

**STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS TOOLS FOR BR
AND BUILDING**

BY

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COMMUNICATION IN CALEB UNIVERSITY, IMOTA, LAGOS.**

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project titled, “**STUDENTS’ PERCEPTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS TOOLS FOR BRAND BUILDING**” was carried out and written by **TAIWO OLUWADAMILARE JUNIOR** with matriculation number **17/** of the department of Mass Communication, College of Arts, Social and Management sciences, Caleb University, Imota Lagos, for the award of Bachelors of Sciences (B. Sc.) degree in Mass Communication.

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DECLARATION

I **TAIWO OLUWADAMILARE JUNIOR** hereby declare that this research work was carried out and written by me for the purpose of acquiring a B. Sc. in Mass Communication and has not been submitted for any other degree program anywhere. This research work is a product of my intellectual investigation and is not copied from any past research work. I also declare that both published and unpublished materials directly used in the research are appropriately and suitably attributed.

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DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to the Almighty God, for his grace, mercies and faithfulness towards the completion of this work. I also dedicate it to everyone who has contributed in one way or the other to the success of this project and throughout my stay in CALEB UNIVERSITY.

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ABSTRACT

Social Media is one of the biggest platforms for the brands to connect with the students as well as build relationships with them. This research work attempts to answer the objectives: look at the perception or the way students see social media as a tool for brand building, trying to see if it can build the reputation of the brand and the way students feel about organizations using social media to build their brands.. the objectives of the study are to ascertain if students are aware that social media can be used to build the reputation of brands, to discover what tools of social media do students feel help companies to build their brands, to discover the ways students are identifying that social media enables an organization to build their brands, to establish the challenges students feel an organization would face in using social media to build their brands. The population for this study were residents of Ikorodu local government area, Lagos State, Nigeria. A total of 400 respondents were selected from the population figure as the sample size. The study revealed that students really see brands that are turning their organizations into brands on social media, the ones who are forcing it, and the ones that are creating organic contents for students to relate to.. social media plays an integral role in the brand building and formulations. Irrespective of variables like, age or respondents, educational qualification of respondents, gender difference and marital status of the students, they all have a perception towards social media tools in relation to brand building. The following recommendations based on the findings and conclusion from this study were made; Organizations should conduct research to know which social media their audience are based on and create content in line with the social media.Organic content helps tremendously to reach the right audience so brands should always know what is trendy and never buy followers.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In a society increasingly influenced by social media and a shift to consumer control of media, brand managers must understand how to effectively use social media in engaging with consumers (Gensler, Völckner, Liu-Thompkins, & Wiertz, 2013).

The means of social networking has taken a drastic leap; while once it meant attending a social function such as a business conference, corporate luncheon or a cocktail event sponsored by the office, today it also means socializing via electronic and online intermediaries, for example – LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat etc. These technological wonders not only allow people to make friends and create new connections but also give a peep at their personal lives via pictures, videos and personal information. According to Berthon and others (2012), social media facilitates the creation of affordable contents, communications and associations and interoperability among the online users. Social media can be differentiated from computer-mediated interactions in three major ways: increased accessibility caused by the transfer of activities from the desktop to the web; greater interaction creating a transfer of value production from the organization to the consumer; and the transfer of power from the organization to the consumers (Okazaki and Taylor 2013).

Social media is a key component of the marketing mix, affecting the relationship between consumers and brands (Gensler et al., 2012). Originally, branding is a strategy used to differentiate

products, services, and companies themselves, in order to build value for both the consumer and the brand owner (Tsiaotso, 2011). Today, branding has developed itself into broader areas including the personal life of individuals. According to Holmberg and Strannegård (2015) “the need to define identities and stand out in branded landscapes is not limited to formal organizations (p.182).”

Branding is therefore no longer exclusively related to the domain of large corporations but can also concern other identities such as non-profit oriented institutions and individuals. (Holmberg and Strannegård, 2015). The theory of the personal brand has been introduced by Tom Peters in 1997. The personal branding literature claims that it has become indispensable regarding the global job market condition that tend to be increasingly competitive or even saturated (Holmberg and Strannegård, 2015; Shepard, 2005). Moreover, the notion of personal brand has become even more important along with the numeric innovations such as the emergence of social medias and macro-environmental modifications over time (Labrecque, Markos and Milne, 2011; Shepard, 2005). In today’s technology driven world, social networking sites have become an avenue where retailers can extend their marketing campaigns to a wider range of consumers. Chi (2011, 46) defines social media marketing as a “connection between brands and consumers, [while] offering a personal channel and currency for user centered networking and social interaction.” The tools and approaches for communicating with customers have changed greatly with the emergence of social media; therefore, businesses must learn how to use social media in a way that is consistent with their business plan (Mangold and Faulds 2009).

Social Media is one of the biggest platforms for the brands to connect with the students as well as build relationships with them. Some brands are majorly patronized by students (E.g.

Telecoms, beverages, fashion lines etc.) So in order for brands to communicate effectively with students, they have to position themselves in a student centric way so as to communicate their messages. Social media has also offered the chance for brands to build and form communities as most brands now have specific promotions for students and discount rates and prices for students too.

The most popular social networking site, Facebook, has over 1.15 billion users according to the American Marketing Association in 2014. Marketers often engage with consumers and provide a great depth of information on Facebook “fan” pages of a brand or company (Weinberg & Pehlivan, 2011). These “fan” pages serve as brand communities for consumers and most times students. (The eBusiness Guide, 2014). Compared with traditional media and direct marketing, social media enables immediate feedback for all relevant parties in this case are students. Marketers can make strategic changes to address this feedback (Obal, Burch, & Kunz, 2011). What makes social media powerful is that it facilitates listening, information gathering, and engagement by both the consumer and brand managers (Weinberg & Pehlivan, 2011). Brands can use social media to communicate information about products, and students can post reviews of the products and questions they may have concerning a product (Obal, Burtch, & Kunz, 2011). From an organizational standpoint, social networks are extremely useful in forming and maintaining relationships with consumers, and should be incorporated into the marketing mix (Kitchen & Burgmann, 2010).

Yan (2011) suggests goals for social media use by a brand: building a sense of membership with the organization, communicate brand values, encourage the audience to engage in a dialogue. In

turn, this dialogue helps the organization to maintain a competitive advantage, inform the brand's vision, assess whether the brand is being communicated properly, and to build positive brand associations and brand awareness (Yan, 2011). The social media marketer must keep consumers engaged in conversation and ultimately create brand advocates and supporters through this conversation (Weinberg and Pehlivan, 2011). Social media use in marketing, however, is not only limited to communication between brands and consumers. According to Mangold and Faulds (2009), the second role of social media is to enable word-of-mouth communication from consumer to consumer. This is crucial for brands, as this word of mouth is much faster and more far-reaching than traditional word of mouth (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Word-of-mouth is a critical component of social media marketing and IMC strategy (Obal, Burch, & Kunz, 2011).

The rationale for this study was motivated by a personal interest in social media and also the desire to investigate the impact and the relationship between social media and brand awareness. The work of Harris and Rae's (2011) titled, "building a personal brand through social networking" is the closest study that looked at social media networks and marketing. Nevertheless, Harris and Rae's work purely focused on building personal image (brand) using social networks. Dutta (2010) also looked at the impact of social media from a personal view in his Harvard business review article. And therefore, since there is little knowledge concerning the impact of social media on awareness from a business level, this study is to investigate the impacts of the social media phenomenon on brand awareness and its implementation challenges. Recently; we have seen the impact of Facebook and the rise of its market value in terms of brand

equity. According to an analyst, the rise of Facebook's market value to \$3.71bn was a result of the social media popularity that has made the company users and advertising revenue increase (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-16789785>).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In today's competitive market social media has dominated the branding, marketing and advertising space, and has led to organizations taking the A quick review of the

Literature reveals that though social media and advertising (Palmer & Lewis: 2007,

Tuten 2008, Webber 2007) has been researched, but not STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS TOOLS FOR BRAND BUILDING. This research work attempts to answer the objectives below by look at the perception or the way students see social media as a tool for brand building, trying to see if it can build the reputation of the brand and the way students feel about organizations using social media to build their brands.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- 1) To ascertain if students are aware that social media can be used to build the reputation of brands?

- 2) To discover what tools of social media do students feel help companies to build their brands?
- 3) To discover the ways students are identifying that social media enables an organization to build their brands?
- 4) To establish the challenges students feel an organization would face in using social media to build their brands?

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To study the above, the research question is therefore broken down into the following:

- 1) Are students aware that social media can be used to build the reputation of brands?
- 2) What tools of social media do students feel help companies to build their brands?
- 3) What are the ways students identify that social media enables an organization to build their brands?
- 4) What are the challenges students feel an organization would face in using social media to build their brands?

1.5 Scope of the study

The main aim of this study was to investigate the perception of Caleb's students towards social media as brand building tools. It was established that companies/individuals are promoting their

products and services on social media via brand building. The study used Caleb students as case study.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The professional significance of this study is that it will help brands understand how how students see and react to their brands.

Academically, this study will serve as an empirical base for future researchers who would want to use this in development of related studies.

Theoretically, this study will provide the empirical explanation, understanding and application of the theory used in this study.

1.7 Operational Definitions of terms

The following terms as defined below were used in the body of this research report accordingly.

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SOCIAL MEDIA:

Social media is a computer-based technology that facilitates the sharing of ideas, thoughts, and information through the building of virtual networks and communities. By design, social media is Internet-based and gives users quick electronic communication of content. Content includes

personal information, documents, videos, and photos. Users engage with social media via a computer, tablet, or smartphone via web-based software or applications. Social media are interactive technologies that allow the creation or sharing/exchange of information, ideas, career interests, and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks. While challenges to the definition of social media arise due to the broad variety of stand-alone and built-in social-media services currently available, there are some common features:

- Social media are interactive Web 2.0 Internet-based applications.
- User-generated content—such as text posts or comments, digital photos or videos, and data generated through all online interactions—is the lifeblood of social media.
- Users create service-specific profiles for the website or app that are designed and maintained by the social-media organization.

Social media helps the development of online social networks by connecting a user's profile with those of other individuals or groups.

Users usually access social media services via web-based apps on desktops and laptops, or download services that offer social media functionality to their mobile devices (e.g., smartphones and tablets). As users engage with these electronic services, they create highly interactive platforms through which individuals, communities, and organizations can share, co-create, discuss, participate, and modify user-generated content or self-curated content posted online. Additionally, social media are used to document memories; learn about and explore things;

advertise oneself; and form friendships along with the growth of ideas from the creation of blogs, podcasts, videos, and gaming sites. This changing relationship between human and technology is the focus of the emerging field of techno self-studies.

The centralization of the web by dominant social media platforms. Some of the most popular social media websites, with over 100 million registered users, include Facebook (and its associated Facebook Messenger), TikTok, WeChat, Instagram, QZone, Weibo, Twitter, Tumblr, Baidu Tieba, and LinkedIn. Depending on interpretation, other popular platforms that are sometimes referred to as social media services include: YouTube, QQ, Quora, Telegram, WhatsApp, LINE, Snapchat, Pinterest, Viber, Reddit, Discord, VK, Microsoft Teams, and more. Wikis are examples of collaborative content creation.

Social media outlets differ from traditional media (e.g., print magazines and newspapers, and TV and radio broadcasting) in a variety of ways, including quality, reach, frequency, usability, immediacy, and permanence. Additionally, social media outlets operate in a dialogic transmission system, i.e., many sources to many receivers, while traditional media outlets operate under a monologic transmission model (i.e., one source to many receivers). For instance, a newspaper is delivered to many subscribers and a radio station broadcasts the same programs to an entire city.

BRAND BUILDING:

Brand building is the process of generating awareness and promotion of the services of a company through direct advertising campaigns or through sponsorship. Brand building strategies

bring consumers closer to the brand and provide value for them so that they can know, feel and experience the brand.

Brand Building is generating awareness, establishing and promoting company using strategies and tactics. In other words brand building is enhancing brand equity using advertising campaigns and promotional strategies. Branding is crucial aspect of company because it is the visual voice of the company. Goal of brand building is creating a unique image about the company. Brand building can be initiated with a well thought brand identity which can help create a strong brand image which goes a long way in consolidating the brand.

Brand Building comprises of creating value to consumers that how consumers feel, think and know about your brand. There are three popular brands known-

- Product brand: A physical product or items or goods are a product brand. Brand building is ensuring a good quality product is given to the customer along with good brand visibility, packaging, warranty etc. All these cumulatively help in brand building. Example of product brands are Adidas, Rolex etc
- Service Brand: A non-tangible offering is a service brand like telecom service, ecommerce etc. In this case, brand building is most dependent on the experience that a customer gets. Example of service brands are sweet sensation, Chicken republic etc
- Retail Brand: Retail brands are a combination of service & product i.e. products are sold through a service offering. Hence brand building has to ensure good customer experience as well as high quality products. Example of retail brands are Justrite, ShopRite etc.

STUDENTS:

A student is primarily a person enrolled in a school or other educational institution and who is under learning with goals of acquiring knowledge, developing professions and achieving employment at desired field. In the broader sense, a student is anyone who applies themselves to the intensive intellectual engagement with some matter necessary to master it as part of some practical affair in which such mastery is basic or decisive.

In Nigeria, education is classified into four system known as a 6-3-3-4 system of education. It implies six years in primary school, three years in junior secondary, three years in senior secondary and four years in the university. However, the number of years to be spent in university is mostly determined by the course of study. Some courses have longer study length than others. Those in primary school are often referred to as pupils. Those in university, as well as those in secondary school, are referred to as students.

PERCEPTION:

Perception (from the Latin perceptio, meaning gathering or receiving) is the organization, identification, and interpretation of sensory information in order to represent and understand the presented information or environment.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter basically reviews some of the related research work on this subject with a view to knowing the state of knowledge in the area and sharpening the focus of this research. Here, we are going to be breaking down the conceptual review.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

A theory presents a systematic way of understanding events or situations. It is a set of concepts, definitions, and propositions that explain or predict these events or situations by illustrating the relationships between variables. Theories must be applicable to a broad variety of situations and they are by nature, abstract.

According to Swanson 2013, Theories are formulated to explain, predict and understand phenomena, and in many cases challenge and extend existing knowledge within the limits of critical bounding assumptions, while a theoretical framework is the structure that can hold or support the theory of a research study.

2.1.1 SOCIAL ACTION THEORY:

The basic concept was primarily developed in the non-positivist theory of Max Weber to observe how human behaviors relate to cause and effect in the social realm. For Weber, sociology is the study of society and behavior and must therefore look at the heart of interaction. The social action theory was founded by Max Weber. There are two main types of sociological theories; the

first is the structural or macro theory while the other is social action, interpretive or micro perspectives. At the two ends of the argument as to which is a better theory are Durkheim, the founding father of functionalism, and Weber, the mastermind behind social action theory.

Social action, also known as Weberian social action, refers to an act which takes into the account of actions and reactions of individuals (or 'agents'). According to Max Weber, an Action is 'social' if the acting individual takes account of the behavior of others and is thereby oriented in its course. (Weber 1922).

Unlike structural theorists, social action theorists argue that people's behavior and life-chances are not determined by their social background. Instead, social action theorists emphasize the role of the active individual and interactions between people in shaping personal identity and in turn the wider society. In order to understand human action, we need to uncover the individual's own motives for acting.

In social action theory:

Audiences are neither hapless nor passive, media audiences participate actively in mediated communication; they construct meanings from the content they perceive. Social action theory sees communication interaction in terms of actors' intent, receivers' interpretations, and message content, meaning is not delivered in the communication process; rather it is constructed within it.

Each communication act generates at least three separate and potentially different sites of this construction.

Using Social Action Theory, it basically:

Determine the intentions of the media creator (e.g., producer, actor, and writer).

Examine the media content (visual, verbal, musical.)

Identify possible receiver interpretations.

Assess the possible effects on receivers (including you).

This theory is useful for my project because it accesses and shows that the audience/or receivers are not hapless I.e. when an information gets to them, they participate actively, and draw out meaning from whatever content they perceive. This simply means that whenever a content is shown to an audience, in this case the content being a celebrity doing a product advertisement, the audience critically looks at the advert or the commercial, breaks it down, to his/her own understanding then properly react to its according to his/her own interpretation.

2.1.2 CULTIVATION THEORY

The cultivation theory was developed by Gerbner and Gross (1976) to examine the media 's effects on its consumers (In the case of this study, it would be social media and students to replace media and consumers).

Morgan & Shanahan (1996) note that the frequent viewing of television portrayals translates into viewers cultivating the information gleaned from the television and integrating it into their existing perceptions and judgements. Today, despite the rapid changes in the media and its consumption, namely the growth of social media, scholars still note that television still affects social reality (Reizer&Hetsroni, 2014). While television may still be one of the most common mediums of communication in the world, as well as in Nigeria, the ever-increasing growth in the use of social media should not be discounted. To this end, Beullens, Roe, & Van den Bulck

(2012) note that the cultivation effect of online media should also be studied due to their increasingly pervasive nature in society.

The emergence of social media has also led to changes in the consumption of the media. Since the internet, and by extension, social media, can provide television content through video on demand platforms for instance, digital media's cultivation ability should be discussed at length (Lau, 2015). This is since there has not been much scholarship into the relationship between the theory and internet use (Lau, 2015).

In a study of media use and behavioral intention, Lau (2015), notes that there is a strong relationship between the use of online media and behavioral intentions. Simply put, if one uses the internet extensively, they are bound to form opinions and behavioral patterns based of what they have been seeing online. They can also attach themselves as students to a brand after seeing them extensively online.

This theory is important to the study because not only will it help us to investigate the ways in which social media use has helped to create student's society of brands.

2.2.3 USES AND GRATIFICATION THEORY:

The theory focuses on the relationship between the medium and the audience (Herzog 1944; Katz 1959; Clapper, 1963; Lin 1999; Stafford, Stafford, & Shade, 2004). Uses and gratification theory (UGT) is an audience-centered approach that focuses on what people do with media, as opposed to what media does to people. It is an approach to understanding why and how people actively seek out specific media to satisfy specific needs. UGT is an audience-centered approach to understanding mass communication. UGT focuses on questioning what people do with the

media. It postulates that media is a highly available product and the audiences are the consumers of the same product. It assumes that audience members are not passive consumers of media. Rather, the audience has power over their media consumption and assumes an active role in interpreting and integrating media into their own lives. Unlike other theoretical perspectives, UGT holds that audiences are responsible for choosing media to meet their desires and needs to achieve gratification. It can be said that the theory argues what people do with media rather than what media does to people. Also, this theory is in contradiction to the Magic Bullet theory, which states that the audience is passive. This theory has a user/audience-centered approach. Even for communication, especially interpersonal, people refer to the media for the topic to discuss among themselves. By referring the media, they gain more knowledge and exposure to the world beyond their limited eyesight. (Charney & Greenberg, 2002; Rubin, 1981).

This theory would then imply that the media compete against other information sources for viewers' gratification. This theory relates to my topic. So using this theory, it would help me prove that the audience in this case are the students are actually acutely aware of how brands use these platforms, and are capable of forming their own opinions beyond the influences of social media.

2.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A conceptual framework represents the researcher's synthesis of literature on how to explain a phenomenon. It maps out the actions required in the course of the study given his previous knowledge of other researchers' point of view and his observations on the subject of research.

In other words, the conceptual framework is the researcher's understanding of how the particular variables in his study connect with each other (Regoniel 2015). Thus, it identifies the variables required in the research investigation.

2.3.1 EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS ON BRANDS

Social media is considered as one of the most recent and significant E-marketing tools in the current time. Social media provides accessibility to customers with the purpose of knowing their interests and needs as well as affecting their purchasing decisions. Social media is defined as the websites that connect millions of users from different parts over the world who share same interests, point of view and hobbies. YouTube, Twitter and Facebook are the best examples on social media that is popular for a large proportion of consumers. So, they are used for the exchange of ideas and reviews of a particular product, service or a certain brand to gather information and ideas formation as well as making the right purchasing decision. Therefore, social media are considered as one of the modern electronic marketing tools which are different from other means of traditional marketing, therefore marketing via social media nowadays is the broadest, fastest, cheapest and most effective marketing channel where the consumer can obtain information and features of interesting goods easily with the possibility of completing the purchasing & sale process without the buyer's need to go to goods and items place. Therefore, the effects of social media on brands are:

- Social media is effective and inexpensive. Social media marketing is very important for small businesses because of its inexpensiveness and ability to reach large number of targeted audiences within less time and very little efforts.
- Branding can be done effectively on social media. Social media marketing is the best tool for small businesses for branding. According to Social media today, 83% of customers prefer to connect to the brand on Facebook and 53% on Twitter.
- Customer acquisition is easy on social media. With more than half of the world's population registered with different social media platforms, the chances of acquiring customers are fairly high on social media websites. There are approximately 1.74 billion social media users according to eMarketer and social media websites play a crucial role in acquiring customers to the businesses.
- Social media enables direct customer interaction. Through social media, businesses can interact with customers directly. Small businesses can attract customers by engaging them with some interactive methods like Question and Answers, Polls, etc.

2.3.2 BRANDING BUILDING

Building branding is a new marketing concept related to the marketing strategies that a person adopts in order to promote his or her major personal characteristics. Personal branding is heavily used by celebrities, politicians, and people who look for social integration, support or uniqueness. The personal branding phenomenon is a relatively new phenomenon for western societies, lately studied by sociologists as well as marketers. As a new social phenomenon and

marketing construct, the academic marketing literature examining it is still under-developed. The present paper aims to present a literature review of the popular press and academic marketing perspective and attempts to define the construct and set a research agenda to identify the variables of the personal branding construct.

Branding, one of the relatively recent additions to the distinct fields of marketing, was practiced but largely ignored by academics for a long time; was pronounced dead, or as good as dead in 1993 (Klein 2002) but it eventually survived. Despite the fact that it is growing as a discipline faster than ever, there is still a considerable gap in branding theory and application development (Hughes 2007). As Keller (2006) put it, academics take the ‘small b’ approach as opposed to the ‘large B’ one practitioners adopt.

So far, the personal branding literature has been summarily dismissed on the grounds of low quality and described as a “regimented diet of canned optimism and connect-the-dot formulas” (Conley 2008) backed by questionable quantities of substance and sold to “naive customers” by “experts [that] range somewhere between corny and culty” (Conley 2008). The branding of inanimate objects and corporation’s literature has also been found to have been built on paradigmatic examples more than theory thus resembling “mythology” rather than “science” (Kay 2006).

Personal branding as an activity has also been criticized on moral grounds and described as a blatant manifestation of the rampant cynicism of commercialism (Klein 2002; Rosen 2004; Lair, Sullivan et al. 2005; Conley 2008; Klein 2008) that equates “complex human beings” with “something like Kleenex” (Conley 2008) thus resulting in “a crude attempt to provide regulated forms of self-exposure” (Rosen 2004). The personal branding movement has also been dismissed

as a valorized imposition of hyper-individuality and image over substance and self-awareness (Lair, Sullivan et al. 2005). Its product, the branded self, has been described as “one of the more cynical 2 products” of labour in the post-Fordism economy and equated to “a form of self-presentation singularly focused on attracting attention and acquiring cultural and monetary value” (Hearn 2008).

Morality-bound arguments against mainstream branding have also been put forward. Branding has been aphorized as based on the assumption that “the customer is not intelligent or even human” (Bazos 2009), or in a more colourful way as the “industrial-strength Raid” with which evil multinationals spray innocent cockroach-minded consumers (Klein 2002).

At a first glance, the imagery and narratives of the popular personal branding literature point towards the easy conclusion that it is but a fad stemming from the frantic attempts of marketers to create jobs for themselves and their unemployed colleagues in a stagnant world economy which is being violently restructured without an obvious vision of the form that will emerge and the role marketing will play in the emergent plot.

It is, indeed, hard to take a method of managing ones’ self and life advertised as the one and only guaranteed way of achieving not only professional success (Aruda 2003; Flemings 2007; Glasscock 2008) but also happiness (Montoya and Vandehey 2002; Hodgkinson 2005; Al Reis in his Foreword to Kaputa 2006; Honaman 2008; Mobray 2009; Rampersad 2009; Schawbel 2009) seriously.

Hughes (2007) simply equates people to goods or services and proposes that “the current American Marketing Association definition of a brand is simply be (sic) extended to include people” thus concluding that a “personal brand therefore would also easily identify a product or service and is a seller’s promise to deliver consistently a specific set of features, benefits and services to buyers” through its “four important characteristics; attributes, benefits, values and personality”. Such an approach implies that people have the means and the knowledge to define and research their markets to great detail as they will need to assess not only existing and explicit (as in a job advertisement) but also emerging needs and desired benefits.

It also assumed that the person to be sold can easily be fashioned to display the attributes desired by a correctly segmented target market and clearly positioned as such in relation to all competing persons. The impossibility of achieving such a task is evident since the fundamental assumption of full information about the market and the competition, which is hard to meet with respect to products, is totally unsustainable in the fluid labour or fame markets for individuals. For these reasons, as well as on the basis of a moral objection (Conley 2008) to the “commodification” of humans (Lair, Sullivan et al. 2005), product branding appears to be an inappropriate framework to be applied to people.

Personal Branding has been described as an “arcane activity” (Shepherd 2005), a strategic process (Montoya and Vandehey 2002) “a programmatic approach” and a proactive response (Lair, Sullivan et al. 2005 quoted in Hughes. 2007) or an indeterminate kind of “proactive behavior” (Mobray 2009) and a “powerful tool” (Post 2005). It is here proposed that labelling it as just a ‘process’ (Schawbel 2009) is parsimonious. Like any process, it has inputs, a method and intended outcomes.

2.3.3 SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media has gained a lot of popularity over the past few years and as a result of this popularity, other traditional Media have experienced decline in both business and popularity. Palmer and Lewis (2009) argued that the main stream media channels have faced many challenges in recent times that have led to closure with TV facing down turn in their profits levels. Palmer and Lewis are correlating the performance of these traditional channels to the rise of social media in marketing and brand management. As a result of completion and tough economic environment, companies have tightened their budgets especially advertising budgets which have shifted to online channels. According to Forrester research study (2011) by Ernst.J, David M. and Cooperstein, Dernoga M, found that companies (brands) are gradually shifting their advertising priorities to align better with today's buyers. Today's buyers are tech savvy and social media maniacs. Therefore it is the proliferation of the social media network services in brand management and marketing that bring us to the attention of social media networks. First, the researcher will define social media and then outline those networks that are driving the debate. 17 In the last couple of years, different kind of social media networking services have emerged and currently there are innumerable social media channels that connect people to each

other. The most popular social network sites that are widely used are; Face book, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and Flickr. In fact, Facebook, twitter and YouTube are the most common channels companies use in their online marketing for creating brand awareness or just engaging with the customers. Though LinkedIn is also widely used by companies, it mainly targets to establish relationship on a professional perspective and slowly becoming B2B channel compared to other three networking sites mentioned above. However for the purpose of this study, only five most popular social networking services are reviewed.

2.1.1 Facebook

Facebook was launched in 2004 and have over 800 million active users (active in September 2011), of which 350 million users access Facebook through mobile devices. An average Facebook user is estimated to have at least 130 friends and is connected to 80 community pages, groups and events. There are more than 70 languages available on the site. Its main use is to establish and maintain relationships in work related situations, in political affiliations or just among friends and families (<http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics>). Facebook has become the most powerful tool for marketing today. In April 2011, the company launched a new service for marketers and interested creative agencies which is a form of online platform (Portal) that allows marketers and creative design agencies to build brand promotions on Facebook. Facebook is now a direct competitor of Google in online advertising and this new service has made it possible for companies such as Financial Times and ABC News to create dynamic commercial graphics or advertisement. Twitter was created in March 2006 by Jack Dorsey and launched that same year in July. Unlike Facebook where one can have friends to share different things, with twitter one has to get connected to the latest information on what they find interesting. One has to find the public stream that interests them and follow in the conversations. Each tweet is 140 characters in length. One can still follow the tweets regardless of whether they do not tweet at all, and also

there is no limit as to how many tweets one can send within a given day.

(<http://twitter.com/about>, 2011) Through Twitter businesses now share their information or news faster to a large audience online following the company, and from a strategic stand point, this has helped companies that uses Twitter to position their brands and also gather business insight through feedback to boost their market intelligence in order to accurately target customers with relevant services and products or enhance business relationships. Twitter has helped lift brands, enhance customer relationship marketing and also improved direct sales by reaching out directly to the engaged audience on the platform (<http://twitter.com/about>, 2012).

2.1.3 YouTube

YouTube was created in February 2005 as a video sharing website on which users can upload, view and share videos as an informative and inspirational to others across the globe. The company uses Adobe Flash Video and HTML5 technology to display a wide variety of user-generated video content. YouTube acts as a platform for distributing contents by creators and advertisers as well. Over 3 billion videos are viewed every day and there are more than 400 million views per day on mobile devices (2011). It is estimated that more than 800 million people visit YouTube every month to watch and share contents. (youtube.com, 2011) Just as the adage goes a picture is worth a thousand words, pictures have an impact in creating an image in the mind of a person. This has given YouTube a competitive advantage in online marketing; all in all more businesses are now using YouTube for their marketing advertising campaigns.

Various companies 19 with outstanding video campaigns have had their breakthroughs in this form of brand marketing, especially when the videos have gone viral. Most of these viral successes can be attributed to expertise and creativity of the brand marketer to entertain the audience hence making the public share the videos with others.

2.1.4 LinkedIn

LinkedIn started in 2002, but was officially launched on May 5, 2003. Many professionals have joined LinkedIn

in recent years to share knowledge and insight in more than one million LinkedIn groups. The company operates the world's largest professional network on the internet with more than 135 million members in over 200 countries and territories. It is estimated that more than 2 million companies have LinkedIn Company Pages (as of November, 2011). There are 14 languages currently available: French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, English and Turkish. (linkedin.com, 2011) In LinkedIn, companies have access to a wealth of information that are mostly user provided through their profile data i.e. company name, job title, size of the company and LinkedIn uses this information for advertising targeted to towards members. Companies pay some fees to advertise their products and services to particular LinkedIn members or affiliation groups on LinkedIn. The classic example is the success of Cathay Pacific Airway through their LinkedIn company page sends messages to the people who are following their company on LinkedIn asking them to recommend the company. Through this, the company has been able to increase its brand awareness among target market segment (marketing.linkedin.com, 2012).

2.1.5 Flickr

This is a photo sharing and video hosting website that was created by Ludicorp in 2004 and acquired by Yahoo! in 2005. It is available in ten languages and has a total of 51 million registered members and 80 million unique visitors (June 2011). Unlike the above mentioned networking sites that offer only one type of account, Flickr offers two types of accounts, Free and Pro. Free and pro account differ in the number of photo upload allowance: With Free account, one is allowed to upload 300 MB of images and two videos per month, where as Pro account users can upload an unlimited number of images and videos every month and receive unlimited bandwidth and storage. This networking system is compounded by different groups. Any member of Flickr is permitted to start a group which he can monitor and set restrictions for.

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flickr>). It is against terms of service for businesses to use Flickr for the purpose of advertising, yet still businesses can get indirect marketing exposure via Flickr. A company can use its website address as their flickr screen name, the screen name will then be attached to every photo upload and every message (this is an opportunity to mention business name and website address) posted to the group discussion. It is also possible to upload quality photos related the business and writing appropriate text describing each photo but avoiding hard sell that is prohibited

2.3.4 MARKETING THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

In broader terms the topic of the study is students' perception of social media as tools for brand building, but it is first important to define the terminology "marketing" as it means to sell, which is what brands are trying to do. Therefore according to the American Marketing Association, Marketing is an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders. (Marketingpower.com 2012). In the definition above, the key words are "organizational function, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers". From an organization perspective, the aspects of these processes referred in the definition above are brand awareness, advertising, public relations etc. Therefore for the sake of this study, we focus only on one branch of marketing which is brand awareness or brand management as a process of communicating or delivering value to customers as already shown in the definition of marketing by the American Marketing Association. Chaffey et al. (2003) thus describe internet marketing as the application

of the Internet and related digital technologies to achieve marketing objectives (Chaffey et al. 2003, 1). These marketing objectives can be realized by use of social media networks which is a subset of internet application. Social media networking platforms serve as a tool for marketers (Qualman 2010: 28). This implies that Facebook, twitter etc. are means of accomplishing marketing strategies through the internet. It is therefore imperative for marketers to find suitable platforms to suite their marketing objectives. A good marketing objective enables marketers to acquire new customers, while retaining the already existing ones through customer satisfaction. Chaffey et al. (2004) further outline 3 points on how the internet can be used to achieve the „processes“

- Identifying how the internet can be used for marketing research to find out customers' needs and wants
- Anticipating the online revenue contribution
- Customer satisfaction through electronic channel; satisfaction here refers to the site easy usability, adequate performance, and identifying what the standard associated customer service is. (Chaffey et al. 2004, 318)

Online marketing has a plethora of strengths; the speed of accessing the information is very first and extremely cost effective, besides that internet has no geographical boundaries. In addition to

cost effectiveness, the marketer likewise has the opportunity to research new suppliers at a fraction of previous search costs. In other words all the marketing research conducted through internet is very cost effective (Gay et al. 2007, 129). On the other hand Gay et al. (2007) are quick to point out some major weakness that online marketing face. The first problem is that cultural and language differences may present difficulties in information gathering across national boundaries. Secondly, it can be difficult to guarantee that the person responding is the person the marketer thinks they are (Gay et al. 2007, 129).

2.3.5 BRAND PERCEPTION

Brand perception is the sum of feelings a consumer has about a brand. These thoughts and feelings happen when a consumer is aware of the brand, and what follows when that consumer hears, sees, or interacts with the brand and its product.

Brand perception incorporates a multitude of areas that touch upon the brand's customer interactions. From product development and packaging to public relations and social engagement, brand perception is a top-level measuring stick of a product's visual presence, goodwill, and emotional character. All of these can play into the product's success. Think about Facebook, for example. Last year Facebook's brand perception fell out of favor with many because of privacy issues and the platform being found to be the conduit of false or misleading news stories. Brand perceptions of Facebook were significantly changed in 2018, which is why the company is now making moves to make public opinion of its brand more positive. Even for small companies, brand perception is one part of a larger marketing equation. How does your product or service resonate with its target audience, why does it matter, how do consumers feel

about your brand, and how can you measure this? In the case of this research, consumers means the students.

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CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present the philosophical assumptions of this research, as well as to introduce the research strategy and the empirical techniques applied. The chapter defines the scope and limitations of the research design, and situates the research amongst existing research traditions. This study will involve primary information by the use of questionnaires to gather information. The materials Used include texts, journals and articles within a period of last two decades. This will help in Finding out what has been researched by other scholars especially the factors that lead to celebrity's influence on audience.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a basic plan that guides the data collection and analysis phases of the research project. (Kinnear & Taylor, 1996; Churchill & Iacobucci 2005) define research design as the blueprint that is followed to complete the study and it ensures that the study is relevant to the problem and will use economical procedure.

Thus, the research design for this study is Survey Research. Survey research is defined as the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions. (Check & Schutt, 2012, p 160). The survey type of research allows for a variety of methods to recruit participants, collect data and utilize various methods of instrumentation.

3.3 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

A research population is simply a large collection of individuals that is the main focus of a scientific query. (Burns & Grove 2001:223).

The population of the study comprised all the students on and off campus in Caleb university.

3.4 SOURCE OF DATA

For this, I would be using both primary and secondary sources for my research work for the primary source; I would be distributing about 400 questionnaires to the above listed parts of south west (Lagos) as these are the largest parts of Lagos, and would enable me get optimum answers. The researcher would be using secondary sources too to see what other researchers have done in the past in the area that the researcher is currently researching currently researching, and build upon it, with proper references to them.

3.5 STUDY SAMPLES AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

The study adopts purposive sampling, according to Abdullahi (2012), sample is a sub group of observation from a large population in order to make inferences about the characteristics of the

large population. Sample size is part of the population selected for closer look. Sampling technique on the other hand, is the essential method of selecting sample from a population. The sample size for this study is one hundred and fifty (400). And it is drawn from a purposive sample population of three hundred and thirty (). The sample size for this study is determined using the Taro Yamane sample size formular:

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

$$1 + N(e)^2$$

Where:

n: Sample size

1: Constant value

N: Elements of population of the study: 330

e: Sampling error: 0.06

$$n = \frac{330}{1 + 330(0.06)^2}$$

$$1 + 330(0.06)^2$$

$$n = \frac{330}{1 + 330(0.0036)}$$

$$1 + 330(0.0036)$$

n= 330

2.2

n= 150

The sample size for this study is 400

3.6 SOURCE OF DATA

Data collection is an essential stage in research. A researcher needs to consider the sources that will confirm his research findings. The primary source of data is going to be used in this study, as self-administered questionnaires will be given to respondents who will give their view on what comedy entails. Therefore, 400 questionnaires will be shared to three parts of south west Lagos state namely Ikeja, Alimosho and Ikorodu.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUE

Survey method will be used for the collection of data. Questionnaires will be used to gather information directly from the respondents.

The questionnaire will be divided into two sections. The first will focus on acquiring demographic data about the respondents while the other one will focus on gathering appropriate data for answering the research questions.

3.8 VALIDITY OF DATA

Validity of data in research can be explained as an extent to which requirements of scientific research method have been followed during the process of generating research findings.

Oliver (2010) also considers validity to be a compulsory requirement for all types of studies.

Thus, in order to ascertain the validity of the instrument that will be used for data collection in this study, it will be given to my project supervisor, for verification and correction so as to establish accurate criterion on the validity of the instrument.

This will help also to confirm that the data derived after the instrument has been administered, contains a sound basis in logic and facts.

3.9 RELIABILITY OF DATA

Reliability refers to the extent to which the same answers can be obtained using the same instruments more than one time by different researchers. If your research is associated with high

levels of reliability, then other researchers would be able to generate the same results, using the same research methods under similar conditions.

According to (Wilson 2010), reliability issues are most of the time closely associated with subjectivity and once a researcher adopts a subjective approach towards the study, then the level of reliability of the work is going to be compromised.

Data will be collected directly from primary sources, therefore It has very high probability to be reliable. Questionnaires will be suitable for the research work as it will be designed to bring out data that will be relevant to the research and reduce the error of unreliability to a minimum.

3.10 DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

The data analysis technique to be adopted for this work is simple percentage. The analysis will involve descriptive statistics with the use of tables, charts, simple frequency counts and percentages.

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DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data sourced from respondents in laspotech. Hence, all the data collected is presented and analyzed with the use of tables, charts, simple frequency counts and percentages.

The 266 respondents responded out of 300. They were selected using stratified sampling technique. The nature of the questions was such that it avoided unnecessary responses from the respondents and it helped in adequate data analysis. The analysis was done by calculating each question accordingly, table by table.

4.2 DATA PRESENTATION

4.2.1: Are students aware that social media can be used to build the reputation of brands?

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
YES	200	50.00%
NO	125	31.25%
NOT SURE	75	18.75%

TOTAL	400	100%
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This table shows that 200(50.00%) of the respondents are positive, 125(31.25%) of the respondents are negative, while 75(18.75%) of the respondents are not sure. This also shows that higher percentage of the respondents are positive.

4.2.2: What social media tools do students feel help companies to build their brands?

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
BUZZSUMO	81	20.25%
GOOGLE TRENDS	112	28.00%
BUFFER PUBLISH	47	11.75%
CANVA	45	11.25%
MENTIONS	65	16.25%
TWITDECK	50	12.50%
TOTAL	400	100%

This table shows that 81(20.25%) of the respondents picked buzzsumo, 112(28.00%) of the respondents picked google trends, 47(11.75%) of the respondents picked buffer publish, 45(11.25%) of the respondents picked canva, 65(16.25%) of the respondents picked mentions, 50(12.50%) of the respondents picked twitdeck. This also shows that a higher percentage of the respondents picked google trends as the social media tool that companies use to build their brands.

4.2.3: Companies use social media to build their brands By

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
SHARING CONTENTS ON REGULAR BASIS	65	16.25%
CREATING AND CURATING ENGAGING CONTENTS	78	19.50%
LEVERAGE INFLUENCERS	96	24.00%
USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO PROMOTE CONTENTS	61	15.25%
KEEP THEIR BRAND VOICE IMAGE AND TONE CONSISTENT.	100	25.00%
TOTAL	400	100%

This table shows that 65(16.25%) sharing contents on regular basis, 78(19.50%) picked creating and curating engaging contents, 96(24.00%) picked leverage influencers, 61(15.25%) picked use social media to promote contents, 100(25.00%) picked keep their brand voice, image and tone consistent. This also shows that a higher percentage of the respondents picked keep their brand voice, image and tone consistent.

4.2.4: What are the challenges students feel an organization would face in using social media to build their brands?

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
IDENTIFYING THE RIGHT PLATFORM	96	24.00%
UNDERSTANDING THE TARGET AUDIENCE	84	21.00%
MEASURING SOCIAL MEDIA R.O.I	55	13.75%
ORGANIC REACH	79	19.75%
BEING APPROACHABLE BY YOUR AUDIENCE	86	21.5%
TOTAL	400	100%

This table shows that 96(24.00%) picked identifying the right platform, 84(21.00%) picked understanding the target audience, 55(13.75%) of the measuring social media R.O.I, 79(19.75%) picked organic reach, 86(21.50%) picked by being approachable by your audience. This also shows that a higher percentage of the respondents picked identifying the right platform.

4.3 ANALYSIS OF DATA

This section also analyses the data and answers each research questions stated in chapter one.

Are Students aware that social media can be used to build the reputation of brands

According to table 4.2.1, 200(50%) of students are aware that social media can be used to build the reputation of brands, 125(31.25%) of students are not aware that social media can be used to build the reputation of brands and 75(18.75%) of the students are not sure that social media can be used to build the reputation of brands.

What tools of social media do students feel help companies to build their brands

According to table 4.2.2, 81(20.25) of students feel that Buzzsumo helps companies to build their brands, 112(28%) of students feel that Google trends helps companies to build their brands, 47(11.75%) of students feel that buffer publish helps companies to build their brands, 45(11.25%) of students feel that Canva helps companies to build their brands, 65(16.25%) of students feel that mentions helps companies to build their brands and 50(12.50%) of students feel that Twitdeck helps companies to build their brands.

What are the ways that social media enables an organization to build their brands?

According to table 4.2.3, 65(16.25%) sharing contents on regular basis, 78(19.50%) picked creating and curating engaging contents, 96(24.00%) picked leverage influencers, 61(15.25%) picked use social media to promote contents, 100(25.00%) picked keep their brand voice, image

and tone consistent. This also shows that a higher percentage of the respondents picked keep their brand voice, image and tone consistent.

What are the challenges students feel an organization would face in using social media to build their brands?

According to table 4.2.3, 96(24.00%) picked identifying the right platform, 84(21.00%) picked understanding the target audience, 55(13.75%) of the measuring social media R.O.I, 79(19.75%) picked organic reach, 86(21.50%) picked by being approachable by your audience. This also shows that a higher percentage of the respondents picked identifying the right platform.

4.4 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this research have revealed that students really see brands that are turning their organizations into brands on social media, the ones who are forcing it, and the ones that are creating organic contents for students to relate to.

The research revealed that social media plays an integral role in the brand building and formulations. Irrespective of variables like, age or respondents, educational qualification of respondents, gender difference and marital status of the students, they all have a perception towards social media tools in relation to brand building.

Also, Table 4.2.1 showed that students are aware that social media can be used to build the reputation of brands. If they are aware of these, audience/students will use their social media

platforms and presence to promote messages of brands that they are interested in. On this basis, fan bases are formed and named after these brands, these in its entirety is a precept of the Cultivation theory. Audience identifies themselves with a brand, and they do what other members of the brand are doing hereby promoting the image of the brand. The Cultivation theory Simply put states that, if one uses the internet extensively, they are bound to form opinions and behavioral patterns based on what they have been seeing online. They can also attach themselves as students to a brand after seeing them extensively online.

The findings of table 4.2.2 shows are congruent with the postulations of the Uses and Gratification. The existence of different tools of social media like Buzzsumo, Google trends, Buffer publish, canva show how different media are actively available for consumers especially in an audience centered world.

The research further revealed that various variables like sharing content on regular basis, creating and curating engaging contents, leveraging influencers and use of social media to promote contents show the existence of different dynamics in the media space as far as brand building is concerned.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Summary

In summary, this study has analysed STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS TOOLS FOR BRAND BUILDING. In conducting this research, a quantitative (questionnaire) method was used to collect data.

5.1 SUMMARY OF WORK DONE

The main objective of this research is to determine students' perception of social media as tools for brand building

Chapter one: This chapter focuses on the general introduction to the study. The specific objectives of the research are to ascertain if students are aware that social media can be used to build the reputations of brands, to discover the tools of social media that students feel helps companies to build their brands, to discover the ways that social media enables an organization to build their brands and to establish the challenges that students feel an organization would face using social media to build their brands.

Chapter two: This chapter focuses on discussion of relevant literature which consist of the theoretical framework of the study, the conceptual framework and empirical review. For this

study, the theories used were the Social Action theory, Cultivation theory and uses and gratification Theory.

Chapter three: It focuses on the research methods which describe the methods of data analysis. Survey method was used for this study. The questionnaire was the research instrument used to conduct this study and 400 questionnaires were shared amongst student of the south western part of Lagos state.

Chapter Four: This chapter is focused on the data presentation, analysis and interpretation. The study revealed that social media helps brands to build their reputations, it also revealed that students are aware that social media can be used to build the reputation of brands.

5.2 CONCLUSION

From the findings of this study, the research therefore concludes that social media platforms have become very important for companies to reach their audiences and target new ones. Turning a company into a brand is not easy, but with the advent of social media it has become imperative that companies go down this path or lose out on customers. And this should not be taken lightly because consumers such as students can tell when a brand is trying too hard or even failing to connect with them either by using wrong social media platforms or creating contents that don't speak to them.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion from this study, the following recommendations were made;

- Organizations should conduct research to know which social media their audience are based on and create content in line with the social media.
- Organic content helps tremendously to reach the right audience so brands should always know what is trendy and never buy followers.
- A wider study of this research topic should be done nationwide, as this study was restricted to just students of Caleb university Lagos.

5.4 AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on the success of this research work, suggestions for the conduct of further research is on:

The influence of Instagram on consumer behaviour.

An exploratory study of social media and the rise of consumer awareness.

The influence of social media on brand positioning.

