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THE IMPLICATION OF CONTENT MARKETING ON BRAND AWARENESS AND BRAND ENGAGEMENT AMONG FEMALE STUDENTS IN EKITI STATE UNIVERSITY, NIGERIA

Abstract:

The study examined the role of content marketing in building brand awareness and engagement. Specifically, the descriptive survey research design method was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised of female students in Ekiti State University. A total of 365 copies of the questionnaire were disseminated to the respondents. The data were collated and analyzed using the multinomial logistic regression analysis. The research findings showed that all aspects of content marketing used in the study have a significant relationship in engaging customers and creating awareness about the brand. Hence, based on findings, it is recommended that brands should constantly review information about their products and services to see how customers engage with them and be aware of their brand, it will help to know where, when, and how to improve on content marketing strategies, brands should constantly and effectively carry out their market research to understand what their customers need about their products, either through content marketers or going directly to their customers, brands after gathering the necessary data from their customers should carry out a concrete and relevant analysis and interpretation to make effective marketing decisions, brands should reach a decision based on organisational marketing goals through constant research, record keeping, good understanding of data, and lots more, to gain more customer engagement and awareness which will trigger patronage.

Keywords:

Content marketing, Brand awareness, Brand Engagement and Patronage

JEL Classification: M31

1.1 Introduction

According to Reddy (2016), marketing involves generating demand for a product or service, which must subsequently be converted into sales that produce money. It encompasses the creation, communication, delivery, and exchange of offerings that provide value for customers, clients, partners, and society. **The American Marketing Association (AMA) characterizes marketing as "the activity, collection of institutions, and processes involved in creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that possess value for customers, clients, partners, and society. The online content marketing tools used by brands to reach out to their customers and engage them .** A content marketing plan generates information aimed at the target market; it is an effective strategy and a method for business to cultivate its brand identity, attract prospective clients, and maintain an engaged audience. Consequently, customers interact with brands to fulfill their requirements. In 2011, Google executed its seminal Zero Moment of Truth (ZMOT) investigation, it was revealed that 88% of consumers utilize the Zero Moment of Truth, a phase of discovery and awareness in the purchasing cycle during which a customer investigates a product prior to acquisition. Google's study suggested that word of mouth was a crucial component in influencing that moment.

The report offers a distinct reference point on the progress of content marketing. It elucidates the necessity for firms to prioritize content marketing in the early 2010s. The ascendance of social media enabled users to engage with content more passively on their chosen platforms, resulting in the development of more shareable, attention-catching material that could be effortlessly disseminated across social media channels. As the decade advanced, social media became a dominant channel for marketing, especially among younger customers.

Content marketing is a method used in reaching potential customers, fostering awareness, and stimulating their interest and involvement with businesses and product. This is a strategic marketing methodology centered on the creation and dissemination of valuable, pertinent, and consistent content to engage and keep a specifically defined audience, ultimately driving profitable consumer behavior. It beyond mere product promotion; it also fosters brand recognition and engagement, achievable through diverse mediums such as images, graphics, videos, and customer experiences. It is a marketing strategy centered on the creation, publication, and distribution of content for a specific internet audience. Businesses frequently employ it to attain the following objectives: Social media account users are increasing daily, prompting companies to enhance their online presence to augment brand recognition, establish credibility, and engage a community of users.

Case studies, podcasts, instructional guides, question-and-answer articles, photographs, blogs, and information technology strategy. Disseminated and distributed over several social channels to enhance its visibility to a broad audience.

Currently, social media function as a bilateral communication platform (Kilgour et al., attracting, engaging, and retaining consumers organically (Halligan & Shah 2010) Odden (2012) posits that buyers engage in brands to dedicate time and effort to cultivating a durable relationship with them, even prior to their initial purchase. Rowley (2014) observes that a content marketer assumes the function of a publisher as well. content marketing can manifest in several formats, including blog entries, infographics, videos, social media content, whitepapers, e-books, podcasts, and others. The cornerstone of effective content marketing is the production of valuable and pertinent material for the audience, coupled with its dissemination through appropriate channels. The advantages of content marketing includes but not limited to enhanced brand recognition, elevated customer engagement, augmented website traffic, higher search engine rankings, and heightened customer loyalty. Many researchers have carried out an empirical study on impact of content marketing. These studies includes Weerasing 2018; Ashrafa, Khanb And Ansari 2022; Zailskaite-Jakste And Kuvykaite 2012; Nayak 2021; Vinerean 2017; Kedra And Şener 2020; Ramzan 2018; Jacob & Johnson 2021; Chan And Astari 2017; Challa And Anute 2021; Shaikh And Nigade 2020; Agarwal 2020; Agi And Kerti 2023; Phan, Vi HO And Le-Hoang 2020; Rahimi, Keshavarz & Shirazi 2023; Shaikh & Nigade 2020; Halim, Noverya, Kurniawan & Sugandi 2022 all have looked at content marketing and consumer behaviour in general and engagement and awareness in different forms. most of these studies were done outside the shores of Nigeria. However, there is a vacuum in the knowledge of content marketing and brand awareness and engagement among female students in Nigeria, this necessitate this study. The completion of this study would be of great benefit to marketers and businesses about diverse content marketing tactics to promote their products, hence fostering awareness that may enhance customer involvement. The findings would impact employees by facilitating internal communication, strengthening company culture, and offering educational tools. It can also enable employees to serve as brand champions, acknowledge their accomplishments, and draw in top talent. Engaging employees in content creation processes cultivates involvement and ownership of the company's marketing initiatives, grounded in expertise and techniques for content marketing.

2.0 Conceptual Review

Social Media Content Marketing

Social media marketing has proven to be highly effective in driving engagements, conversions, and business growth. In today's technology-driven world, social networking sites have become an avenue where retailers can extend their marketing campaigns to a wider range of consumers. Chi (2011, 46) defines social media marketing as a

“connection between brands and consumers, [while] offering a personal channel and currency for user-centered networking and social interaction.” The tools and approaches for communicating with customers have changed greatly with the emergence of social media; therefore, businesses must learn how to use social media in a way that is consistent with their business plan (Mangold and Faulds 2009). This is especially true for companies striving to gain a competitive advantage.

Video Content Marketing

Video marketing describes the use of video content to promote or inform audiences about your brand and products and brands can use video across a variety of digital channels and formats, including their website, social media marketing, programmatic advertising, and more.

Video marketing started in earnest in 2005 with the launch of YouTube. Google bought YouTube in October 2006, and by 2009 there were seven different ad formats on the platform. As the technology to create quality videos gets easier, it's become more popular with marketers. But that's not the only reason video is the dominant form of communication today. First, there was the rise of smartphone technology that made watching videos easier and more convenient.

Infographics Content Marketing

Infographics are visual representations of data, presented in a format that is more engaging than usual written copy. It can be challenging to achieve the same depth of information as text, but a compelling infographic can be more attractive to web users while telling a relevant narrative. Quality infographics require high-caliber editorial research and copy combined with appropriate, interesting, and logical designs. Companies marketing with infographics must be especially conscious of choosing subjects and formats befitting of their brands.

As more businesses begin using the web to boost their marketing campaigns, differentiating content becomes increasingly important. Infographic marketing provides an opportunity for a company to present information in a dynamic, visual format that will stand out from the rest of its website and set it apart from competitors.

Brand Awareness

It refers to the level of recognition and familiarity that a brand enjoys among its target audience. It is a marketing term that refers to how familiar your target audience is with your brand and how well they recognize it. Brands with high brand awareness are generally referred to as 'trending,' 'buzzworthy,' or simply 'popular.'

Brand Engagement

It refers to the emotional connection and commitment between a brand and its audience, including existing and potential customers.

Hollebeek (2011) defines engagement with the brand as the level of customer motivation, relative to the brand and the contextual awareness state depending on the level of awareness, emotions, and behaviors focused on specific brand interactions. According to Verhoef et al. (2010), the purpose of customer engagement is to focus on customer behavior to get target companies, and it goes beyond trading and buying. Based on this, Vivek et al. (2012) argued that customer engagement in relationship marketing, not only incorporates relationships established between buyers and sellers but also any association. There may be potential customers actual customers and all other stakeholders. According to Palmet and Ghasemi (2019), the behavior of customer engagement is expressed by liking the brand's content, the willingness to collaborate to provide ideas with the brand's in-development products, and services as well as more motivation to engage positively with the brand.

3.0 Methodology

Research Design

This study shall employ descriptive research of a survey type. The explanatory and survey type of research design is suitable because it enables the researcher to gather relevant information from the female students of Ekiti State University using the qualitative measures of the survey.

Population Of Study

The population of the study is a total of 4138 female students admitted as of 2019 into Ekiti State University.

The total population of 4138 is shown in the population of the study is considered too large for this study. The researcher has resolved to draw a sample representative of the whole

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

population. The simplified formula for determining sample size as stated in Israel (1992) is that of Tao-Yamane (1967). This formula assumes a 95% confidence level and a 5% level of precision. The formula is as stated below:

Where n is the sample size, N is the population size, and e is the level of precision. When the formula is applied, we get the following figures:

$$\frac{4138}{1 + 4138(0.05)^2} = 365$$

A total of 365 questionnaires will be spread and administered to the female students of Ekiti State University chosen for this study.

Method Of Data Analysis

The usable data were, analyzed, and presented using descriptive and multinomial logistic regression analysis. Descriptive analysis will be used to present the result of the data collected in sections A and B, the data collected in sections C to F will be analyzed using the multinomial logistic regression analysis. Multinomial logistic regression is an extension of binary logistic regression that allows for the modeling of outcomes with more than two categories. It is useful when the dependent variable is categorical and nominal (i.e., the categories do not have a natural order). It can have nominal or continuous independent variables and interaction between independent variables to predict the dependent variable. In this study, multinomial logistic regression will be used to understand whether content marketing can help to create brand awareness and engagement based on each of the content marketing tools under discussion.

The dependent variables being examined in the study are brand awareness and engagement and the independent variables (as nominal values) are the content marketing tools of social media, video, and infographics. The multinomial logistic regression analysis is considered appropriate; the dependent variables will be measured at a nominal level with four categories (referral, followers, likes, and comments), and the independent variables have five categories that are stated in ordinal form using the Likert scale.

The multinomial regression model is stated as follows:

$$P(Y = i) = \frac{\exp(\beta_{i0} + \beta_{i1}X_1 + \beta_{i2}X_2 + \cdots + \beta_{ip}X_p)}{1 + \sum_{j=1}^{K-1} \exp(\beta_{j0} + \beta_{j1}X_1 + \beta_{j2}X_2 + \cdots + \beta_{jp}X_p)}$$

The dependent variable $P(Y=i)$ is the probability of the dependent variable Y being in category i represents brand awareness and engagement (referrals, followers, likes, and comments), β_{i0} is the intercept for category i while the independent variable β_{ij} are the coefficients for the independent variables X_j for category i represents the categories of content marketing tools (social media, video, and infographics) and X_1, X_2, \dots, X_p are the

independent variables. β_j is a vector of coefficients on each independent variable X , \exp is an exponential value while \sum is the summation symbol.

Method Of Testing Hypotheses

Chi-Square Statistics: A chi-square (X^2) statistic is a measure of the difference between the observed and the expected frequencies of the outcomes of a set of events or variables. Chi-square is useful for analyzing the differences in categorical variables, especially those nominal. It can be used to test whether two variables are independent of one another, and it can also be used to test the goodness of fit between an observed distribution and a theoretical distribution of frequencies.

4.0 Results

Descriptive Distribution of Social Media Content Marketing

According to Table 4.2, none of the respondents agreed that media content marketing is easy to use in their decision to engage with social media content from a brand, the other descriptive result also affirmed that online reviews and comments influence decision to engage with or purchase a product advertised on social media. important to you that the social media content you follow helps to save time as indicated on the 2.83 and 1.815. the result 2.89 and 1.783 meaning mean and standard deviation showed that hashtags and trends help to discover the content on social media easily while engagement with social media content that conveniently aligns with interests.

Table 4.2: Descriptive Distribution of Social Media Content Marketing

S/N	Items	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Is it easy to use in your decision to engage with social media content from a brand?	854	2.75	1.917
2	Do online reviews and comments influence your decision to engage with or purchase a product advertised on social media?	900	2.90	1.764
3	Is it important to you that the social media content you follow helps you save time?	877	2.83	1.815
4	Do hashtags and trends help you to	897	2.89	1.793

	discover the content on social media easily?			
5	Will you engage with social media content that conveniently aligns with your interests?	833	2.69	1.911

Table 4.3 Descriptive Distribution of Influencing Features of Infographics Content Marketing

Table 4.3 revealed that all of the respondents concurred that infographics effectively generate leads

engage with an infographic-based content marketing campaign if it features a well-known brand. On the other hand, the respondents approved share an infographic with friends if it contains valuable content. The respondents also concurred that visual appeal important in infographic content marketing, moreover rate the educational value of the infographics provided by brand content marketing materials.

Table 4.3: Descriptive Distribution of Influencing Features of Infographics Content Marketing

S/N	Items	Sum	Mean	STD
1	Do infographics effectively generate leads?	1028	3.32	1.743
2	Will you engage with an infographic-based content marketing campaign if it features a well-known brand?	833	2.69	1.911
3	Will you share an infographic with your friends if it contains valuable content?	841	2.71	1.905
4	Do you consider visual appeal important in infographic content marketing?	841	2.71	1.915
5	Would you rate the educational value of the infographics provided by brand content marketing materials?	901	2.91	1.772

4.4 Descriptive Distribution of Video Content Marketing

According to Table 4.5, none of the respondents agreed that video help to build trust to engage brands. The result disagreed that engaging content of a video prompt the customer to share it while the video educates on relevant topics while video advertisement make you feel a strong emotional connection to the brand and perceive analytics to be influential in shaping the success of video content marketing campaigns.

Table 4.4: Descriptive Distribution of Video Content Marketing

S/N	Items	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	Do video help to build trust to engage brands?	837	1.913	3.661
2.	Will the engaging content of a video prompt you to share it?	837	1.913	3.661
3.	Do video educate you on relevant topics?	870	1.842	3.393
4.	Does any video advertisement make you feel a strong emotional connection to the brand?	901	1.767	3.121
5.	Do you perceive analytics to be influential in shaping the success of video content marketing campaigns?	855	1.855	3.440

4.5 Descriptive Distribution of Building Brand Awareness and Engagement

According to Table 4.5, none of the respondents agreed that increase the visibility of the brand

find it educating and informing likewise build trust and loyalty engage the audience and help to define the brand identity.

Table 4.5: Descriptive Distribution of Building Brand Awareness and Engagement

S/N	Items	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Does it increase the visibility of the brand?	836	2.70	1.910
2	Do you find it educating and informing?	864	2.79	1.856
3	Does it build trust and loyalty?	938	3.03	1.641

4	Does it engage the audience?	907	2.93	1.767
5	Does it help to define the brand identity?	895	2.89	1.787

4.6 Social media content and Building Brand awareness and Engagement

To test this hypothesis, the respondents' scores on two variables of social media content and Building Brand awareness and Engagement were computed and subjected to simple regression analysis. From Table 4.6, the R (correlation Coefficient) gives a positive value of 0.959; this indicates that there is a very strong and positive relationship between social media content and Building Brand awareness and Engagement. The R^2 is a portion of the total variation in the dependent variable that is explained by the variation in the independent variables. From the results obtained, R^2 is equal to 0.920, this implies that Social media content brought about 92% variance in Building Brand awareness and Engagement, this is further proven by the adjusted R^2 that shows the goodness of fit of the model which gives a value of 0.919, implying that when all errors are corrected and adjustments are made, the model can only account for 91.9% by Social media content; while the remaining 8.1% are explained by the error term in the model as shown in Table 4.6.

The unstandardized beta co-efficient of social media content is 0.956 with $t = 59.330$ and ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). These results showed that social media content has a positive relationship with building Brand awareness and Engagement. This suggests that decision to engage with a brand's social media material is significantly influenced by online reviews and comments, and it is essential that the content you follow aids in time efficiency.

From the Table 4.6 discussion in objective one, and by F-Stat. 3520.073, p -value $0.000 < .05$, it showed that the null hypothesis, social media content does not significantly affect building brand awareness and engagement is not true therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Based on this, we accepted the alternative hypothesis that social media content has effect on Building Brand awareness and engagement.

Table 4.6: Social media content marketing and Building Brand awareness and Engagement

Variable	Coeff.	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
Constant	0.064	0.054	1.189	0.235
Social media content	0.956	0.016	59.330	0.000

R	0.959			
R Square	0.920			
Adj. R Square	0.919			
F Stat.	3520.073(0.000)			

Dependent variable: Building Brand awareness and Engagement

4.7 Infographics content and Building Brand awareness and Engagement

To test this hypothesis, the respondents' scores on two variables of infographics content and Building Brand awareness and Engagement were computed and subjected to simple regression analysis. From Table 4.7, the R (correlation Coefficient) gives a positive value of 0.796; this indicates that there is a strong and positive relationship between infographics content and Building Brand awareness and Engagement. The R^2 is a portion of the total variation in the dependent variable that is explained by the variation in the independent variables. From the results obtained, R^2 is equal to 0.592, this implies that infographics content brought about 59.2% variance in Building Brand awareness and Engagement, this is further proven by the adjusted R^2 that shows the goodness of fit of the model which gives a value of 0.591, implying that when all errors are corrected and adjustments are made, the model can only account for 59.1% by infographics content; while the remaining 40.9% are explained by the error term in the model as shown in Table 4.7.

The unstandardized beta co-efficient of infographics content is 0.843 with $t = 21.142$ and ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). These results showed that infographics content has a positive relationship with Building Brand awareness and Engagement. This implies that the participate in an infographic-centric content marketing campaign if it includes a reputable brand. Disseminate an infographic to your acquaintances if it encompasses valuable information, and regard visual aesthetics as significant in infographic content marketing.

From the Table 4.3 discussion in objective two, and by F-Stat. 446.971, p -value $0.000 < .05$, it showed that the null hypothesis, infographics content does not significantly affect Building Brand awareness and Engagement is not true therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Based on this, we accepted the alternative hypothesis that infographics content has effect on Building Brand awareness and Engagement.

Table 4.7: Infographics content and Building Brand awareness and Engagement

Variable	Coeff.	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
Constant	-0.099	0.149	-0.664	0.507
Infographics Content	0.843	0.040	21.142	0.000

R	0.769			
R Square	0.592			
Adj. R Square	0.591			
F Stat.	446.971(0.000)			

Dependent variable: Building Brand awareness and Engagement

4.8 Infographics content marketing on Building Brand awareness and Engagement

To test this hypothesis, the respondents' scores on two variables of infographics content and Building Brand awareness and Engagement were computed and subjected to simple regression analysis. From Table 4.8, the R (correlation Coefficient) gives a positive value of 0.977; this indicates that there is a very strong and positive relationship between infographics content and Building Brand awareness and Engagement. The R^2 is a portion of the total variation in the dependent variable that is explained by the variation in the independent variables. From the results obtained, R^2 is equal to 0.955, this implies that infographics content brought about 95.5% variance in Building Brand awareness and Engagement, this is further proven by the adjusted R^2 that shows the goodness of fit of the model which gives a value of 0.955, implying that when all errors are corrected and adjustments are made, the model can only account for 95.5% by Building Brand awareness and Engagement; while the remaining 4.5% are explained by the error term in the model as shown in Table 4.8.

The unstandardized beta co-efficient of infographics content is 0.726 with $t= 21.921$ and ($p= 0.000 < 0.05$). These results showed that infographics content have a positive relationship with Building Brand awareness and Engagement. This suggests that Video fosters trust and facilitates brand engagement; its compelling content encourages sharing. Video advertisements evoke a profound emotional connection to the company, and analytics are perceived as important in determining the efficacy of video content marketing efforts.

From the Table 4.8 discussion in objective three, and by F-Stat. 6590.763, p -value $0.000 < .05$, it showed that the null hypothesis, infographics content does not significantly affect Building Brand awareness and Engagement is not true therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Based on this, we accepted the alternative hypothesis that infographics content has effect on Building Brand awareness and Engagement.

Table 4.8: Infographics content and Building Brand awareness and Engagement

Variable	Coeff.	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
Constant	0.062	0.040	1.558	0.120
Video content	0.976	0.012	81.184	0.000
R	0.977			
R Square	0.955			
Adj. R Square	0.955			
F Stat.	6590.763(0.000)			

Dependent variable: Building Brand awareness and Engagement

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concluded that ease of use influences your decision to engage with a brand's social media content, while online reviews and comments affect your decision to engage with or purchase a product advertised on social media. Additionally, it is significant that the social media content you follow aids in time-saving. Participate in an infographic-centric content marketing campaign if it showcases a reputable business, disseminate an infographic among your peers if it offers significant information, and see aesthetic quality as crucial in infographic content marketing. Video fosters trust and facilitates brand engagement; its compelling content encourages sharing. Video advertisements evoke a profound emotional connection to the company, and analytics are perceived as important in determining the effectiveness of video content marketing efforts.

Recommendation

Content marketing facilitates the improvement of client engagement. Content marketing can be executed through many mediums such as images, graphics, videos, and written accounts of consumer experiences. Various content marketing strategies are advantageous for enhancing brand engagement. The captivating imagery of a product shapes consumer perceptions.

These intriguing images assist in creating an impression, as a single image conveys a thousand words. Incorporating subtitles in films enhances consumer understanding of the product and fosters engagement in product education. A well-produced video accompanied by subtitles enhances customer knowledge of a product and fosters engagement in product learning. Brand engagement can also occur when consumers engage with the writings of

other consumers. Consumer reviews of the product captivate potential buyers more effectively than any other type of information.

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