

Social Media Advertising/Marketing: A Study of Awareness, Attitude and Responsiveness by Nigerian Youths

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Abstract

The growing popularity of the social media has without question brought about a paradigmatic shift in the way advertisers and marketers seek to promote their goods and services and affect the purchasing decisions of their customers and targets. However, research on advertisements positioned on these social networks and the level of awareness, attitude and responsiveness of its users are relatively still developing, especially within the Nigerian context. Because Facebook has, among the various social media, grown exponentially to become the biggest and most popular today, this study thus investigates the level of awareness, attitude and responsiveness to Facebook advertising on the part of Nigerian youths who are believed to be active social media users. Drawing a sample size of 400 from some select universities in South East Nigeria, the survey finds high awareness of Facebook advertising among the youths. However, it was found that in their vicarious experiences with Facebook, these youths experience some “attention challenges” in noticing and observing the ads. Their attitude to the Ads also indicate a cause for worry: even though they fancy and see Facebook Ads as useful, majority of them would not buy the product or visit the website for more or even “Like” products or services liked by their friends. Debunking the Uses-and-gratification theory to some extent, the study supports the social cognitive theory of communication and recommends that social media advertisers make their Ads more assertive, eye-catching, detailed, brief and concise, more visible and more properly positioned, among others.

Keywords: social media, Facebook, advertising, marketing, Nigerian youths.

Background of the Study

Advertisers and marketers had before now, romanticized with the traditional media of communication to reach their audiences, and to wage advertising ‘war’ in competition against themselves. However, this is rapidly changing. Recent studies indicate that the traditional mass media audiences are increasingly and to a great extent turning toward the new media for information and gratification of certain communication needs (Rudloff & Fray, 2010; O’Toole, 2000). This has indicated a flight from the more conventional mainstream media especially among the younger generation to the alternative media of new (social) media. Today, if you are not on the social networking sites, you are not on the Internet. This fact has become truer for consumers as well as for advertisers. And advertisers and marketers are well aware of this singular fact. The Internet having advanced into Web 2.0, the new media is today facilitating two-way online interaction and user-generated content has become the mainstay of this development. What has become clear is that social media, especially social networking sites (SNS), enable users to present themselves, establish and maintain social connections with others, and articulate their own social networks (Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe 2007, Weinberg 2009; Kaplan and Haenlein 2010; Meerman Scott 2010). Alluding to the rapid change that is occurring and which is creating a chasm between the traditional and new media, IAB Platform Status Report (2008) shares that:

User Generated Content (UGC) and Social Networks are transforming the media ecosystem. Gone are the days when power rested in the hands of a few content creators and media distributors. Gone are the days when marketers controlled the communication and path between advertisement and consumer. Today’s model is collaborative, collective, customized and shared. It’s a world in which the consumer is the creator, consumer and distributor of content. Today there are over a billion content creators and hundreds of millions of distributors. The proliferation of quality, affordable technology and the popularity of social networks and UGC sites have forever changed the media landscape.

This growing popularity of social media has also brought about a paradigmatic shift in the way advertisers now use traditional media to ‘catch’ their target audiences, leading them to invest more effort into communicating with consumers through online social networking.

This social engagement thus presents marketers and advertisers with the opportunity to promote their goods and services and affect the purchase decisions of their customers and targets through online marketing and social media (Evans, 2010; Rudloff and Frey, 2010).

Rationale for the Study

Among the social media and social networking sites, Facebook has grown exponentially over time to become the biggest and most popular social networking site today with a population of over 1 billion users (Facebook, 2012b) and still counting. In Nigeria, and parts of Africa, the diffusion of new digital technologies and their use are increasing by the day. Internet penetration in Nigeria currently stands at about 30% with over 50 million internet users (Business Day Research and Intelligence Unit and Terragon Insights Report, 2013), out of the 167 million Nigerian citizens (National Population Commission, 2012 cited in Terragon Insights, 2013). This figure puts Nigeria as the nation with the largest Internet population in Africa and 11th in the world (Internet World Statistics, 2012 cited in Terragon Insights, 2013). Furthermore, statistics show that the rate of penetration of mobile telephony in Nigeria also stands at 69 percent, with 113,195,591 mobile subscriptions (Terragon Insights, 2013). This is an indication that in Nigeria, Social network sites such as Facebook may have become a medium for advertisers and market practitioners to engage their customers and consumers. However, research studies on these social network sites and how its users perceive it are relatively limited.

This study therefore becomes germane when we recall that as new information technologies are evolving globally, advertisers in turn are increasingly relying on various modes of interactive technology to advertise and promote their products and services. Thus, recent observations and studies have indicated that advertisers have turned the way of the social media in a bid to reach their targets, by taking advantage of the ubiquitous social networks with their multiple platforms. However, understanding consumer's attitudes toward advertising has always been one of the goals of advertisers. This is based on the premise that advertisers and the audiences may be playing discordant tunes if the intended message of the advertiser is not well received by the intended audience. Advertisements can only be said to be successful if the message is well delivered and at the same time well received by the intended audiences. It therefore becomes exigent to find out to what extent these advertising messages on the social network platforms have been received by the audiences and by

extension helped to promote and build awareness on the advertisers' offerings. This study comes handy to unveiling to what extent the popularity and proliferation of social media (Facebook in this instance) advertising is in congruence with the expected awareness, attitude and responsiveness among the youths in Nigeria.

It is the expectation of the researchers that insight gained from this study will be valuable for advertisers and marketers who apparently spend whooping sums of money targeting people through the social media. It will enable them make better judgments about the effectiveness of their advertisements and online marketing strategies, and of course, advise them on the best policies and practices for improvement. In the area of scholarship, this study promises to be another useful addition to the already existing body of literature in the area of New Media, Social Media and the 21st century Nigerian youths.

This study in a nutshell undertakes an in-depth investigation to determine whether the youths who from observation make more active use of social media like Facebook, are even aware of the existence of social media advertising positioned by advertisers and to explore their attitudes and responsiveness towards these advertisements. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Find out if and to what extent Nigerian youths make use of Facebook (social) media;
2. Determine the extent to which they are aware of advertisements posted on Facebook;
3. Ascertain the perception of these youths to the advertisements encountered on Facebook; and
4. Investigate their attitude and responsiveness toward such advertisements.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical frameworks which form the basis for this study is located within the Uses and Gratifications theory of Mass communication and Social Cognitive theory of Psychology and Mass communication. Central to studies analyzing media adoption and use pattern is the basic concept of the Uses and Gratifications approach, which states that people make an active and goal directed choice between the different media that surround them, based on their needs and the different gratifications these media provide them with (Katz *et al.*, 1974; Ruggiero, 2000; Roy, 2008; Cauwenberg *et al.*, 2010).

In the mass communication process, Uses and Gratifications approach puts the function of linking need gratifications and media choice clearly on the side of audience members. It suggests that people's needs influence what media they would choose, how they use certain media and what gratifications the media give them. Uses and gratifications approach also postulates that the media compete with other information sources for audience's need satisfaction (Katz et al., 1974a). Uses and Gratification theory is relevant in understanding patterns of use of the different media forms by audiences, most essentially in view of the development of the new media, since the choice between new and traditional media will in future depend more on how well these technologies satisfy particular interests and needs of individual consumers than on the current social distribution of necessary equipment and skills (Cauwenberg *et al.*, 2010). Uses and Gratification approach, as analyzed by Kocak and Terkan (2009) "takes the use of mass media as a process of the satisfaction of the needs and takes the media audiences as individuals that are active, rational, and resistant to the effects and makes choices according to their preferences" (p. 2).

Looking from the new media perspective, a wide range of new theories, approaches, and methodologies have been proposed as a response to the changes occurring in the digitization of content, the creation and distribution of digital artifacts. These new trends have also motivated scholars to revive traditional theories in the field of mass communication and journalism, which could aid in examining digital communication. Hence, in determining the media use behaviors and motives of the Nigerian youths who consistently engage and interact with the emerging social media, the uses and gratification approach gives some important data. Also, the proponents of Uses and Gratification argue that the technique is suitable for studying new communication technologies. As Ruggiero (2000) puts it, "since new technologies present people with an increasing number of media choices, motivation and satisfaction become even more crucial components of audience analysis" (p. 14).

The uses and gratifications approach (U&G), though an old media theory, is presented as a theoretical lens and empirical means for studying how audiences engage with new media. U&G provides a unique perspective on new media as it stresses the relevance of media in the context of everyday life, examining uses, gratifications sought and obtained, and media practices over time. In particular with the increasing adoption of social media, the U&G approach seems promising in providing a theoretical framework from which to examine what

kinds of social media are adopted by what segments of the population, and what gratifications individuals obtain from their use of various social media platforms, sites, and services. This will help us better understand what motivates users to spend large amounts of time on these sites sharing, liking/disliking, forwarding, adding, and disseminating content. In other words, each of the new media concepts – interactivity, abundance, demassification, asynchronity, etc – offers a vortex of communication behaviors to examine, using the uses and gratification theory. Media scholars have also suggested that traditional models of Uses and Gratification may still provide a useful framework from which to begin to study Internet and new media communication (Kuehn, 1994; December, 1996; Morris & Ogan, 1996; Ruggiero, 2000).

However, in talking about social media advertising, the U&G theory will better explain why and how certain segments of the population derive satisfaction from any type of advertising positioned on the social media. It would also explain why and how other contents of the social media, apart from advertising compete for the audiences' attention and thus could make certain advertisements less desirable and less effective.

On the other hand, the Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive theory (1986) which states that people are self-organizing, proactive, self-reflecting, and self-regulating, not just reactive organisms shaped and shepherded by environmental events or inner forces, might be instructive here too. This attribute might unwittingly contribute in making people develop particular kinds of attitude to (social) media content and respond to them in certain ways, even when they are aware of and exposed to the particular media content.

Literature Review

By definition, social media is a set of various web services that can be interrelated for social interaction using highly accessible and scalable communication techniques (Subramanyam and Greenfield, 2008). Those web services refer to user's capacity to create, publish and share contents that are accessible in various platforms – basically webs and mobiles. Mayfield (2008) explains that social media is online or electronic media which facilitates participation, openness, conversation, community and connectedness amongst online users. The core of social media as explained by Trusov *et al.* (2009) lies in fact that users can have individual profiles and personal images, users are able to communicate their thoughts,

feelings, interests (music, hobbies, preferences) and link to affiliated profiles (friends or professional fan pages).

Various social media applications exist that allow the creation, modification and exchange of online content. According to Hausmann & Poellmann (n.d.), the most relevant categories of social media applications at present are summarized and cursorily discussed below:

- Collaborative projects encompass knowledge communities like “Wikipedia”, bookmarking sites like “Mr. Wong” or review sites like “Yelp”. While knowledge communities enable users to add, remove, and change text-based communities, bookmarking and review sites allow a group-based collection and rating of Internet links, media content or products and services.
- Weblogs (Blogs) represent the earliest form of social media and are regularly updated websites on which contributions are published in reverse chronological orders. In general, blogs allow extensive interaction between blogger and readers via a comment function.
- Microblogs like Twitter are seen as a hybrid of blogging, instant messaging and status notifications. They allow people to publish short text messages (restricted to 140 – 200 characters) using a multitude of various communication channels such as cell phones, instant messaging, e-mail and the Web.
- Content communities like YouTube, Flickr or Slideshare focus on content and file sharing between users. Content communities exist for a wide range of different media types like text, photos, songs, videos and PowerPoint presentations.
- Social Networks like Facebook connect users with similar background and interests who create personal, fully customizable profiles displaying their identity and then share these with so-called friends or fans. Profiles can include any type of information, i.e. photos, videos, audio files and blogs.
- Virtual Worlds comprise virtual games and social worlds where a three-dimensional computer-based environment replicates the “real world”. In games like Warcraft user can appear in the form of a personalized avatar and interact with the community.

For the present study, focus is on social network sites; Facebook being a popular example. Finin et al. (2005, p. 419) define a social network as an “explicit representation of the relationship between individuals and groups in the community”. Additionally, Raacke and

Bonds-Raacke (2008) indicate that social networks provide a virtual platform where people of similar interests may gather to communicate, share and discuss ideas.

A unique and striking feature of social networks is the users' profile. This profile is the focal point of one's social networking experience. Each profile page is unique to the owner and allows its user to literally "type oneself into being" (Sunden, 2003, p. 3). Each member is encouraged to upload their personal profile photograph and share a range of personal information such as where they go to school and details about their personal tastes, such as favourite movies and music (Boyd, 2007). As users have total control over the content that they choose to share and the applications they place on their pages, they can, and usually do, opt to portray themselves in the most positive light. In essence, this means that a user can aspire to an ideal-self through his/her SNS profile. Aside from the inclusion of personal details and photographs, there are two further main components of the social networking profile – friends and comments (Boyd, 2007). Friends also play a fundamental role in the composition of SNSs. On joining a SNS, users are encouraged to identify others with whom they wish to form relationships. Once the connection is made, the relationship will be visually represented on each user's profile page, under the friends section, within which there is a facility to nominate one's top or best 8, 12, 16 or 20 friends, to be listed as such on the user's main profile page (Boyd, 2007). Research to date in this area has focused overwhelmingly on one's profile page, primarily regarding how people portray themselves through their profile page and how they connect with friends and acquaintances via the network (Boyd and Ellison, 2008; Tong et al., 2008; Liu, 2008; Boyd, 2007).

Social Media Advertising and Marketing

Social media advertising refers to the process of gaining website traffic or attention through social media sites. Social media advertising campaigns usually center on efforts to create content that attracts attention and encourages readers to share it with their social networks. Traditional campaigning approaches are overshadowed not only by rising social media but also due to increasing difficulty to create an outstanding campaign due to very competitive market. Impact of social media can be seen in television advertisements which sign off with a plea for consumers to visit their websites, Facebook or Twitter page with the promise of an exciting online experience, fun incentives and a sense of community that people actually want to get involved with (Kaushik, 2012). Bajpai et al (2012) write that Social media has

become a platform that is easily accessible to anyone with Internet access. Increased communication for organizations fosters brand awareness and often, improved customer service. Additionally, social media serves as a relatively inexpensive platform for organizations to implement advertising and marketing campaigns.

With the advent of the Internet and the development of Web 2.0, there is a palpable shift in the control of communication and of course, advertising. The web has successfully switched the power of control from companies to the customers. Thus, customer decides what he/she wants to see, read, or listen to, so the companies compete in getting people's attention and delivering their messages. The good news is that when companies join these social networking sites, people can interact with the company and their products. This interaction makes users feel personal because of their previous experiences with social networking site. Social networking sites like Twitter, Facebook, Google Plus, YouTube, Pinterest and blogs allow individual followers to "retweet" or "repost" comments made by the product being promoted. By repeating the message, all of the users' connections are able to see the message, therefore reaching more people. Social networking sites act as word of mouth. Because the information about the product is being put out there and is getting repeated, more traffic is brought to the product/company. Furthermore most advertisements on Facebook for instance invite users to simply "Like" the product or the company by simply clicking the "Like" button. What follows such action is that the company henceforth starts sending such user contents, information and other interactive posts that market the product or the company so "liked".

However and undoubtedly, the use of social networking sites such as Facebook and user generated content (UGC) has presented both opportunities and challenges to the advertisers, marketers and the overall advertising landscape. IAB Platform Status Report (2008) concedes that "In the larger eco-system, social networking and UGC sites have provided high-value advertising inventory and audience segments needed to capture more of the market share and targeted audience reach that advertisers demand, e.g. Microsoft's investment in Facebook, Google's acquisition of YouTube..." The report continue that,

Traditionally, marketers have been able to buy time or space on fixed media in a controlled context. They knew where their ad would appear, what it would look like, and perhaps most important, in what context it would be seen. In

other words, they could be guaranteed their message wasn't being delivered in a hostile or inappropriate environment. Today, such guarantees are harder to make, and that lack of control can be a source of great anxiety for marketers.

Considering the above, it is therefore important that advertisers and marketers be reminded that a new approach is deemed critical in their use of social networks. Instead of broadcasting one-way messages *at* their audiences, advertisers are compelled to engage customers *in* a conversation. Instead of inviting individual consumers into an environment of their own making, marketers advertising on these sites are entering a conversation initiated, maintained, and "owned" by consumers themselves. Doing so carries risks, but failure to do so carries more.

On impact of social media advertising and or marketing on consumers purchase decisions, Fauser et al (2011) found that consumers felt that information sharing, collaboration and relationship building was necessary to support ongoing communication; social media marketing allowed organisations the opportunity to be in the position to offer additional sources of information regarding product benefits, product features and provide real time feedback to consumers; social networks, particularly Facebook were found to be most suitable information sharing platform at the beginning of the consumer purchase decision as many consumers relied on social recommendations; and many consumers used Facebook reviews and ratings ("likes") as the means to seek recommendations, peer advice and find product information.

Bati (n.d.) studying attitudes of young consumers towards social media marketing, surveyed a total of 124 students at some universities located in Istanbul. He found that 66.9% of the participants think that using a social media tools for advertising is useful; 50% of the participants are fans of at least one company or brand; 54% of the participants follow of at least one company or brand; 57.2% of the participants trust recommendations from people they knew personally about brands; 42.8% of the participants trust brand websites and mini-sites; and 47.5% of the participants like social network advertising very much. Similarly, Chi (2011) analyzing User Motivation and Social Media Marketing Responses in Taiwan found that social networking online is the main reason users keep spending time with social media such as Facebook. Therefore, users perceive and respond to marketing venues, such as

advertising and brand communities, in a different way than they do to traditional media. The findings also indicate that user motivations generate complex effects for responses to social media marketing, differing across Facebook advertising and virtual brand communities. Azizul Yadi Yaakop, Marhana Mohamed Anuar, Khatijah Omar & Alphonsus Liaw Kuok Liung (n.d.) who studied consumers' perceptions and attitudes towards advertising on Facebook in Malaysia suggest that there are three online factors that significantly influence consumers' attitudes towards advertising on Facebook. The factors are perceived interactivity, advertising avoidance and privacy. Surprisingly, according to them, credibility was not a significant factor predicting consumer' attitudes towards advertising on Facebook.

Methodological Considerations

This research adopted quantitative methodological approach and thus used the survey method as the study design. The questionnaire was used as the survey instrument. Consequently, 400 questionnaire were distributed to young people between the ages of 19 and 30 in select universities in south east Nigeria. The universities include: Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka in Anambra State; Godfrey Okoye University, Ugwuoma, Enugu State; and Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. The sample size was determined from the entire population of the select Universities given at 65,940 (Nigerian Universities Commission, 2014).

Having determined the sample size, the researchers then proceeded to selection of a Faculty from each of the selected universities. The researchers while selecting the respondents ensured that all the faculties in each of the schools had equal chance of being selected. Nnamdi Azikiwe University for instance has 15 faculties viz: Education, Law, Social Sciences, Management Sciences, Medicine, Pharmaceutical, Arts, Engineering, Bio Sciences, Physical Sciences, Health Science and Technology, Environmental Science, Agricultural Sciences, Basic Medical Sciences, and Confucius Centre. Two faculties were randomly selected from the above, which are Social Sciences and Engineering. For the purpose of representativeness, two departments were chosen to represent each of the faculties selected. This process was repeated in Godfrey Okoye University and Ebonyi State University with four (4) and eleven faculties respectively. To further delimit the sample for effective administration of data collection instrument, the researchers deemed it necessary to rationalize the distribution of questionnaire to schools according to the numerical strength of the schools. Hence nine (9) respondents each were selected from the selected departments (Psychology, Political Science, Mechanical and Chemical Engineering) across the

levels in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (which has the highest population among the selected universities), making a total of one hundred and forty two respondents (142). Eight (8) respondents were drawn across the levels in the selected departments in Ebonyi State University (Law, English Language and Literature and Philosophy) making a Total of one hundred and forty four (144), while seven (7) respondents were issued with questionnaire across the levels in the selected departments viz.: Accountancy, Economics, Applied Biology and Computer Science, in Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu making a total of one hundred and twelve (114). The questionnaire contained twelve (12) question items.

Data Presentation and Discussion

From the total of 400 questionnaire that were distributed to respondents from the select Universities, though there was a 100 percent return rate, there were 2 unusable questionnaire which respondents did not fill out. The analyses of the valid ones were done using the *Statistical Package for Social Sciences* (SPSS). Hereunder are the details of data analysis based on the research objectives/research questions. However, for the sake of comprehensibility, the data presentation and the discussion of relevant findings are hereunder merged together.

Table 1: Demographic Variables

Demographics		Frequency	Percentage
<i>Gender</i>	Male	183	46%
	Female	215	54%
<i>Age bracket</i>	26-30 years	55	14.0%
	22-25 years	182	46.0%
	19-21 years	161	40.0%
<i>Year of study</i>	4th year	105	26.4%
	3rd year	95	23.9%
	2nd year	104	26.1%
	1st year	94	23.6%

From the demographic data above, 54 percent of the respondents were females whereas 46 percent were males. This shows an almost even distribution of the young people who were surveyed. Data also show that for majority of them, their ages were spread between 19 to 25 years. This indicates that these young people are between the ages adjudged by the United

Nations to be the ideal definition of youth – between the ages of 15 and 24 (United Nations, 2003) - as only 14 percent were between the ages of 26 – 30 years. In the same vein, data shows that the percentages of the level of study for the surveyed undergraduate students were almost equal.

Use of Facebook Social Media

Variable		Frequency	Percentage
<i>Ownership of Facebook account</i>	Yes	366	92.0%
	No	32	8.0%
<i>Years of using Facebook</i>	7 - 10 years	26	6.5%
	4 - 6 years	130	32.7%
	1 - 3 years	208	52.3%
	Less than a year	34	8.5%
<i>How often respondents Facebook</i>	Once in a while	121	30.4%
	Several times a week	113	28.4%
	Once a week	35	8.8%
	Everyday	129	32.4%
<i>Time spent when signed in</i>	Others	26	6.5%
	Less than 1 hour	182	45.7%
	Average of 3-5hours	26	6.5%
	Average of 1-2hours	164	41.3%

Table 2: showing data on the respondents’ use of Facebook social media

From data presented above, majority of the respondents (92 percent) own Facebook accounts. Only an insignificant 8 percent agree they don’t have any. However, data at the same time indicate that majority of the respondents (52.3 percent) have just had this account for between

1 – 3 years; 32.7 percent of them have had it for between 4 – 6 years while only 6.5 percent have had it for as long as 7 years just as 8.7 percent opened their own accounts less than a year ago. Though these data indicate that the phenomenon of Facebook might not totally be new to these young people, yet when compared with young people in more advanced societies, Nigerian youth might still be discovering the Facebook phenomenon. On the other hand, from the above data, it is seen that 32.6 percent of them ‘facebook’ on daily basis just as 28.3 percent say they do so several times a week. This makes it difficult for one to begin to consider the fact that another 30.4 percent avow they use Facebook once in a while. The fact that over 60 percent of them either use it everyday or several times a week speaks louder here. However, when asked the amount of time they spend when signed in, it is shocking to note that 45.7 percent of them spend less than an hour on Facebook, even though the fact that another 41.3 percent agree they spend between 1 – 2 hours. It is interesting to also note that those who answered “Others” wrote in black and white that they are logged on round the clock, always and all the time. That might be speaking for those who have Blackberry or Android phones and constant Data subscription.

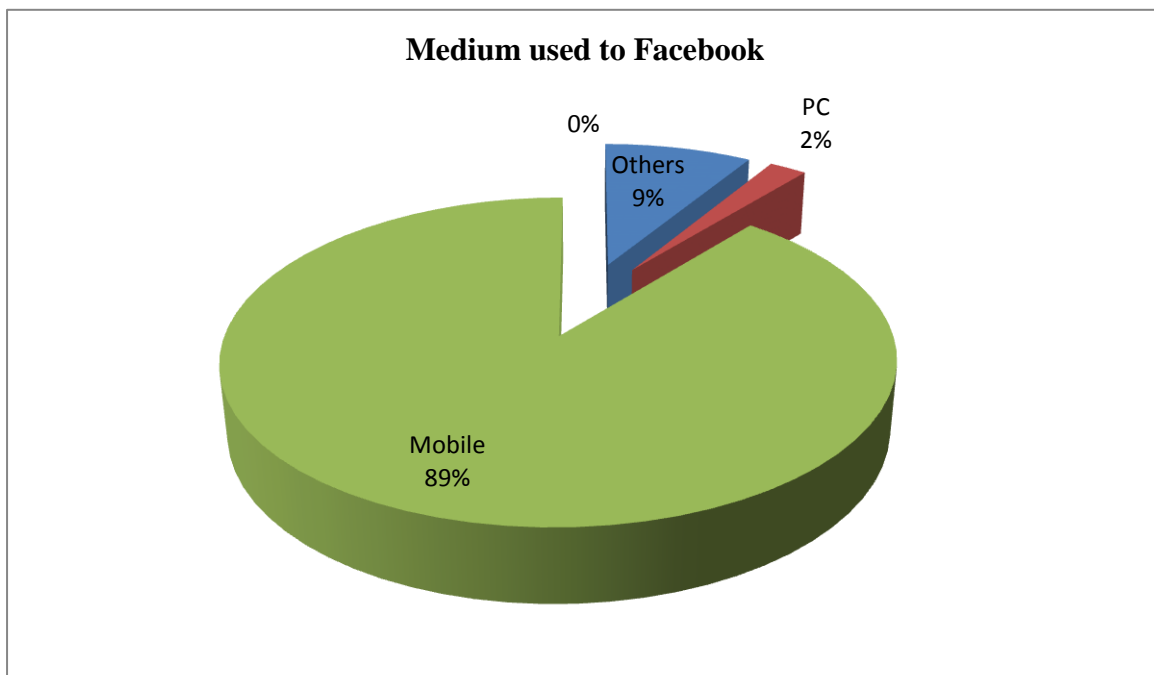


Fig. 1 showing the medium respondents use to ‘Facebook’ and their percentages

At this juncture one is tempted to ask, if these youths have been Facebook account holders for as long as the data show, and ‘facebook’ either everyday or several times in a week, what medium do they use in ‘facebooking’? From the data shown in Figure 1 above, majority access the Facebook social media using their internet-enabled mobile phones whereas a paltry 9 percent say they do so using both their mobile phones and personal computers (laptops). Only a handful of them (2 percent) access through their PC alone. This finding is in line with Omenugha, Ndolo & Uzuegbunam (2012)’s finding that Nigerian youths are increasingly spending more time on the Internet than on other more conventional media; mobile phones being at the forefront of this development.

Table 3: Awareness of Facebook Advertisements

Variable		Frequency	Percentage
<i>Encountered advertisementson Facebook?</i>	Yes	346	86.9%
	No	52	13.1%
<i>How often?</i>	Accidentally	10	2.5%
	Sometimes	244	61.3%
	Always	144	36.2%
<i>Noticeability</i>	They take me time and effort to notice	68	17.1%
	They are easily noticeable	330	82.9%

Having established the fact of their use of Facebook social media, another thing is to ascertain the extent to which they are aware of Facebook advertisements. Firstly, 87 percent agree they have at one time or the other encountered advertisements positioned on Facebook while 13 percent claim they haven’t had such encounter. In an open ended question to this regard, many of them were quick to name various kinds of advertisements they have encountered: product advertisements, cooperate advertisements, telecommunication, on music concerts, real estate, on foreign scholarships, on fashion accessories, on mobile phones, automobiles, commercials, among others. Still, 61 percent of the undergraduate students claim that these encounters with Facebook advertisements happen “Sometimes” (that

is, not always) whereas a considerable 36.2 percent say they encounter them always and only 2.5 percent do so accidentally. Toeing this line of thought, the next question sought to find out if this encounter has anything to do with noticeability of the advertisements. Yet, 82.9 percent of them claim that these Facebook advertisements “are easily noticeable” to them just as only 17 percent of them allege it “takes them time and effort to notice”. This brings up a certain contradiction. Majority of them claim they do not always encounter advertisements on Facebook and yet turn round to say that the advertisements are easily noticeable to them. Considering the fact that there is never a time these days when advertisements are not always displayed on Facebook, this contradiction might go to show that these youths might simply be suffering from ‘attention problem’.

Table 4: Perception of Respondents To Facebook Advertisements

Statement	Response	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Using social media for advertising is useful and good</i>	Yes	389	97.7%
	No	9	2.3%
<i>I like Facebook advertising very much</i>	Yes	271	68.1%
	No	127	31.9%
<i>I enjoy viewing advertisements displayed on Facebook</i>	Sometimes/Not really	18	4.5%
	Yes	243	61.1%
	No	137	34.4%
<i>I am a fan of at least one company/brand on Facebook</i>	Yes	208	52.3%
	No	190	47.7%
<i>Compared to other media, advertisements on Facebook are more eye catchy</i>	Not really/Sometimes	8	2.0%
	Yes	136	34.2%
	No	254	63.8%

<i>It's easier for me to recall brands advertised on other media than those on Facebook</i>	Yes	262	65.8%
	No	136	34.2%
<i>The position of these advertisements is the biggest factor that prevents me from noticing them</i>	Yes	168	42.2%
	No	230	57.8%

Coming to how these undergraduate students perceive the whole idea of Social media/Facebook advertising and the advertisements themselves, seven (7) statements were put forward to them in order to elicit varied responses pertaining perception. Interestingly, a vast majority of the respondents (97.7 percent) agree that “using social media for advertising is useful and good” whereas 68.1 percent “like Facebook advertising very much”. Still we cannot ignore the fact that a good number of them (31.9 percent) do not like it very much. Similarly, majority of them “enjoy viewing advertisements displayed on Facebook” while another 34.1 percent do not. It goes to show therefore that since majority avow that using social media to advertise is good and useful and that they like Facebook advertising very much, it is expected that they would also enjoy viewing them. Moreover, 52.3 percent of them claim they are fans of at least one company/brand on Facebook. This claim is nonetheless questionable owing to the fact that another huge 47.7 percent allege they are no fans to any brand or company. Yet, more disturbing indications from their perception show that when compared to other media, advertisements on Facebook are not more eye catchy (63.8 percent). The rest say they are more eye catchy (34.2 percent) and some say they are, sometimes (2.0 percent). Still, many of the respondents admit that it is easier for them to recall brands advertised on other media than those advertised on Facebook. This lends credence to our earlier assertion in Table 3 that these youths might be experiencing what could be called as ‘attention challenges’ in their use of Facebook. As if to echo the last observation, 57.8 percent agree that the positioning of these advertisements on Facebook is not the one big factor that prevents them from maximally noticing, recalling and observing them. Rather, it is their fault; so it seems.

Attitude/Responsiveness to Facebook Advertisements

Statement	Response	Frequency	Percentage
<i>If I am a fan of a brand on Facebook, I'll buy the product</i>	Yes	232	58.3%
	No	166	41.7%
<i>I will visit a product website after seeing an advertisement on Facebook</i>	Yes	152	38.2%
	No	246	61.8%
<i>When you are told your friend likes a product/brand, do you click 'like' as well?</i>	Sometimes	28	7.0%
	Yes	154	38.7%
	No	216	54.3%
<i>I always look out for Facebook advertisements because they tell me what's new and popular</i>	Yes	253	63.6%
	No	145	36.4%

Considering the above revealing data on perception of Facebook advertisements, what remains is to ascertain their attitude and responsiveness to these advertisements. To gauge this, four-item statements were given the respondents to respond in the affirmative or otherwise. 58 percent aver that if they are fans of a brand on Facebook, they will buy the product whereas 42 percent claim they won't. Yet, data analysis shows strongly that majority of them at 62 percent would not visit a product website after seeing an advertisement on Facebook. However, 38 percent say they would. There is the common practice on Facebook where users are updated about what brands and products their "Friends" 'like' and could be fans of; the idea being that users can decide to as well 'Like' the brand or product as they are likely to want to associate with what their circle of friends associate with. But in this study, data shows that 54.3 percent of the young people say they would not "like" the product/brand just because their friends do; whereas 38.7 percent of them claim they would. That is not denying the fact that 7.0 percent say they sometimes do. Finally on attitude, 63.6 percent

agree after all said, that they “always look out for Facebook advertisements because [they] tell them what’s new and popular”.

Summary and Conclusion

This paper set out to tackle four research objectives – To find out if and to what extent Nigerian youths make use of Facebook (social) media; to find out the extent to which they are aware of advertisements posted on Facebook; to discover the perception of these youths to the advertisements encountered on Facebook; to investigate their attitude and responsiveness toward such advertisements. The study finds that Facebook phenomenon and its use is popular among the surveyed Nigerian youths – undergraduate students and that over 60 percent of them either use it everyday or several times a week. This use is however facilitated by their internet-enabled mobile phones. It shows that Nigerian youths are beginning to join their contemporaries in other societies to engage more with the Internet and the mobile phones. This brings to mind what George Dixon, Manager of Mobile and Digital media, *Mediacom* UK said about social media and advertising:

Mobile is amplifying consumer usage of the social media, due to the quick access to content it offers. Our target audiences can engage with friends and brands far more often and more easily than previously possible on the desktop web...with more time spent on Facebook via mobile, than via the traditional web.

More so, it is found that majority of the surveyed youths are well aware of advertisements on Facebook as many of them have encountered as well as have been able to name some of the various advertisements they have encountered. These range from product advertisements, cooperate advertisements, telecommunication, on music concerts, real estate, on foreign scholarships, on fashion accessories, on mobile phones, automobiles, commercials, among others. However, it is concluded that the youths might be experiencing what has been termed “attention challenges” in their vicarious use of Facebook. This is apparently so because although 82.9 percent allege that the advertisements are easily noticeable to them, 61 percent still claim they do not always encounter advertisements on Facebook whereas we know that the Facebook platform is almost always patronized by very many advertisers, companies and marketers, these days. This attention challenge is further buttressed by the fact that the youths

say that the positioning of the advertisements on Facebook does not in any way contribute to their inability to notice the advertisements ‘Always’. In the same vein, while majority of the youths avow that using social media to advertise is good and useful and that they like Facebook advertising very much as well as enjoy viewing them, a significant number of them (47.7 percent) allege they are no fans to any brand or company, just as majority believe that when compared to other media, advertisements on Facebook are not more eye-catching; and that they more easily recall advertisements from other media platforms than those from Facebook. Furthermore, the attitude and responsiveness of young people to Facebook advertising in general indicate a cause for worry. While majority aver that if they are fans of a brand on Facebook, they will buy the product, many of them insist they would not visit a product website after seeing an advertisement on Facebook and that they do not necessarily have to “Like” the brands their friends “Like” on Facebook. However it is interesting that majority of them still say that they always look out for advertisements on Facebook because of one striking utility: they tell them what’s new and popular.

The salient findings of this study have revealed an interesting argument about the Uses-and-Gratifications theory. Advertisements and marketing contents abound on Facebook. This is a time-tested fact. However, while media scholars might be quick to assume that advertisements and marketing stunts comprise as being among the media users’ needs and gratifications and reasons for ‘facebooking’, this study has found a slight contradiction to this. As far as the surveyed young people are concerned, advertisements, though noticeable and appealing, do not form part of their more serious gratification sought from Facebook usage. This is explained by the fact that they could be distracted by a host of other gratifications they are seeking after on Facebook to notice the barrage of advertisements that continue to ‘fight’ for spaces on Facebook. This has debunked the existing assumption and theory of Uses and Gratifications in relation to the social media and advertising. Again, the social cognitive theory of Psychology and Mass communication seem to have played out in this scenario as well. The fact that people are self-organizing, proactive, self-reflecting, and self-regulating, not just reactive organisms but can call up certain psychological schemas to bring to bear in their decision-making, is indeed instructive here. The fact that although most of the young people like, enjoy, and view Facebook advertisements but still have attitude and response challenges lends weight to this. Perhaps, the varied responses which emanated from the open-ended question posed to the respondents about what they think advertisers ought to

do to increase the effectiveness of their Ads on Facebook, might be a sure way to close this discussion. For these youths, they believe

“advertisers should make these social media ads more eye catchy; brief and concise; have better visibility, include more useful details that can aid potential buyers; take note of the positioning, make ads more creative and thought-provoking; be more persuasive; make ads larger and less inconspicuous; be truthful in delivering their ad communication; consider using pop-up ads as well...” Shouldn’t we rather agree with them?

Recommendations

This study recommends, alongside those suggested by the students themselves (see above) future research directions. A study involving a larger sample size drawn from more than one geographical zone in Nigeria is hereby suggested. More so, further examination on the relationship between social media consumption and attitude and responsiveness to advertising/marketing communication should be explored using a qualitative methodology such as focus group discussion.

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