



SOCIAL MEDIA AND MEDIA RELATIONS IN THOMAS ADEWUMI UNIVERSITY

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Abstract: The tools and approaches for communicating with customers have changed greatly with the emergence of social media; therefore, corporate organization, educational institutions, businesses must learn how to use social media in a way that is consistent in this digital age. This paper used descriptive survey methodology and driven by Technological Determinism of Marshall McLuhan. The findings show that social media are veritable tools of communication to reach out to prospective students for admission drive. Therefore, the University should operate at least three social media accounts in any of these platforms - Youtube, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Phoneix, Ayoba and others. The more the number the better is the awareness creation. When selecting social media platforms media relations officer should choose platforms that their target prospective students operate. The social media should have monitoring personnel to relate and answer prospective student's inquiry.

Keywords: Social Media, Media Relations, Thomas Adewumi University.

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INTRODUCTION.

Media Relations involves working with media for the purpose of informing the public of an organization's mission, policies and practices in a positive, consistent and credible manner. This means coordinating directly with the people responsible for producing the news and features in the mass media. The goal of media relations is to maximize positive coverage in the mass media without paying for it directly through advertising. Social media are now special tools in reaching out to the youth especially target undergraduate that seek for admission in private universities.

Social media are being used by billions of people around the world and has become one of the veritable advertising

for schools such as Thomas Adewumi University to create awareness to attract student attention.

Boyd & Ellison, (2008) see social media as a platform which allow business owners and their target clients, customers and consumers to relate together for awareness creation and visibility of services and products. Coremetrics (2010) is of the view that social media is one of the fastest growing marketing channels in the world. This has resulted in the transition within the advertising and marketing communications industry from a one way communication in the media to an interactive approach towards synergistic integration of companies and higher institutions strategic communication to reachout to target customers. In opposition to the paid online media advertising (banner, text and search), social networks

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marketing (SNM) involves viral consumer-to-consumer communications by creating company 's brand fan pages and managing promotions and public relations within the most popular social media networks, such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter, Facebook, for example, according to report, they have about 2.38 billion monthly active users and 1.56 billion daily active users as of March 31 as at 2019 (Facebook,2019). Evans (2009) opines that such social networks applications such as service sharing and voting, collaborative design and service launch announcements may provide relevance, immediacy and convenience to customers, as publicity and brand name recognition to the company. Internet Advertising Bureau (2010) also observes that this marketing medium has a lot of advantages to educational institutions such as Thomas Adewumi University due to its moderate school fees and the flexibility in which the University media relation officers can make use of the social networks for both marketing and new programmes development to attract more students .

Objective of this Paper

The main of objective of the study is to draw attention of the registry which is the media relations department of Thomas Adewumi University to exploit the social media for the school visibility to attract more students to the institution.

Methodology

This paper used descriptive survey for the study. Wimmers and Dominick, (2006) see descriptive survey as research designed to obtain pertinent and precise information concerning the existing status of phenomena and whenever possible, to draw valid generalisations for the facts discovered without making any interference or control over the situation. Such type of studies are restricted not only to fact finding but may often result in the formulation of important principles of knowledge and solution of significant problems concerning local, state, national and international issues. Edafejirhaye and Ogunwuyi (2022)

opine that descriptive surveys collect and provide three types of information:

- (i) of what exists with respect to variables or conditions in a situation;
- (ii) of what we want by identifying standards or norms with which to compare the present conditions or what experts consider to be desirable; and
- (iii) of how to achieve a goal, by exploring possible ways and means on the basis of the experience of others or opinions of experts.

Descriptive surveys investigate phenomena in their natural setting. Their purpose is both immediate and long range. They constitute a primitive type research, and do not aspire to develop an organized body of scientific laws. Such surveys, however, provide information useful to the solution of problems and at times provide data to form the basis of research of a more fundamental nature to drive social media advertising.

Literature Review

Literature review for this work covers both conceptual, theoretical and empirical frame works

Conceptual Analysis

Thomas Adewumi University

Media Relations

Richard Weiner,(1990) view media relation as a branch of public relations which promote mutual relations of organizational interest, visibility, activities and influence.

Onabajo (2005:13) defines media relations as essentially a two-way operational link between an organisation and the media, comprising the press, radio and television. The organisation, on the other hand, supplies information and provides facilities to the media on request while, on the other hand, it takes steps to initiate comments and news. This rightly implies that media relations are concerned with corporate organisation's deliberate and conscious effort at seeking and achieving the cooperation of the



media. Organisations need this profitable relationship given that it helps to wade off negative media coverage.

Nkwocha (1999:43-44) sees media relations as public relations function which establishes and maintains mutual understanding, goodwill, co-operation, respect and support between an organisation and the mass media practitioners/owners with the aim of achieving public relations objectives. He further isolates the objectives of media relations to include establishing and sustaining cordial relationships between an organisation and media houses; ensuring that organisations get sufficient and positive coverage of their products, services and activities; and to explain an organisation's policies and actions to media men particularly in crisis situations.

Purpose of Media Relations

The main goal of media relations is to communicate an organization's newsworthy message, story or information via the appropriate media outlets. By serving as a credible, third-party endorsement, media relations is a powerful tool that can enhance your brand's reputation and, ultimately, influence the perceptions and behavior of your target audience. In addition, media relations can help achieve specific business goals, such as:

- Building greater brand awareness
- Enhancing Corporate Image.
- Positioning organization and its experts as thought leaders
- Growing the online presence of your brand
- Attracting more business patronage

Hence, media relations officers in Thomas Adewumi University could make land mark achievement by attracting more student through the social media.

Social Media

Social media are digital media in the internet through which people communicate socially. Some examples of Social media are facebook, twitter, Whatsapp and may others.

Smith (2013) argues that social media enables the development of the relationship between marketing and public relations by enabling a greater capacity of interaction and relationship cultivation.

Sinclair and Vogus (2011) affirm that large companies are regarding social media sites as strategic tools and some businesses are even hiring employees to oversee their social media pages:

Consumers are no longer passive receivers of marketing messages; instead, they are using Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, and Twitter to voice their opinions-both positive and negative" (Sinclair and Vogus 2011, 293).

Since social media sites can be exploited for the information it provides on consumer behaviour with regards to their purchasing intentions, research further suggests that businesses should incorporate social networking sites into their business model or promotional mix.

Mangold and Faulds (2009) recommend that social media should be regarded as an integral part of an organization's integrated marketing strategy and should not be taken lightly.

Valentini and Kruckeberg (2012, p. 11) argue that social media must be at the heart of public relations activities because social media can enhance organization relationships by increasing and improving community relations. Zhang, Jansen, and Chowdhury (2011)



emphasise that businesses should have a brand presence on many different social media sites to increase their consumer audience. Businesses are realizing the need to create their own brand presences on social media not only to control some of its brand marketing, but also to stay informed and keep track of the consumer-generated content surrounding their brand. According to Curran et al. (2011), social media sites such as Facebook are better than other advertising avenues because it stores information on all its users thus ensuring marketing reaches a retailer's specific target market. Social media sites are a great stage for retailers to create an experience and retailers can use information stored on social media sites to improve user experience with their brand. Curran et al. (2011) avow that almost one in every thirteen person in the world is an active Facebook user, which points to the potential of finding a ready market for any product or service.

Heinonen (2011) sees the platform as a vital stage for retailers and marketers to be aware of the factors that affect consumer attitudes and motives because consumers are increasingly creating content about brands, something previously controlled solely by companies.

Pavlou and Stewart (2000) came up with another approach to measure the effectiveness of a company's participation in interactive advertising. One set of measures focuses on media choice, information search, and attention to the processing of information.

Davis (1989) states that the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) presents that for an organisational decision-maker, a decision to adopt a new technology is mainly based on the perceptions of its ease of use and usefulness. Since using social networks does not require considerable technological skills, but instead relies on the synergistic employment of existing marketing, PR and customer service skills and because SNM usefulness in terms of measurable marketing performance is difficult to assess, other factors may warrant the decision to adopt SNM. Trusov et al. (2009) and Stephen and Galak (2012)

demonstrated that certain kinds of social interactions now happen on social media (e.g., Refer a friend features and discussions in online communities) can positively affect important marketing outcomes such as new customer acquisition and sales. Gordon et al. (2019) recently, the value of advertising on social media continues to be explored as well as how it interacts with other forms of media such as television.

Theoretical Framework

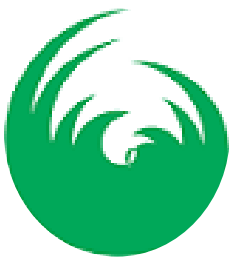
This work is anchored on the technological determinism theory of Marshall McLuhan.

Technological Determinism Theory

Marshall McLuhan

Technological determinism has been defined as an approach that identifies technology, or technological advances, as the central cause of element in processes of social change (Croteau and Hoynes, 2001). Technological determinism is a reductionist theory that presumes that a society's technology drives the development of its social structure and cultural values. The term is believed to have been coined by Thorstein Veblen (1857–1929), an American sociologist. The most radical technological determinist in the United States in the twentieth century was most likely Clarence Ayres who was a follower of Thorstein Veblen and John Dewey. William Ogburn was also known for his radical technological determinism (Talabi, 2015).

The first major elaboration of technological determinism according to Solo-Anaeto & Babafemi, (2015) came from the German philosopher and economist Karl Marx, whose theoretical framework was based upon the idea that changes in technology and productive technology are the primary influence on the organization of social relations, and that social relations and cultural practices ultimately revolve around the technological and economic base of a society. Marx's position has become embedded in contemporary society, where the idea that fast changing technologies alter human lives is all-pervasive.



The Theory Assumptions

According to McQuail (2005), technological determinism theory lies on the following assumptions:

1. Communication technology is basic to society. It is the life blood of any society.
2. Technology drives change in all forms of media industries.
3. Each technology is tilted towards particular communication forms, contents and uses.
4. The sequence of invention and application of technology influence social change.
5. Communication revolutions engender social revolutions.
6. New media undermines old bases of power.

As a theory, technological determinism explains that when new systems of technology are developed; the culture or society is immediately changed to reflect the senses needed to use the new technology. It predicts that with every new technological equipment, members of the society change and adapt to that technology. They probably will dispose of older technological equipment and rush to get new ones. This is on the belief that it will affect their status in the society. Members of the society can either use the technological equipment or software to sustain their culture or use it to embrace another culture which is not their own (Wacyman, 2002; Solo-Anaeto & Babafemi, 2015; Asekun-Olarinmoye, Ibbi & Edafejrhaye, 2018).

There is a simple cause and effect analysis between the introduction of new technology, the way the media operates and the changes in society's way of thinking, feeling, or acting. This theory provides an insight into the use of internet and social media for communication in modern times. Following the internet and its advantages in easing communication, more and more users are getting on social media, especially young people. There are more than 1.32 billion monthly active users (as of June 2014) on the Internet (Tufts University, 2015, Solo-Anaeto & Babafemi, 2015).

Technological determinism seeks to show technical developments, media, or technology as a whole, as the key mover in history and social change. Most interpretations of technological determinism share two general ideas:

That the development of technology itself follows a predictable, traceable path largely beyond cultural or political influence and that technology in turn has "effects" on societies that are inherent, rather than socially conditioned or produced because that society organizes itself to support and further develop a technology once it has been introduced (Ukonu, Nkoro, & Agbo 2013; Edafejrhaye, 2016).

Relevance of the theory

Technological determinism theory posits that new technology drives society and influences social change; society members adopt and change to fit to new technological inventions. This can be said to be the case of international broadcasting being used as tool of international diplomacy as observed by Edafejrhaye (2016) and social media as a new means of quick communication (Solo-Anaeto & Babafemi, 2015). Users of Social media keep increasing by the day. Ohiagu and Okorie (2014) put the figure at “25 percent of the global online population has joined social media networking sites” especially among young people who embraced wholeheartedly as major means of communication. It is seen as a sign of social relevance and being trendy to be on social media. For youths, one has to be on these sites to connect with people, to know the latest news, style, and trends because there is a new technological break forth communication gadget.

How to Exploit Social Media for Thomas Adewumi University Growth.

The following are some of the ways so social media could be used to advance Thomas Adewumi University.

1. Pop up advert message. As people open the social media page advert message will pop up in form of audio visual.



2. Streaming advert messages below the line.
3. Promotional rebate to encourage more students to be attracted. For instant when the school float a rebate for four years for departments that have few students such as the the faculties of physical and social sciences in this manner:

“FIRST 20 STUDENTS TO REGISTER IN 100 LEVEL TO PAY HALF OF THE SCHOOL FEES”. And this is well advertised in the various social media platforms; it will go a long way to boost the school population in no distance time.

4. Create special interactive discussion blog to discuss about the school programmes.

Benefits of Social Media

Using social media as a media relations officer in Thomas Adewumi University will make communication faster and easier.

Prospective students can easily contact the University for quick admission.

They create wide spread information about the school and its programmes of study.

They enhance mutual interactive communication students’ parents and the University.

They will enhance admission drive because social media quick channel to reach out to youths.

They facilitate 24- hour advertising service without payment

Social media are special avenue for promotional rebate to attract more students. However, in every endeavour there may be some initial challenges which must be overcome in the process of time.

Conclusion.

As a media relations officer working in Thomas Adewumi University we need to identify our target audience and know the media that they majorly operate, it is by identifying this factor that we can reach out to our target student. Although, it may be impossible to measure the effectiveness of the social media platform in

accomplishing our aim, by and large, the use of social media will help create awareness about the school, boost the school image both home and abroad. The use of social media will drastically reduce cost of adverts.

Recommendations.

As media relations officer in Thomas Adewumi University the following recommendations are hereby suggested:

The University should operate many social media accounts in Youtube, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Phoneix, Ayoba and others. The more the number the better awareness creation.

When selecting social media platforms we recommend media relations officer to choose platforms that their target prospective students operate

The social media should have a monitoring personal standby to relate and answer prospective students inquiry.

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