

This is a self-archived version of an original article. This version may differ from the original in pagination and typographic details.

Author(s): Olaleye, Sunday; Ukpabi, Dandison; Mogaji Emmanuel

Title: Social Media for Universities' Strategic Communication : How Nigerian universities use Facebook

Year: 2020

Version: Accepted version (Final draft)

Copyright: © 2020 The Contributors

Rights: In Copyright

Rights url: <http://rightsstatements.org/page/InC/1.0/?language=en>

Please cite the original version:

Olaleye, Sunday, Ukpabi, Dandison, Mogaji Emmanuel. (2020). Social Media for Universities' Strategic Communication : How Nigerian universities use Facebook. In E. Mogaji, F. M. Maringe, & R. Ebo Hinson (Eds.), Strategic Marketing of Higher Education in Africa (Article Chapter 8). Routledge. Routledge Studies in Marketing. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429320934-9>

8 Social media for universities' strategic communication

How Nigerian universities use Facebook

Sunday Olaleye 0000-0002-0266-3989, Dandison Ukpabi 0000-0002-5081-354X, and Emmanuel Mogaji 0000-0003-0544-4842

A university has many stakeholders with varying interests and commitments. Several studies have examined modes and methods of HEIs communication with stakeholders. To the best of our knowledge, it is not evident in the literature how the engagement between universities and their stakeholders proceeds on the social media platforms particularly from a developing country perspective. This study employed stakeholder theory to give newer understanding to social media marketing as a strategy to reach university stakeholders and utilised an inductive, generic, qualitative approach in a netnography context to achieve the aim of this study. Theoretically, this chapter makes three key contributions. First, it extends the knowledge of the use of social media by universities, moving beyond the use of websites as strategic, interactive stakeholder engagement tools. Second, the study extends the application of stakeholder theory to include university conversations on social media, especially regarding the higher education institutions from a developing country perspective. Third, while acknowledging the unique and dynamic nature of stakeholders on social media, the study adopts a unique methodology to capture the usage of social media by the universities and explored their level of activity and analysed stakeholder responses. Methodologically, the study contributes to the literature on social media research.

Keywords: universities, social media, Facebook, Nigeria, stakeholder, strategic communications

Introduction

Firm effective and coordinated communication is essential for positive image perception among its different stakeholders (Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007). Scholarly evidence suggests that one of the metrics of measuring effective communication is when feedbacks are received from the intended target audience (Kreuter, Farrell, Olevitch, & Brennan, 2013). Over time, universities in developing countries primarily rely on the traditional mode of communication with different stakeholders (Anene, Imam, & Odumuh, 2014). A university has many stakeholders with varying interests and commitments. Thus, identifying the right communication media for a specific stakeholder is essential to elicit stakeholder engagement (Payne & Calton, 2017).

Social media has assumed a critical interaction medium for organisations. Social media is a group of Internet-based applications built on ideological and technological foundations that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated Internet content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). It offers abundance of services which include; social networks (Facebook, Instagram, Myspace, and LinkedIn), micro-blogs (Twitter, Plurk, and Friend Feed), reviews and ratings (Yelp, Amazon, and Trip Advisor), video (YouTube, Snapchat and Vimeo) and lots more. While there are different electronic media sites, social media is growing every day. Nigeria in

September 2015 had 97,210,000 Internet users, more than 52% of its population (Internet World Stats, 2016). A staggering 73% of all adults are now using a social media site worldwide. With massive growth and close to one billion users all over the world and 15 million users in Nigeria, Facebook alone has created a new communication channel that is to be reckoned within less than ten years, becoming one of the biggest communication channels in the world today (Callaghan, 2013; Hauger, 2014).

According to the stakeholder theory, an organisation consists of multiple stakeholders who are impacted by the operations of the business (Freeman, Wicks, & Parmar, 2004). The interest of a specific stakeholder depends on values and benefits derived from the business (Hart & Sharma, 2004). Thus, while the organisation seeks to balance the interest of every stakeholder, it must prioritise the interest of critical stakeholders over those who hold peripheral stakes in the organisation. Within higher educational institutions, balancing the interest of internal and external stakeholders is a recipe for engagement, growth, and success (de la Torre, Rossi, & Sagarra, 2018). To achieve this, the higher educational institution must maintain adequate and consistent communication with these interest groups. Several studies have examined modes and methods of HEIs communication with stakeholders. In a study of communication methods adopted by universities in Czech Republic David and Martina (2011) found that universities rely exclusively on marketing tools (advertising, promotions, and so on) for communicating with their stakeholders.

Similarly, Verma and Dahiya (2016) examined gender differences in the perception of the use of information and communication in Indian universities and found that gender was not a significant factor in the perception use of information and communication as a medium with internal stakeholders. Finally, Quadri and Idowu (2016) investigated the use of social media by libraries of selected Nigerian universities and found a high level of awareness of the use of social media by the different institutions. To the best of our knowledge, it is not evident in literature how the engagement between universities and its stakeholders proceed on the social media platforms particularly from a developing country perspective. Accordingly, the objective of our study is to a) examine the use of social media by the universities in Nigeria; b) investigate the level of activity of Nigerian universities on social media; and c) to analyse stakeholder responses to the social media content by the universities. Thus, with our study, practitioners, scholars, and other stakeholders would be abreast of the level of penetration and use of social media by the universities in Nigeria. Thus, our study proceeds as follows.

Theoretical development and literature review

Stakeholder theory

Stakeholders intervention has become a global issue in higher education institutions (HEIs), and different authors have contributed to the literature of stakeholders in HEIs. For example, Vargas, Lawthom, Prowse, Randles & Tzoulas (2019) developed new insights into sustainable development through stakeholder networks for organisational change in HEIs while Casablancas-Segura, Llonch & Alarcón-del-Amo (2019) used latent class segmentation technique for public universities based on their stakeholder orientation. Later study motivates the universities to be stakeholder-oriented. Also, Le (2019) analysed the stakeholder's perception in Vietnam universities regarding their involvement in translation studies course and discovered that stakeholders' feedbacks have been helpful in different subjects of their Bachelor of Arts training program. The involvement of strategic engagement in academic library was emphasised by (Harland, Stewart, & Bruce, 2019) and established a strategic framework for engagement with stakeholders. Due to the inevitability of stakeholders in HEIs, Edwards, Venugopal, Navedo & Ramani (2019) addressed the needs of diverse stakeholders and touched on three key ways of managing the stakeholders through planning, implementation, and monitoring. Stakeholders is a multidimensional phenomenon in HEIs as Alexander & Hjortsø (2019) examined the tensions and contradictions of stakeholders in participatory curriculum development. Unlike the earlier mentioned authors, Wood & Su, (2019) focused on parents as a specific stakeholder, and their findings show that HEIs parents desired to be treated as an essential stakeholder that can contribute to the teaching excellence in England HEIs. Dobija, Górka, & Pikoš (2019) also participated in the discussion of stakeholders in HEIs as they showed how the internal organisational processes change due to the response of external demands in Polish universities and concludes that the influence of influential stakeholders constitute changes in performance measurement and performance information while Radinger-Peer (2019) confirmed the influence of multi-stakeholder in universities regional engagement.

The relevance of stakeholders to the survival of HEIs especially the universities is crucial, and Guerrero-Villegas (2019, p. 196) described stakeholder as 'an individual or a group that can affect or be affected by the actions taken by the firm in pursuit of its objectives'. According to Vargas et al., (2019), the inclusion of stakeholders in the affairs of HEIs could improve decisions that fostered sustainable development and proposed that future research dwell on quality, processes of stakeholder participation in organisational change.

The stakeholders depend on the policy concerned with HEIs. Casablanco-Segura, Llonch, & Alarcón-del-Amo (2019) clustered stakeholders in HEIs into high stakeholder-oriented and low stakeholder-oriented and in the same line, Guerrero-Villegas (2019) group them into core stakeholders, strategic stakeholders, and environmental stakeholders and described the stakeholders that possess the attribute of legitimacy, power, or urgency as latent stakeholders while the latent stakeholders could be sub-classified as dormant, discretionary, demanding, dominant, dangerous, dependent, definitive, and non-stakeholders.

The non-stakeholders are nominal. Dobija, Górka, and Pikoš, (2019) found that the design of performance measurement and performance information could be influenced by the external pressures of dominant stakeholders and compared the private and public HEIs based on isomorphic pressures of coercive, normative, and mimetic. The public universities are more coercive than private universities. Private universities are high in normative and low in public universities while the public universities are low in mimetic and moderate in private universities. Since the priorities of stakeholders are competing and complementary, Edwards et al. (2019) suggest stakeholders identification, activities identification, stakeholders engagement plan, identify the core team members that will interact with the stakeholders, devise a means of feedback and summarise the stakeholder analysis and communication plan. These mentioned tasks will help in sorting out the problem of overlapping and diverging interests of various stakeholders. The influence of stakeholders in HEIs impact both theory and practice.

The stakeholder is held beyond shareholders. A stakeholder involves a person or group of persons affected directly or indirectly by the operations of the business. Thus, the success of the business lies in satisfying these multiple interests (Freeman, 2010). Donaldson and Preston (1995) identified three components of the stakeholder theory: normative, descriptive, and instrumental. The normative stakeholder theory outlines how organisations should treat their stakeholders while descriptive describes how organisations should manage different stakeholders.

Similarly, the instrumental stakeholder theory prioritises the relationships with stakeholders that are critical to the achievement and objectives of the company (Freeman, 2010). Similarly, there are internal and external stakeholders (Cardwell, Williams, & Pyle, 2017) and the organisation must identify their various interests to be able to satisfactorily perform to their expectations (Van der Zee, Gerrets, & Vanneste, 2017). The stakeholder theory has gone through some refinements and applied in different contexts. Mason and Simmons (2014) conceptually applied the stakeholder theory in the context of corporate social

responsibility. They argue that firms would successfully be perceived as responsible corporate entities by taking into account their different stakeholders in formulating their corporate social responsibility objectives.

In the management of universities, there are internal stakeholders (students and staff) while external stakeholders 'can be broadly defined as individuals and groups having interests in HEIs but without an immediate linkage with them' (Musiał, 2010, p. 46). The advent of new technologies such as social media has opened fascinating frontiers through which these different stakeholders engage with HEIs (Sashi, 2012; De Vries & Carlson, 2014). Accordingly, through these platforms, HEIs have been able to communicate effectively and gauge the feelings of their stakeholders through their feedbacks. The effective deployment of social media would enhance a higher level of engagement and involvement by the stakeholders of the HEIs. From the internal stakeholder perspective, students and staff would be able to know the goings-on in the university by regularly postings these happening on their universities' social media pages (Dabner, 2012).

Similarly, university administrators would be able to understand the mood and feelings of its internal stakeholders when they utilise these social media platforms. Many incidents of strikes and students unrest happened due to lack of opportunity for these internal stakeholders to be heard by university administrators (Odu, 2014). Similarly, from the external stakeholder perspective, some vital information such as inventions, research breakthroughs, recruitment exercises can quickly reach these stakeholders faster than the traditional means of communication. It is pertinent to state that it is not enough to launch these social media platform, but continuous use and monitoring feedbacks across the stakeholders are most important. The effective use of these platforms would enhance robust university-stakeholder relationship.

Methodology

An inductive, generic, qualitative approach

An inductive, generic, qualitative approach in a netnography context is adopted to achieve the aim of this study. This approach 'seeks to discover and understand a phenomenon, a process or the perspectives and worldviews of the people involved' (Caelli, Ray, & Mill, 2008, p. 3). While the netnography offers a 'form of ethnographic research, adopting the participant-observational approach and taking online interactions as its fieldwork' (Kozinets, 2010, p. 1). The online community is advancing as a research stream for qualitative scientists and netnography is one of the recommended approaches for exploring diverse cultural

dispositions of online communities and interpreting the results in a descriptive or analytical format (Kozinets, 2015).

It should also be noted that the participants (stakeholders) were not part of any interview or laboratory setting to understand how they engage with the university or vice versa. Stakeholders were not asked any questions about their relationship with the university, and there were no concerns about confidentiality and anonymity because, unlike interviews, their comments were publicly displayed online (Mogaji & Farinloye, 2018).

All indicators of engagement and communication between the university and the stakeholders were derived from subsequent analysis of their online comments to the universities' profile pages. This approach followed the methodology adopted by Mogaji et al. (2016) to understand consumers attitude towards bank brands. The level of engagement between the university and stakeholders is understood through observation and thematic analysis of the social media post.

The sampled universities

There are 174 Universities in Nigeria (Mogaji, 2019a). However, not all of them have a social media profile. By 1 April 2019, only 125 Universities in Nigeria had a Facebook profile, of which only 5 have a verified Facebook page. These universities are Covenant University, Ota, Federal University of Technology Akure, University of Port Harcourt, Osun State University, and the American University of Nigeria. These verified pages have the blue checkmark which identifies a verified Facebook page; the verification adds credibility to the page, ranked higher on the list of searched items. It builds trust with your audience, and the audience knows they are getting factual information from a verified and official source (Sorensen, 2018). Also, critical metrics of Facebook engagement were explored to increase the sampled universities. The study used LikeAlyzer open software to calculate the engagement rate of Facebook users (Olaleye, Sanusi, Ukpabi, & Okunoye, 2018). The university with the highest comments per post (University of Maiduguri), highest reactions per post (Kola Daisi University) and highest shares per post (Summit University Offa) were included in the sampled universities. In total, eight universities were sampled. Five universities for being the only universities verified by Facebook, three for being the most active based on the Facebook metrics.

Data collection

Two sets of data were collected to achieve the aims of this study. The first data were the official postings on the Facebook pages of the eight universities. These data were collected to

examine how universities are using social media. The other data were the user-generated contents in the form of comments from the Facebook pages of these universities. These data were collected to analyse how stakeholders are responding to the social media posts of these universities. These data were collected between 1 October 2018 and 31 April 2019 using NVivo12, a qualitative content analysis tool that incorporates a new web browser plug-in called NCapture, which is capable of capturing social media data (in RAW format). This plug-in is capable of downloading social media data for further analysis by the software NVivo. It facilitates the taking of publicly available data without programming expertise and arranges it into exportable spreadsheets. It also offers a variety of visualisation tools, including word-cluster analysis, treemaps, charts, and word-frequency arrangements (Lane & Menzies, 2015; Mogaji & Farinloye, 2017). Posting data-screening processes were put in place to inspect the extracted posting, identifying outliers and dealing with incongruent comments (Mogaji & Farinloye, 2018). Profane comments, comments that were not in English or those that contain swear words, were removed before coding.

Data analysis

In total, 1,209 postings (from the universities) and 5,205 comments (from stakeholders) were extracted and thematically analysed. Braun and Clarke (2006)'s thematic analysis approach was used to analyse both the postings and comments. Themes were inductively extracted. The inductive analysis involves coding the data without trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This form of thematic analysis is data-driven. The data was read over and over again to gain a better understanding of the engagement between the universities and stakeholders. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested that 'Immersion usually involves "repeated reading" of the data and effectively reading the data - searching for meanings, patterns, and so on.'

Codes were inductively generated as there was not pre-existing coding frame. A short description (often one or two words) was given to each tweet, gathering all the references to a specific topic on the postings. At this stage of the analysis, these codes were fluid, changing, and emerging. Codes were redefined, new ones were created, codes were merged and split to account for new ideas as the coding progresses. The next step involved identifying and describing links and relationships between codes. Codes were categorised, and themes generated based on the relationship between the codes, the frequency of the codes and the underlying meaning across the codes.

Table 8.1 Selected Nigerian universities on social media

FACEBOOK					
<i>University</i>	<i>Facebook</i>	<i>Comments per post</i>	<i>Shares per post</i>	<i>Reactions per post</i>	<i>Administrator</i>
Covenant University Verified	119.315	0.81	3.97	24.27	Staff/Student/Public
Federal University of Technology, Akure Verified	90.396	12.93	14.28	151.66	Staff/Student/Public
University of Port Harcourt Verified	71.905	0.58	0.66	10.08	Staff/Student/Public
Osun State University Verified	50.526	12.14	4.21	63.47	Staff/Student/Public
American University of Nigeria Verified	43.453	0.52	1.88	13.14	Staff/Student/Public
University of Maiduguri	41.176	59.98	33.38	124.45	Staff/Student/Public
Kola Daisi University	5.161	7.42	6.38	512.52	Staff/Student/Public
Summit University Offa	1.621	9	49.57	197.71	Staff/Student/Public

The themes were shared with the co-author to review and refined the themes. It became more evident that some of these themes were closely related. Initial codes were examined, trends patterns and the most frequent and significant themes were explored. There were regular debriefing sessions between the first author doing the analysis and the other co-authors. Themes were frequently discussed and revised. The meetings also provide a sounding board and opportunity for peer scrutiny. Also, a detailed account of the methods, procedures, and decision points in carrying out this study was documented in the form of an 'audit trail' as advised by Shenton (2004). The assurance of analytic rigour to ensure that data was not

selectively used and that the researcher's position did not overpower the participants' voices can be evidenced from the audit trails. Key themes were determined after the discussion. This step was followed by the theoretical coding which connects the core categories to create the narrative proposition and stakeholder theory for universities on social media.

Results

This section presents results of the thematic analysis of the posts by the universities, which indicate how they are using social media and comments by the stakeholders, which highlights how they are engaging with the universities' posting.

Universities' posting

The universities are using their social media profile for various purposes, targeting different stakeholders but predominantly prospective students who are interested in higher education. Five key themes emerged from the analysis of how the universities are using Facebook for their marketing communication strategy.

Inform

Universities were using social media to inform prospective students about their desires to welcome them to their university. They presented information about the availability of spaces to study for a degree, screening exercises around the country to recruit prospective students and also provide admission requirements and criteria. Some universities take pride in their achievements as they present themselves to students.

Meet us in Jos this Saturday. The University leadership will be available to attend to your inquiries on admissions, academic programs, tuition fees, campus life and more.

Admission is still ongoing for the 2018/2019 academic session into 100 & 200 levels, JUPEB and remedial at the Kola Daisi University, Ibadan.

Meanwhile, this is to inform interested applicants that opportunities still exist for qualified applicants to study at Covenant University, as the final screening exercise has been scheduled for this weekend July 12 and 13th respectively. Visit the Admission Website for more details.

Likewise, the universities use their social media platform to inform present students about developments going on within the university. They inform them about resumption dates,

events like convocation and matriculation, dignitaries visiting the campus, and also announcements around examinations.

Provisional examination Time-table for 2018/2019 academic session GST Unit ...

(Updated) Education: First-semester examination time-table for degree students 2018/2019

All Fresh and Returning Students should visit bit.ly/2ObqDQf in preparation for the Resumption of 2018/2019 Academic Session. Compulsory!

Date; Returning students: August 12, 2018

Freshers: August 15, 2018

The Vice-Chancellor of Covenant University, Professor \o “Ręmi Atayero” Ręmi Atayero decorating the Executive Vice-Chairman/CEO, National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure, Professor M. S. Haruna and Business Development and Relationship Manager, Development Bank of Nigeria, Mary Esther Ezeadi, during a courtesy visit to Covenant University Vice-Chancellor’s Office after making presentations at the 2019 International Conference on Sustainable Development in Africa ...

Motivate

Universities in Nigeria are making an effort to motivate their students by sharing contents which can encourage them to work harder and achieve excellent results. There were postings about the best graduating students, alumni that have a successful business and present students that have won an academic or sports competition. Universities push this narrative to encourage and motivate their students.

FUTA undergraduates win Microsoft competition ... Win All Expenses Paid Trip to Microsoft’s Headquarters in Redmond, USA

Congratulations to the overall best graduating student in Covenant University ... from the dept. Of architecture with 4.97GP.

Ajibua Michael Alayode, Director, Sports and Chief Coach of the FUTA Football Club is among the 24 selected coaches of tertiary institutions nationwide who attended the “Coaching The Coaches” Clinic in Lagos Organized by the Higher

Sunday Olaleye et al.

Institutions Football League (HiFL) in partnership with Manchester City Football Club of England.

They also provided motivational quotes and prayers for the students. On the first day of the month, there were postings about the new month, greetings, wishing the students all the best and hoping they have a blessed month.

Reflect this weekend over Dean Bullock's powerful quotes.

Gossip is verbal poison. It seeks to defame & discredit others. It is hurtful & dangerous. It is the quickest way to destroy trust and friendships. Do not take it lightly. You may think it is harmless, but you're ruining someone's reputation. You'll pay a high price for it in your Lifetime Even in Paradise HALLH Says.

This February will usher you with new experiences. Happy New Month

The greatness of AUN does not only depend on the quality of our diverse degree programs or our faculty or this beautiful infrastructure but also the motivation, dedication, and hard work of you, the student.

Update

These are often targeted towards present students and staff who are considered internal stakeholders. These types of posts include the event that will be held on campus, a forum or announcements, Pictures and images of events that have happened such as inaugural speeches, graduation, and matriculation. This type of post is about updating the stakeholders about activities going on campus. The university also uses its social media to wish their staff happy birthday or announce the death of a colleague. KolaDaisi University predominantly did this posting strategy. Often, they showed a picture of their team, tag their social media handle and wish them a happy birthday. Other universities also use this strategy to showcase their staff contribution and achievements.

Osun State University recorded a victorious outing by winning four medals at the just-concluded annual university sports competition organised by the Nigerian University Game Association (NUGA).

The outstanding virtues of an elder statesman, teacher, and author, Basorun Seinde Arogbofa were extolled by dignitaries at a book launch held to commemorate his 80th

birthday at the main Auditorium of the Federal University of Technology, Akure, FUTA.

Our Vice-Chancellor @ 61. Today we celebrate Professor Joseph Adeola Fuwape, Vice-Chancellor FUTA on the occasion of his 61st birthday. May the Good Lord continue to grant you good health and the wherewithal to take our University to Greater heights. Congratulations Mr Vice Chancellor.

The sudden death of our students shocks me – SUG President. The President, Students' Union Government, Comrade Farouq Muhammad Ahmad receives with sadness, the terrible news of the ghastly motor accident that claimed the lives and injured many UNIMAID Students on their way back to Gombe.

Report

Unlike the updates provided by the university for the internal stakeholders, the universities use their Facebook to report what is going on within the university. This posting strategy is an attempt to flaunt their achievements for external stakeholders to see. These are targeted towards parents who may be looking at a prospective school for their children, staff who are looking at changing the university and considering the university as a better option, the regulatory bodies, employers, press, and the general public. The university showcases its world league table ranking, and they showcase their latest research funding from international organisations. Appearance in the media like television interview or newspaper coverage are also shared on their Facebook page. This type of messages appeared to be an attempt to create a narrative about a successful university which everyone should be a part of.

Samuel Adeyanju graduated with First Class from the Department of Forest and Wood Technology in 2016. In 2017 Adeyanju and nine other Alumni of FUTA won 10 out of the 12 MasterCard's Foundation Scholarships allocated to Nigeria. He is currently a Masters student at the University of British Columbia (UBC) Canada. He was in Nigeria recently to undertake practical fieldwork along with some other engagements. In this interview, he talks about the scholarship, his experience and his vision for the future.

Happening now: 10th Commencement Ceremony and the inauguration of Dr Dawn Dekle officially as AUN's 4th President. Over 150 graduating students will be

conferred with Bachelor's Degrees, Post Graduate Diplomas and Masters Degrees
You can catch the live broadcast on the African Independent Television (AIT) and
Gotel Television.

Prolonged Exposure to Radiation Can Lead to Cancer, Others – FUTA Don —
Leadership Newspaper

Share

This posting strategy is when the university is not posting content they have created, but instead, they are sharing information from other sources. This approach was predominantly adopted by the University of Port Harcourt sharing information from the World Health Organisation. This posting strategy can have a negative effect when most of the stakeholders do not find it relevant. This negative effect was evident from the comments under those posts. Students felt that such information was not necessary when the university has not provided information about examinations and other things that are more important to them. Universities are using this strategy to keep their profile active and engage with other stakeholders who might find such information relevant.

Support Mums to breastfeed anytime, anywhere. We can all help make society
breastfeeding-friendly - WHO.

Stakeholders' comments

This section of the analysis shows how the stakeholders are engaging with the posting from the universities.

Ask

Prospective students use the social media platform to ask the university about various questions regarding their admission. They ask about admission requirements, fees, and insight into the institution. The stakeholders believe they can directly engage with the university and request specific information. Students ask if their qualifications can secure them admission into the university, they ask for an update about their admission, especially those who have submitted their form and attend the screening exercise. Some prospective students also ask about the cost of an application form, if the government approves the university, scholarship offers, and resumption dates. Parents as well were asking questions on the behaviour of their children. Present students seldom ask questions as there is little

evidence of them interacting with the post to ask question that relates to their current needs as students.

I want to ask if a returning student can pay part of the school fees and the procedure.

Pls help ooooooh, I was given admission but was unable to pay acceptance fee due to nationwide strike(banks) with 2wks ultimatum, Any other way apart from using bank.

Hello #CovenantUniversity, I am an applicant to the institution for 2019/2020 session. I have not been receiving emails through the email address I presented during my application whereas other applicants like me do receive. I only ask other people to hear from them whatever message has been passed, please help me out.

Please my spiritual referee has not filled her part, and I did not see my name on the first list do I stand a chance of seeing it on the second list.

Please, friends and colleagues I have a question to ask. Why is this that my UTME screening is showing me that Jamb number has already been registered and I have made my payment. It has refused to allow me to continue with registration.

Advice

On the other hand, present students are more likely to provide answers and guidance instead of asking questions. They serve as an online influencer that can give advice and answer questions being asked by the prospective students. Though disappointing to note that the universities infrequently engage and answer the questions that are being asked, the present students and other prospective students take up that role – they provide advice and answers to students and parents inquiring about the location of screening, information about admission, resumption date, and lifestyles in the university.

During my time a very similar case took place, I wrote the last supplementary exams but still got admitted on the 1st batch list a week after I took CUSAS.

It is completely normal to feel nervous before an examination. What you can do to reduce test anxiety. Breathe, be prepared, practice with your study group. Have a positive mental attitude. Good luck in your midterm exams.

Acknowledge

These are comments that indicate an understanding of the postings by the university. The stakeholders are acknowledging the message the university is sending to them. They often say OK or mention another of the friends to see the message as well. There are indications that these are present students. As an indication of acknowledgement, some stakeholders do say *Congratulations, Happy for you, and well done*, especially when information about a successful student is shared, or pictures of the graduation are shared.

Appreciation

For stakeholders who appreciate the universities post and find it relevant, they tend to be appreciative and say *Thank you*. While present students are acknowledging the posts, prospective students are more likely to appreciate posts that provide information. These appreciation comments are often on posts that offer an update about the admission process, the admission criteria, screening venue, and scholarship opportunities. Prospective students feel they can make use of the information and tends to be grateful.

Advertise

Disappointedly, some use the comments section of the universities' post on Facebook to advertise their goods and services. The presence of these advertisements is an apparent lack of control and monitoring from the part of the page administrators. Sometimes these advertisements are relevant to the students, such as helping them with the admission process to some other universities, extra classes to improve grades or helping with admissions and travel plans to universities outside Nigeria. However, there are others like bitcoin, foreign exchange training, and car sales. These advertisements in the comment section can sometimes hijack the conversation and distract the readers from the message of the initial post.

They are Legit, They are TRUSTED ... BRING YOUR BITCOIN at a low rate depending on volume ...

I buy 100 USD for 350/\$ and 1000 for 356/\$... They also Trade cards too at best current rate

*Contact—070******

Do not be left out people are making money in this 2018 already ... This is for business-minded persons.

DROP YOUR WHATSAPP NUMBER IF YOUR INTERESTED. BITCOIN AVAILABLE FOR SALE, INTERESTED BUYERS SHOULD WHATSAPP (+23470*****")

Discussion and conclusion

Social media is transforming how consumers interact with brands and how brand-related content is consumed (Mogaji, 2016) and universities are not excluded from using social media to engage with their stakeholders. The advent of readily available social media applications has created opportunities for dialogic and more interactive engagement (Bonsón & Ratkai, 2013). To understand how universities in Nigeria are engaging with stakeholders on social media, the study examined social media profiles of 125 universities on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The study was set out to accomplish three main aims. Firstly, to examine the use of social media by the universities in Nigeria; Secondly, to investigate their level of activity and lastly, to analyse stakeholder responses to the social media content. The study was anchored on the stakeholder's theory which recognises the success of the business lies in satisfying the multiple interests (Freeman, 2010) within a business. In the case of a university, these interests vary and communicating with them is essential.

Findings of the study revealed the use of social media which highlights the initial challenge of which of the social media platform to use, while the study focused on 125 universities, only a few of them have a presence on the three media considered (Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook), perhaps as an indication of the challenges in effectively managing all the profiles. There were concerns about the nature of the post on these social media profiles. They do not appear strategic enough to engage with the diverse stakeholder of a university. The information posted is often information-focused aimed explicitly to students and staff. The engagement rate is also meagre. The American University of Nigeria with the highest rate has 11%.

The targeted audience is also worthy of consideration as the study recognises the diverse nature of university stakeholders. The most crucial content entails inaugural lecture, universities ranking, workshop, reunion, travel, symposium. These understandings can explain the low engagement rate. Often the student (and sometimes the parents) are the primary audience while other stakeholders are often excluded in the communication. This gives an indication of the universities' awareness of their stakeholders and how best to curate content to engage them with. There are little or no engagement between the university and the alumni, the host community, funders, and other research organisations.

With a specific focus on Nigeria as a developing country, it is essential to consider the context in which the universities relate with their stakeholders and perhaps gives an insight into their level of engagement on social media. Firstly, Internet user penetration in Nigeria is a concern. In 2019, 56.4% of the Nigerian population were Internet users (Statista, 2019), though this is growing, it is still a challenge especially for prospective students and other stakeholders who may want to engage. Secondly, public universities in Nigeria are underfunded from both the Federal and State Government. The funders, regulators (like National Universities Commission) and research organisation are key stakeholders, but often there is no engagement on social media as indicated by the analysis of the frequent messages. Often there is no posting about community services, research activities and impact but more of updates to strike. Lastly, admission spaces are oversubscribed as the demand for university places is higher than the supply and therefore there is hardly interest in marketing communications campaign because they are always guaranteed a steady supply of prospective students. This is, however, different from the private universities who are competing with prospective students who have not secured admission or willing to attend the government universities. The private universities are often more motivated to engage with stakeholders, share their research achievements, provide updates about activities and events on campus.

Notwithstanding these contextual challenges, understanding consumer behaviour on social media is vital for the successful development of an appropriate channel that reflects stakeholders' varied requirements (Dwivedi, et al., 2019; Shareef et al., 2016). As with many consumers, there are high expectations on social media (Ukpabi et al., 2019) from students especially when engaging with the universities, and they want answers to their questions

Theoretically, this chapter makes three key contributions. First, it extends the knowledge of the use of social media by universities, moving beyond the use of websites as strategic, interactive stakeholder engagement tools. This study recognised that social media applications present communication opportunities that differ from universities' websites (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012) as it offers more flexibility and engagement between the universities and their stakeholders.

Second, the study extends the application of stakeholder theory to include university conversations on social media, especially regarding the higher education institutions from a developing country perspective. It recognises a different structure of stakeholders, the universities' peculiar challenges, and the developing country perspective. Third, while acknowledging the unique and dynamic nature of stakeholders on social media, the study

adopts a unique methodology to capture the usage of social media by the university and explored their level of activity and analysed stakeholder responses. Methodologically, the study contributes to the literature on social media research.

Managerially, the current study offers implications that highlight the need for managers of universities' social media profile to understand their essence of having a social media presence. This is expected to feed into their social media strategy. From a practical perspective, being on social media may indicate an intention to actively engage with the stakeholders (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012), it is, however, paramount to be strategic about this. The fact that every organisation is on social media is not enough justification to jump on the bandwagon without having clear objectives and goals.

Universities need to understand their stakeholders to engage and communicate with them properly. As there are internal and external stakeholders (Cardwell, Williams, & Pyle, 2017), the university must identify their various interests to be able to provide the relevant content that they can engage with satisfactorily. Managers need to understand the expectation of the prospective students who needs information about the courses offered by the university, the expectation of current students who needs an update about what is going on at the university and alumni who are looking forward to opportunities to develop and contribute back to the university.

Importantly as well, this suggests the need for content creation strategy. Managers must be aware that stakeholders are not just consumer of the content but also actively participate in creating and shaping it (Bonsón & Ratkai, 2013; Mogaji & Farinloye, 2018). With the understanding of the stakeholders, relevant contents should be created by the universities' communications team and be co-created with stakeholders. These contents should go beyond the usual update about activities on the campus but something which is more strategic, scheduled and engaging with the stakeholders. This is anticipated to increase the engagement level, and build communication, gain insight into the level of engagement and be able to target them with more relevant information.

The more extensive range of functionality on different social media platform is recognised. For example, Twitter is restricted to 280 characters; cross-posting from Facebook will truncate the message on Twitter. Managers need to be conversant with these functionalities and use it effectively (Mogaji, 2019b). One size does not fit all in social media, and each site is used correctly to engage with the stakeholders.

It is also essential to work towards getting their profiles verified and engaging more with the stakeholders as there are many parody accounts. These parody accounts do not represent the

university, and it can confuse the stakeholders willing to engage (Mogaji & Erkan, 2019). Often, these parody accounts, especially on Facebook share irrelevant post and as the pages are often created to attract followers and used for advertisements and sponsored post, this is another reason for the universities to take ownership of their social media profile and take charge of their communication strategies as prospective students may not be able to identify the real profile by a simple search on the social media platform.

Analytics to understand the key drivers of engagement is essential (Mogaji, 2019c). Managers should be endeavouring to measure the impact of their campaigns, track the performance of posts and discover what resonates with the stakeholders by tracking performance at the post level. These insights can be used to create better content, inform campaign strategy and better engage your stakeholders. Tools for the entire publishing process should be considered based on the significant number of stakeholders to engage with. There should be a dedicated team responsible for social media engagement, and this may be within the communications team or the marketing team (Mogaji, 2019b). The social media policy should guide the team, and there should be contingency plans for continuity in case staff leave, everyone should have access to the password, staff are trained on tools to engage effectively and professionally. Staff are aware of the basic etiquette of customer services even though they are behind the scene. These are essential points to be considered by universities when putting a social media team together.

There are limitations to this study, however. The study restricted itself to the analysis of social media pages of Nigerian universities. It is acknowledged that not all the universities are using social media and even for those analysed, not all of them are using the three social media networks analysed. Other social media pages haven't been explored, such as YouTube, etc. The results cannot be generalised to other sectors. The study has offered insights into communications strategies of universities on social media, albeit quantitatively; future research should try to analyse the content and frequency of the post to understand how each stakeholder are being targeted and the nature of their contents. The distinctions between different university typology can also be explored.

References

Aguilera-Caracuel, J., & Guerrero-Villegas, J. (2018). How corporate social responsibility helps MNEs to improve their reputation. The moderating effects of geographical diversification and operating in developing regions. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, 25(4), 355-372.

Alexander, I. K., & Hjortsø, C. N. (2019). Sources of complexity in participatory curriculum development: an activity system and stakeholder analysis approach to the analyses of tensions and contradictions. *Higher Education*, 77(2), 301-322.

Anene, J., Imam, H., & Odumuh, T. (2014). Problem and prospect of e-learning in Nigerian universities. *International Journal of Technology and Inclusive Education (IJTIE)*, 3(2), 320–327.

Bonsón, E., & Ratkai, M. (2013). A set of metrics to assess stakeholder engagement and social legitimacy on a corporate Facebook page. *Online Information Review*, 37(5), 787-803.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.

Caelli, K., Ray, L., & Mill, J. (2008). ‘Clear as mud’: Toward greater clarity in generic qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 2(2), 1–13.

Callaghan, M. I. A. B. (2013, 2 May). Facebook’s declining user growth rate, pictured. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <http://allthingsd.com/20130502/facebooks-declining-user-growth-rate-pictured/>.

Cardwell, L. A., Williams, S., & Pyle, A. (2017). Corporate public relations dynamics: Internal vs. external stakeholders and the role of the practitioner. *Public Relations Review*, 43(1), 152–162.

Casablanacas-Segura, C., Llonch, J., & Alarcón-del-Amo, M. D. C. (2019). Segmenting public universities based on their stakeholder orientation. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 33(4), 614-628.

Chan, H. K., Wang, X., Lacka, E., & Zhang, M. (2016). A mixed-method approach to extracting the value of social media data. *Production and Operations Management*, 25(3), 568–583.

Dabner, N. (2012). ‘Breaking ground’ in the use of social media: A case study of a university earthquake response to inform educational design with Facebook. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 15(1), 69–78.

David, S., & Martina, R. (2011). Marketing communications mix of universities-communication with students in an increasing competitive university environment. *Journal of Competitiveness*, 3, 58–67.

de la Torre, E. M., Rossi, F., & Sagarra, M. (2018). Who benefits from HEIs engagement? An analysis of priority stakeholders and activity profiles of HEIs in the United Kingdom. *Studies in Higher Education*, 5, 1–20.

De Vries, N. J., & Carlson, J. (2014). Examining the drivers and brand performance implications of customer engagement with brands in the social media environment. *Journal of Brand Management*, 21(6), 495–515.

Dobija, D., Górska, A. M., & Pikos, A. (2019). The impact of accreditation agencies and other powerful stakeholders on the performance measurement in Polish universities. *Baltic Journal of Management*, 14(1), 84-102.

Donaldson, T., & Preston, L. E. (1995). The stakeholder theory of the corporation: Concepts, evidence, and implications. *Academy of Management Review*, 20(1), 65–91.

Dwivedi, Y. K. et al., 2019. Artificial Intelligence (AI): Multidisciplinary perspectives on emerging challenges, opportunities, and agenda for research, practice and policy. *International Journal of Information Management*.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2019.08.002>

Edwards, R. A., Venugopal, S., Navedo, D., & Ramani, S. (2019). Addressing needs of diverse stakeholders: Twelve tips for leaders of health professions education programs. *Medical teacher*, 41(1), 17-23

Fereday, J., & Muir-Cochrane, E. (2006). Demonstrating rigor using thematic analysis: A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(1), 80–92.

Freeman, R. E. (2010). *Strategic management: A stakeholder approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Freeman, R. E., Wicks, A. C., & Parmar, B. (2004). Stakeholder theory and ‘the corporate objective revisited’. *Organization Science*, 15(3), 364–369.

Harland, Fiona, Stewart, Glenn, and Bruce, Christine (2019) Leading the academic library in strategic engagement with stakeholders: a constructivist grounded theory. *College and Research Libraries*, 80 (3). pp. 319-339

Hart, S. L., & Sharma, S. (2004). Engaging fringe stakeholders for competitive imagination. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 18(1), 7–18.

Hauger, K. K. (2014). *ABC I sosiaalmedier: #sosialmarkedsforing*. Kampanje.

He, W., Wu, H., Yan, G., Akula, V., & Shen, J. (2015). A novel social media competitive analytics framework with sentiment benchmarks. *Information & Management*, 52(7), 801–812.

Internet World Stats. (2016). Usage and population statistics. Retrieved from <http://IWS.com/Africa.htm>.

Jogulu, U. D., & Pansiri, J. (2011). Mixed methods: A research design for management doctoral dissertations. *Management Research Review*, 34(6), 687–701.

Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite: The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons*, 53(1), 59–68. doi:10.1016/j.bushor.2009.09.003.

Kozinets, R. V. (2010). *Netnography: Doing ethnographic research online*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kozinets, R. V. (2015). *Netnography*. London: John Wiley.

Kreuter, M. W., Farrell, D. W., Olevitch, L. R., & Brennan, L. K. (2013). *Tailoring health messages: Customizing communication with computer technology*. London: Routledge.

- Lane, M., & Menzies, V. (2015). An analysis of user engagement in student Facebook groups. *Student Success*, 6, 93–98.
- Le, T. D., Dobeles, A. R., & Robinson, L. J. (2019). Information sought by prospective students from social media electronic word-of-mouth during the university choice process. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 41(1), 18–34.
- Lovejoy, K., & Saxton, G. D. (2012). Information, community, and action: How nonprofit organizations use social media. *Journal of computer-mediated communication*, 17(3), 337–353.
- Mason, C., & Simmons, J. (2014). Embedding corporate social responsibility in corporate governance: A stakeholder systems approach. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 119(1), 77–86.
- Mogaji, E. (2019a). Type and location of Nigerian universities. *Research Agenda Working Papers*, 2019(7), 92–103. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3442737>
- Mogaji, E. (2019b). Strategic stakeholder communications on Twitter by UK universities. *Research Agenda Working Papers*, 2019(8), 104–119. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3445869>
- Mogaji, E. (2019c). Branding private universities in Africa: An unexplored territory. *Research Agenda Working Papers*, 2019(9), 120–148. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3457571>
- Mogaji, E., & Erkan, I. (2019). Insight into consumer experience on UK train transportation services. *Travel Behaviour and Society*, 14, 21–33.
- Mogaji, E., & Farinloye, T. (2018). Attitude to brands and advertisement: Qualitative and thematic analysis of social media data. In B. Rishi & S. Bandyopadhyay (Eds.), *Contemporary issues in social media marketing*. (pp. 206–216). London: Routledge.
- Mogaji, E., Farinloye, T., & Aririguzoh, S. (2016). Factors shaping attitudes towards UK bank brands: An exploratory analysis of social media data. *Cogent Business & Management*, 3(1), 1223389.
- Musiał, K. (2010). Redefining external stakeholders in Nordic higher education. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 16(1), 45–60.
- Odu, O. M. (2014). Management of students crisis in higher institutions of learning in Nigeria. *International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences*, 15, 31–39.
- Olaleye, S. A., Sanusi, I. T., Ukpabi, D., & Okunoye, A. (2018). Evaluation of Nigeria universities websites quality: A comparative analysis. Available at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/1717>
- Pandey, A. C., Rajpoot, D. S., & Saraswat, M. (2017). Twitter sentiment analysis using hybrid cuckoo search method. *Information Processing & Management*, 53(4), 764–779.
- Payne, S. L., & Calton, J. M. (2017). Towards a managerial practice of stakeholder engagement: Developing multi-stakeholder learning dialogues. In J. Andriof, S. Waddock, B. Husted, & S. S. Rahman (Eds.), *Unfolding stakeholder thinking* (pp. 121–135). London: Routledge.

Quadri, G. O., & Adebayo Idowu, O. (2016). Social media use by librarians for information dissemination in three federal university libraries in Southwest Nigeria. *Journal of Library & Information Services in Distance Learning*, 10(1–2), 30–40.

Radinger-Peer, V. (2019). What influences universities' regional engagement? A multi-stakeholder perspective applying a Q-methodological approach. *Regional Studies, Regional Science*, 6(1), 170-185.

Rohm, A., Kaltcheva, V. D., & Milne, G. R. (2013). A mixed-method approach to examining brand-consumer interactions driven by social media. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 7(4), 295–311.

Sashi, C. M. (2012). Customer engagement, buyer-seller relationships, and social media. *Management Decision*, 50(2), 253–272.

Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for information*, 22(2), 63-75.

Snelson, C. L. (2016). Qualitative and mixed methods social media research: A review of the literature. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 15(1). doi:1609406915624574.

Sorensen, A. (2018). Credibility of your page. Retrieved from <https://socialnicole.com/verify-facebook-page/>.

Statista. (2019). Internet user penetration in Nigeria from 2017 to 2023. Retrieved 10 10, 2019, from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/484918/internet-user-reach-nigeria/>

Tavana, M., Momeni, E., Rezaeiniya, N., Mirhedayatian, S. M., & Rezaeiniya, H. (2013). A novel hybrid social media platform selection model using fuzzy ANP and COPRAS-G. *Expert Systems with Applications*, 40(14), 5694–5702.

Ukpabi, D., Karjaluoto, H., Olaleye, S., & Mogaji, E. (2019). Influence of offline activities and customer value creation on online travel community continuance usage intention. In *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism 2019* (pp. 450-460). Springer, Cham.

uniRank. (2019). Universities search engine. Retrieved from www4icu.org.

Van der Zee, E., Gerrets, A. M., & Vanneste, D. (2017). Complexity in the governance of tourism networks: Balancing between external pressure and internal expectations. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 6(4), 296–308.

Van Riel, C. B., & Fombrun, C. J. (2007). *Essentials of corporate communication: Implementing practices for effective reputation management*. London: Routledge.

Vargas, V. R., Lawthom, R., Prowse, A., Randles, S., & Tzoulas, K. (2019). Sustainable development stakeholder networks for organisational change in higher education institutions: A case study from the UK. *Journal of cleaner production*, 208, 470-478.

Verma, C., & Dahiya, S. (2016). Gender difference towards information and communication technology awareness in Indian universities. *SpringerPlus*, 5(1), 370.