

Buzz Marketing Strategies and Brand Performance of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGS) Firms in South-South Zone, Nigeria

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DOI [10.56201/ijebm.v10.no1.2024.pg264.284](https://doi.org/10.56201/ijebm.v10.no1.2024.pg264.284)

Abstract

This study examined Buzz Marketing strategies and Brand Performance of Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGS) Firms in South-South Zone, Nigeria. Its aim was to determine the effects of Events/Interactive and Offline campaigning on Brand Performance of Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGS) Firms in South-South Zone, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consisted of employees of 20 selected Fast-Moving Consumer Goods firms in South South Zone, Nigeria. The sample size of the study was drawn from the total population of two hundred and eighty (280) employees of selected FMCGs firms in South South Zone, Nigeria. Because of the smallness of the population size, the entire population was adopted as the sample size for the study. Subsequently, a structured questionnaire was used to obtain primary data for the study. The data obtained were descriptively analysed while hypotheses testing were executed using simple linear regression. Consequently, the findings of the study revealed that Buzz Marketing strategies tested (Events/Interactive and Offline campaigning) had significant positive effects on Brand Performance of Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGS) Firms in South-South Zone, Nigeria. Furthermore, the study made practical recommendations which could be applied by players in the Fast Moving Consumer Goods industry.

Keywords: *Buzz Marketing strategies, Brand Performance, Fast Moving Consumer Goods Events/Interactive and Offline campaigning*

INTRODUCTION

The concept of marketing has changed drastically due to the complexity of consumer behaviour. Postmodern society has become civilized and people are showing less interest in traditional advertising. This has led to the shift and the next step in the field of marketing is to develop alternatives to improve communication with the target consumers. The diversified behaviour naturally has forced marketing and his men to diversify their approach and therefore develop new techniques that will fit into the changes in technology and consumer behaviour. The question among brand owners is how do we promote the benefits of our new product or great service without spending a huge amount of money in the means of flags of traditional such as TV or print advert? This is a question asked by managers and business owners with tight communication budgets on a regular basis. This search for ingenuity or genius in advertising and its proximity to customers and advertisers was more and more dependent on the technological advancement in the society.

Many administrators, scholars and marketers have become interested in the latest marketing and communication methods and trends that remain in constant renewal with the technological development and the modern business environment. Among these modern marketing methods that have emerged and have been interested in many research and marketing agencies are electronic marketing through the internet, network marketing, digital marketing, and marketing through social media (Goyal, 2018). Today, a new term has appear to us called Buzz Marketing which despite the strangeness of the name has proven to be an effective means of marketing products on the Internet like wildfire (Hashem, 2021). Buzz marketing has been used as a marketing method to promote products that may be strange or not needed by the consumer or that are new to the market and need to be promoted in order to reach individuals and begin to identify them (Hashem, 2021). Buzz marketing is one of these modern marketing methods. It has spread widely across the internet and specifically social media and become the most prominent means to promote the products. It is a strategy used by organizations to create a marketing noise about the products in the target markets and investigate opportunities in achieving a high market share for the company in question (Alwan, 2020).

Buzz marketing is a promotional posture that is driven by word of mouth (WOM), a process where people influence the actions or attitudes of others. It takes WOM one step further by using technology, media and creativity to foster individuals to talk, share and spread information about a product or brand to the point that it is viewed as entertaining, fascinating and newsworthy or simply just so dramatically different from the norm so ultimately, it becomes an enjoyable experience to share. Goodie-Okio (2022) defined buzz marketing as a multifaceted communication process, in which messages are distributed or delivered from buzz agents to buzz targets. This process is characterized by WOM conversations which can be performed online or offline. Hashem (2021) acknowledged that buzz marketing is an indirect marketing method which has successfully been applied to promote the distribution of different products or services.

The Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) firm, also called the consumer packaged goods (CPG) firm, is one of the largest industries worldwide. Fast-Moving Consumer Goods are generally cheap products that have a short shelf life, and purchased by consumers on a regular basis. Profit margins on these products are usually low for retailers, who try to offset this by selling large volumes (Etuk, Anyadighibe, James and Egemba, 2021). Some of the most well-known Fast-Moving Consumer Good companies in the world include Unilever, Dangote Groups and Nestle PLC. The Fast-Moving Consumer Goods firm comprises a large variety of products, with some of the most important categories being food, beverages, personal care products, and home care products. Within these categories, Fast-Moving Consumer Good products are often near-identical, and for this reason price competition between the industries are intense. To boost profitability, companies use marketing and other techniques to set up loyalty to the product, which enables them to charge higher prices. Another important characteristic of the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods sector is that it generally does well in an economic downturn, with consumers rather cutting back on luxury products.

Competition is a buzz-word in new era of globalization. Different companies are trying to satisfy the needs of target consumers by offering innovative products. Fast Moving Consumer Goods are

also playing a vital role in our everyday life. People are also conscious to make better living standard in so many aspects. Now-a-days, in respect of this awareness, Fast-Moving Consumer Goods have already become almost essential needs of the people. At present, more than 65 products covering a range of categories like skin care, hair care, oral care, baby care, fabric care, scorers and male grooming are being produced by different manufacturing companies in Nigeria. These products are also imported from different countries. Considering this, the South South part of Nigeria being the Africa's largest consumer market is seen as the next frontier for fast moving consumer goods. In the midst of the economic downturn and the current currency swap a different light on the prospects of the foods industry, South-South Nigeria still offers an attractive opportunity for firms that have realistic expectations together with the ability to tailor creative strategies in the local context that suits consumer's journeys. However, the economic setbacks and the sensitive nature of consumers have made some firms in the industry wonder if robust growth is still attainable. This comes as a result of the poor performance experienced by some firms in the industry (Goodie-Okio, 2022).

In Nigeria like other parts of the world, various popular marketing strategies are adopted by manufacturers of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods such as Unilever Nigeria Plc, Nestlé Nigeria Plc, Cadbury Nigeria Plc and Promasidor Nigeria Plc (Etuk, Anyadighibe, James and Egemba, 2021). In an effort to enhance their brand performance at marketing fast-moving consumer goods, these manufacturers have implemented a number of strategies such as word of mouth strategies, digital marketing strategies, buzz marketing strategies, viral marketing strategies, social media strategies, among others. These brand performance helps to reflect the brand's desirability and profitability. It's the grand sum of actions pursue by the firms to ensure high brand awareness, positive brand perception, and strong brand recall among target audiences that will all eventually lead to more sales. The performance of a brand points out how successful a brand is in the marketplace and seeks to evaluate the strategic successes of a brand. It was stressed that brand performance describes how well the product or service meets customers' more functional needs. In other words, the performance of a brand is seen in terms of meeting the primary or basic need of the customers. In reality, brands may be on top notch in terms of functionality in the marketplace, and still be lagging behind when returns are expected. These returns can be in the form of customer satisfaction, brand preference, sales volume, return on investment (ROI), profitability etc.

In order to support the brand and make it competitive with other brands in the market, some powerful means that can visualize a firm's campaign and widen its reach by penetrating more favorable markets need to be employed. A firm can use advertisements, referral campaigns, social media campaigns, influencer marketing, as well as buzz marketing in making the brand to be viral. Marketing experts recommend the use of multiple online channels for optimizing the outcomes of your buzz marketing campaign. Using online advertising and marketing tactics will be quite useful in boosting the conversions of your brand. Buzz marketing captures the attention of consumers and media to the point that people talk about the brand because the message is perceived as entertaining, fascinating, and/or newsworthy. Companies that employ buzz marketing hope to increase brand awareness, and increase online traffic, sales, profits as well as their brand performance.

With the world becoming increasingly digital, it is necessary to bridge word of mouth (WOM) with technology (e.g., the Internet, mobile phones, apps, tablets, smart TVs, etc.) and see how the adoption of buzz marketing strategies can help Fast-Moving Consumer Goods firms in the South South part of Nigeria increase their brand performance. An understanding of whether buzz marketing affect brand performance of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods firms could be extremely useful to the development of effective marketing strategies by manufacturers and distributors. It was against this backdrop, the researcher conducted this study to determine the effect of buzz marketing strategies (Events/Interactive and Offline campaigning) on brand performance (Brand Familiarity and Brand Awareness) of fast-moving consumer goods such as processed food, milk, soft drinks, beverages and diapers in South South Zone, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine the effect of Buzz Marketing Strategies on Brand Performance of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods firms in South South Zone, Nigeria. Specifically, the research was designed to:

- i. Determine the effect of Events/Interactive on Brand Familiarity of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods firms in South South Zone, Nigeria.
- ii. Examine the effect of Offline campaigning on Brand Awareness of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods firms in South South Zone, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated from the objectives of the study;

- i. To what extent does Events/Interactive affect Brand Familiarity of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods firms in South South Zone, Nigeria?
- ii. To what extent does Offline Campaigning affect Brand Awareness of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods firms in South South Zone, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

Based on the research objectives and the research questions, the following null hypotheses were formulated for the study.

HO₁: Events/Interactive has no significant effect on Brand Familiarity of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods firms in South South Zone, Nigeria.

HO₂: Offline campaigning has no significant effect on Brand Awareness of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods firms in South South Zone, Nigeria.

Significance of the Study

The output of this study would primarily benefit manufacturers of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods in designing and implementing relevant marketing mix strategies for their specific products so as to sustain their brand performance. The curiosity of scholars and researchers would also be challenged in the area of theorizing so as to expand knowledge in the field of buzz marketing strategies and brand performance. Practically, the implication of the study is seen in providing sound knowledge required by managers in the production of fast moving consumer goods and in ensuring that their brands accepted by consumers to enhance their brand performance. Others that

would also benefited from the outcomes of this study include the general public, academia, students and researchers as the study would offer them the source of literature review and information in their relevant areas of endeavors.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study was considered under the geographical scope, survey scope and contextual scope. Geographically, this study covered only 20 Fast-Moving Consumer Goods firms in South-South, Nigeria. These firms were chosen because the researcher discovered that they are well known brands and they have been in operations for more than 15 years. Also, these firms have been practicing the strategies of buzz marketing in their operations.

Regarding the unit of analysis, which is also the survey scope, this study was limited to only six states in the South South zone of Nigeria was considered and these were- Akwa Ibom State, Bayelsa State, Cross River State, Delta State, Edo State and Rivers State. Branch Managers, Production Managers, Marketing Heads and various Departmental Heads from the 20 Fast-Moving Consumer Good firms under investigation were only considered as the researcher believes they will have a better answer to the questions that will be asked. The 20 Fast-Moving Consumer Good firms considered were Dansa Foods Limited, Yale Foods Ltd, Deli Foods, DuFil Prima Foods, Friesland Campina Wamco Nigeria Plc, OK Foods, La Casera Company Plc, PZ Cussons, Nigerian Breweries, UAC Group, Rites Foods Ltd, Flour Mill, Cadbury, PZ Group, Promasidor Nigeria Limited, CWAY Food and Beverages Nigeria Company Limited, Chi Limited, Nestle Nigeria Plc, Unilever Plc and Dangote Group. This study adopted a study window of five years period (2018-2022) to assess the effect of buzz marketing on brand performance of these firms.

In the case of contextually, the study was domiciled in electronic marketing and the study was limited to determining the effect of buzz marketing strategies on brand performance of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods firms in South South Zone, Nigeria. The buzz marketing strategies considered for this study were Events/Interactive and Offline campaigning. The dimensions of brand performance measured in the study were Brand Familiarity and Brand Preference. The study would not go into discussing issues beyond the major variables or constructs of the study.

Limitation of the Study

Similar to any study, this work has limitations such as the number of respondents, the case study under study and the analytical tools adopted for the study. This study was limited to only 270 respondents in the six states out of thirty-six states in Nigeria. Hence, the results cannot be generalized for other states. Also, only firms of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods were studied. Thus, the result obtained was limited to only Fast-Moving Consumer Goods. Only one analytical tool was adopted for this study which was simple linear regression model.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Buzz Marketing

According to Magomadov (2019), marketing is one of the most flexible fields, as when it comes to marketing a product, the marketer is faced with a large number of marketing options, such as strategies, tools, and plans to perform the task, but with different and varying results. With the advent in technology, marketing options have become more and more numerous, which has provided many opportunities for organizations to market their goods and services in the best and

least expensive way (Melrose, 2018). One of these modern methods of marketing that has met with great acceptance among consumers and marketers is the method of buzzing marketing, and the idea of buzz marketing is that the organization adopts what is possible or available of means, methods, strategies and marketing tools in order to motivate people to speak about a product (Schiniotakis and Divini, 2018). As for Mohr (2017), it was indicated that the idea of buzz marketing is taken from the word "buzzy", meaning the sound that attracts attention or is annoying to the point of drawing attention, and from here he defined buzz marketing as a marketing method aimed at causing a stir and clamor about a product or service that it pushes people to pay attention to it and talk about it either orally or through the transmission of pictures and videos on various social media.

According to Hashem (2021), in recent times marketing methods have differed greatly due to the increase in consumer complexity and the low level of response to traditional advertising methods. Buzz marketing has been taken into account to be a method for viral marketing. Its fundamental goal is spreading messages that may generate buzz, which provides it with stronger chance to travel viral. It influences the actions or attitudes of others. It takes WOM one step further by using technology, media, and creativity to foster individuals to talk, share, and spread information about a product or brand to the point that it is viewed as entertaining, fascinating, and newsworthy or simply just so dramatically different from the norm so ultimately, it becomes an enjoyable experience to share.

However, for this to occur there must be something interesting, clever, amusing, catchy, or remarkable enough about the message such that WOM spreads quickly to create buzz. For the message to go viral, it requires crafty marketing and digital tools to succeed (Mohr, 2017). While buzz marketing resembles the traditional marketing model in targeting audiences through varying media, in the case of the former, the marketer injects the audience with a jaw-dropping message that is so interesting and exciting for it to spread like wildfire. Ultimately, buzz marketing targets a greater number of people than in the case a traditional marketing campaign.

Buzz Marketing Strategies

There are many strategies of buzz marketing which have been adopted in many production and marketing organizations. Some of these strategies includes; Marketing Hype, Online Campaign, Planting Idea, Seeding, Influencers, Motivation, Grants and Rewards, Buzz Campaigning, Viral Contents, Events and Interactive, Buzzing, Offline Campaigning, Rumor Spreading, Sales Promotion and Customer Education. However, for the course of this study, the strategies of buzz marketing adopted to reflex the FMCGs firms are Events and Interactive and Offline Campaigning.

Events/Interactive

Events/Interactive also known as campaigning is one of the oldest Buzz marketing methods. It is done by sponsoring some events or creating out game to prompt purchases of their product. Campaigning is done on sponsoring something that is always an option, but there will always be an event to launch their product. In which the company will explain its product, product specifications, and advantages. It considered crucial for their product promotion to creating an eagerness in people's minds to buy their product (Akim, 2022).

Campaigning that has the potential to gain the attention of the mass and also providing the essential information regarding the product will certainly be contributing to create a buzz and thus make the marketing of the product more effective than traditional marketing. For this, at first, the marketers should try to find out the ongoing trends, especially among the youths and do something creative based on the findings. The audience must see something interesting and out of the box type of ideas during the campaigns, and ultimately, what we can expect to happen through these campaigns, is that people will try to be a part of the hype that will have already been created and inform others about it as well.

Creating noise and commotion about the product is the Buzzing method, where the organization carries out marketing campaigns that may be strange of its kind for the sake of consumer attention, such as Red Bull and the free marketing method in the street, where the organization used young males and females in a car holding the Red Bull brand and distributed the drink for free among pedestrians on the streets. Winston Tobacco Company also carried out an advertising campaign aimed at promoting a specific type of its products through the presence of delegates in smoking places and youth cafes and offering them to exchange the tobacco they used for a new Winston tobacco pack in exchange for testing the product and for free.

Offline Campaigning

Offline campaigning is prompting a product, employing person to person communication. This method consists of services like customer care, feedback, and so on. This method will give satisfaction in the consumer mind that their product is safe, and it also helps the company to improve the product to the next generation based on the customer reviews, and the customer needs (Rosen, 2018). This method is followed in all the companies as mandatory to connect themselves with the customers.

Face-to-face buzz marketing is mainly getting people talk about particular products, brands or trends in a particular environment aimed at boosting sales. Face-to-face buzz marketing is not an innovative technique. Conversations, recommendations and opinions about products and brands are intrinsic to human communication. Buzz is an inherent feature of humans and thus it cannot be affected by any company. It is not governed by any rules, because it refers to genuine/real conversations between consumers (Akim, 2022). Converting buzz into buzz marketing enables companies to undertake deliberate and conscious activities, which will produce the desired result.

With the rise of digital tools, buzz marketing has evolved into a viral marketing technique that maximizes the word-of-mouth potential of a particular brand campaign via technology, whether through conversations or larger scale discussions on social media platforms (Waqas, 2018). However, for buzz marketing to be implemented successfully there must be more than just getting people to talk about a brand. A question, for example, is why certain brands are more buzz worthy than others, both right after people first heard about them and in the mouths that follow. While executing online campaigns, don't get too much easy with that since you still have an audience who might not be a part of the virtual world (Akim, 2022). So, to serve these offline customers in the right way, you have got to take some measures. What you can do in this situation is introducing a totally different type of strategy to market the product like arranging a musical, flash-mobs, and

street-drama and so on. The motive is to attain attention and to do it; you have to come up with something different. Also, apart from doing the marketing activities, you can try to get some customer feedback in a person to person conversation, which will obviously make the customer feel special and attracted to your brand.

Buzz Marketing as a Tool of Marketing Promotion

Marketing communication is the "Promotion", part of the "Marketing Mix" or the "four Ps": Price, Place, Promotion, and Product, a strategy used by a company or individual to reach their target market through diverse communications and promotion is what marketing communications is all about. In recent times there is a paradigm shift to emails, SMS, blogs, television and company websites which have become the trendy way of transmitting the organization's message to the consumers. To reap proper benefits of advertising, organizations have evolve effective communication process which identifies where the investments are being done and what is bringing more return on investment. The integrated marketing communications is a data-driven approach which spots the consumer insights and develops a strategy with the right amalgamation of offline and online channels which should result in a stronger brand-consumer relationship and grown manifolds in recent years due to numerous changes in the advertising and media industry. Choosing the most imperative communication elements is vital for the triumph of company's business and the advertising drive must be proficient crossways all platforms. Once the integrated marketing process is set, the company can harvest prosperous dividends where an effective marketing communication process is the order of the day.

Buzzing also described as 'micro-marketing,' presuppose that a person-to-person marketing message is so powerful that it could potentially reach more people than a broadcast message, if only it is buzzed about in great quantity by people who have very long contact lists and no misgivings about promoting products to anyone who will listen in. Internet has helped firms speed up the Buzz creation process where Instead of people talking in person about the product, word can spread swiftly through social media sites like Facebook, Twitter and popular Blogs. Thus buzz marketing is highly effective for spreading the word about a new product or service. The buzz on the Internet only works, if possible to generate a message that the user wants to go and must be in the followed by the message a special interest or personal satisfaction where the Internet has been instrumental in increase of concept and tools inherent in this type of media used to convey information in a few clicks. Word of mouth between two people has a more credible effect than a print advertisement or TV commercial.

Businesses that hire the services of these buzz marketing agencies and buzz marketers include companies that sell: Cars, Technology, Consumer products, Movies, Beverages, Fashion, Cosmetics, Children's gear. Companies are predicted to spend more of their marketing dollars on encouraging people to talk about their services particularly through Buzz marketing. In each case, companies looked for ways to gain high visibility and personal recommendations through buzz. Buzz marketing has become one of the many elements that a company uses when trying to get a new product out to market. What people have to realize is that it's not a strategy; it's a tactic. Its objective is to transmit verified and sometimes unverifiable information to create a viral effect with the target (O'Leary, and Sheehan 2018).

Concept of Brand Performance

The concept brand is often seen to have a distinct identification. On one part it is seen as a name, a trademark, a symbol, a logo, or an identity, and at the other part, brand includes both tangible and intangible attributes of an organization. According to Goodie-Okio (2022), brand performance is the result of desirability and profitability in a brand. For a brand to be termed successful, customers need to long for or desire to possess a brand in a manner that enables the brand to generate revenue in excess of its expenses.

Brand performance shows the strength of a brand in the market and is also defined as the relative measurement of the success of a brand in the marketplace. It is mirrored in its attainment of a firm's strategy and goals. This can be done through its market share, sales growth or profitability. With this a brand is termed weak when it does not achieve its set objective and strong when objectives are met. It is known that no two firms can have the same brand goals and objectives in a particular period of time, and objectives of a firm can also change from time to time. It can be brand awareness at one point, and top of mind or brand loyalty at another time. For example, 'Brand A' might be gaining awareness while 'Brand B' will be recording massive number of loyal customers. The details here doesn't make 'Brand A' a failure if the objective is to gain awareness at that period of time (Goodie-Okio, 2022).

Determinants of Brand Performance

In measuring brand performance, various dimensions can be adopted. Such as; sales growth, profitability and market share. But in measuring brand performance, the focus of this study was brand awareness and brand familiarity.

Brand Awareness

Goodie- Okio (2022) opined that brand awareness is the probability that consumers recognize the existence and availability of a company's product or services. It goes beyond information on the existence of products, and extends to its availability as well. Brand awareness is the level of familiarity a target audience has with a company's brand, the knowledge they have of their business, products and values. It is expressed as a force that drives the entire narrative of a brand which entails a company's logo, slogan, color, messaging, voice etc. Brand awareness is a basic level of brand knowledge comprising at least, recognition of the brand name. It is thus has to do with ease of access of the brand in memory, and defines how well it is recognized by customers and potential customers. Brand awareness also involves correctly linking the recognized brand to a particular product within a product category (Eno and Udonde, 2022).

Brand awareness is seen as a prerequisite of peoples' buying decisions. It is known that what an individual is aware of is what he thinks of. A company's successful brand awareness indicates a good reputation and acceptability of the brand in the marketplace. While purchasing a product, brand awareness plays an important role since it has control on perceived risk evaluation of consumers as well as the extent of assurance about the purchase decision. While making a purchase decision, there must be a consideration of a brand, without a consideration, there won't be anything to choose (Goodie-Okio, 2022).

Brand Familiarity

Brand familiarity reflects the extent of a consumer's direct and indirect experience with a brand. Brand familiarity captures consumers' brand knowledge structures, that is, the brand associations that exist within a consumer's memory. Although many advertised products are familiar to consumers, many others are unfamiliar, either because they are new to the marketplace or because consumers have not yet been exposed to the brand.

Familiar and unfamiliar brands differ in terms of the knowledge regarding the brand that a consumer has stored in memory. Consumers tend to have a variety of different types of associations for familiar brands. Consumers may have tried or may use a familiar brand, they may have family or friends who have used the brand and told them something about it, they may have seen prior ads or marketing communications for the brand, or they may know how the brand is positioned, packaged, and so on, from the press. Consumers lack many associations for unfamiliar brands because they have not had any of these types of experiences with them.

People more familiar with a brand seem to engage in more confirmation-based processing of information compared with non-familiar people. Familiar brands include many positive associations that lead consumers to judge that the product or firm is trustworthy (Harcourt and Ikegwuru, 2018).

Buzz Marketing and Brand Performance

Buzz marketing has been identified to help in generating large number of contacts even at the initial stage of implementation. This easy flow is possible because contacts are quickly given by influencers who decide to disseminate messages to recipients with same interest. The efficiency of buzz marketing offers direct stimuli, sensory renewal, a direct response to a need and the production of meaning leading to a positive interaction between the consumer and the brand. A target individual make choices on the brands base on the messages they are exposed to. They are said to also make use of means that help in spreading messages. In other words, individuals can seek to accept or reject a message. This will be decisive for the future of the brand (Goodie-Okio, 2022). For this, organizations are required to come up with good buzz if the performance of their brand must be promoted.

It also brings the positive association between buzz marketing and brand awareness. Going further they disclosed that one of the best strategies that can be used to approach customers directly, engage them, and establish an association with them is buzz marketing strategy. Buzz they say, is targeted at getting customers surprised, arousing their curiosity, and getting them talk about the brand beyond their action.

The Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) Sector in Nigeria

The term Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) refers to those retail goods that are generally replaced or fully used up over a short period of time i.e., days, weeks, or months, and one year. This contrasts with durable goods or major appliances such as kitchen appliances, which are generally replaced over a period of several years. The FMCG have a short shelf life, either as a result of high consumer demand or because the product deteriorates rapidly. Some Fast Moving

Consumer Goods includes meat, fruits and vegetables, dairy products and baked goods are highly perishable. An excellent example is a newspaper - every day's newspaper carries different content, making one useless just one day later, necessitating a new purchase every day. Other goods such as alcohol, toiletries, prepackaged foods, soft drinks and cleaning products have high turnover rates.

A major portion of the monthly budget of each household is reserved for Fast Moving Consumer Goods products. The volume of products circulated in the economy against Fast Moving Consumer Goods products is very high, as the number of products the consumer uses, is comparatively very high. In Nigeria, FMCGs account for more than half of all consumers spending, but they tend to be low-involvement purchases. The market size for FMCGs spans around to the population size of 120 million people, based on the FMCG industry analysis in Nigeria of 2019 (Sampson, Udondo and Udoh, 2023). Competition in Fast Moving Consumer Goods sector is very high resulting in high pressure on margins. The introduction of sachets products have made rural people who are traditionally not accustomed for bulk purchase to buy branded Fast Moving Consumer Goods products like Shampoo, nut powders, oils, detergents, cleaning powders and liquids, toothpaste etc., in rural shops. This changed the pattern of buying from traditional products to branded products. Fast-moving consumer goods or consumer packaged goods (CPG) firm are products that are sold quickly and at reasonably low cost. Examples of some of the Non-durable goods are: soft drinks, over-the-counter drugs, toiletries, processed foods and abundant other consumables.

Fast Moving Consumer Goods is probably a typical case of low margin and high volume business. FMCGs visited for the course of this study; Dansa Foods Limited, Yale Foods Ltd, Deli Foods, DuFil Prima Foods, Friesland Campina Wamco Nigeria Plc, OK Foods, La Casera Company Plc, PZ Cussons, Nigerian Breweries, UAC Group, Rites Foods Ltd, Flour Mill, Cadbury, PZ Group, Promasidor Nigeria Limited, CWAY Food and Beverages Nigeria Company Limited, Chi Limited, Nestle Nigeria Plc, Unilever Plc and Dangote Group. These companies were chosen the researcher discovered that they are well known brands and they have been in operations for more than 15 years. Also, these firms have been practicing the strategies of buzz marketing in their organization.

Conceptual Model

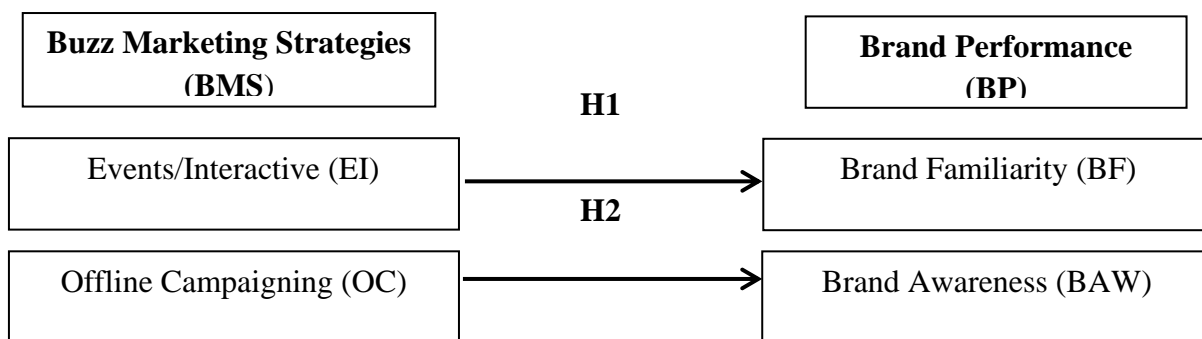


Figure 2.1: A Conceptual Model Showing the Relationship between Buzz Marketing Strategies and Brand Performance of Fast-Moving Consumer Good (FMCGs) in South South, Nigeria.

Source: Researcher's Conceptualization (2023).

Based on the research objectives, the conceptual model was constructed. This model was developed showing buzz marketing strategies Events/Interactive and Offline campaigning as key underpinning towards brand performance. This model is important because it consists of variables that can be controlled by FMCG firms to increase the visible of their brand and increase their performance.

Theoretical Framework

The Uses and Gratifications Theory (Blumler and Katz, 1974)

This theory was propounded by Jay Blumler and Elihu Katz in 1974. It focuses on interactive communication as emphasis is laid on the sender and the message. This theory is used to understand different media ranging from newspaper to internet, and motivations for using a media. It focuses on individual's use and choice of media (Blumler and Katz, 1974), it sees individuals as purposive and active, and that they select media basis of their needs. It seeks to know the reason behind people's attention to media contents and what they derive from it. The theory shows that motivations influence individual behavioral intention through attitude and consumer needs and motivations induces message virility. When individuals are faced with different media choices, they tend to choose the ones that gratify their needs the best, especially for core needs like getting information, entertainment, and social interactions. Today, the significance of uses and gratifications theory is made bare by the appearance of computer-mediated communication.

When there is a good match between media aid content to motivation, consumer needs and interest can be met better since the traits of individuals have an influence on their habits of media use as well as attitudes and expectations about d benefits presented by the media. Blumler and Katz (1974) emphasized that this is a determinant of media choice and consumption. The understanding of the motivations that drives consumer behaviors will help marketers seek effective messages that can please targeted or desired motivations and thereby influence forwarding behaviors that will birth positive brand performance on the long run, given that the content of the buzz marketing campaigns may likely encourage transmission and consumers may vary in their motivations to pass on buzz marketing campaigns.

Review of Empirical Studies

Eno, Udonde and Ibok (2022) conducted a study on crowdfunding and marketing performance of microfinance banks in Akwa Ibom State. The study was carried out in order to assess the relationship between crowdfunding and marketing performance of microfinance banks in Akwa Ibom State. The researcher adopted a survey research technique in the study. The population size 16 microfinance banks within Uyo metropolis of Akwa Ibom State and a sample size of 366 employees was studied. The crowdfunding variables (independent variables) considered in the study were equity-based crowdfunding, reward-based crowdfunding and lending-based crowdfunding. From the findings, it was concluded that there was a positive and significant relationship between crowdfunding and marketing performance of microfinance banks in Akwa Ibom State. In line with this, it was recommended that companies, start-up businesses and financial institutions should adopt various crowdfunding platforms in their businesses as one of the means

of raising finance for the company in order to boost their marketing performance. Only the microfinance banks were considered in the study.

Eze, Nnabuko and Etuk (2014) examined an evaluation of e-word-of-mouth communication on brand equity in Cross River State, Nigeria. The survey research design was employed and data were collected from the customers of selected GSM operators in Nigeria. The ordinary least square was used for the hypotheses and it was discovered that e-WOM influences brand awareness, brand association, perceived brand equity, and brand loyalty. It was therefore recommended that, organizations should spur discussion about their brands through the internet and where a trustworthy source like the social network is used to communicate consumers' experiences; it will contribute in no small measure to brand familiarization, establishment of brand equity and ensure unique association with the brand that gives the required satisfaction, benefit and solution.

Eno and Udonde (2022) studied marketing communications strategy and brand awareness of Smoov chapman drinks in Rivers State. The study examined the relationship between marketing communications strategy and brand awareness. The study adopted an explanatory research design and utilized data collected from three hundred and fifty-four (354) respondents through a structured questionnaire. The study observed that marketing communications strategy associates positively with brand awareness by using the various marketing communications platform of advertising, events and sponsorships and word-of-mouth. The study thus concludes that brand awareness depends on marketing communications strategy and recommends that organizations (especially Smoov chapman drinks) that seek to improve consumers' awareness should build strong brands through effective marketing communication. Only was a Smoov chapman drink. Thus the findings will only be realistic in this brand.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study was conducted using the descriptive research design. The descriptive research design enables the researcher to collect data from all aspect of the variables through a structured questionnaire.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of employees of 20 selected Fast-Moving Consumer Goods firms in South South Zone, Nigeria. Branch Managers, Production Managers, Marketing Heads and various Departmental Heads from the 20 FMCGs firms under investigation were only considered as the researcher believes they will have a better answer to the questions that will be asked. A total target of two hundred and eighty (280) employees were employed. This staff strength was obtained from the records of the FMCGs firms visited in the course of the study.

Sampling and Sample Size Determination

The population of the study consisted of employees of 20 selected Fast-Moving Consumer Goods firms in South South Zone, Nigeria. The sample size of the study was drawn from the total population of two hundred and eighty (280) employees of selected FMCGs firms in South South Zone, Nigeria. Because of the smallness of the population size, the entire population was adopted

as the sample size for the study. All the staff available at the time of the data collection was employed for the study. The sample size of two hundred and eighty (280) respondents were selected for the study. Each FMCG were allocated with 14 copies of questionnaire to be filled by the top administrative staff of the company (14*20= 280). In the absence of the staff, the researcher dropped the research instruments with the company's receptionist who helped administered it to the appropriate staff.

Sampling Procedures

The assembled sample size (280) had the same proportion of individuals as the entire population (280); thus, complete enumeration was used to obtain the data for the study, where all the population represents the sample. Since the researcher attempted to ensure that all the observable characteristics of the population were taken into consideration in the sample.

That means $n=N$

Where;

n = sample size and N = population

Methods of Data Collection

The data collecting method used was the questionnaire. A close-ended questionnaire where the researcher gives the respondents options from where they choose the one or ones that most represent their views, opinions, attitudes or behaviors. The questionnaire was structured using the five-point Likert scale rated as follows:

5 = Very High Extent

4 = High Extent

3 = Moderate Extent

2 = Low Extent

1 = Very Low Extent

Source of Data

Data for this research were collected from primary source. The primary data were obtained with the use of questionnaire, designed to enable respondents express their independent opinions.

Reliability of the Instrument

Using the internal consistency reliability, the research instrument was assessed to ascertain the effect between multiple items in the test that are intended to measure the same construct. The Cronbach Alpha Coefficient with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was adopted with an alpha coefficient benchmark of 0.76 to calculate in terms of average, the inter-correlations among the items measuring the concept. This is shown in table 3.1;

Table 3.1: Result of Reliability Analysis

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Buzz Marketing Strategies	0.856
Events/Interactive	0.876

Offline campaigning	0.911
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Source: SPSS Version 22.0 Output, 2023

Instrument Administration

The questionnaire copies titled Buzz Marketing Strategies and Brand Performance of Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) Firms in South South Zone, Nigeria (BMSBPFF) were distributed to two hundred and eighty (280) employees of selected 20 FMCGs in South South Zone, Nigeria out of which two hundred and seventy (270) copies of questionnaire were successfully retrieved and used for the study. Each FMCG firms has 14 copies of questionnaire to be filled. The survey instrument was divided into two major sections; the first section contains questions about the respondents’ demographic data including gender, age, educational level, employee’s position in the firm and the employee’s duration in the firm while the second section consists of questions on the variables of Buzz Marketing Strategies.

Model Specification

Brand performance (Brand Awareness and Brand Preference) was estimated as a direct function of buzz marketing strategies (Events/Interactive and Offline campaigning). This was expressed in functional equation form as;

$Y = F (X_1, X_2)$ ----- eqn (1)

Recoded to represent the variables, it is presented as;

$BP= F (EI, OC)$ ----- eqn (2)

The model representing the effect of the independent variable ($X_1, X_2,$) on the dependent variable (Y) will be expressed in this form;

$H_{01}: Y = a_0 + b_1X_1 + e$

$H_{02}: Y= a_0+ b_2 X_2 + e$

To represent the variables in use, the equations will be presented as:

$H_{01}: BP= a_0 + b_1 EI + e$

$H_{02}: BP= a_0 + b_2 OC + e$

Where: BP (Y) = Brand performance

EI(X_1) = Events/Interactive

OC(X_2) = Offline Campaigning

e = error term

The above estimated equations are linear function which was used in testing the model separately.

Method of Data Analysis

The questionnaire was edited for consistency and completeness, data were analyzed and explained to suit the objectives. The simple linear regression model was used to analyze the data collected and test the hypotheses stated as well and with the help of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS-version 25). The level of significance was 5%.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

HO₁: Events/Interactive has no significant effect on Brand Familiarity of FMCGs firms in South South, Nigeria.

Table 4.1: Model Summary Showing the Effect of Events/Interactive on Brand Familiarity of FMCGs Firms in South South Zone, Nigeria.

Variables Entered/Removed^a

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Events/Interactive Dimensions ^b	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Familiarity Dimensions

b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary Showing the Effect of Events/Interactive on Brand Familiarity of FMCGs Firms in South South Zone, Nigeria.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.851 ^a	.724	.723	.35221

a. Predictors: (Constant), Events/Interactive Dimensions

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA^a) showing the Effect of Events/Interactive on Brand Familiarity of FMCGs Firms in South South Zone, Nigeria.

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	87.233	1	87.233	703.191	.000 ^b
	Residual	33.246	268	.124		
	Total	120.479	269			

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Familiarity Dimensions

b. Predictors: (Constant), Events/Interactive Dimensions

Coefficients^a showing the Effect of Events/Interactive on Brand Familiarity of FMCGs Firms in South South Zone, Nigeria.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.321	.102		3.148	.000
	Events/Interactive Dimensions	.883	.033	.851	26.518	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Familiarity Dimensions

Source: Researcher's Computation, (2023)

Table 4.1 with R value of 0.851 indicated that there is a significant influence between the dependent and the independent variables. The R-Square value of 0.724 implies that about 72.4% of the variation in Brand Familiarity was explained by Events/Interactive dimensions. The F-calculated value of 703.191 and P-value of 0.000 implies that the model was adequate. That is, the independent variable was able to explain the dependent variable very well. The constant value of 0.321 indicates that keeping independent variable (Events/Interactive dimensions) constant, Brand Familiarity will remain at 0.321. The coefficient of Events/Interactive dimensions was 0.883 which means that a unit change in Events/Interactive dimensions will lead to 0.883 unit change in Brand Familiarity. The P-value of 0.000 means that the effect of Events/Interactive dimensions on Brand Familiarity was statistically significant.

Hypothesis Two

HO₂: Offline Campaigning has no significant effect on Brand Awareness of FMCGs firms in South South, Nigeria.

Table 4.2: Model Summary Showing the Effect of Offline Campaigning on Brand Awareness of FMCGs Firms in South South Zone, Nigeria.

Variables Entered/Removed^a

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Offline Campaigning Dimensions ^b	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Awareness Dimensions

b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary Showing the Effect of Offline Campaigning on Brand Awareness of FMCGs Firms in South South Zone, Nigeria.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.862 ^a	.742	.741	.34026

a. Predictors: (Constant), Offline Campaigning Dimensions

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA^a) showing the Effect of Offline Campaigning on Brand Awareness of FMCGs Firms in South South Zone, Nigeria.

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	89.451	1	89.451	772.611	.000 ^b
	Residual	31.028	268	.116		
	Total	120.479	269			

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Awareness Dimensions

b. Predictors: (Constant), Offline Campaigning Dimensions

Coefficients^a showing the Effect of Offline Campaigning on Brand Awareness of FMCGs Firms in South South Zone, Nigeria.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.137	.104		1.321	.002
Offline Campaigning Dimensions	.973	.035	.862	27.796	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Awareness Dimensions

Source: Researcher’s Computation, (2023)

Table 4.2 with R value of 0.862 indicated that there is a significant influence between the dependent and the independent variables. The R-Square value of 0.742 implies that about 74.2% of the variation in Brand Awareness was explained by offline campaigning dimensions. The F-calculated value of 772.611 and P-value of 0.002 implies that the model was adequate. That is, the independent variable was able to explain the dependent variable very well. The constant value of 0.137 indicates that keeping independent variable (offline campaigning dimensions) constant, Brand Awareness will remain at 0.137. The coefficient of offline campaigning dimensions was 0.973 which means that a unit change in offline campaigning dimensions will lead to 0.973 unit change in Brand Awareness. The P-value of 0.002 means that the effect of offline campaigning dimensions on Brand Awareness was statistically significant.

Discussion of the Findings

The main aim of this study was to examine the effect of Buzz Marketing Strategies on Brand Performance of FMCGs firms in South South, Nigeria using a study window of five years period (2018-2022). The buzz marketing strategies considered for this study were Events/Interactive and Offline Campaigning. The dimensions of brand performance measured in the study Brand Awareness and Brand Preference. To achieve the study objectives, a simple linear regression model was used to test each independent variable against the dependent variable. The major findings revealed were as follows;

- i. The result showed that Events/Interactive significantly affects Brand Familiarity of FMCGs in South South, Nigeria. This implies that creating noise and commotion about a product through events can help increase the Brand Familiarity of FMCGs in South South, Nigeria.
- ii. Offline Campaigning is seen as having a positive effect on Brand Awareness of FMCGs in South South, Nigeria. This means that employing person to person communication helps to create more awareness about a brand.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The main aim of this study was to examine the effect of Buzz Marketing Strategies on Brand Performance of Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) firms in South South Zone, Nigeria using a study window of five years period (2018-2022). The Buzz Marketing Strategies considered for

this study were Events/Interactive and Offline Campaigning. The dimensions of Brand Performance measured in the study were Brand Awareness and Brand Familiarity. Relevant data were collected with the use of questionnaire from the top administrative staff of Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) firms in South South, Nigeria. The data collected were analyzed with the help of a simple linear regression model

From the analysis of data, the independent variables (Events/Interactive and Offline Campaigning) were seen as having a positive and significant effect on the dependent variables (Brand Awareness, and Brand Familiarity). That is, for Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) firms to increase their brand performance all the strategies of Buzz Marketing need to be adopted into their firm's activities.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were made:

- i. Events/Interactive significantly affects Brand Familiarity of Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) in South South Zone, Nigeria.
- ii. Offline Campaigning significantly affects Brand Awareness of Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) in South South Zone, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the above findings, the following recommendations were made;

- i. Based on the significant effect of Events/Interactive on Brand Familiarity of Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) in South South Zone, Nigeria, FMCGs firms need to continually engage in all activities of advertising through events sponsoring and constant interaction with their customers to create brand familiarity with them.
- ii. Based on the positive effect of Offline Campaigning on Brand Awareness of Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) in South South Zone, Nigeria, FMCGs firms need to continue engaging in prompt feedback and effective customer services to their customer by employing brand representatives to carry out person to person communication about their brand in order to keep enjoying brand awareness.

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