

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON STUDENTS' ENROLMENT AT THE FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, OKENE.

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Abstract

This research investigates the impact of social media on students' enrolment in the department of music at the Federal College of Education, Okene. Despite its rich history, the department has experienced a troubling decline in student numbers over the past five academic sessions. This decline threatens the department's sustainability. The paper underscores the importance of addressing social media's role in students' enrolment to ensure relevance of music education and an enduring vibrancy at the institution. Utilizing oral and observational methods for data collection, the research addresses the imperative role of social media in elevating the department's visibility and attracting prospective students. Key findings highlight the concerted decline in music students' enrolment as posing a significant threat to the sustainability and existence of the department. In response to these findings, the study recommends leveraging social media platforms as powerful tools for advertising and promoting the department, it emphasizes the need for comprehensive recording of all departmental performances to facilitate effective outreach and awareness creation. This research contributes valuable insights to the ongoing discourse on the challenges facing music education in the region and provides actionable recommendations for sustaining and enhancing the visibility of music departments in colleges of education.

Keywords: Musical Arts, Music Education, Social media, College of Education.

Introduction

The integration of social media into marketing strategies has become a prominent trend across various sectors, including the music industry and educational institutions. Recognizing the significance of marketing strategies is pivotal in addressing challenges such as declining students' enrolment Kotler and Fox, (1985), as cited in Chika, Nwafor, and Nwaneri, (2015), Institutions that neglect strategic marketing often grapple with issues such as dwindling enrolment, constrained budgets, and a blurred institutional image.

The past decade has witnessed a remarkable development in the utilization of social media within educational programs. Kennedy (2014), cited in Chika, Nwafor, and Nwaneri, (2015) emphasizes that social media, along with other ICT-driven media shape the perceived value of educational institutions among the target audience. It is highlighted as an effective strategy for increasing student enrolment by creating positive institutional image. While the potential benefits of social media marketing for schools are evident, the implementation of such strategies poses challenges. Educating Marketing Solution (2023) emphasizes that executing a social media marketing strategy for schools requires careful planning to align posts with overall recruitment goals, whether focused on reputation-building or increasing student enrolment.

Owusu's (2022) study underscores the global impact of social media in the music industry, asserting that a diverse array of professionals, including performers, producers, publicists, and event planners, derive their livelihood from music. The narrative highlights the indispensability of marketing, particularly through social media, in gaining the attention of listeners. Without effective marketing, artists may struggle to garner sufficient attention in the current era. Beyond its commercial aspects, the historical role of music as a catalyst for social transformation and community building is emphasized. The author opines that the cultural right embedded in music, contributes to human rights advocacy, freedom, and serves as a therapeutic tool for individuals. In this vein, this study sets the stage for a comprehensive exploration of the dual impact of social media marketing – on educational institutions grappling with student enrolment challenges and on the intricate landscape of the music industry, where visibility and attention are pivotal for success.

The Federal Government of Nigeria established colleges of education as part of its national policy, aiming to facilitate the teaching and learning of music. This initiative, designed to produce qualified music teachers for foundational education, is plagued by low student enrolment at the Federal College of Education Okene. Teacher education is recognized as crucial for maintaining educational quality, with learner achievement hinging on teacher competence, sensitivity, and motivation (Okebukola, 2012). Oyekan (2000), cited in Mmeremikwu,(n.d) defined teacher education as the provision of professional training over a specified period to prepare individuals for nurturing and developing young citizens into responsible and productive members of society.

Established in 1974, the Federal College of Education, Okene, originally

named Federal Advanced Teachers College and was renamed in 1985. Initially the department of music started with 24 students, the department experienced a gradual increase in students' population, reaching 100 by 1987. During this period, the demand for manpower in the music department intensified. However, the recent decline in student enrolment in the department (Federal College of Education, Okene portal) has become a source of grave concern. While numerous studies have focused on Federal Colleges of Education in Nigeria, there is a noticeable gap in research addressing methods to enhance student enrolment specifically in the Department of Music. This research aims to shed light on the current status of student enrolment in the Department of Music at the Federal College of Education, Okene. Additionally, it seeks to identify and propose strategies for improving student enrolment through the effective utilization of social media platforms.

Methodology

This study employs a survey research design to systematically examine the enrolment dynamics within the Department of Music over a five-year span, spanning from 2018 to 2023. This design is chosen for its suitability in providing a comprehensive understanding of the number of students admitted during this specified timeframe. Data collection is conducted through a combination of observational methods and interviews. The observational approach allows the researcher to gather firsthand insights into the dynamics at play and departmental activities, while interviews provides a qualitative dimension to the study by capturing perspectives from key stakeholders. In addition to primary data collection, a thorough review of relevant literature is undertaken. This includes consulting academic journals, books, and reputable internet sources to contextualize the findings within the broader landscape of music education and enrolment trends. The research population comprises all students in the department of music at Federal College of Education, Okene, and departmental examination officer alongside exams and records department FCE Okene.

Concept of Music Education

The concept of music education extends beyond the acquisition of musical skills, serving as a vital element in the holistic development of individuals. With advancements in teaching methodologies, shifts in learner profiles, and the significance of music education approaches like Kodaly, Orff, and Dalcroze, coupled with the influence of technology, there arises a pressing need for the re-evaluation of music curricula (Christophersen, 2015). In this dynamic context, globalization and technological progress highlight the imperative to revise educational content. As Christophersen (2015) suggests,

the rapid pace of technological advances underscores the necessity for updates in educational curricula.

Adeogun (2006) emphasizes the expansive impact of music education, asserting that it transcends individual boundaries, propelling learners to explore the broader world. This perspective underscores the transformative power of music education, empowering individuals not only to understand themselves but also to navigate and influence the emotions of others. *Scripp & Subotnik, (2003) in Wong, (2010) explained the views* emerging from the reconciliation of the essentialist and instrumentalist views of music education as follows:

- i. The term *music education* is defined for this purpose as the extension of pedagogical and training practices based on traditional goals of music education 'for its own sake.
- ii. The term *music-in-education* is offered here as a label for building on innovations in traditional music teaching, and, at the same time, committing music as an appropriate tool that enhances general education;
- iii. The concept of *learning through music* signifies music education's effect on learning outside of the narrow parameters of musical performance, analysis, or aesthetic experience; *Comprehensive, interdisciplinary music program* is a phrase intended to capture music educators' intent to reconcile the essentialist and instrumentalist perspectives. Innovation takes the form of programs that are wide ranging in scope and, at the same time, wedded to serving the individual school's core curriculum. The comprehensive study of music is designed to benefit both 'music for its own sake' and music for the sake of learning across the curriculum.

In the twenty-first century, music education has the potential to be one of the most beneficial disciplines for developing human personality. The emphasis on education across the globe has always been on individual formation, the enhancement and transmission of cultural heritage, and equipping individuals with the necessary knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes. According to Ogun, Nwuzo, and Muogilim (2008), cited in Eze (2010), they emphasize the significance of purposeful and relevant education. They argue that education achieves excellence when learners can apply their acquired knowledge to address challenges, whether personal or societal, thus demonstrating the practical impact of the learning experience.

Music education is an important part of education because it fosters personality development, fosters a sense of belonging, promotes unity

among children, and allows the fulfilment of set objectives. According to Okafor (2005), music education is focused on enabling man to express himself deeply. Effiong (2014) corroborates that, 'while music instructors equip and train individuals to be valuable to them, they are also nurtured for service to their fellow men.' Omibiyi-Obidike (2008) offers a definition of music education, characterizing it as a comprehensive educational system designed to equip students for practical and creative roles in society. This functional aspect suggests that music education holds the potential to prepare students for self-sufficiency beyond high school. Belson (2006), cited in Eze (2010), emphasizes the importance of music education aligning with the primary objective of fostering an understanding of music, leading to a lifelong appreciation and involvement in creative musical pursuits.

Furthermore, it is noted that aesthetic experiences contribute to enhancing and enriching life. A nation or human group's ability to analyse what they have learnt musically and what they should study in the future is facilitated by music education. More importantly, music education as a subject has the ability to foster the development of an independent individual. To develop a self-reliant individual, one must first learn to be self-sufficient in the setting of self-employment.

Concept of Social Media

Social media is known to have a tremendous impact on one's life which could either be negative or positive. Social media is an online space where individuals connect with each other to share information, ideas, and jokes, various forms of content and musical videos. It is an interactive online platform where communication, information and ideas can be shared. Social media is the term often used to refer to new forms of media that involve interactive participation. (Manning, 2014).

According to Manning (2014),

With the rise of digital and mobile technologies, interaction on a large scale became easier for individuals than ever before; and as such, a new media age was born where interactivity was placed at the centre of new media functions. One individual could now speak with instant feedback. Citizens and consumers used to have limited and somewhat muted voices, now they could share their opinions. The low cost and accessibility of new technology also allowed more options for media consumption than ever before – and so instead of only a few news outlets, individuals now have the ability to seek information from several sources and to dialogue with others via message forums about the information posted. (p.1158)

Perspectives on social media are at variants, ranging from social networking and news sharing to, micro blogging. The NFL society (n.d) defined social media as any digital technology that allows users to instantly generate and share information with the public. Social media includes a wide variety of websites and apps. Some, such as Twitter, whatsapp, facebook messenger are focused on sharing links and brief written messages. Others, like Instagram, facebook,tik tok,you tube are designed to facilitate sharing of photographs and videos. Social media are interactive technologies that facilitate the creation and sharing of information, ideas, interests, and other forms of expression through virtual communities and networks. (Wikipedia, assessed 13/10/2023).

In analyzing the different elements of social media the Wikipedia enumerated common features as follows:

1. Social media are interactive Web 2.0 internet-based applications.
2. User-generated content—such as text posts or coSmmments, digital photos or videos, and data generated through all online interactions—is the lifeblood of social media.
3. Users create service-specific profiles for the website or app that are designed and maintained by the social media organization.
4. Social media helps the development of online social networks, by connecting a user's profile, with those of other individuals or groups.(Wikipedia, assessed 13/10/2023).

Popular social media sites;

- Facebook
- Instagram
- WhatsApp
- Facebook Messenger
- TikTok
- YouTube

The primary motivation behind the emergence of diverse social media networks can be traced back to a common goal: facilitating communication, maintaining connections with distant friends and relatives, and creating awareness of products or services to the wider public. Pan and Crofts (2012), narrated that facebook was created because a Harvard undergraduate student wanted to connect with his fellow students. Twitter came from a brainstorming session of Twitter founder Evan Williams neither was created due to a deep understanding of social network theories.

The Transformative Power of Social Media Marketing in the Digital Age

In the contemporary landscape, the influence of social media on marketing is profound, catalyzing a paradigm shift in promotional strategies. The world, once analogue, has undergone a digital metamorphosis, elevating the significance of social media marketing (SMM) to unprecedented levels. According to Laffleur (2023), SMM emerges as a potent facet of internet marketing, utilizing various social media applications as dynamic tools. These platforms serve as fertile ground for brands to establish meaningful connections with their audience.

The objectives encompass not only building brand identity but also amplifying sales, directing web traffic, and cultivating a community of engaged followers who actively share and interact with content. Echoing this sentiment, Hayes (2023) delineates SMM as a multifaceted approach, synonymous with digital marketing and e-marketing. It leverages social media platforms, the virtual spaces where users construct social networks and exchange information. The overarching goals include brand building, sales augmentation, and the generation of web traffic.

Beyond merely facilitating interaction with existing customers and reaching new ones, SMM is distinguished by purpose-built data analytics. This analytical capability empowers marketers to meticulously track the efficacy of their campaigns, unveiling insights for continual improvement and innovation in engagement strategies (Hayes, 2023). In essence, SMM transcends conventional marketing paradigms, leveraging the interconnected nature of social media platforms to foster brand growth, enhance sales trajectories, and navigate the digital landscape with precision and agility.

Theoretical Framework

In delineating an effective framework for leveraging social media in school recruitment efforts, this study draws on McLuhan's Media Theory and incorporates insights from Pseudo-theories.

McLuhan's Media Theory: At its core, McLuhan's Media Theory underscores the symbiotic relationship between social media and society. As articulated by McLuhan (1995) and discussed by Pan and Crofts (2012), the theory posits that the transformative impact lies not solely in the content of the media but in the media itself. The famous assertion, "the media is the message," implies that the nature of the media platform alters individuals and societal behaviours. Consequently, the study emphasizes that the influence of media on society extends beyond the communicated content, emphasizing the profound implications of social media interactions on behaviour and perception.

Pseudo-theory: The Pseudo-theory integrated into the framework centres on the dynamic relationships among customers, marketers, and social media. Inspired by Jowyang's (2010), insights as discussed by Pan and Crofts (2012), this aspect of the framework encourages businesses to delve into the demographic, geographic, and psychographic profiles of their target audience.

Marketers are urged to formulate a social strategy, termed social graphics, by addressing critical questions: Where are customers present online? What are their social behaviours in digital spaces? Whose social information or influence do customers rely on? What constitutes their social influence? This pseudo-theory underscores the need for a comprehensive understanding of customers' online presence and behaviours to tailor effective social media strategies for school recruitment. In tandem, McLuhan's Media Theory and the Pseudo-theory form a robust theoretical framework, providing a lens through which the study explores the intricate dynamics of social media marketing for educational recruitment.

Data Presentation: Enrolment Trends in the Department of Music at Federal College of Education, Okene

Established in 1974 as Federal Advanced Teachers College, Okene, subsequently renamed in 1985 as Federal College of Education, Okene, this institution has a historical trajectory of academic evolution. A critical facet of its academic landscape is the Department of Music, which, despite historical prominence, is currently grappling with a concerning decline in student enrolment.

Enrolment Trends (2018-2023):

S/N	Academic Session	Students Admitted
1.	2018/2019	19
2.	2019/2020	16
3.	2020/2021	13
4.	2021/2022	9
5.	2022/ 2023	5

The table illustrates a disconcerting trend in the number of students admitted into the Department of Music over the past five academic sessions. The decline from 19 students in the 2018/2019 session to a mere 5 students in the 2022/2023 session is indicative of a substantial reduction in enrolment.

Implications: This diminishing trend raises a significant alarm for the department's sustainability and poses a looming threat to its continued existence. The institution needs to critically assess the factors contributing to this decline and implement strategic measures to reverse this trend, ensuring the enduring vibrancy and relevance of the Department of Music within Federal College of Education, Okene.

The Department of Music, once a vibrant hub for aspiring musicians and educators, has experienced a disconcerting decline in student enrolment over the past five academic sessions (2018/2019 to 2022/2023). Throughout its history, the Department of Music played a crucial role in nurturing musical talent and producing educators. However, recent trends paint a worrisome picture, revealing a stark reduction in the number of students opting for music education.

A decline of this magnitude could compromise the department's ability to offer a diverse and robust music education program, impacting both the academic community and the broader cultural landscape. To address this concerning trend, there is an urgent need for the institution to conduct a comprehensive review. This review should delve into the factors contributing to the decline and strategize ways to reinvigorate interest in the Department of Music. Potential initiatives may include targeted marketing campaigns, enhanced curriculum offerings, or partnerships with local musical communities. A proactive and strategic response is essential to ensure the continued vibrancy and relevance of music education within the institution.

Examining the current state of the department's resources, a noteworthy finding emerged during the evaluation of the availability of recorded practical performances. Regrettably, it was discovered that the department currently lacks any recorded practical performances in its repository. This absence represents a significant gap in showcasing the department's musical prowess and limits its capacity for wider publicity, particularly on social media platforms.

Conclusion

This study sheds light on the alarming decline in student enrolment within the Department of Music at the Federal College of Education, Okene, and highlights the pivotal role of social media in addressing this issue. The historical prominence of the department underscores the urgency of reversing the downward enrolment trend to safeguard its sustainability and contribution to musical education. The absence of recorded practical performances further underscores the need for strategic measures to enhance the department's visibility and promotional efforts on social media platforms. By implementing targeted marketing campaigns, the institution can rejuvenate interest in music

education and ensure its continued vibrancy within the academic community and broader cultural landscape. This research emphasizes the imperative of leveraging social media effectively to uphold the department's legacy and meet the evolving needs of aspiring musicians and educators.

Recommendation

The following strategic recommendations are proposed to address the decline in student enrolment and rejuvenate the Department of Music at Federal College of Education, Okene:

- **Leveraging Social Media for Awareness:** The department should initiate dynamic awareness campaigns using platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter. Engaging mediums like jingles and uploading departmental performances will showcase the musical prowess, attracting a broader audience and potential students.
- **Publicizing Departmental Image:** A concerted effort should be made to publicize the image and achievements of the Department of Music through various social media channels. Highlighting successes, faculty expertise, and unique features of the department will contribute to a positive and appealing public image.
- **Documenting Departmental Performances:** Considering the critical role of social media in promoting the department and attracting prospective students, the absence of recorded practical performances poses a notable constraint. It is crucial for the department to maintain a comprehensive record of all performances. Recording and archiving performances will not only serve as a valuable resource for promotional materials but also establish a historical documentation of the department's artistic endeavours.

These recommendations aim to proactively address the decline in enrolment by enhancing visibility, creating a positive public perception, and preserving the department's artistic legacy. Implementing these strategies will contribute to a renewed interest in the Department of Music, fostering increased applications and ensuring its sustained prominence within the academic community.

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