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THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE NIGERIAN PIZZA AND RESTAURANT INDUSTRIES

By

Rabiu Iliya
Department of Business Administration and Management
Jigawa State Polytechnic Dutse, Nigeria
rabsdut@gmail.com

Nura Isah
Department of Accountancy
Jigawa State Polytechnic Dutse, Nigeria
sumnur4real@yahoo.com

Abstract

The objectives of this research is to investigate the role of social media in the Nigerian Pizza and Restaurant Industry. The study used qualitative and quantitative methods. The research used structured questionnaire and is divided into two section. Section (A) goes to Fast Food and Restaurant Businesses while section (B) goes to their customers respectively. The size of the study sample are 20 Fast Food and Restaurant Businesses and 500 customers in Jigawa State of Nigeria. The study drawn 25 customers from each Fast Food and Restaurants using stratified random sampling technique making a total of 500 customers. The findings of this study reveals that social media play significant roles in the Nigerian Pizza and RestaurantIndustry toward marketing their products due to its powerful influences among GSM users and it gives a number of benefits to marketers which includes arousing customers interest to a product, convenient, cost advantages, user friendly and served as a source of information in the Nigerian restaurant industry. Finally, the study reveals that sales volume in the Nigerian Pizza and Restaurant Industry increases as a result of adverts made in social media networking sites.

Keywords: Social media, Social media networking sites, Restaurant industry, Pizza hut.

INTRODUCTION

Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram are social media networking sites used by restaurant and Pizza industry because they provided cheap and accessible marketing platform to reach thousands customers within short period of time. Social media's acceptability is fast growing across the world, which is why fast food and restaurant businesses uses social media as one of their important tools of implementing business and marketing strategies (Manoj, 2017).

The first pizza industries that delved into social media in the world where the three most competitive Pizza's businesses in the United State of America which are Papa John's Pizza, Pizza Hut and Domino's Pizza (He, et al., 2013). Pizza accounts for 11.7 percent of all restaurants and represents about 10 percent of all food service sales in America and its revenue accounted for more

than $ 36 billion per annum (Statista, 2019). Restaurant and Pizza industry now use face booking and WhatsApp social networking sites in promoting their product, customer attraction, market and means of generating sales revenue. Top Chef Master Rick Bayless makes used of Twitter, Smokey Bones Bar, and Fire Grill makes used of MySpace and Facebook whereas McDonald's decided to build a global online community aim at gaining large number of audience for the exchange of information and feedback (DiPietro, et al., 2012).

According to Jeon and Jeong, (2017) states that, the use of websites and blogs by restaurants serve as a way of disseminating information towards attracting and customer retention which promote popularity and high revenue generation. In recent time, many businesses struggled and are trying to adapt the use of social media so that they could establish customer loyalty, promote sales growth, improve corporate value, and build brand image and company's reputation (Anderson, 2020). Social media provide an online platform for fast food and restaurant businesses to retain their existing customers and attract new customers (Wu, et-al, 2014). Social media can be set up at little or no cost, however, due to limited financial resources many small enterprises find it challenging to compete with the large enterprises and therefore embraced social media to make their adverts (Muhammad, et-al, (2022).

Social media networking sites are used to promote brand image, sales revenue, advertising, marketing, attracts customers, customer care service, product innovation and development, delivery services and so on (Anderson, 2020). Social media can be used by marketers to determine the power and activities of their competitors, effective marketing strategy, innovation and techniques within the industry and find ways of satisfying customers to achieve competitive advantage (Dey, et al., 2011).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The wide spread of smart phones in 21 century enable enterprises including fast food and restaurants businesses to reach their target customers and attract potentials customers towards their products or services Yousery et-al., (2018). It is quite true that social media networking sites brings into contacts and connect people together which allowed them to associate, create, and exchange content with unlimited group or organisations (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Similarly, social media remain a platform where people involve in content sharing, blogs, video, photos and so on using social networking sites which enable them to share, create, interact and discuss issues related to Internet content. Impliedly, social media promote competition in marketing of products (Kietzmann, et al., 2011). Social media provide mutual benefits towards facilitating effective communication and hence, commitment could be made to marketing problems and their possible solutions (Thackeray et al., 2012). In 21st century, marketers' uses social media as a tool for market driven, influence and persuade present and potential customers toward their brands (Hanna et al., 2011). Now a day's companies consider social media as a means of communication with their workers and customers (DiPietro, et al., 2012).

A study conducted by (Kok Ban et-al., 2021) reveals that Pizza Hut customer's patronage were influenced by using social media sites which led to higher revenue generation and promotes their business performances. A survey conducted on Pizza industry from (PMQ Pizza, 2010; in He, et al., 2013) reveals that Twitter and Facebook are quite relevant and important tools that need to be used in Restaurant and Pizza's industry to promote sales and other related services. Another similar

report in 2010 from Pizza franchise claims that 85%t of Pizza chain sales are forced to offer discount and engaged in social media as a strategically tool of promoting sales (Franchise Direct, 2011; in He, et al., 2013).

However, in another survey of He, et al. (2013) reveals that many researches recommended restaurants to employ the use of social media networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and the likes as a strategically tools for connecting with large groups towards building customer's relations. A study conducted by Manoj (2017) shows that social media has positive impact on Restaurant and Pizza businesses which leads to increment in sales and flow of customers. In the United States, about 33.3% Americans patronises restaurant and Pizza's spot at least twice a week due to social media. At least 56% of consumers believe to be better served and satisfied by restaurant and pizza spots who buys online as a result of social media networking sites (Business in Social Media, 2008; in DiPietro, et al., 2012). A study from (Hertel, 2009; in DiPietro, et al., 2012) found that, a Chicago-based Pizza chain provided a coupon on social media networking sites to communicate with their customers and other interested followers. Restaurants and Pizza industry appreciated the influence of social networking sites on their target customers. Hence, they begin to take an active part in the use of social networking sites to market their product (Gretzel et al., 2008).

The National Restaurant Association (NRA) of United State organised a conference in 2009 and reported that restaurants and Pizzas centres incorporated the use of Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook to create a forum for disseminating information, engaged and educate followers about their products (DiPietro, et al., 2012). In a similar report, Krystal restaurant created a discussion forum on Facebook by Dunkin Donuts to determine consumers' opinion related to healthy menu offerings, and the conference attracted 1,200 people within two days (DiPietro, et al., 2012). A restaurant advertised its product called brunch through social media and found that more than half of their customers heard about the product on Twitter (DiPietro, et al., 2012). Another restaurant in Salt Lake City created a blog on Twitter and sent out coupon and in less than an hour their networking sites attracted new 450 (Kwok and Yu, 2013). A local coffee Cafe in Houston received additional 20% increase in its sales revenue on Twitter as a result of communicative advertisement with their customers (Kwok and Yu, 2013).

Gretzel et al., (2008) discovered various types of social media platforms use by tourist in China, United State, Germany and the United Kingdom as follows: in the United Kingdom blogs and social networking sites are frequently used and are the most popular social media platforms. In Germany, Xing.com is the most popular social networking site they use instead of Facebooking. In the United States and China, Consumer Generated Media (CGM) like videos and consumer reviews are said to be the most popular media tools use in marketing their products. It is expected that marketers should be able to identify and understand culture differences, perceptions, belief and the current technology been in practice within their marketing territories (Gretzel et al., 2008).

METHODOLOGY

The study used qualitative and quantitative method of data. They includes questionnaire, journal, books and internet related to social media in Nigerian Pizza and Restaurant Industry. The research used structured questionnaire and is divided into two section. Section (A) goes to the Fast Food and Restaurant Businesses while section (B) goes to their customers respectively. The size of the study sample are 20 Fast Food and Restaurant Businesses. The study also used 500 customers of Fast Food and Restaurant Businesses in Jigawa State of Nigeria. The study drawn 25 customers

from each Fast Food and Restaurant Businesses using stratified random sampling technique. The study used simple percentage and tabular form for presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data collected. The sample size of 20 Fast Food and Restaurant Businesses with only 25 customers each are the study limitation.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The data collected was divided into two. There are data collected from Fast Food and Restaurant Businesses and data collected from their customers respectively.

Data collected from Fast Food and Restaurant Businesses

Question 1: Do you use any social media platforms to market your products?

Table 1: Research responses

Responses	Number of restaurants	Percentage
Yes	14	70
No	6	30
Total	20	100

Source: Field survey 2023

The research shows 14 fast food and restaurant businesses with 70% stated that they are using social media platform in marketing their products. While 6 of them with 30% stated that they don't used social media to market their products. This clearly reveals that most fast food and restaurant businesses use social media platforms as a strategic means of marketing their products.

Question 2: If yes, which social media platform do you frequently use?

Table 2: Research responses

Responses	Number of respondents	Percentage
Facebook	3	15
WhatsApp	11	55
Instagram	6	30
TikTok	-	-
YouTube	-	-
Total	20	100

Source: Field survey 2023

The research shows that fast food and restaurant businesses prefer using WhatsApp and Instagram over other media platforms with 55% and 30% respectively. While only 15% uses Facebook. This is due to the fact that most people in Jigawa State of Nigeria uses Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram over other social media platforms.

Question 3: What are the contents of your post from the above platforms?

Table 3: Research responses

Responses	Number of respondents	Percentage
Video/audio	-	
Picture & text	6	30
All of the above	14	70
Total	20	100

Source: Field survey 2023

The research shows 14 fast food and restaurant businesses with 70% market their products using video/audio and pictures/text. While only 6 with 30% uses only pictures and texts as means of showcasing their products in social media platforms.

Question 4: How can you assess customer's buying response from your post?

Table 4: Research responses

Responses	Number of respondents	Percentage
Good	7	35
Average	9	45
Poor	4	20
Total	20	100

Source: Field survey 2023

The research shows that, the buying responses of their customers in relation to their social media post is satisfactory. This would directly increases their sales revenue as a result of the contents of their post in social media platforms. Only 4 fast food and restaurant businesses with 20% states that, the content of their posts in social media does not influenced their customer's buying decisions.

Data collected from fast food and restaurants customers

Question 1: Do you buy Pizza product?

Table 1: Research responses

Responses	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	314	62.8
No	186	37.2
Total	500	100

Source: Field survey 2023

The research shows 314 customers of fast food and restaurant businesses with 62.8% clearly expressed that, they buy Pizza products. While 186 of fast food and restaurant businesses with 37.2% states that, they don't buy Pizza products. This simply means that, there are people who don't appreciates Pizza as one of their favourite food.

Question 2: If yes, why do prefer Pizza over other fast food such as Bugger and Shawarma?

Table 2: Research responses

Responses	Number of respondents	Percentage
Taste	198	39.6
Nutritional composition	177	35.4
Aroma	125	25
Total	500	100

Source: Field survey 2023

The research shows 198 customers with 39.6% states that, they prefer Pizza over other fast food products because of its taste. 177 customers with 35.4% states that, they prefer Pizza because of its nutritional composition their body system needs While 125 customers with 25% prefer Pizza because of its aroma.

Question 3: How did you get to know this product (Pizza)?

Table 3: Research responses

Responses	Number of respondents	Percentage
From friends	172	34.4
From family	77	15.4
From s/media	251	50.2
Total	500	100

Source: Field survey 2023

The research shows 251 customers of fast food and restaurant businesses with 50.2% states that, their knowledge of Pizza was due to posts made by other people in social media. While 172 and 77 customers with 34.4% and 15.4% knew Pizza from friends and family members respectively. This means, majority of customers knew Pizza products from social media posts.

Question 4: Does videos and pictures of Pizzas in social media influence your buying decision?

Table 4: Research responses

Responses	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	328	65.6
No	172	34.4
Total	500	100

Source: Field survey 2023

The research shows 328 customers of fast food and restaurant businesses with 65.6% states that, social media posts and adverts made with videos and pictures usually influences their buying decision of Pizza product. While the remaining 172 customers with 34.4% states that, social media posts whether using videos, pictures or both has little influence on their buying decision of Pizza product.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The findings of this study reveals that social media play significant roles in the Nigerian Pizza and Restaurant Industry toward marketing their products due to its powerful influences among GSM users and it gives a number of benefits to marketers which includes arousing customers interest to a product, convenient, cost advantages, user friendly and served as a source of information in the Nigerian Pizza and Restaurant Industry. Finally, the study reveals that sales volume of Pizza in Fast Food and Restaurant Businesses increases as a result of adverts made on social media networking sites in Nigeria. This is in congruence with a study conducted by Kok Ban et-al., (2021) which reveals that Pizza Hut customer's patronage were influenced by using social media sites which led to higher revenue generation and promotes their business performances.

CONCLUSION

It is evident from the recent surveys that out of every three family, one followed a blog or coupon directly or through a suggestions from a friend on Twitter and Facebook on social media networking sites (McMaster and Schwartz, 2013). This means, customers recently tend to become extra powerful and of greater influence because of social media networking sites. It is also clear that social media sites played significant roles in the Nigerian Pizza and Restaurant industry, driving them to promote and improve services toward satisfying customers for greater competitive advantage (Kiron et al., 2012).

Social media networking sites enable customers to follow and monitor some group of clients or other people on what they are saying concerning the activities and operations of restaurants and Pizzerias. It also facilitates firm's interests in dealing with customer's complaints (Gallaugher and Ransbotham, 2010). Conversely, it is essentials for fast food and restaurant businesses to monitor social media so that they could be able to identify and track customer conversations in relations to their operations which would allow them to deals with their customer's complaints. This would secure their sustainability and competitive advantage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that, the practice of social media networking sites as a means of communication in the Nigerian Pizza and Restaurant Industries should be encourage so that customer's action could change from like to buy in Nigeria. The research also recommends the need of using new marketing trends such as Pizza selection, shopping carts and made purchase using debit cards which would make it convenient for consumers to buy Pizza and other fast food and restaurants products from adverts made in social media networking sites (Anderson et al., 2020).

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