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DIGITAL MARKETING AND TRADITIONAL MARKETING: WHICH AMONG THEM SUITS THE PECULIARITIES OF OUR SETTING?

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Abstract

Businesses are being operating in a digital age equally dubbed as 'New normal era' that prompted the proliferation of digital marketing where products and services are promoted using digital technologies not only on the Internet, but also through mobile phones, display advertising and other digital channels. Thus, digital marketing is becoming an integral part of our daily lives as the traditional marketing practice is presently lagging behind. The paper is aimed at throwing some light on the concept of digital marketing, its benefits and its various forms. An extensive review of extant literature on past studies related to the concept is done. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) along with Social Exchange Theory (SET) served as underpinning theories of the work. Dearth of digital marketing related studies has been identified in less developed and developing countries. The outcome of the study also revealed the need for organizations to fully embrace the emerging trends and also merge digital marketing with the traditional marketing practices specifically, in an environment with paucity of infrastructural facilities to become relevant and competitive.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Traditional Marketing, Benefits of Digital Marketing

1. Introduction

The evolution and emergence of online media has significantly influence consumers' daily activities thereby leading to a drastic change on the part of marketers, specifically, in their dealings with the prospective and current customers. The widespread penetration of the internet has greatly revolutionized how we communicate, make purchases and even interact with one another. In today's technologically driven era, social networking sites serve as important channels where large number of customers can effectively be reached. Thus, digital marketing enables the marketers to engage with buyers in a more efficient and cost-friendly way. In fact, digital marketing is assumed to be an integral part of organizations' business strategy, as it greatly ensures the success of organizations. That is why Dodson (2016) affirmed that, for business organizations to prosper, they need to be actively visible in the virtual domain.

The rapid expansion of e-businesses mandated the marketers to embrace the emerging trends by monitoring and formulating the necessary strategies that will allow the organizations to cope with the current technological leaps. Dodson (2016) added that the rapid advancement of e-business compel marketing experts to scan the environment in order to cope with the business dynamism and complexity. This can be achieved by identifying the trends and formulating the required strategies to achieve the desired goals.

The adoption of digital technologies is increasingly getting acceptance in today's competitive marketing environment (Onobrakpeya, & Mac-Attama, 2007). Scholars believed that marketing of a products/services using digital technology is largely but not restricted to the use of internet, it also involves mobile phones, display advertising and or any available digital media (Chan, Wu, & Xie, 2011). Thus, it involves a sequence of actions used by managers to achieve organizational objectives through choosing an efficient

online marketing channel that lead to the proper execution of marketing plans around a designated business line (Hoban & Bucklin 2015).

Although digital marketing is considered by some scholars as synonymous to internet marketing, but there exist some differences. For instance, Tetiana and Yana (2016) argued that Internet marketing can only be applicable in the internet-bound environment (online context), however digital marketing has a broader scope as it also covers offline settings as well. For instance marketing information can be shared in cellphones and other downloaded medium, POS and other self-service terminals, tablets and computers outdoor adverts e.g. on LCD screens, digital television and other related digital tools. In effect, Internet marketing is just a channel in the digital marketing domain, as it makes use of various digital channels that are dynamic in nature and are grossly expanding in both quantity and diversity.

Moreover, according to Goel, et al. (2017) digital marketing goes beyond internet marketing as it encompasses other means that do not involve internet usage. Such channels entails the use of mobile phones e.g., through SMS and MMS, social media, display advertising, marketing through use of search engines as well as other digital media. Equally, Tetiana and Yana (2016) believed that digital entails the application of digital channels towards promoting a product. This could be through the use of blogs and social media, viral advertising, television and contextual advertising or designing of a special site.

Traditional marketing is believed to differ with the digital marketing with respect to differences in medium. While traditional marketing entails print, broadcast, telephone along with direct mail, digital marketing on the other hand, involves online ads, email marketing, affiliate marketing, pay per click, email marketing, search engine optimization, social media as well as text messaging (Goel et al 2017).

In the same vein, while emphasizing that digital marketing is more desirable than the traditional marketing, Goel, et al. (2017) further reiterated that digital marketing cannot be effectively implemented in a society with dearth of literacy rate. Moreover, it is also believed that acquiring thorough knowledge and

requisite expertise in handling data-intensive tools is highly needed for digital operations to succeed (Hudson, Roth & Madden 2012). In addition, when used incorrectly or by unskilled professionals, digital marketing can affect companies negatively (Aswani et al., 2018).

Similarly, Shammi (2015) after highlighting the importance of digital marketing in today's competitive and dynamic era. He however affirmed that it can only flourish in an environment with improved infrastructure. Also, although digital marketing enables organizations to promote their offerings into the market, among the major obstacles of digital marketing is the marketers' inability to persuade the prospective buyers as well as devising means for their attraction and retention as direct and face to face contact is usually non-existing.

The use of physical cash is now being discouraged in making transactions (Darma & Noviana 2020), hence the recommendations of adopting digital payments. This can also be facilitated by provision of the requisite infrastructure so that the cashless policy can be more effective.

The level trust vested on digital marketing is still low compared with traditional marketing (Ali et al., 2016). In addition, scholars further argued that the adoption rate of digital marketing in the developing countries or in countries with infrastructural challenges is lower than what is obtainable in the advanced countries (Christino et al., 2019). Furthermore, as unskilled professionals are in abundance in the less developed countries, the desired benefits of digital marketing cannot be fully realized as revealed by Dwivedi, et al (2020) and Aswani et al (2018). Thus, this study is aimed at offering a comprehensive review of prior studies on the concept of digital marketing in comparison with the traditional marketing concept with a view of identifying which fits the peculiarities of the developing countries like Nigeria where there still infrastructural gaps.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual issues

According to the American Marketing Association AMA (2013), digital marketing encompasses all the activities

and processes brought about by digital technologies leading to the creating, communicating as well as delivering enhanced value to the customers (López García et al. 2019).

Equally, the promotion of a product or services using technology in the New Normal Era is simply referred to as digital marketing (Darma & Noviana 2020). Thus, the concepts of e-commerce, the internet of things (IoT), smart products, Artificial Intelligence along with mobile devices are all believed to fall under the auspices of digital marketing (Herhausen et al, 2020). As traditional marketing reflects the conventional marketing practices of promoting a product, digital marketing entails the act of promotion of goods and services via some specific channels such as internet, television and phones (Blythe 2006). Digital Marketing is also defined as “an adaptive, technology-enabled process by which firms collaborate with customer and partners to jointly create, communicate, deliver, and sustain value for all stakeholders” (Kannan & Li, 2017, p. 23).

Benefits of Digital Marketing

The benefits of digital marketing in the contemporary world are enormous. The ability to reach the entire market segments in the online domain is very much feasible. Similarly, the costs of advertising and other transactions are greatly minimized. The digitization of operational documents, distribution, management and communication enhance the optimization of business processes as time management is greatly achieved. It further encourages consumer to be more aware about the product, its quality and prices, thereby ensuring more relational and convenient transaction between the organizations and the customers. In addition, it allows for the identification and implementation of effective marketing strategy as buyers' attitudes and assessments becomes much easier accessible. Equally, it becomes much easier for the organizations to identify the confidence of the customers towards a brand. It also portrays the image of the organizations in the eyes of the customers. Furthermore, it also offers almost equal opportunities to all organizations irrespective of their sizes and scopes (Ištvančić, Crnjac & Krpić 2017).

The emergence of digital marketing has also given the users or buyers the power to exact control on what they purchase. Thus, marketers should give emphasis on what that buyers are already thinking, rather than informing them about what to think. That is, the buyers have enormous control over what they choose. In digital marketing, customers have the ability to influence the prices of a commodity, emphasizing that, apart from the producers of goods and services, customers are equally involved in the pricing process (Dodson 2016). He further added that through digital marketing, consumers can quickly and aggressively be reached. In fact, through virtual interaction, an attractive and unique image of a company can be portrayed which will subsequently lead to building of trust and by extension, the achievement of customer satisfaction.

According to Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) digital communication enhances customer participation especially in a situation where digital content is created and shared. It also enables the initiation of dialogue along with provision of a means that encourage receiving of a feedback from the clients. That greatly empowers the customers to select and determine the contents that suit them which also allow them to exercise some control on some marketing communication decisions.

Also, among other advantages of digital relationship as argued by Murphy and Sashi, (2018) is that, it facilitates an immediate reciprocal feedback among the parties in a relationship, and this significantly enhances relational satisfaction among them. Kulova and Mihaylov (2018) further affirmed that being an updated means of information management, digital marketing enhances the sustainability and prosperity of many organizations. The work of Merisavo (2006) also confirmed that digital marketing is playing a vital role towards achieving customer loyalty by offering cost-friendly options to the organizations.

Similarly, Goel et al (2017) maintained that other benefits of digital marketing include, it allows organizations to compete irrespective of size or scope of operations specifically if the required expertise is present, unlike in the traditional marketing practices where smaller firms struggle to compete with the market

leaders. It also encourages cost reductions when promoting organizational offerings as it get rid of the costs associated with radio, newspapers and other prints ads. It further allows the organization to know the level of its sales within the shortest possible time. Thus, it boosts the sales rate as a single click will portray the volumes of sale made. In effect, digital marketing helps marketing managers to have deep knowledge about their customers which will also help them to identify their needs and provide the offerings that match or even exceed their requirements (Chaffey, 2013).

Despite huge benefits offered by digital marketing, it is not without some identified obstacles. One of the major drawbacks associated with an emerging digital communication is the dearth of fundamental components of personal connection like empathy, eye contact and personal interaction. Similarly, the addiction with digital along with social media is considered by some as a disease prevalent in the 'new normal' era (Slijepčević, Radojević, & Perić, 2020).

The following are some of the factors that affect the effectiveness of digital marketing as offered by Goel et al (2017);

- i. Target market; choice and focusing of the target market in promoting the organizational offerings at a lower rate
- ii. Technology; be up-to-date as technology is usually dynamic
- iii. Content; which is expected to be attractive and unique
- iv. Budget; this has to do with financial capability of the company
- v. Social media; like using the web-based social networking avenues to attract and retain clients
- vi. Channels; potential customers can be targeted appropriately using the appropriate channels. The choice of a channel can be analyzed through its cost advantages, reach, speed and the like.
- vii. Infrastructure; the effectiveness of bandwidth available and other infrastructural facilities in an environment
- viii. Literacy; the level of awareness and level of education of the citizens of a country to use technology

Types of Digital Marketing

The following represents the basic types of digital marketing;

- i. Website; it allows clients to access information about the organizations and their profiles much easier. It also promotes organizational offerings at relatively lower costs
- ii. Search Engine marketing; this is aimed at ensuring the organizational website are easily found and accessed in the search engine domain. It is divided into two broad categories, which are the search engine optimization (SEO) along with the search engine marketing (SEM). While the former is much cheaper and works more slowly, the latter is faster and requires financial involvement, that is, it is usually paid.
- iii. Social Media marketing; this channel promotes organizational offerings at a much lower rate. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are serving as communication media to many people in today's technological driven era. Social media marketing (SMM); this is the adoption of social media platforms to connect users to your organizations. If properly implemented, it improves the image of the organizations, boost sales and drives traffic. It also aids customers to evaluate, choose and make purchases of organizational offerings (Constantinides, 2014). Thus social media apps are used as marketing tools.
- iv. Email marketing; this is also a medium of communication where organizations promote their offerings to the email addresses of their current and prospective customers.
- v. Video Marketing; this is also an avenue where organizations directly inform the public about their brand. Customer testimonials can equally be added in the form of video ads to woo more buyers.
- vi. Content Marketing; Mandloys Digital Agency (2013) viewed content marketing to be "The creation of content that is relevant, compelling, entertaining and valuable and this content must be consistently provided to maintain or change the behavior of customers. Content marketing is an essential marketing activity that helps retain customers, acquire new ones and helps companies to build a strong brand." It is geared at educating

customers by offering vital information. It does not involve direct selling as clients are encouraged to buy from the organization whenever they are ready. While Copyblogger (2013) added that: “Content marketing means creating and sharing valuable free content to attract and convert prospects into customers, and customers into repeat buyers.” They proposed that the content should be free, and that it can be accessed, consumed and shared. The shared content is expected to relate to the field along with the category of the business for the customers to know, like and trust the organization in their present and future dealings.

vii. Automation marketing; this represents the deployment of software for the automation of marketing processes like the segmentation of the customers, customer data integration as well as campaign management. If properly executed, it aids organizations to focus on the right clients and encourages more buyers by boosting sales funnel at minimal cost and fewer human resources (Todor 2016). In particular, automation software aid organizations to centralize data, improves contact strategy, turning leads to become potential clients and facilitate the success of the overall marketing campaigns of the organizations.

viii. Pay per click (PPP); some amount (fee) is paid whenever a visitor clicks organizational web sites (landing page or app). If properly implemented, the fee is usually insignificant compared to the anticipated profit resulting from such clicks. PPC emerges in various sizes and shapes. It can be in the form of images, videos, or text or even a combination of these. They can be visible on search engines, social media, websites and the like Kapoor, (Dwivedi, & Piercy 2016).

Forms of Traditional marketing

Sinha (2018) categorized traditional marketing as;

Print: Involves advertisements of organizational offerings in newspapers, brochures, newsletters, magazines, and other printed materials

Broadcast: this is normally done in the radio and television commercials, along with other specialized forms such as on-screen movie and theatre advertising

Direct mail: this entails fliers, letters, catalogues, postcards, brochures, and other related materials which are printed and mailed directly to the buyers

Telemarketing: this covers requested callings and cold calling of consumers over the phone

Several studies have on digital marketing have been conducted by scholars that portrayed the efficacy or otherwise of the concept in various contexts and settings as presented in the following section.

2.2 Empirical Review

The work of Onobrakpeya and Mac-Attama (2007) aimed at identifying the effect of DM on customer satisfaction in the context of Nigerian banking domain. Using 214 respondents who are banks’ employees, the study found that e-marketing had a significant influence on satisfaction. The study of Christina, Fenni, and Roselina, (2019) found that digital marketing strategy has an important influence towards promoting organizational offerings. They advocated that the planning, implementation along with the evaluation of digital marketing strategies should be done in a unique pattern as against how it is executed in the traditional marketing manner.

Pawar (2014)’s study highlighted the relevance of integrated marketing communication and digital marketing in the present dynamic and complex setting in the context of Mumbai suburb. Their empirical work revealed that buyers do not have trust regarding the safety of digital marketing, as they rely on other medium in gathering information about organizational offerings.

According to Middle, (2009) whose work made comparison about consumers’ trust with respect to traditional and digital marketing, using secondary sources, the study found that family members and other relatives exert greater influence in persuading customers to patronize organizational offerings. That is, they trust family sources more compared to the digital means. Similarly, digital marketing does not significantly influence consumers’ buying behavior in the studies of Clarke and Svanaes, (2012) and that of Furrer and Sudharshan (2001).

The study of Goel et al (2017) aimed at assessing consumers’ attitudes towards online shopping. The sample of the study were drawn from

the online media, the outcome indicated that both online and offline shopping were preferred rather than just one with more emphasis given to the offline trading.

Sait, Al-Tawil and Hussain (2004) investigated the factors that trigger e-commerce adoption. Their study found that infrastructural development along with peoples' tradition and cultural values are the major determinants of e-commerce adoption. Pavlou (2003) investigated the degree of acceptance to e-commerce among buyers. Their empirical study established that a perceived risk is the main factor that hinders e-commerce acceptance.

Khan and Siddiqui (2013) examined customers' perception towards digital marketing in the context of Pakistani professionals and also how it influences their perception. Using 200 marketing experts, the findings of the study indicated that marketing professionals are skeptical towards digital marketing operations, especially, with digital marketing tools and concepts.

Stephen (2016) reviewed articles related to digital marketing with specific areas of social media, online word of mouth, and social media in four main journals of consumer research between 2013 and 2015. The journals include journal of consumer research, journal of consumer psychology, journal of marketing as well as journal of marketing research. The study highlighted digital environment and consumer digital cultures have an influence on digital marketing. They went further to reveal that digital marketing is expected to be the future of consumer marketing.

2.3 Theoretical Literature

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and social exchange theory served as underpinning theories of this work. The two known constructs that explain the concept of TAM are the perceived ease of use (PEU) along with perceived usefulness (PU) (Davis 1989). He conceptualized to be "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of effort" (p. 320). In this regard, a person will be attached

to an electronic platform for instance social media websites if his friends and or family are also using the site. But, PEU will decrease in a situation where his privacy will be compromised, or when he is faced with information overload and overwhelmed friend request. Davis (1989) further viewed PU as "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance" (p. 320). Interestingly, Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) have being used by quite a number of studies in the context of DM such as; Matikiti, Mpinganjira, and Roberts-Lombard, (2018); Ritz, Wolf, and McQuitty, (2019); Lee, Xiong, and Hu, (2012) and Fedorko, Bacik, and Gavurova, (2018) among others.

People are in relationship when they expect some benefits that exceed those offered by rival organizations (Emerson, 1962). Thibaut and Kelley (1959) further assert that people evaluate the tangible and intangible benefits along with cost associated with any relationship. As behavior emanates from social exchange, and the exchange is geared towards maximizing benefits at minimal cost. One of the advantages of digital marketing over traditional marketing practices is that, it enjoys cost advantage. Issue of reciprocity is vital in exchange process as customers change their interaction due to reciprocity balance (Gawuna & Dasuki 2022). Among the benefits to be derived in an exchange are; companionship and other support from a relationship that one derives as against those offered by the competitors. That is, the benefit is not restricted to the monetary values to be derived in an exchange. Although the theory has been well applied in offline related studies, scholars such as Luo, (2002) along with Luo, X., and Donthu, (2007) used it in online context.

3. Methodology

For the purpose of this study, different literature sources from both anecdotal and empirical works as they relate to digital marketing were sought for in various articles; papers; publications in various media; text books and internet sources from various contexts and settings.

4. Summary and Conclusions

Digital marketing allows organizations to be more exposed and visible 24/7 anywhere globally at a minimal costs. Digital marketing encourages enhanced engagement as it allows clients and other followers to relate with the organizations by visiting their sites and knowing more about them, and subsequently rates them and provides inputs where necessary. Unlike in traditional marketing practices, where huge costs and time are required in refining marketing strategies, digital marketing however aids organizations to refine their strategies at any given time and get the desired outcome and make the necessary improvements. However, the concept of digital marketing should not be considered as mutually exclusive with the concept of traditional marketing especially, among companies operating in the less developed countries as it will be very difficult to

develop efficient and comprehensive marketing strategies while neglecting the principles and approaches of traditional marketing. In effect, digital marketing is a complex approach geared towards promoting organizations and all what they offer via using a digital channels or through combining the traditional networks in the virtual marketing domain.

Thus, ignoring the traditional marketing tactics in favor of digital marketing will not augur well with our context (Nigeria) considering the infrastructural challenges bedeviling our context. In fact that is why Hartono, Yusuf, and Arifiati (2020) call for the integration of digital marketing with offline marketing in selling organizational offerings. In the same vein, Bala and Verma (2018) also reiterate the needs to merge both the online with the conventional marketing practices together for customer satisfaction to be realized.

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