Social Media for Book Marketing in a Digital Marketplace: A Study of Selected Publishers in Lagos, Nigeria

By

Afolabi, Abdulrasheed A.

Department of Printing Technology, Yaba College of Technology, Yaba , Lagos, Nigeria
rasheedafo@gmail.com, Tel: 08023543605

ABSTRACT

With marketing messages flooding the social media landscape, small publishers and their products are finding it increasingly difficult to gain visibility and recognition. Given the importance of publishing as a fulcrum for socioeconomic and technological change in society, small publishers must find ways to leverage on the opportunities afforded by social media technology to reach a larger audience. While several studies have shown the adoption of novel information and communication technologies in the Nigerian book publishing industry, there is little research on the usage of social media for book marketing. The purpose of this study is to explore Nigerian book publishers' perception and awareness about social media and the challenges they face while using it for book marketing. The study used an in-depth interview to collect data from five (5) randomly selected book publishing companies in Lagos State, Nigeria, based on the argument that strategy -driven social media marketing can help small book publishers survive and prosper in the current digital world. Social media was viewed positively by respondents as a marketing tool. They stated that using social media to engage with clients and raise awareness about their book items was rather easy. However, a major constraint was identified as a la ck of social media marketing skills that would allow them to maximise the benefits of social media. As a result, this study identifies social media competency as a resource in the strategic use of social media in the Nigerian book publishing industry.

Keywords: Social media, Publishing, Book marketing, Book publishers, Nigeria

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INTRODUCTION

Publishing remains a fulcrum for socio-economic and technological developments in societies. As a result, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) urged member nations to adopt and implement book-reading policies to ensure that books and other reading materials are available to assist education, literacy, and lifelong learning (Nyariki & Krolak 2016). However, there is a never-ending dispute about books as cultural tools versus books as profit-making products. Although there is no doubt that book publishing is a cultural activity, it remains also not in doubt that to remain sustainable the economic dimension must be emphasized and given adequate attention, especially with the intensity of competition in the contemporary media market environment. The nature of this competition is both intermedia and intra-media (Picard 2008). Intermedia competition takes the form of the book publishing industry versus other media channels, especially the wide range of Internet-based media, while intra-media competition is manifested by the rivalry between large multinational book publishers and the small and medium book publishing houses. Recently, Squires (2020) examined the role and positioning of small publishing companies in a marketplace that tilts in the

favour of large multinational conglomerate publishing companies. She argues that to remain sustainable, small-press publishers must drive their publishing practices through good management practices.

Consequently, small publishers are leveraging on the opportunities provided by social media technologies to reach a wider readership. However, a study by Klamet (2020) shows that it is becoming increasingly difficult for small publishers and their products to stand out among the vast array of content online. While prior studies (Christopher & Ifeduba, 2014; Ihebuzor & Odu, 2016; Ani & Ogboh, 2018; Ifeduba & Chistopher, 2018a; Ifeduba & Chistopher, 2018b; Ifeduba, 2020; Egbunu, 2020 and Adegbite-Badmus & Folayan, 2020) examined issues on the adoption of innovative information and communication technologies in the book publishing sector in Nigeria, there is a dearth of studies on the use of social media for book marketing in the country. Recently, Igudia and Ogunsina (2021) investigated how book publishers in South West Nigeria use social media. Overall, this research added to the understanding of how book publishers use social media for tactical, everyday purposes. The study, however, did not cover book publishers' perception of social media as a strategic marketing tool.

There is no doubt that the intense competition in the media industry necessitates that book publishers adopt social media to gain competitive advantage in the contemporary market environment. Thus, it is argued that strategy-driven social media marketing will assist small book publishers to survive and thrive in the present digital landscape. Subsequently, this study seeks to find out the perception of Nigerian book publishers about social media and the issues associated with the use of social media for book marketing by these publishers.

An Overview of the Literature

Gaining a competitive advantage through social media marketing is a big concern for digital firms. The importance placed on firms adopting digital marketing strategies, according to Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2016), highlights this issue. A digital marketing strategy is required, " to provide continuous direction for an organization's online marketing operations so that they link with other marketing efforts and fulfill the organization's overall business goals" (Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2016:178). A social media marketing plan (part of a digital-led marketing strategy) comprises "option of strategic solutions to satisfy digital marketing objectives and develop a sustained distinctive competitive advantage," (Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2016:178).

A number of studies have revealed that online marketing, adopted with the appropriate strategy, is of immense value in the publishing industry. For example, Ali, Abd Razak, Bani Hashim, and Yusof (2011) looked into the strategic use of e-marketing in the transformation of Malaysia's publishing business. Using information and communication technology, they discovered, is a cost-effective way to reach worldwide audiences and book customers. In another study, Ali, Zainal Abidin, Abdul Raheem and Yusairi (2013) examined how university presses employ e-marketing to increase sales. The study found that employing e-marketing to promote books helps academic publishers sell more volumes. Ali (2018) did a follow-up study to examine scholarly publishing companies' e-marketing techniques in order to increase the success of scientific publications produced by Malaysian public universities. The study found that, having a well-thought-out and effective marketing approach will help sell more books.

In Nigeria, evidence supports the adoption of new technologies for marketing activities by book publishers. Otoayele, Okwilagwe, and Ikegune (2017) explored how emergent indigenous publishing enterprises and bookstores in Ibadan used information and communication technology in marketing their products. It became known that the Internet and other new

technologies were the most important information and communication technologies (ICTs) available to indigenous publishers and booksellers for marketing. In the context of social media adoption for marketing in book publishing in Nigeria, Igudia and Ogunsina (2021) discovered that Nigerian publishing houses do not use social media as effectively as they should, pointing out that book publishers primarily use it for social networking and socializing. Specifically, the researchers investigated the ease with which employees of selected publishing enterprises used social media for marketing. The study revealed a link between effort expectancy (ease of use) and social media adoption for marketing by employees of the publishing firms. In other words, perceived ease of use and complexity are important predictors of how effectively and efficiently publishing houses in Nigeria use social media for marketing goals. While Igudia and Ogunsina's (2021) study give some useful insights on social media use by Nigerian book publishers, this effort is only part of a large picture. To see the bigger picture, more dimensions on the subject matter of social media usage for book marketing need exploration.

Book marketing is a core aspect of publishing. Thus, its importance cannot be exaggerated. Cole (2003:4) defines book marketing as a "publishing practice involving selecting and finding methods that result in a profitable book and a profitable company". Fullerton (2016) also clarifies that book marketing practices comprise planning and goal-setting activities such as ideas mining, editorial development, and generally assuring financial success through promoting and distributing book products to the reading audience. These two definitions underlie a new approach to marketing in publishing which thrives on innovative product development, customer engagement and brand management. As Baverstock (2015:29) puts it, "innovation and radical thinking are not only firmly on the marketing agenda, they are also essential to the industry's future".

Methodology

This study employs qualitative in-depth interview to gather preliminary information on the perception and use of social media by selected book publishing companies in order to find out trends in social media adoption in the Nigerian book publishing industry. Given its purpose of gaining insights, this study is exploratory. An exploratory study is highly appropriate if researchers wish to clarify their understanding of a topic, problem, or phenomenon (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). The five book publishing companies involved in this study were randomly selected from a directory of businesses in Lagos State, Nigeria. For the reason of confidentiality, the selected companies were given labels of Company A-E. A brief profile of each of the selected book publishing companies is presented in Table 1 below.

Data was collected through in-depth interview. The interview was carried out with a respondent with marketing management role in each of the selected publishing companies. The overall objective was to gain insights on the use of social media in the marketing operations and business practices of the companies. Each interview lasted between forty minutes and one hour. In the case of one of the respondents who for reason of busy schedule could not be committed to an oral interview session, written responses to interview questions were obtained through instant messaging (WhatsApp). All responses were transcribed into texts and coded on the basis of questions asked in the interview. Thematic analysis was adopted to generate distinct categories of insights, in line with Lester, Cho and Lochmiller (2020).

Table 1: Labels, categories and profile of selected book publishers

Company	Category based on size	Brief Profile	Span of social media use
Company A	Small academic publisher	A university press established in the year 2008 with the aim of meeting the publishing and printing needs of the parent university	6 months
Company B	Small educational publisher	The twenty-year old company publishes educational books for all levels, as well as general readership.	2 years
Company C	Small literary publisher	An independent book publishing company founded in 2012 with the aim of promoting the freedom of the imagination and the free press.	9 years
Company D	Small general publisher	An extension of a micro financial institution, the printing and publishing firm offers a wide range of print media related services including book publishing.	5 years
Company E	Medium educational publisher	A prominent indigenous educational publisher, with a long history of educational book publishing spanning over fifty years.	5 years

Results

Social Media Perception

Company A respondent argued that social media is a double-edged sword in the sense that although it may be a source of competition for readers' attention, it is nevertheless, a great platform for business. As the respondent noted; "If you can combine social media marketing with traditional marketing, you may derive the best result". In a similar vein, Company B respondent agreed that social media is a great tool for marketing that should be explored more by publishers. Company C respondent also concurred with the opinions of previous respondents. According to the respondent, "the social media is what you make of it. Social media is beyond borders, there is speed, immediacy and the algorithms work in the background. By monitoring online users, social media can cater to their needs". As for Company D respondent, rather than perceive social media in negative light, social media has really helped the company in landing big orders. Company E respondent shares the same opinion. Overall, the studied publishing companies unanimously perceived social media as a relevant and useful marketing tool.

Social Media Capabilities

Majority of the studied book publishers have specialists handling their social media marketing. Company A has three staff members in charge of social media and promotion. In Company B, there is a team of social media/ digital marketers who have background knowledge and experience in social media. Company C respondent's response on this is; "Yes, we do. It has to be someone who knows how the Internet works". A similar response from Company D is, "We have a social media representative that reports to the marketers". The only exception is Company E's response, "None for now, but that is on our plan".

Social Media Impact

The respondents highlighted the positive role of social media in reaching their target audience and influencing the sales and awareness of their book products. Company A respondent noted that social media goes a long way in reaching out to people who are

interested in their books. "Because of the peculiarities of our business, we have to meet up with writers, poets etc. It takes a lot to actually reach our audience. We started six months ago and it is still work in progress", the respondent informed.

Company B respondent noted that the company was at the time in the process of engaging with schools and educational bodies on social media, so the impact is still taking form. According to the respondent: "On a scale of 0-100 per cent, I will say 20%...we only have a few target market on these social media platforms…the educational book markets are with schools which we try to engage with personally, both online and in persons". Company C respondent described the impact of social media as "immense", although the need to engage much more with relevant consumers and other stakeholders through consistent social media marketing to achieve the company's set goals was stressed. The respondent reported that social media brings about product awareness by reducing promotion costs, just as word-of-mouth marketing also helps in boosting sales. Company D respondent noted that social media impact is positive, "it is good for business. There is no way you can do business in the digital world without the social media… We have been getting great responses. So far it has been positive and helpful in reaching our target audience," the respondent said. As for Company E respondent, the feedback is: "We can say there is considerable change, though not as much as envisaged. Social media has made reaching our target audience quite easy. It has increased our audience base".

Social Media Challenges

The respondents expressed various challenges faced in using social media for book marketing. Company A respondent highlighted a technical challenge in relation to how the algorithms on social media platforms work. "Generic posts on Facebook will only reach a handful of people. The cost of promoting posts on social media platforms is a challenge", the respondent said. Company B respondent complained about the cost of electronic equipment, internet costs and costs of promotional advert on the social media platforms. Company C respondent pointed out plagiarism and outright theft of content in digital marketing as bane. Company D highlighted content development for digital marketing as challenging. Company E respondent complained about the difference between awareness and purchase of books by schools. The respondent said, "Yes, we are getting the awareness and more views but the case is not the same in the adoption of our materials. The bulk of those that form the social (media) users are not the same people that will adopt our materials, that is challenging for us."

Discussion of Findings

This study investigated the general perception of social media and issues on the use of social media by marketing staff of selected publishing firms. It was discovered that all respondents of the publishing houses surveyed perceived social media as a relevant and valuable marketing tool. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, and Linkedin are the most popular social media platforms among the publishing companies analyzed. The respondents said that social media is important in bringing traffic to their websites, and that search engines are important in book marketing and promotion. The majority of the book publishers surveyed had social media marketing specialists on the staff list. The importance of social media in reaching their target audience and impacting sales and awareness of their book items was emphasized by the respondents. Nonetheless, they identified a number of obstacles that are limiting its impact.

These insights on the use of social media by the selected Nigerian book publishers align with previous knowledge on book publishing. Lis and Berz's (2011)

study on the value of social media for marketing and branding in a competitive media environment concluded that using social media to promote products increases the likelihood of a sale, which supports the submission of the respondents from the current study, affirming social media as a useful book marketing tool.

There is no doubt that social media marketing demands some levels of skills and competences which require that the function be performed by specialist staff as revealed in this study. At the start of the digital revolution, most book publishers performed the direct marketing function of providing information on their titles on their websites (Clark and Phillips 2014:235). Today's book publishers face a more difficult task of engaging with online communities, either by creating one from scratch or by utilizing existing ones. According to Criswell and Canty (2014), social media is most effective as a promotional tool for publishers to interact with readers in online communities. As Wang, Hou, and Hu (2021) aver, social media provides an opportunity for word of mouth (WOM) to spread and for interested readers to feel engaged and involved. The researchers argue that the ability to act on this opportunity is a competitive advantage.

However, the supposed comparative advantages that could be gained through social media usage by the publishers in this study were limited by challenges, the major of which relates to the technicalities of social media algorithms, content development for social media marketing, and search engine optimization costs. Despite the huge promises, Lal, Ismagilova, Dwivedi, and Kwayu (2020) stress that there are still issues with social media deployment and assessing the returns on social media. According to them, the fact that businesses are reportedly struggling to incorporate social media has resulted in a growing corpus of literature examining social media strategy and formulation.

Deductions from this qualitative study give some insights on the perception, awareness and use of social media in the Nigerian book publishing industry, giving more depth to the contributions of Igudia and Ogunsina (2021) on the subject matter. However, the picture is still emerging; there are many more aspects of the emerging social media marketing practice to explore in the context of the Nigerian book market, especially how social media marketing strategy influences publishing performance.

Conclusion

The responses of interviewed Nigerian book publishers in this study point to the positive perception of social media as a marketing tool. They reported the impact of social media in engaging with their customers and creating awareness about their book products with relative ease. However, in view of some constraints highlighted, these publishers certainly need to acquire more social media marketing competencies that will help them derive the maximum benefits from social media innovations. In the light of these findings, further research is required to explore social media marketing practices of Nigerian book publishers, especially from the dimension of social media planning and strategy.

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IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES AND FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT IN NIGERIA

By

[1]Sani Giwa Sani & [2]Anifowose Ayodeji A, & Atoyebi Abdulwakeel O.

sanigieasani@gmail.com 08075339072   ayodeji.anifowose@yaba.edu.ng 07035778230
3Department of Social Sciences, School of Liberal Studies, Yaba College of Technology, Yaba

ABSTRACT

National security is an integral part of a country's policy. It is the essence of state policy and objective. The flow of foreign direct investment is closely determined by the efficiency and pace of coun*try's national security. National security challenge is an impediment that* dwindle the flow of FDI into a country. This paper examines the impact of national security and FDI in Nigeria. This study adopted survey research design methodology. The study established that there is significant negative relationship between national security challenges and the flow of FDI in Nigeria. The study observed that the plethora of national security challenges confronting Nigeria for example Boko-Haram insurgency and terr orism, armed banditry, kidnapping, violent secessionist agitation of IPOB, herder -farmer clashes, ethno-religious crises, citizenship conundrum, are greatly impacting negatively on the *country's foreign policy objective on increasing the flow of FDI. It co*ncluded that the nature of Nigeria national security challenges is complex and contradictory base on the character of the state and is badly affecting the flow of FDI. The study concluded that there should be national reorientation to enlighten Nigerians t hat national security challenge of the country *is every citizen's business and citizens should support government to boost the flow FDI into* the state through tolerance. The state should decisively combat the menace of terrorism, insurgency, armed banditry, kidnapping, armed robbery, herder -farmer clashes among other.

Key words : security, insecurity, national security, foreign direct investment FDI,

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is daily confronted with plethora of security challenges. This no doubt is affecting her foreign policy drive on foreign direct investment FDI. Since the inception of this Fourth Republic right from Chief Olusegun Obasanjo administration to Umar Yar'adua, Ebele Jonathan and incumbent Muhammadu Buhari administration, the country foreign policy have designed in such a way that, it woo foreign investors and to boost the flow of FDI into the country. Unfortunately, the spike in insecurity has become very challenging for the country. The nature and character of the Nigeria state and society couple with contradictory or inverted democratic and capitalistic practices have pose as insecurity challenge which further threatens the foreign policy objective of the country. Nigeria foreign policy objective is designed to ensure and maintain peace and security within its territory and to ensure that the appropriate security architectures are mounted, ensure development and economic stability. Of recent the country foreign policy posture is to ensure increase flow of FDI, national and regional peace and economic and political stability.

Nigeria is confronted with national security challenges and this is affecting the country foreign policy objective. The agitation of Niger delta group on resource control has led to the emergence of various militant armed