Rumor Spreading and Brand Reputation of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State

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Abstract

This study was conducted to examine the effect of rumor spreading on brand reputation of Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. This study adopted a descriptive research design. The population of the study consisted of 270 respondents of FMCGs in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. A purposive sampling technique was adopted by the researchers. Data for the study were collected using structured copies of questionnaire from two hundred and seventy (270) respondents. The research hypothesis was tested using simple regression model at a 5% level of significance. From the data analysis, findings revealed that the rumor spreading significantly affect brand reputation of Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. From the findings, it was concluded that spreading good rumors and bad rumors about one's brand can affect the reputation of the brand among its consumers. Thus, it was recommended that FMCGs firms in Uyo need to encourage the spread of positive rumor about their brands so as to increase the reputation of their brand among its consumers

Keywords: Rumor Spreading, Brand Reputation, Fast Moving Consumer's Goods

INTRODUCTION

The country Nigeria is nominated by Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs). Fast-moving consumer goods or consumer packaged goods (CPG) are products that are sold quickly and at reasonably low cost. They are 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. Examples of some of the Non-durable goods are: soft drinks, over-the-counter drugs, toiletries, processed foods and abundant other consumables. 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 alcohol, toiletries, prepackaged foods, soft drinks and cleaning products. 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 spams around to the population size of 120 million people, based on the FMCG industry analysis in Nigeria of 2019 (Sampson, Udonde and Udoh, 2023).

However, the introduction of technology has shifted the attention of consumers from the traditional means of advertising (mass media marketing) to a more sophisticated means which involves the use of internets. In a conscious attempt to make a purchase decision for FMCGs, consumers have adopted the internet and other online strategies in their consumer brand preference. Competition in Fast Moving Consumer Goods sectors are very high and to make purchases consumers have resorted to gathering information about a brand using online platforms. Some powerful means that can visualize a brand reputation and widen its reach have been employed by consumers. Now, consumers make use referral campaigns, social media campaigns, influencer marketing, as well as rumor spreading to know how reputable a brand is.

The business world has experience a paradigm shift where consumers now rely on information on online platforms about their brands before making purchases. The Online also referred to as "Internet" has changed the world we live in and it has made the business environment to be increasingly dynamic. Its growth in use has led to the decline of the traditional marketing tools of mass media: television, radio, newspapers and magazines to the adoption of online platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram to reach consumers (Etuk and Udonde, 2023a). To reap a proper benefit of this technology, companies are seen conducting a philanthropic marketing and using celebrities all in the mean of building a strong brand reputation for themselves. Internet has helped firms speed up information about their brand where consumers instead of talking to the firm about their product review prefer to spread it swiftly through social media sites like Facebook, Twitter and popular Blogs. Thus, rumor spreading is highly effective strategy for spreading the rumor about a product or service.

Online word of mouth between two people about a firm's product has a more credible effect on a potential customer than a print advertisement or TV commercial. In each case, companies looked for ways to gain high visibility and personal recommendations about their products through rumor spreading by hiring the services social media influencers and celebrities to help spread positive rumors about their brands. Companies are predicted to spending more of their marketing dollars on encouraging people to talk about their services particularly through online platforms.

Rumor spreading has become one of the many elements that consumers use in trying to create a buzz about a product. What firms 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). A questioning phenomenon will arise and intrigue the public concerned on social networks. The brand may then benefit from the rumor and will enjoy a resonance and an increased notoriety, if the rumor is positive or may tend to lose most of its

valuable customers if the rumor is negative. Whether good or bad rumors, the main condition for rumor spreading is to impact on the brand reputation.

One can spread good rumors about particular products and negative ones about its rivals. Negative rumors about other product can create a buzz which can automatically make a consumer to buy the competitive company product to that rumor product. A case in point, in October, 2023, a lady on her Facebook page had made a negative online buzz about a certain Erisco tomato paste product in Nigeria. According to her, this product tasted sugary and unfit for consumption. The brand in question debunked the message and sued her for the negative rumor. To the competitive brands, this was opportunity to create awareness that their own products were safe and fit for consumption.

In rumor spreading while one brand might be at the losing end, the competitive brand tends to be at the winning end. Companies at times pay influencers and celebrities to help them spread positive rumor about their brands all in pursue of creating a good reputation for themselves. To consumers, rumor spreading is the best strategies since they are not being influenced by the companies. A target individual makes choices on the brands base on the messages they are exposed to. In other words, individuals can seek to accept or reject a brand on the bases of people's comment on online platforms. This can be decisive for the future of the brand. For this, organizations are required to come up with good rumor for their brands if their reputation of their brand must be preserved.

Goodie-Okio, (2022) described the reputation of a brand's name as an extrinsic cue that is a feature related to the product. This however does not include the physical composition of the product. Brand reputation changes always, and it is majorly produced by the flow of information from one customer to another. With this flow, Companies and brands having good reputations will likely attract more customers, but a positive reputation can be lost and replaced by a negative one if it fails to accomplish its marketing signals repeatedly. Based on this, the research was conducted to investigate the effect of Rumor spreading on brand reputation of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods firms in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine the effect of Rumor Spreading on Brand Reputation of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Research Questions
Based on the research objective, the research question below was formulated;
To what extent does Rumor Spreading affect Brand Reputation of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods firms in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State?

Research Hypotheses

Based on the research objective and the research question, the null hypothesis was formulated for the study.

HO$_1$:   Rumor Spreading has no significant effect on Brand Reputation of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE
Concept of Rumor Spreading

Rumor is a mean of communication that feeds on word of mouth, and which can take on a very large scale. This method gives a strong amplification with the target and virality on social networks when the message is adapted and efficient. Social media are volatile and difficult to control, it is this effect that rumor marketing is looking for, a propagation of information to make it one of the most shared topics that will promote the success of an original advertising campaign to achieve the greatest diffusion of your advertising message or the expected objectives (O'Leary, and Sheehan 2018).

Rumor spreading can be a useful tool to fight competition. After all, you can spread both good rumors about a brand and bad rumors about someone else's. It especially works to a brand advantage if it builds a good image about a brand but if it tends to spread a bad image about a brand's image, the brand can sue and take a legal action. One can spread good rumors about particular products and negative ones about its rivals. Negative rumors about other product can create a buzz which can automatically make a consumer to buy the competitive company product to that rumor product. A case in point, in October, 2023, a lady on her Facebook page had made a negative online buzz about Erisco tomato paste product in Nigeria. According to her, this product tasted sugary and unfit for consumption. The brand in question had to sue her for the negative rumor while to the competitive brands, this was opportunity to create awareness that their own products were safe and fit for consumption. In rumor spreading while one brand might be at the losing end, the competitive brand tends to be at the winning end.

Companies at times pay influencers and celebrities to help them spread positive rumor about their brands all in pursue of creating a good reputation for themselves. It is the rumor that runs, spreads and carries an idea or "what is being said", which it is difficult to know what is true and what is false.

Rumor spreading as a Tool of Marketing Promotion

Marketing communication is the Promotional part of the Marketing Mix. It is a strategy used by a company or individual to reach their target market through diverse communications. In communication the primary goal is to influence the behaviour of the receiver in some ways (Etuk and Udonde, 2023b). The Online also referred to as "Internet" has changed the world we live in and it has made the business environment to be increasingly dynamic. Its growth in use has led to the decline of the traditional marketing tools of mass media: television, radio, newspapers and magazines to the adoption of online platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram to reach consumers (Etuk and Udonde, 2023a). The business world has experience a paradigm shift where consumers now rely on information on online platforms about a brand before making purchases.

To reap a proper benefit of this technology, companies are seen conducting a philanthropic marketing and using celebrities all in the mean of building a strong brand reputation for themselves. Internet has helped firms speed up information about their brand where consumers instead of talking to the firm about their product review prefer to spread it swiftly through social media sites like Facebook, Twitter and popular Blogs. Thus, rumor spreading is highly effective strategy for spreading the rumor about a product or service.

Online word of mouth between two people about a firm's product has a more credible effect on a potential customer than a print advertisement or TV commercial. In each case, companies looked for ways to gain high visibility and personal recommendations about their products through rumor spreading by hiring the services social media influencers and celebrities to help spread positive rumors about their brands. Companies are predicted to spend more of their marketing dollars on encouraging people to talk about their services particularly through online platforms.

Rumor spreading has become one of the many elements that consumers use in trying to create a buzz about a product. What firms 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). A questioning phenomenon will arise and intrigue the public concerned on social networks. The brand may then benefit from the rumor and will enjoy a resonance and an increased notoriety, if the rumor is positive or may tend to lose most of its valuable customers if the rumor is negative. Whether good or bad rumors, the main condition for rumor spreading is to impact on the brand reputation.

Brand Reputation

Goodie-Okio, (2022) described the reputation of a brand's name as an extrinsic cue that is a feature related to the product. This however does not include the physical composition of the product. Brand reputation changes always, and it is majorly produced by the flow of information from one customer to another. With this flow, Companies and brands having good reputations will likely attract more customers, but a positive reputation can be lost and replaced by a negative one if it fails to accomplish its marketing signals repeatedly.

Academics and practitioners believes in the increasingly importance of brand reputation. A positive reputation must be developed if brands must be successful (Goodie-Okio, 2022). Brand names can be seen as storehouses for firm's reputation since a good performance on one product can often be transferred to another product through the brand name. The overall effect of a brand is influenced by the relative strength of a consumer's positive feelings towards the brand. The effect of the brand is linked to the intensity of the feelings aroused by the brand and can be based on a brand's ubiquity, visibility or functionality. Brand effects can be enhanced through advertising and promotion exposures, in store product display, trial, purchase, consumption and online/offline referral communications (Etuk and Udonde, 2022).

Reputation has become a very popular concept in the business world. This involves whether to believe a company's claims about its brands. According to Goodie-Okio (2022), reputation is the estimation of the consistency over time of an attribute of an entity. A reputable brand is a strong asset to a company; it brings a high degree of loyalty and assurance of stable future sales. It is also a source of demand and lasting attractiveness since the image of superiority and added value is a justification of a premium price. For brands with high reputation, the ultimate goal must be to strengthen their image, or more specifically, to examine which key traits the loyal consumers attribute to the brand and unhealthy brands with low reputation need to focus on fixing image problems.

From the company's perspective, brand reputation remains a long central construct in marketing, it measures the attachment a customer has for a brand and it shows the likelihood of a customer switching to another brand, especially when there are changes in the features and price of a product (Goodie-Okio, 2022). A target individual makes choices on the brands base on the messages they are exposed to. In other words, individuals can seek to accept or reject a brand on the bases of people's comment on online platforms. This can be decisive for the future of the brand. For this, organizations are required to come up with good rumor for their brands if their reputation of their brand must be preserved. To consumers, rumor spreading the best strategies since they are not being influenced by the companies.

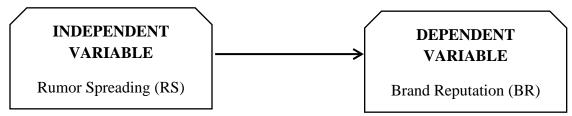**The Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) Sector in Nigeria**
The term Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) refers to those retail goods that are generally replaced or fully used up over a short period of time i.e., days, weeks, or months, and one year. This contrasts with durable goods or major appliances 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 alcohol, toiletries, prepackaged foods, soft drinks and cleaning products.

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 spams around to the population size of 120 million people, based on the FMCG industry analysis in Nigeria of 2019 (Sampson, Udonde and Udoh, 2023).

According to Reddy, Reddy and Kumar (2018), Fast Moving Consumer Goods have a short shelf life either due to high consumer demand or because the product deteriorates (perishes) quickly. Some Fast Moving Consumer Goods such as meat, fruits, vegetables, dairy products and baked goods are highly perishable. Other goods such as alcohol, toiletries, prepackaged foods, soft drinks, and cleaning products comparatively have long time utility. Though the profit margin per unit made on Fast Moving Consumer Goods product is relatively small (more so for retailers than the producers/suppliers), they are usually sold in huge quantities. Thus the collective profit on such goods can be substantial.

For the course of this study, consumers of the following FMCGs were used for of the 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 FMCGs were chosen because they are well known brands and they have been in operations for more than 15 years.

Conceptual Model

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE	DEPENDENT VARIABLE
Rumor Spreading (RS)	Brand Reputation (BR)

Figure 2.1: The Link between Rumor Spreading (RS) and Brand Reputation (BR) of Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs)

Source: Researcher's Conceptualization, (2024)

Theoretical Framework
Diffusion of Innovations Theory (Rogers, 1962)

This theory was propounded by Everett M. Rogers in 1962. It appeared in communication and gives an explanation on how an idea or product gains impetus and spreads through a population social system over a period of time. Being part of the social system, people adopt new ideas, behavior or product as a result of this diffusion. Adoption entails altering previous performances like acquiring a new behavior, buying or using a new product etc. Diffusion is seen to be possible only if individuals perceive ideas, behaviors, or products as new. In a social system, adopting an innovation does not happen simultaneously, it is rather a process where some individuals adopt the innovation more quickly than others.

The diffusion of innovations theory examines the manner new ideas, practices, and objects read among a network of people via interpersonal and mass communication. Four main elements are used to describe this. The first is the innovation that entails idea, practice or object seen as new by people or other units of adoption which are relevant. The second element is the channel through which communication takes place. The third element considered is the time period. Diffusion of innovation is said to happen overtime and among the members of a social system (Rogers, 1962). In their study on the adoption rate of new medical procedures of rural doctors, Rogers (1962) discovered how ideas are passed between social groups, and noted that word of mouth communication can fit into the diffusion model when connected to interpersonal communication and in a case where mass communication is involved.

According to Rogers (1962), diffusion of innovations happens when consumers go through a mental process through which an individual passes from first hearing about an innovation to final adoption. Consumers have the privilege to make their own decisions about the information they receive. This will help them decide whether or not they will adopt the innovation given the meanings and consequences of other decisions. Individuals go through stages of decisions such as problem conservation, analyzing the problem, deciding the courses of action available, taking action, and accepting the consequences that come as a result of those decisions, before they can be seen as individuals who have completed an adoption (Rogers, 1962).

Typically, Consumers adoption rates tend to be different. According to Rogers (1962) they are classified as innovators (about 2.5 percent of the population), early adopter (about 13 percent of the population), early majority (about 34 percent of the population), late majority (about 13 percent of the population), and laggards (about 16 percent of the population). Each of them holds numerous, but different features along the adoption curve. This is an indication that diffusion of innovation is not just a technical matter, but a social process. Ideas are also regarded as innovations, hence the consideration of viral marketing as an innovation. Just as new products n be diffused among consumers, viral marketing can also be diffused among consumers, viral marketing can also be diffused through agencies. Here public relations agencies are consumers trying out viral marketing for the first time. Innovation adoption relies on relative advantage and complexity. Relative advantage refers to the manner in which an adopter sees the innovation to be superior to other previous methods of completing a task. Complexity on the other hand refers to the level of difficulty of use and implementation of the innovation in the perspective of the adopter. These two factors play a large role in deciding if an agency would adopt buzz marketing. In a case where a relative advantage and low complexity is perceived by the practitioner, buzz marketing will be likely adopted, and vice versa.

Review of Empirical Studies
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.

RESEARCH 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 all consumers of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods firms in Uyo Metropolis.

Sampling and Sample Size Determination
Given the largeness of the infinite population, it would be impossible to carry out a study of the whole population. The sample size was determined using the Top-man Formula for sample sizes were the population is finite but not known.

$$n = \frac{Z^2 (pq)}{e^2}$$

Where
n=sample size
Z=value of Z-score associated with the selected degree of confidence (1.96 for 95% Confidence level)
e=estimated standard error (5%)
p=probability of success (0.5)
q=probability of failure (1-p)

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2(0.5)(1-0.5)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{(3.8416)(0.5)(0.5)}{0.0025}$$

n=384.16

Since the sample size cannot be in fraction or decimal, the sample size will be approximated to the nearest whole numbers. Thus, n= 384.16=384 (approximation). Therefore, the sample size of 384 respondents was used, where 384 copies of questionnaire were administered to the consumers of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods firms in Uyo Metropolis.

Sampling Procedures/ Research Instrumentation

Using convenient sampling, 384 respondents were chosen from different locations within Uyo metropolis and its environs. Out of the 384 respondents, 270 copies of questionnaire were successfully retrieved and used for the study.

In conducting this study, a fully structured questionnaire was used as an instrument in order to gather information from the respondents. It consisted of the closed-ended multiple choice questions and Likert-scale questions which enable respondents to express their level of agreement and select the answer that suits them best. 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

Validity of the Instrument
The questionnaire had to undergo face and content validity before being administered on the respondents. The content validity was estimated as the questionnaire items were scrutinized by four senior lecturers in the department of marketing.

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
Brand Reputation	0.856
Rumor Spreading	0.876

Source: SPSS Version 22.0 Output, 2024

Variables and their Measures
The statistical tool used in this study was the simple linear regression model. In this case, the measurement of the variables and the *apriori* expectation for each of the independent variables on the dependent variable were presented on Table 3.2

Table 3.2: Variable Description

S/N	Variable	Abbr.	Measurement	*Apriori* Expectation
1.	Brand Reputation	BP	Five-Point Likert Scale	
2.	Rumor Spreading	RS	Five-Point Likert Scale	Positive

Source: *Researcher's Compilation, (2024)*

Model Specification

Brand Reputation was estimated as a direct function of Rumor Spreading. This was expressed in functional equation form as;

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

Recoded to represent the variables, it was presented as;

$BR = F(RS)$ --- eqn (2)

The model representing the effect of the independent variable (X_1) on the dependent variable (Y) was expressed in this form;

$H_{01}: Y = a_0 + b_1 X_1 + e$

To represent the variables in use, the equations was presented as:

$H_{01}: BR = a_0 + b_1 RS + e$

Where: BR (Y) = Brand Reputation

$RS(X_1)$ = Rumor Spreading

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%.

Decision Criteria

The decision making on the result will depend on the p-value outcome. When the P-value is higher than the level of significance (0.05), the null hypothesis will be rejected. But when the P-value is less than the level of significance (0.05), the null hypothesis will be accepted.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS
Test of Hypotheses
Hypothesis One
HO_1: Rumor Spreading has no significant effect on Brand Reputation of FMCGs in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Table 4.1:   Model Summary Showing the Effect of Rumor Spreading on Brand Reputation of FMCGs in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Variables Entered/Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Rumor Spreading Dimensions[b]	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Reputation Dimensions
b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary showing the Effect of Rumor Spreading on Brand Reputation of FMCGs in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.854[a]	.729	.728	.34919

a. Predictors: (Constant), Rumor Spreading Dimensions

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA[a]) showing the Effect of Rumor Spreading on Brand Reputation of FMCGs in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	87.802	1	87.802	720.087	.000[b]
	Residual	32.678	268	.122		
	Total	120.479	269			

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Reputation Dimensions
b. Predictors: (Constant), Rumor Spreading Dimensions

Coefficients[a] Showing the Effect of Rumor Spreading on Brand Reputation of FMCGs in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.202	.105		1.927	.005
	Rumor Spreading Dimensions	.929	.035	.854	26.834	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Reputation Dimensions
Source: Researcher's Computation, (2023)

The table revealed the R value of 0.854 which indicate that there is a significant influence between the dependent and the independent variables. The R-Square value of 0.729 implies that about 72.9% of the variation in Brand Reputation was explained by rumor spreading dimensions. The F-calculated value of 720.087 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 0.202 indicates that keeping independent variable (rumor spreading dimensions) constant, Brand Reputation will remain at 0.202. The coefficient of rumor spreading dimensions was 0.929 which means that a unit change in rumor spreading dimensions will lead to 0.929 unit change in Brand Reputation. The P-value of 0.005 means that the effect of rumor spreading dimensions on Brand Reputation was statistically significant.

Discussion of the Findings

The main objective of this study was to examine the effect of Rumor Spreading on Brand Reputation of FMCGs in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. To achieve the study objectives, a simple linear regression model was used to test each independent variable against the dependent variable. The findings revealed that Rumor Spreading significantly affects Brand Reputation of FMCGs in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State**.** This implies that spreading good and bad rumors about one's brand can affect the Brand's Reputation.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS
Summary

The main aim of this study was to examine the effect of Rumor Spreading on Brand Reputation of Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) FMCGs in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. The data collected were analyzed with the help of a simple linear regression model. From the analysis of data, the independent variables (Rumor Spreading) had a positive and significant effect on the dependent variables (Brand Reputation). This implies that spreading rumors about a brand can influence the reputation of the brand.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that Rumor Spreading significantly affects Brand Reputation of Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Recommendations

Based on the above findings, it was recommended that FMCGs firms need to attach good reputation or good will to their brand by encouraging the spread of positive rumor about their brands so as to increase their Brand Reputation.

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