



The Impact of Social Media Marketing on Sales: A Case Study of Cigarette Companies in Zimbabwe.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of social media marketing on sales using a case of three Cigarette companies in Zimbabwe namely, British American Tobacco, Pacific Zimbabwe and, Rudland & George. The study focused on the social media marketing platforms such as Face book, You Tube, Twitter and Instagram as elements of social media marketing which impact sales. The main objective of the research was to establish whether these social media marketing elements increases sales of business. The researchers used quantitative and qualitative research methods and a casual or explanatory research design was adopted for the study. The study had a sample size of 25 people who received questionnaires and 5 interviews. The respondents were directors, marketing managers and employees of Cigarette companies in Zimbabwe. The sample arrived at using the stratified sampling technique and also the study relies on primary data. The collected data was analysed by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 20 (SPSS v20) software. The studies proved that there is correlation between social media marketing and sales. Recommendations made after the study indicated that, cigarette companies need to effectively use social media marketing platforms so as to increase sales of the business.

Key Words: Social media, Sales, Impact, Marketing

INTRODUCTION

The global tobacco industry continues to be dominated by the world's top 10 largest tobacco companies in 2020 (www.bizvibe.com). Despite the industry facing challenges including stricter government regulations and changing consumer health concerns over the past few years, these top tobacco companies were still some of the world's revenue earners and biggest tax contributors. Today there are over 1 billion individual adult smokers in the global tobacco and cigarette market making this one of the world's most lucrative business of all time. The global tobacco output had reached a total volume of 8.2 million tons in 2018. According to British American Tobacco Company, the most recent estimates for the legal tobacco sales were worth approximately US\$814 billion in 2018. (www.bizvibe.com). More than US\$700 billion of this comes from the sale of congenital cigarettes, with over 5300 billion consumed per year by over 19% of the world's population. Over recent decades the demand for tobacco has witnessed a major shift from the developed regions such as North America and Europe to the developing nations such as Sir and Africa. Several major developing countries such as China, India and Brazil are becoming some of the largest tobacco markets. (www.bizvibe.com). According to the recent report from Murder Intelligence, Chin is the world's largest tobacco producer and biggest cigarette consumer, consuming over 40% of the world's cigarettes every year. The tobacco market in China has long been dominated by the China National Tobacco Corporation a state owned that is responsible for almost 90% of all cigarettes sold in Chin. In recent years, several worlds' leading tobacco companies including Phillip Morris International Tobacco, British American Tobacco, Japan Tobacco International, and Imperil Tobacco have all started joint venture with the CTNC to increase their market share in Chin. The other largest tobacco companies in the world are Altria Group, ITC India, Gudang Garam Indonesia, KT &G South Korea and Universal Corporation.

Zimbabwe is the largest grower of tobacco in Africa and the 6th largest grower in the world three types of tobacco have traditionally been grown in the country, Virginia flue cured burley and oriented tobacco. Over 95% of Zimbabwe tobacco consists of flue –cured tobacco, which is renowned for its flavor. The cash crop is a major part of Zimbabwe economy. Zimbabwe is producing over 198000 tones out of 16, 2 million produced in the world. (Chikwati, 2015). Cigarettes companies in Zimbabwe include British American Tobacco, Pacific Cigarette Company and Rudland & George Company. The Cigarette market is dominated by the international BAT, through its Zimbabwe subsidiary and domestic Savanna Tobacco. The production and manufacturing of the tobacco has led to an increase in generating foreign currency hence the Zimbabwean government has remained supportive to the cigarette manufacturing industries. Pacific Cigarette Company is a leading cigarette manufacturer in Zimbabwe. The company was founded in 2002 by Adam Molar and some partners. It has now had operations in some Southern African countries. The values of Pacific Cigarette Company are trust, responsibility, and excellence. They believe business excellence stems from people excellence send that their people are their greatest resources. They continue to build on their legacy and use their collective expertise for growth. Pacific Cigarette Company (PCC), formally known as Savanna Tobacco, signed a landmark cooperation

agreement with China Tobacco Shaanxi Industrial Cooperation (CTSIC) at function held at the Zimbabwean company's headquarters in Harare. (www.pacific.co.zw)

British American Tobacco Zimbabwe (Holdings) Limited (BAT Zimbabwe) is the leading tobacco manufacturer in Zimbabwe by market share. BAT Zimbabwe is part of the British American Tobacco Group of companies (BAT) and has been operating over 80 years. BAT is a leading multi category consumer goods business. Founded in 1902, today the Group is a truly global company it employs more than 53000 people worldwide, operates in over 40 countries. The Groups global business is divided into four regions and covers over 150 million consumers and 11 million retail point of sale, with a growth emerging markets and developed markets. Bats portfolios comprises combustible tobacco products such as cigarettes alongside a range of non-combustible products and these includes tobacco free nicotine pouches as well as traditional oral products such as suns and moist snuff. (BAT) Zimbabwe is A Company incorporated in terms of laws of Zimbabwe and listed on the Zimbabwe Stock of Exchange. BAT Zimbabwe manufactures and supplies cigarettes to approximately 6600 retailers and wholesalers, who in turn service thousands of informal traders cross the world. The mission is to build a better tomorrow by reducing the health impact of our business through offering a greater choice of enjoyable and less risk products for our consumers. (careers.bat.com). BAT four best selling cigarettes include its native brand Dunhill and US brands Lucky Strike, Kent and Pall Mall. Other brands the company markets include Benson and Hedges and Rothmans. (www.bat.co.zw).

Rudland and George is now the biggest seller in the country, research released by the Tobacco Institute of Southern Africa. R &G is manufactured by Golden Leaf Tobacco Company which produces illegal cigarettes, Last year, City Press reported that 26, 8% of all cigarettes sold in South Africa were illicit and that this trade was dominated by one local company Gold Leaf Company (www.r&g.com). In 2015, Simon Rudland and George cigarette brand but his brand R&G was successfully challenged by competitors Remington Gold in court for copyright infringement. The Rudland have over the past years, been active on the Zimbabwe Stock of Exchange, holding significant stakes in assets such as Zimmer and CFI, where they had long battle for control with maverick investor Nicholas van Hoogstraten.

Savanna Tobacco was founded in 2002 when the company purchased a tobacco threshing plant in Harare, Zimbabwe. Savanna reconditioned the machinery and started processing and packaging cigarette stems and selling them to a number of cigarette factories round the world. Within the first two years of operation the company had sold over three million kilograms of form stems. By this time the directors of Savanna had already identified an opportunity to add value to Zimbabwean tobacco by manufacturing quality cigarettes for the export market. Savanna Tobacco entry into the tobacco industry in Zimbabwe started with a quest for a contract growing license. Zimbabwean historical marketing system was characterized purely by tobacco sales on auction floors. With the commencement of land reform program in Zimbabwe, newly resettled farmers did not the financial capacity to grow the very expensive crop of tobacco. Hence Savanna embarked on recess of convinces. Since then the company has never looked back. When the factory started it was manned by six South Africa Technicians about 60 Zimbabweans. Savanna Tobacco has 350 packing machines which have vastly increasing the companies packing capabilities as well as look and feel their finished programs. Savanna Tobacco vision is to be the leading African tobacco company as well as to establish a common understanding only for those who work for them (Masuku and Makura, 2015).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Cigarettes companies are facing challenges in marketing or advertising cigarettes on social media as they had been banned by World Health Organization and this had led to the reduction in consumption of cigarettes. The WHO (2010) stimulates the ban of tobacco advertising on social media platforms to reduce worldwide demand for tobacco products by 7%. The ban of cigarettes on social media platforms has led to the reduction of sales in most Cigarettes companies in Zimbabwe. Oyez and Edwin (2016) found that 62% of marketers have identified effective social media strategy as one of the biggest challenges faced by managers to implement. The general business problem is that organizational leaders lack clear strategies for using their social media platforms. The specific business problem is that some organizational leaders lack marketing strategies for using social media to increase sales. As such, this study sought to determine the impact of social media marketing on company sales using the case of three Cigarette companies in Zimbabwe, that is, British American Tobacco, Pacific Zimbabwe and, Rudland & George.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this research study was to determine the impact of social media marketing on sales of Cigarette companies. The secondary objectives were as follows:

- To establish the impact of You Tube on sales.
- To establish the impact of Face book on sales.
- To establish the impact of Twitter on sales.
- To establish the impact of Instagram on sales
- To identify social media marketing strategies to increase sales of Cigarette companies.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researchers adopted a casual research design which is quantitative in nature. The demand of the research advocates for the use of casual research design approach. According to Rutledge (2008) a casual research refers to the approach that was aimed at enlighten the influence of the independent variable (social media marketing) to the dependent variable (sales). This research has primary mandate of finding relationship between social media marketing and sales. The researchers also used qualitative approach to elicit a rich collection of data from various sources to gain a deeper understanding of individual participants including their opinions, attitudes and perspectives. The target population of 100 employees, for the research was the marketing managers and employees of British American Tobacco, Pacific Zimbabwe and, Rudland and George Cigarette companies. A sample size of 25 people which comprised of 12 respondents from British American Tobacco, 8 respondents from Pacific Zimbabwe and 5 respondents from Rudland and George was used. The researchers used questionnaires and interviews as instruments to collect data which was later analyzed and made inference on.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

- **Social Media and its Importance**

Social media is a computer technology that simplified the exchange of information and ideas and the building of virtual reality and communities removed spatial and time constraints that deep seated in traditional methods of communications, the online tools enables too many sharing of multimedia content, and employ easy use interfaces that enable even non-specialists to share and connect (FOTIS,2015). Social media use enables consumers to access sellers at their fingertips and marketers can receive real time feedback and can tailor their marketing strategies or offer products and services that meet the consumer's needs (Single and Dark, 2015). This would lead the business to have more sales. Kissing (2016) posited that social media is a marketing venue for business seeking to expand their reach online, to attract new customers, and convert more of their traffic into sales. Presently people round the world use social media in its various forms newsfeeds, face book, twitter and face book, private messaging on Whatsapp.

- **Social Media Marketing (SMM)**

Social media is defined as gaining traffic attention or attention through social media sites. (Kolter, 2004). Social media marketing is most important in the operation of business and also important for networking, content sharing and online accessing. Due to its reliability, consistency and features, social media opens a wider place for business such as online marketing. Social media marketing has made possible for companies to reach targeted consumers thus enabling Cigarette companies to attract more smokers and more youth to come and buy more cigarettes to the company. Big tobacco companies are increasing using social media to find new ways to hook young people on smoking, circumventing decades of laws restricting the marketing of traditional cigarette to minors. In major cities around the world such as Rio de junior, Jakarta and Milan tobacco companies have been holding extravagant events with young people. The challenge faced by Cigarette companies was the ban of advertising cigarette on social media sites; however, the partial bans prohibiting the advertising and promotion of tobacco products in traditional marketing made the tobacco industry divert social media with indirect marketing tactics. (World Health Organization, 2010). With more and more people embracing social media sites such as Face book and You Tube the commercial potential of social media with tens of millions of potential consumers connected is emerging. The popularity of social media such as Face book and YouTube presents the opportunity to raise the visibility of tobacco products and promote tobacco use. A recent study found that the British American Tobacco employees were taking advantage of social networking sites to promote the company products (Freeman, 2010).

The internet has become a popular marketing platform in the late 1990s and early2000s companies established websites to post information about their products and services where consumers can directly access the information as a whole became an essential tool for commercialization (Ryan, 2016). Current and potential consumers became accessible to marketers 24/7 because of technological advances (Kabat-Zinn, 2016). The internet has become an important market place transaction of goods and services. Management spends billions of dollars of social media marketing (Schwarzkopf, 2015) and this has led to more sales by the business. Social media offers an interactive marketing tool which allows the audience to communicate directly with firms to engage customers (Huotari, Ulkunie, Saarinen and Malaska, 2015). Social media marketing is any form of marketing communication which uses social media platforms as social networking sites (Face book ,LinkedIn, Twitter, video and photo sharing platform You Tube, Instagram consumer review platform blogging platforms or search and discovery based services (McGrath and Connor,2015).The traditional marketing platforms such as television and print advertisements are the ones used to advertise or launch their products and services are no longer sustainable (McGrath and O Connor, 2015).

Worldwide there has been a growing interest in social media marketing among marketing scholars and organizations .Mangers have become more comfortable with and active in including social networks as part of their integrated marketing communications (Wing and Kim 2017).Felix ,Rauschanabel and Hirsch (2017) defines social media marketing as an interdisciplinary and cross -functional concept that uses social media (often in combination with other communications channels) to achieve organizational goals by creating value for stakeholders. Yazdanparast and Muniz (2016) and Pinto and Yagnik (2017) emphasizes that social media marketing involves marketing related activities such as blogging, sharing photos and posts online that use tools, platforms, applicationsand social channels that enable the promotion of websites, products and services.

- **The Use of Social Media Marketing by Cigarette Companies**

Tobacco companies are secretly advertising cigarettes on social media platforms like Instagram ,Face book and Twitter by paying social media influencers –popular young people with large online followings to post images of cigarettes and smoking as part of a marketing strategy documented in

more than 40 countries. The investigation documents more than 100 social media campaigns by multinational tobacco giants Philip Morris International, British American Tobacco, Japan Tobacco International and Imperil Brands (www.tobaccofreekids.com).

The Tobacco Giant British American Tobacco faces a new legal complaint in Brazil for the company's use of social influencers to advertise cigarettes on social networks like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. (Myers, 2018). Brazil is the second country in which legal action has been initiated as a result of big tobacco secret use of social media to advertise cigarettes. (Myers, 2018). Besides the ban of advertising on social media BAT continues aggressively to market their deadly products and have found new ways to secretly do so, exploiting the vast and global reach of social media networks like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter Social networking.

Online social networking is often disparaged as little more than a vehicle for youth to spend hours updating friends on the trivia of their daily life. This limited stereotype ignores how social networking websites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, MySpace, and LinkedIn also used to unite people with common interest and to disseminate content in ways and at speeds that were previously unimaginable. Online social networking involves the explicit modeling of connections, which in turn enables and facilitates collaboration and collaborative filtering process. Unlike traditional forms of advertising that seek to target customer's swath advertisements, companies and marketers that successfully join in this complex network of relations seek to befriend their customers wanting to influence consumers to express their personality through brand association. Tobacco brands with a visual presence on social networking personal pages can be likened to the promotional power of smokers displaying their preferred brand packages on restaurant table or bar. One of the most successful online social networking is Facebook (<http://www.facebook>).

Tobacco companies seek out for young people who have significant numbers of followers online and pay them to post photos featuring Marlboro, Lucky Strike and other cigarette brand. Social media influencers are trained on what cigarettes brands to promote, when to post pictures for maximum exposure and how take natural photos that do not look like staged advertisements. In Italy influencers paid to promote Lucky Strike cigarettes were instructed to make sure health warnings on cigarette packs were not visible in photos posted online. Tobacco companies organize parties and contest with cigarettes brand sponsorship and encourage participants to post on their social media accounts. Influencers are instructed to include specific hash tags promoting cigarettes on social media. Social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook are viewed as online services that allow communities to collaborate, connect, interact with user generated or shared content that is modified, shared and engaged with over time (McCay-Peet & Quan-Haase, 2016). In context of tobacco products such as e-cigarettes, these platforms offer opportunities marketing played a critical role in fueling the popularity of cigarettes among young people and causes a youth cigarette epidemic. A study by Stanford University researchers (2010) indicated that the cigarette launch advertising was patently youth oriented view Jull marketing image. Recent media reports and studies have documented the widespread use of social media to market tobacco products. As Reported by the New York Times in August 2018, tobacco companies have paid social media influencers to promote cigarettes on platforms including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter as part of a marketing strategy documented in more than 40 countries. The influencers are usually young, attractive and have large social media followings. These social campaigns have been viewed more than 25 billion times worldwide, according to social media analytics. Social media marketing is of great importance to cigarettes companies since it enables the firms to target more young people and smokers which results in more demand of cigarettes, a development that leads to more sales.

- **The Use of Social Media Marketing by Cigarette Companies in Zimbabwe**

The Savanna Tobacco makes use of new social media platforms such as WhatsApp to connect to its customers. Most articles written by the Herald, H-Metro among other papers for Savanna Tobacco show how the Marketing department at Savanna Tobacco make use of different types of medium in the enhancement of brand image and identity. It is through the use of different mediums that necessitates public awareness. Savanna Tobacco in Zimbabwe also makes use of Facebook. (Masuku and Musara, 2015). Rudland and George Company has also Facebook page where customers will comment the quality of product and the services offered by the firm. British American Tobacco advertises its tobacco products on Facebook, YouTube and Instagram.

- **Social Media Marketing Components**

Social media marketing has different components which include Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram. Nark, et al (2017) and Punjabi (2020) also point out WhatsApp to be efficient marketing tool. Facebook is the best marketing tool because is the only mostly used by young people thus enables Cigarettes companies to be able to communicate with smokers more effectively than using newspapers so Cigarettes companies in Zimbabwe will be able to target more smokers as it will advertise the prices and types of cigarettes smokers will want on YouTube and Facebook and this will lead to more sales. Social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook are viewed as online services that allow communities to collaborate, connect and interact with user generated or share content that is modified, shared and engaged over time (McCay-Peet and Quan-Haase, 2016). In the context of tobacco products such as e-cigarettes, these platforms offer opportunities for the public to engage with tobacco related content and in e-cigarette policy discussions (Homily and Mullin, 2015). Engagement in this context is of define in terms of experiences that are either driven by personal habits or preferences (e.g. coming across a YouTube video and watching it or involving discussions and socializing with others on the internet. (Colder, Malt House & Schaedel, 2009). Social media engagement with tobacco related messages or campaigns makes these topics salient among audiences, facilitates targeted and rapid dissemination of marketing messages, and provides as indicator of viewer involvement for real time monitoring of public engagement (Allen Tell, 2017); Jaward, Abass, Hariri & Akl, 2015; Vallone tell 2017).

Facebook is the biggest social network worldwide based on global reach and total active users. In the third quarter of 2012, the number of active Facebook users surpassed one billion, making it the first social network ever to do (Clement, 2020). Shao, Jones and Grace (2015) found that Facebook interactions echoed the brand meaning advocated on the company websites. Cigarette Companies mainly use Facebook to advertise their cigarettes and is the most successful online social networking sites (<http://www.facebook.com>) the exponential growth of Facebook since its launch in February 2004 has seen attract more than 350 million users worldwide. With tobacco markets shrinking in high income countries; globalization has enabled tobacco

companies to widen their focus. Given the globalizing effects of communications technology reaching these potential consumers through online media may be a highly efficient strategy. British American Tobacco company employees authorized by BAT could legitimately create pages for BAT brands on Face book for example a page called Lucky Strike Tobacco will show all activity including any messages or posting images undertaken by the page creators being undertaken by Lucky Strike Tobacco. Tobacco users more likely to search for and join face book groups, pages events featuring their favored tobacco brand rather than (BAT) Company itself. British American Tobacco (BAT) employees are energetically promoting BAT brands on face book through joining and administrating groups, joining pages as fans and posting photographs of BAT events, products and promotional items. Face book will enable Cigarette companies to attract more smokers, youth and customers to buy cigarettes and this will lead to more sales. British American Tobacco Zimbabwe uses face book that enables the company sales to be increased. The cigarette manufacturer posted an 18% increase in after tax profit of US\$31, 4 million in the year ended 31 December 2018 from US\$26, 7 million from previous year driven by an increase in sales of 16% and improved operational efficiencies. The group revenue was up 16% to US\$42, 7 million from US\$36, 8 million backed by strong sales performance thus Face book has positive impact on sales of British American Tobacco in Zimbabwe (Nyoni, 2019).

Face Book is also used by Zimbabwe Savanna Tobacco Company and also R& G has also a Face book page where customers comment and able to see the cigarettes which the company will be selling to them. R&G created its face book page in August 2016. R&G face book page has only 271 likes which means the company had not efficiently using face book and thus led to the company filing to have more sales.

Whatsapp is a free mobile messaging application which is massively used for international messaging and voice calls. Whatsapp was founded in 2009 by Whatsapp Inc. According to Clement (2019), in 2019 Whatsapp ranked first worldwide as the most popular mobile messenger application with 1.6 billion monthly active users which more than Face book Messenger and We Chat with 1.3 billion and 1.1 billion respectively. In addition to this, it was the world's third most popular social network behind face book and You Tube. Bhatt & Nashua (2016) reveals that Whatsapp is a medium of making communication easier and faster thereby enhancing effective flow of information idea sharing and connecting people easier. Examining its empirically it is found that Whatsapp has positive impact on sales as it enables Cigarette companies to attract more smokers and youth and also the consumers will be aware of the products the company will be offering this will lead to more sales of cigarettes. However, selling cigarettes over Whatsapp is a criminal offence as advice by Megan Harrington Johnson, managing partner of HJW. According to legal expert, many vendors and companies are now taking their schemes online and these looking to make quick buck by selling cigarettes are advertising their stock cigarettes in what sap group chats and on Face book Messenger (Tom Head, 2020).

Instagram is a American photo and video sharing social networking service owned by Face book. Instagram is said to be the third most popular social network among the college students in the United States (Salomon, 2013). Instagram has 100 million monthly active users, 40 million photos were uploaded per day, 8500 likes and 1000 comments gained per second. (Buena and Lundberg, 2016) and (Wally and Cushy 2014) defined Instagram as a social media platform originally designed for Mobile phones. It is a platform for sharing images or videos with a description or a caption, which are searchable with hash tags and geotags. Users see paid partnerships with tag or posts when viewing that branded content on Instagram the change closes a loophole in face book advertising policies. Even though face book ad policies have banned the advertising of vaping tobacco and cigarettes was done privately and now can posts about them, now advertises, could theoretically put unpaid promotion behind those posts. (CBNC Newsletters, 2020).

Twitter is a free micro blogging, social messaging tool that lets you stay connected to people through tweets, a twitter specific post that can contain up to 140 characters, images, or videos. Twitter is used largely for reporting real time events and sharing what you are doing at the moment. (Webopedia). Twitter has been used as a platform for a wide variety of purposes in many scenarios by different business. It is used as the means for direct communication among social groups and organizations, especially with the use of hash tags, which enable tweet to be viewed by all users who follow a given topic that starts with the hash symbol. Research by different authors show that twitter is one of the most popular social media platform since its founding in 2006 (Soblvea et al, 2015).

You Tube is a video sharing service where users can watch, like share, comment and upload their own videos. The video service can be accessed on PCs, laptops, tables and via mobile phones. Several authors recognized You Tube as a video sharing website, that allow users to create and upload videos that are viewed and shared by hundreds of millions of viewers with over billions videos viewed each day (Freeman and Chapman, 2007) as cited by (Lee and Watkins, 2016), (Rein and Hay 2016) Marketers have traditionally turned to You Tube for branding, using to build awareness, consideration and preferences. Meanwhile, its impact on sales has been difficult to measure without access to more comprehensive date sets and analytical horsepower. You Tube is a Web 2.0 Tool. Cigarettes companies advertise their cigarettes on You Tube by posting images of attractive young people, particularly at a 2015 product launch party.

The Impact of Social Media Marketing on Sales

Social media marketing has impact on sales of the business in that it enables Cigarette companies and customers to interact effectively and also consumers interact amongst themselves. Hence the company can follow through these conversations and analyzes them and see what customers really need .After identifying these needs ,the firm can produce products to suit the needs of consumers and these would led to the company realizing profit , the firm would have driven up its sales by simply following the online conversation of consumers on social media .Moreover the firm can use this information what the consumer wants and provide to these needs .Social media marketing will have impact on sales in that social media engages customers in that the company will have set up pages on social media platforms like Face book ,Twitter and Instagram. They serve the purpose of updating the consumers about what is new and what challenge the company is having and this allows for 2-way communication with the consumer. The consumers will be answering some of the questions which will be posted by the firm bout what they think should be changed in the current. This builds an intimate

relationship the consumer and will lead to brand loyalty where the consumers will prefer the brands products or services to competitors even at times when the prices are higher than those of competitors. This will in the long run drive up sales of the firm because they would have engaged their target audience thus the smokers and consumers and accomplished brand loyalty as they will feel honored and cherished by the immediate response. More so social media marketing is less costly because the majority of social media sites are free to access, create profile and post information. Whereas traditional marketing campaigns can cost millions of dollars, many social media tools are free even for business use. Pay per click advertisement such as face book are geo targeted according to a specific criteria to the capability to spread news further within the network. As such, information can reach a large number of people in short time, thus will led to more sales to the business. Social media marketing if used appropriately and effectively it will results in more sales as the business will be able to target more cigarette smokers by the use of face book and more customers will be here if the good services offered by the company thus more sales. There is positive relationship between social media marketing and sales as Cigarette companies by using social media platforms like Face book and Instagram will be targeting more customers thus led to more customers buying cigarettes as they will be aware of the products and services being offered by the, as well as direct communication with customers that lead to more sales.

British American Tobacco and R&G cigarette companies have no detailed literature on how they use social media marketing and how the social media marketing effect sales. Most of the studies were focusing on the impact of social media marketing on sales in the case of cigarettes companies in other countries and there had no research on the impact of social media marketing on sales for Cigarette companies in Zimbabwe except only for Zimbabwe Savanna Tobacco

Conceptual Framework

This study focused on five elements of social media marketing which are the most important or critical for social media marketing activities and this included Face book, Whatsapp, Twitter, Instagram and You Tube. These elements are the main focus of this research and they establish how they impact or affect sales of the Cigarette companies and these components are critical for social media marketing activities in Zimbabwe.

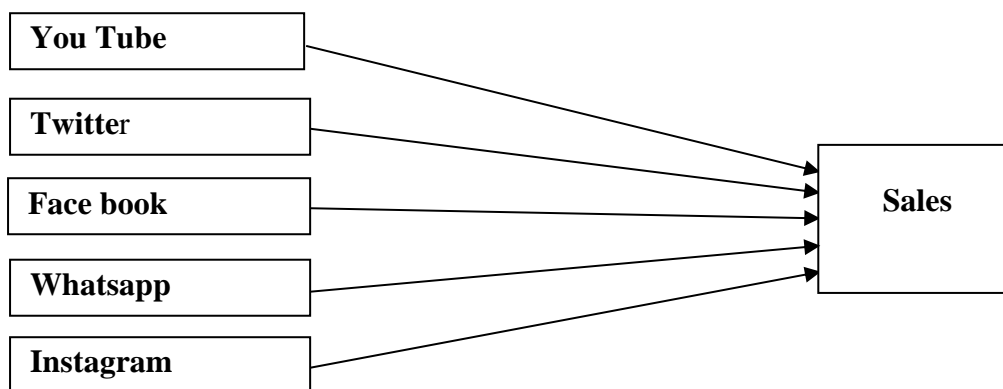


Figure 1 Conceptual framework

Source: Own

The above figure 1 shows how each of the element of social media marketing have impact on sales. The critical component of social media marketing are independent variables and this include You Tube, Face book, Twitter, Whatsapp, and Instagram that influence sales which are dependent variables.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

• The Extent To Which Social Media Marketing Increase Sales

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Neutral	0	0		0
	Agree	15	75	75	75
	strongly agree	5	25	25	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Table 1: How social media marketing increases sales

Source: Primary Data

Table 1 above shows that social media marketing has great impact on sales of the business. Social media affect sales to a greater extent since more employees and managers agree that social media affect sales thus 15 out of 20 agree that social media affects sales to a greater extent than other strategies that might be used to create awareness to customers.

- **Advertising Tobacco Products on Face Book Attracts More Customers**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Neutral	0	0		0
	Agree	16	80	80	80
	strongly agree	4	20	20	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: How advertising tobacco products on face book attracts customers

Source: Primary Data

The above Table 2 shows that advertising products on face book attracts more customers as these posts of tobacco products builds awareness to customers and this will lead to more sales. Most employees strongly agree that advertising tobacco products on face book attracts more customers as shown by (4/5) that agree that the platform attracts more customers. Hence Face book has positive impact on sales of the business.

- **Use of Social Media Marketing Increases Sales of the Business**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Neutral	0	0	0	10
	Agree	15	75	75	72
	strongly agree	5	25	25	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Table 3: Use of social media marketing on increasing sales

Source: Primary Data

The above Table 3 shows that 5 respondents out of 20 strongly agree that social media marketing increases sales of the business .15 respondents out of 20 agree that the use of social media increases sales of the business. The use of social media marketing has a great impact of sales of the business.

- **The Extent to Which Social Media Marketing Increases Sales of Cigarette Companies in Zimbabwe**

This section provides results concerning the extent to which Social Media Marketing increases sales of Cigarette companies. The respondents have indicated that social media platforms they were aware of and active on was Face book, Twitter, Instagram and You Tube. The Table 4 below shows the results which denoted the extent to which the used platforms impacts sales.

Table 4: Effects of social media marketing on sales

Product	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Face book	-	-	-	80%	20%

You Tube	45%	40 %	-	15%	-
Twitter	-	-	-	25%	75%
Integra	-	20%	-	50%	30%

Source: Researchers' own computations

The above Table 4 indicated that 80% and 20% of the respondents have agreed and strongly agreed respectively to the ascertainment that Face book has a significant impact on sales. In addition, You Tube had shown to be insignificant in increasing sales as indicated by 45% and 40% of the respondents strongly disagree and disagree respectively that You Tube increases sales of Cigarette companies. This could have been caused by the fact that You Tube has not been such a popular social media platform among target consumers of the organization. Twitter on the other hand, indicated to have a significant positive influence on sales as shown by 75% respondents strongly agreeing to the positive impact of twitter on sales. Despite 20% of respondents disagree that instagram increases sales, the platform also proved to have a great impact on sales, 50% agree and 30% strongly agree responses. Face book, Instagram and Twitter have positive impact on sales of the business.

- **Research Statistics Instrument Reliability**

The researchers used Cronbach's Alpha test in order to check the reliability and validity of the research instrument. Cronbach Alpha coefficient was observed to be 0.715. For research a minimum reliability of 7.0 is required for instrument. However, more researchers feel that it should be higher. Reliability of 70 indicates 70% consistency in the score that are produced by instrument. The Cronchach's coefficient value is greater than 0.70 indicating that the instrument is reliable and can be applied to similar study.

Pearson Correlation

Correlations		Social Media Marketing	Sales
Social Media Marketing	Pearson Correlation	1	.911**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	20	20
Sales	Pearson Correlation	.911**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	20	20

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5: Pearson Correlation

Source: Primary Data

Pearson Correlation shows relationship between 2 continues variable. When the value is between 0 and or -1 there is a relationship .Correlation =+1 there is a perfect relationship .In this case there is perfect relationship between social media marketing and sales.

Regression

Variables Entered/ Removed ^a

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Social Media Marketing ^b	.	Enter

Table 5: Regression

a. Dependent Variable: Sales

b. All requested variables entered

Table 6:

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.911 ^a	.831	.829	.29155

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Social Media Marketing
- b. Sales

Model Summary

Source: Primary Data

Table 6 above provides R and R squared values. The R value represents the simple correlation and is 0.11 which indicates a high degree of correlation. The R squared indicates how much of the total variation in the dependent variable sales can be explained by the independent variable social media marketing. In this case 83,1% can be explained which is very large.

As shown in Table 5 calculation of linear regression to predict the impact of social media marketing on sales of cigarette companies was done. In this investigation, all the hypotheses are accepted because p-value is below 0.05 for a 95% confidence level. Thus, the efficient use of social media marketing by cigarette companies thus the use of face book, twitter, you tube, and instagram and twitter will result in increased sales of the business. The results were consistent with Rutledge (2008) view that there is a positive relationship between social media marketing and sales of the business.

ANOVA ^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	59.619	1	59.619	701.369	.000 ^b
	Residual	12.156	23	.085		
	Total	71.775	24			

- a. Dependent Variable: Sales
- b. . Predicts: (Constant), Social Media Marketing

Table 7: ANOVA

Source: Primary Data

The ANOVA reports how well the regression equations fit the data (predicts the dependent variable and is shown above. This Table 6 indicates that the regression model predicts the dependent variable significantly well. The value of $P < 0.005$, which is less than 0.05 and this indicates that overall. The regression statistically predicts the outcome variable that it is a good fit for the data. As shown in table 4.10 the F-test is significant; thus, the researcher can assume that there is a correlation between the variables in the model. The significance value is F statistics 701.369 ($p = .000 < 0.05$), which is $p < 0.05$, in other words, the significance tells us that the researcher is (1-0.000) or 100% confident that the model was significant and the hypothesis is accepted, that means that the hypothesis which states that there is a correlation exist exists.

Coefficients

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.444	.182		-2.436	.016
	Social Media	1.059	.040	.911	26.483	.000
	Marketing					

- a. Dependent Variable: Sales
- b. Independent .Social media marketing (Face book, You Tube, Twitter, Whatsapp and Instagram)

Table 8: Coefficients

Source: Primary data

The Coefficient table provides us with the necessary information to predict sales from social media marketing. As well as determine whether social media contributes statistically to the model.

The Correlation that Exist Between Independent Variables and the Dependent Variable

Table 9: Model Summary

Model Summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin- Watson
1	.994 ^a	.983	.983	2.519	.330
a. Predictors: (Constant), Face book , Twitter, Whats App , Instagram and You Tube,					
b. Dependent Variable: Sales					

Source: Primary data

As shown on above in Table 7, the sales of the business are highly described by the predictor variables which numbers 0.983. This denotes that more sales of the business depend on how the business efficiently use the social media platform thus Face book, Twitter, You Tube, Whatsapp and Instagram. From what has been discovered above, the researcher can say that the use of Face book when advertising cigarettes will increase awareness to smokers and this will lead to more cigarettes being demanded and thus more sales to the business. The use of Face book will result in more sales and this means that Face book has positive impact on company sales. The use of Instagram, Youtube, Twitter and face book attracts more customers and this will lead to more demand of tobacco products and this will lead to more sales. There is Positive relationship between social media marketing and sales of the business.

CONCLUSION

The overall social media marketing and its five components, that is, face book, twitter, YouTube, instagram and Whatsapp are of great importance on attracting more customers than using posters and billboards and also these social media platforms increases sales of the business. The results of simple regression analysis revealed positive and significant correlation between social media marketing and sales of the business. The significant level between these two variables with a P value of 0.000, which indicates that the relationship between the independent and dependent variables is highly significant. The study found a positive relationship between social media marketing and sales of the business. This means that social media marketing have a greater potential of increasing sales of the business. The simple regression analysis found significant correlation between social media marketing business sales where the significance level of independent and dependent variables is 0.000.

Based on the descriptive analysis, it can be concluded from the study that, social media marketing strategies (Face book, Twitter, Youtube, Intstagram and Whatsapp) have a positive impact on sales of Cigarette companies. By efficiently using these social media platforms, businesses are able to build awareness to more customers. Goes on to attracts more smokers and customers to buy tobacco products and thus generating more sales for Cigarette companies although they might face challenges in form of legal constraints restricting them to advertise on social media. Such companies may secretly advice their products on social media platforms which will lead to more sales.

One implication from these findings is that Cigarette companies are facing challenges in advertising cigarettes on social media platforms therefore these in overcoming such challenges they need to advertise their products secretly on other social media sites. They can also make use of billboards and posters to create awareness to smokers and this will attract more customers and thus increased sales.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it can be recommended that:

- Cigarette companies in Zimbabwe should use social media sites to create or build awareness to customers although it might be illegal. The companies can advertise their products privately so that they will able to target more youth so by attracting more youth it will enable the business to have more demand of cigarettes by young generation even also adult smokers. This will result in more sales of the business and to their increase of sales. Cigarettes companies can also make use of billboards, posters, radio advertising in leading to the increase of the business sales. Social media marketing is of great importance to the business as it enables business to have more sales.
- Cigarette companies should also explore other social media platforms in marketing such as Whatsapp and LinkedIn in order to reach the diverse and wide range of smokers that may not be active on other social media platforms as they are on others. This will make them appealing to a wide range of different customers and this will lead to increased demand of cigarettes thus more sales to the business as more customers will be aware of cigarettes sold by the company.
- Cigarette Companies managers should encourage employees and agents to also share links, tag relatives and also share tobacco products on their own social media pages that acting as ambassadors of the brand. This builds awareness to customers. Employees and agents should regularly invite their friends to follow, like and share the organization social media platforms and this will build awareness to consumers and will lead to increased sales of cigarettes as more customers will demand more cigarettes.

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