

Impact of Social Media Marketing Communication on Financial Performance of Selected Banks in Nigeria: A Study Of Zenith, Guaranty Trust And Union Bank

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of social media marketing communication on financial performance of selected banks in Nigeria with particular attention to Zenith, Guaranty Trust and Union banks. The researcher examined this with the use of survey research design. The questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. The study tested four hypotheses that included variables from technology acceptance model. The results gotten through this study confirm that social media has been able to optimistically impact the organizations financial performance. The result of this study also tested and confirmed technology acceptance model. This study recommends, among others, that other organization yet to adopt social media as a form of communicating product and services should so to benefit from its low cost but efficient customer acquisition prowess to increase its good and services delivery and in turn increase its profit.

Keywords: bank, social media, marketing, communication, finance

Introduction :

Social media platforms currently play essential roles in the almost every part of our contemporary society. They have been found beneficial for task execution and behaviour change. Scholars (e.g. Udejah, & Gever, 2015; Ugwuanyi, Gever, & Ojiro, 2019; Wogu; Ezeah, Gever, & Ugwuanyi, 2019) corroborate that social media platforms have emerged as indispensable communication platforms for the 21st century society. Social media utilization has led to massive change in communication and the dynamics of human relationships taken on a new perspective (Adeyeye, Audu, Onoja, Ogwo & Ojih, 2013). Social media has provided consumers with a platform to form a "tribal community around a product or brand" (Njeri, 2014, p. 11). For instance, Mangold and Faulds (2009) opine that social media, rather than websites and email programmes, remains the largest web presence for many businesses in recent times. Thus social media has mutated how businesses interact and communicate with their customers as well as how they establish and implement their customer relationship management (CRM) policies (Sinclair and Vogus, 2011). In the words of Tirunillai and Tellis (2012), marketers and financial analysts consider social media to be the most effective channels where online users review and blog to provide product and brand specific information compared with other popular forms of marketing. Different from conventional online consumer behavior metrics, Aral and Walker (2011) explains that social media metrics are featured by their ability to generate, share, and spread information virally, which creates a social contagious effect largely driven by the unprecedented speed of information diffusion through the Internet. Considering the seeming acceptance of social media among members of the populace as a channels of communication, different marketing organizations have adopted social media platforms as through which they promote their services and market their products. Banks are among the organizations that have found social media useful. The situation in the banking sector is of particular attention because of banks.

First, the banking industry is one of the few industries where there is not much product differentiation. This is because, as financial institutions, every bank offers a similar mortgage of services across all sectors. To this end, marketing communication remains one of the critical factors in successful banking across the globe as it helps in differentiating the seemingly similar services in the competitive market environment. However, the art and science of marketing communication has evolved over the years- from its late 1950s advertising and promotion concept to the drive for customer satisfaction in 1960s and 1970s and the emergence of the Internet and social media marketing in the 1990s to the present day internet era. Survival in the current banking industry therefore is no longer based on the size of the bank, but rather on its ability to innovate.

According to Vater et al. (2012), many banks across the world are responding to this challenges by rolling out a broad array of initiatives that place bold bets on new digital technologies, which they expect will fundamentally change how they attract and retain customers. Most banks are investing heavily in applications for smartphones and digital tablets that make it easy for customers to conduct a wide range of banking activities while on the go. Some are developing interactive tools that help customers analyze their spending habits and strengthen their money management skills. Still others are mobilizing the power of social networks to draw "fans" to feature-rich social media pages that build their brands and entice consumers to share personal information. Each of these initiatives marks a major effort to harness fast-moving digital technologies, unrestricted mobile access and vibrant social media to banks' marketing communication with their customers (Adelola, 2016).

To this end, scholarship in other climates has started documenting the extent of social media utilization in marketing, advertising, promotion, interaction, and communication among others (Oluwagbemi, Abah & Achimugu, 2011; Kimaru, 2011). In the same vein, others have started investigating the impact of social media on marketing performance, financial performance, among other (Njeri, 2014). However, studies on the Nigerian banks' utilization of social media for marketing of banking services remain relatively few. As such, possible impact of social media marketing communication on the financial performance of commercial banks in the country seems to be shrouded in obscurity. This has resulted in the dearth of empirical data to guide policy makers on the utilization of social media for marketing communication in the banking sector in the country. This study sought to fill the knowledge gap.

Literature Review

Social iMedia iMarketing i

Social media marketing is a new trend and rapidly growing ways in which businesses are reaching out to targeted customers easily (Nadaraja & Lumpur, 2013). A basic definition of social media marketing is "using social media channels to promote your company and its products" (Barefoot & Szabo, 2010). An expanded definition is "a process that empowers individuals to promote their websites, products, or services through online social channels and to communicate with and tap into a much larger community that may not have been available via traditional advertising channels" (Weinberg, 2009). This kind of marketing can be thought of as a subset of online marketing activities that complete traditional Web-based promotion strategies, such as e-mail newsletters and online advertising campaigns (Barefoot & Szabo 2010). By

encouraging users to spread messages to personal contacts, social media marketing has injected a new term of exponential dissemination and trust to mass-communication and mass marketing (Hafele, 2011). By this new approach of outreach and marketing, new tools are being developed and increased in turn for businesses. Social media marketers are now going better and more effective insight through the introduction of analytic applications by official social network site platforms (Hafele, 2011).

In marketing communication as obtains in the banks, social media is deployed in a number of ways and using different strategies irrespective of the social networking site in question. For instance, when social media like the Facebook, the bank or the organization can replace the concept of human 'friend' with the brand or tangible product or create a page or group (Facebook, 2011). As such, a user who elects to 'like' a product or company advertises that connection to their own private network of contacts. Similar trend can be observed in other social media as well. According to iBorges (2009), Twitter is combination of micro blogging and social network (Borges, 2009). Twitter, allows users to receive small updates and advertisements from favored producers as well (Hafele, 2011). Twitter gives opportunity to users to involve in real time sharing. A tweet is usually no more than 140 characters, which followers of the user can see (Borges, 2009). Recent scholarship equally suggests that collaborative projects, such as wikis, or editable data-sources, are particularly poignant avenues of contact and are quickly becoming the predominant source of information among consumer populations (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010) cited by (Hafele, 2011).

In addition, blogs managed by either individuals or organizations, are another heavily used marketing forum. Through blogs, businesses can promote brand awareness by sharing insider information, updating customers on new products, as well as providing links to the main sales channels. Fans will be updated time to time on any special events, contests or a new promotion organized by the brand or product. Blogs also facilitate the posting of comments and feedbacks, allowing fans and detractors to post opinions and questions to producers. This encourages the exchange of ideas between peers and can also promote honest discussion between individuals and companies to improve their defaults (Hafele, 2011).

Nowadays, Social Media Marketing and more particularly Social Networks are becoming increasingly important in consumers' purchasing decisions, mainly because they amplify word-of-mouth (Adegbuyi, Akinyele and Akinyele, 2015). They may even become more important than advertising as a trusted source of information. To this end, social media approaches need to be considered to ensure the highest chance of success with a social media marketing. According to iRay et al. (2011) as cited in iNick iHafele i(2011) there was need to diversify social media strategy to ensure that messages are reaching appropriate audiences.

Empirical Literature and hypotheses formulation

We examined previous studies to enable us develop assumptions for the study. Musoka (2017) studied social media brand strategy and marketing performance of telecommunication firms in Kenya. A descriptive survey design was used; it targeted all 11 registered and licensed telecommunication firms in Kenya. The study deduced that the firm's interaction with its customers through social media improved their attitudinal loyalty and improved customer retention and acquisition thus improving marketing performance. Okari (2017) carried out a study on social media usage and its effect on the financial performance of deposit taking microfinance institutions in Kenya. To achieve the study objectives it adopted a descriptive research design, it carried out a census survey of all the 13 deposit taking microfinance in Kenya.

The study found out that from the deployment of social media, it led to an increase in number of new customers which improved their asset and loan portfolio and hence better performance of the microfinance institutions in Kenya.

Kazungu, Matto and Massawe (2017) studied how performance of micro enterprises was affected by uptake of social media in Moshi Tanzania. The study used case study as a research design. Respondents of the study were selected by use of random sampling. Results from the study concluded that micro-enterprises used social networks to a large extent and this helped to improve their commercial performance. Ochieng (2015) carried out a study on social media marketing, challenges and performance of start-up companies in Nairobi. The study adopted descriptive cross-sectional research design; it targeted 548 start-up companies located in Nairobi out of which 231 start-ups formed the sample of the population. The findings of the study revealed that most start-up use social media interactive platforms such as Facebook and whatsapp. From the study, it deduced that the use of social media improved company performance by improving their brand awareness, making it easier to sell their products. Arockiaraj and Baranidharan (2014) found that social media networking is a genuine cultural phenomenon and has become the most popular online sector in less than ten years in India. They established that marketers of brands can best use social media to engage with their core customers. The social media creates brand awareness; a constant need for learning and developing new knowledge as well as for measuring and following up. Regarding the different degrees of brand awareness, there exists a clear strategy for how to reach the different stages of brand awareness, from the weakest to the strongest (word-of-mouth). Jembere, Contogiannis and Chikandiwa, (2013) carried out a study on how South African banks had adopted the use of social media marketing. The study targeted 28 marketing and communications managers from randomly selected South African banks and 5 South African social media experts. In-depth interviews were used to collect data and from their findings they were able to deduce that Social media's uptake is still at its early development stages in South Africa, though the main platforms used by the banks are Facebook and Twitter, which are mainly used for advertising and customer service.

Schivinski and Dabrowski (2013) investigated consumers' perception of brands as a result of social media communication using 504 Facebook users. The results of their empirical studies showed that user-generated social media communication had a positive influence on brand equity and brand attitude. In addition, the analysis indicated that firm-created social media communication affected only brand attitude. Both brand equity and brand attitude showed a positive influence on purchase intention. Moreover, measurement invariance was assessed using a multi-group structural modeling equation.

Odhiambo (2012) explored whether social media is more effective than the traditional media in a brand management perspective. The study established that even though social media is more effective than some of the traditional advertising channels, it cannot be implemented in isolation without augmenting it with other forms of traditional advertising channels. The implications are that social media alone cannot single handedly create brand awareness or even develop business. Based on the studies above, the researchers hypothesized:

H₁ Social media marketing communication significantly impact on sales performance in the selected banks in Nigeria.

H₂: Social media marketing communication has significantly impact on cost of customer acquisition in the selected banks in Nigeria.

H₃: Social media marketing communication has no significant impact on risk mitigation and management in the selected banks in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

The researcher made use of technology acceptance model to articulate this study. Numerous innovation acknowledgement theories and models have been produced or used to study information technology acceptance. One of these propositions is the Technology acceptance model (TAM) advanced by Davis (1989). According to the theory, a prospective user's inclination towards using a given system is hypothesized to be a fundamental factor of consideration of whether it will be adopted. The theoretical foundation is anchored on the argument that, when a new technology is presented to users, three major factors affect their decision on how and when they will utilize it. The first major factor of consideration is its perceived usefulness (PU), the second is its perceived ease of use (PEOU), while the third determinant is the user attitude towards usage (ATU) and perceived utility which is the degree to which a user believes that adoption of a particular system can improve work performance. The adoption and use of emerging technologies by most businesses is so as to improve efficiency on the job, which subsequently leads to improved job performance. Most organizations have embraced the use of social media which can be viewed as a new technology; its uptake has been on the rise due to the realization that it's an efficient platform for interacting with prospects and customers. It offers organizations the opportunity to engage their clientele and meet their demands almost on real time basis. This has greatly improved the performance of most sales personnel as they are able to present their offerings to prospects, resolve issues with their customers and thus are able to improve on their productivity and performance significantly. On the other hand, perceived ease of use (PEOU) is whereby an individual believes that the adoption or use of a system will be effortless. Perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use positively affects the attitudes towards usage of technology. In this study, the researcher made use of this theory to explain if its variables determine the decision to make use of social media to enhance the performance of banks in Nigeria. Based on the theory above, the researcher hypothesized:

H₄: Variables technology acceptance model will significantly predict the utilization for social media in banking in Nigeria.

Methodology

The researcher employed survey research method. The use of survey method presented the universe of the study by appropriating or reducing it to provide the opportunity to check on the incident, distributions and interrelation of variables (Wimmer and Dominick, 2009). Also, survey design aided this study in getting access to the primary data from the respondents, getting their opinions and give options for their divergent views on the focus of the study. The population of this study entails all 391 marketing staff of the selected banks (Zenith Bank PLC, Guarantee Trust Bank PLC and Union Bank Nig PLC) from North central Nigeria. It was decided that marketing staff were better for the study because they are the ones responsible for selling the banks and their products to the outside world. All the elements were studied because the population was small and could be managed. Therefore, there was no sampling for the study. The instrument for the collection

of data in this study was the questionnaire. One advantage of the questionnaire is that it aids objective reports in the area of survey research, thereby providing facts and figures, where necessary, in any human situation. The validity of the instruments was tested ahead by three communication experts. The reliability of the instrument was however tested by the results generated from the pilot study conducted at Abuja branches of Zenith Bank plc, Guarantee Trust plc and Union Bank Nig Plc, where 42 respondents were administered the copies of the questionnaire for assessment purposes. The test method used was split-half method reliability coefficient. This involves the correlation of the total score on one half of the test with the total score of the other half. Based on this, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) was used to calculate the reliability, using SPSS 20 as seen below:

Table 1: Correlational Coefficient Test of Reliability Using Pearson’s R Split Method

Correlations		X	Y	x ²	y ²	Xy
X	Pearson Correlation	1	1.000**	.968**	.970**	.969**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	42	42	42	42	42
Y	Pearson Correlation	1.000**	1	.968**	.970**	.969**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	42	42	42	42	42
x ²	Pearson Correlation	.968**	.968**	1	1.000**	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	42	42	42	42	42
y ²	Pearson Correlation	.970**	.970**	1.000**	1	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	42	42	42	42	42
Xy	Pearson Correlation	.969**	.969**	1.000**	1.000**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	42	42	42	42	42

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

Interpretation: From the analysis in the table, the PPMC for the test scores obtained shows a perfect correlation (1.000**) for x and y scores, very high positive correlation (.968**) for x² and y² (.969**), respectively. Therefore there is highly significant correlation between the two scores at 0.01**. This implies that a positive relationship exists between the test scores, thus the items are reliable and as such, the instruments were upheld. The data to be generated was presented and analyzed using quantitative techniques. The quantitative technique included descriptive and inferential statistics like frequency and percentages and Chi-square test of independence as well as multiple regression. Results were presented in tables.

Results

Out of the 391 copies of the questionnaire that were administered to the respondents, 366 copies representing 94% were returned and found useful. The sample was 52% and 48% female. All the respondents had tertiary education. The mean number of years of working with the bank was 9 years (range of 5 years and 12 years). The results of the hypothesis testing is presented below:

Table i2: iChi-square itest ion isignificant iof isocial imedia imarketing icommunication ion isales iperformance iin iselected ibanks a

Grouping	Level of sig	df	p. value	Decision
SMM	0.05	6	.013	Sig
Mkt perf.				

Note: SMM= social media marketing
MKT perf= Marketing performance

The result of the study as shown in table two was meant to determine the association between social media marketing and marketing performance in the banking sector. The result of the study showed that a significant association exists between social media marketing and marketing performance of banks ($P < 0.05$) Therefore, the first assumption was supported and the researcher concludes with 95% confidence that a significant association exists between social media marketing and the performance of commercial banks.

Table i3: iChi isquare ishowing iimpact iof isocial imedia imarketing icommunication ion icost iof iacquisition iin iselected ibanks iin iNigeria a

Grouping	Level of sig	Df	p. value	Decision
SMM	0.05	12	.031	Sig
Cost of acq.				

Note: SMM= social media marketing
Cost of acq: Cost of aquisition

From itable i3, iit ican ibe iconfirmed ithat iis ia istrong irelationship ibetween isocial imedia icommunication iand icustomer iacquisition iin iselected ibanks iin iNigeria. i iWe iconclude ithat ithere iis ivery istrong ievidence ithat iSocial iMedia iMarketing iCommunication ihas ia ipositive ieffect ion icustomer’s isatisfaction iin i(Chi-square i= i17.549^a, idf i= i12, ip< i0.031, ias iabove).Therefore, the second assumption was supported. i i i i

Table 4: Chi-square showing impact of social media marketing on risk mitigation

Grouping	Level of sig	Df	p. value	Decision
SMM	0.05	12	.031	Sig
Risk mitigation				

Note: SMM= social media marketing

The result of the study above examined the association between social media and risk mitigation. The result of the study showed that the $P < 0.05$ is less than the level of significance. Therefore, the researchers concluded that there is a significant relationship between social media marketing and risk mitigation among banks in Nigeria. The third assumption was supported.

Table 5: Regression analysis predictors of social media use for marketing in banks

Exposure	Constant	β value	R square	F. value	P. value
Perceived Ease of use	2.012	.306	.499	12.441	.02
Perceived usefulness		-.888			.001
Attitude to social media		-.506			.002

In the table above, the researchers made use of variables from technology acceptance model to examine how they predict the utilization of social media in marketing in the banking sector. The result of the study revealed an overall p-value of 0.001 with R. Square value of .499. What this means is that our model explains 49.9% variance in the utilization of social media for marketing. The result of the Beta value showed that perceived usefulness contributed more in predicting the use of social media in bank marketing. This means that the last assumption was supported and the researchers conclude that variables from technology acceptance model predict the utilization of social media for marketing in the banking sector.

Discussion of Findings

The goal of this research work was to examine the impact of social media marketing communication on financial performance of selected banks in Nigeria with particular attention to Zenith, Guaranty Trust and Union Bank. This was achieved through quantitative method of data collection. The researchers tested four hypotheses. The results of the study suggest that social media marketing communication has a significant impact on sales performance in the selected banks in Nigeria. What this means is that the application of social media in banking sector results to a corresponding improvement in the performance report of banks. The result of this study is similar to that of previous researchers (Adegbuyi, 2013; Kaplan, & Haenlein, 2010; Weinberg, 2009) whose finding revealed that social media platforms are essential in the performance of business organizations. The researchers equally examined the impact of social media marketing communication on customer acquisition cost in the selected banks. The result showed that social media have had tremendous impact on customer acquisition by reducing cost of customer's acquisition to a very

large extent. According to Levitt (2006), customers are assets that need to be acquired before they can be managed for profit. Customer acquisition is hugely important to companies in many contexts: for new business start-ups, when entering new geographic or customer market segments, when launching a new product, when exploiting new applications for an existing product or service, when marketing low involvement products and services, when repeat purchases are infrequent, and when switching costs are low. Prior to the use of social media marketing, the banks invest heavily in manpower in recruiting massively to help acquire customers but in recent time with the use of modern technology, the banks have been able to get in touch with millions of people with much more satisfaction and reduced cost. The researchers examined the impact of social media marketing communication on risk mitigation and management in the selected banks. The result of the study showed that a significant relationship exists between social media use and risk mitigation. Despite the fact that there are other risk factors such as data and information regulatory risk and operational risks, the reputational risk is high and this points to the fact that the social media managers of banks should be set up to avoid such risks as this or to counter these risks if they cannot be prevented. The result of this is that banks' public relations experts should be consulted by the social media administrators of banks to deal with threats like this. Another implication of this result is the fact that reputation issues discredit banks and hence, affect their market performance on the long run and therefore this issue is one that should be handled, tackled and prevented properly to forestall poor market performance. According to McKinnon, (2002), in social media interaction, risks can be managed and mitigated efficiently. By applying predictive analytics to social data banks could identify potential defaulters and identify market trends. Banks therefore can take adequate measures to shield itself from risk and business cycle volatility. The researcher also made use of variables from technology acceptance model to determine if they predict the utilization of social media in banking. The result confirmed that variables such as perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness and attitude towards social media are predictors of social media use in banking sector. This means that the current study tested and confirmed the technology acceptance model.

5.1 Conclusion

Financial institutions have embraced social media bringing them closer to the goal of customer satisfaction. Social media interaction avails financial institutions a platform to reach out to customers and deal with their needs and enquiries in real time. This will increase the quality of their services and levels of consumer loyalty. The firms have adopted social media platforms in marketing their products and services in order to lower their cost of operations. The trend is hastening the adoption rate of social media marketing by banking institutions which significantly increases revenue from the uptake of loans. Social media policies are in place to ensure proper and efficient utilization of social media platforms by banking institutions.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Following this research, it is recommended that financial institutions yet to embrace social media in their operations should do so because social media is rich in opinions, wishes and comments among other benefits yet to be realized. A lot of noise may be irrelevant but if data is refined, it has the greater potential to provide the banking industry with vivacious comprehension and understanding of their current and potential customers and their demands and needs in order to increase customer satisfaction levels. From the front line to the back office, staff must be given training and flexibility to

provide service on social media channels. Modalities must be installed to facilitate harvesting of social insights for the stakeholder groups of the business to meet their individual goals and deliver on the overarching business strategy. The management should also keep in mind the target audience who will be consuming social media shared information. They should ensure that the social media initiative deployed is providing value towards their overall business strategy and business goals to understand if the social media initiative is deepening customer relationship and understand the quality of service delivered to their customers to establish whether there are any opportunities for improvement in existing processes.

Lastly, the study recommends that banks that have no social media policies to draft and adopt one to ensure that they are transparent and meet the ethical business behaviour in the field of social media interactions.

Suggestions for Further Research

Due to the limited time and funds, a few areas are hereby recommended for more research. Further studies should be carried out on the impact of social media marketing in the banking industry involving all commercial banks in the country. Another study should also be conducted on the general perspective of how social media and mobile applications integrated with other emerging technology infrastructure in shaping the delivery of financial services in the financial industry in Nigeria.

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