

Content Marketing and Online Shopping Behavior towards Skincare Products among Female Students in Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effect of content marketing on online shopping behavior towards skincare products among female students at Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti. The study examined the effect of blog content, podcasts, video content, and e-books on online shopping behavior. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The study was limited to the female students of Ekiti State University with a population of 15,787, and a sample of 400 respondents using the Taro Yamane (1967) model. The study adopted a purposive sampling technique by identifying female students who have patronized skincare products online. Simple regression analysis was used to test the research hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The results show that blog content may result in a negative response in online shopping behavior. ($b = -0.127$, $p = 0.035$); however, it is significant. Podcasts may result in a positive response in online shopping behavior. ($b = 0.128$, $p = 0.012$) and it is significant. Furthermore, video content shows ($b = 0.118$, $p = 0.025$). The positive beta indicates that the video content may result in a positive response in online shopping behavior among female students at Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti. However, E-Book shows $b = 0.065$, $p = 0.203$. The positive beta indicates that the e-book may result in a positive response in online shopping behavior. However, the result uncovered that e-books do not significantly affect online shopping behavior among female students at Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti. The study concluded that content marketing, by its nature, provides the opportunity to create an entertaining environment. After some time, people may forget why they bought the product, its features, and such information, but they will remember the experiences they had at that moment. For this reason, businesses can establish relationships with consumers by producing entertaining content. The important thing is to create humorous content that entertains people and appeals to people's emotions and is conveyed to the target audience through stories.

Keywords: content marketing, blog content, podcast, video content, e-book, online shopping behaviour

INTRODUCTION

In the 1990s beauty products were only a wish, but in the 2000s era, with the development of technology as well as the rapid and widespread dissemination of information about the importance of taking care of the face and body, most women consider beauty products a secondary need. Adanna and Saino (2022) stated that someone thinks that skin care is a necessity in his life, resulting in skin health in the long term. Seeing the importance of skin health and the opportunity for advertising models based on digital content marketing, unlike sales and traditional marketing campaigns, digital content marketing focuses on providing consumers with information and valuable ideas about the publication or use of applications such as text, images, videos, and other content (Vinerean, as cited in Gulsoy & Kocer, 2023). Current era has changed the traditional marketing strategies to

digital content marketing strategies. Post the Covid-19 pandemic, the need for physical distancing has forced consumers to adopt online shopping and there has been a sharp rise in e-commerce shopping. During and after the pandemic, interest in online shopping increased significantly (Ali Taha, as cited in Trivedi et al., 2022). The contactless shopping process made e-commerce the first choice for people when shopping. Demand spiked in categories such as groceries; home office essentials like laptops and headphones; furniture; consumer electronics; health and fitness products; household products; and personal grooming products.

Content marketing has existed for decades but was not always recognized as such, because it appeared under labels such as “custom publishing,” “corporate media,” and “branded content.” Famous examples date back to the 19th century: through Quaker’s baking powder recipe booklets in 1891 and John Deere’s *The Furrow* magazine in 1895, both companies strategically managed their content, created value for customers, and became trusted sources of information that enhanced customers’ experiences with their brands and offerings (Patrutiu-Baltes, 2015). More than 100 years later, content marketing is still important and has a prominent role in today’s online marketing literature, as it has become a weapon in the online marketing arsenal of successful businesses (Lieb, as cited in Brinkman, 2015). Content marketing is an umbrella term that encompasses all marketing activities involving the creation and distribution of valuable, relevant content that a specific customer audience is actively seeking (Content Marketing Institute, as cited in Brinkman, 2018). Content is created and distributed to get the attention of customers, pull them closer to learning more about a brand and most importantly get them engaged (Content Marketing Institute, as cited in Brinkman, 2018). The most well-known digital content marketing strategies include blog posts, which are widely used alongside websites as important business and marketing tools that provide readers with valuable information and experiences (Frick, as cited in Gulsoy & Kocer, 2023). Since blogs are an easy and efficient way to communicate personal opinions to readers, they are frequently used applications in content marketing (Scott, as cited in Gulsoy & Kocer, 2023). Websites consist of various written, visual, and audio elements, including graphics, animations, and videos, that can be accessed via a computer (Kazantaya, as cited in Gulsoy & Kocer, 2023). Many large organizations, and even some small organizations, have multiple sites (or microsites) on the Internet, and these often focus on narrow content areas (Pulizzi & Barrel, as cited in Gulsoy & Kocer, 2023). When creating a seamless user experience or preparing a website, businesses should bring together technology, Content, design, and architecture and present interesting, easy-to-understand content with their sites and any information they want to convey to their users with a click (Frick Werve, as cited in Gulsoy & Kocer, 2023). E-books are a form of content typically designed to educate people or provide in-depth information on a specific topic (Handley & Chapman, as cited in Kocer & Kocer, 2023). This type of content application initiates comprehensive research and knowledge, which presents a deep source of knowledge about the relevant topic. To be able to achieve this situation, a specific topic for target customers and a new resource of credibility for companies should be provided (Vinerean, as cited in Gulsoy & Kocer, 2023). Videos are a meaningful means for a content marketing method to describe specific matters. YouTube, the most widely used and most interacted-with video application in the world, is an application that allows people from all over the world with access to the internet to produce video content and share it with people (Boran, as cited in Gulsoy & Kocer, 2023). Podcasts are associated with interviews that are pre-recorded and conventional radio programmes companies make use of them to produce leads by discussing various phenomena of interest to a company's potential customers (Vinerean, as cited in Gulsoy & Kocer, 2023). Discussing various issues of interest to a company's potential consumer and creating leads are also possible with these podcasts. Social media is associated with a bunch of technologies for sharing communication content, etc. between individuals, friends and social networks (Treadaway & Smith, as cited in Gulsoy & Kocer, 2023) Social networking sites are socialization tools that provide a virtual environment for people to communicate over the internet (Opreana & Vinerean, as cited in Gulsoy & Kocer, 2023). Social networks, including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, etc., are very special and important applications for digital content marketing because with these applications, potential customers can be brought to the brand and have the opportunity to communicate (Baltes, as cited in Gulsoy & Kocer, 2015).

Today's consumers need entertaining and informative experiences while they shop online. This highlights the need for creating engaging digital content and managing customers' digital experiences. Customers need to be provided with entertaining and informative online shopping experiences throughout the process (Lim & Ting, as cited in Trivedi, 2022). Digital Content Marketing (DCM) is used to build long-term relationships and customer engagement, while advertising is primarily targeted at sales. DCM is very significant while considering

how customers view information as advertising or as a marketing communication activity. Digital content marketing is focused on converting potential customers into customers. It can be solved by using various content marketing strategies like page design, attractive colors, providing accurate information, etc. Rolex is an old-fashioned brand, but they reconcile its classic image with modern content marketing strategies by producing beautiful product images for social media. Another example is the 'Scarlett' brand, which has good product quality and quite varied products to suit the use and skin type of the user. Also, "Random House" is a book publishing company; content shown on their website is always full of inspiration and innovation for their team members and readers. This study aims at investigating the effect of digital content marketing on online shopping behavior toward skincare products using female students of Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti.

Statement of the Problem

The rise of digital media has transformed how brands communicate with consumers, particularly in the skincare industry, whose beauty relies on visual and informative content to engage customers. Female university students, as a demographic group, are increasingly turning to online platforms to explore and purchase Skincare products, influenced by content marketing strategies deployed across social media, blogs, and influencer endorsements. According to the Content Marketing Institute (2024), 90% of B2C and 28% of B2B marketers say team members resigned in the last year; 20% say team members were laid off; and about half (49%) say they had new team members adapting to their ways of working. 72% of B2B marketers use generative AI tools for content-related tasks. However, 61% say their organization lacks guidelines for doing so, and sadly 8% are unsure. 31% say they have guidelines. These numbers are expected to grow continuously. However, only one third of content marketing users found it effective (Milhinhos, 2015).

Even though the world is a rapidly changing digital landscape and there are varying levels of digital literacy among consumers, many female students at Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, may not have adequate digital literacy skills to critically evaluate the content they encounter online, leading to impulsive or uninformed purchasing decisions (Smith, 2020; Adekunle, 2021). Additionally, the diverse cultural content of Nigeria may affect how content marketing messages are perceived and interpreted, complicating the effectiveness of generic content strategies. Previous studies have explored various aspects of content marketing and online consumer behavior. For example, Tuten and Solomon (2017) and Alkharabshen and Zhen (2021) examined the general impact of social media marketing on consumer behavior, highlighting the importance of interactive content in building brand loyalty. Similarly, research by Mangold and Faulds, as cited in Milhinhos (2015), discusses the role of social media as a hybrid element of the promotion mix and its influence on consumer decisions. However, these studies primarily focus on western contexts or broader age demographics, leaving a gap in understanding how these dynamics play out among specific demographic groups in non-western settings, such as female students in a university setting in Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria. Several studies were done relating digital content marketing to online shopping (Trivedi, 2022; Gulsoy & Kocer, 2023; Li et al., 2022; Halik & Nugroho, 2022). The studies show the content created by various companies needs to focus on content that attracts customers and builds long-term customer engagement with the audience, showing that digital content marketing is an important strategy in consumers' preferences for online shopping (Khandelwal et al., 2018) and relates to consumer satisfaction levels in digital content marketing on websites. This study shows that digital content marketing has a highly significant impact on customers, and it is an important marketing tool type that cannot be ignored by websites or companies. Despite the growing interest in digital marketing and consumer behavior, there is limited research specifically focused on the impact of content marketing on shopping behavior for skincare products among female University Students in developing countries, particularly in Nigeria. Most existing studies tend to generalize findings across different products and demographics without a targeted focus on skincare, a category that has unique marketing dynamics due to its emphasis on personal care, health, and beauty (Johnson & Wood, 2018). A previous study in the area of digital content marketing and its effect on purchase intentions, such as Hollebeek and Macky, as cited in Trivedi (2022), was conducted in a western context and therefore this research aims to explore the Digital content Marketing's impact on online shopping behavior in a developing country context such as Nigeria, more so in Ado Ekiti among female university students. Nevertheless, DCM online shopping behavior research in E-commerce websites in the Nigerian context, Ado Ekiti, is relatively new. Therefore, this study aims to fill the identified gaps by examining the effect of content marketing on online shopping behavior towards skincare among female students of Ekiti State University, Ado

Ekiti. Specifically, it will analyze how different types of content, such as videos, blogs, social media posts, influence endorsements, Podcasts, E-books, etc., affect the purchasing decisions of this demographic group.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Content Marketing

Digital content was first defined in the literature by Koiso-Kantilla, as cited in Gulsoy and Kocer (2023). The definition of the term "content marketing" can be explained as a kind of art to identify and comprehend consumer needs (Swieczak, as cited in Gulsoy & Kocer, 2023). A phenomenon that encompasses all marketing activities (Pulizzi & Barrett, as cited in Gulsoy & Kocer, 2023), which enables the creation or sharing of content to create interaction with existing and potential consumers. According to this definition, Digital Content is defined as, 'The distribution of digital products through electronic channels and their conceptualization as bit-based objects.' Originally, the term 'Content' is rooted in publishing, where words, images, and motion graphics must be sufficiently interesting for the target audience to seek on the publishing platform, whether it is a newspaper, magazine, TV, or radio channel (Holliman & Rowley, as cited in Vinerean, 2017). In terms of bringing this concept into online and digital marketing, as cited in Vinerean (2017), stated that content counts as "anything created and uploaded to a website: The words, images, or other things that reside there. Focusing on the users (and potential customers) of a Company's website, Halvorson and Rach, as cited in Vinerean (2017) proposed that content is "what the user came (to your website) to read, learn, see, or experience." Whereas these definitions explain content in general or in a digital framework, the concept of 'content marketing' is still in the process of being developed as a viable online marketing strategy. Thus, Pulizzi and Barrett, as cited in Vinerean (2017) proposed one of the first definitions of content marketing as the creation and distribution of educational and/or compelling content in multiple formats to attract and/or retain customers. as cited in Vinerean (2017) suggested that content marketing is a strategy focused on the creation of valuable experience. Content can be presented in a variety of formations including Blogs, Infographics, Slide, decks, case studies, white papers, e-books, videos, quizzes, memes, images, etc. Due to the emergence of digital content, new rules of marketing are designed for firms to adapt to new challenges. Traditional marketing is not as relevant and useful as it used to be. Customers are demanding more information with accurate data that can lead them to a better understanding of products and services and, therefore, better buying decisions. The failure of traditional advertising to capture customer attention, the evolution of word-of-mouth (WOM) and referrals, and the possibility to access information with just a click are taking marketers to the era of content marketing (Pulizzi & Barrett, as cited in Vivera, 2016).

Blog Content

Blogs appeared in the early days of the internet. It is assumed that the first blog was created around 1994, although without any certainty. In 1997 the term "weblog" started being used, which was later abbreviated to "blog" (Bair, 2016). The first blogs had a very simple format, as they permitted only adding text and links. The evolution of blogs is notorious: today, it is possible to add "multimedia content, such as sound, videos, animation, and graphics" (Blaster & Connolly, as cited in Marques, 2021). The ideas behind a blog's Concept is not new; they are very similar to a paper diary. According to Bair (2016), "A blog is a chronologically ordered series of website updates written and organized much like a traditional diary." Despite Bair's definition, which gives us a general idea of a blog, it is important to introduce a more business-related description, more aligned with the content of this dissertation. Therefore, as highlighted by Jefferson and Taton (2015), "A blog is where you (The Company) regularly share ideas in a form that is interesting and helpful to customers." The objective of a company blog is to generate business; thus, "A valuable content blog is a place where you (the Company) write about your subject for the benefit of the people you do business with" (Jefferson & Tanton, 2015). This view goes along with the concepts proposed by Ahuja and Medury as cited in Marques (2021), such as "Corporate" or "Organizational" blogs, referring to blogs that companies manage to communicate with audiences. Colton (2018) states that "Blog content can influence consumers' attitudes toward products and brands." Moreover, A blog is considered an owned media, consisting of the channel assets that the brand owns, and which are fully under its control" (Kotler et al., 2017). Therefore, the Company has the power to decide the type of Content it will share in its blog, whereas in social networks such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc., It is always constrained to the norms of these platforms (Jacobsen & Barnes, 2016). Even though these social networks are

important to spread the content, "The focus should be on a platform you (The Company) can control" (Pulizzi in Marques, 2021).

Video Content

This content format has the highest level of engagement and contagion on social media and other websites. Videos can be used as a content marketing tactic to explain certain issues, demonstrate a product or service, or present a topic of interest to target audiences (Vinerean, 2017). Videos are a meaningful means for a content marketing method to describe specific matters. YouTube, the most widely used and most interactive video application in the world, is an application that allows people from all over the world with access to the internet to produce video content and share it with people (Boran, 2021). Currently, video content is almost on all websites and platforms throughout the web, which was possible through the improvements in internet speed (Appiah, as cited in Marques, 2021). It became a mainstream tool for companies to develop content, using it as another channel for showing information. Videos have the power to make the user experience on the web more enriching due to their appealing and entertaining nature (Wuebben, as cited in Marques, 2021). They also offer a Stimulating and engaging experience to users compared to images or text (Stokes, as cited in Marques, 2021). In a study carried out by Alamaki et al. (2019), the authors concluded that videos could influence the customers to act, such as purchasing a product. Alas, if the user feels connected with the video's content, it raises the probability of him moving forward on the customer journey. In the same research, the authors state that marketing videos can brand consumers since videos can convey helpful information about the company services, such as prices, benefits, and schedules. Moreover, videos can convey and trigger positive emotions in consumers. According to Stokes as cited in Marques (2021), "Video content helps you (The -Company) connect with your audience, creating an experience and encouraging engagement.

E-books

An E-book is "a book in electronic format" (Maczuga et al., as cited in Marques, 2021), compatible with electronic devices, such as computers or smartphones. According to Rao, as cited in Marques (2021), an E-book is text in digital form, or a book converted into digital form, or digital reading material, or a book in a computer file format, or an electronic file of words and images display on a desktop, notebook computer, or portable device, or formatted for display on dedicated e-book readers. E-books are usually prepared to educate people or provide in-depth information on a subject (Handley & Chapman, 2019). Such a type of content application initiates comprehensive research and knowledge, which presents a deep source of knowledge about the relevant topic for target customers, and a new source of credibility for companies should be provided (Vinerean, 2017). E-books can contain text but also "images, audio, video, and animations" (Maczuga et al., as cited in Marques, 2021). Some of the most usual formats are PDF or EPUB, making it possible for any kind of book to be converted into an e-book. E-books are a practical way to share educational content and to position the company as a thought leader in its industry. They can easily be shared through the company website, making them a powerful source for generating leads (Pulizzi & Barrett, as cited in Marques, 2019), since to get this resource, which is commonly free, users must provide their contact information (Vinerean, 2017). According to D'Haen and Van den Poel, as cited in Marques (2021), leads "are prospects that will be contacted after they have been qualified as the most likely to respond." The company can later try to monetize these leads (Pulizzi, as cited in Marques, 2021).

Podcast

Podcasts are associated with interviews that are pre-recorded and conventional radio programs, and companies make use of them to produce leads by discussing various phenomena of interest to a company's potential customers (Vinerean, 2017). Discussing various issues of interest to a company's potential consumer and creating leads are also possible with these podcasts (Gulsoy & Kocer, 2023). As with other formats, inside the content marketing world, the emergence of podcasts was possible only due to the internet since this is the primary transmission medium. The name "podcast" derives from the words "ipod" and "broadcast." Although podcasts became most popular in the early 2000s when apple released the ipod (Wuebben, as cited in Marques, 2021). They could also be listened to using other music player devices (Mc Laughlin, 2001). One of the key benefits of podcasts is that users can simply download the podcast to their equipment and listen to it anywhere and at any time (Wei & Ram, 2016). According to Wuebben as cited in Marques (2021), "A podcast is a pre-recorded audio

program that is posted to a website and is made available for download so people can listen to it on personal computers or mobile devices." Although this definition describes what a podcast is, to present a broader explanation, it is important to complement it with the definition from Waddingham et al. (2020): "A podcast is a series of audio files available for download over the internet." This last definition helps to understand that a podcast can be either an isolated episode or a series of episodes. This is relevant since consistency is an important factor in content marketing. Noteworthy is the fact that podcasts are an easy and inexpensive format, accessible to all companies. Moreover, brands can produce it inside the Organization, without spending resources hiring an external company (Wuebben, as cited in Marques, 2021). Podcasts can be incorporated into blogs, which will amplify user experience (Evans, as cited in Marques, 2021).

Online Buying Behaviour

Online transactions or e-Commerce is becoming a greater aspect of the economic landscape. There are many new platforms, avenues, and approaches to buying and selling being introduced at a rapid rate. In e-commerce, all these rules come together at the user interface of websites and mobile device applications. Online shopping is a form of electronic commerce that allows consumers to directly buy goods or services from a seller over the Internet using a web browser. Consumers find a product of interest by visiting the websites of the retailer directly or by searching among alternative vendors using a shopping search engine, which displays the same product's availability and pricing at different retailers. According to the theory of planned behavior (TPB), Consumer behaviour has been defined as identifying the reason or the purpose of the consumer's behavior (Ajzen 2015). Based on an empirical study in Delhi, several factors have been identified to influence consumer behaviors towards online shopping. The findings revealed that perceived risk negatively impacts consumers' attitudes towards online shopping, while perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and perceived enjoyment have no impact on consumers' attitudes towards online shopping (Jain, Goswami, & Bhutani, as cited in Mukhtar, 2020). Another study by James and Akhbar (as cited in Mokhtar, 2020) has shown that the results of three variables, namely convenience, price, and brand, have strong significant Correlations to online shopping.

THEORETICAL LITERATURE

The SOSTAC Model

SOSTAC model is a marketing plan model developed by PR Smith in the 1990s. The model was later formalized in his book called Marketing Communications in 1998. Marketers have used the SOSTAC model in a number of different product and service companies for generating plans and strategies for their target audience. The model simply solves a problem using six logical steps (Waheed, 2022). (i) **Situation:** A detailed view of the current state of Business. The challenges it is facing and the room for opportunities. It takes help from shot analysis to get a better understanding of the company's affairs. (ii) **Objectives:** It is a set of goals or missions that the company wants to achieve for its business in the future. (iii) **Strategy:** The strategy part addresses how a particular goal or objective is to be achieved over the course of time. (iv) **Tactics:** Tactics are the detailed set of actions or plans that are governed by a strategy to achieve the objective. (v) **Control:** Control is a measure of how well the strategy is implemented to achieve desired results and objectives (Kurth, as cited in Waheed, 2022)

The AIDA Model

The AIDA Model, formulated by E. St. Elmo Lewis in 1898, is one of the oldest models of consumer behaviour, AIDA stands for Attention, Interest, Desire and Action, and it describes the sequential steps a consumer goes through before making a purchase. The model is extensively used to understand having content marketing strategies can attract and retain consumer's attention, build their interest in a product and eventually convert their interest into action (purchase). Recent studies suggest that AIDA remains relevant in modern digital marketing. Smith and Taylor (2020) claim that the model is especially applicable to social media marketing, where the content's ability to capture a key. They highlight that the immediacy of the digital environment means that marketers have limited time to move a consumer from attention to action (Smith & Taylor, 2020).

Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT)

The uses and gratifications theory (UGT), originally developed by Kat, Blumler, and Gurevitch, examines how individuals actively seek out specific media to satisfy their various needs. UGT suggests that consumers are not

passive recipients of content but instead are active participants in selecting content based on their desires for information, entertainment, or social interaction. In digital marketing, UGT has been applied to understand why consumers engage with different forms of content such as blogs, videos, or webinars. For instance, Kietzmann et al. (2018) explained how consumers use different types of online content for various gratifications, including information gathering and social connection. Their study found that information content such as e-books and webinars is often used for decision-making, while social media content is primarily for social interaction and entertainment (Kietzmann et al., 2018).

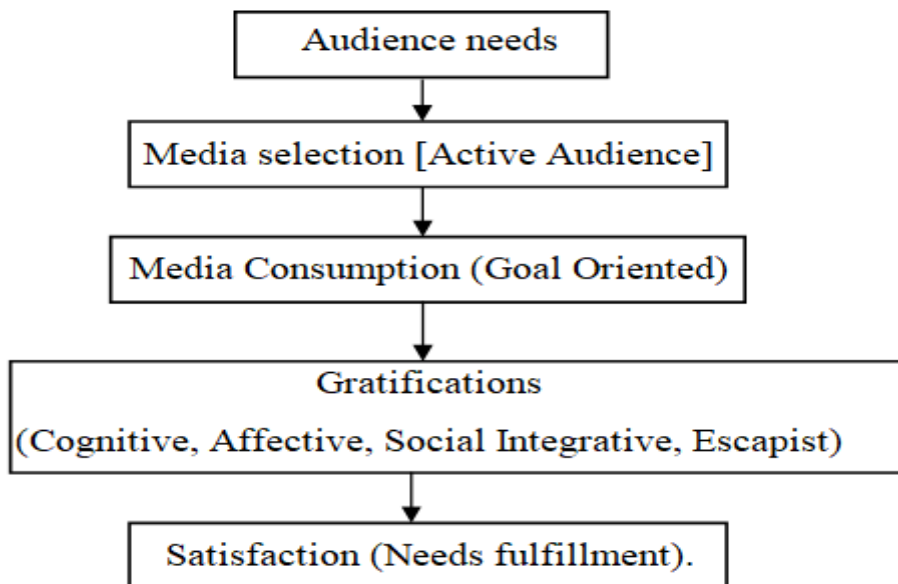


Figure 1: Uses and Gratification Model

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design: The study adopted a descriptive survey research design with the intent of obtaining responses from female students of Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria.

Population of the Study: The population of the study is 15,787 which consists of all female students in Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, drawn from all the faculties of the university, which are Arts, Agriculture, College of Medicine, Engineering, Education, Law, Management Sciences, and Social Sciences.

Sample Size: The sample size for this study was 400 respondents, determined by using the Yaro Yamane (1967) sample size model.

Sampling Technique: This study applied the purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental or selective sampling, is a non-probability Sampling technique where participants are selected based on specific criteria or characteristics relevant to the study. In this study, the subjects for the study are pre-defined as female students who have shopped online for beauty products.

Research Instruments: To this study, the questionnaire has closed-ended questions and has options following a Likert-type scale from Strongly disagreed (1) to Strongly agreed (5). The research instrument was divided into 6 sections: section A contained questions on respondents' demographics; section B contained questions to measure blog content using the blog service quality scale having 21 items adapted from Wu et al. (2007); section C contained questions to measure E-book using the E-book reading app measurement scale having 29 items adapted from Meštrović et al. (2018); section D contained questions to measure podcasts using the podcast motivation scale with 15 items derived from Chou et al. (2022); section E contained questions to measure video content using the video content scale with 15 items derived from the video engagement scale adapted from Hillen et al. (2016); and section F contained questions to measure online consumer behavior using the online consumer behavior scale with 31 items adapted from Ansari (2019).

Validity of Research Instrument: The questionnaire used to measure the variables in the study: Blog Content, E-book, Podcast, video content, and Online shopping behavior—was subjected to validity tests with experts & check for content analysts, and appropriateness of language copies of the questionnaire were given to experts in test and measurement and management to ensure face and content validity as well as sustainability for the target Sample.

Reliability of Research Instrument: Cronbach's alpha coefficient indicates the consistency of responses to items in a measure (Foxroft & Rwatt, 2003). Reliability coefficients for the independent and dependent variables are given in the following table:

Table 1: Cronbach Alpha Reliability Co-efficient

Variables	Types	Measurement Scale	No of Items	Cronbach Alpha	Source
Blog Content	Independent Variables	Blog Service quality measurement scale	21	0.85	Wu et al, 2012
E-books	Independent Variables	E-book reading app measurement scale	25	0.79	Meštrović et al. (2018)
Podcasts	Independent Variables	Podcast motivation scale	15	0.87	Chou et al. (2022)
Video Content	Independent Variables	Video Engagement Scale (VES)	15	0.86	Hillen et al. (2016)
Online Shopping Behaviour	Dependent Variables	Online consumer behaviour scale	31	0.81	Ansari (2019)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Distribution of Respondents:

Table 1 shows the highest percentage of the respondents (53.5%) are between age 18-22 years, 33.5% of the respondents are within age 23-27 years, and 13.0% of the respondents are within age 28-32 years. The table also shows the distribution of respondents by Faculty. The table reveals that 5.5% of the respondents are in Agricultural Science, 17.1% are in Arts, 10.4% of the respondents are in the college of medicine, 14.3% of the respondents are in education, 3.6% of the respondents are in Engineering, 4.9% of the respondents are in law, 11.9% of the respondents are in management science, and 20.3% of the respondents are in science, while 11.9% of the respondents are in Social Science. The distribution of respondents by Level reveals that 26.0% of the respondents are 100 level students, 29.6% of the respondents are level 200 students, 25.7% of the respondents are 300 level students, 9.4% of the respondents are 400 level students, and 9.4% of the respondents are 500 level students. The distribution of respondents by monthly expenditures reveals that 39.0% of the respondents spent between 50,000 and 100,000, 44.9% of the respondents spent between 101,000 and 150,000, and 16.1% of the respondents spent in the study between 151,000-200,000. The distribution of respondents by frequency of online shopping shows that 38.2% of the respondents only did online shopping once a month, 31.9% of the respondents use online shopping two to three times a month, 19.7% of the respondents use the internet for online shopping once every month, 6.8% of the respondents of the study rarely use the internet for online shopping, while 3.4% of the respondents in the study never use online shopping.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents

	Item	Frequency	Percent
Age	18-22 years	206	53.5

	23-27 years	129	33.5
	28-32 years	50	13.0
	Total	385	100.0
Faculty	Agricultural	21	5.5
	Arts	66	17.1
	College of Medicine	40	10.4
	Education	55	14.3
	Engineering	14	3.6
	Law	19	4.9
	Management Science	46	11.9
	Science	78	20.3
	Social Science	46	11.9
	Total	385	100.0
Level of Study	100 level	100	26.0
	200 level	114	29.6
	300 level	99	25.7
	400 level	36	9.4
	500 level	36	9.4
	Total	385	100.0
Average monthly expenditure	50,000-100,000	150	39.0
	101,000-150,000	173	44.9
	151,000-200,000	62	16.1
	Total	385	100.0
Frequency of shopping online	Once a month	147	38.2
	Two to Three times a month	123	31.9
	Once every month	76	19.7
	Rarely	26	6.8
	Never	13	3.4
	Total	385	100.0

Source: Field survey data output (2025)

Test of Hypotheses

To test this hypothesis, one: blog content does not significantly affect Online shopping behavior among female students at Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti: the respondents’ scores on blog content and online shopping behavior were computed and subjected to regression analysis. The results are shown in Tables 3 and 4. In Table 3, the result of the analysis was found to be significant with $R = 0.107$ and $p = 0.035$ showing that blog content influences online shopping behavior. R-squared showed that blog content caused 0.012 variance in online shopping behavior. In other words, an estimated 1.2% of online shopping behavior is accounted for by blog content when all other variables are held constant. The statistical significance of the regression ($F = 4.465$, $p = 0.035$) shows that the model was significant as $p < 0.05$. The result means that the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted.

Table 3: Model Summary of Regression analysis for Blog Content and Online Shopping Behavior

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.
1	.107 ^a	.012	.009	3.53268	4.465	.035 ^b
a. Predictors: (Constant), Blog Content						

Source: Field survey data output (2025)

From Table 4, Blog content shows ($b = -0.127$, $p = 0.035$). The negative beta indicates that the blog content may result in a negative response in online shopping behavior. Also, the result showed that blog content significantly affects online shopping behavior among female students at Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti. It could be observed that the difference in the mean score is statistically significant at $p < 0.05$; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Furthermore, the table shows that the t-value of blog content (-2.113) is less than the critical value (-1.960) and within the rejection region. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, which states that there is no significant difference in the means of the effect of blog content on online shopping behavior among female students in Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti. The regression estimates of the model are given as follows:

$$OSB = 49.417 - 0.127BLOG + u$$

Where OSB = Online shopping behavior, a_0 = Constant, β_2 = beta coefficient, BLOG = Blog Content, u = error term

Table 4: Regression analysis (Beta co-efficient) for Blog Content and Online Shopping Behavior

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	49.417	1.610		30.700	.000
	Blog Content	-.127	.060	.107	-2.113	.035
a. Dependent Variable: Online Shopping Behavior						

Source: Field survey data output (2025)

To test this hypothesis two, E-book does not significantly affect Online shopping behavior among female students at Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti; the respondents’ scores on E-book and online shopping behavior were computed and subjected to regression analysis. The results are shown in Tables 5 and 6. In Table 5, the result of the analysis is not significant with $R = 0.065$ and $p = 0.203$ showing that E-book does not influence

online shopping behavior. R-squared showed that E-book caused 0.004 variance in online shopping behavior. In other words, an estimated 0.4% of online shopping behavior is accounted for by E-book when all other variables are held constant. The statistical significance of the regression ($F= 1.629, p= 0.203$) shows that the model was not significant as $p > 0.05$. The result means that the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Table 5: Model Summary of Regression analysis for E-Book and Online Shopping Behavior

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.
1	.065 ^a	.004	.002	3.54568	1.629	.203 ^b
a. Predictors: (Constant), E-Book						

Source: Field survey data output (2025)

From Table 6, E-Book shows ($b = 0.065, p = 0.203$). The positive beta indicates that the E-Book may result in a positive response in online shopping behavior. However, the result showed that E-book does not significantly affect online shopping behavior among female students at Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti. It could be observed that the difference in the mean score is statistically not significant at $p > 0.05$; therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected. Furthermore, the table shows that the t-value of E-Book (1.279) is less than the critical value (1.960) and lies outside the rejection region. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is not rejected, which states that there is no significant difference in the means of the effect of E-Book on online shopping behavior among female students in Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti. The regression estimate of the model is shown as:

$$OSB = 42.948 + 0.107EBOOK + u$$

Where OSB = Online shopping behavior, a_0 = Constant, β_2 = beta coefficient, EBOOK = E-Book, u = error term

Table 6: Multiple Regression analysis (Beta co-efficient) for E-Book and Online Shopping behavior

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	42.948	2.427		17.696	.000
	E—Book	.107	.084	.065	1.276	.203
a. Dependent Variable: Online Shopping Behavior						

Source: Field survey data output (2025)

To test this hypothesis, three podcasts do not significantly affect online shopping behavior among female students at Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti; the respondents' scores on podcasts and online shopping behavior were computed and subjected to regression analysis. The results are shown in Tables 7 and 8. In Table 7, the result of the analysis was found to be significant with $R = 0.128$ and $p = 0.012$ showing that podcasts influence online shopping behavior. R-squared showed that podcasts caused 0.016 variance in online shopping behavior. In other words, an estimated 1.6% of online shopping behavior is accounted for by podcasts when all other variables are held constant. The statistical significance of the regression ($F= 6.332, p= 0.012$) shows that the model was significant as $p < 0.05$. The result means that the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted.

Table 7: Model Summary of Regression analysis for Podcast and Online Shopping Behavior

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.
1	.128 ^a	.016	.014	3.52420	6.332	.012 ^b
a. Predictors: (Constant), Podcast						

Source: Output of Data Analysis (2024)

From Table 8, Podcast shows ($\beta = 0.128, p = 0.012$). The positive beta indicates that the Podcast may result in a positive response in online shopping behaviour. Also, the result showed that Podcast significantly affects online shopping behaviour among female students in Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti. It could be observed that the difference in the mean score is statistically significant at $p < 0.05$; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Furthermore, the table shows that the t-value of Podcast (2.516) is greater than the critical value (1.960) and lies within the rejection region. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is not rejected which states that there is no significant difference in the means of the effect of Podcast on online shopping behaviour among female students in Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti. The regression estimate of the model is shown as:

$$OSB = 41.830 + 0.114PC + N$$

Where OSB = Online shopping behaviour, a_0 = Constant, β_2 = beta co-efficient, PC = Podcast, N = error term

Table 8: Regression analysis (Beta co-efficient) for Podcast and Online Shopping Behavior

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	41.830	1.287		33.285	.000
	Podcast	.114	.045	.128	2.516	.012
a. Dependent Variable: Online Shopping Behavior						

Source: Output of Data Analysis (2024)

Hypothesis Four:

To test hypothesis four, video content does not significantly affect online shopping behaviour among Female student in Ekiti State University Ado-Ekiti, the respondents' scores on video content and online shopping behaviour were computed and subjected to regression analysis. The results are shown in Tables 9 and 10. In Table 9, the result of the analysis was found to be significant with $R = 0.118$ and $p = 0.025$ showing that video content influences online shopping behaviour. R-square showed that video content caused 0.021 variance in online shopping behaviour. In other words, an estimated 2.1% of online shopping behaviour is accounted for by video content when all other variables are held constant. The statistical significance of the regression ($F = 4.124, p = 0.025$) shows that the model was significant as $p < 0.05$. The result means that the null hypothesis was rejected and alternative hypothesis accepted.

Table 9: Model Summary of Regression analysis for Video content and Online Shopping Behavior

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.

1	.118 ^a	.021	.019	3.55264	4.124	.025 ^b
a. Predictors: (Constant), Video Content						

Source: Output of Data Analysis (2024)

From Table 10, video content shows ($b = 0.118, p = 0.025$). The positive beta indicates that the video content may result in a positive response in online shopping behavior. Also, the result showed that video content significantly affects online shopping behavior among female students at Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti. It could be observed that the difference in the mean score is statistically significant at $p < 0.05$; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Furthermore, the table shows that the t-value of video content (2.352) is greater than the critical value (1.960) and lies within the rejection region. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is not rejected, which states that there is no significant difference in the means of the effect of video content on online shopping behavior among female students at Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti. The regression estimate of the model is shown as:

$$OSB = 45.618 + 0.113VIDEO + N$$

Where OSB = Online shopping behaviour, a_0 = Constant, β_1 = beta co-efficient, VIDEO = Video Content, N = error term

Table 10: Regression analysis (Beta co-efficient) for Video Content and Online Shopping Behavior

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	45.618	1.204		37.882	.000
Video Content	.113	.057	.118	2.352	.025
a. Dependent Variable: Online Shopping Behavior					

Source: Output of Data Analysis (2024)

DISCUSSION

The study investigated the influence of various forms of digital content on online shopping behavior among female students at Ekiti State University. The findings reveal varying degrees of impact across different content types, providing valuable insights into how digital media shapes consumer behavior in the university demographic.

Blog content demonstrated a significant but modest influence on online shopping behavior ($R^2 = 0.012, p < 0.05$). This aligns with previous research by Kumar and Singh (2021), who found that blog posts influence purchase decisions through detailed product information and user experiences. The positive relationship suggests that blogs serve as important information sources for female students when making shopping decisions, possibly due to their ability to provide in-depth product reviews and personal experiences.

Interestingly, e-books showed no significant impact on online shopping behavior ($p > 0.05$). This finding contrasts with research by Thompson et al. (2023), who found e-books to be influential in consumer decision-making. The discrepancy might be attributed to the specific context of female university students, who may prefer more interactive and dynamic content formats for shopping-related information.

Podcasts emerged as a significant influencer of online shopping behavior ($R^2 = 0.016, p < 0.05$). This finding supports recent research by Martinez and Lee (2022), who identified podcasts as increasingly important

touchpoints in the consumer journey, particularly among younger demographics. The positive relationship suggests that the intimate and engaging nature of podcast content may effectively shape shopping preferences and decisions.

Video content showed the strongest influence among all content types studied ($R^2 = 0.021$, $p < 0.05$). This aligns with findings from Wilson and Ahmed (2023), who demonstrated that video content significantly influences purchase decisions among Gen Z consumers. The visual and demonstrative nature of video content appears particularly effective in influencing shopping behavior, possibly due to its ability to showcase products in use and create emotional connections.

The relatively small R^2 values across all significant relationships suggest that while digital content influences online shopping behavior, it represents just one of many factors affecting consumer decisions. This aligns with comprehensive consumer behavior models proposed by Anderson and Roberts (2023), which emphasize the multifaceted nature of purchase decisions.

These findings have important implications for marketers targeting female university students. The varying effectiveness of different content types suggests the need for a diversified content strategy, with particular emphasis on video content and interactive formats. The results also highlight the importance of creating engaging, relevant content that resonates with this demographic's preferences and consumption patterns.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study investigated the effect of content marketing on online shopping behavior towards skincare products among female students of Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti. The specific objectives were to examine the influence of blog content; E books, podcasts, and video content on the online shopping behavior of female students towards Skincare products at Ekiti State University. The study was only limited to the female students of Ekiti State University, whose numerical capacity was 15,787 as at 2024 from the directorate of ICT of Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti. The study adopted a purposive sampling technique using the Taro Yamane (1967) method to calculate the sample size for female students in the university and the sample size for the study is 400. Descriptive statistics were used to present and analyze demographic data of respondents in frequency tables. The demographics were gender, age, marital status, educational status, work experience etc. and inferential statistics, namely simple regression, was used to test the hypothesis, to answer the research question and to achieve the objectives of the study. The results of the analysis were found to be significant, with $R = 0.107$ showing that blog content influences online shopping behavior. R-squared showed that blog content caused 0.012 variance in online shopping behavior. In other words, an estimated 1.2% of online shopping behavior is accounted for by blog content when all other variables are held constant. The statistical significance of the regression ($F = 4.465$, $p = 0.035$) shows that the model was significant as $p < 0.05$. It was concluded that content marketing, by its nature, provides the opportunity to create an entertaining environment. After some time, people may forget why they bought the product, the features of the product, and such information, but they will remember the experiences they had at that moment. For this reason, businesses can establish closer relationships with consumers by producing entertaining content. The important thing here is to create humorous content that entertains people and appeals to people's emotions and conveys this to the target audience through stories.

Conclusion

Content marketing influences online shopping behavior by informing existing and potential customers, strengthening customer relationships, and building engagement. It is a customer-focused, strategic process that helps businesses retain, inform, educate, and persuade their target audience. In this study, blogs, e-books, podcasts, and videos showed different levels of impact on shopping decisions among female students at Ekiti State University, which suggests that content marketing should be treated as a structured project with clear goals, not as a generic or repeatable method.

Given that blogs had a small but significant positive effect, businesses should treat blogs as tools for delivering detailed, helpful information rather than purely promotional messages. Blog posts should focus on problem-solving content that answers students' questions, explains product features, or shares user experiences, and should be written in a way that highlights benefits rather than sales pitches.

Since e-books had no significant effect on online shopping behavior, businesses should use e-books mainly for educational and awareness-building purposes (e.g., detailed product guides, industry overviews, or study-related materials) rather than expecting them to drive immediate purchases. E-books should be integrated into a broader strategy that includes more interactive formats.

Because podcasts had a modest positive effect, businesses should introduce short, conversational audio episodes that fit students' schedules (e.g., during commuting or studying). Podcasts can cover topics such as shopping tips, product comparisons, or campus-life-related consumer advice, and should maintain a friendly, storytelling style to build emotional connection.

Given that video content had the strongest influence, businesses should prioritize short, visually engaging videos for platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. These videos should demonstrate products in use, show real-life applications, and include clear calls to action that guide students towards online purchases.

To make content more effective, businesses should ensure that it is informative, interactive, and entertaining. Content should be designed to solve problems, answer questions, and provide value that students can apply immediately. It should include at least one or two clear takeaways in every piece and be tailored to a clearly defined target audience (female university students in this context).

Businesses should focus on creating benefit-driven content that highlights how products improve students' lives (e.g., saving money, saving time, enhancing studies, or improving style) rather than simply listing features. At the same time, they should use interactive formats such as quizzes, polls, contests, and games to increase engagement and encourage sharing on social media. Entertaining content that is relevant to students' interests (even if not directly about products) can also increase follower loyalty and brand recognition.

In summary, content marketing should be implemented as a focused, evidence-informed project that matches the preferences and habits of female university students: it should emphasize video and interactive formats, support them with blogs and podcasts, and use e-books for deeper, non-immediate educational purposes. This approach will make content more attractive, credible, and effective in shaping online shopping behavior.

Recommendations

- (i) To reach a broad range of customers, organizations and brand managers using social media platforms must consider both the businesses they symbolize as well as the products and services on offer.
- (ii) In terms of social media, enterprises and brand managers must guarantee that their blogs as well as social networking webpages are user-friendly for collaborative efforts.
- (iii) The results demonstrate that customers are constantly using social networking sites to discover their product requirements, which means that companies must regularly engage their customers, demonstrate their goods' encouraging characteristics, as well as demonstrate how the goods meet the needs of customers
- (iv) As a result, social media is a dominant instrument for constructing a firm's image and attracting new customers. Companies can expand their product's value by collecting and publishing positive customer feedback.
- (v) There may be culturally specific differences in how people use social media, but there may also be differences based on the social media channels people utilize.

- (vi) The government should develop an infrastructure to allow entrepreneurs in the world to succeed. There should be encouragement for people in Nigeria to use the internet to buy products and services locally made.
- (vii) Lastly, businesses, especially the ones in the supplementary product industry, were forced to rethink their firms' operations. To consider taking total benefit of the gains provided by technological innovation and embrace the necessary modernization, many businesses must modify and rebrand themselves in response to changing consumers.

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