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Influence of Information Communication Technology (ICT) on the Effective Promotion of Locally Made Product in an Era of Covid-19: Business Education Students` Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This research was carried out in order to determine the influence of information communication technology on the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19: Business Education students` perspective. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 542 students of Business Education at the University of Nigeria. The sample size was 230 and was obtained using Taro Yamane sample formula of n $\left(\frac{N}{(1+N(e^2))}\right)$ and the sampling technique used were stratified and simple random sampling techniques. The instrument for the study was a structured questionnaire of 12 question items. Using cronbach alpha the reliability coefficient of 0.88 was obtained on the questionnaire instrument. The three research questions were an and standard deviation while the two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significant level using t-test. From the results of the findings, it was discovered that, both the undergraduate and postgraduate students agreed that Facebook, YouTube video and Whatsapp as a form of ICT have influence on the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19. The study also show no signifivcant difference in the mean response rating of undergraduate and postgraduate students on the influence of

Facebook, YouTube and WhatsApp on the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19. Finally, conclusion was drawn and some

Key words: ICT, Product, Covid-19, Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp

Introduction

recommendations were made.

The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has brought about an essential transformation at all levels of business, and the marketing sector has been one of the main beneficiaries of this transformation. Bond and Houston (2003) stated that ICT usage in the creation of marketing activities may be a significant source of competitive advantage for any organization that increases innovative processes and outputs. Going by this statement, it shows that for any organization, be it local or international, to thrive in the business world, it has to use ICT since it is now playing a prominent role in the marketing of goods. Jordi, Joan, and Ana (2007) claimed that ICT is one of the most ideal mediums for getting near the environment and learning or developing information about its numerous agents. Thus, the organization has access to a great deal of relevant and up-to-date information quickly, conveniently, and affordably. Sorensen and Lundh-Snis (2001) stated that ICT also promotes and supports the transmission and dissemination of information throughout the entire organization and its subsequent application in the decision-making process. An essential portion of the decisions to be taken belongs to the marketing function, as they impact the design and development of activities directly done in the markets (Jordi, Joan, & Ana, 2007). ICT also contributes positively to the marketing and promotion of goods in the era of COVID-19.

The COVID-19 crisis affected every aspect of human life. We all feel compassion for those who are directly affected by the coronavirus. Society and the economy were largely brought to a standstill, and almost every country was in the grip of a recession (Hoekstra & Leeflang, 2020). The use of ICT during (and after) the COVID-19 crisis shows (and will continue to show) similarities with the way promotion of locally made goods can be carried out in an era of virus or economic recession. Even the locals who are not used to ICT have no choice but to acquaint themselves with the knowledge of ICT so as to get their locally made products sold to their respective buyers. Various social media sites such as Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp that serve as parts of ICT were used to promote locally made goods.

Facebook is a form of ICT that can be used to promote locally made goods in Enugu State and Nigeria at large. Acceptance and adequate use of ICT have brought about improvements in various media technological disciplines with the increase in internet users. This advance has made more companies and individuals choose Facebook and other forms of social media for effective promotion of locally made goods (Treimikien et al., 2021). Facebook as a form of promoting locally made products has brought about change in interactive communication, human reasoning, behavior, and entertainment with increased acknowledgment and visibility while communicating with potential clients and customers in real time online (Idowu & Babafemi 2022). Sunday and Busari (2022) stated that Facebook is one of the most prolific interactive mediums for large and small businesses due to its performance and productive reports with the additional tool. Abdullahi, Husin, and Baharudin (2021) reported in their study on factors influencing the adoption of Facebook as a marketing channel among SMEs in Nigeria as a developing country (a conceptual framework) that Facebook as a marketing channel influences small

scale businesses. A good example of a small-scale business is one that produces locally made products like washing soap, brooms, rice processors, and many others. Another form of ICT that can be used to promote locally made goods is YouTube.

YouTube is an amusement and social communication website that can be used to contribute positively to the sales of goods through an effective promotional mix. YouTube content creators present their experiences and share their opinions about local or non-local products they have tested with a target audience that is inclined towards engaging with such contents (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). The audience members are not passive receivers of the content, as they indicate their cursory feedback through the like/dislike icon and express more elaborate thoughts in the comments section (Le, Alang, & Tran, 2021). One ripple effect of this is that an individual's perception of a locally made brand may not only be shaped by the YouTube influencer's promotional content but also by the direction of audience engagement with the content (Sodeinde, Olomojobi, & Abiola, 2020). Therefore, marketers leverage YouTube influencers' far-reaching presence and online audience community to promote their product so as to increase their profit margin. Various locally made products in Enugu State and Nigeria at large. Sodeinde, Olomojobi, and Abiola (2020) found out in their study that female undergraduate students positively perceived the benefits of YouTube influencer marketing, the image of YouTube influences, the promotional strategies used in YouTube influencer marketing, and the image of cosmetic brands. In summary, their findings show that YouTube influences the promotion and marketing of cosmetic products among undergraduate students at Babcock University, Nigeria. Aside from YouTube, another form of ICT that was briefly discussed in this study was WhatsApp.

The use of WhatsApp in promoting locally made products became rampant on the verge of the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemics in Enugu State and Nigeria at large. Perez (2020) asserted that WhatsApp saw a 40% increase in its usage due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Such an increase indicates that most people used the platform to promote their products in the era of COVID-19. Achmad, Adhimursandi, and Rahmawati (2020) conducted a study on the influence of WhatsApp advertisements on purchase decisions to increase sales of local culinary products in the COVID-19 pandemic period involving 100 participants and found that attitude towards the advertisement, ad recall, and click-through rate factors via WhatsApp have a positive connection with purchasing decisions. Given the intense use of WhatsApp and forms of ICT such as Facebook and YouTube for advertising and promotions, concerns are arising regarding the influence of the use of Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp on the effective promotion of locally made products in an era of COVID-19. This concern poses the following questions: What is the mean response rating of undergraduate and postgraduate students on the influence of YouTube as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19? What is the mean response rating of undergraduate and postgraduate students on the influence of YouTube as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19? What is the mean response rating of undergraduate and postgraduate students on the influence of YouTube as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19? What is the mean response rating of undergraduate and postgraduate students on the influence of YouTube as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19? What is the mean response rating of undergraduate and postgraduate and postgraduate and postgraduate and postgraduate students on the influence of Facebook, YouTube, and Whats

The main aim of the study was to determine the influence of Facebook, YouTube and WhatsApp as forms of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19. Specifically, the study sought to:

- Determine the influence of Facebook as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19.
- Determine the influence of YouTube as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19.
- Determine the influence of WhatsApp as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19.

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- What is the mean response rating of undergraduate and postgraduate students on the influence of Facebook as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19?
- What is the mean response rating of undergraduate and postgraduate students on the influence of YouTube as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19?
- What is the mean response rating of undergraduate and postgraduate students on the influence of WhatsApp as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19?

The following null hypotheses that were test at 0.05 significant level guided the study.

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the mean response rating of undergraduate and postgraduate students on the influence of Facebook as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the mean response rating of undergraduate and postgraduate students on the influence of YouTube as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19.

Ho3: There is no significant difference in the mean response rating of undergraduate and postgraduate students on the influence of WhatsApp as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19.

Methods

The design of this study was a descriptive survey research design. Ezeudu, Jolaosho and Dajan (2020) describe research design as a type of design that is meant to describe the behaviour of a particular population in an accurate fashion. The study was conducted at the University of Nigeria. The University of Nigeria is located in Enugu State, south-east Nigeria. The university has four campuses, while the present study was carried out at the main campus of the university in the town of Nsukka. Nsukka is the second-largest town in Enugu State and shares a boundary with Kogi State. The population of the study was 542 undergraduate and postgraduate students in business education. 244 out of the total population were males, while 288 were females. The sample size of the study was 230, which was arrived at using the Taro Yamane sample size formula. Out of the 230 students, 141 were undergraduate while 89 were postgraduate students. A multi-stage sampling technique was used. The instrument for the study was the Influence of ICT on Local Product Questionnaire (IICTLPQ), which had 15 question items that were positively skewed and covered. The instrument was in three clusters: A, B, and C. Cluster A was on Facebook, Cluster B was on YouTube, and Cluster C was on WhatsApp. The researchers, with the help of two research assistants, administered the instrument to the respondent, and the questionnaires were retrieved on the spot of administration. Three experts in the fields of educational technology, business education were used to answer the three research questions that guided the study, while the t-test was used to test all three null hypotheses formulated to guide the study at a 0.05 significance level. A mean below 2.5 was considered disagreeable, while those above 2.5 were regarded as agreeable. Also, any hypothesis less than 0.05 was rejected, while those greater than 0.05 were accepted.

Results

Research Question One

What is the mean response rating of undergraduate and postgraduate students on the influence of Facebook as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19?

Table 1

Mean and Standard Deviation Rating Of undergraduate and postgraduate students on the influence of Facebook as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19

N = 230

S/N	Items	Respondents	Ν	Mean	SD	Decision
1	An image ad on Facebook helps in the promotion of	Undergraduate	141	2.83	.86	Agree
	locally made products in the era of COVID-19.	Postgraduate	89	3.17	.73	Agree
2	Hosting Facebook content helps in the promotion of	Undergraduate	141	2.99	.98	Agree
	locally-made products in the era of COVID-19.	Postgraduate	89	3.13	.80	Agree
3	Sponsored stories on Facebook showing users'	Undergraduate	141	3.76	.63	Agree
	interactions enhance the promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19.	Postgraduate	89	2.91	.79	Agree
4	Facebook-sponsored posts contributed effectively to	Undergraduate	141	2.97	1.09	Agree
	the promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19.	Postgraduate	89	2.94	.79	Agree
5	Facebook's open graph contributed effectively to the	Undergraduate	141	3.04	.70	Agree
	promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19.	Postgraduate	89	3.08	.63	Agree
	Grand Mean and Standard Deviation	Undergraduate	141	3.12	.85	Agree
		Postgraduate	89	3.05	.75	Agree

Both the undergraduate and postgraduate students agreed to the 5 items on the influence of Facebook as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19. Their responses show that all the 5 question items have positive influence on the use of Facebook for effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19. The grand mean of undergraduate and postgraduate students of 3.12 and 3.05 with standard deviation of 0.85 and 0.75 also agreed to the statement on the influence of Facebook as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19.

Hypothesis One

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the mean response rating of undergraduate and postgraduate students on the influence of Facebook as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19.

Table 2

T-test comparison of a significant difference in the mean ratings of undergraduate and postgraduate students on the influence of Facebook as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19.

Staff	Ν	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	Sig	Decision
Underg	141	3.12	.85	228	1.317	.189	NS
Postg	89	3.05	.75				

Table 2 reveals that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of undergraduate and postgraduate students on the influence of Facebook as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19, t (228) = 1.317, p = .189. This implies that the null hypothesis formulated was accepted since the associated probability value of .189 was greater than the 0.05 significant level.

Research Question Two

What is the mean response rating of undergraduate and postgraduate students on the influence of YouTube as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19?

Table 3

Mean and Standard Deviation Rating Of undergraduate and postgraduate students on the influence of YouTube as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19

N = 230

S/N	Items	Respondents	Ν	Mean	SD	Decision
6	Building a library of promotional videos	Undergraduate	141	3.15	.76	Agree
	helps in the effective promotion of locally	Postgraduate	89	3.00	.00	Agree
	made products in the era of COVID-19.					
7	A TruView video ad on YouTube helps in	Undergraduate	141	3.02	.84	Agree
	the effective promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19.	Postgraduate	89	3.17	.98	Agree
8	The use of promoted keywords helps in the	Undergraduate	141	3.32	.87	Agree
	effective promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19.	Postgraduate	89	2.97	.38	Agree
9	Being interactive on YouTube helps in the	Undergraduate	141	3.29	.91	Agree
	effective promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19.	Postgraduate	89	2.94	.98	Agree
10	A director account with logo features helps	Undergraduate	141	2.91	.76	Agree
	in the effective promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19.	Postgraduate	89	3.36	.80	Agree
	Grand Mean and Standard Deviation	Undergraduate	141	3.14	.83	Agree
		Postgraduate	89	3.09	.63	Agree

Both the undergraduate and postgraduate students agreed to the 5 items on the influence of YouTube as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19. Their responses show that all the 5 question items have positive influence on the use of YouTube for effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19. The grand mean of undergraduate and postgraduate students of 3.14 and 3.09 with standard deviation of 0.83 and 0.63 also agreed to the statement on the influence of YouTube as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19.

Hypothesis Two

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the mean response rating of undergraduate and postgraduate students on the influence of YouTube as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19.

Table 4

T-test comparison of a significant difference in the mean ratings of undergraduate and postgraduate students on the influence of YouTube as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19.

Staff	Ν	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	Sig	Decision
Underg	141	3.14	.83	228	1.317	.189	NS
Postg	89	3.09	.63				

Table 4 reveals that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of undergraduate and postgraduate students on the influence of YouTube as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19, t (228) = 1.000, p = .316. This implies that the null hypothesis formulated was accepted since the associated probability value of .316 was greater than the 0.05 significant level.

Research Question Three

What is the mean response rating of undergraduate and postgraduate students on the influence of WhatsApp as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19?

Table 5

Mean and standard deviation rating of undergraduate and postgraduate students on the influence of WhatsApp as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19

N = 230

S/N	Items	Respondents	Ν	Mean	SD	Decision
11	The WhatsApp business app provided for the	Undergraduate	141	2.91	.70	Agree
	effective promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19.	Postgraduate	89	2.94	.59	Agree
2	Building a contact list on WhatsApp gives room for	Undergraduate	141	2.91	.72	Agree
	effective promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19.	Postgraduate	89	2.89	.70	Agree
13	Delivering great customer service on WhatsApp	Undergraduate	141	3.09	.81	Agree
	helps in the effective promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19.	Postgraduate	89	3.12	.64	Agree
14	Designing a good communication strategy helps in	Undergraduate	141	3.06	.61	Agree
	the effective promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19.	Postgraduate	89	2.90	.75	Agree
15	Pinning down target audiences on WhatsApp helps in	Undergraduate	141	2.96	.75	Agree
	the effective promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19.	Postgraduate	89	2.72	.75	Agree
	Grand Mean and Standard Deviation	Undergraduate	141	2.99	.72	Agree
		Postgraduate	89	2.91	.69	Agree

Both the undergraduate and postgraduate students agreed to the 5 items on the influence of WhatsApp as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19. Their responses show that all the 5 question items have positive influence on the use of WhatsApp for effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19. The grand mean of undergraduate and postgraduate students of 2.99 and 2.91 with standard deviation of 0.72 and 0.69 also agreed to the statement on the influence of WhatsApp as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19.

Hypothesis Three

Ho₃: There is no significant difference in the mean response rating of undergraduate and postgraduate students on the influence of WhatsApp as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19.

Table 6

Staff	Ν	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	Sig	Decision
Underg	141	3.12	.85	228	1.719	.087	NS
Postg	89	3.05	.75				

T-test comparison of a significant difference in the mean ratings of undergraduate and postgraduate students on the influence of WhatsApp as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19.

Table 6 reveals that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of undergraduate and postgraduate students on the influence of WhasApp as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19, t (228) = 1.719, p = .087. This implies that the null hypothesis formulated was accepted since the associated probability value of .087 was greater than the 0.05 significant level.

Discussion of Findings

Both the undergraduate and postgraduate students of Business Education responded that an image ad on Facebook helps in the promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19; hosting Facebook content helps in the promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19; sponsored stories on Facebook showing users' interaction enhance the promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19; Facebook promoted posts contributed effectively to the promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19; and finally, the Facebook open graph contributed effectively to the promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19. The results show further that there was no significant difference in the mean response rating of undergraduate and postgraduate students on the influence of Facebook as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19. The findings of this study were in line with the findings of Abdullahi, Husin, and Baharudin (2021), who found out that Facebook as a marketing channel influences small-scale businesses.

Both the undergraduate and postgraduate students' responses show that building a library of promotional videos helps in the effective promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19; a TruView video ad on YouTube helps in the effective promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19; the use of promoted keywords helps in the effective promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19; and the effective promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19; being interactive on YouTube helps in the effective promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19; and finally, a director account with logo features helps in the effective promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19; and finally, a director account with logo features helps in the effective promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID The results show further that there was no significant difference in the mean response rating of undergraduate and postgraduate students on the influence of YouTube as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19. The findings of this study were in line with the findings of Sodeinde, Olomojobi, and Abiola (2020), whose findings show that female undergraduate students positively perceived the benefits of YouTube influencer marketing, the image of YouTube influences, the promotional strategies used in YouTube influencer marketing, and the image of cosmetic brands. In summary, their findings show that YouTube influences the promotion and marketing of cosmetic products among undergraduate students at Babcock University, Nigeria.

Both the undergraduate and postgraduate students' responses show that the WhatsApp business app provided for effective promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19; building a contact list on WhatsApp gives room for effective promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19; designing a good communication helps in the effective promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19; designing a good communication helps in the effective promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19; and finally, a target audience on WhatsApp helps in the effective promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19; and finally, a target audience on WhatsApp helps in the effective promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19. The results show further that there was no significant difference in the mean response rating of undergraduate and postgraduate students on the influence of WhatsApp as a form of ICT on the effective promotion of locally made products in the era of COVID-19. The findings of this study were in line with the findings of Achmad, Adhimursandi, and Rahmawati (2020), who found that attitude towards the advertisement, ad recall, and click-through rate

Conclusion

The study concluded that Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp as forms of ICT influences the effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19 in Nigeria. The study is also of the view that more features on Facebbok, YouTube and WhatsApp also contributed positively to effective promotion of locally made product in an era of Covid-19 in Nigeria.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made in line with the findings of the study.

- 1. Government should put more efforts in enlighten local producers on the importance of using Facebook to promote their locally made products.
- 2. Government should ensure good internet and subsidize subscription fees so that local producer can easily promote their product through the YouTube.
- 3. Local producer should be educated on how they can fully utilize WhatsApp in promoting their locally made products.

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