

Environmental Dynamism: The Role of Influencers in Marketing Practice

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Abstract

The changes in the environment as a result of evolving technologies demand marketing efforts to attract and retain customers at cheap costs. Influence marketing as promotional activity engages audience with contents that promote goods and services to the consumers and the firms using the internet services. This study is a descriptive research design based on analysis from journal publications, internet materials and books relevant to the study. The problem is that traditional media advertising is highly expensive and with small scope of coverage compared to influence marketing promotion. As such, consumers and firms are looking for alternative wider scope actions to source information, purchase and sell brands at cheap costs. The main objective was to determine the effects of internet services such as Social Media and Search Engine Optimization coupled with environmental factors that enhance influence marketing in a dynamic society. The persuasion theory among other psychological theories was the most appropriate as it aimed at inducing customers to change their attitudes, values and beliefs in difficult situations. The qualitative analysis approach was the research design. The population comprised of 28 authors and this also served as the sample size. The sampling technique was the use of authors of related studies. The findings were that influencers use social media channels to demonstrate their contents for engagement and entertainment of audience, firms and consumers use search engine optimization to search for useful information about brand and finally that environmental factors explain perception of consumers. The conclusion was that influence marketing is efficient and cheap in costs for firms and customers for economic growth of entrepreneurship. It is recommended that social network sites utilization be encouraged among firms and consumer for search engine optimize-tons and influence marketing benefits..

Keywords: Environmental Dynamism, Technology Innovation, Social Media, Search Engine Optimization, Environmental Influence, Entrepreneurship, Influence Marketing.

Introduction

The evolving technologies have brought tremendous changes in the environment and marketing practices. These novel changes have led to driving economic growth in indigenous entrepreneurship. Most entrepreneurs in the past have used Billboards, Television, Radio, magazines, newspapers, etc to promote products. The costs remained enormous, thereby making many emerging entrepreneurs to source for cheap alternatives. The goal of this study is to investigate influence marketing as a cheap method of marketing promotion for costs reasons. The environment is

dynamic and the society requires cheap sources of information to satisfy their needs, wants and desires. Therefore, the link of Social Media, Search Engine optimization and environmental influence tends to satisfy consumers demand through internet services.

The concept of influence marketing is not new [1]. Far back long ago in the early centuries, producers influence consumers through demonstrations by celebrities. GRIN added that Fatty Arbuckle endorsed Murad Cigarettes in 1905, Coca Cola

Prompt-Zed with Santa Claus in 1931 and the recent marketing influencers like Spice Man 2010, Fat-Fit-Fun 2019, Nigerians like, Jay Jay Okocha, Kanu Nwankwo, Peter Edochie, White Money 2021, etc. Some of the product lines that benefit from this topic are; Fashion, Drinks, Beverages, Airlines, Soap and Detergents etc. Digitalization in marketing practices has aided marketing communication for faster and cheap, costs of promotion activities.

Problems Statement

The problem is that traditional advertising messages in media channels are saturated, expensive and confusing [2]. Adeola stated that products are becoming tailored to consumers relative to culture and social values. The consumers are becoming more specific, skeptical and rare to catch-up with brands [3]. Cost of outdoor, prints and broadcasts are highly expensive compared to Social Network Sites (SNS).

Objectives of the Study

The major objective of the study is to survey the drivers of influence marketing such as Social Media (SM), Search Engine Optimization and Environmental Influences as tools to building brand choice purchase decision in an intensive market.

Other specific objectives are:

- To determine the influence of social media network in influence marketing.
- To ascertain usefulness of search engine optimization in influence marketing.
- To examine environmental influence as factors for influence marketing.

Research Questions

The following research questions were asked.

- How does social media networks contribute to successful influence marketing?
- How is search Engine Optimization a useful tool in influence marketing?
- What is the relevance of environmental influence in influence marketing?

Significance of Study

This study benefits entrepreneurs, consumers, firms and governments. It is aimed at promoting goods and services efficiently at cheap costs as a measure to drive the economic growth of indigenous entrepreneurship and technology innovation.

Scope

The scope of the study is Nigeria. This covers all the indigenous entrepreneurs in Nigeria, regardless of the firm's size.

Concept and Meaning

The current trend in the business environment of shortening the product-life (SPL) as business model calls for quicker consumption of products [4]. Didukh stated that SPL is a business model that has made a working gadget obsolete in the mist of new technology brands. This innovativeness comes mostly as product differentiation, positioning and repositioning in fashion, drinks, beverages, electronics, soap and detergents, etc. The dynamic environment witnesses concurrent changes in product innovation that comes in the strategy of new models and adopting same as brand choice.

To balance the relationship between the society and product promotion, Influence Marketing (IM) is adopted mostly to attract and retain loyal followers who are brand consumers. So, the environment affects changes in business operations that might hinder profitability [4]. IM is a marketing communication strategy for promoting sales in businesses by lowering the search costs of the product. It is a marketing promotion activity using mostly digital technology innovation in business to attract sales and retain customers for economic growth of indigenous entrepreneurship.

IM seems to be giving traditional advertising a run for its money because the influencers engage the audience most efficiently than traditional media. Regardless of the assumed success of IM, there are still talks about fraud and doubts in authenticity of the industry, yet most influencers still care about their being transparent and raw with their audiences.

So, IM as a social communication entails the interaction between sender and receiver (influencer and customer) systematically based on interpretation of the final conclusion of the consumer as expression of the purchasing power. Companies make use of influencers to inform, persuade and retain customers, and at fundamental level, IM is aided by Social Media Platforms (SMP) and Search Engine Optimization (SEO) to attract followers for themselves [5]. These followers are lovers, dedicated SM users who perceive influencers as experts whom they respect, trust and love as role models within their niche.

However, the influencers are seen as social-proof to a mentioned brand for potential customers. The marketing influencers do post related contents created by themselves about the good, the bad and the ugly in their lives, attracting for themselves high level of trust, reputation and authority to gain followers who would be consumers of the advertised brands. Influencers in marketing have the ability to reach specific audience by ensuring that the target markets are interested in the brands and are engaged with the contents.

The presence of influencers increases customer traffic, induce new product trials, stimulate distribution for preferences and loyalty for brands because followers become less price sensitive, the results being driving economic growth through indigenous entrepreneurship and technology innovation.

Performing Variables

The social media platforms, search engine optimization and environmental influence are the performing variables of this study.

Link to Social Media

The Social Media (SM) is an information technology (IT) as a product that provides benefits to businesses. The SM channels includes; Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, Tiktok, Pinterest, Podcast etc. These channels create deeper forms of activities that engage and entertain audience to promote brands. The Podcast is used to reach highly engaged audience to build brand awareness [6]. Videos and games are used to create solid media quiz like Indomie Superman, BetNaija, "Who wants to be a millionaire", back to school by First Bank, save for school by Union Bank and other sales promotion activities by other banks in Nigeria. The Generation Z (GenZ) demographic cohort has dominated the

SM in the decision-making process for brands. They believe so much on the recommendations from influencers. The society is now highly integrated into the SM platform. This involves more than 4.26 billion global active users in 2021 quoting Statista [7]. Social media marketing (SMM) remains the process through which customers' attention are drawn to make purchases and achieve sales turnover. Having segmented the market, the selected target market is faced with the choice of quality influencer that will promote the brand through SMs platforms. Being an important social media platform for promoting brand awareness and building visibility, gaining wider target audience, customer acquisition, the SMs helps in lowering marketing cost, tackle and measure audience result and customer retention. So far as there exist prolific users due to the increased rate of possession of differentiated versions of digital devices, [8, 9], influence marketing will continue to boom. Hutt, (2023) stated the IM can bring \$5.20 for every \$1 spent on IM as a great investment. IM uses SMPs to share brand content through social channels (SC) in the form of sharing and fostering conversations. These ideas and information are created as content marketing, to distribute and promote relevant online materials in a way that strategically designed to attract, engage and convert target market to customers.

Link to Search Engine Optimization

The search engine optimization (SEO) is used to reach website by internet visitors [10]. The search engine remains the critical link between companies that use the internet to build their brands and corporate images and equally find target customers, by changing the type, quantity and cost of information. The advanced technology has aided search engines to become significant instruments for providing information for marketing opportunities in assortment of particular items to particular customers.

SEO is the internet usage that entails customizing brand features to increase a website ranking or visibility in search engines. SEO is defined as a strategy that uses data observation and marketing research to explore the latest keywords for the sites advertising. SEO are phrases that are used interchangeably with search en-

gine marketing. SEO specifically employs organic methods to roaming a website to the top of the search engine results pages. The selection of the rightful collection of keywords that enhances the page rank of the identified website in the search engines is a critical composition of a successful SEO.

The search Engine Marketing (SEM) as also referred to SEO activities (e.g. advertising, new product development) and the study of consumer website behaviour enable the narrowing of the buyer choice options at reduced information costs. SEM ensures more rapidly communication effect that might change the nature of product development, advertising, differentiation and positioning. The SEM is for engagement and it is the key to successful internet communication. It attracts people who want to engage with brands [11]. It is interesting that the emerging technologies cause initial shift in existing market powers from retailers to manufacturers to the presently observed shift in marketing practice, the market power to the portals and influencers.

Link to Environmental Influence

The economic environment depends on the purchasing power of the citizens, the ability of household and firms based on the micro-economics factors such as income, prices, savings and credit facilities available. On the social-cultural environment, the consumers taste and preferences are largely defined by their beliefs, value and norms that shape the society. The natural environment calls for environmental friendliness, a measure for safety aspect of the product and the consumers. The technological environment has made people to learn, relearn and unlearn new things, especially by the use of cell phones [2]. Adeola opined that technology has dramatically shaped peoples' lives through most wonders and life-threatening gadgets in the world. Finally, is the political and legal environment that give laws, rules and regulations that govern the people, the business, the brand and the promotion activities. Nigeria has media control law on advertising campaigns and guide to influencers activities. Influence marketing scrutinizes the environments and fits the required inputs to make use of social media to reduce face-to-face social interaction as people catch up with brand preferences through internet services.

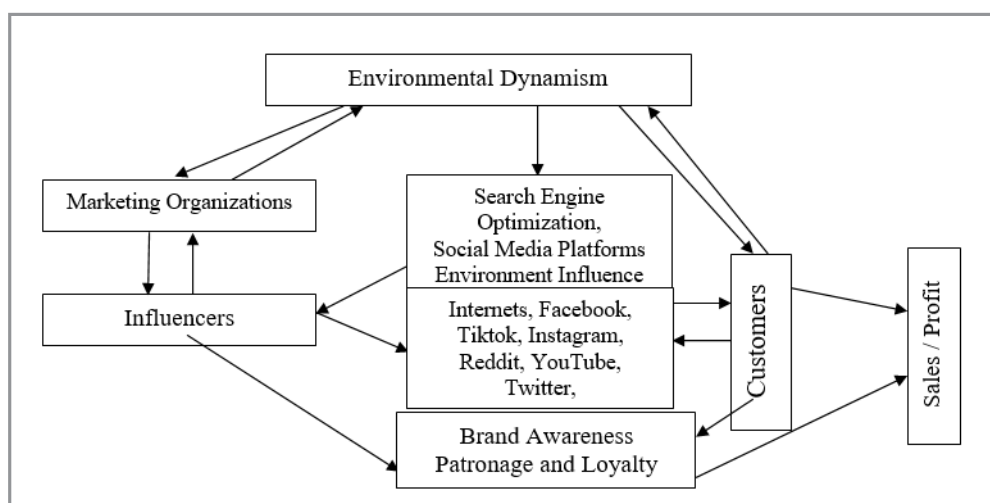


Figure 1: Conceptual framework model of influence marketing in a dynamic environment.
Source: Authors' conceptualization, 2025.

Theory

Influence marketing is anchored on persuasion theory among other psychological theories. The persuasion theory, attempts to explain that consumers' belief can be changed. The concept of IM fundamentally is a type of social media marketing (SMM) that uses endorsement and attract followers who view them as experts within their niche and their marketing influence stand the test of the day, such that their recommendations serve as a social proof to brand potential and ultimate consumers [12].

People are mostly influenced by what they see like aesthetics and designs that have attractions. Koralage (2020) defined influencer as one who is not famous as such, unlike celebrities but is able to get thousands and even millions of followers by creating engaging content. Koralage stated that influencers are people who were able to get famous across SM just because of their contents that went viral within the environment. Koralage also submitted that if people within the environment love the person promoting product, there is every tendency that they also love the product [13].

Influencers in marketing are mostly confined to industries like fashion, electronics, food and beverages, betting and games, etc., and the wide variety of customers on personal sales (PS). People like the Gen Z spends much time digitally these days as compared to their real world. Today, brands are seen making waves through the best possible way to increase seen time in creators' contents [14]. The marketing influencers through the posts, create audience engagement on SMPs such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, LinkedIn, Tiktok, Raddit, Pinterest, Sound Cloud, etc. all these efforts are to slip a brand into a customer's consideration list to make sales. The persuasion theories do the change in behaviour that functions for influencers. The cognitive dissonance theory by Leo Festinger (1957) was proposed to help understand how persuasion functions on people. This theory is the aversive motivational state theory that is observed when an individual customer considers two or more contradictory attitudes, value, belief or behavior simultaneously before making choice of purchase. This theory aims at inducing customers to change their attitude, values and belief in situations like aversive consequences, freedom of choice and insufficient external justifications.

The laboratory likelihood model is another influence on consumers. This theory was created to explain a continuity of the likelihood from high laboratory thought to low laboratory thought. The theory considers the level of thought or energy of cognitively that the consumer has for uses and analyzing the message contents. High elaboration highlights the ability to process information through proper channels and the subsequent arguments presented. Without the energy to analyze content messages, means low elaboration situation for brand choice preference. The proper channel for subsequent argument and consideration is seen in social communication theory.

The social communication theory is the phenomena explaining the relationship that exists among channels, thus; the influencer and the customers and the possible feedback. The framework of this theory could be social, psychological, mechanical, systematical and critical. The theory explains that all living beings existing in this planet communicate with each other, although

in various ways. Therefore, individuals differ in personality and cognitive ability variables, in combination with learning experiences, leading to the variability with the technology of social transmission of information.

The social judgmental theory is an attempt to determine the likely communication messages and the situations that communication messages will lead to change in attitude, belief, value and behavior of the customer; Researchers revealed that people's perceptions of attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviors exist on a continuum, resulting to rejection, non-commitment and acceptance of offer.

Empirical Evidence

Investigated the impact of social media influencer's credibility dimensions on the consumer behavior [15]. The study was on Pakistan consumers who are followers of social media influencers. The data was collected from 149 consumers with valid 135 respondents in the fashion industry. The results revealed that social media influencer's credibility dimension positively influence the consumer's attitude towards brands and their purchase intentions. Researched on the impact of influencer marketing on purchase intention in Vietnam [16]. The work examined how influence marketing affects consumer purchase intention through influencer popularity, trustworthiness, expertise and perceived risk. The PLS-SEM was used to conduct the study on 255 respondents via email and social media sites. The results showed that the tested variables had significant effect on purchase intention, with exception to perceived risk. Also, Govindan and Alotaibi study impact of influencers on consumer behavior in unschooled company to create sales by influencing students [21]. The research used primary data source on 20 students. The findings were that decreased sales are caused by buying decision and the influencers use the positive consequences of the influencers to produce impressive amounts of profit for firms.

Presented the study on social media experience of consumers and marketers in Punjab [19]. The study focused on two parallel surveys on consumers (N=211) and marketers (N=101) aimed at eliciting the perception about social media marketing and social media behaviour of consumers. The result showed that motives, beliefs and experience are used by marketers to capture consumer's perception analyzed the social media marketing towards buying interest. The objective was to build on analysis and evaluation of social media marketing as an effective and efficient purpose to meet their target markets. The study used (SEMPLS) N21 on the analysis of 100 social media followers. The finding showed that the influence of the social media marketing platforms explains 47% of the changes in target markets, keeping 53% unexplained by the random variables. Also, investigated the role of social media in the development of businesses [19]. The study was conducted by quantitative approach using 150 respondents and analyzed by SPSS. The findings revealed SM as having positive influence on business growth and performance.

Researched on effect of search engine marketing on the performance of top 100 medium-sized companies in Kenya [20]. The study investigated the effect of SEO marketing on firms of 100 in population on a stratified sample method of marketing managers. The data collection method was by primary source. The analysis was by descriptive and inferential statistics on cor-

relation and regression analysis. The results showed that SEO marketing has significant effect on business performance. Also, that SEO marketing captures audience attention at the right time at low cost. In addition, examined the search engine marketing as a systematic literature review [21]. This systematic literature review has its objective as to identify the key variables related to SEM from a commercial perspective. The study made use of information from Scopus and Web of science database, and the other analyses were conducted via the Vos viewer program. The findings revealed that studies on SEM do revolve around the five primary clusters: SEO, Paid Ads, Keyword auctions, digital marketing characteristics and exploring destinations [22, 23].

Methodology

The survey is analysis from journal publications, internet materials and books aimed to explore the effect of influence marketing in a dynamic environment in emerging economy like Nigeria. The study is a quantitative research design that make use of purposive sampling of authors in related literatures. This study used non-probability sampling method with a population of 28 authors [24]. The sample size is the same as the population based on stratified sampling method because of the characteristics of the reviewed authors are unique. This research design was adopted because the reviewers share similar nature of observations on influence marketing and the environment [25]. Population: Population is known and comprises of twenty-eight (28) authors referenced in this study. Sample size: The sample size was determined using judgmental method, which is the same as the population. Reasons being that the authors are homogenous in function and knowledge of marketing.

Sampling technique: The study chose purposeful sampling procedure because of knowledgeable participation and experience adopted for the study. Considering the objectives of the study and research design, this sampling technique was adopted as the right choice.

Discussion of Findings

The management of indigenous entrepreneurship is of paramount importance to Nigeria. This will help to drive the national economic growth through indigenous entrepreneurship and technological innovation. However, the findings of the study showed that social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Reddit, YouTube, Twitter, Soundcloud, etc. are powerful tools influencers use to engage and entertain audience. The persuasion theory as explain support the view that followers are attracted by experts within their niche. This finding aligns with [24] who posits that people are mostly influenced by what they see. Aesthetics and designs are attractions that influencers use to attract and retain followers also supports social media influence as credible [26].

Another finding was that Search Engine Optimization was a powerful tool for companies to build their brands and corporate images and equally target customers through internet services. The social judgmental theory revealed that messages change attitudes, beliefs, values both researched on the usefulness of search engine as a critical link between firms and their target customers. Concluded that search engine marketing attracts people who want to engage with brands as choice and comparison [27].

Finally, the findings on environmental influence revealed that people are commonly dependent on their purchasing powers, prices, taste, preferences and credit facilities available. The cognitive dissonance theory by Leo Festinger (1957) tends to help people understand their perceptions and change their attitude, values, beliefs and norms that shape the society. Adeola (2019) supports that the natural environment calls for friendliness and safety aspect of the product through influencer's activities [28].

Importance

The implications of IM may emanate from the hiring of a competent influencer, the budget and management, the goal and the message, the influencer outreach (engagement) and the selection strategies. Other implications may include considerations on the chosen influencer in the social circle as the one credible than any commercial brand advertisements. So, recommendations from friends, family, consumer generated and Social Network Sites (SNS) are far more trusted and considered for purchase decisions.

Influence marketing is persuasion act according to Robert Cialdini as quoted on the consumer behavior based on motivation and psychology. That act is based on the six universal principles of social influence of persuasion behaviour thus; the satisfied customer with a given sampled product will reciprocate, get committed, join the consensus of loyalties, have authority to recommend same product and will like the product even at the period of scarcity.

Benefit of Influence Marketing

The influencer explains brand specifications, quality prices and the choice decision on how, where and why consumers should succumb to influence appeals. Social capital is built and the promulgation of innovation, giving out brand samples with the view that the receiver will reciprocate by buying the next time.

Influence marketing reach out to customers using the most innovative ideas, improves sales and web traffic, assist brands to get maximum result for a new product launch and influencers also act as referrals and engage customers, gains their confidence and may retain them over the lifespan of the brand.

The Future of Influencer Marketing

Quoting business insider said that IM would have likely yielded \$15billion as industry by the year 2022. GRIN added that the customer acquisition rate and return on investment (ROI) from IM is pretty impressive too. While counting on the value of IM quoted Adweek on the view that witnessed \$10billion of influence marketing by the entrance of other networks like Snapchat, YouTube and TikTok, who have their set-up on different demographics. Supporting the ever-increasing growth for IM, foresee the expected growth of influence marketing to hit \$22.3billion industry by 2024. The smartest brands take advantage of the new waves in the market, knowing the time to skyrocket. This entails adding more community members to the chain, as brand partners. A strong community can provide important feedback leading to improved product, brand loyalty, increased awareness and overall success in sales and profit.

Conclusion

To drive indigenous entrepreneurship to standard growth and technological innovation, the entrepreneurs must key-in to the

proper adoption of social media networks, utilize fully the potentials of search engine optimization and embrace the environmental factors strategically. These will help entrepreneurship to develop to expected growth and development in Nigeria. The mobile phone industry is continuously upgrading models to the most sophisticated, likewise the rises in electronics, computers and televisions. Therefore, anyone and everyone has the capability to influence their peers' purchase decisions, real and passionate fans for brands loyalty. Based on the finding of this study, it is recommended that; Social media activities be verified on credibility of the influencer. The network firms in Nigeria should render efficient services to avoid network failure. The government should enact enabling laws that will protect consumer rights and as environmental influence.

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