

Use of Social Media in Event Planning and Promotion among Corporate Organisations in Abuja, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study assessed the use of social media in event planning and promotion among corporate organisations in Abuja, Nigeria. Technological Determinism Theory was used, while data was collected through the survey research approach from a sample size of 100. Findings revealed among others that social media like Facebook, WhatsApp and the likes were used to leverage events and ticketing sales and that social media are employed to craft exceptional, unique and engaging content. The study concluded that social media platforms have become relevant in event planning and promotion for corporate establishments. The study recommended among others the continuous and good use of social media for event planning and promotion.

Keywords: Social media, promotion, Event planning, corporate organisations, Event promotion

Introduction

Since the innovation and invention of the online communication platforms, corporate organisations and event planning establishments have taken advantage of these communication tools to expand the scope of their businesses. Gupta (2024) contends that brands are tapping into the avenues provided by digital communication platforms such as social media because they believe that most of their target customers are now online. Gupta (2024) further states that, since social media communication tools are currently town and market squares and it is clear that they remain one of the best places for the planning and promotion of events by corporate organisations and event planning firms. This implies that social media like Facebook, WhatsApp, X, TikTok, Instagram, among others give corporate and event planning organisation wider reach; meaning their activities can go beyond geographical boundaries and reach global markets.

According to Stewart (2024), digital communication platforms like Facebook, X, WhatsApp, and the likes offer huge advantages for the promotion, marketing and selling of all types of events; referring to these new communication innovations as indispensable tools in today's even organising. It is no secret that any business venture that wants to succeed and be on-top of the business radar, such a business firm needs to be on social media; however, it mere presence on these online communication platforms is not enough, it needs to constantly engage its established and potential clients; and when it comes to event planning, social media gives the edge (Stewart, 2024). Karacaer (2022) corroborates that presently, social media is used by event planners and corporate organisations to convey their feeling to the target audience in seconds and as well get feedbacks from these audiences.

Similarly, social media is playing a very important role for consumer to take right decision on their needs (Casalo, Flavian & Guinaliu, 2011). This phenomenon is motivating deep changes

in consumers' behaviour. This indicates that the development of online communications has changed the way of seeking information by consumers. It has been found useful for events companies like TravelPerk, MKG, Event Solutions, JR Global Events, Evolve Activation, Luxe Fete, MGM Resorts, AJ Williams Events, Rafanelli Events, Sequence Events and Absolute Production Services (Nashville, 2024). Miran (2024) concurs that social media tools have become important for event planning companies in France and Ghana (Miran, 2024 & Mensah et al, 2022). These authors argue that social media has become helpful in corporate organisations event planning. They use it to increase visibility, focus and target specific advertising, engage in real time with customers, for expo and to build relations with clients and similar organisations (Mensah, et al, 2022).

In Nigeria, available data indicates that in the first quarter of 2025, the country has about 36.75 million social media users (National Bureau of Statistics, 2024). Another statistics indicate that there are a total of 205.4 million Nigerians with active Internet connectivity, representing 90.7 percent of total population of the country (DataReportal, 2024). With this huge number of online communication presence, corporate organisations and event planning companies are capitalising on this to carry out their activities more effectively and efficiently.

Many scholars both in Nigeria and outside Nigeria have conducted studies concerning the employment of social media for event planning and promotion by corporate organisations (Koroma, 2018; Rathnakar, 2018; Paris, Lee & Seery, 2010; Akinrujomu & Adedara, 2024; Bradley, 2021). For instance, the study of Koroma (2018) was on the effectiveness of social media in event marketing. That of Rathnakar (2018) focused on the impact of social media on event marketing. Akinrujomu and Adedara (2024) study dwelled on leveraging fashion exhibition events and social media engagement for the promotion of Nigeria fabric brands. While that of Bradley (2021) was on the impact of social media marketing in the event industry: Executing a marketing plan.

However, the gap in knowledge that this study filled is by assessing the use of social media for corporate organisations' event planning and promotion in Abuja, Nigeria. This study provided insights into the reasons for using social media and factors that are hindering the effective adoption and use of social media applications for enhanced event planning and promotion in Abuja, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to examine the use of social media for corporate organisations' event planning and promotion in Abuja, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. Find out whether corporate organisations in Abuja use social media for event planning and promotion.
2. Explore the purpose of using social media for event planning and promotion among the respondents.
3. Examine the extent of the use of social media for event planning and promotion among the respondents.
4. Find out the challenges of the use of social media for event planning and promotion among the respondents.

Conceptual Clarifications

Social Media

Social media are new forms of media that involve interactive participation. Kaplan and Heinlein (2010) define social media as a set of Internet-based applications that build on the conceptual and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-created content. Apuke (2016) affirms that social media have expanded the horizon of communication and made the world smaller and communication process more rapid. As a form of new media, social media serves as a powerful tool for communicating rapidly without intermediary gatekeepers to spread new ideas (Schwab, 2015). Technological changes have facilitated in this direction and it is representing a prerequisite for changing society (Evans, 2011). According to Arthur (2012), social media are internet-based tools and services that allow

users to engage with each other, generate content, distribute, and search for information online. It is the interactive or collaborative nature of the medium that makes them “social”. Social media are web-based tools of electronic communication that allow users to exchange information individually or in groups, share ideas and opinions, make decisions and create, store, retrieve and exchange information because of its ability that allows the recording and manipulation of (text, images, videos, etc.), by anyone in the virtual world (Apuke, 2020). These personal profiles can then be connected with family, friends and colleagues, where information can be shared among one another. These connections create a network of users where anyone connected to the network can view everyone else’s profile and, therefore interact with them (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Furthermore, social media are systems of networks and applications that use the Internet to create a website which is then linked through an electronic social system with other members who have the same concerns (Sánchez-Moya & Cruz-Moya, 2015). This process is conducted through several services such as direct contact between people, sending messages and browsing personal pages for friends to see their news and some information about them (Bartlett et al, 2015). These networks contribute to an increased interaction and communication between users in the virtual community who are divided into groups of their own (Mariam, Nurazmallail&Miftachul, 2020). Chijioke (2013) opines that social media are online based interactive tools via which humans can create and exchange information in a participatory manner on a real-time basis. The author further notes that social media are internet-based democratic and participatory communication platforms that allow inhibited exchange of information and documents among users.

Corporate Organisations

Corporate establishments, bodies, organisations, companies or firms, according to DePamphills (2020) refer to the structure set up by individuals to meet up the specific needs of their coming together. It also means assigning individuals to specific business duties within an establishment (DePamphills, 2020). They are also units in organisations compressing all workers with each given his or her own functions for the overall benefits of the company. Corporate firms are entities established by individuals of like minds, stakeholders or shareholders, the primary aim of getting profits (CRI Team, 2024).

Event Planning and Promotion

The success of any activity is largely anchored on planning and promotion. This implies that event planning and promotion are imperative due to the fact it is through these two components that the event can achieve its desired aim and objectives. According to Dolasinski et al (2020), planning for an event is a critical aspect of marketing approach and strategy; and it is the act putting in place all the necessary items and creating awareness about the event through the available media of mass communication. Event planning and marketing are important for establishing strong name for a brand both for current clients and future customers (Carvache-Franco et al, 2019). Cassar, Whitfield and Chapman (2020) further concur that event planning is a lively, dynamic and appealing field of study that is primarily concerned with organising and coordinating different types of events depending on their scope and interest area. An event planner has the responsibility of meeting with potential and existing clients to know their needs; create detailed plans, budgets, timelines, and resources for events; as well as communicate effectively these plans to the target market (Cassar, Whitfield and Chapman, 2020).

Review of Empirical Studies

This segment of the literature reviews studies by scholars and other literature on the benefits and challenges of the use of social media for event planning and promotion. To start with, Koroma (2018) investigated the effectiveness of the employment of social media to achieve the aim of marketing. The study employed both the quantitative and qualitative research designs. The study found that social media was instrumental in the marketing of organisations’ goods and services. It equally established that clients do get to their organisations quickly and easily

through social media. The study concluded that social media platforms have become important marketing communication tools, despite challenges such as issues around creating of content, managing time and clients, turning followers into customers, and getting traffic to one's website. Koroma's study recommended that online marketing establishments should continue to tap into the positive aspects of social media for their activities.

The significance of the work of Koroma (2018)) in correlation with the present investigation lies in the shared primary objectives if both studies, which are to enhance the understanding of the role of social media in event planning and promotion. Another area of similarity is that both studies collected data through the employment of the survey research design. Contrastingly, the research being reviewed focused marketing while the current study concentrated on event planning and promotion among corporate organisations in Abuja, Nigeria. Also, the present study adopted the technology determinism theory, whereas the reviewed research was silent on theory.

Rathnakar (2018) did an analysis on the impact of social media on promoting of events. The objectives of the study were to understand the important role that social media was playing in marketing promotion; it impacts of event promotion; social media recent trends in advertising and to explore the various social media platforms used for marketing promotion. Other objectives were to find out the level at which social media is employed for event marketing; and user's response to various advertisements on internet based social media websites; as well as to find out the cons of using social media for event promotion. Quantitative survey and interview research methods were used to obtain data from the respondents. The study's finding revealed that marketing and branding through social media is a very good investment which has consistently increased in value and thereby considered as a safe and secure investment. The study also established that one of the traditional strengths of social media is that it has always been a hedge against inflation. The study further found that promotion of events on social media is challenged by time and other resource management, high competition, issues of fake information from dubious people, feedback and reputation management challenges and dynamic nature of social media audiences. The study concluded that social media has done a remarkably good job in spite of beating inflation and other challenges for years.

The investigation by Rathnakar (2018) and the present one have share nexus and this lies on the fact that the two researches focused on the application of digital communication platforms by hospitality organisations to enhance healthcare delivery. Nevertheless, both studies differ in locations, time, and methodologies. For instance, while the reviewed study was used both quantitative and qualitative research strategies, the current study made use of only the quantitative method.

Furthermore, Paris, Lee and Seery (2010) examined Facebook as social media platform for event promotion for consumers. The objectives of the study were to find out the relationships, influence and employment of Facebook for promoting special events and whether this motivates the consumers to attend the events. The study adopted the technology acceptance model. The study made use of the online survey method of data collection. Finding of the study among others showed that users' trust and expected relationship through Facebook had significant impact on their acceptance of Facebook and their intended offline attitude to be part of events. It was thus, concluded that Facebook use to promote events has great effects on consumers to attend such events.

In spite of the relationship between the research conducted by Paris, Lee and Seery (2010) and the current one in terms of methodology and aim, there is still gap in knowledge that needed to be closed. This is due to the fact that the reviewed work concentrated on Facebook and event planning and promotion, whereas the present study dwelled on the use of all social media platforms. The findings of both studies equally revealed that social media platforms are important in planning and promoting events.

The study by Akinrujumu and Adedara (2024) focused on leveraging fashion exhibition events and social media engagement for the promotion of Nigeria fabric brands. Content analysis and descriptive research methods were utilised. The study concentrated on Lagos, Port Harcourt and Hayati fashion weeks. The study found that social media was important in the promotion

of local Nigerian wears. The finding further revealed that the use of social media had strong impact on creating awareness and buying habits of the customers concerning Nigerian fabric. The study concluded that Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, X, TikTok, YouTube, and other social media platforms were promoting made in Nigeria clothes. The study, therefore recommended the need to promote more made in Nigerian products and services via the social media networking sites.

The reviewed study and the present one have connection in the sense that both researches investigated social media use for promoting and planning events. However, the reviewed study and the current one differ in methodologies, this is because while the present study utilised both quantitative and qualitative research strategies, the reviewed research employed descriptive survey and content analysis method. Also, differences exist in locations and populations. The study by Akinrujomu and Adedara (2024) focused on Lagos, Port Harcourt and Hayati fashion weeks. However, the thrust of this present research is the understanding how and why social media is used by Qmara Vie Planners, Wellington Events, Events by Eki, Events with Anthonia, Pereztopomtch Events, Veez Event Planners and Managers, Innate Arts and Media Ltd, ACE Party Planners and Weds and More Events, Abuja, Nigeria.

Bradley (2021) conducted a study on “The impact of social media marketing in the event industry: Executing a marketing plan industry”. The study’s research objectives were to find out whether social media marketing increased brand loyalty to the SMASH event held at the University of Arkansas; if there was disparity between generational association regarding brand loyalty, social media, and the SMASH at the University of Arkansas; and to determine what forms of social media marketing was most recognised in promoting the SMASH event. Quantitative research approach was used in the study. Findings of the study revealed among others that social media handles were effective in the promotion of SMASH event in the studied university during the COVID-19 period. The study, thus concluded that social media has become imperative in the promotion and marketing of events. It recommended that more studies should be conducted on other institutions, using larger populations.

The significance of the reviewed research in relation to the current research lies in the fact that both studies concentrated on social media and event marketing by hospitality industries. The two investigations also used the quantitative research technique. However, there exist differences especially in locations and populations of studies. The reviewed research was conducted in University of Arkansas; the current study collected data from Qmara Vie Planners, Wellington Events, Events by Eki, Events with Anthonia, Pereztopomtch Events, Veez Event Planners and Managers, Innate Arts and Media Ltd, ACE Party Planners and Weds and More Events, Abuja, Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

Technological determinism theory was used to explain the crux of the study. Marshall McLuhan was the brainchild of this theory, which he propounded in 1962. This theory seeks to establish the causal relationship between technology and the characteristics of the society. Karl Marx posits that technology is deterministic, stating that progress and innovations in technology, particularly in production, serves as the fundamental drivers of human social interactions. According to this viewpoint, social relationships and cultural practices are in due course shaped by the technological foundation of a society. This theory states that technology underpins all human endeavours.

Technological determinism theory operates basically on two hypotheses. The first one explains that the technological advancements of a society are significant in shaping its various modes of existence. The second hypothesis states that transformations in technology of a society serve as the main and most important vehicle for modifying changes in society.

Based on the aforesaid postulations, it can be inferred that technology significantly impacts the diverse decisions human beings make, signifying that changes in any society can be linked to progresses and developments in technology. In addition, traditional media like newspapers, magazines, television and radio, have integrated the Internet to enhance effective distribution of information. The theory points that societal development and advancement is connected to

technological innovations and inventions, which in turn follows an unavoidable course. Marshall McLuhan's investigation states that technology of the media shapes how people in the society think, feel and take actions, pointing out how the society equally operates as technology continues to influence human activities from one technological age to another. This means that, all the actions that we take, the way we feel, learn new things as relate to new media technology is largely linked to messages we receive through the current online media technology.

In the view of Lievrouw and Livingstone (2006) referenced in Odemelam (2024), technological determinism is the belief that technologies have great influence in determining the kind of actions that humans take, which helps in bringing changes to the society. From this position, it is clear that the innovation of social media technology has altered the way information is generated and shared. That is why, local, national and international government, private and non-governmental organisations have social media platforms.

As regards the crux of this research, corporate organisations and event planning establishments make use social media technology platforms to spread messages about their activities. The social media tools also provided the public the avenue to ask questions from corporate firms and event planning companies. This implies that the innovation of social media technology has brought a new dimension to the communication styles of corporate organisations and event planning establishments. Thus, this theory was considered relevant in this study.

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed the quantitative research approach. This research design method was adopted due to the arguments put forward by scholars such as Babbie (2001, p. 259) who emphasizes the value and importance of survey when he notes that "survey is probably the best research method available to the social scientist interested in collecting original data for the purpose of describing a population too large to be observed directly.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised Qmara Vie Planners, Wellington Events, Events by Eki, Events with Anthonia, Pereztopomtch Events, Veez Event Planners and Managers, Innate Arts and Media Ltd, ACE Party Planners and Weds and More Events. The study randomly selected these organisations and event planning establishments across the six Area Councils of Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria. In each of the organisation, a sample size of 10 was selected. The sample size for the study, therefore, was 90.

Validation and Reliability of Data Gathering Instruments

The questionnaire was subjected to two research experts, who vetted to modify the instrument before it was administered to the respondents. The reliability of the instrument was established through the test-retest method using sub-scale of 20 of a similar organisation and after an interval of two weeks, it was re-administered to people who have knowledge of event planning.

Method of Data Collection

The administration of the research instruments was done on a face-to-face basis by the researcher. The justification for the adoption of direct method of data collection was because such technique ensured a high return rate of the questionnaire administered as well as waiting for the respondents to send their responses was avoided in this form of data collection. The collection of data took three weeks.

Method of Data Analysis

In the presentation and analysis of data, the study utilised mean deviation tables of five-point likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD), which the criterion mean was put at 3 is accepted result, while 2 is rejected result Also, percentage and frequency charts were adopted. Afterward, deductive analysis of data was used.

Data Presentation

The researcher distributed 90 copies of questionnaire of which 87 were returned and found useful for analysis. Percentage representation is as illustrated in Figure 1.

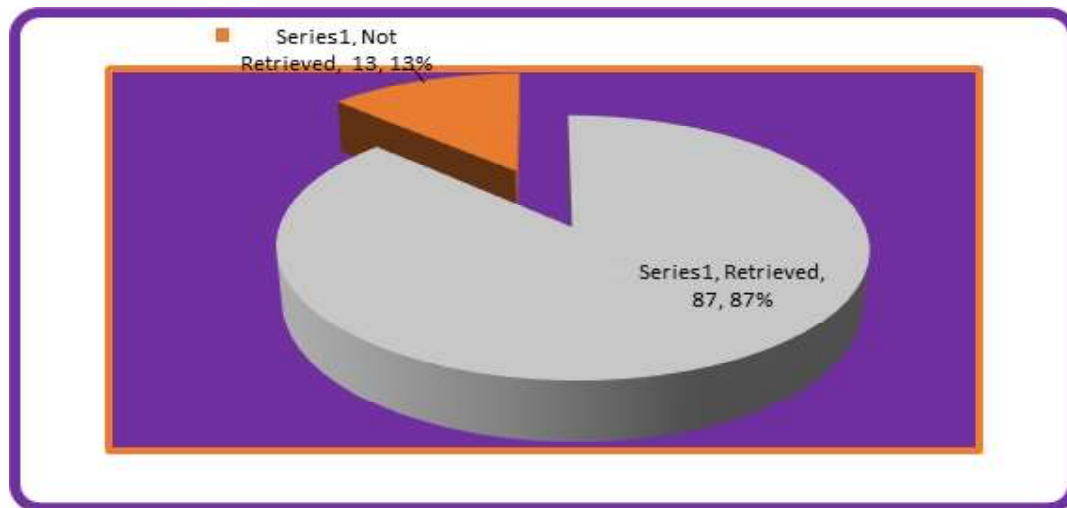


Figure 1: Response Rate Analysis

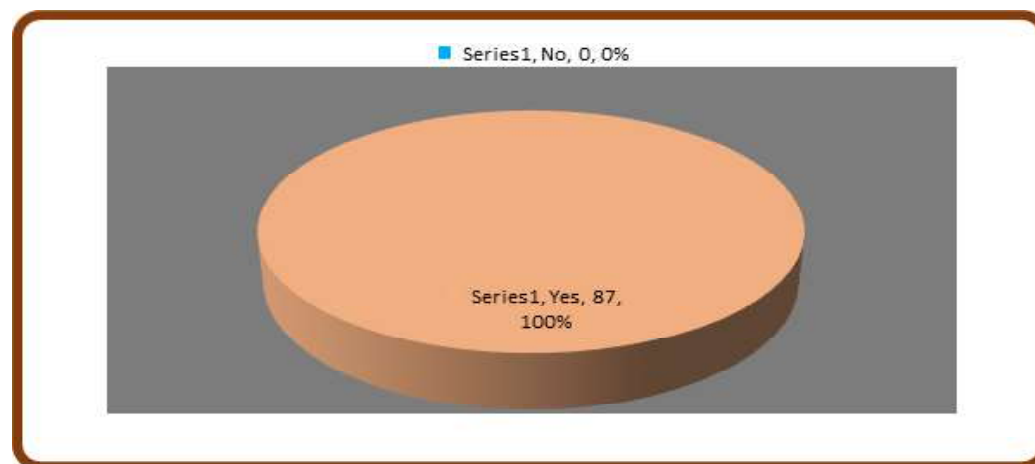


Figure 2: Use of Social Media for Event Planning and Promotion by Corporate Organisations

It is implied by data in Figure 2 that social media has become dominate communication tools for event planners and corporate bodies.

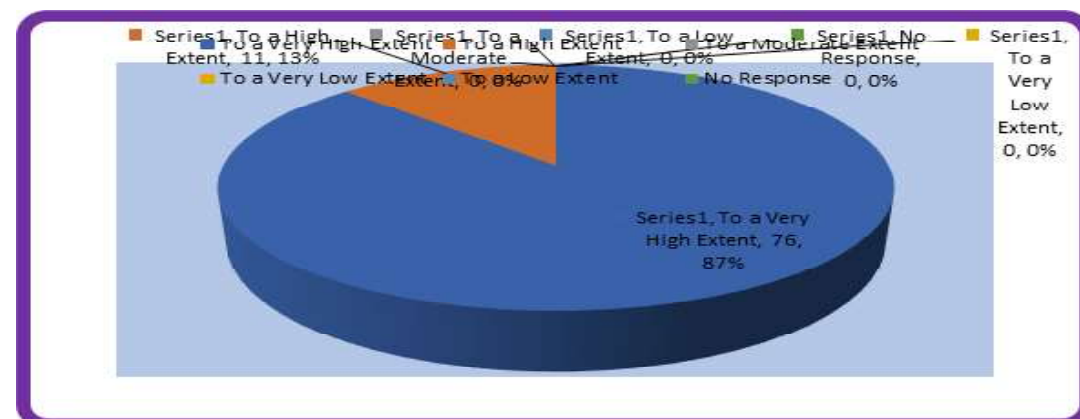


Figure 3: Extent of the Use of Social Media for Event Planning and Promotion

The results suggest that event planners and corporate organisations often use social media to create awareness about their activities.

Table 1: Purpose of Using Social Media for Event Planning and Promotion by Corporate and Event Planning Organisations

Options	AS	A	U	SD	D	Total	Mean Rating	De
Social media assists in optimising brand profiles and capturing the attention of millions within a second	74	13	0	0	0	87	4.8	Acc
Use social media to create unique and exceptional event and corporate image hashtags	76	11	0	0	0	87	4.8	Acc
Use social media like Facebook, WhatsApp and the likes to leverage events and ticketing sales	65	22	0	0	0	87	4.7	Acc
Use social media to craft exceptional, unique and engaging content	66	19	2	0	0	87		Acc
Use social media to collaborate with the right influencers, run contests about your organisation and pairing organic promotional efforts	56	31	0	0	0	87	4.6	Acc
Social media enables your organisation to use live videos on event days	72	15	0	0	0	87	4.8	Acc
Social media also enables your organisation to keep engaging with clients and customers even after staging events	77	10	0	0	0	87	4.8	Acc
Cost-effectiveness of social media in corporate and event planning activities	61	26	0	0	0	87	4.7	Acc
Use social media to build relationships and loyalty with customers, clients and organisations offering seminar services, goods and products	48	39	0	0	0	87	4.5	Acc

The data presented in the Table 1 above indicates that social media has played role in event planning and promotion for corporate organisations.

Table 2: Challenges of the Use of Social Media for Event Planning and Promotion

Options	AS	A	U	SD	D	Total	Mean Rating	Dev
Issues rounding rapid spread of unsubstantiated messages concerning your establishment on social media	46	41	0	0	0	87	4.5	Acc
Too much of information to handle on social media	65	22	0	0	0	87	4.7	Acc
Challenges of knowing the exact and true followership of your activities on social media	59	28	0	0	0	87	4.6	Acc
Competition and noise because you are competing with millions of other posts and promotions for the attention of the audience	70	17	0	0	0	87	4.8	Acc
It requires and lot of time and resources to create and manage engaging content, respond to comments and messages, monitor and measure performance, and stay updated on latest trends and algorithms	62	25	0	0	0	87	4.7	Acc
Challenges of constantly adapting to the changes that social media presents. You have to keep up with the evolving preferences and behaviours of the audience	68	19	0	0	0	87	4.7	Acc
Challenges of considering the other options that your audience has when it comes to discovering and attending events	56	31	0	0	0	87	4.6	Acc

It could be deduced from the finding in Table 2 that despite the huge benefits of using social media for event planning and promotion, it is faced with some challenges.

Discussion of Findings

Upon detailed analysis of data collected, result of the study revealed that social media is extensively used by corporate organisations for event planning and promotion (see Figure 2 above). Further findings further indicated that social media assists in optimising brand profiles and capturing the attention of millions within a second; social media is used to create unique and exceptional event and corporate image hashtags, as well social media like Facebook, WhatsApp and the likes are used to leverage events and ticketing sales. Findings also revealed that social media are used to craft exceptional, unique and engaging content, to collaborate with the right influencers, run contests about your organisation and pairing organic promotional efforts and that social media enables your organisation to use live videos on event days. Other results showed that social media also enables your organisation to keep engaging with clients and customers even after staging events; cost-effectiveness of social media in corporate and event planning activities; and social media are used to build relationships and loyalty with customers, clients and organisations offering seminar services, goods and products (see Table 1 above). Bradley (2021) corroborates that social media handles were effective in the promotion of SMASH event in the studied university during the COVID-19 period. This also justifies that adoption of the technological determinism theory, which states that innovation of social media

technology has brought a new dimension to the communication styles of individuals and organisations.

The study further found that challenges associated with the use of social media for event planning and promotion by corporate organisations to include: Issues rounding rapid spread of unsubstantiated messages concerning your establishment on social media and too much of information to handle on social media. Others are challenges of knowing the exact and true followership of your activities on social media; competition and noise because you are competing with millions of other posts and promotions for the attention of the audience, It requires and lot of time and resources to create and manage engaging content, respond to comments and messages, monitor and measure performance, and stay updated on latest trends and algorithms. Findings further revealed other hindrances to include constantly adapting to the changes that social media presents. You have to keep up with the evolving preferences and behaviours of the audience, and the challenges of considering the other options that your audience has when it comes to discovering and attending events (see Table 2 above). This finding align with an earlier one by Koroma (2018) who found challenges such as issues around creating of content, managing time and clients, turning followers into customers, and getting traffic to one's website.

Conclusion

The crux of the research was to evaluate the use of social media for corporate organisations' event planning and promotion. From the data gathered, the study concluded that social media has become imperative in the business of planning and promoting events by corporate establishments in Abuja, Nigeria. This is due to the fact that social media used to create unique and exceptional event as well as building corporate image for organisations. It was also concluded that in spite of the advantages of the application of social media in event planning and promotion, it faced some challenges such as time consumption, issues of fake information, competition and the dynamic nature of social media audience, among others.

Recommendations

From the conclusion, the study recommends:

1. The continuous and good use of social media for event planning and promotion.
2. Stringent measures should be taken by social media owners to deal decisively with people who use these platforms to spread fake and unsubstantiated information about corporate organisations.

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