

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IN ENHANCING TRANSPARENCY AND NATION-BUILDING IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Social media marketing techniques have emerged as vital tools for communication and engagement across individuals, organizations, and government institutions. These techniques facilitate openness, participation, and collaboration, enabling governments and organizations to enhance transparency and strengthen citizen engagement. This theoretical study examines the role of social media marketing techniques in promoting transparency and contributing to nation-building in Nigeria. Findings highlight that the strategic use of social media platforms can foster effective communication, improve accountability, and create stronger social bonds between government, citizens, and public employees. The study concludes that social media marketing techniques are essential for national development and recommends that governments institutionalize their use across public offices and agencies to promote transparency, peace, and national security, thereby supporting sustainable nation-building efforts.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Transparency, Nation-Building, Citizen Engagement, National Development

Introduction

Social media marketing techniques has become a vital tool for individuals, organizations, public sector to communicate and interact with one another and the public. Social media marketing has also helped government, private sector and the various public to operate an open system that embraces openness, participation, and collaboration. Social media offers opportunities for government to solve its challenges of increasing national transparency and as well as improving citizen engagement (Mahajan-Cusack, 2016). Social media has been used as an effective tool in building communities and climes and encourages citizens and the publics to pursue civic improvements (Belle, 2013; Clarkin, 2009; Cole, 2009; Haya, 2010; Natatchi & Mergel, 2010; Prall, 2013). Furthermore, social media marketing offers access to government services, in that citizens have access to government's services (Caylor, 2010; Dowd, 2010; Fleming, 2008; Guha, 2011; Heaton, 2011). Montalbano, 2010; Moody & Carter, 2011. Social media has been proven efficient and effective in government efforts to address public safety problems (Gray, 2010; Taylor, 2010; Chavez *et al.*, 2010; Cumber, 2010, Draper, 2011).

Transparency is the degree to which governments and organizations reveal private and vital information to their existing and potential customers (Granados, Gupta & Kauffman, 2005). They further conceptualized transparency as offering unbiased, complete and accurate information to customers or

public. Transparency is seen as improved clarity and understandability of information (Flood *et al.*, 1999; McGaughey, 2002; Potosky, 2008) reduced information concealment is conceptualized as transparency (Granados *et al.*, 2010; Larson *et al.*, 1998). Social media marketing is the bedrock of a transparent society (Bowers, 2014). Social media marketing when adopted by government help in public relations and external communications. In other-words social media marketing enhances transparency which enables government to fulfill its mission and be accountable to its publics (Mahajan-Cusack, 2016).

Zhu, (2004), posits that the inability for customers and the public to access organizations information does not show a full picture of what the organization is doing or saying.

Nation building is the ability to achieve sustainable development through employment, the openness of manufacturers, job creation, creating entrepreneurial opportunities, providing good conditions of service and welfare packages for stakeholders and citizens of a nation.

Social media techniques bring about transparency such as an organization or government being visible, trustworthy, open, accessible, and sincere to its customers and citizens. An open government system enhances nation building; a government that its systems and services are accessible and understandable by its publics will lead or improve satisfaction amongst the citizens. Nation building does not happen; it is a product of intentional statecraft and not a coincidence (Grambari, 2008). A nation is said to be developed when, there is reduction of information seclusion from its public and one of the major ways to reduce its information seclusion is through the use of social media networks, this is due to the fact that social media platforms improves and enhances information disclosure, clarity and accuracy and when information needed by the public are made available to them via social media platforms, they tend to be happy and satisfied without going through rigorous processes in accessing information about any government or organizational service.

Furthermore, when citizens are satisfied with the services and information exposed to them, they tend to be delighted, which in turn enhances nation-building.

Previous studies carried out studies on (social media marketing, transparency and Nation- building in isolation and using them differently as either a predictor or criterion variable (Flood *et al.*, 1999; Zhu, 2004; Zhang, 2015; Gbadeyan and Mensah 2016; Alberg, 2010;

Schnackenberg, 2014; Potosky, 2008; McGaughey, 2002; Karakiza, 2014; Mahajan-Cusack, 2014), but to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there seem to be lacking a theoretical study on the contribution of social media marketing techniques on transparency and nation building in Nigeria. In other to bridge the gap, in literature, the study tries to explore the contribution of social medial marketing techniques on transparency and nation building in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Nigerian public and government institutions are expected to provide and increase the hopes of its citizens on social media techniques by offering online opportunities where citizens can freely engage, participate, and interact with its public institutions at any point in time. They are expected to operate an open system

where citizens can share information with others in a digital format. The Nigerian government is expected to actively engage in social media platforms where, citizens can access government's activities.

However, this is not the case in the Nigerian system of government. Citizens' right to online information are jeopardized. The ubiquitous request and demand for transparency amongst citizens have led to the fraudulent nature of policy makers behaviour in public offices, citizens want to know what is happening within their environment. However, the government and public office holder in Nigeria have not met with these demands and yearnings of its citizens and this has resulted to inability of transparency to strive in Nigeria. However, the author of this paper believes that a conceptual review on social media marketing techniques will enhance transparency and nation building in Nigeria.

The Aim of the Study

Is to theoretically examine the concept of social media marketing techniques on transparency and nation building in Nigeria.

2.0 Literature Review

Social Network Theory (SNT) Social network theory is a special kind of network that sees social relationships in terms of nodes and ties (Shafie, Mansor; Osman; Nayan and Maesin, 2011). Social Network is also a unique platform where nodes are seen as social entities (Van den Bulte and Wuyts, 2007). Nodes are individual actors that participate within the networks, while ties are the level of relationships that exist between the actors. There are different kinds of ties that take place within the nodes. Nodes can also be seen as actors. Actors are connected by social relations or ties (Richardson, Choong and Parker, 2016). Social network theory views individual's actors in a community as nodes where communications between these actors are seen as ties, links, connections, and interrelations. (Pan and Crofts 2012). Adopting SNT helps organizations to compete favorably in the marketplace, because actors consume social media through virtual nodes online. It helps them to create links, share information and create membership through social network ties.

SNT helps organizations to understand the difficult interactions that exist between informational artifacts and actors in the social networks: where they can share, comment, and recommend a piece of information, text, picture or video to friends, family and other people that may discover you in any of the sites through shared information artifacts and add you as a friend (Pan and Crofts 2012). Consequently, when applied to this study, social networks are inclined towards building and development a community where nodes (actors) or customers interact, communicate and share information, pictures, text etc with one another. It is on this premise that the social network theory becomes an important baseline theory for the current study. The predictor variable of this study is social media marketing and social is a paradigm of individual social relationship with one another.

2.1.1. Concept of Social Media Marketing Techniques

Gaining a competitive advantage for customers has greatly increased as businesses are seeking new medium to attract and retain their customers. Companies are seriously looking at social media as a

competitive avenue to market their products and increase the sales volumes and profitability. Employing the use of a stable social media presence in business is no longer an addition, but a requirement in today's competitive arena. Advertising a business or an organization through the traditional advertisement media such as radio, TV, magazines, billboards, flyers, newspapers, etc. is gradually becoming ineffective because it reaches very few people, and it is a one-way communication system. Presently, the development of social media is the new trend and businesses need to catch up with this trend, if they still want to remain in business. Social media has created a significant change in the strategies and tools organizations use in communicating with their customers. Adegbuyi, Akinyele, and Akinyele (2015), asserted that while most businesses are aware of social media technology a relatively low per cent fully understand the workability and how to effectively apply this technology into their marketing strategies, activities and tactics (Andreas, 2010). Social media marketing enables firms to achieve a better understanding of what customers need and want to build better relationships with the customers. With the various definitions of social media in place, explicit definition of social media marketing is possible. Basically, social media marketing is the process of using social media techniques to promote your firm, its products, or services. (Barafoot and Szabo, 2010). Presently, social media marketing and especially social networks are becoming seriously important in consumers' buying decisions, since consumers amplify word-of-mouth.

Social media marketing is a medium or vehicles that enables individuals and organization to advert their products, services, and websites via social media sites and to communicate and reach a wider group of communities and forums that may not be found in the traditional advertising channels. (Ahlberg, 2010). According to Weinberg (2009), social media marketing connects and links service providers, organizations, and multinationals with huge audience of influences and customers. Social media marketing provides lots of opportunities for marketers in the sense that it strengthens and extends relationships to customers.

2.2. Social Media Marketing Techniques

Facebook

Social networking sites such as Facebook offers users new ways to communicate connect and interact through the internet and it can be done using computer or mobile phone. In other-words, Facebook enables or allows individuals to create their online pages and profiles, develop online and create networks of contacts such as friends easily and freely.

Ellison et al., (2007) asserted that Facebook is used by people to create, develop, and maintain relationships whether offline or online and that it is also used as a means of maintaining and solidifying offline relationships, it also helps people to meet new friends online.

Facebook is the most visited social network sites and was developed in 2004, with more than 600 million users and present in over 70 countries (Carlson, 2011; Tectree News Staff, 2008). Facebook network sites enable users to create a profile of themselves and allows them to explore the profile of others, thereby getting information and access into someone else's lifestyle and interest (Acar & Polonsky, 2007). Facebook social network where users are members and customers are the most relevant for marketers

(Casteleyn, Mottart and Rutten, 2009. Facebook helps organizations to connect and interact with many people, more than companies would do using phone calls, emails, and advertising through traditional media (Luke, 2009). Social networking sites are beneficial for firms because it brings about reducing marketing costs and expenses. With the current economic downturn, many organizations are seeking for better avenues to cut excess spending and social network platforms are making it easier for organizations and reducing their advertisement expenditure.

Twitter

Twitter was launched in the year 2006 and it has gained a lot of recognition because it provides new options which include micro-blogging and often used by celebrities, (Gbadeyan and Mensah, 2016). Since 2008, after the introduction of twitter, businesses and firms starting using twitter as a form of disseminating information and messages to both existing and potential customers and investors. (Paul, 2015).

Twitter according to Paul (2015), helps organizations to control the information and message content of the tweet because of its strictness of just 140 characters or tweets. (Constant Contact, 2011; Statista, 2015b), asserted that Twitter users are 200 million as at 2011 and as at the third quarter of 2015, the micro-blogging service averaged at 307 million monthly active twitter users. Twitter is usually used to lodge complaints about an organization's products or services, it also helps in generating new traffic by aiding product offers, render advice and suggestions of new content to a company's followers (Gbadeyan and Mensah 2016). Twitter allows people to speedily disseminate information in up to 140 characters on a one-to-one basis. Twitter's ease of use and its instantaneous nature of disseminating information has made it a media site that is used for sharing news, delivering reports about events etc (Williams, Terras and Warwick, 2013).

YouTube

YouTube is ranked to be the third most visited social media site in the world (Alexa, 2011), behind Facebook, Google and Whatsapp. After the introduction of YouTube in February 2005, it experienced a huge increase; and sixteen months later, 100 million clips were being viewed daily (ComScore, 2006). In October 2008, YouTube attracted 100 million American viewers daily, which was estimated to be over two third of internet users in the United States (ComScore, 2008). YouTube can also be seen as video and viewing sites where users watch and shares videos with friends, families, co-workers, etc. According to Gbadeyan and Mensah (2016), YouTube is one of the popular 10 most visited websites and the second most famous search engine, for internet users who are into the realm of online video scope. It is also a social media site where firms can host videos for free and provides a better form of advertising products to customers, followers and other businesses (Gbadeyan and Mensah (2016).According to Imran, (2014), YouTube is a media sharing site that enables the uploading of photos documents, music, video, information in a single place, which can be shared with customers friends colleagues and family and can also be accessed anywhere in the world. Since the purchase of You-tube by Google, it has evolved from a site where

free videos were posted to an online destination that is now been consumed by commercialized and professional videos.

WhatsApp

Technology has become a way of life. It is the trend and the rate at which it is evolving is amazing. It has made the globe to change faster and wider, it is so difficult for people to escape the presence of technology in our present generation (Hasmin et al., 2015). WhatsApp Messenger is one of the changes in communication technology that is commonly used on our smartphones. With the advent of instant application for mobile messaging, it is obvious that traditional SMS will lose its place to the WhatsApp messaging site (Church and Oliveira 2013). WhatsApp allows online users to send real-time messages to other users, friends, families, or groups at no cost as long as they are connected online. Hasmin et al., (2015), noted that WhatsApp mobile is highly addictive and can create a huge impact on regular users and is likely to increase a firm's market share. WhatsApp is a social media platform that allows better accessibility and ease of communication which provides real-time messaging, employment, sense of belonging and sociability among friends and families, rapid information-sharing and cost benefits (Bere, 2012; Plana, Gimeno, & Appel, 2013; Church and Oliveira, 2013; Yeboah and Ewur, 2014; Soliman & Salem, 2014; Devi & Teverea, 2014; O' Hara, Massimi, Harper, Rubens & Morris, 2014). According to Bhatt and Arshad (2016), WhatsApp is an instant messaging application site across the globe for smartphones. It allows users to send and receive information, photos, messages, videos, images, audios in real time to forums, communities, individuals and group of friends at no cost.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a social networking platform that is developed especially for businesses. It is a platform that showcases the business community on social media. LinkedIn is used by registered users to establish and document networks of people and community they know and trust. Furthermore, LinkedIn sites are free for members and network members are known as „connections. LinkedIn is also a social network platform used by business people to connect, and find new job opportunities, share information with customers and other firms. LinkedIn is rated as the most frequently used social media sites and it had over 300 million memberships in 2015. (Constant, 2011, Statista, 2015c). LinkedIn is used by firms in their recruitment processes (Edosomwan, et al., 2011). LinkedIn is used to develop a link and relationships with clients, partners, and colleagues and assist in making job referrals and recommendations on each other's behalf (Chase, 2010). Furthermore, LinkedIn manages the world's largest professional and business network on the various social media sites (Saavedra et al., 2017).

2. 3 Social Media Marketing Techniques and Transparency

Social media marketing techniques are social networks sites where organizations and visitors to their sites interact and communicate in an online format. Furthermore, is a set of online sites allowed by new media technologies – internet software and other mobile gadgets-where individuals, organizations and

government can create a public or personal profile and share the information with each other in an online format (Rajainmaki, 2015).

Rajainmaki (2015), noted that the foundation of international transparency movement exists in developing co-operation and there are huge public demands on accountability and openness. Social media which have been in existence in Nigeria within the past fifteen years have greatly changed the way individuals communicate with one another. The amount of information on social media is quite alarming and it has „datafied“ our relationships and communications. For example, Facebook keep all records of our moods, YouTube captures all our videos, Twitter keeps record of our thoughts, WhatsApp captures our messages and LinkedIn captures our past professional experience. Social media allows citizens to influence public policy, public opinion and public debate. It further helps citizens to provide suggestions that addresses the issues of infrastructural projects, improve project planning and expose some cases of corruption (Hussain, 2014). Transparency means that the public are being offered easy access to information about the activities of government and public office holders (Strand, 2010). E-Government which is seen as online avenues of communication enhances trust in the government through increased transparency, honesty, and empowerment of its citizens (Demchak *et al.*, 2000; Kauvar 1998). Social media marketing techniques can provide increased access to information, increased transparency leads to increased trust (Cho and Choi 2004; Shim and Eom, 2008; 2009). Furthermore, online government programmes have been increasingly seen as a vital vehicle to implement both accountability and transparency. Online government programmes are also seen as accomplishing two objectives: Enhancing internal efficiency and public service delivery as well as providing transparency openness, and accountability (Brown, 1999; Fountain, 2001). One of the major concerns of greater transparency is to eliminate corruption in Nigeria. Presently, national development, good governance, economic growth and empowerment of citizens are being chased by tackling and curbing corruption in Nigeria. Citizens and the general public can stand up against injustice, abuses of public trust, corruption and violation of law and thereby demand for total accountability and transparency from government (Brinkehoff, 2000). Social media marketing further enables citizens to directly access information on government performances -provided that the government gives reliable and accurate information (Hussain, 2014).

2.4. Social Media Marketing Techniques and Nation Building.

Nation building is about unifying citizens' behavior within and outside the nation to constantly maintain political and economic steadiness. Furthermore, it is the ability to achieve and enhance development through empowerment of citizens, job creation, provide good condition of service to the public, provide reliable and accurate information to citizens, etc.

Any nation that consistently engages in the abuse of authority public power, funds, office or for personal gain is doom. In Nigeria, corruption is seen as the order of the day and the present administration are painting a picture of fighting corruption which the effect cannot be felt anywhere in Nigeria.

Cisar (2003), posits that for any country to develop and achieve its objectives, there is need to introduce the use of social media marketing techniques, because it can be used to reduce the opportunities for corruption, to subsidize incentives for corruption and also enhance the probability that the acts of corruption can be uncovered. Picazo-Veta *et al.*, (2012) noted that social media marketing techniques are used by government to increase transparency of information and government performances. It further promotes involvement of citizens in decision-making which thereby strengthens nation-building. Furthermore, when citizens are responsive about being exposed by their bad behaviors on social media, they tend to be discrete and act orderly. Transparency is a vital prerequisite for accountability. In other-words, accountability allows citizens to challenge the government and its policies, decisions and practicing thereby demanding free flow of information. Abdul-Kalam (2006) posits that social media is an important partner in National missions. A social media marketing technique are very open and enables extensive engagement and participation which brings about robust conversations among members of the communities that are linked on the various platforms (Oludare, 2019). Nationbuilding does not just happen; it is a product of intentional statecraft and not a coincidence (Grambari, 2008). In other words, nation-building is always under construction or work-in-progress. It is a continuous process and a dynamic system in constant need to be handled carefully, nurtured and also a continuous re-invention (Oludare, 2019). Nation-building is not something that happens occasionally, it never ends or stop, this is because nations are constantly faced with different challenges, with no nation -builder is expected to go to sleep, all hands must go to work. Social media marketing techniques allows for new forms of participation which ensures that citizens interests are translated to policies that are satisfactory to them (Oludare, 2019). This is to incline that social media marketing techniques have become a panacea for improvement in socio-political agents in nation-building, to maintain and nurture a vital relationship amongst the citizens (Oludare, 2019).

2.5. Empirical Review

The adoption of social media as contributor to nation-building has been seen in previous studies in different areas such as economy, health, education, political spheres, businesses and organizations such as Amana *et al.*, (2014), they found out in their study that social media is a tool used for messaging on security reasons and its accuracy is relative. They further concluded that social media usage for security reasons is one of the new ways that can be used in any modern society. Olaseinde (2015), conducted a study on the use of social media as a tool for creating accessibility and openness of health information amongst Nigerian students and the study discovered that 73.3% of the respondents received and access health related messages on the various social media platforms. He further concluded that social media marketing platforms have become a panacea in sharing information regarding issues of health. For instance, during the Ebola virus outbreak in Nigeria, the various social media marketing platforms were significantly used to fight the threat and create awareness for its prevention. Onwunali & Daramola (2014), carried a study on social media and stakeholders' relations in the educational sector and discovered that educational institutions use social media to interact with stakeholders and the university management. They noted that

the various social media platforms were used to disseminate messages to students regarding resolutions to the crisis. Chukwuma (2016), conducted a study on the use of social media marketing sites in creating and maintaining interpersonal relations among south-East residents in Nigeria and was revealed that 95.5% of the residents use social media in communicating and interacting with friends, families and colleagues and 84.9% of them revealed that they are happy with the easy closeness and access they get when connected on any of the social media platforms. Politically, the 2019 general election in Nigeria, using social media, mobile phones and digital cameras, enabled Nigerians to act as citizen observers by monitoring and checkmating the electoral process across the country. With social media usage during the election period, lots of reports were gotten through social media platforms. Secondly, before the 2019 general election in Nigeria, political contestants used social media to disseminate messages about their political campaigns; this also gave Nigerians the opportunities to share these campaign messages across the various social media platforms. The trend in the use of social media to establish awareness, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Nigeria, used the various social media platforms to encourage voters to go for their private voters' card (PVC) and ensure that they exercise their civic rights. This further encouraged the political agents, electorates, eligible voters to actively participant in interacting and communicating with one another on the social media platforms.

Conclusion

We further conclude that social media marketing techniques within the context of transparency and nation building is seen as a veritable tool for nation building. Drawing from the discourse of previous studies on health, agriculture, economy, social and political issues. Although social media marketing platforms may showcase some challenges to national security when it is not properly managed. Furthermore, social media marketing techniques have been a vital tool that can help the government and citizens of any nation to interact and communicate with one another on critical issues concerning both parties.

Recommendations

We therefore recommend that:

- The media should be objective in reporting government activities and programmes to the public.
- Government should establish the use of social media techniques in all public offices and institutions to create social bonding between government, citizens, and employees to achieve peace and national security and hereby enhance nation-building.
- Government should also develop a social media marketing websites where citizens can freely interact with the government.
- Finally, government should install closed-circuit television (CCTV) in all public offices where transactions and services take place.

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