EVALUATING ENTERTAINMENT MARKETING: A CASE OF SOCIAL MEDIA SKITS

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Abstract
Entertainment marketing is the promotion of products and services, with entertainment as the primary vehicle for delivering the advertising message. It is an effective means of marketing a brand in such a way as to thrill target markets and motivate them to try the promoted brand. The study was undertaken to evaluate the usefulness of entertainment marketing by way of examining consumers' experience and perception of it. The study was anchored on Uses and Gratifications Theory. Survey research design was adopted. Empirical data was collected at Tansian University Umunya from a sample of 338 regular undergraduate students by administering questionnaire to them. Tables with percentages were used to present and statistically analyze the data. The study found a high rate of exposure to social media entertainment skits. It also found high prevalence rate of entertainment marketing inigeria. Popular social media platforms for product placement were Facebook, WhatsApp, Tiktok, Instagram, and YouTube. The result also showed that consumers perceive entertainment marketing as an effective marketing strategy. The study found that entertainment marketing has a significant impact on consumer purchase decisions. One of the recommendations is that social media content creators should do their best to reward their audiences.

Keywords: Entertainment marketing, Social media, Entertainment, Product placement, Skit

INTRODUCTION
Technology is increasingly reshaping and redefining virtually every aspect of human activities. As Basaran and Ventura (2022) put it, the most striking and radical developments of the 20th century are undoubtedly related to Internet technologies, and the development of these technologies has caused various effects in almost every field. Entertainment, no doubt, is one of the fields radically affected by the Internet revolution. The era of social media has revolutionized the promotion of products and services across the globe. As a consequence, new marketing communication tools and advertising strategies are emerging and further creating new opportunities to make the most of the social media platforms. The birth of social media has ultimately given rise to innovations within the dynamic marketing paradigm. Today, social media platforms are awash with skits which entertain the audience as well as promote products and services at the same time. Since social media platforms are adopting entertainment as their stock in trade, most organizations are capitalizing on the trend to market their brands, hence the increasing adoption of skit as an emerging advertising strategy. Through Instagram, Tik Tok, Facebook, WhatsApp and other social media platforms,

organizations are increasing the visibility of their products and services through entertainment forms such as skit, music, dance, joke, and painting.

Entertainment has been generally adopted by the media industry as an integral part of it. In today's world, the nature of entertainment has blossomed and now extends to social media channels. And as entertainment extends its reach, so does any brand incorporated into it. Of course, the more people are exposed to the entertainment content, the more likely that the product or service incorporated has the potential to reach more target markets. This is because brands advertised through entertainment marketing has more customer engagement than brands advertised through the formalized advertising channels.

Entertainment marketing is an effective means of marketing products and services in such a way as to thrill target markets and motivate them to go ahead and share the message with friends and family. It is the promotion of a product or a brand, with entertainment as the primary vehicle for delivering the advertising message (Beaton, 2022). An advertising message so shared widely not only goes viral but also has potential for inducing repeated exposures because of the incorporated entertainment value.

The overall impact of the trend is that advertising is shifting gradually from the mainstream advertising media such as television, radio, newspaper, magazine, cinema, and billboard to social media platforms. The idea of incorporating advertising within entertainment formats is what has come to be known as entertainment marketing. Entertainment marketing is the promotion of a product or service with entertainment as the primary vehicle for delivering the advertising message (Beaton, 2022).

Statement of the Problem

Entertainment has a universal appeal, rooted in a people's culture. It is a rapidly growing field that impacts other aspects of human life. The nature of entertainment has widened to include social channels, so too has the reach of the entertainment industry. The media industry has embraced entertainment marketing as its stock-in-trade; hence, product placement has become a staple of the industry. Product placement is more likely to be shared and to go viral when it is incorporated into an entertainment form, and the more visibility a product or a service has, the more likely that potential customers will patronize it.

Social media is an effective platform for creating entertainment marketing. As social media transforms into social entertainment brands, Beaton (2022) asserts, brand's advertising strategies shift toward entertainment marketing. The benefit of social media entertainment skits is that the engagement of an entertaining short-form video is ten times higher than static social media posts — audiences are far more likely to click on the post and possibly even navigate to the online store and check out a product or service (Beaton, 2022). Social media channels like Tiktok and Facebook are the popular destinations for skits with embedded entertainment marketing.

The study aims to investigate how audiences respond to entertainment marketing. As audiences use the social media for entertainment purposes, are they attracted to the branded content embedded in the entertainment? There are as yet few empirical studies in the area of how audiences have benefitted from, or hurt by, the increasing number and influence of digital entertainment on promotion of products and services. This study hopes to fill this gap.

Objectives of Study

The main purpose of this study is to ascertain how social media audiences perceive and respond to advertising messages embedded in social media entertainment skits. Specifically, the study seeks to investigate the following objectives:

1. To find out the prevalence rate of entertainment marketing in social media entertainment skits.
2. To ascertain the influence of entertainment marketing on consumer purchase decisions.
3. To ascertain their perception of entertainment marketing.

Research Questions

The following questions were posed to guide the study:

1) What is the prevalence rate of entertainment marketing in social media entertainment skits?
2) What is the influence of entertainment marketing on consumer purchase decisions?
3) How do members of social media audience perceive entertainment marketing?

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
The Concept of Entertainment
Entertainment is a basic function of the mass media. It is media content that has a profound impact on the destiny of any group of people. This is because entertainment has a universal appeal, rooted in a people's culture. It is a rapidly growing field that impacts other aspects of human life. Entertainment is a universal practice engaged in by most societies at all stages of human development. Media entertainment is not always trivial material packaged to provide escape and diversion. It also contains a lot of information in implicit messages loaded with cultural values (Okunna & Omenugha, 2012, p.181).

Culture, demography, and technology make it easier to add entertainment to every experience. Entertainment encompasses many sectors and subsections (Foutz, 2017), from publishing to gaming. It is quite important to serve entertainment to people of different ages and, sexes and cultural structures via technological innovation and convenience (Bugday & Lembet, 2016). As Koumar (2021) pointed out, the Internet is necessary for entertainment. Internet technologies, no doubt, are growing rapidly and impacting almost every human endeavour. Entertainment is not left out in this trend. Entertainment plays such a significant role in marketing that Kaser and Oelkers (2021) consider it a marketable product (Basaran & Ventura, 2022). The digital entertainment is driven by the internet technologies. Today, entertainment marketing is holding sway, gradually refining conventional marketing strategies.

Technological developments in the 20th century have led to entertainment being produced independent of the audience, packaged and sold by the entertainment industry on a commercial basis. Referred to as show business by many, the industry relies on a business model to produce, market, broadcast or distribute many of its traditional forms as well as performances of all types. Due to the immense success of the industry, its economics has led to a separate area of academic study (Amanze, 2021).

Entertainment Marketing
Entertainment marketing is the promotion of products and services by means of entertainment as its primary vehicle for delivering the advertising message. As social media transforms into social entertainment, brands' advertising strategies have also shifted toward entertainment marketing (Beaton, 2023). More and more firms are now turning to social media skits for passing their advertising message. Audiences of these skits get to see the advertising message in the process of watching the entertaining content. Consequently, the increasing audience exposure to social media entertainment has gradually resulted in advertisers and development communicators taking over the space (Cunnigham & Craig, 2016; Sheth & Kim, 2017). Ojomo and Sodeinde (2021) rightly pointed out that, with entertainment marketing, while the members of the social media audience are being entertained, the entertainment subtly addresses brand support, purchase, and practice intention of the audience.

Ajayi (2021), citing (Joseph, 2021), stated that a skit maker understands that a consumer values his time; therefore, he makes his video content simple and straight to the point without losing the humorous part. Similarly, Beaton (2022) rightly pointed out that the benefit of this shift is that the engagement of entertaining short-form video is ten times higher than static social media posts — audiences are far more likely to click on your post and possibly even navigate to your online store and check out a product. The word-of-mouth effect also means that shoppers are more likely to shop in-store too, and share their purchases with their audiences to inspire even more purchases. Entertainment marketing has now become a platform for doing serious business by skit makers and advertisers.

Brands are now using the rising influence of skit and comedy to communicate their products and services to the consumers. They leverage the skit maker's growing number of followers to sell their products and services to a larger audience even to those who are not within their localities, but indirectly put it in the mind of the audience Ajayi (2021). This is possible only because they rely on the internet, which is not limited by boundaries since these skit makers have audiences around the world. Many companies are beginning to embrace entertainment marketing because of of the roles skit comedians are playing to influence the

audience. Ajayi (2021) has argued that selling a product to consumers by communicating the benefits creates more engagement from the consumers than directly putting it in the face of the consumers. This is a unique way these skit makers are able to influence consumers to patronize a product. Using jokes as a vehicle, they communicate the efficacy and usefulness of a brand, while leaving the audience in a good mood to make a decision.

Brands which have used this medium to promote their products include Odogwu Bitters, De General Bitters, Buypower, 1x Bet, Thermocool, Wazobet, OctaFX, Villa Picasso Hotel, etc. According to Ajayi (2021), on the average, Nigerian skit makers earn as much as N500,000 – N1 million for product placement. Beaton (2023) reported that Dash Hudson determined through its 2023 social media benchmarks that the entertainment industry, which includes the media and publishing industry, is now the top industry on TikTok, supplanting the beauty industry, which has long reigned supreme. This signals a strong shift in what users are getting in social media channels, as channels like TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook have now become the prime destinations for popular culture.

Theoretical Framework: Uses and Gratification Theory
The study takes a look at the relevant communication theory that guides the study – Uses and Gratification Theory. This study is rooted within the broad theoretical framework of the Uses. The theory has its roots in the 1940s, when researchers became interested in why people engage in various forms of media behaviour (Lazersfeld & Stanton, 1949). According to Ijwo and Ikanni, as cited in Okpaga (2014), the origin of the theory is traceable to the functionalist paradigm in the social sciences. It was championed by Katz and his colleagues who laid the theoretical foundation of building the uses and gratification approach through their various researches in mass communication. The theory seeks to understand why individuals use and choose certain media in the way they do, which makes it different from the traditional effects approach (which views media users as passive, without the ability to choose). The importance of the uses and gratifications theory lies in its ability to focus on the interaction of media users and the media when trying to understand media uses. As such it is able to produce abundant research on the ways in which humans interact with the media (Ruggiero, 2000).

Eighmey, as cited in Ukonu, Ani and Ndubisi (2013), opined that the media can have little or no impact on persons who have no use for them; that media fare is selected rather than imposed and that particular media offering is chosen because it is meaningful to those who choose it. The theory also postulates that the gratifications sought and obtained from selected media have largely contributed to the way media consumers interact with the various media. Therefore, the application of the uses and gratifications theory to improve our understanding of the use pattern of social network sites amongst the secondary school students and indeed the general public becomes legitimate.

As new technologies present people with more and more choices, it becomes necessary to decode the uses and gratifications of such communication experiences (Ukonu, Ani & Ndubisi, 2013). The Uses and Gratifications Theory thus offers a convincing explanation for changes in media use patterns, following the adoption of new communication technologies (Ruggiero, 2000). New media supports interactivity, which significantly supports the core uses and gratifications notion of active users. The new media have a number of aspects that offer a vast continuum of communication behaviours to examine.

The relevance of the Uses and Gratifications Theory to this study lies in the postulation that media serve the audience. Through uses and gratifications research, communication scholars have shown that everywhere, people selectively expose themselves to media content, choosing only those media messages that would serve the function of satisfying or gratifying their needs. To this end, social media provides a pool of entertainment content that could help in influencing Nigerians, especially the youth either positively or negatively. Also, young social media audiences can enjoy the luxury of choosing which information serves them most as well as choosing the way they use such information.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted quantitative research approach, with descriptive survey as its research design. This research design is appropriate for the study since survey focuses on people, the vital facts of the people, their belief system, opinions, attitudes, motivation and general behaviour.

The population of the study comprised all the regular undergraduate students of Tansian University. The population of Tansian University in 2022/2023 academic year was 2,173 (Admission Unit). Tansian University, Umunya, Anambra State, Nigeria. has two campuses: Umunya and Oba. The University, as of 2022/2023 academic session, had five faculties, namely Management and Social Sciences, Natural and Applied Sciences, Law, Health Sciences, and Education.

A study sample of 338 was drawn from 2,173 regular undergraduate students of Tansian University using the statistical formula by Taro Yamane. The sample size used was sufficient enough to represent the entire population frame.

First, Tansian University was purposively selected. At the second stage, random sampling of the five faculties was made. The faculties are: Faculty of Management & Social Sciences (505), Faculty of Applied & Natural Sciences (512), Faculty of Law (89), Faculty of Health Sciences (959), and Faculty of Education (108). The third stage involved the random selection of two faculties (one from either campus) from the five faculties in the University. The two randomly selected faculties were Faculty of Applied and Natural Sciences (Oba campus) and Faculty of Management & Social Sciences (Umunya campus). Thereafter, three departments each were randomly selected from the two selected faculties. The selected departments were Microbiology, Computer Science, and Biochemistry (Faculty of Natural & Applied Sciences); and Accounting, Business Administration, and Economics (Faculty of Management & Social Sciences).

To get the percentage for each of the selected faculties:

Faculty of Applied and Natural Sciences: $\frac{512}{1017} \times \frac{100}{1} = 50.3\%$

Faculty of Management and Social Sciences: $\frac{505}{1017} \times \frac{100}{1} = 49.7\%$

To get the number of respondents for each faculty:

Faculty of Applied and Natural Sciences: $\frac{50.3}{100} \times \frac{338}{1} = 170$

Faculty of Management and Social Sciences: $\frac{49.7}{100} \times \frac{338}{1} = 168.$

Table 1: Order of distribution of 338 copies of the questionnaire to the respondents:

Faculty	Department	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Applied & Natural Sciences	Microbiology	57	16.9
	Computer Science	58	17.1
	Biochemistry	55	16.3
Management	Accounting	53	15.7
	Business Administration	57	16.9
	Economics	58	17.1
Total		338	100

At the next stage, the researcher adopted accidental non-probability sampling method to administer the instrument. The method entailed handing out copies of the questionnaire to any respondent he chanced upon. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the various respondents in their lecture halls. The instrument was allocated to the various levels of study based on their numeric strength.

Copies of the questionnaire were personally administered to the respondents. The three hundred and thirty-eight (338) copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents on a face-to-face basis. In the end, all three hundred and thirty-eight (338) copies of the questionnaire were duly completed and returned. This figure represents a response rate of 100%. The high response rate was probably because the instrument contained only ten items.

Table 2: Distribution of instrument according to year of study

Level	Frequency	Percentage

100 Level	68	20.1
200 Level	85	25.1
300 Level	105	31
400 Level	80	23.8
Total	338	100

The questionnaire was the data collection instrument used for the study. The choice of questionnaire was due to the large size of the population under study. The questionnaire contained 10 simple questions. All were closed-ended questions, which made it easy for the respondents to understand. The questionnaire comprised two sections: the first section contained questions that bordered on demographic variables; the second consisted of questions that provided answers to the research questions.

The collected data was analyzed using tables, frequencies and percentages. This method of data presentation and analysis allows for easy-to-understand format in relation to research questions it addresses.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Respondents' demography result showed that 167 respondents representing 49.4% were male, while 171 respondents representing 50.6% were female. Based on the data retrieved, 85 respondents representing 25.1% were aged between 16 – 20 years, 127 respondents representing 37.9% were between the ages of 21 – 25, while 125 respondents representing 37% were aged 26 and above.

Table 3: Access to Social Media Skits

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	336	94.4
No	2	0.6
Total	338	100

Data in Table 3 indicates that 336 respondents representing 99.4% have access to social media skits, while 2 respondents representing 0.6% do not have access to social media skits.

Table 4: Exposure to Entertainment Marketing

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	329	97.3
No	9	2.7
Total	338	100

Data in Table 4 indicates that 329 respondents representing 97.3% are exposed to entertainment marketing, while 9 respondents representing 2.7% are not exposed to entertainment marketing.

Table 5: Prevalence Rate of Entertainment Marketing in Nigeria

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	131	38.8
High	182	53.8
Low	16	4.7
Very low	9	2.7
Total	338	100

Result of data in Table 5 reveals that 131 respondents representing 38.8% reported very high prevalence rate for entertainment marketing in Nigeria, 182 respondents representing 53.8% reported high prevalence rate for entertainment marketing in Nigeria, 16 respondents representing 4.7% respondents reported low prevalence rate for entertainment marketing in Nigeria, while 9 respondents representing 2.7% reported very low prevalence rate for entertainment marketing in Nigeria.

Table 6: Favourite Social Media Platforms for Experiencing Entertainment Marketing

Variable	Frequency	Percent
WhatsApp	50	14.8
YouTube	56	16.6
Instagram	61	18
Tiktok	70	20.7
Facebook	93	27.5
Other	8	2.4
Total	338	100

Data in Table 6 indicates social media platforms through which the audience experience entertainment marketing. The result shows that 50 respondents representing 14.8% prefer experiencing entertainment marketing on WhatsApp, 56 respondents representing 16.6% prefer experiencing entertainment marketing on YouTube, 61 respondents representing 18% prefer experiencing entertainment marketing on Instagram, 70 respondents representing 20.7% prefer experiencing entertainment marketing on Tiktok, while 93 respondents representing 27.5% prefer experiencing entertainment marketing on Facebook. 8 respondents (2.4%) experience entertainment marketing on social media platforms other than the ones listed in the table.

Table 7: Influence of Entertainment Marketing on Consumer Purchase Decisions

Variable	Frequency	Percent
So significant	89	26.3
Significant	142	42.1
Insignificant	64	18.9
So insignificant	30	8.9
Don't know	13	3.8
Total	338	100

On the influence of entertainment marketing on consumer purchase decisions, result in Table 7 indicates that 89 respondents representing 26.3% believed that entertainment marketing has a very significant influence on their purchase decisions, 142 representing 42.1% believed that entertainment marketing has a significant influence on their purchase decisions, 64 respondents representing 18.9% believed that entertainment marketing has an insignificant influence on their purchase decisions, while 30 respondents representing 8.9% believed that entertainment marketing has a very insignificant influence on their purchase decisions. 13 (3.8%) respondents did not know how much influence entertainment marketing has on their purchase decisions.

Table 8: Respondents' Perception of Entertainment Marketing

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Effective marketing strategy	266	78.7
Not effective marketing strategy	72	21.3
Total	338	100

Result in Table 8 shows that 266 respondents representing 78.7% perceive entertainment marketing as an effective marketing strategy, while 72 respondents representing 21.3% perceive entertainment marketing as an ineffective marketing strategy.

Table 9: Addictiveness of Social Media Skits

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Very addictive	152	45

Addictive	124	36.7
Not addictive	43	12.7
Not at all addictive	12	3.6
Don't know	7	2
Total	338	100

Data in Table 9 indicates that 152 respondents representing 45% believed that social media skits are very addictive, 124 respondents representing 36.7% believed that social media skits are addictive, 43 respondents representing 12.7% believed that social media skits are not addictive, while 12 respondents representing 3.6% believed that social media skits are not at all addictive. 7 (2%) did not know how addictive social media skits are.

Discussion of Major Findings

This study investigated audience experience and perception of entertainment marketing. The results reveal that they have a rich experience of entertainment marketing. Findings reveal a 94 percent access to social media skits and a 98 percent exposure rate to entertainment marketing among the audience members. Also, the findings show that entertainment marketing has a high prevalence rate of 54 percent in Nigeria. The implication of the results is that more and more social media audiences get to see promotional activities conveyed to them through skits. This finding is in line with the assertion of Brown (2017) that the audiences have found greater advantage of the use of social media for entertainment purposes rather than just for information sharing and communication. Also, the finding concurs with the findings of Cunnigham and Craig (2016) and Sheth and Kim (2017), which assert that increasing audience exposure to social media entertainment has gradually resulted in advertisers and development communicators taking over the social media skit industry.

The study further finds that 79 percent of the respondents perceive entertainment marketing as an effective marketing strategy, while 21 percent perceive entertainment marketing as an ineffective marketing strategy. This finding implies that entertainment marketing is considered an effective strategy for promotion of products and services. This finding is consistent with the finding of Beaton (2022), which said that as social media transforms into social entertainment, brands' advertising strategies have also shifted toward entertainment marketing.

The study also reveals the influence of entertainment marketing on consumer purchase decisions, The result shows 26 percent of the respondents believed that entertainment marketing has a very significant influence on their purchase decisions, 42 percent believed that entertainment marketing has a significant influence on their purchase decisions, 19 percent believed that entertainment marketing has an insignificant influence on their purchase decisions, while 9 percent believed that entertainment marketing has a very insignificant influence on their purchase decisions.

On the popularity of social media platforms for entertainment marketing, the result indicates that 15 percent of the respondents prefer experiencing entertainment marketing on WhatsApp, 17 percent prefer YouTube, 18 percent prefer Instagram, 21 percent prefer Tiktok, while 28 percent prefer Facebook. This finding corroborates Dencheva's (2023) report that Facebook is the most commonly used social media platform among marketers worldwide.

Conclusion

As earlier stated, this study sought to examine the popularity of social media entertainment skits among Nigerian social media audience members. In particular, the study sought to find out their experience and perception of entertainment marketing.

The results of the study in general confirm a rich experience of entertainment marketing among audience members in Nigeria. The results reveal a very high audience access to social media skits and an equally high exposure to entertainment marketing. The results also show that entertainment marketing has a high prevalence rate in Nigeria. The results show that entertainment marketing is generally considered an effective marketing strategy.

Entertainment holds a special place in the hearts of both the young and the old. There is evidence from this study that social media audiences consider entertainment as part of their daily social and communication life. Social media audiences are turning to comedy skits on various social media platforms for gratification. Consequently, social media skit makers leverage the emerging field of social media to gratify their audiences with comedy, motivational speech, acting career, special abilities, choreography and so forth. In the process of providing audience members with entertainment, the skit makers engage in promotion of products or services.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study and the conclusion drawn, the following recommendations are made:

1. Advertisers who are yet to promote their brand through entertainment marketing are losing so much. Entertainment marketing has this subtle way of product placement, which advertising through conventional advertising media lacks.
2. Social media content creators should devise a means to reward their loyal fans. They should not forget that loyalty is what actually distinguishes them. This gesture would encourage the audience to promote their skits.
3. There is a need for skit makers to constantly improve their carriage, acting, communication sills, and production skills. The audience and advertisers always go for high-quality performances.
4. Too much consumption of media entertainment is wrong and should be discouraged. Entertainment should be consumed in moderation, especially by young members of the social audience. Too much of everything is bad.
5. Youth should not sacrifice their worthwhile duties on the altar of seeking entertainment. On no account should entertainment distract any person from his or her chores or work. There are instances where some people have seriously injured as a result of distraction caused by social media skits.
6. There is a need for young members of the audience to blend entertainment with work. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. Entertainment has some notable benefits for everyone. These benefits should be maximized by everyone.
7. Teachers, parents, guardians, and school management should teach students the importance of prioritizing their needs so that they would not be carried away by the allure of social media entertainment. They should be encouraged to explore the potential educational benefits of social media.

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