	1.24595
	Malaysia	15	2.0667	1.43759
	Thailand	15	2.4667	1.59762
	Indonesia	15	2.4000	1.54919
	Singapore	15	2.4000	1.45406
	Total	75	2.3600	1.42980
OUTFLOW	Philippines	15	2.5333	1.40746
	Malaysia	15	2.1333	1.45733
	Thailand	15	2.8667	1.64172
	Indonesia	15	2.2667	1.53375
	Singapore	15	2.4000	1.72378
	Total	75	2.4400	1.53553

CORRELATION ANALYSIS

Tables 2 presents the relationship between pairs of variables consists of INFLOW, OUTFLOW and NETFLOW (IV) and influences on annual stock return (ASR) in five ASEAN countries (Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and Singapore) (DV) by using correlation coefficient data. Correlation coefficient enables one to quantify the strength of the linear relationship between two ranked or numerical values (Saunders, 2012). Correlation coefficient between +1 and -1 represent perfect positive and negative correlations and if the number equal to zero, then there was no correlation between the variables.

Table 2: Correlation between FDI and ASEAN-5 Stock Index

		Inflow FDI Sig	Outflow FDI Sig	Net flow FDI Sig
ASR Singapore	Pearson Correlation	0.647*	0.653*	-0.022
	Sig.(2 tailed)	0.009	0.008	0.939
ASR Malaysia	Pearson Correlation	0.231	0.037	-0.195
	Sig.(2 tailed)	0.408	0.895	0.487
ASR Thailand	Pearson Correlation	0.209	0.629*	0.257
	Sig.(2 tailed)	0.455	0.012	0.355
ASR Philippines	Pearson Correlation	0.359	0.199	0.075
	Sig.(2 tailed)	0.189	0.477	0.791
ASR Indonesia	Pearson Correlation	-0.165	-0.243	0.036
	Sig.(2 tailed)	0.556	0.383	0.897
n		15	15	15

*** Correlation was significant at the 0.10 level (2-tailed)

** Correlation was significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation was significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

In case of Singapore, the FDI inflow and outflow seem to be associated and the findings are similar to that of Malik (2014). Net flow does not seem to be associated similar to the findings of Baker, Foley & Wurgler (2004). Singapore was also a major investor abroad and has sought to diversify its investment beyond its traditional target markets in Asia and to attract more FDI to Singapore by maintain an attractive tax regime and provide tax reductions and promotes loans and other investments incentives.

Whereas, in case of Malaysia the FDI inflow, outflow and net flow do not seem to be associated with the stock market performance. This is similar to the findings of Herzer (2011), Agbloyor, Abor, Adjasi&Yawson (2013) and Kapoor & Sachan (2015), respectively and contradicts the results of Baker & Foley & Wurgler (2004). FDI is permitted in a few sectors in Malaysia and hence the FDI flows seem to show a decreasing trend. Hence, they do not influence the stock market.

FDI inflows and the stock market performance do not appear to be related for Thailand, as observed by Malcus and Person (2018) in Sweden. However, the FDI outflows and stock market performance in Thailand seem to be associated as posited by Ponniah (2013). Similar to the inflows, the net flow does not seem to be related. This could be due to the political uncertainties faced by Thailand and investors are expecting clarity before buying the Thailand stocks.

As observed in case of Malaysia, the FDI inflows, outflows and net flows do not seem to be associated with the stock market performance of Philippines. These findings could be related to the observations made by Gupta, Kalra, & Bagga (2013), Baker, Foley & Wurgler (2004) and Tsaurai (2014). While the Philippines stock market has shown remarkable growth the presence and influence of FDI seems to be low. Policymakers could consider foreign equity financing in the companies exporting their produce, develop the financial infrastructure and try to maintain a stable foreign exchange rate.

The findings in case of Indonesia are also similar and there seems to be no association between the FDI inflows, outflows and net flows with the stock market performance. Agbloyor, Abor & Adjasi&Yawson (2013), Ramirez (2018) and Tsaurai (2014) have made similar observations.

REGRESSION ANALYSIS

While correlation analysis can establish the strength of association between two variables it doesn't help to establish the causality. Regression has been typically used to test the cause-effect relationship. Hence, beta (B) regression coefficient was computed to assess the strength and how strongly each predictor variable influences the dependent variable (Being, 2011). To study the impact of foreign direct investments flows on ASEAN stock market (Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and Singapore) during the period of study, foreign direct investments

flows was taken as independent variable and ASEAN stock market taken as dependent variable. For the purpose of analysis Multiple Linear Regressions has been applied for inflow and outflow foreign direct investments and Simple Linear has been applied to net flow foreign direct investments.

Table 3: Regression: FDI inflow and outflow on Singapore stock market performance

Model	B	t	Sig.
Constant	0.761	2.562	0.025
Inflow FDI Sig	0.232	2.035	0.065
Outflow FDI Sig	0.201	2.086	0.059
R ²	0.573		
F	8.059		
Sig.	0.006		

From Table 3, it can be inferred that 57.3% of the variations in the dependent variable i.e. stock market performance are caused by the independent variables viz. FDI inflow and outflows. However, the net flow did not seem to be related to the Singapore stock market. These findings are similar to the results of Al-Halalmeh & Sayah (2010) and Malcus&Persson (2018), respectively.

Table 4: Regression: FDI inflow and outflow on Malaysia stock market performance

Model	B	T	Sig.
Constant	1.568	4.248	0.001
Inflow FDI Mas	0.162	0.942	0.365
Outflow FDI Mas	-0.079	-0.468	0.648
R ²	0.70		
F	0.453		
Sig.	0.646		

Table 5: Regression: FDI inflow and outflow on Thailand stock market performance

Model	B	T	Sig.
Constant	0.584	1.163	0.268
Inflow FDI Thai	0.084	0.646	0.531
Outflow FDI Thai	0.352	2.764	0.017
R ²	0.416		
F	4.267		
Sig.	0.40		

Table 6: Regression: FDI inflow and outflow on Philippines stock market performance

Model	B	t	Sig.
Constant	1.257	2.013	0.067
Inflow FDI Phi	0.237	1.236	0.240
Outflow FDI Phi	0.089	0.521	0.612
R ²		0.148	
F		1.043	
Sig.		0.382	

Table 7: Regression: FDI inflow and outflow on Indonesian stock market performance

Model	B	T	Sig.
Constant	2.700	4.128	0.001
Inflow FDI Indo	-0.093	-0.484	0.637
Outflow FDI Indo	-0.156	-0.805	0.437
R ²		0.077	
F		0.501	
Sig.		0.618	

However, in case of Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines and Indonesia, no statistically significant cause-effect relationship was observed as shown in Table 4, 5, 6 and 7, respectively. Similar findings were reported by Omodera & Ekwe (2017).

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of 15 years data on FDI investments and ASEAN-5 stock indices, it appears that Singapore stock market performance is related to the FDI inflows and outflows. However, the stock market performance of Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines and Indonesia do not seem to have a statistically significant relationship with FDI inflows, outflows and net flows. Though negative correlation is observed in case of Indonesia and Philippines that does not establish a causal relationship. This is similar to the findings of Malcus & Pearsson (2018), Baker, Foley & Wungler (2010) and in contrast to the observations of Malik (2018), Al-Halalmeh & Sayah (2010) and Gupta, Kalra & Bagga (2013). This could partly be attributed to the definition of FDI where different countries define it differently. Hence, a consensus needs to be arrived at in definition and in implementing a policy framework that is supportive of the foreign direct investments.

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RESPONSIVENESS OF CRYPTOCURRENCY AMONG POTENTIAL INVESTORS OF MAHARASHTRA

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ABSTRACT

Cryptocurrency is a digital or virtual currency which is moulded to use as a medium of exchange used by strong cryptography (used for solving codes) to secure financial transactions and verify the transfer of assets. Cryptocurrency is from a decentralised platform with no government control. There is a gigantic market for crypto-based products and services and it is growing speedily with some jeopardies and paybacks. Hence in this study, an attempt has been made to study how people perceive cryptocurrency as a basis for earning money, and whether it is a consistent source to trade and earn. Due to the decidedly volatile nature, there are more day dealers instead of long-term investors. Respondents in the less than thirty years age group are more interested in cryptocurrency trading whereas respondents more than thirty years are more risk averse. The older generation, above fifty years age group, considers cryptocurrency trading as pure gambling. The male respondents wanted to purchase and pay with cryptocurrencies, but the majority of female respondents were reluctant to do so. Many people are facing challenges when using cryptocurrency platforms. A large number of people who know about cryptocurrency prices are influenced by billionaires and influencers

INTRODUCTION

One of the digital transformations today is the evolution of Cryptocurrency. Cryptocurrency is a digital or virtual currency which is moulded to use as a medium of exchange used by strong cryptography (used for solving codes) to secure financial transactions and verify the transfer of assets. They are considered to be one such future development of Blockchain technology. But the awareness regarding cryptocurrencies is not appreciated. The Banking sector is opposed to investment or transactions with cryptocurrencies as the banks do not earn many profits with the innovation of cryptocurrency.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Cryptocurrency is becoming a source of earning money, many people started trading in it. Also, some stores in the foreign countries started accepting payment for it. Cryptocurrency is from a decentralised platform with no government control. Thus, it has some risks and benefits. Hence in this study, an attempt has been made to study how people see cryptocurrency as a source of earning money, and whether

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it is a reliable source to trade and earn. Also, by observing trends around the world, the crypto market is becoming the mainstream earning money source in some countries. Many countries made it legally acceptable. The prime purpose of the study is to analyse the investment attitude of the younger generation versus the older generation while weighing risks when investing and trading in the cryptocurrency market. The secondary objective is to Understand the Perceptions of prospective investors' attitudes towards Cryptocurrency trading according to age, gender, and occupation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Junadi and Sfenrianto (2015) studied the main factors which influenced the reason behind digital payment in Indonesia and found a few major factors, namely, culture, perceived safety, expectation of performance, expectation concerning effort and impact of society.

Garg and Punchal (2017) studied the benefits, and challenges of a cashless economy. The conclusion of the study showed the preference of people towards a cashless economy because the respondents felt that it helps to fight against illegal activities, corruption, etc.

Sumathy and Vipin (2017) identified in their research studies that the major drivers that accelerated the growth of Indian Digital Payment Systems are found to be favourable regulatory environment, the emergence of next-generation payment service providers and enhanced customer experience.

Ganorkar and Kandasamy (2017) conducted a study focused on consumer awareness of cryptocurrency in India. This study was conducted on 40 samples. The study finding showed that cryptocurrency is in the evolution phase in India and a very less population of India aged between 18-24 are aware of and used cryptocurrency.

Gokilavani, R, Kumar Venkatesh. D, Durgarani. M, Mahalakshmi R (2018) studied the different factors affecting the rate of adoption of digital payment.

Agarwal et al (2018) discussed the role of cryptocurrency in the money supply. They believed the cashless economy and digital economy helped people in transactions. The research suggested the importance of digital modes of money transactions. The study gave the importance of the creation of reliable CryptoCurrencies by National Governments. Brijesh Sivathanu (2018) studied the importance of how customers wanted to behave and the resistance to innovations in the usage of digital payment.

Henry *et al.* (2018) found on Men and consumers who have high income and higher education appear to be more aware of virtual currencies. For this, research was conducted on 391 traders. The outcome of the finding of the study is that

individual investors must be made aware of the risks of cryptocurrency trading, and investment although it represents a good opportunity.

Parashar & Rasiwala (2018) a study conducted on investors' awareness and perception of investment in Cryptocurrency. In this study special references are given to bitcoin and the study finds that most investors feel insecure about the technical glitches or errors of bitcoin.

Kanirajan and Veliappan (2019) conducted a study to find out the investor awareness and adoption of cryptocurrency and blockchain technology among blockchain communities in Malaysia. This study was conducted among 304 respondents. The study results find that investors' involvement is not dependent on education level, age, or industry sector.

Ku-Mahamudet *al.* (2019) conducted a study to find out the Cryptocurrency investor's awareness in India. The study was conducted on 140 investors; the Study results find that male investors were more aware as compared to female investors in India.

Dewaniet *al.* (2020) on the awareness regarding cryptocurrency among investors. For this study, the researcher used secondary data to find out the related literature from the past literature. This paper gives information about cryptocurrency mining and blockchain technology.

Narayanan (2020) conducted on the responsiveness of digital currency among the public. The study was conducted on 100 samples and the study concludes that the public is not much aware of digital currency.

Zubiret *al.* (2020) conducted a study on doing business using cryptocurrency in Malaysia, this study was conducted on 400 responses and the results showed that age, occupation and ethnicity affect the awareness of cryptocurrency.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was based on Primary data collection using Questionnaire & qualitative data collection by taking interviews with the respondents. The target Segment of the respondents was the Cryptocurrency Investors group on Telegram & WhatsApp in September 2021. Secondary data was used for studying research papers, Bloomberg Articles and various reputed websites. 326 responses were found to be fit for analysis among 409 respondents. Test of hypothesis using SPSS and pictorial representation of data is applied in this research to conclude.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study intended to exhibit if there is a strong market in future for cryptocurrency-based products and services. This study would help the government to understand if there is a need for robust laws and regulations based on the interest of investors.

The learning from the study would aid to understand if there is a need for a cryptocurrency-accepting payment mechanism in the market. The study would also help to gain insight into if investors are aware of technical things and news updates from RBI regarding Cryptocurrency Trading.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was limited by the narrow size of the sample. There was less collaboration between respondents as they currently had other responsibilities to deal with. The research was restricted to only known platforms and considered only in Maharashtra. Data Analysis and Findings of the study

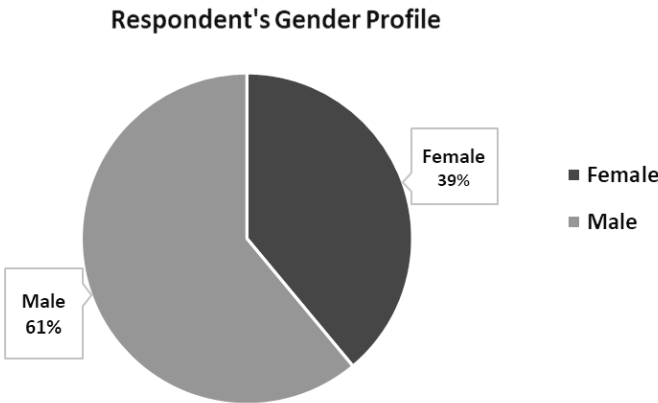


Fig. 1.1. Gender Profile of respondents

Source: Primary data

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

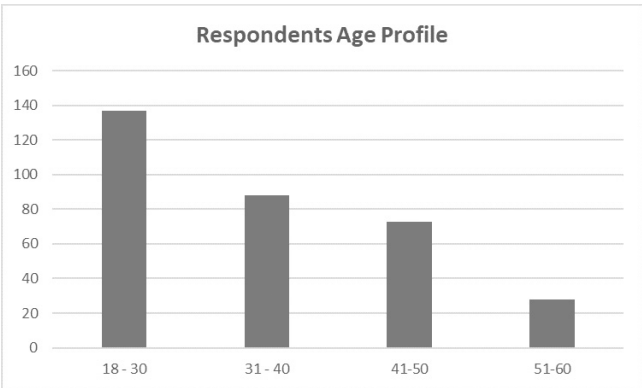


Fig. 1.2. Age Profile of respondents

Source: Primary data

Fig. 1.1 indicates that there were 39% female respondents and 61 % male respondents in the study.

Fig. 1.2 shows that 42% of respondents belong to the 18 to 30 age group. 27% of respondents belong to the 31 to 40 years age group. 23% of respondents were in the age group of 41 to 50 years and 8% of respondents were from the age group of 51 to 60 years. The education profile of the respondents indicated that there are

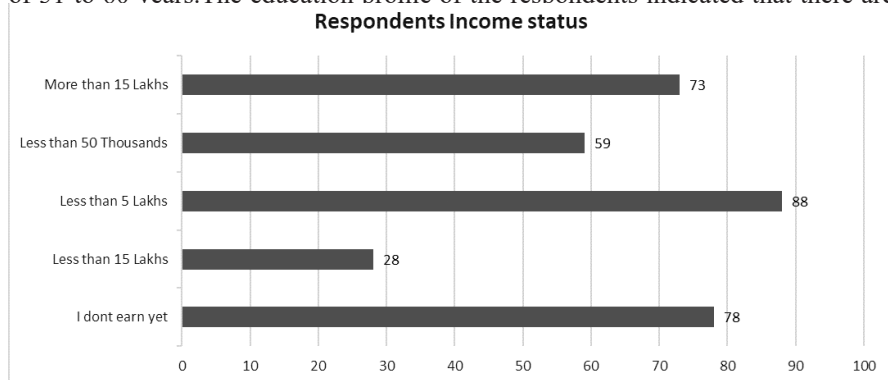


Fig. 1.3 Salary Profile of respondents

Source: Primary data

18% of respondents were who 12th pass, 27% respondents were graduates, 33% respondents were Postgraduates and 22% respondents were doctorates.

Respondents who earned more than 15 Lakhs were 22%, respondents who earned less than 15 Lakhs were 9%, respondents who earned less than fifty thousand were 18%, respondents who earned less than five Lakhs and didn't earn were 27% and 24% respectively.

**Respondents awareness about Cryptocurrency Market
have no foundation and mostly influenced by
Billionaires.**

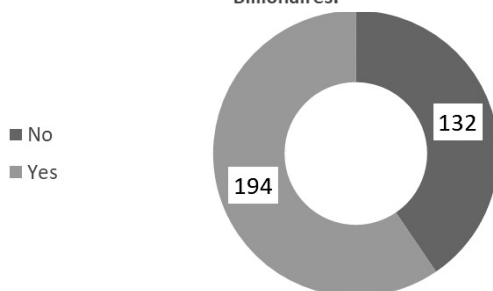


Fig. 1.4 Respondent's response to if they were aware about Cryptocurrency Market has no foundation and is mostly influenced by Billionaires

Source: Primary data

Maximum respondents were earning less than five lakhs. The respondents who were not earning yet were more likely to be students. Very few respondents earned less than 15 lakhs per year.

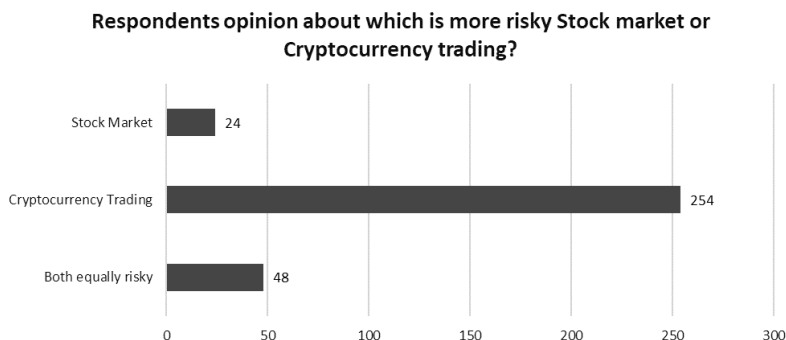


Fig. 1.5 Respondent's response to risk in Cryptocurrency trading or Stock market

Source: Primary data

As indicated in figure 1.4 out of 326 responses 132 people or 40%, respondents are not aware of the fact that the cryptocurrency market has no foundation and is

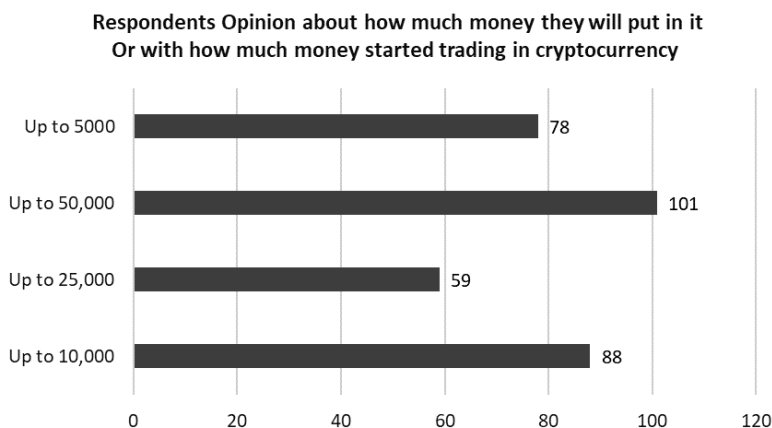


Fig. 1.6 Respondent's opinion about putting money into Cryptocurrency trading

Source: Primary data

mostly influenced by Billionaires. 60% of respondents were aware of the fact that the market has no stable foundation.

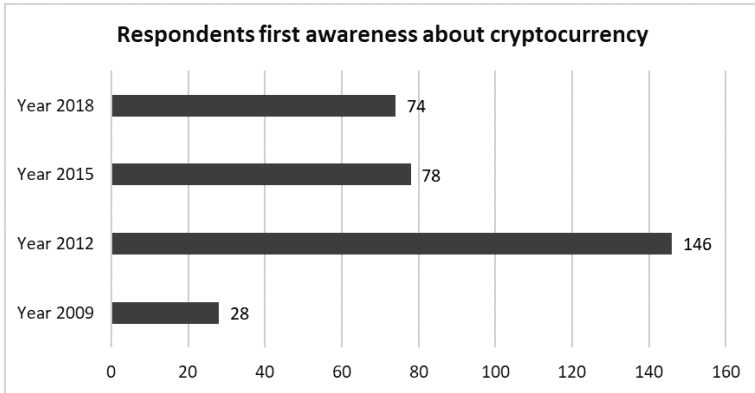


Fig. 1.7 Respondent's response about time factor awareness of cryptocurrency

Source: Primary data

In the figure, 1.5 78% of the respondents felt that cryptocurrency trading was riskier than the Stock market which contributes over 7% and over 15% of respondents felt that both were equally risky.

Respondents opinion about nature of Cryptocurrency Trading

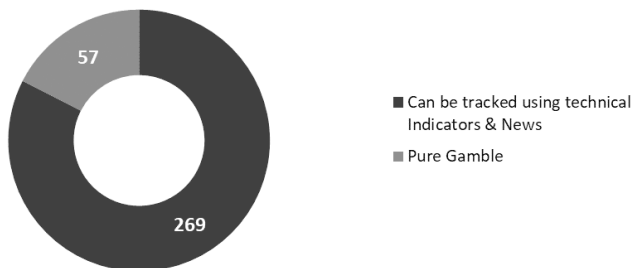


Fig. 1.8 Respondent's response about the nature of Cryptocurrency Trading

Source: Primary data

Diagram 1.6 depicted that 31% of the respondents desired to invest or currently invested nearly Rs.50,000 in the crypto market.18% of respondents desired to invest up to Rs.25000.27% of respondents want to invest up to Rs 10000. 24% of respondents wanted to invest up to Rs. 5000.

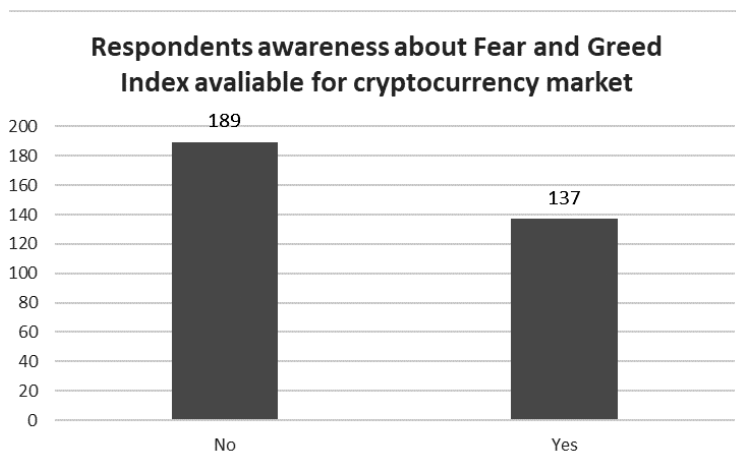


Fig. 1.9 Respondent's response related to the Fear and Greed Index available for the cryptocurrency market

Source: Primary data

Diagram 1.7 depicted 8% of respondents were aware of cryptocurrency since 2009. 45% of respondents were aware since 2012. The respondents who were aware of cryptocurrency since 2015 and 2018 were 24% and 23% respectively.

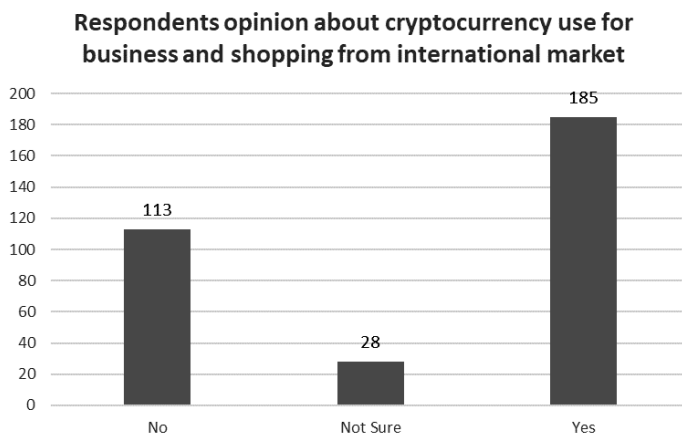


Fig. 1.10 The response towards considering cryptocurrency use for business and shopping from the international market

Source: Primary data

Respondent’s response to their thinking about the nature of Cryptocurrency trading shows that over 83% of respondents said that the nature of cryptocurrency trading can be tracked using technical indicators and news. Whereas 17% said it was a pure gamble. (figure1.8)

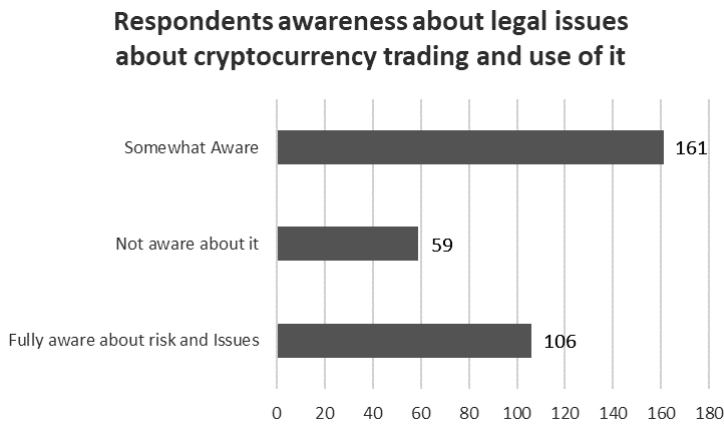


Fig. 1.11

Source: Primary data

Figure 1.9 depicts that 58% of respondents were not aware of the fear and greed index of the Cryptocurrency Market. 42% of the respondents were aware of the fear and greed index.

57% of respondents wished to or consider the use of cryptocurrency for business and shopping from international markets. 35% of respondents were reluctant about it and 8% of respondents were not sure about it. Respondents mentioned that they were fully aware of the risks and issues in cryptocurrency trading. (Fig. 1.10)

33% of respondents were fully aware of legal issues about cryptocurrency trading and its use of it, 18% of respondents were not aware of it and 49% of respondents were partially aware of it.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Table 1.1 - Hypothesis-I - Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	40.565	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	40.728	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	40.26	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	326		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 10.91.

Table 1.1 Dependence between the use of cryptocurrency in shopping from international market and business with gender

H_0 : The gender and use of cryptocurrency in the international market are not significantly dependent on each other.

H_1 : The gender and use of cryptocurrency in the international market significantly depend on each other.

It is observed that Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) value is .000 which is lower than 0.05 so we reject H_0 and accept H_1 . It says that the gender and use of cryptocurrency in the international market significantly depend on each other.

Table 1.2 - Hypothesis-II - Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	88.813	3	.000
Likelihood Ratio	111.321	3	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	30.654	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	326		

Table 1.2 indicates the Dependence between when respondents know about cryptocurrency and which they consider the riskier the stock market, crypto market or both.

H_0 : There is no significant dependence between the year you know about cryptocurrency and the consideration of high risk between the stock market and cryptocurrency trading.

H_1 : There is significant dependence between the year you know about cryptocurrency and the consideration of high risk between the stock market and cryptocurrency trading.

It can be observed that the Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) value is .000 which is lower than 0.05 so H_0 is rejected and accepted, which states that there is significant dependence between the year respondents know about cryptocurrency and the consideration of high risk between the stock market and cryptocurrency trading.

Table 1.3 - Hypothesis-III - Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	24.333	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	38.703	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	23.383	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	326		

a. 1 cell (16.7%) has an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.79.

Table 1.3 depicts the dependence between updates about cryptocurrency from RBI and legal institutions with interesting trading time frame.

H_0 : There is no significant dependence between updates about cryptocurrency from legal institutions, RBI and trading of cryptocurrency in the intraday time frame.

H_1 : There is a significant dependence between updates about cryptocurrency from legal institutions, RBI and trading of cryptocurrency in the intraday time frame.

It is observed that the Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) value is .000 which is lower than 0.05 so we reject H_0 and accept H_1 , which states that there is a significant dependence between updates about cryptocurrency from legal institutions, RBI and trading of cryptocurrency in the intraday time frame.

Table 1.4 - Hypothesis-IV - Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.120E2a	8	.000
Likelihood Ratio	346.697	8	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	25.047	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	326		

a. 5 cells (33.3%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is .69.

Table 1.4 Dependence between salary & trading intraday time frame

H_0 : There is no significant dependence between cryptocurrency trading in an intra-day time frame & current salary or income.

H_1 : There is significant dependence between cryptocurrency trading in an intra-day time frame & current salary or income.

It is observed that the Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) value is .000 which is lower than 0.05 so we reject H_0 and accept H_1 , which states that there is significant dependence between cryptocurrency trading in an intra-day time frame & current salary or income.

Table 1.5 - Hypothesis-V - Correlations

		Money respondents put in cryptocurrency Or with how much money they started trading in cryptocurrency	Awareness of Pearson legal issues regarding cryptocurrency trading
Money respondents put in cryptocurrency Or with how much money they started trading in cryptocurrency	Pearson Correlation	1	-.697
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0
	N	326	326

Awareness of Pearson legal issues regarding cryptocurrency trading	Pearson Correlation	-.697	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	
	N	326	326

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 1.5 shows the relationship between how much money respondents want to put into trading & legal issues involved in it.

H_0 : There is no significant relationship between the money with which you want to start trading or started trading and legal issues about cryptocurrency trading & use of it.

H_1 : There is a significant relationship between money with which you want to start trading or started trading and legal issues about cryptocurrency trading & use of it.

Here Pearson Correlation value is -0.679 which shows a moderately negative relation between money with which respondents want to start trading or started trading and legal issues about cryptocurrency trading & use of it.

Table 1.6 - Hypothesis-VI - Correlations

		When did respondents know about the Cryptocurrency	what do the respondents think about the nature of Cryptocurrency Trading
When did respondents know about the Cryptocurrency	Pearson Correlation	1	-.292
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0
	N	326	326
what do the respondents think about the nature of Cryptocurrency Trading	Pearson Correlation	-.292	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	
	N	326	326

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 1.6 Relation between from year you know about cryptocurrency and the nature of it.

H_0 : There is no significant relation between from year you know about cryptocurrency and the nature of cryptocurrency trading

H_1 : There significant relation between from year you know about cryptocurrency and the nature of cryptocurrency trading.

Table 1.6 depicts Pearson Correlation value as -0.292 which shows that low negative relation between the year respondents know about cryptocurrency and the nature of cryptocurrency trading.

The findings of the study show that young respondents in the age group of 18 to 30 were more interested in cryptocurrency trading and didn't put too much emphasis on risk management. Respondents in their 30s and higher age group were more risk

averse; they used news from RBI and regulatory institutions to decide whether to invest in crypto. The respondents in the 51 to 60 years age group, dispensed a pure gambling label to cryptocurrency trading, while the younger respondents considered it speculative-based trading. It was observed that respondents who intended to make good money always kept a risk management attitude and entered cryptocurrency trading with very diminutive money.

The male respondents in the study desired to buy and pay with cryptocurrencies, but a larger number of female respondents were reluctant to do so. Respondents were facing challenges when using cryptocurrency platforms. A large number of respondents who were aware of cryptocurrency prices were influenced by billionaires and influencers. There is a huge market for crypto-based products and services and it is growing very rapidly. Due to the highly volatile nature, there are more day traders than long-term investors. Respondents who have been familiar with cryptocurrencies for many years were very careful about where they wanted to put their money for trading or a long-term investment.

CONCLUSION

Governments need detailed policies on the use of cryptocurrencies in commerce and business as the need to accept and pay for cryptocurrencies grows. Those who had difficulty using the trading platform need appropriate training such as detailed guidance and step-by-step guidance. There must be clear laws and regulations from the government because the cryptocurrency market is highly volatile. It is necessary to develop risk management policies in cryptocurrency trading applications. The younger generation must not only acquire appropriate pieces of training in risk management but also move away from long-term investments based on cryptocurrencies as a source of wealth. Since cryptocurrencies are not regulated by any institution and have the potential for illicit use and tax evasion, the RBI obligation needed to track where cryptocurrencies are poignant speedily in bulk.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Respondents who wish to capitalize or trade in cryptocurrencies must intensely study the worth and failings of investing and trading in this area. Currently cryptocurrency market is extremely volatile, it is countering and mostly following news and events related to it. So, twitching with less money to avoid big fatalities is recommended. Broking firms around India are currently in the developing phase, they regularly update their trading software and apps. So, investors need to stay up to date with user interface changes of apps and policy changes by broking firms. Many businesses in India are acquiring payment and transfer systems of cryptocurrencies for ease of business and gaining the attention of cryptocurrency holders. Although guidelines are not clear from the Reserve bank of India. Users

of this system must stay alert to what rules and regulation the Reserve bank of India are setting up for cryptocurrency-based payment and transfer facility. People need to learn risk management in cryptocurrency trading by diversifying their portfolios among different yet robust cryptocurrencies. Let the Reserve bank of India make rules and regulation policies then only invest more amount till then “Small investment small profit” should be the mantra.

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DRIVERS AND CHALLENGES OF DIGITAL MARKETING ADOPTION AMONG MSMEs DURING PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

Digital marketing is a form of electronic communication that marketers use to promote their products and services to potential customers. The way MSMEs communicate and connect with their customers have been drastically changed by digital marketing. Businesses can increase efficiency and performance with the aid of digital marketing. The COVID-19 Pandemic made it difficult for MSMEs to sell their goods, which reduced their income. MSMEs should market their products online using digital technologies. The study aims to investigate the challenges MSMEs face during the COVID-19 Pandemic and how technology adoption has aided them in successfully managing their businesses. Data was collected through interviews with MSME entrepreneurs and a review of prior research on the adoption of digital marketing between 2017 -2022. The elements of technology are perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and owner's characteristics. The Theories used in these studies are Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) model and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) model. Layoffs of employees, lack of knowledge of digital platforms, lack of skilled labour, and financial crunch were the major challenges affecting digital marketing adoption.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, MSMEs, TAM model and UTAUT.

INTRODUCTION

Kotler and Keller (2013) have defined “marketing as meeting needs profitably”. The most effective and efficient way to communicate with customers is via digital marketing, as it reaches everyone, anywhere and anytime. A COVID-19 pandemic, however, provided an unexpected boost to the adoption of digital platforms among MSMEs.

Digital marketing is more interactive than traditional marketing. On-field marketing initiatives suffered significantly from the COVID-19 Pandemic during the lockdown. Digital marketing provides numerous opportunities for all kinds of businesses in today's competitive environment. Belamhitou (2021) the main issues for businesses are improving efficiency and effectiveness by utilizing all the advantages of digital marketing. The major challenges for companies are

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optimizing efficiency and performance by seizing advantages of all the benefits of digital marketing. According to Partner (2021), 65% of marketers, digital marketing has increased the importance of marketing within companies. According to Keelery (2021), there would be 932 million internet users worldwide.

The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) have become a vibrant and active sector of the Indian economy. Moreover, MSMEs play a crucial role in providing large employment opportunities at comparatively lower capital cost than large enterprises, and they also contribute to the industrialization of rural and backward regions Bhuyan (2016). MSMEs are critical to the country's economy. Many MSMEs are inefficient and ineffective due to lack of business knowledge among human resources. MSMEs significantly increase India's GDP. More than 29% of the country's GDP and 50% of all exports come from MSMEs.

According to Tambunan (2002), in order to enhance the MSMEs performance, their owners must overcome numerous challenges in the management and development of their businesses such as capital difficulty. It is believed that the behavior of the entrepreneur is essential for enhancing the performance of MSMEs. Hamzani (2013) studied about the major problems faced by MSMEs are market challenges, raw material challenges, capital challenges, labour challenges, and lack of energy. According to Hamzani (2016), a company's growth is influenced by the owner's management style. According to Abrar (2021), the impact of the second wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic predicts that 59% of MSMEs will cease operations. When compared to other businesses, MSMEs have been the most vulnerable since the outbreak of COVID-19 Pandemic. Some MSMEs are forced to learn online businesses since they are unaware of the need for digital skills for their businesses. According to Tripathi (2021), just 34% of Indian MSMEs connect with employees, customers, and suppliers using digital tools.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of the study is to explore the factors that influence strategies of digital marketing in Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and to examine the challenges during COVID-19 Pandemic faced by MSMEs.

METHODOLOGY

To understand the factors influencing and challenges encountered by MSMEs in adopting digital marketing strategies. Through interviews, primary data were collected from MSME entrepreneurs. Data were collected using survey methods and few one-on-one interviews. A sample of 15 MSMEs in Coimbatore were used to collect data, and it was found that 10 of them had successfully adopted digital marketing. Secondary data is collected using journals, periodicals, blogs, and published articles in the websites. In order to better understand how different

digital marketing techniques could help MSMEs perform and the factors that affect technology adoption, researchers looked at previous research on these challenges.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Drivers of digital marketing adoption

Redjeki *et.al.*, (2021) examined the deployment of small and medium enterprises in the MSME sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. Qualitative research using literature review was adopted to examine and solve research content issues. According to the study findings, digital marketing is particularly beneficial for MSME players and can increase their sales turnover.

Nuseir T. Mohammed (2020) explored the factors of the adoption of digital marketing strategies. The research was conducted on the sample of 116 licensed hotels in the UAE. The study concluded that relative advantage significantly influences the adoption of digital marketing, whereas competitive advantage doesn't significantly influence the adoption of digital marketing. The agility moderates the correlation between relative advantage, competitive industry and digital marketing adoption among the tourism Industry of UAE.

Momoh I. Yalo *et.al.*, (2019) conducted a study that is mainly focused on the effects of marketing mix strategies on the performance of SME's in Kogi State. A survey research design was adopted for the study to achieve the objectives. Data were collected from a sample of 300 respondents, a purposive sampling method was used for the study. The study concluded that the marketing strategies have a significant relationship with sales and profitability, whereas promotion strategy has less significance with sales and profitability.

Abraham (2018) conducted a study on the factors influencing the adoption of digital marketing in commercial banks operating in Tanzania. Data collected from a sample of 90 employees and 12 managers concluded that organizational, individual, and social factors have a significant positive impact on the adoption of digital marketing. Perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use significantly determined the adoption.

Dr. M. Subala (2017) studied the role of factors affecting MSMEs growth in e-business. The aim of the study is to examine the opportunities and growth of digital marketing in MSMEs as well as the factors that influence the adoption of e-business. A sample of 50 companies was surveyed for information. E-commerce is affecting every aspect of business in every country. The study revealed that there is a lack of knowledge among the individuals and the organizations.

Challenges of Digital Marketing Adoption

Kumar *et.al.*, (2021) explored to identify the challenges and issues in adopting digital marketing. The study concluded that budget, choosing the correct social media platforms, developing a content marketing strategy, brand awareness, generating quality leads are the major challenges in adopting digital marketing.

Anuj Kumar *et.al.*, (2021) examined the problems SMEs faced during the COVID-19 Pandemic and how technology adoption can help them in resolving these problems. The study concluded that lay off employees, financial crunch, fall in sales and turnover, and fall in customer demands.

Isita Lahiri *et.al.*, (2019) conducted a study to identify the significant factors responsible for the development of sustainable brands of the MSME sector, to estimate the impact of these factors on firm performance. The MSME sector is facing huge opportunities and challenges. The study concluded that the Indian MSME sector has focused on firms located in and around India. The scope for future research is that the work may be expanded to test the soundness and the applicability of the major findings, taking samples from other industrial sectors as well as geographical regions in India.

Jeeban Jyoti Mohanty (2018) conducted a study that MSMEs is one of the most important sectors of any economy and India in particular to ensure equal, inclusive employment friendly growth development. Number of literature reviews have been reviewed to understand the advantages and challenges faced by MSMEs. The finding of the study shows that the MSMEs in India have achieved steady growth over the last few years.

Lack of funding is the biggest challenge that small businesses face in adopting digital marketing. The majority of small businesses do not have enough money and support for significant digital marketing strategies. MSMEs typically look for a roadmap or guide to help them understand and plan their first steps toward a digital transformation.

In the middle of the Pandemic, the use of digital platforms has increased opportunities for commercial and economic growth. These platforms offer a variety of applications to increase online traffic. Marketing effectiveness is one of the challenges of digital marketing. It is quite difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies. The effectiveness of marketing performance can be measured in many ways, but not all of them are applicable to digital marketing campaigns. According to the Business review (2022) statistics, the industry or market that a company operates can also have an effect on how effective digital marketing efforts are. Generating quality leads, providing the right content strategy, and the right mix of digital marketing are the other challenges.

DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

COVID-19 has had a largely positive effect on digital marketing. The Pandemic has boosted the growth of digital marketing. MSMEs can benefit significantly from the adoption of technology when it comes to enhancing the product and services marketing. Technology adoption in MSMEs is influenced by business owners, perceived usability, and perceived usefulness. The study findings indicate that in terms of growth and development, the variables influencing the digital marketing adoption can be divided into internal and external factors. Internal factors include lack of innovation, lack of ICT adoption skills, and lack of skilled staff. External factors include fluctuating demand, macroeconomic factors and export issues. By conducting a few one-on-one interviews, the study was able to examine the difficulties associated with implementing digital marketing which includes inadequate training, lack of skilled labour, targeting the correct audience, and receiving good ROI.

Every year, as technology on the digital platform evolves, new challenges arise every year. When adopting digital marketing, MSMEs face several challenges which include lack of skilled staff, decline in sales, financial constraints, lack of understanding of ecommerce, lack of knowledge, decline in sales and loss of profit. The pandemic has forced people to focus more on digitalization, and businesses have seen positive outcomes. It is easier to target customers globally. Despite the fact that MSMEs have begun to use digital technology, adoption is still in its very early stage. MSMEs should train themselves properly for adopting the technology because digital marketing offers several tangible and intangible advantages. MSME players can increase their sales by using digital marketing, which is quite profitable. The findings of the research provide numerous advantages for MSME owners and managers.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have analyzed MSMEs in adopting technology, digital marketing, various challenges of MSMEs in digital marketing and strategies to overcome. Digitalization has become an integral part of the operations of MSMEs. In conclusion, literature reviews and interviews have revealed some of the key challenges that MSMEs must overcome in order to adopt digital marketing including financial constraints, lack of sufficient technical resources, lack of adequate skills and awareness, security concerns, targeting the correct audience, and receiving good ROI. According to the survey conducted, MSMEs can perform better by adopting digital marketing. As a result, more people must be aware of how to use digital marketing as a business tool. Digital media usage for businesses requires supporting facilities including IT expertise, infrastructure, compatibility, cost, and IT usability for business. This research contributes to empirical literature and interviews, based on the drivers and challenges faced by MSMEs. Sample size and time constraints

were the main limitations of this study. Further research on this topic needs to be undertaken, in order to help companies overcome the unique challenges faced by digital marketing adoption. MSMEs in other regions may also face these drivers and challenges, which would require further analysis with a sample covering different regions. The study was conducted only in the Coimbatore district. It is possible to validate and examine this research statistically.

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