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THE EFFECT OF FACEBOOK ADVERTISING ON NIGERIAN STUDENTS' PURCHASING BEHAVIOUR

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ABSTRACT

Social Media functions as a valuable source of a wide range of information on variety of subjects and encourages mass dissemination of information. This enables advertisers, companies and marketers to strike on social media in order to get access to their target customers. Facebook is the leading social network nowadays with over 1 billion users worldwide. Advertisers use Facebook as a tool for introducing various products and services to the public. The aim of this study is to examine the effect of Facebook advertising on Nigerian students' purchasing behaviour. The research analyses the influence of Facebook advertising in purchasing behaviour and decision process focussing on how Facebook advertising creates awareness about brands or products as well as how friend recommendation and celebrity endorsement determines purchasing behaviour. Survey method has been used for this research using questionnaire to collect data from 389 respondents by random sampling using Likert - scale. Findings from the study revealed that Facebook advertising influences Nigerian students' purchasing behaviour as well as their decision process. Furthermore, the study figures out that using celebrities for product promotion or aiming at reaching target consumers for marketers is not an appropriate for Nigerian market, because the findings indicate respondents are not giving value to advertising endorses by celebrities.

KEYWORDS

facebook advertising, purchasing behaviour, social media.

INTRODUCTION

ocial media are commonly used nowadays in order to connect people together all over the globe via internet. The connection may be through social networks, forums, blogs or media sharing websites. People can now have a conversation online, also called interactive dialogue, with anybody and on any subject, permitting them to share their experiences and valuable information. From business or marketing perspective, Social Media Marketing has offered a large variety of new opportunities for companies to promote their brand, products and services. People are actively connecting with each other and talking about their experiences, sharing their opinions about products, brand and services they have tested or even just heard about. This study is aims at exploring how social media advertising specifically Facebook effect Nigerian students' purchasing behaviour.

Connecting to the social media sites or network helps people all over the globe to connect for different purposes. For instance, we can connect with other people, organisations, ideas and information that were not available to us before the invention of social media. This is the new way of understanding other people's character and behaviour, and it also helps in getting first-hand information without being distorted by mainstream media.

LITERATURE REVIEW**SOCIAL MEDIA**

The importance humans attach to communication has led to search for avenues to communicate with people all around the world at the same time during any given time. Hence the invention of different technologies enhances communication both at the interpersonal and mass communication levels. The latest and recent of these inventions is the 'Social Media'.

Social Media sites are the place where millions of people interact and exchange ideas. Therefore, advertisers see Social Media as an avenue where they can meet their target or potential customers. The aim of advertising is to increase commercial profits and the demand of the consumers. The concern of this research is on the effect of advertising via Social Media specifically 'Facebook' on Nigerian students' purchasing behaviour. Facebook is a popular free social networking site that allows users to create profiles, upload pictures; videos, send messages and keep interact with friends and family.

Before the use of internet and social network sites became popular, communication over long distances were very minimal. With the invention of the World Wide Web the internet became a global network and use of social network sites played a vital role in shaping the world to become 'information age' or new media age. Social Media network embraces a mixture of on-line media platforms using social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, video-sharing sites such as YouTube, and photo sharing sites such as Flickr and Picasa (Kesavan, Bernacchi, and Mascarenhas, 2013: 59). Speedy expansion in the use of Social Media across the globe shows that companies can use it to develop their product and service to tally consumer's interest (Mir, 2012).

People with common interest interact on social network sites and sometimes create community which give them opportunity to solve their problem or any matter arise. Social networking sites have emerged as vital communication channels used by individual consumers to produce content, distribute items, share ideas, voice out his or her opinions, and use information and knowledge (Heinrichs, Lim, 2011).

The use of Social Media nowadays is incredible, the massive volume of data provided by Social Media will provide challenges and opportunities. (Hensel and Deis, 2010: 88). Meanwhile, Social Media provide avenues and opportunities that tally with the interest of twenty-one centuries, emerging life without Social Media; some of the benefit or the aim of globalization will not be achieve. Many industries use Social Media to burst their marketing, and also help to meet the demand of their customers. Social Media technologies are disrupting the broadcast 'one-to-many' media model, consumers have opportunity to give feedback. (Barefoot, Szabo, 2010). This means that Social Media is a two-way communication in which sometime customers participate in company decision process.

SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING

Advertisement can be a tool for the introduction of various products and services to the public; the aim of advertising is to increase commercial profits and the demand of the consumers. Wells et al define advertising as: "Advertising is paid persuasive communication that uses non-personal mass media-as well as other forms of interactive communication-to reach broad audiences to connect an identified sponsor with a target audience" (Wells et al, 2007: 5). Nevertheless, advertising is the primary tool to make people aware about the product or service and try to persuade people to go for the product. Wells et al, highlights key concepts of advertising, which they describe as the fundamental elements of advertising. These are: strategy, creative idea, execution and media. Strategy is the Advertising logic; creative idea is the central idea of the advert that catches attention; execution is the implementation while media is the use of channel to communicate.

In today's sophisticated world, Social Media sites have become an avenue where companies can extend their marketing campaigns to a wider range of consumers. Social Media Marketing is the most recent marketing concept and every business owner wants to know how Social Media can generate value for their companies. Social Media Marketing is about understanding how new technology is making it easier for people to connect socially with their social networks and how business can make profit from that perception (Parker, 2011: 1). When company advertising their product on Social Media, they are doing two things; advertising the product and company. For example, many company holders produce different product, when advertising a single product of the company people are likely to know more about the company and its other product.

Social Media advertising is considered to be one of the viral advertising or word-of-mouth marketing. For instance, online users use to tell their offline friends about the product or services they come across in Social Media, and share the page or product to online users; as a result of this the advertising will go viral. Social Media advertising is a powerful communication force and significant marketing tool to sell product, services and ideas. Companies use Social Media to advertise

their products and services, and reach large number of audience at relatively cheap price (Mon, 2013: 43). When advertising message is very effective users will talk more and more about it, and this will make the advertising message to become viral.

Whatever type of business you have i.e. small, medium or big business you can reach your target customers or potential customers via Social Media, because Social Media consist different calibre of people. "Whether you are part of a small, medium, or giant business, or are an individual entrepreneur, your customers are using Social Media, and there's no reason you shouldn't be, too. It costs almost nothing, it's easy to get started, and it can have an enormous financial impact on your business" (Zerralla, 2010: 8).

Social Media advertising is relatively cheaper, it's very important for small and medium entrepreneur to use Social Media to create awareness and boost their business, because customers use Social Media to seek information about the product or service. You don't need to have a big company before joining social media medium and small company also count.

BACKGROUND OF FACEBOOK

Mark Zuckerberg in collaboration with Andrew McCollum and Eduardo Saverin launched Facebook with aim to change social interaction; Facebook started on the Harvard University campus. Within twenty-four hours of going live, 1,200 Harvard students had signed up, within weeks students from Stanford and Yale wanted in (Croft, 2007). More than half of the students create an account. The network was extended to other Boston Universities and finally all US universities (Phillips, 2007).

In February 2004 Facebook was originally founded and restricted to Harvard University students only. In March 2004 the privilege was extended to colleges and university students, users can create a personal account; add other users as friends, and exchange messages, photos and comments when they update their profile; Facebook users may join common interest user groups, organized by workplace, school, college, or other characteristics. Facebook allows anyone who is at least 13-year old to become a registered user of the website (Edosomwan, 2011: 4). This means that anyone below 13 years old is not eligible to register with Facebook. Facebook continue to grow and the company update the site to maintain status. For instance, On May 2006 Facebook introduces additional networks, allowing people with corporate email addresses to join; in 2007 Facebook create a platform which allow outside programmer develops tools for sharing photos, taking quizzes and playing games; in 2008 Facebook introduces 'Chat'; February 2009 Facebook introduces 'Like', allowing people to endorse other people's posts by clicking like; 2010 Facebook launches location feature, 'check-in' allowing people to share where they are with their friends (Associate Press, 2014). Many things introduce within 10 years to improve Facebook site. According to Facebook statistics page, "Facebook is accessed by 1.19 billion active users every month as of September 30, 2013" (Facebook Statistic, n.d). On January, 2014 marketing charts rated Facebook as leading social network with 57.9%. "Facebook.com is a comprehensive and encompassing clustering of networks based on universities and colleges, high schools, work places, and geographic areas." (Ginger, 2008).

FACEBOOK ADVERTISING

Facebook is the leading social network nowadays with over 1 billion users worldwide. Thus, advertisers use Facebook as a tool for introducing various products and services to the public. "Facebook gives companies and brands direct access to customer thoughts, feelings, reactions, responses, and Likes" (Cister, 2010). Facebook is daily destination for millions of people. Companies and advertisers get this advantage to advertise their products and services on Facebook in order to meet their target consumers, or rather potential customers. Advertising on Facebook became popular nowadays. Thus, it is imperative to conduct a research and find out the influence of such advertising and how it affects purchasing behaviour. The assumption of this research is that many students engage in using Facebook surfing for various purposes and gratification. Moreover, it's a well-known fact that Young adult particularly students are the 'active users' of Facebook; and in one way or the other they come across with Facebook Advertising on their pages.

Facebook Adverts are designed to help advertisers show people adverts they find interesting and relevant, from the initial stage Facebook was not mean for advertising, it builds to connect Harvard students, regardless of the reason of building Facebook, the personal information Facebook collect is very important to advertisers. (Marshall, Maloche, n.d). This shows that when Facebook was created the main purpose was to connect between students but it starts growing among students and beyond. Within short period of time Facebook generate large number of users from different calibre of people; this help advertisers and companies to find their target customers or potential customers.

Advertising on Facebook are exceptional, it shown to precise groups of highly engage people on personal computer and mobile phones. When advertising is well created and well targeted, it may get more comments, likes and shares. When users like, comment or share on advert his/her friends may see the Ad and making it more powerful. The more a company or advertisers promote posts and create targeted Ads to specific groups of people, the more likely users are likely to see when they visit their Facebook page. The most important benefits of Facebook advertising to companies or marketers are: targeting specific audience, reaching out to more people, brand awareness and generating sales. The most important thing for the company here is that; create good advertising which may attract users and identify the target group.

The strength of Facebook to advertisers is the availability of information about users. Facebook asks people to register with their real name and provide relevant personal data such as hometown, current city, favourite books, activities and other demographic data that advertisers thrive on to target consumers (Todi, 2008: 11).

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

People are interactively connected with one another, social media interaction allows for the accelerated flow of information for grass-roots struggles, as well as a free medium of communication to date. Therefore, social media help in narrowing the world into a 'globalized' society. Connecting to the social media sites or network helps people all over the globe to connect for different purposes. For instance, we can connect with other people, organisations, ideas and information that were not available to us before the invention of social media. This is the new way of understanding other people's character and behaviour, and it also helps in getting first-hand information without being distorted by mainstream media. The study will help in contributing to the existing literature on how social media especially Facebook influence purchasing behaviour.

STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PROBLEM

Social Media advertising or Social Media marketing is an innovation which forces companies, business tycoons, advertisers to change their marketing strategies from traditional way to modern way, because people shun from patronising traditional media. It's very difficult to escape from advertising messages nowadays since Advertising Agencies are continuously sending out messages on a daily basis. Such messages affect consumers' purchasing behaviour, decision process and increase consumption. An increase in consumption culture is wide spread globally as studies revealed that advertising is a creator of false needs, a manipulator of consumers' minds and an industry as powerful as it can alter culture. Due to the huge impacts of advertising in our lives, it is widely believed that, the purchase and use of goods can convey social identity

OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this study is to examine the effect of Facebook advertising on Nigerian students' purchasing behaviour. In order to do so, this research will try:

1. To analyse the influence of Facebook advertising in purchasing behaviour and decision process.
2. To examine how Facebook advertising create awareness about brands or products.
3. To examine how friend recommendation and celebrity endorsement determine purchasing behaviour.

RESEARCH QUESTION

How do the Nigerian students perceive Facebook advertisement on their purchasing decision?

HYPOTHESES

H1: Gender is an important factor on how students perceive the effectiveness of Facebook advertisement

H2: Education level of the students is an important factor on the perceive effectiveness of Facebook advertisement

H3: Geographical difference is important factor on the perceive effectiveness of Facebook advertisement

H4: When the monthly average household income of the students increases their perception on the effectiveness of Facebook advertising decreases

METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the aim of this research, 'survey research method' was adopted, and it is most suitable for this research because it allows for the study of a fair random representation of the entire population. Survey method is mostly used to assess thoughts, ideas, opinions and feelings. "Surveying is a research method that we use to get information about certain groups of people who are representative of some large group of interest to us" (Berger, 2000: 187). Scheuren describe survey method as: "...the word 'survey' is used most often to describe a method of gathering information from a sample of individuals" (Scheuren, 2004: 9). This also aptly describes what this study aims at doing.

The method is therefore appropriate to this study which aims at collecting data on student's purchasing behaviour and decision processes in relation of Facebook advertising. The survey was conducted online. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed to respondents via mail, and 389 questionnaires were filled-in and returned online. The eleven questionnaires that were not filled, were removed from the data being analyzed leading to 389 questionnaires being used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RQ 1: How do the Nigerian students perceive Facebook advertisement on their purchasing decision?

TABLE I: MEAN VALUES OF QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS

| Item | Mean | SD |
|---|---------------|---------|
| Facebook advertising influences my purchasing behaviour | 2.7326 | 1.13994 |
| Facebook adverts prompt me to purchase a product unintentionally | 2.9254 | 1.17846 |
| Facebook advert change my purchasing decision process | 2.9177 | 1.20925 |
| I often made decision base on Facebook advert | 2.9486 | 1.25074 |
| When intend to buy expensive product, I check advert to see the risk involve | 3.3239 | 1.18972 |
| I bought only expensive brands that are advertised On Facebook | 2.3985 | 1.13886 |
| I bought only cheap brands that are advertised On Facebook | 2.5656 | .98124 |
| Do you think Facebook is useful when looking for opinions about what products to purchase | 3.6069 | 1.15610 |
| I click on advert message to seek information About new product or brand | 3.2674 | 1.35292 |
| Only read advert on product or brand that I'm familiar with. | 2.3702 | 1.10609 |
| Only read advert on product or brand that I'm not familiar with. | 3.2416 | 1.09507 |
| I subscribe Facebook advert base on friend Recommendation | 2.6401 | 1.10250 |
| I sometimes purchase a product, when a friend likes, comment or share | 3.2468 | 1.13781 |
| I check on adverts base on celebrity endorsement | 3.3830 | 1.06723 |
| I check on adverts, and sometimes purchase a Product, when a celebrity likes or comment | 3.6838 | 1.22696 |

For the general research question "how do the Nigerian students perceive Facebook advertisement on their purchasing decision?" the statistics above shows that; Nigerian students are not subscribed advertising messages or try to purchase when celebrities like or comment. The mean is 3.6838 which is the highest with SD of 1.22696, the mean value is negative based on the coding data from strongly agree to strongly disagree (1- 5) that is from lowest to highest.

Moreover, the result indicates that the minimum number of mean is 2.3702 (SD=1.10609). The mean value is visibly closer to the positive end from the negative end. The Nigerian students read advertisement messages on product or brand that they are familiar with. This indicates that Nigerian students has less curiosity about unfamiliar brand or products, and in most cases consumers in general patronized advertisement from famous product or brand; and most of the famous brand or products are produced by big name companies, consumers specifically young adults associate themselves with such companies. Therefore, Nigerian students joined the band-wagon of reading advertisement on popular and familiar product in Facebook. Putting all these together, it could be said that; Facebook advertisement influence Nigerian student purchasing decision.

H1: Gender is an important factor on how students perceive the effectiveness of Facebook advertisements.

The assumption is that; gender is an important factor on how students perceive the effectiveness of Facebook advertisement. The assumption is rejected based on the finding of the study; the result shows that there is no difference between genders in terms of effectiveness of Facebook advertisement 0.2 value proved that male and female do not differ in this sense. Thus, we can conclude that gender is not an important factor of determining purchasing decision among Nigerian students, the purchasing pattern between male and female is almost the same as research revealed.

Even though, the perceive effectiveness of Facebook advertisement is the same between men and women in Nigerian context. but the way they perceive information is differing, men do not pay much attention on cosmetics and fashion while women does.

H2: Education level of the students is an important factor on the perceive effectiveness of Facebook advertisement

According to the finding, graduate students perceive effectiveness of Facebook advertisement more than high school, college and bachelor students. This hypothesis is accepted; educational level is an important factor on the perceive effectiveness of Facebook advertisement, this is because graduate students are using internet more for their academic activities and also for leisure like using social media Facebook inclusive, as a result of that they perceived effectiveness of Facebook advertisement more compare to high school and bachelor students. Also the level of maturity contributes to this; most graduate students are belonging to twenty-five years and above.

According to the literature consumer level of education effect his purchasing pattern and perception of Facebook advertisement is not the same between education levels, as the study indicate graduate students has high perception on Facebook advertisement followed by bachelor students. To sum it up, the study proved that, level of education is an important factor on the perceive effectiveness of Facebook advertisement

H3: Geographical difference is an important factor on the perceive effectiveness of Facebook advertisement

The average of the differences of the mean between north and south is 0.3, the number is negligible. Base on the finding the assumption is not supported; the result shows that there is no difference between north and south in terms of effectiveness of Facebook advertisement. 0.3 values proved that north and south do not differ in this sense. Thus, we can conclude that geographical zone is not an important factor of determining purchasing decision among Nigerian students, the purchasing pattern between north and south is almost the same as research indicate.

H4: When the monthly average household income of the students increases their perception on the effectiveness of Facebook advertising decreases

The correlation coefficient is a measure that determines the degree to which two variables movements are associated.

TABLE II: CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS FOR THE INCOME

| | | | Correlations | |
|----------------|---|-------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| | | | Income of respondents | Facebook advertising influences my purchasing behaviour |
| Spearman's rho | Income of respondents | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | -.410** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | .000 |
| | | N | 389 | 389 |
| | Facebook advertising influences my purchasing behaviour | Correlation Coefficient | -.410** | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | . |
| | | N | 389 | 389 |

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

The correlation analysis result obtained show with a figure -.410; indicate that there is moderate correlation between income and student perceived influence purchase on Facebook. The figure shows in negative value (-.410) but based on the coding system its positive value, because the coding start from lowest to highest. (Strongly agree to strongly disagree). The result revealed that when student's income increases; the influence to purchase also increases or his influence increases as his income increases. For instance, if students' income increases from \$500 to \$700 he will have a moderate positive effect of his influence to increase his purchase as he will tend to spend more of his income. However, the increase in students' income assume from \$500 to \$300 will have a negative effect on his influence to purchase, that is he will tend to spend less of his income. Going by the results of correlation analysis the hypothesis is rejected or not supported which says that "When the monthly average household income of the students increases their perception on the effectiveness of Facebook advertising decreases.

FINDINGS

The findings of the study have shown that Facebook advertising influences Nigerian student's purchasing behaviour and their purchasing decision process, the mean values of the research proved that. Social media provide two way communications between company and consumers, not like mainstream media. Consumers can add their voices; make review about the products and companies respond to the consumer's inquiry and give first-hand information. The study further reveals that using celebrities for product promotion or aiming at reaching target consumers for marketers is not an appropriate in Nigerian market, because most of the respondents are not giving value by advertisement endorsed by celebrities. Furthermore, the study sets four hypotheses to figure out the effectiveness of Facebook advertisement on gender; educational level; geographical zone as well as income.

CONCLUSION

In today's dynamic and interactive world, the notion of advertising goods and services through traditional media of newspapers, television and radio stations are increasingly changing as the internet creates a forum on which social media networks have joined the wagon to lure potential advertisers to reach out to billions of subscribers. Though Peter Drucker a renowned management theorist describes marketing as "a process in which one knows and understands the customer well to easily produce a product or service that fits his wishes," (Kottler, 2009: 8). This study explores how Social Media especially Facebook impacts on Nigerian student's purchasing behaviour. Like in the traditional media that depends on adverts for revenues and sustainability, so is the Social Media. The basis of the study creates an understanding on how Facebook as social media network impacts on a student's life through its adverts done on the social network whose usage is globally increasing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Since Facebook is the destination of mass number of people, it's good for both big and small enterprises to have Facebook page in order to meet their target audience; or prospective customers, it's also important for any organisation whether public or private to provide unit that monitor the activities of Facebook in order to meet consumers or customer's demands; this recommendation is from marketing perspective.

From academic perspective, there is need for academicians to conduct more and more researches about Facebook and social media networks at large because it touches lives of millions. For instance, the studies of negative effect of social media network need to be conducted. Moreover, research need to be done about age and gender i.e. how social media advertising effect age and gender; how age and gender determine purchasing behaviour. Also similar research needs to be conducted by expanding number of samples, since Nigeria is multi-cultural nation with multi-ethnic groups. This research has insufficient time and recourses to go deep into such angles.

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