

**Undergraduate Entrepreneurs' Use of Social Media for Marketing: A Study of Fountain
University, Osogbo, Nigeria**

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Abstract

The efficacy of the social media as a tool of socialisation has never been in doubt. This is even more so as the biggest patrons of the media are the youths and the young at heart. This category of individuals has exploited the social media to their advantage for both positive and negative ends, a trend that knows no limit yet. One of the positive purposes that the social media has been put to is for entrepreneurial use as a good number of the young people now engage in buying and selling to augment their pocket money. In view of their relationship with the social media, it has come in handy as a veritable marketing communication tool that is capable and has been found useful to boost sales. This paper seeks to know how efficiently the social media are being deployed for this purpose. The Uses and Gratification theory was used to drive the study to be able to probe the use of the social media for entrepreneurial purposes and to know the success level of the use, that is, to know how they use the social media for that purpose and what they gain from using them for entrepreneurship. Further, a qualitative method was adopted where the In-Depth Interview was used as the data gathering instrument. The study found that students use a wide range of social media platforms from WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter to Pinterest suggesting a heavy reliance on the social media to grow their businesses. It was also found that their use of the social media extends beyond socialisation and they in fact engage in promotional activities to win and retain the interest of their customers. In addition, the study also found that the social media aid and help greatly in the improvement of their sales. The paper recommends the adoption of the various social media platforms to achieve their commercial and economic gain.

Keywords: Social media, student entrepreneur, Uses and Gratification, Online marketing

INTRODUCTION

In recent time, there has been an increasing global concern over the continuously expansion in the rate of unemployment around the world, particularly in most developing countries, where the youth have been identified as the most affected groups (Akhuemonkhan, Raimi & Sofoluwe, 2013). The invention and utilization of social media has provided a platform where youth can create jobs for themselves. Social media has given young entrepreneurs the capacity and capability to gain access to resources that were otherwise not within their reach. The potency possessed by social media platforms is enabling these young entrepreneurs to make use of social media for marketing, advertising, and promotion through the usage of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, You Tube, etc. (Hanna, Rohm & Crittenden, 2011). The internet has helped in turning the world into a global village as predicted by Marshall McLuhan. It has improved communication process which according to (Ogwezzy 2008), is a process by which a 'sender passes information to the decoder or receiver.' It has also allowed people to express themselves through blogs, websites, pictures, social networking sites and other user-generated media.

The term *social media* refer to the use of web-based and mobile technology to turn communication into an interactive dialogue. This online sharing of information also promotes the increase in the communication skills among the people especially among the learners/students of educational institutions. There is also a flip side to the use social media tools. Sometimes, such tools are misused by people which lead to interference into one's privacy. Such instances can lead to dangerous proportions keeping in view that ethical aspect of the use of such media. The social media tools have virtually brought people close to one another especially those living in far off places. (James, 2011). However, these days it has been witnessed that most of the business houses also engage in social networking while promoting their products and services. Very often, the head honchos of the business groups try to maintain a healthy relationship with their valued customers. Social networking sites are now seen as a promising means of publicity, which every brand must embrace. (James K. 2011).

In particular, Nigeria has experienced a rapid transformation in the development of technology, advancements and internet connectivity which has led to unprecedented increase in the number of people who use internet between 2010 and 2014 (Ezeani&Igvesi, 2012). Nigeria was ranked fourth in Sub-Saharan African and 22nd out of the 65 global markets that were measured for internet freedom in 2019, (Freedom House Index, 2019). No wonder the numbers of internet users in Nigeria is put at 99.05 million (Joseph Johnson, 2021). The social media platform

mostly used in Nigeria as of the third quarter of 2019 is WhatsApp (94%), followed by Facebook (87 %). YouTube ranks third (76%), Instagram ranks fourth (67%) and Twitter ranks fifth (50%) (Simona Varrella, 2020) These staggering statistics reflect the explosive growth social media has experienced over the past years. Nevertheless, the practice of usage and adoption of social media among student entrepreneurs seems unclear especially in developing economies as Nigeria.

The most distinctive characteristics of social media is their potential to facilitate engagement: the interactive, synchronous communication and collaboration among numerous participants facilitated by technology (Bolton et al., 2013). Social media is a multi-way communication, at the same time but in different places, enabling people to disseminate and share information, ideas, experiences, thoughts, pictures and videos typical of traditional mass media to a fully interactive information sharing dialogue. As opined by Tella and Adu (2013), social media has become a common communication channel among young people, particularly, students in tertiary institutions. However, the usage of social media among undergraduates goes beyond the interactive aura that it provides. Few of these students are young entrepreneurs and they use these platforms to pass across information to their various clients on the products and services that they have to offer (Shokery, Nawi, Nasir & Mamun, 2016). Social media platforms provide inexplicable resources for businesses of all sizes to thrive through the promotion of their brands online. Importantly, Shokery et al (2016) opined that social media platforms are free to use, though some offers advertising options for brands that want to reach out to larger audience.

They give young student entrepreneurs prospects to connect in an affordable, private and expressive way with their prospective customers. It also allows for quick access to customer support issues, feedback, share and praise compliments about the brand. However, there is dearth of research on social media usage and adoption among tertiary institution students' entrepreneurs in Nigeria, particularly undergraduate students. It is expected that the outcomes from the paper will fill some gaps on social media usage among entrepreneurial students in Fountain University Osogbo Nigeria.

Companies use various means/medium to convey the advertisement of their product and services through media such as the television, radio, newspaper, billboard and the new media which is the internet. Organizations are always after meeting the desires of their ever-increasing consumer base whose attention is always lobbied through promotion strategies, spending heavy budgets on

their products and services to attract the consumers and also promote their business. It is interesting to note that in recent times more people seem to have moved to this platform to inform, socialize and exchange views both as advertisers of a product or as consumers. Social media use is trending upward according to the survey of more than 1,235 small business owners. No surprises, given the attention paid to the various social platforms by big businesses and media outlets. Nearly 50% of the businesses have increased time spent on social media this year, and nearly 55% say they are using platforms like Twitter and Facebook.

However, Siu (2013) stressed that social media has also led to the downfall of several businesses that, in one way or the other, misused the marketing platform and destroyed their reputation or wasted tons of money. Bhattacharya (2000) noted that negative impact of social media includes, but not limited to limited control of whatever shared on social media as any mistake made on social media is very difficult to rectify and can attract negative consumer reviews which are harmful to the growth of any business. Also, social media is time consuming, and one must compete with crowded content on the web. In the light of this, this research, therefore, seeks to ascertain if business have improved and grown as a result of the existence of such business on social media. Therefore, this research will examine the role social media play in the growth of small business among undergraduate entrepreneurs in Fountain University, Osogbo, Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. Which social media platform do undergraduate entrepreneurs make use of for their business?
2. How frequently do undergraduate entrepreneurs make use of social media platform to promote their businesses?
3. Do social media use by undergraduate entrepreneurs translate to increase in sales?

Literature Review

Social Media as a Tool for Business

Social media is a term that has gained the interest of researchers over the past few years (Mukolwe&Korir, 2016). There are many definitions of social media as a result of this. For instance, in giving a definition of social media, Nyekwere (2012:16) mentions that social media “refers to online social interaction sites in which messages are developed by the users and also shared by those users between or among themselves”. Social media can hardly be understood

without defining Web 2.0 to serve as a background into understanding it. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) opine that Web 2.0 is a term that explains the new system with which account users use the World Wide Web to generate and share information or other content that are generated by the users of such media. These scholars both went further to define social media as “a group of Internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of user generated content” (Kaplan et al, 2010:61).

Social media can be seen as an internet-based computer facilitated tool that allows for transfer of information which permits individuals, groups, or organisations to create, exchange or share ideas, feelings and information by uploading videos, posting pictures, sending texts and other information in a community that is filled with computers with the help of applications. Social media era was started around 2006, it began with LinkedIn in 2003 followed by Facebook and Myspace in 2004, YouTube in 2005 and Twitter in 2006 (Rajesh, 2016). The popularity of social media has increased rapidly with site like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram, WhatsApp, Wikipedia, etc.

The term “Entrepreneur” was coined out of a French Verb “Entreprendre” which literarily means to go-between or undertake; it has been in existence since the 12th century (Pahuja & Sanjeev, 2015). One of the foremost and earliest definitions of entrepreneur was by Adam Smith in 1776. He saw as entrepreneur as an economic agent who transforms demand to supply (Kabiu & Maalu, 2012). The term was used in context of business and economic activities in the 18th century by Richard Cantillon, a French Banker and economist, he used the word ‘Entrepreneur’ for the first time to describe a person who bears uncertainty and risk (Pahuja et al, 2015).

Some studies (Carree & Thurik, 2002; Kabiu & Maalu, 2012) found unemployment as a factor that arouse the interest of individual into entrepreneurship. They believe most individuals see entrepreneurship as a systematic way to creating and sustaining wealth, especially in countries with high rate of unemployment. Nigeria is an example of such countries as the new data published by Nigeria’s Bureau of Statistics (NBS) records the unemployment rate at 14.2% in the last quarter of 2016, up from 13.9% in the preceding quarter. This is the ninth consecutive quarter that the unemployment rate in Nigeria has increased. These studies confirmed that most people agree that self-employment is the best way of surviving in countries with high rate of unemployment and loss of job security. Stuart and Sorenson (n.d.) support this point by opining that the most typical type of entrepreneurship is the one an individual creates and manages his or

herself; which is often referred to as 'self-employment'. For a country to be considered strong and developed, the economy has to be visibly growing and entrepreneurship has an important role to play in this growth. It is for this reason entrepreneurship is a matter of interest to businessmen, governments, and academics all over the world. One way to do this is to develop the minds of the youths. The Nigeria government have initiated entrepreneurship education to change students' behaviour pattern in the desired direction and to serve as a continuing development of relevant entrepreneurial skills and habits with which the understanding and application will enable the students to contribute meaningfully towards the growth and development of Nigerian economy (Pulka et al., 2014).

Social media since inception have been of great advantage to the business environment. This makes it easy for business owners of 21st century to make it a part of their enterprises so as to bring about improvement on sales performance. Social media helps in removing boundaries. In doing this, it makes the product or service popular around whole world (Zafar et al., 2017). This is so because when a product or service gets exposed to people outside the boundary or environment with the help of social media, it becomes popular and it increases patronage, which in turn increases sales. The importance of social media includes facilitating information exchange, benefiting learning and circulating information processes to further discover opportunities (Ridzwan, & Muhammed). Park et al support this view in explaining how social media help in boosting sale performance. They argued that social media can help the people by providing them information that can benefit them in finding new knowledge and opportunities. This means an entrepreneur, with the aid of social media, can learn new ways of producing a product or learn how to produce another product or good which will in turn affect sales performance positively. For instance, a restaurant owner with the help of YouTube can learn how to make a soup in different ways to bring about customer satisfaction or even learn how to make another meal. This can help the restaurant owner to have more customers come to eat because of the new meal she learnt online, as this will also increase patronage and increase the overall profit.

Social media provides entrepreneurs the power to promote their products and services by transforming the communication networks into influence networks (Mukolwe & Korir, 2016). Entrepreneurs can use social media as a medium with the help of technologies such as smart phones to advertise their products. This makes people in their environment to become aware of the products and services. Social media advertising helps to increase the patronage gotten

through interpersonal or face-to-face communication. Social media have been of great benefit in boosting sales performance of entrepreneurs that adopt them in their businesses.

Mukolwe and Korir (2016) discovered that social media allows young women entrepreneurs the opportunity to manage their academic and self-employment life. The study revealed that social media provides young women entrepreneurs the flexibility to take care of their families, undertaking studies and managing the business at the same time. It also revealed that social media reduces cost of renting a physical store for their business. The respondents reported all they have to do is to keep their product supplies at home, take pictures of the products, and promote them through their social media accounts which can be accessed through their tablets or smart phones. In the same study, a challenge faced by student entrepreneurs in handling social media for their businesses was discovered. The authors found that the inability of the entrepreneurs to have a social media team to help handle their social media delay customer feedback and in turn lead to customer dissatisfaction. Poor internet connection and their inability to handle customer negative customer comments or complaints was also another challenge as some comments are purposely posted by their competitors to destroy their business reputation.

In a study of the impact of social media on consumers by Hadji (2013), It was revealed that advancements on the internet and the emergence of Web 2.0 along with social media have empowered customers. In this climate, consumers create added value through collaboration and social interactions on the internet. In another study, “The State of Small Business Report,” sponsored by Network Solutions, LLC and the University of Maryland’s Robert H. Smith School of Business, the study results showed that social media usage by small business owners increased from 12% to 24% in just the last year, and almost 1 out of 5 actively uses social media as part of their marketing strategy. Here is a breakdown of what the small businesses reported as the main uses of social media marketing. Seventy-five percent have a company page on a social networking site. Sixty-nine percent post status updates or articles of interest on social media sites, 57% build a network through sites such as LinkedIn, 54% monitor feedback about the business, 39% maintain a blog, 26% tweet about areas of expertise and 16% use Twitter as a service channel. According to the study, different industries are adopting social media marketing at different rates, and while many industries have started using social media marketing in their efforts to reach more customers, many still have not positioned it as their top priority.

Another study by Invoke Solutions reveals that active social networkers find benefits of social media use beyond just staying connected with friends and family. Active social networkers say an important driver of social media use is sharing and gathering information and learning about new products. Sixty-three percent of the respondents said that sharing information with network is very or somewhat important, 59% explained that gathering information from network is very or somewhat important, while 58% said that to learn about new products is very or somewhat important. Given that active social media users are looking for information about products and brands online, how well do they think companies are leveraging social media to these ends? The study revealed that there is room for improvement, with 46% saying that companies are not doing well using social media to listen to customers. Forty-six percent said companies are not doing well using social media to deliver better customer service. Fifty percent said companies are not doing well using social media to learn about unmet customer needs.

Surveying 104 owner-managers of SMEs in France, Nakara and Jaouen (2012) examined how SMEs manager use social media to market their products. The study showed that SME managers use social media in their marketing practices because they are aware of the developments and importance of social media, they consider that these media are easy to use and do not require special skills. Seventy-nine percent of the respondents (SME managers) reported they create their own groups on social media and communicate by posting activity news, but they mainly use it for advertising. In a study by Fini et al (2016) aimed to explore the entrepreneurial activities of 61,115 students in Italy, they sampled 64 Italian universities, and they reported some challenges faced by student entrepreneurs. They mentioned that “the most relevant obstacles experienced by entrepreneurs and nascent entrepreneurs are related to high taxation as well as to administrative issues” (Fini et al, 2016:22).

In a study by Anderson Analytics and Marketing Executives Networking Group titled “Marketing Trends 2010,” the report revealed some interesting insights in the minds of marketing executives. When marketing executives were asked to choose the most important trends and buzzwords to pay attention to in 2010, getting a good return on marketing efforts was number one with 58% saying it was the most important trend to keep an eye on. But what is even more interesting is that social media made the top 10 list with 42% choosing it as one of the top trends to watch. In addition, 72% said they work for companies that are planning social media initiatives in 2010 (Porterfield 2010). This survey corroborates the findings by eMarketer which revealed that 92% of marketers use Facebook and 75% of marketers plan to increase their use in

2011 (2011 Social Media Marketing Industry Report). The essence of these empirical findings by other scholars is to see what the outcome of similar studies have been in other environments. These findings can help to certify what the expected results of this study will be.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopted The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT). This is a mass communication theory that focuses on the needs, motives and gratifications of media users. The theory states that media consumers are passive consumers of mass communications; rather, they play an active role in media consumption. The theory is attributed to researchers Jay G. Blumler and Elihu Katz. In 1974, they published “The uses of mass communication: Current perspectives on gratifications research”, which painted a complete picture of the Uses and Gratifications Theory. The theory originated, however, with the research of Harold Laswell. The base of this theory has been applied widely. In 2000, Researcher Denis McQuail mentioned the order and the names of the principles on which the UGT rests. These are: Information, Personal Identity, Integration and Social Interaction, and Entertainment. Of relevance to this study is the social interaction. It is relevant because it explains away the aspect of what consumers of messages in the media choose to do with the messages and in this case what the undergraduate entrepreneurs put on the social media and what the consumers do with the messages.

Methodology

The study adopted In-Depth Interview (IDI). It was used to gather the data from the sample in a bid to reveal specific facts about the phenomenon of social media marketing among undergraduates. The study makes use of IDI to enable the researcher to understand the usage and adoption of social media for sales performance among undergraduate entrepreneurs in Fountain University Osogbo, Osun State Nigeria. The researchers focused on undergraduate entrepreneurs in Fountain University, Osogbo, for the study because of their peculiar demographic characteristics which is their social media usage for their businesses. The population for the study comprises of male and female undergraduate entrepreneurs in Fountain University, Osogbo, Osun State, Nigeria. The total population of undergraduate entrepreneurs in Fountain University Osogbo is 70. This was determined through snowballing approach. The essence of this research is not to make some generalizations based on empirical finding from other studies but rather to discover the issues concerned with social media usage by student entrepreneurs and to explore how social media are being used in various stages of the entrepreneurship. This is in

support of Dowla's (2011:11) position that "the issue in sampling is not 'the size' but on the depth of the information acquired through various respondents, thus requiring a flexible, interactive approach to sampling and data collection". Simple Random Sampling was adopted for the study with 10 as the sample. Interviews sessions were conducted in order to gather data. The researchers carried out the interviews till the data reached a saturation point. The interviews were carried out with undergraduate entrepreneurs who reside within the school campus in Fountain University, Osogbo. Face-to-face interview method was used due to the willingness of the respondents to grant the researchers' audience.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1 Informants Background Information

S/No	Informants	Gender	Age Group	Department	Level	Trade
1	INFORMANT 1	Female	(20-25)	Micro Biology	400	Bags and Slippers
2	INFORMANT 2	Female	(20-25)	Micro Biology	200	Make-Up
3	INFORMANT 3	Female	(20-25)	Micro Biology	400	Clothes, bags and shoes
4	INFORMANT 4	Male	(16-20)	Mass Communication	300	Gadgets
5	INFORMANT 5	Female	(20-25)	Mass Communication	400	Scarfs and Abaya
6	INFORMANT 6	Female	(16-20)	Mass Communication	300	Fragrances
7	INFORMANT 7	Female	(20-25)	Biochemistry and Nutrition	400	Cakes and Desert
8	INFORMANT 8	Female	(20-25)	Mass Communication	300	Abaya and Foot-Wear
9	INFORMANT 9	Female	(16-20)	Mass Communication	300	Make-Up
10	INFORMANT 10	Male	(20-25)	Accounting	400	Clothes, Foot-Wear and

Table 1 shows the background of the 10 informants. On the age distribution list, the informants fall into two distinct groups. Only seven (7) informants fell within the age bracket of 20-25 years. Three (3) fell in the age bracket of 16-20 years. This shows that the bulk of the informants were in their early and mid-twenties. The above table shows that there are more females than males. A total number of eight (8) females were interviewed compared to the males numbering just two (2). This hugely edging out males by females is explained by the fact that more females were readily available for the interview.

SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

The study explored the usage of social media by undergraduate entrepreneurs; the social media they use, the ones they prefer using most and why they prefer using them most. This section provides result on informants' usage of social media for entrepreneur purposes. This is informed by the perceived importance of social media for entrepreneurship improvement. The social media platforms that student entrepreneurs utilize are WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube etc.

Social Media Platforms

Social media platforms are the sites, applications or Softwares that people use to create and share contents that can come in form of videos, text, audio and documents. Social media platforms have not only brought about changes in how we interact, it has also brought about changes in how we conduct business, these changes have had enormous impact on how we learn from and communicate with businesses. As a result of this, undergraduate entrepreneurs make use of social networking sites and applications such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter etc. With the main aim of using them to improve the way they conduct businesses. The data from this study show that undergraduate entrepreneurs use more of WhatsApp and Instagram for the marketing of their various goods and services. For instance, informants 1 and 4 explained that through WhatsApp groups, they link their business wares with online community.

It is overwhelming to note that all the 10 informants interviewed affirmed that they use WhatsApp, Instagram and Facebook. However, Informant 2 and 7 uses Instagram, whereas; Informant 7, a caterer in explaining her reason for the usage of Instagram aside WhatsApp

pointed out: “WhatsApp is limited to friends, to share business and to discuss prices. My target audiences are on Instagram; also, Instagram is a very popular social media platform to advertise and promote your goods.”

Informant 2 who is a Make-up artist also gave her reason for the usage of Instagram aside WhatsApp, she said: “I use Instagram than any other social media, because I don’t have much contact on my WhatsApp. I also prefer using Instagram than WhatsApp because WhatsApp will remove it after 24hrs but on Instagram, it will be there forever so people get to see your business”

This explains the edge of Instagram over WhatsApp. Also supporting the view of Informant 2 on using Instagram for her business, Informant 7 also posited that “...aside following my clients and customers on Instagram, I also follow my mentors to give me advice in prices of delivery when delivering to clients and on how to do new things” (Informant 7).

Also Informants 4 uses Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and WhatsApp basically. Therefore, the popularity of social media has increased rapidly with site like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram, WhatsApp and as such enriching their reach among students’ entrepreneurs. Zafar et al. (2017) maintained that on Facebook, over 3 million businesses are advertised on social media and that over 50 million Facebook users use free pages for promoting their business ideas. Also companies have aggressively acquired fans and followers on platforms like Facebook by investing seriously on the platform (Lee, Hosanager & Nair, 2014).

Rationale for Social Media Usage

As part of the findings, this study explores the motive behind the usage of social media by undergraduate entrepreneurs. These rationales for social media usage are explainable reasons why undergraduate entrepreneurs make use of social media in their various entrepreneurial activities. Social media applications are regularly considered as valuable instruments that facilitate business; this is considered one of the reasons for the usage of social media for entrepreneurship. Based on agreeable reasons, undergraduate entrepreneurs have given points to why they all make use of social media.

Therefore, all Informant indicates that social media is a platform that helps interact with friends, post pictures and videos for comments and likes. They help to connect with friends, help to share documents, etc.

Informants 10 corroborated the view shared by the above Informants on this point. The Informants stressed that they prefer using social media platforms because they both have wider range of the population that use them. Informant 4 prefers using Instagram for his business activities because he get a lot of engagement on it.

According to Informant 1 who sells Clothes and Bags, said, ‘‘WhatsApp is mainly for contacts’’ (Informant 1). According to Informant 7,

‘‘when I post on Instagram, it helps me create interactive system and I get to meet new clients, people that are far ahead in the industry’’ (Informant 7).

According to Otugo (2015) there are different social media applications in existence that allows for the generation, modification and exchange of online content, this makes it very easy for individuals and companies and groups to tap into to create some form of bond within them and the public at large to create a fan page and exhibit their businesses with the sole aim of promoting the business. For informant 5

‘‘Instagram has promotional platforms for advertisers, where people with large followers help posting. You can also pay to boost your posts to reach more audiences. Other pages post videos and I learn from them’’. (Informant 5).

Similarly, Shabbir, Ghazi and Mehmood (2016) were quite correct in their study that with the help of social media, entrepreneurs have been able to make connections more appropriately directed connection with people who have same or common business interest.

Social Media Preferences

This section explores the social media platforms student entrepreneurs prefer using for their businesses. All social media platforms cannot be used by every undergraduate entrepreneur at the same rate; some have to be ahead of others in the priority of usage list. This can be as a result of several reasons. Among the social networking sites that have gain acceptance among

undergraduate entrepreneurs the most are WhatsApp and Instagram. These social media platforms over the years are seen to be youthful friendly, and part of the reasons given for these are because of instant messages and large population of users. They also gave reasons for these;

On this note, Informant 2 who is a makeup artist gave her account:

“I prefer using Instagram for my business because it provides opportunity for other people not even following me on my social media platforms to see the pictures I post about my goods and services. Especially on Instagram, using hashtag for my post makes it reach large people. WhatsApp allows my posts to reach my contacts” (Informant 2).

For Informant 3:

“I use WhatsApp for my business because it is very easy for me, I get quick feedback on my WhatsApp. WhatsApp allows for instant comment and messages, unlike Instagram, the messages and replies there are not instant” (Informant 3).

Social media platforms and most especially WhatsApp “help create links beyond my contacts, because the network there is stronger for my business for now but I feel Instagram is better for the gadget business. WhatsApp is also important, but Instagram is more dominated by influential people.” (Informant 4). Same as what Beranek (2014) noted that easy accessibility of social media among students encourage their usage of it for their business enterprise.

SOCIAL MEDIA ADOPTION

This section of the study gives a detailed description of the frequency, strategies and promotion regarding the adoption of social media for entrepreneurship among undergraduates. The level at which social media is becoming increasingly beneficial for business purposes sees the trends among undergraduate entrepreneurs to be interesting

Frequency

Frequency is the rate at which undergraduate entrepreneurs post on their social media platforms; how often they post. This section of the study gives detailed account of how often undergraduate entrepreneurs post about their products and services on their various social media platforms. All undergraduate entrepreneurs cannot have the same rate at which they post; some post as soon as

they get new products or deliver new services. Some post regularly, just to update their social media friends and followers. In fact, all the informants alluded that they make use of at least one among the social networking sites twice in a week. Thus, in the words of Informant 5, ‘‘I use to post daily on my Instagram, but now I post weekly’’ (Informant 5). I do more posting on WhatsApp, most especially new items, I post like 5 to 10 pictures every day and I delete them after 5hours’’ (Informant 5).

For instance, Informant 10 who is into clothes, sneakers and jewelries said; ‘‘I post my products three times in a week on WhatsApp and Instagram’’. (Informant 10).

This shows that undergraduate entrepreneurs that have adopted social media for their business have seen it habitual to frequently post their products or services on the platforms. Since social media works on real-time, individuals or companies that adopt it for their business operations have the opportunities to interact with their clients and prospective customers within any time during of their choice.

Promotion

This section of the study explores the promotion methods undergraduate entrepreneurs use to promote their business. Promotion by undergraduate entrepreneurs is a way of enticing their customers by giving them discounts, or free products, or reduced price with a particular period of time so as to increase their customer base. Promotional activities such giving of discount, as attested Informant 10, ‘‘Yes, I do give away discounts to get more contact or to boost my business, (Informant 10).

While informant 4, a gadget seller engages on promotional activities on WhatsApp, in his words he said: ‘‘Yes, I do, I have WhatsApp Tv, WhatApp influencers or people that have lots of contact, I usually pay the sum of 5000naira to post up my business for 2days’’.

According to Informant 9 who is a make-up artist, she said: ‘‘The only promotion I have done for myself is, I get myself to work with some photographers and these photographers will post up the pictures and they will tag me as the Make-Up artist’’

For informant 8 who sells Abaya and Foot-Wears, she said: ‘‘Yes I engage in promotions by paying, I pay Instagram so they help me promote my business so I get more views and patronage’’

Though, some informants agree that they do not engage in any form of promotion, as Informants 6 and 3 agree that they have not done any promotion and do not have any for now.

INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE ON SALES PATRONAGE

Impact is how effective social media platforms have been on the progress of the business; in terms of achieving sales, making process easier and increasing customer base.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness is how helpful social media platforms have been in achieving the objectives and goals of undergraduate entrepreneurs over their businesses. This shows how important and contributing social media have been to undergraduate entrepreneurs and their various businesses. The informants agreed that social media is every effective in enhancing their business, that’s what informs their adoption of it. According to informants, what makes social media adoption for entrepreneurship to be effective is because of its inherent advantages of interactivity and universality.

Through social media effective interaction, Informant 10 gave his account, he said: ‘‘Social Media has been very effective for my business, I make a lot money from it, it has really make me get a lot of customers’’

Information of social media have the potential of going viral through posting and redistribution. Promoting a business through social media platforms serves as a very attractive business idea due to the large amount of steady online users everyday (Naidoo 2011). This edge makes social media to be very effective for student entrepreneurs. Informant 4 has this to say: ‘‘Yes, it has been effective, I have made a lot of customers from my business’’

Though social networking sites provide entrepreneurs with a space to interact with key publics and to allow users to engage with one another on topics of mutual interest; this should provide the ideal conditions necessary for stimulating dialogic communication (Bortree & Seltzer, 2009). According to Informant 6 social media is very effective because: “Just by posting, people get to know what I am selling, get to know they need it and they purchase”. This shows how social media have been effective to the running of businesses by student entrepreneurs.

Benefits

This section of the study explains how beneficial the usage and adoption of social media have been to entrepreneurial activities of student entrepreneurs. Benefits here are the pleasure social media platforms have provided student entrepreneurs in usage for businesses; good or helpful results or effect social media have provided. Thus in stating the benefits provided by social media usage among student entrepreneurs, Informant 6 states that: “I can post my business on my WhatsApp, I can choose to state my price, I can also choose not to state my price, also for the chat section I can negotiate with the customers and I can make calls to process delivery” (Informant 6).

Informant 9 said: “I get to meet boogie clients (clients of a higher social standing) that tends to pay me more and people get to see my work, most especially photographers” (Informant 9). Nyekere 2012 posited that; Social media have become a platform that is easily accessible to anyone with Internet access, opening doors for entrepreneurs to increase their brand awareness and facilitate conversations with the customer.

Discussion of Findings

The first research question examined the usage of social media among undergraduate entrepreneurs in Fountain University Osogbo. The study found out that the most common social media platforms all the informants claimed to use are WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter, Pinterest etc. Therefore, the platforms are used to promote their entrepreneurship business. A similar finding was recorded by Hong et al., (2010) and Mukolwe and Korir (2016) in Asia, and Europe respectively, that entrepreneurs use social media to get their business idea spread in the virtual world.

The second research question investigated the adoption of social media among undergraduate entrepreneurs. It found that all the interviewed entrepreneurs have adopted social media for their business. The frequency at which they make use of social media is high because the study found that the informants use social media daily and thrice a week averagely. For the strategies, undergraduate entrepreneurs use social networking sites to interact with their prospective customers about their business activities. The study also found that not all the informants engage in promotional activities. Those that engage on promotion activities give discount, giveaways and reduction of price most especially during festive periods. The level at which social media is becoming increasingly beneficial for business purposes sees the trends among undergraduate entrepreneurs to be interesting as such Marchand et al., (2015) acknowledge that economic weakness is one of the main purpose of students adopting social media for entrepreneurship.

The third research question examined the influence of social media on undergraduate entrepreneurs' sales patronage. It was found that social media is very effective; it has strengths and is beneficial to students as it aids them in the improvement of sales. The informants agreed that social media is every effective in enhancing their business, and that is what informed their adoption of it.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurs most times go into business without having the right strategy, and this might be due to their love for the trade or due to the fact that because they think they have enough money to start up the business. Students as well mostly start an enterprise because they feel it is one of the best options to survive due to economic crisis, and other situations. There are needs to explore the student entrepreneurship, especially to the present situation in Nigeria. Matters on student entrepreneurship studies in other countries cannot be related to what is happening in Nigeria context, these provides the reason why a study like this became necessary to examine who are undergraduate entrepreneurs, how they engage social media in their businesses, as well as the strategies they employ and the integration of social media.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following are the recommendations of this study: For social media usage, findings revealed that the majority of undergraduate entrepreneurs make use of two platforms majorly, such as: WhatsApp, Instagram. Although few of them still make use of other platforms like Facebook Twitter and Pinterest altogether. This study, therefore, recommends that all undergraduate entrepreneurs should make use all social media platforms as much as possible because every platform has its strengths and comparative advantage over other platforms. This will bring about flexibility and different results for the usage of different platforms.

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