

The Impact of Social Marketing Networks on the Promotion Of Nigerian Global Market: An analytical approach

¹Alakali, Terfa T., ²Alu, Francis A.
³Mr.Tarnong, Moses, ⁴Mr. Ogbu Edwin

¹Research Fellow University of Nigeria Nsukka, Nigeria

²Research Fellow Benue State University Makurdi

³Lecturer, Department of Mass Communication, University of Mkar, Mkar Benue State Nigeria.

⁴Lecturer, Department of Mass Communication, University of Mkar, Mkar Benue State Nigeria.

ABSTRACT: *The study: “The impact of social marketing Networks on the Promotion of Nigerian Global Market: An Analytical Approach” explored the use of various social media channels such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, etc for global marketing activities by various business organizations across the globe. Evolving the Global Village theory, which discusses the application of ICTs in many fields of specialization including online or network marketing, the study adopted the survey methodology to analyze to generate data for the respondents. The study revealed that, most businesses utilise the social marketing networks to promote their global marketing activities. The study recommended that the Nigerian Global market should evolve the use of social marketing networks to help boost Nigeria’s global market expansion.*

I. BACKGROUND

The mass media plays very crucial role in the promotion of marketing activities of any organisation both it public or private. The relationship between the media and marketing is mutually beneficial and dates back to ages. This relationship is better captured by Chile, (2012:146) thus:

The media marketing partnership is demonstrated in the sense that the media create avenue for companies/business firms to reach out to their potential buyers. The idea is to inform people and persuade them in a way that will convince them to patronise the product, services or ideas.

Marketing involves a transaction that involves the exchange of goods or services for money or for a token. Stewart (1985:2) defined marketing as “the vehicle through which a company achieves its short term goals and strategic aims in terms of long –term survival in the face of change particularly competitive change”.

Pride & Ferrel (1989) in Ajala (2005:25) says marketing consists of individual and organizational activities that facilitate and expedite satisfying exchange relationship in a dynamic environment through the creation of distribution, promotion and pricing of goods, services and ideas. Specifically, marketing involves finding out what the customer’s needs, developing a product or service to satisfy customers needs and lastly, determining appropriate mix decisions of price, to promote and distribute the product or services. The need to increase the channels of marketing of goods, services and ideas across the globe is increasing every day. This is because most business organizations want to showcase their products beyond their immediate environment, and also engage in partnership with other organisations or countries. This is more so as government and private individuals continually engage in business activities in order to sustain the economy given the global economic meltdown.

In Nigeria, the deregulation polices initiated by various governments in the country have open door for more competition in the Nigerian market globally. And with the use of information and communication technologies (ICT), being mainstreamed in the global market, organizations no longer rely on traditional media channels which include newspapers, magazine, radio, television, bill boards etc for the promotion of marketing activities alone. The social media networks commonly referred to as social marketing networks also provides other channels for marketing activities globally.

Social marketing was "born" as a discipline in the 1970s, when Philip Kotler and Gerald Zaltman realized that the same marketing principles that were being used to sell products to consumers could be used to "sell" ideas, attitudes and behaviors. Kotler and Anderson define social marketing as "differing from other areas of marketing only with respect to the objectives of the marketer and his or her organization" Elliott, (1991) states that:

Among various reasons, the emergence of social marketing responded to two main developments: the political climate in the late 1960s that put pressure on various disciplines to attend to social issues, and the emergence of non-profit organizations that found social marketing to be a useful tool.

Like commercial marketing, the primary focus is on the consumer--on learning what people want and need rather than trying to persuade them to buy what we happen to be producing. Social marketing talks to the consumer, not about the product alone but also the benefits. The planning process takes this consumer focus into account by addressing the elements of the "marketing mix." This refers to decisions about the conception of a Product, Price, distribution (Place), and Promotion. These are often called the "Four Ps" of marketing. Social marketing also adds a few more "P's which include partnership, policy and Purse Strings. Furthermore, Anderson (1994:110) defines social marketing as:

The adoption of commercial marketing technologies to programmes designed to influence the voluntary behavior of target audiences to improve their personal welfare and that of the society of which they are part of.

Social marketing practices are based on commercial marketing practices that make the consumer the central focus for planning and conducting a program. Social Media Marketing is simply a form of advertising that reaches out to a wide range of target audience in a fast, convenient, and inexpensive manner. With the use of social book marketing, media, and networking sites, a small-medium business entrepreneur can afford to promote their services or products on the Internet without dipping into profits.

The impact of social marketing in global marketing cannot be underestimated. In Nigeria, social marketing is just an emerging field and as a result it is yet to be fully utilised by many companies and business organizations that operate within Nigerian and African region. However, with Nigeria gradually gaining attention in the global market, social marketing is increasingly becoming a viable option for modern marketing activities. This study therefore attempts to explore the impact of social marketing network in the promotion of Nigerian market at the global stage.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As noted before, social media networks are fast gaining ground in the promotion of marketing activities globally. Most developed economies take advantage of the versatility of the social media networks to promote and link up with their existing and potential clients globally. Social marketing networks utilizes social media channels like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Yahoo, YouTube etc to reach their target market on daily basis. However, the Nigerian market which is also desirous of global attention is yet to fully embrace the social marketing networks for marketing activities. The study therefore investigates the impact of social marketing on the promotion of Nigeria products in the global market. The study also investigates the advantages of social marketing networks over the traditional media channels which have been in existence in Nigeria over the years.

The social marketing networks have proved to be effective in the promotion of products, services and ideas in the global market with less cost and considerable time saving with the potentials of meeting large target audience. Aware of this many international brands such as *Nokia, Samsung, Etisalat*, Manchester United, Barcelona, Emirate and many popular organizations marketing their products on the social networks using different promotional strategies.

With many Nigerians patronizing the social media which according to Facebook statistics (2010:2) puts thus "At least one million, seven hundred and fourteen Nigerians use the social media especially the Facebook, with a good number of them being young". The study intends to finally investigate the benefits of promoting the Nigerian market on the social media networks and also identify some potential constraints militating against the full adoption of social media channels for the promotion of Nigerian global market.

III. OBJECTIVE

The broad objective of this study is to find out the impact of social marketing in the promotion of Nigerian global market. Specific objectives of the study include:

- (i) To identify the benefits of social media networks in the promotion of Nigerian global market.
- (ii) To explore the advantages of social marketing for the Nigerian market.
- (iii) To identify the impediments of using social media as a promotional strategy in the global market.

Research Question

The research questions are as follows:

- (i) Are there some benefits in the use of social marketing networks in the promotion of Nigerian global market?
- (ii) Are there some challenges in the use of social marketing networks for the Nigerian global market?
- (iii) Are there some factors impeding the use of social media as a promotional strategy.

Significance of the Study

First and foremost, it is hoped that this study will provide additional knowledge and literature on the topic under study. It is also hoped that the study in its practical value will help government and other agencies both local and international in designing programmes that will promote better marketing strategies for the Nigerian global market. Similarly, it is hoped that this study will unravel other issues relating to Nigerian global market. But above all, the study will be significant to the government, the society and members of the academia.

The study being an emerging field will contribute to investment opportunities in Nigeria if adopted by stakeholders as another channel for information dissemination on the Nigerian global marketing with the aim of boosting the Nigerian economy. It will also promote marketing activities for the Nigerian market both locally and internationally.

Literature Review

Social media marketing has emerged as a powerful new tool in recent years and will continue to be integrated into companies marketing communications plans. In Nigeria, just like many other countries, the social marketing networks is yet to be fully mainstreamed into the promotional channels of most business organizations for marketing activities even though this channel is very useful for global marketing activities.

For example, Facebook may be used for customer service and broadcasting updates while Twitter may be used for promotions. YouTube could give the behind the scenes look at the organization. One obvious benefit of social marketing is the ability of the two parties to participate and contribute instantly on the topic of discussion.

According to Tulchinsky, (2007:3) many people participate regularly in Social Media Marketing. One example of the most popular sites is YouTube, which gets around 25 million visitors each month. This simply indicates that a lot of people enjoy communicating with others in interactive communities. By using YouTube alone, a company can increase its chance of attracting more clients, especially if its videos are interesting and are of high quality.

The success factor may depend upon the goals: a certain number of new customers as a result of a promotion may be one goal; another may be responding to all customer complaints within a specified window of time in a customer service situation. The secret to effective Social Media Marketing is focus. Social Media Marketing experts recommend targeting a limited number of websites that serve the needs of a specific target market instead of focusing on numerous social media and bookmarking websites.

Baker, (2009) however notes that "not all Web readers or visitors will buy your product or service. So instead of fishing for traffic in highly irrelevant websites earn real audience at websites that provide Web visitors with the same or related service to what your company offers". Furthermore, learning about a social media site's characteristics, its strengths and weaknesses can help you know how to efficiently use each site for your small business.

For instance, the results of a study conducted in December 2012 by social marketing software Provider, Awareness Inc. on the using social media for marketing titled 'The State of Social Media Marketing: Top Areas for Social Marketing investment and Biggest Social Marketing Challenges in 2012' revealed that about 320 marketers from various industries and with varied levels of experience in social marketing, highlights how professionals can improve their social marketing skills and reach out to a larger audience in order to maximize their profit.

According to the report, content publishing is predicted to happen at a higher frequency and social marketing management and monitoring will receive more attention. Among the major challenges that marketers continue to face are the generation of sufficient resources – 77% of respondents identified this as a challenge – followed by the ability to accurately measure the return on investment generated by their marketing campaigns – 58% of respondents consider this to be a challenge. Apart from popular social sites like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, marketers are also trying to make use of other resources such as blogs, forums and YouTube.

The research revealed that, those who are new to social marketing do not give much importance to the availability of appropriate tools and methods, but those who already run social campaigns pay more heed to the availability of the right tools and methods to reach out to the target audience. One of the most obvious advantages of social marketing is the opportunity for immediate feedback. This Belch and Belch (2001:24) notes:

Unlike the traditional form of marketing communication such as advertising, which is one way in nature, this new media allows users perform a variety of functions such as receiver and alter images, make inquires, respond to questions and of course make purchase.

This unique opportunity offered by social marketing has a huge advantage over other channels of marketing in terms of interactivity and can be useful in promoting the Nigerian global market. While organizations may continue to design and implement different marketing strategies and communication programmes, the new media can also be incorporated in the marketing strategy which could payoff.

Also commenting on the use of ICT which has given rise to social marketing Jillian (2003) noted that: *The advent of and development of technology has resulted in the convergence of traditional media into a new communication medium the internet. Encompassed with all the print, audio and visual elements of journal media, the internet become a bridge for the marketing industry to cross over from conventional forms of magazine and newspaper ads, radio and television commercials to internet marketing such as web banners and pop up ads.*

As noted above, the internet technology has provided a good channel for global marketing which can have enormous impact on Nigerian global marketing activities. Mielach, (2012) observed that “even though the popularity of social media marketing has grown in recent years, marketers are still unsure exactly how their efforts are helping businesses” This is because there have not taken time to study the success achieved through social marketing. This could be the situation with Nigeria where the available social media networks are not fully utilised for marketing the Nigerian brands.

Similarly, Boyd, Harper A., John W. Mullins and Orville C. Walker Jr. (2006), in their new research found that, the biggest problem that marketing and advertising managers have with social media marketing is measuring the return on investment it provided their businesses. Overall, 40 percent of advertising and marketing executives polled said that measuring the return of social media marketing was the top challenge for social media initiatives. Just fewer than half of that number, 19 percent, worried about finding the right people to carry out such campaigns. An additional 13 percent said that funding such efforts was their top problem.

Even with marketing executives expressing doubt on how to measure the effectiveness of social media campaigns, gaining support for social media marketing was a challenge for just 10 percent of marketers. This shows the willingness of businesses to invest in marketing on social media even if concrete results are not available to quantify its effectiveness at this point. There is therefore no doubt that, social marketing could be a viable channel in the promotion of the Nigerian global market because of the unique potentials provided by the medium.

IV. THEORETICAL

The Global Village Theory:

This study will be anchored on the **Global Village Theory** propounded by Marshal McLuhan. The theory best explains the rationale of international communication as Okoro (2002:9) stressed that “the phenomenon of the ever widening accessibility of the lifestyles of various cultures was breaking down boundaries that separated the societies and forming a new global extensive polysemous environment”. McLuhan’s contention suggests that new electronic interdependence had created the world in the form of a global village. In apparent echo of the theoretical construct, with regard to the discourse on the impact of ICTs on the global communications vis-à-vis Third World development, Baran (1998:63) notes that:

As the media shrinks the world, people will become increasingly involved in one another’s lives. As people come to know more about others who were once separated from them by distance, they will form a new beneficial relationship.

The ever increasing advancement in the sphere of ICTs has authenticated McLuhan’s construct as a veritable research postulate and makes it relevant to our study because technology has made the world a global village thus facilitating marketing activities. The social networks can therefore be effectively used to promote the Nigerian market at the global level. The use of social networks for marketing activities can improve more marketing channels and avenue for the Nigerian market at the global level.

Methodology

This paper adopted the survey research methodology utilizing the questionnaire to generate data from respondents in the sampled area.

Population of the study

The population of the study is restricted to Benue State comprising of 23 Local government areas. However the study is limited to Makurdi metropolis where our targeted population mostly uses the social media networks. Makurdi has a population of two hundred and ninety seven thousand, three hundred and ninety-eight (297,398) people according to 2006 National Population and Housing Census figures.

Method of Data Collection.

To generate data, the researcher administered 200 structured questionnaires on respondents within Makurdi metropolis. To get the respondents, the researcher systematically divided Makurdi metropolis in to five clusters. Cluster A covered North Bank axis, cluster B: Wurukum axis cluster C: Modern market axis, cluster D: Wadata axis and cluster E: New GRA axis. The researcher used simple random sampling procedure to administer between 20- 25 questionnaires per cluster. Out of 215 questionnaires administered, only 200 were successfully filled and returned and thus form the basis for our analysis.

Data Analysis

The researcher utilises the survey research methodology to gather data on about 200 respondents.

Table: I-Analysis of the frequency of use of some of the social media networks by respondents.

s/No	Name of social media	Frequency	Percentage %
1	Facebook	80	40
2	YouTube	40	20
3	Twitter	60	30
4	Nijapals	20	10
5	Total	200	100 %

The table above shows the frequency of social media network use according to respondents. The statistics shows that, Facebook users dominate with 40%, YouTube 20%, Twitter 30% and Nijapals 10%. This shows that all the respondents use the social media.

Table II: Which of the social media do you often get marketing information?

s/No	Name of social media	Frequency	Percentage %
1	Facebook	90	45
2	YouTube	70	35
3	Twitter	10	05
4	Nijapals	20	10
5	Total	200	100 %

Again the table shows that most of the respondents see marketing information on the Facebook. This is represented by 45%, YouTube 35% Twitter 05% and Nijapals 10%. This statistics is an indication that most of the respondents get marketing information mostly on Facebook. This again demonstrates the popularity of Facebook among the respondents which can be tapped for Nigerian market.

Table III: The Marketing information you often see are on the social Media networks are based on the following:

s/No	Information base	Frequency	Percentage %
1	Foreign market	120	60
2	Regional Market	30	15
3	Local Market	40	20
4	All of the above	10	05
5	Total	200	100 %

The table is an indication that most marketing information on the social media networks are based on foreign market, this is represented by 60%, regional market 15%, local market 20% and all of the above 05%. The statistics is an indication that information on the local market (Nigeria) is not very common on the social media networks. This development may affect the speedy promotion of Nigerian market at the global level.

Table iv: Do you recommend the use of social marketing information channels for Nigerian the Global market?

s/No	Nature of Recommendation	Frequency	Percentage %
1	Yes	160	80
2	No	40	20
3	Total	200	100

The above statistics is an indication that majority of the respondent recommends social marketing channels for the Nigerian global market. This statistics is represented by 80% of the total respondents while a negligible percentage represented by 20% did not recommend. The statistics is an indication that the social media networks are good channels for promoting the Nigerian market especially at the global level.

Table v: What are the impediments of implementing the social marketing Networks for the Nigerian Global Market?

s/No.	Impediments	Frequency	Percentage %
1	Ignorance	60	30
2	Low ICT literacy	30	15
3	Lack of Network access	10	05
4	All of the above	100	50
5	Total	200	100

The statistics is an indication that 30% of the total respondents are ignorance of the existence of social marketing networks, 15% cited low ICT literacy, 05% indicate lack of network access while 50% indicated all of the above. The statistics is a clear indication that all the listed factors affect effective use of social marketing channels for Nigerian global market.

Table vi: Would you say the social marketing networks have more advantages in the Promotion of the Nigerian Global market of the traditional media?

s/No.	Advantages	Frequency	Percentage %
1	Yes	100	50
2	No	40	20
3	Can't Tell	60	30
4	Total	200	100

The table is a clear indication that most of the respondents feel that social marketing networks have more advantages in the promotion of the global market. This is represented by 50% of the total respondents, those who prefer the traditional media are represented by 20% while those who cannot tell constitutes 30%. The statistics is an indication that social marketing networks have numerous advantages for the promotion of the global market.

V. DISCUSSION

From the analysis above, it is evidently clear that the use of social marketing networking is yet to take its firm roots in the promotion of the Nigerian global market. This is represented in table III because 60% of the respondents indicated that most information on global market on the social networks reflects the promotion of foreign products more than the local products made in Nigeria.

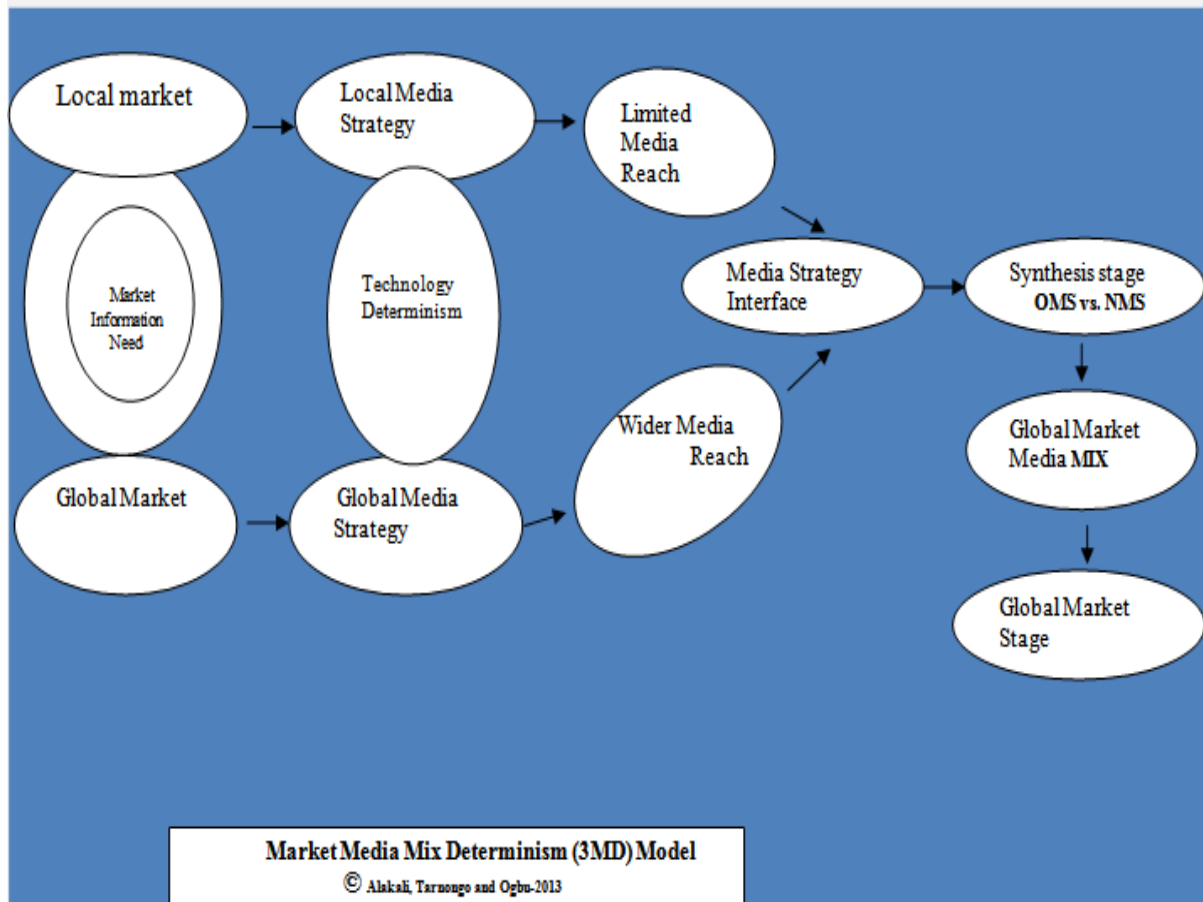
Similarly, statistics from the respondents revealed that all the factors, Ignorance, low literacy level, lack of network access all contributes to the low use of social networking sites for marketing activities in Nigeria.

Furthermore, majority of the respondents recommend the use of social marketing networks for the promotion of Nigerian global market, this is represented by 50% of the total respondents. And finally majority of the respondents were of the opinion that social media networks have more advantages in the promotion of the Nigerian global market, this is represented by 50 % of the total respondents.

This call for the suggestion that for the Nigerian market to be transformed into the global market it must have to pass through the following stages as illustrated in the model presented below.

The Suggested Market Media Mix Determinism (3md) Model

This model is developed by Tarnongo, M.O., Alakali, T. T., Ogbu, E.O. in January 2013 at the University of Mkar, Mkar in Benue State to explain how local markets could get themselves on the global market stage taking the Nigerian local market as case study.



STAGE 1: This is the market information need stage where the local market needs latest information on the latest trends on the international market scene. Information such as new products, product outlets, technological developments to enhance easy transaction, purchases, portal services, prices, price cuts etc. When these need-to-know information is gotten, the local market starts a marketmorphism process.

STAGE 2: This is the technological determinism stage. Here, the information gotten in the Information need stage(Stage 1) on new market technologies form the basis of the local markets marketmorphism as it takes the new developments, media technologies to emerge in the shell of the new technologies adopting its characteristics and functions. This takes us to stage 3.

STAGE 3: This is the media interface stage where the local market interface its local strategies used at the local level with the global market strategies of the global market as gotten in stage 1 . This done leads to the next stage.

STAGE 4: This the Synthesis Stage At this stage , the interfaced local and global market and media mix strategies are synthesized. The old media strategies of the local market are realigned with those of the new and global media giving rise to a global market-media mix.

STAGE 5: The Global market-media mix is the stage at which the local market has taken on and fulfilled all the needs discovered at stage 1. With this done, the local market is ripe and ready to enter the global arena.

STAGE 6: This is the global market arena. The local market shells-off the local shell and enters the global market operating on global market strategies, principles and mix.

Synergy of 3MD Model Stages

The model looks at looks at Local and Global markets as parallel lines of a continuum which are determined by needs caused by new technologies and new media. These developments thus come with new market mix and media mix strategies which when adopted by the local market created a fusion that merge the old and new strategies to ensure the global market.

VI. CONCLUSION

Based on the facts analysed above, it is abundantly clear that, social marketing networks play some important roles in the global marketing process. This is because most of the business organizations, corporate bodies, government agencies and multinationals should incorporate social marketing in their global marketing activities.

Research has shown that, more and more people turn to social media sites such as **Facebook**, **YouTube**, and **Twitter** etc to promote their products, a development which is not yet fully embraced in Nigeria. This is because these sites are cheap but very efficient in providing marketing information beyond boundaries. The study therefore recommends the use of global marketing networks for the promotion of Nigerian market that is yearning for global attention.

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