

ARTICLE

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IN EMERGING MARKETS

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ABSTRACT

Globalization has transformed the marketing field from traditional marketing media to social marketing media because of its numerous roles of reaching more customers at the least cost. Traditional marketing communicates with customers through dedicated media channels like television, radio, newspaper, magazine, but the failure of traditional marketing channels to yield significant returns on investment is attributed to many reasons including lack of interactive engagement between the customers and the brand. Social media appeared as the solution to the letdown of traditional marketing, social media are online platforms that facilitate social conversation between social agents regardless of the geography while social media marketing is the promotion of products and services through social media platform. Thus, considering its ability to penetrate across national boundaries without any stoppage, this study found it worthwhile to investigate social media marketing in emerging markets using social media marketing platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Whatsapp, LinkedIn, et cetera. The study adopted purposive and systematic sampling technique to ensure that mature adults who fall within the age of 18 and 65 with deep knowledge of social media marketing in organizations in emerging economies are involved in the study through a standard questionnaire which was designed for such purpose. Classical regression model was adopted for the analytical findings, the study concluded that social media activity positively affect brand success in emerging economies. In other words, there is a direct and positive relationship between social media activity and success of an organization's brand in the market. It is recommended that Organization should design effective social media marketing strategy in order to increase its brand engagement and create more customer delights.

I. Introduction

Globalization and technological advancement remain two major forces altering the conventional ways of promoting businesses both in developing and developed countries. With technological progress, Web 2.0 was birthed and since its advent, businesses have been employing innovative strategies on platforms that emanate from it to further their

businesses. Also, the increasing numbers of smart phone users and growing penetration of internet services significantly contribute to the growth of online communities where businesses can engage their customers (Otugo et al, 2015).

In traditional marketing, businesses communicate with customers through dedicated media channels like television, radio, newspaper, magazine, et cetera.

Business marketing is solely done through these channels with little feedback from the customers. Likewise, the outcome of such marketing campaign is not felt by the companies in form of sales turnover. Failure of traditional marketing channels to yield significant returns on investment is attributed to many reasons including lack of interactive engagement between the customers and the brand.

Although, call-in programs are being held on radio and television to collate the opinions of the customers about certain products and brands but responses gotten from such programs are shallow and most times such programs are aired, high net customers are usually busy with their businesses thereby omitting their ideas (Omotayo et al, 2015). These shortcomings of traditional media are addressed by the new media which is the current mantra of businesses both national and multinational. The advent of social media have changed the dynamics of businesses and transformed the conventional ways of marketing (Ogunaike and Kehinde, 2013).

Social media are online platforms that facilitate social conversation between social agents regardless of the geography while social media marketing is the promotion of products and services through social media platform. Thus, it is the integration of social media into the element and mix of marketing. Due to the wide coverage and reach of the internet, businesses are able to communicate with wide range of audience across the globe (Bajpai et al, 2012).

Social media enable firms to engage in interactive dialogue with their customers in order to create more customer delights and satisfaction. With diverse use of social media platform for defense strategies, electioneering campaign, public policy, et cetera, it is indisputable that social media has become the new backbone for brand awareness and engagement. Unlike traditional marketing, social media marketing enable firms to increase its recognition through its online platform and to create familiarity with its customers through virtual communities (Celine, 2012; Olabanji et al, 2014).

The level of brand recognition, engagement, and bonding created by organizations through social media marketing has the potential of generating more sales leads for the organizations as well as improve brand loyalty among the customers. Through social media marketing, organizations generate inbound traffic to their website which in a way create brand

awareness and ultimately influence the purchase intention of the customers (Kaushik, 2012).

Social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Viber, Facetime, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Whatsapp, Tumblr, Youtube, Vimeo, MySpace, e.t.c. are becoming effective channels through which organization engage customers by sharing convincing messages. The ability of organization to create engaging narratives that customers will respond to is the bane of many organizations. Organization that fails to create compelling messages online to launch its product risk tainting its image and losing potential customers (Rodney and Myles, 2016).

In emerging economies like Nigeria, social media marketing is gaining traction but inadequate number of social media professionals undermine the benefit accruing from these platforms. Organization may have many likes and followers on their social media page but the responsibility of such organization to convert these followers into customers rest solely on professionals that are skillful in such art. This is one of the major reasons why small scale organizations haven't been able to reap the benefit of social media in boosting their sales and increasing patronage from their customers (Alakali, et al, 2013; Chikandiwa et al, 2013).

Another force that undercut emerging economies the benefit of social media marketing is the slow adoption of social media marketing in such countries. Some organizations still rely much on traditional media to advertise their product due to the level of trust in such channels than social media platforms. Cases of fraudulent accounts and fake news on social media platform dissuade some organization from using such platforms to communicate their product to customers. Considering the rate of criminal activities online, some organization favors traditional marketing channels than social media marketing channels in order to eradicate such fraudulent activities (Ali, et al, 2016)

Similarly, the divergence in social media usage among the millennial, generation X, Y, and Z, makes it difficult for organization to effectively reach their target audience. Since social media is the synthesis of media and communication, it becomes imperative that organizations employ proven communication strategy to reach their target audience but risk of misconstruction of the content shared on these platforms is a serious bane of organizations.

Minimizing the noise from the encoder to the decoder is a complex task which can only be tackled by social media professionals.

The remainder of this paper is sectionalized into the following: section 2 covers the literature review which included the conceptual, theoretical and empirical review, section three covers the research methodology, section four is the data analysis and presentation, while section 5 summarizes, conclude, and make astounding recommendations.

A. Objectives of the study

The major objective of this study is to investigate social media marketing in emerging markets. The following specific objectives were achieved:

1. Analyze the speed of adoption of social media marketing in selected organizations
2. Investigate the effect of organization social media activity on brand success
3. Examine the prominent social media platform adopted by organizations in emerging economies

B. Research Questions

The following research questions were raised in the course of the study

- i. What is speed of adoption of social media marketing in selected organizations?
- ii. How does organization social media activity affect its brand success?
- iii. What are the prominent social media platform adopted by organizations in emerging economies
- iv. What are the social media strategies that organization can employ to position itself in the market?

C. Research Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was tested in the course of the study

H0: There is no significant nexus between organization social media activity and brand success in Nigeria

H1: There is a significant nexus between organization social media activity and brand success in Nigeria

II. Literature Review

A. Social Media

Etymologically, social media is the abridgement of media and social conversation between social agents. Since media involves communication through dedicated channels, social media can be seen as sites through which users create and share ideas and information to other users within the same social circle. Individuals share information in different format like video, voice, text, and picture, e.t.c and they also engage with information shared by other users. Social media allows users to freely express their emotional feelings about particular information shared by other users in the form of likes, dislikes, share, comment, and followership (Celine, 2012).

Some of the popular social media platform include Twitter, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, Google+, Tumblr, e.t.c and through this platforms, organizations communicate their brand products to their customers. While some platforms are famous for sharing voice messages, some are used to share text likewise some are used to share videos. It is now the responsibility of the social media expert in an organization to decide which platform to use and which information format to share to the customers in order to achieve the marketing objectives of the organization.

B. Social media marketing

Basically, social media marketing integration of social media to each phase and element of marketing mix. It is the promotion of organizational product, services, and brand through social media site. It is the creation of appealing content on different social media site to create awareness and gain new and existing customers' attention. It is marketing through online communities and social networks as opposed to traditional marketing channels like television, radio, and print media. Social media marketing also covers the implementation and management of organizational marketing objectives through social media platforms (Olabanji et al, 2014).

Since social networks are platform through which individuals express their opinions, wants, needs, values, organization thus leverage on such platform to understand their customers and seek innovative ways to meet these needs. Information on price, product, and place are being communicated by

brands to their customers through online platforms that have the largest target audience. Traditional marketing campaign is becoming obsolete with the gradual shift to social media marketing by organizations (Omotayo et al, 2015).

Even in traditional marketing channels like televisions, advert usually ends by an appeal to customers to visit their Facebook or website for further information on the products. This is an attempt to engage the audience in an interactive conversation about the company, its product, price, and place. By advertising on social media platforms, organizations requires their followers to “retweet” on Twitter, “share” and “like” on Facebook, or “repost” on Instagram. Individuals that like or retweet the organizations’ product information are further engage by the brand in order to influence the purchase intention as well as their advocacy to their network of friends.

C. Traditional marketing versus social media marketing

There is a noticeable difference between traditional marketing and social media marketing both in the developed and developing economies. This will be discussed under the following sub-theme: time, cost, coverage, engagement, and key performance metrics.

Cost: Traditional media channels like television and print media are expensive thus increasing the marketing budget of organization. Small scale businesses find it costly to run a television or radio adverts for their product. Newly established businesses also find it difficult to expend huge amount of money on traditional channels of marketing. On the other hand, social media platform enable organization to maintain low budget and still reach a large audience. The inexpensive nature of advertisement on social media platform comparably to traditional marketing channels makes it social media marketing more appealing to organization with low marketing budget. Organization can maintain a public profile on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram for free and the cost of advertising on these platform is relatively cheap compared to traditional marketing channels.

Engagement: Brand engage their customers on social media platform more than traditional marketing channels because brand engage in interactive dialogue with customers on social media platform

while conversation on traditional marketing channels is monologue. There is a direct communication between customer and the brand but the communication between brand and customer is indirect in traditional marketing channels. Brands don’t get immediate feedback from traditional marketing channels but feedback is gotten from social media marketing.

Key performance metrics: Social media platform provide organization will accurate insights in the form of metrics which will guide organization in measuring the success of their social media campaign unlike the traditional marketing channels which fails to provide an accurate measure of marketing campaign success or performance. Through metrics like sentiment analysis, social applause, social emotion, et cetera, organizations are able to understand the success rate of their marketing campaign and if they have been able to reach the target consumer.

Time: Social media creates platform for organizations to engage their customers twenty four hours in a day because an average individuals check their social media account more than ten times a day in the morning, afternoon, and at night. Unlike traditional media where organizations only communicate brand information within limited time, social media platforms allows organizations to engage customers every minute in the day since majority of these social media sites have statistics that shows the trending information which most users view.

Coverage: The number of registered and active users of different social media platform is in billions and this gives organization the certainty of being able to reach large audience unlike traditional marketing channels where the audiences that patronize a particular channel at a point in time are not as active as social media. Organizations are able to interact with different customers across different geography on social media and they can choose the target segment to concentrate their marketing effort on. Organization easily reached the target segment on social media platforms by communicates the right message at the right time.

D. Empirical review

This section reviews existing literature on social media marketing in emerging economies. Thirushen (2011) asserted that globalization and technological advancement has altered the dynamics of the traditional business, more importantly, the approach to marketing. With the spate of social media platform, more companies and advertising agencies are adopting social media to launch and promote their product. Social media marketing is gaining more prominence among companies because of the level of personalized engagement between brands and the customers. Using a sample of two hundred customers, the study found out that customer thought process, brand image, and brand attitude contribute to the effectiveness of social media marketing particularly on Facebook.

Sisira (2011) avowed that social media marketing is one of the best opportunities available for brand to engage with its prospective and potential customers. The avalanche of social media platforms and the rate of internet penetration cause businesses to seek better ways to engage their customers. Through social media sites, companies can customized their advertising needs and better reach their customers. The array of social media platform allows companies to choose a particular site considered to be most effective in promoting their organization product and concentrate their efforts in order to maximize the outcome.

Otugo et al (2015) investigate social media marketing among four hundred undergraduates in selected universities in South East Nigeria. Findings showed that the youth surveyed claimed they were aware of advertisement on Facebook and were able to remember some of the advertisement they have encountered. Respondents revealed that they have encountered product advertisement on products like fashion, music concerts, automobiles, phones, real estates, e.t.c. However, study found out that respondents don't give detailed attention to such promotions as they scan through their profile pages to scoop the updates on their page.

Andrea and Tuan (2014) analyzed social media marketing from the perspective of brand relationship marketing. A systematic literature review was carried out and the findings indicated that social media marketing creates familiarity and friendship with the brand, one-to-one communication/dialogue, and

loyalty which are key elements of relationship marketing. Social media facilitates bonding between customers and brand through dialogue and transparent dialogue between the customers and brand. However, from the literature review, some studies found out that some companies have reasonable likes on their Facebook page but low engagement.

Olabanji et al (2014) employed quantitative research technique to analyze how social media marketing impact on retailer's turnover in South Africa. Using a chi square test, findings revealed that social media marketing impact on retailer's turnover positively. This can be attributed to the strengthening of retailers' brand, increasing of retailers' customers and also creation of more awareness about the location of retailers. Most of the retailers reach their customers through twitter and Facebook but majority has not harnessed the marketing capability of BBM, Whatsapp, LinkedIn and Mxit in the country.

Alakali et al (2014) analyzed how Nigerian firms employed the tools of social media marketing to promote their global market. In addition to the traditional four Ps of marketing, the advent of social media added few more Ps into the existing Ps which includes policy, partnership, and purse strings. Evidence showed that social media marketing is effective in promoting Nigerian firm's products, services, and ideas in the international market.

Abdul and Nor (2016) revealed that the popularity of social media sites like Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Whatsapp, and Blog necessitated the adoption of innovative promotional strategies by companies in order to register their image in the minds of the customers. From information sharing which leads to brand engagement, companies are able to attract potential customers, generate more turnovers, and strengthen their brand image and awareness.

The study found out that companies adopt social media marketing basically because of its usefulness and ease of use.

Using Analysis of Variance, Omotayo et al (2015) investigated the impact of social media marketing on small scale business performance in Ogun state, Nigeria. Findings indicate that social media positively impact on SME business performance in Ota metropolis but many SMEs fails to have concrete social media strategy. This is due to the lack of social media specialist in many SMEs since most of these

organizations manage their businesses by themselves thereby leaving little less time for proper planning and strategizing.

Ali et al (2016) employed a multiple regression analysis to investigate the effect of social media marketing on consumer perception among university students in Faisalabad. Result showed that social media marketing is a significant determinant of consumer perception about company products and services. The vast volume of data generated on the internet significantly influenced consumer perception of a brand. Findings also showed that social media enhanced brand popularity among its customers since most customer uses their smart phone on a daily basis.

Due to the personal autonomy and liberty individuals enjoyed on the internet, customers are able to socialize and engage with their brands on social media platform. Celine (2012) revealed that through interactive dialogue which is facilitated by social media sites, customers can freely communicate their queries and complaints and also give their review of their brand's product. Through online communities, customers that use the same product can share their experience and network among each other. Rashid and Aminu (2014) examined how social media has impacted on virtual marketing in Nigeria. Findings showed that most companies in Nigeria use Facebook to promote their products among customers in Nigeria. This is due to the level of daily activity and traffic on Facebook as an average Nigerian checks his/her Facebook account fourteen times daily.

III. Research methodology

A. Research design

This study adopted quantitative research design to provide in-depth insights that will shed light on the level of social media marketing in emerging economies. The data for this study was objectively collected through a systematic and scientific process in order to provide reliable insights. The study uses both descriptive and inferential statistics to provide empirical fact to the research questions raised in the study. Specifically, the study employed survey research design and data was collected using well-designed and standard questionnaire designed.

B. Scope of study

The study covers emerging economies but was focused on Nigeria being the largest economy in Africa with a teeming population estimated at 193 million. Considering the rate of internet penetration in the country and the number of organizations that have registered their presence online, Nigeria is one of the emerging economies which are the focus of this study. The study also covers social media marketing platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Whatsapp, LinkedIn, et cetera. Similarly, the study will study the uses of social media marketing across various sectors of the economy. This is to provide cross-fertilization of insights across the industry and to comprehensively understand the uses of social media marketing in emerging economy like Nigeria.

C. Study population

This study will cover both small scale and large scale organizations in Nigeria that have existed for a minimum of five years and are active users of social media platform as well as understand traditional marketing channels. The population includes all organizations in emerging economies that falls within small and large scale organizations, both public and private organizations.

D. Sampling technique and sample size

This study adopted purposive sampling method to recruit and interview marketing department staff of the selected organizations. The respondents that represent each organization are mandated to fall within the age of 18 and 65. Due to the nature of this study, a sample size of two hundred marketing staff were interviewed in the study and their opinion on key questions was captured through a standard questionnaire which was designed for such purpose.

E. Data collection

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire sectionalized into two: section A covers the demographic information of the respondents interviewed while the second section covers the research objectives and other key issues evident from the literature. The questionnaire was piloted among ten respondents to ensure face validity and content validity while the reliability was tested using the Cronbach Alpha which was 0.86 indicating the

reliability of the research instrument. The questionnaire was administered in Lagos by trained and experienced interviewers due to the avalanche of registered businesses (national and multinational) in the state. .

F. Model specification

Based on the objective of the study, we specify the following equation

$$BS$$

Where $c_5 =$

Dependent variable

Many proxies have employed to capture brand success such as turnover, product/service quality, image, customer base, and reputation. For this study, we utilized reputation which is measure as either positive or negative. BS means brand success where negative assume 0 values and positive 1.

Control variable

Control variable were included in this model in order to minimize their opinion bias and age bias. Gender and age were considered as control variables so as to objectively analyze the findings of the result and minimize any bias arising from these two variables.

Independent variable

The independent variable is firm’s social activity on different social media platform which includes social audience, comments, likes, dislikes, tweets, retweets, and followers.

IV. Data Analysis

Section A of the question, which include the demographic information of the respondents was analyzed using the descriptive method. Simple percentage method was employed to present demographic analysis in tabulated form while single regression analysis was used to test the research hypothesis.

A. Data Analysis and Presentation

Table I: Demographic.Information

Income level	%	Sex	%	Educational qualification	%	Age	%
≤ ₦50,000	33	Male	51	≤ secondary school	2	18- 24 yrs	14
₦51,000 – ₦100,000	42	Female	49	Polytechnic (ND/HND)	36	25 – 34 yrs	54
₦100,000+	25			University Degree	52	35 – 44 yrs	23
Marital status	Single	Married	Others	Postgraduate degree	10	45 – 54yrs	9
	57	40	3	Others	-		

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Fifty one percent the respondent interviewed are male while forty nine percent are female indicating a minimal gender gap thereby minimizing any gender bias in the study. A sizeable proportion of the respondents (57%) are singles while forty percent (40%) are married. Forty two percent of the respondent (42%) earns between ₦51,000 – ₦100,000 while only twenty five (25%) percent respondents earns over ₦100,000. Majority of the respondents (54%) falls within the age of 25 – 34 years while only twenty three percent (23%) falls within 35 to 44 years. Similarly, a larger percentage of the respondent has received up to university education while only ten percent (10%) are postgraduate degree holder.

Table II: Organizational information

Size	%	Department	%	Ownership	%	Years of existence	%
Smes	23	Marketing	100	Private	93	≤5	27
Medium	44			Public	7	6 – 10	43
Large	33					10+	30
Social media department/team						Yes	No
						34	66

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Forty four percent (44%) of the respondents interviewed works in a medium-sized organization while thirty three percent (33%) works in a large-sized organization. Also, all the respondents interviewed works in the marketing department while forty three percent (43%) of the respondents have been in existence between six to ten years. Out of all the respondents interviewed, only thirty four percent (34%) of the organization have social media

department/team while sixty six percent (66%) revealed they don't have social media department/team.

Table III: Social Media Presence

Social media platform	Whatsapp	Twitter	Facebook	Instagram	Others
Frequency of Usage	54	62	92	53	41
Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Others		
84	69	31	21		

Source: Field survey, 2016

Facebook has the highest usage rate among major organizations sampled in the study which is followed by Twitter, Whatsapp, Instagram, et cetera. Findings also showed that majority of the organizations check their social media account daily (84%).

Table IV: Customers Engagement

S/N	Instruments	Yes	No
1	Have your customer lodge queries through your social media page	64%	36%
2	If yes @ q1, do your social marketing team provide timely response to your customer queries	87%	13%
3	My organization actively engage customers by sharing relevant information on our social media platform	96%	4%

Source: Field survey, 2016

Sixty four percent (64%) of the respondents revealed that their customers have lodge queries through their social media page thus indicating the level of interactive engagement ongoing between the customers and the brand. Similarly, eighty seven percent (87%) claimed that their organization provide timely response to their customers' questions and also ninety six percent (96%) indicated that they share relevant information on social media platform to their customers.

Table V: Product Launch

S/N	Instruments	Yes	No		
1	Brand social media activity influences their product launch in the market	75%	25%		
2	My organization has launched some of its product through social media platform	56%	44%		
Which of the following is the best format of sharing campaign on social media platform					
Text	Voice	Video	Picture	Infographic	Others
85%	76%	64%	87%	89%	

Source: Field survey, 2016

Findings indicated that the level of brand social media activity influence the launch of their product in the market in that the number of brand audience, engagement, and sentiment has general effect on organization's product launch in the market while only twenty five percent (25%) claimed it doesn't have any significant effect. Fifty six percent (56%) claimed that their organizations have launched some of their product through social media platform while only forty four percent (44%) declined. Many respondents (89%) considered info graphic as the best format for sharing marketing campaign online which is followed by picture (87%), text (85%), and voice (76%) respectively.

B. Research Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis one

H0: There is no significant nexus between organizational social media activity and brand success in Nigeria

H1: There is a significant nexus between organizational social media activity and brand success in Nigeria

Table VI: Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.421	.215		3.816	.000
SMA	.328	.107	.087	3.122	.002

a. Dependent Variable: BS

Results indicated that social media activity positively affect brand success in emerging economies. In other words, there is a direct and positive relationship between social media activity and success of an organization's brand in the market. Statistically, the t-statistics showed that social media activity significantly affects brand success and this is significant at 1% level of significance. Therefore, we accept the alternative hypothesis that social media activity significantly affects brand success in emerging economies

V. Summary and Conclusion

This study examines social media marketing in emerging market using a case study of Nigeria. Two hundred respondents were interviewed across different sectors of the economy and their opinions are captured and collated using a structured questionnaire. The study hypothesizes a nexus between social media activity and brand success in emerging economy. Simple regression analysis was used to analyze the hypothesis while simple percentage analysis was use to present demographic information of the study. Findings revealed that Facebook is the prominent social media platform employed by organizations in emerging economy but the rate of adoption is still low considering the percentage of organization that have social media department/team. The study also indicated that social media activity has significant impact on brand success in emerging economies. Based on the findings of the study, the study concludes that social media marketing is gaining traction in emerging economies. Therefore, the following policy recommendations were suggested:

1. Organization should design effective social media marketing strategy in order to increase its brand engagement and create more customer delights
2. There is need for organization to have a social media department/team in order to fully design social media strategy as well as implement it.
3. Small scale organization and new startups in emerging economies should leverage on the social media tools to promote their

businesses in order to remain relevant in the market.

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