THE IMPACT OF TRADITIONAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA ON BRAND AWARENESS: A CASE STUDY OF COCA-COLA IN MWANZA, TANZANIA

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Abstract

This study explores the influence of traditional and social media channels on brand awareness, focusing specifically on Coca-Cola in Mwanza, Tanzania. The primary objectives are to examine the relationship between exposure to traditional media (such as television, radio, and print) and brand awareness, and to analyze the effect of social media engagement on consumer perception and recognition of Coca-Cola. Employing a quantitative research design, a structured survey was distributed to a random sample of 385 consumers in Mwanza, achieving a 73% response rate. Statistical analysis, including correlation and regression, reveals a significant impact of both traditional and social media on brand awareness. Findings indicate that while traditional media remains effective, social media engagement has emerged as a potent force in shaping consumer perceptions. This study contributes to understanding media effects on brand awareness within the Tanzanian context, offering insights for strategic marketing approaches in emerging markets. Practical implications highlight the need for Coca-Cola and similar brands to balance traditional advertising with robust social media engagement strategies to optimize brand recognition.

Keywords: Traditional media, social media, brand awareness.

INTRODUCTION

In today's dynamic marketplace, media channels play a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior and influencing brand perceptions. Traditional media such as television, radio, and print has long been fundamental in brand communication, offering extensive reach and enhancing visibility across diverse audiences (Belch & Belch, 2022). However, the rapid evolution of social media has transformed the way brands engage with consumers, creating real-time interaction opportunities that foster stronger brand awareness and encourage deeper connections with audiences (Felix, Rauschnabel, & Hinsch, 2017). Social media enables brands to cultivate relationships and facilitate the exchange of information in ways that traditional channels alone cannot achieve, making it a critical element of contemporary brand strategy (Alalwan et al., 2017).In emerging markets like Tanzania, where the influence of media on consumer awareness is relatively under-researched, understanding the interplay between traditional and social media is vital. Mwanza, the country's second-largest city, provides a unique setting for examining this relationship, particularly as Coca-Cola, a globally recognized brand, seeks to solidify its engagement with local consumers. Existing research suggests that brand awareness significantly impacts consumer choices, but much of this literature lacks focus on specific regional contexts, where unique socio-economic and cultural factors may alter media effectiveness and consumer responses (Chinomona & Maziriri, 2022).

While the impact of media on brand awareness has been widely studied globally, there is limited research within the Tanzanian context particularly on how both traditional and social media channels influence brand awareness in Mwanza. This gap presents an opportunity to investigate how these media channels collectively shape consumer perceptions of Coca-Cola in Mwanza, thereby offering insights that can guide tailored marketing strategies. By addressing this gap, this study contributes to understanding the nuanced effects of media on brand awareness, especially in emerging markets like Tanzania.

Theoretical Review

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) provides a foundation for understanding Coca-Cola's media strategies in influencing brand awareness, explaining how consumers process persuasive messages through two routes: central and peripheral (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). When consumers are

motivated and able to process information deeply, they engage in the central route, analyzing message content closely. In contrast, when motivation or cognitive capacity is lower, they follow the peripheral route, relying on cues like visual appeal or source familiarity.In this study, traditional media channels—television, radio, newspapers, and magazines align with the ELM's central route. These channels, which provide structured, one-way communication and broad reach, convey deliberate brand messaging, crucial for building awareness in markets like Tanzania, where traditional media continues to play a vital role (Valencia, 2022). This structured exposure fosters consumer engagement and brand perception.

Social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, fit within the peripheral route. Social media enables direct and interactive brand engagement, often through influencer endorsements and visually stimulating content that appeals to emotions and social cues. In Tanzania, the rise in smartphone use and internet access has increased social media's significance in influencing consumer attitudes and brand connections, providing Coca-Cola with a highly dynamic platform for engaging with consumers at varying involvement levels (Olaleye & Naidoo, 2022; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2023).

Empirical literature review

The empirical literature on the impact of traditional and social media on brand awareness indicates significant insights into how these media types operate and influence consumer perceptions.

Traditional media, especially television and radio, has been extensively studied for its effectiveness in building brand awareness. Research indicates that these channels create strong brand recall due to their wide reach and sensory engagement. Roozen et al. (2016) emphasize that television serves as a powerful medium for shaping consumer perceptions, particularly through its ability to engage both visual and auditory senses. Haule (2018) further supports this by highlighting the significant impact of television advertisements in Tanzania on consumer perception formation. Similarly, radio advertising has proven effective in influencing brand awareness, especially in rural regions where it remains a primary source of information (Mmasy et al., 2017).The consistent messaging inherent in traditional media helps reinforce brand recognition, which contributes to building consumer trust (Smith & Yang, 2015). However, a notable limitation of traditional media is its one-way communication format, which restricts interaction between brands and consumers. This aspect is particularly critical in the current digital landscape, where consumers increasingly seek interactive and engaging brand experiences.

In the context of Coca-Cola in Mwanza, Tanzania, the reliance on traditional media must be complemented by strategies that promote consumer engagement. While traditional media is vital for establishing a strong brand presence, Coca-Cola should explore innovative approaches that facilitate two-way communication. This could involve integrating feedback mechanisms within advertisements or leveraging events that encourage audience participation, thus enhancing overall consumer engagement and connection with the brand.

Social media presents a contrasting approach to brand engagement, characterized by its interactive nature, which allows brands to connect with consumers on a more personalized level. Research by Bruhn, Schoenmueller, and Schäfer (2012) demonstrates that social media plays a significant role in building a hedonic brand image through user-generated content and sharing. This amplification of brand awareness is further enhanced by the involvement of social media influencers, who are crucial in shaping consumer perceptions through authentic endorsements (Sudha & Sheena, 2017). A study by Olaleye and Naidoo (2020) underscores the positive influence of social media on brand awareness in Nigeria, attributing this to the interactive engagement and content sharing that fosters consumer trust. In East Africa, Balaban and Mustatea (2019) note that social media influencers significantly impact brand awareness, particularly in the lifestyle and consumer goods sectors, by leveraging their credibility and reach.For Coca-Cola, the dynamic nature of social media offers an invaluable opportunity to engage consumers and foster emotional connections. By strategically utilizing influencers and encouraging user-generated content, Coca-Cola can enhance brand visibility and strengthen consumer loyalty. However, this approach requires careful management to ensure that brand messaging remains authentic and resonates with the target audience. While social media provides an avenue for increased brand awareness, Coca-Cola must navigate potential pitfalls, such as misinformation or negative consumer feedback, which could undermine brand reputation.

Research indicates that both traditional and social media can effectively raise brand awareness, albeit through different mechanisms. Bruhn et al. (2012) suggest that traditional media primarily drives functional brand awareness through structured advertising, while social media enhances brand image and consumer connection through interactive content. This dual influence suggests that brands could benefit from an integrated media strategy that leverages the strengths of both types. In the case of Coca-Cola in Mwanza, Tanzania, the integration of traditional and social media strategies could create a more robust approach to brand awareness.

By combining the broad reach of traditional media with the interactive capabilities of social media, Coca-Cola can create a comprehensive marketing strategy that addresses various consumer preferences and behaviors. However, the limited studies focused on the specific interplay between these media types in Tanzania highlight a critical gap in understanding their complementary effects. This study aims to fill this gap by examining how the combination of traditional and social media can impact Coca-Cola's brand awareness, thus providing valuable insights for marketers looking to optimize their strategies in similar contexts.

Methods

The investigation into the impact of traditional and social media on brand awareness of Coca-Cola products in Mwanza employed a quantitative research design, gathering empirical data through structured questionnaires. The questionnaires consisted of a mix of closed-ended multiple-choice questions and Likert scale items aimed at assessing participants' exposure to media, perceptions of brand awareness, and purchase intentions. Prior to distribution, the questionnaire underwent a pre-testing phase to ensure clarity and comprehensibility, with feedback incorporated to refine the instrument. Data collection utilized a dual approach to maximize reach and accommodate participant preferences: online platforms for those comfortable with digital engagement, and in-person interviews for participants who preferred direct interaction. This strategy facilitated a diverse and representative sample of 385 respondents, determined using the Cochran formula for unknown populations, which enhances the generalizability of findings.

Once data collection was completed, various statistical methods were employed for analysis. Descriptive statistics summarized demographic information and provided a general overview of the data. Correlation analysis examined relationships between variables, while regression analysis assessed how media exposure predicted brand awareness levels. Reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's alpha to evaluate the internal consistency of the scales. Data analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. To ensure validity, the questionnaire was based on established literature, and the pre-testing phase allowed for refinement based on participant feedback. Reliability was assessed, with values above 0.60 indicating acceptable internal consistency, aiming for high reliability across measurement scales. Ethical considerations were integral to the research, adhering to protocols that protect participants' rights. Informed consent was obtained by informing participants about the study's objectives and methods, while confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing identities and securing data storage. Participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty, ensuring the integrity of the research process and fostering trust among participants.

Table1. Summary of the Respondents' Profile

Item	N	%
Gender		
Males	100	27.2%
Females	181	72.7%
Total	**281**	**100%**
Age		
18-24 years	20	4.5%
25-34 years	80	36.3%
35-44 years	100	45.4%
45-54 years	40	6.8%
55 and above	41	6.8%
Total	**281**	**100%**
Marital status		
Single	23	10.4%
Married	55	25 %
Divorced	17	7.7%
Widow	9	4%
Total	**281**	**100**
Education Level		
Secondary school	2	0.9%
Diploma	88	40%
Degree	7	6.6%
Post graduate	0	0%
Total	**281**	**100**

Researcher 2023

Results and Findings

This section presents the results and findings of the study on the effects of Traditional Media and Social Media on Brand Awareness. Through the examination of key statistical outputs, including reliability tests and regression analyses, this section aims to elucidate how Traditional Media and Social Media interact to influence Brand Awareness, thereby providing actionable insights for marketers and businesses striving to enhance their branding strategies. The findings will focus on the significance of both media types in shaping brand perceptions, offering valuable recommendations for effective branding strategies.

Reliability Test

The reliability of the measurement dimensions in this study was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, which measures internal consistency. According to established benchmarks, a value of .60 or higher is considered acceptable. The analysis revealed Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.759 to 0.872 for Traditional Media, Social Media, and Brand Awareness, indicating strong internal consistency. These findings confirm that the measurement scales are reliable for exploring brand awareness dynamics.

Table2. Reliability Test-Crobanch Alpha

Variable	No. of items	Cronbach Alpha
Traditional Media (TM)	3	.850
Social Media (SM)	4	.759
Brand Awareness (BA)	3	.872

Researcher 2023

Multiple Regression Analysis Results

To address the research objectives, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to explore the relationship between Traditional Media (TM) and Social Media (SM) as independent variables, and Brand Awareness (BA) as the dependent variable. The analysis utilized SPSS to produce three key tables: the Model Summary, ANOVA, and Regression Coefficients as presented below and description.

Model Summary

Table3. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.764[a]	.719	.687	.4315	1.625

a. Predictors: (Constant), TM, SM

b. Dependent Variable: BA

Researcher 2023

The Model Summary indicates a strong relationship between the independent variables and Brand Awareness, with an R value of 0.764. The R-squared value of 0.719 suggests that approximately 71.9% of the variance in Brand Awareness can be explained by the combined effects of Traditional Media and Social Media, while the adjusted R-squared value of 0.687 provides a slightly more conservative estimate, reinforcing the adequacy of the model.

ANOVA test

Table 4 ANOVA

Model		Sum-of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	13.168	8	1.863	18.76	.000[b]
	Residual	11.884	212	.110		
	Total	22.951	285			

a. Dependent Variable: BA

b. Predictors: (Constant), TM, SM

Researcher 2023

The ANOVA results demonstrate that the model is statistically significant, with an F-value of 18.76 and a p-value of 0.000. This indicates a significant relationship between the independent variables and Brand Awareness, confirming that Traditional Media and Social Media contribute meaningfully to the prediction of Brand Awareness.

Regression Coefficients

Table 5 Regression Coefficients

Model		Unst Coefficients.		Stand Coefficients		Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B			t		Tolerance	VIF
Error	Beta							
1	(Constant)	2.468	.423		5.628	.000		
	TM	.545	.256	.453	.438	.001	.946	1.057
	SM	.646	.181	.307	.230	.000	.841	1.189
a.	Dependent Variable: BA							

Researcher 2023

The Regression Coefficients reveal the individual contributions of each independent variable. The coefficient for Traditional Media is 0.545 (p = 0.001), indicating a strong positive effect on Brand Awareness, while the coefficient for Social Media is 0.646 (p = 0.000), suggesting an even stronger positive influence. These results suggest that both media types are critical in enhancing Brand Awareness, with Social Media showing a slightly greater impact.

Discussion of Findings

Effects of Traditional Media on Brand Awareness

The regression analysis revealed a significant relationship between traditional media and brand awareness, accounting for 55% of the variance in brand awareness (p < .001). This finding is consistent with previous research emphasizing the extensive reach of traditional media, particularly television and radio, in enhancing brand exposure. Marketing Charts (2020) highlighted the substantial influence of TV advertising on consumer purchasing decisions, reinforcing the impact of traditional media on brand awareness. Edelman's Trust Barometer (2021) supports the notion that established media outlets are perceived as more trustworthy than emerging digital platforms. Brands featured in credible traditional media channels experience enhanced trust and recognition, which positively influences brand awareness. Additionally, Nielsen (2016) noted that frequent exposure through traditional media leads to better brand recognition and recall over time.

Krcmar and Greene (2013) demonstrated that television advertising significantly increases positive brand awareness, while Smith and Yang (2015) found that print advertising positively affects brand attitudes. The interactive nature of traditional media, combined with consistent exposure, plays a critical role in shaping consumer perceptions and driving brand awareness.

Effects of Social Media on Brand Awareness

The regression analysis further illustrated that social media accounts for 65% of the variance in brand awareness (p < .001). This substantial influence is supported by the global reach of social media platforms, which facilitate brand engagement with an extensive audience. According to Statista (2021), there are over 4.66 billion active social media users worldwide, highlighting the potential for brands to increase exposure. Research indicates that the interactive and engaging nature of social media enhances brand awareness. Social Media Examiner (2021) noted that 58% of marketers prioritize original written content for social media, emphasizing its role in capturing user attention. Additionally, social media encourages user-generated content and brand advocacy, amplifying brand messages within user networks.

A Nielsen report (2019) revealed that 92% of consumers trust recommendations from friends and family over traditional advertising, underscoring social media's powerful influence on brand perception. Olaleye and Naidoo (2020) highlighted the positive impact of social media marketing on brand awareness, emphasizing interactivity, information sharing, and entertainment value as key factors. Fournier and Avery (2011) demonstrated that engagement within online brand communities positively influences brand awareness and loyalty. The interactive nature of social media allows brands to cultivate a sense of community, further enhancing brand awareness. This trend is especially relevant in the African context, where social media serves as a critical platform for brand engagement and consumer interactions.

Conclusion

This study aimed to evaluate the impacts of traditional and social media on brand awareness for Coca-Cola products in Mwanza. The findings reveal a significant and synergistic interplay between traditional and social media, each exerting a profound influence on consumer perceptions of Coca-Cola. Traditional media, including television, radio, and print, offers expansive reach and credibility, while social media fosters interactive and authentic brand connections.

The integrated approach of utilizing both traditional and social media is crucial for developing effective brand awareness strategies. Marketers are encouraged to leverage the strengths of both media types to enhance consumer engagement and brand recognition. This holistic strategy is vital in navigating the complex landscape of consumer consciousness and achieving greater brand awareness for Coca-Cola products in Mwanza.

Recommendations

The study investigates the influence of traditional and social media on brand awareness for Coca-Cola products in Mwanza, Tanzania. Findings reveal that traditional mediums', including television, radio, and print, significantly enhances brand awareness by leveraging credibility and extensive reach. Conversely, social media is effective in engaging consumers and fostering interactive brand experiences. For future studies, researchers are encouraged to broaden the geographical scope to encompass a larger region within Mwanza and potentially extend to other areas of Tanzania. Additionally, adopting a mixed-methods approach that includes qualitative insights can deepen understanding of how traditional and social media interact to influence brand awareness, thereby enriching marketing strategies.

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