

SOCIAL MEDIA CONSUMPTION AS AN EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR
INCREASE RESTAURANT MARKETING IN KATSINA
METROPOLIS, KATSINA STATE, NIGERA

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Abstract: Social media consumption by restaurants as a means of marketing has been widely recognised as it yielded good result for many restaurant organisations. This study aimed at identify restaurant social media consumption as an effective tool for increase restaurant marketing in Katsina metropolis, Katsina State, Nigeria. Empirical literatures about the predictors of social media consumption were reviewed and the tools as well as frequency of its usage as its determinants were all identified. Cross-sectional descriptive survey type of research was adopted in conducting the study where the population consist of all the restaurants and their guests. Purposive sampling method was used in sampling 22 restaurants and their managers while proportionate sampling method was adopted in sampling 43 guests which gave a total of 65 respondents as the sample size for the study. A structured close-ended questionnaire as an instrument for data collection was used to collect quantitative data. The study findings reveal that respondents aged 31-45 are the major customers and mangers of the restaurants and despite majority of them are possessing more than one social media site, WhatsApp is the social media site they predominantly used. The study also find out that both the restaurants and their guests are using computers and mobile handsets as technological tools in accessing social media servers and majority of them are using their social media sites between 5-6 everyday. The study identified that social media consumption increases restaurant marketing chances through various ways which among others; increases customer satisfaction, restaurant

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social media marketing (SMM) campaign, help in market segmentation, help in direct contact with guest and increases the chances of satisfying large and hard to reach population at ease. It was concluded that social media where fully utilised have the capabilities of increasing restaurants chances of marketing to a higher level. Based on the findings of this study it is recommended that further studies be carried out on the social media online marketing tools in the study area, as this study only focused on the technological tools.

Keywords: *Restaurants, Social media, Consumption, Marketing.*

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INTRODUCTION

Social media has been accepted and adopted globally by many small and large business organisations as their marketing tool, because of its diverse advantages in marketing. The organisations are using the platforms for their advertisement, sales promotion, product and brand awareness, public relations, purchasing and delivery with a major aim of having a satisfied and returned customer. According to Lanz, Fischhof, & Lee, 2010) with the advancement in technology which brought social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, organisations have the opportunity for direct access to their customers. Before the advent of social media, mass media was the medium used for exchange of opinion between families, relatives, neighbours, friends, and even organisations to their customers for product information and purchase (Dellarocas, 2003). But evolution of internet and social media in particular provided two-way communication content as opposed to the one-way provided by mass media (Pan and Crott, 2012). As the digital version of word-of-mouth, social media

represents the solidification, storage, and retrieval of the word-of-mouth content online.

The impact of social media to many aspect of life cannot be over emphasized, as it is available to anyone with internet connection. Restaurants and other hospitality industry subsidiaries take advantage of using the platform in majority of their marketing activities as increased brand awareness and obtaining immediate feedback from their customers (Abigail and Garry, 2013). However, many restaurants over the globe have now adopted social media in their marketing and it changes many of their marketing aspects as customer relation, sales promotion, and even purchasing. Restaurants that already adopted social media as their marketing are seeing its advantage in developing their business to thrive in the current competitive and online driven marketplace (Wendy, 2010). In regards to this, restaurant operators now understand that with social media they have vast number of opportunities in dealing with their customers to achieve their target aim of generating revenue to maximise profit (Pan and Crott, 2012).

According to Profitline Consulting (2016) Restaurants vary greatly in appearance and offerings, including a wide variety cuisines and service models ranging from inexpensive fast food restaurants and cafeterias to mid-priced family restaurants, to high priced luxury establishments. In western countries, most mid to high-range restaurants serve alcoholic beverages such as beer, wine and light beer. Some restaurants serve all the major meals, such as breakfast, lunch and dinner (e.g., major fast food chains, diners, hotel restaurants, and airport restaurants). Other restaurants may only serve a single meal (e.g., a pancake house may only serve breakfast) or they may serve two meals (e.g., lunch and dinner) or even a kids' meal. Based on this categorisation, it is believed that marketing aspect differ from one category of restaurant to other as they differ in the type of customers they target. As such social media consumption is of utmost importance when dealing with restaurant marketing, and in-active

social media account owned by restaurant may mean trash or burden to their business. Despite restaurants' tight cost structure social media consumption if fully maintained is a low-cost marketing tool that will help restaurants in meeting their target. This present study is therefore aimed to identify how social media consumption will serve as an effective marketing tool for restaurants in Katsina metropolis, Katsina State Nigeria.

Social media Consumption Factors and its Benefits to Restaurant Marketing

Social media marketing involve direct interaction between staff of a particular organisation and their customers which makes it different from traditional/mass media type of marketing (Zachary, 2011). Different categories of restaurants are using different social media platforms for majority of their marketing activities as they found it cheaper, more effective and efficient compared to other means. Social media provide restaurant mangers with vast opportunities of information about what customers and other people are saying about their restaurant which will give them the advantage to take corrective measures about the negatives and improve in the positives (Pantelidis, 2010). All these mentioned opportunities and challenges about how restaurants can redeem service failure and improve performance only depend on how restaurants consume their social media. Active and well managed social media platform by restaurant can help them to create mutual relationship with new customer, and maintain the relationship with existing customer, that will make them advertise the restaurant to their friends, family and relatives (Abigail and Garry, 2013).

Social media marketing has the advantage of providing customers with image and information of their future product form a restaurant; this information help to convert potential customers to loyal customers (Miletsky, 2010). According to Wendy (2010), One added advantage with social media is that, while traditional media

keeps customers informed, it goes a step further by keeping the customers stimulated and involved. When a company gets their customers involved and engaged, it leads to lasting working relationships with organizations. The level of customer support increases with the use of social media since it is personal and interactive. In the event of an unfortunate situation, social media may serve as a catalyst to turn this situation into an opportunity for a company to extend their services and go extra mile to reverse the negative feeling (Hailey, 2010).

Online marketing can take place in several social media platforms, and that should be taken into consideration for the marketing strategy of a restaurant and other hospitality sectors. Each hospitality sector is different and must be treated accordingly, so a blend of social media tools such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Corporate Blogs should be used if necessary. If a hospitality sector is not engaging in any of the social media activities like tweeting, linking or having an active blog, it just means that the hotels or restaurants are missing out on the huge opportunity in digital marketing. To stay competitive in the digital world, the hotel or restaurant has to be engaged or be involved with their intended audience by participating in online discussions, hospitality forums, podcasts, RSS feeds, and hotel review commentary while increasing awareness and building relationships with both new and loyal customers (Burson-Marsteller, 2010).

METHODOLOGY

The study identifies social media consumption pattern as a means of increased restaurant marketing in katsina metropolis, katsina state, Nigeria. Cross sectional type of survey design was adopted in conducting the study where two categories of respondents, restaurant managers and restaurant guests were used. Purposive sampling was used in sampling 25 restaurant managers and proportionate random sampling method was used in sampling 50 restaurant guests. The final sample size for this survey after 7 guests who were unable to fully

complete the instrument and 3 restaurant managers who were newly appointed to the positions were eliminated is 65. Questionnaire was used as an instrument for retrieving information from the target respondents. The questions in this survey were design to provide greater information about how restaurants adopt social media consumption for its effective use to increase their online marketing. The first part of the questions gathered information about the demographic characteristics and the categories of social media platforms the restaurants/guests are using in their marketing/looking for information about restaurants and the purpose each is used for. It went further by identifying the type of social media tools restaurants are using and their contributions to the restaurant's increased marketing. The frequency of using each social media platform by the restaurant in respect to its increased marketing is also investigated, and finally, the benefits of the social media consumption to increased restaurant marketing were explored. The four social media platforms mostly used by restaurants and other hospitality sectors in the study area WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram as highlighted by Usman (2018) were adapted.

The data was collected from the respondents (restaurant managers) through direct contact during their normal daily routine, while for the restaurant guests during their visits to the restaurants at various intervals. The data collected was subjected to descriptive statistics of bar charts for the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected was presented, analysed and interpreted here.

Age of the Respondents

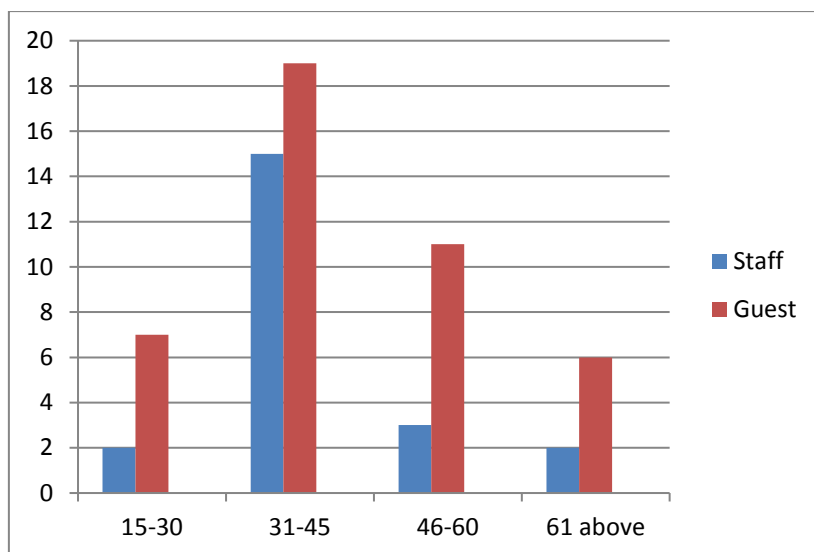


Figure 1: Age of the Respondents

Figure 1 presents the respondents age group and it was revealed that age group 31-45 is important to restaurant social media marketing as majority of its managers 15 representing 68.18 percent and guests 19 representing 44.19 of their total fall under this category. Following this age group is the 46-60 segments with 3 managerial staff representing 13.64 percent and 11 guest 25.58 percent. Age group is important when dealing with social media consumption based on social media marketing, as it can indicate the segments that a restaurant can put more emphasis on when marketing through social media. According to Pew Research Center (2010) Age groups can be classified into five generations: Millennials (ages 18-33), Gen X (ages 34-45), Baby Boomers (Ages 46-64), Silent Generation (65-73), and G.I. Generation (ages 74 and older). Each generation has unique characteristics and qualities about social media consuming habits. Millennials top the group as adopters of social media. According to the Pew Research Center (2010), part of the characteristics of the Millennials is that they are confident, self-expressive, upbeat, connected and open to change. The same report found that 75% of Millennials have created social media accounts and 62% use wireless Internet away from home, and the percentage moved to 68% from 2005 when only 7% of Millennials used social media, 51% of Millennials in 2006 and 71% in 2008.

Types of Social Media Sites Used

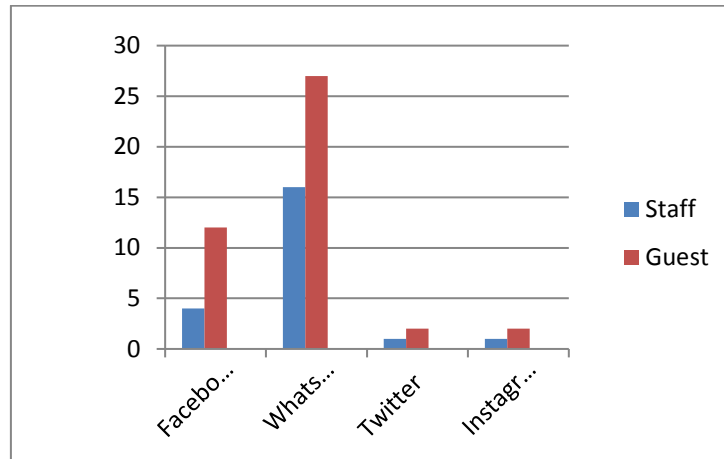


Figure 2 Types of Social Media sites used

Figure 2 presents another important demographic variable; types of social media used by the respondents. This finding shows that WhatsApp segment of social media has the highest usage rate with 16 restaurant managers representing 72.73 percent and 27 guests representing 62.79 percent of the total respondents. This segment of social media usage is followed by Facebook with 4 restaurant managers representing 18.18 percent and 12 guests representing 27.91 percent of the total respondents. This finding was supported by the findings of Usman (2017) who conducted a study in the study area and found that, 47 percent of the respondents are using WhatsApp, with 44, 5, and 4 percents using Facebook, Instagram and twitter respectively. Burson-Marsteller (2010) states that, restaurant that doesn't possess a social media site is missing a lot in regard to the century's digital marketing opportunities. It is the social media profile that will allowed a restaurant to market its products online and have followers that will be contributing with reviews based on what the restaurant markets' online.

This finding is similar to Murray and James (2011) that, WhatsApp remains the most widely used social media platform by a relatively healthy margin: some 68% of U.S. adults are now WhatsApp users.

Other than the video-sharing platform Facebook, none of the other social media sites are used by more than 40% of Americans. The findings was also supported by Sanni (2009) who conducted survey based on Nigerian Social Network Penetration and found WhatsApp with 41%, Facebook 41%, Instagram 25% and You Tube 25% among others.

Number of Social media Sites Possessed

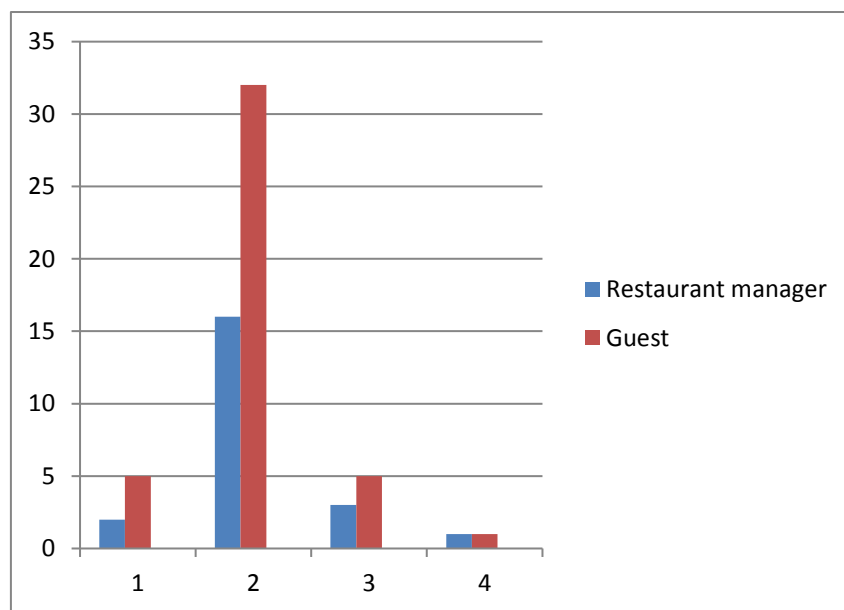


Figure 3: Number of Social Media Sites Possessed

Figure 3 shows the results on the number of social media sites the restaurants and their guests possessed. It was indicated that majority of the restaurants 16 representing 72.73 percent and 32 guests representing 74.42 percent are possessing 2 social media sites. Possession of active social media sites is a good indication that there

are high chances of social media consumption as a good result is obtained when each social media site is used based on its purpose. This finding corroborate with Wendy (2010) that Social media is considered by some as a tool for connection and a medium for broadcasting between organisations and customers. But if positive result is at all the target to be achieved, these social media tools are recommended to be used in the way they are designed. For example, Twitter and Facebook are used as a marketing machine while YouTube functions more as a public relations tool since it is video sharing website. In addition, LinkedIn is a professional networking tool; it is a site for business minded professionals to keep track of their contacts (Abreu, 2010).

Types of Technological Tools used

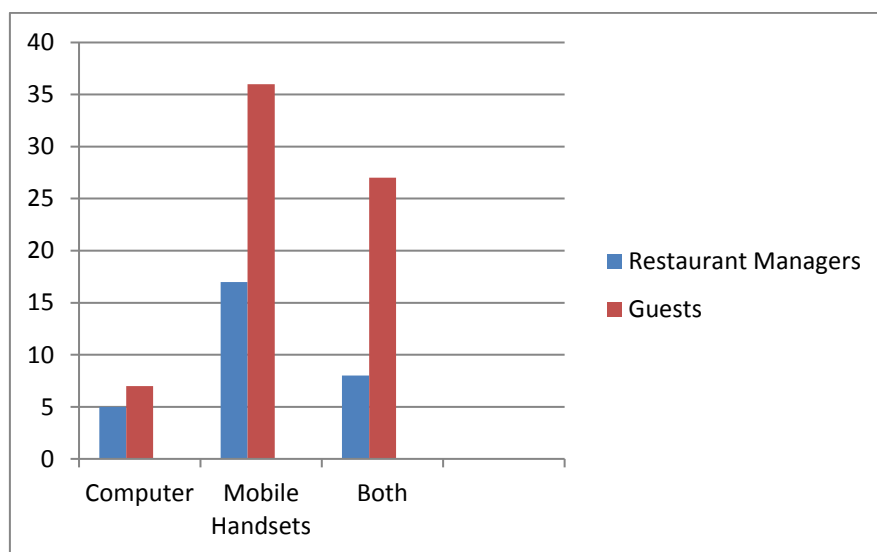


Figure 4: Technological Tools Used

Figure 4 above presents the result of the analysis about the types of technological tools the restaurants and their guests are using for social media consumption in respect to their increased marketing chances. Tools are important variables when measuring social media

consumption as factor of increased restaurant marketing. This study identified that majority of the restaurant staff and guests are using computers and mobile handsets for social media consumption at various degrees. It was indicated that 6 managers representing 27.27 percent and 7 guests representing 16.28 percent of the total respondents are using computer systems for social media consumption. While 17 managers representing 77.27 percent and 36 guests representing 83.72 percent of the total respondents are using mobile handsets. The study further reveals that 8 managers representing 36.36 percent and 27 guests representing 62.79 percent of the total respondents are using both. This corroborate with Mary (2018) that if you want your social media marketing campaigns to be effective, you simply cannot do it without some important marketing tools in your possession. These social media tools will help you to find more content to share, schedule your posts efficiently, measure and analyze the effectiveness of your marketing campaigns, and use those insights to improve your campaigns (Mary, 2018).

The finding of this study agrees with Muhammad (2016) Computer Technology now became an essential tool in our businesses. Many of business companies restaurants included rely on expensive computer not only to perform basic function but to manage and grow their business. Computer machine enable restaurant proprietors to handle tasks such as daily accounting, online marketing, inventory management and many other more accurately and easily. Beside computer technology the release of iPhone 5s, the iPhone 5c, and the iOS 7 enable us to see that technology is well on the move. Cell phones have become more than just tools to make phone calls. They are getting smaller, yet bigger at the same time. And there are also tablets and computers that are getting faster, thinner, and all around prettier.

Frequency of Using Social Media in Hour/Day Basis

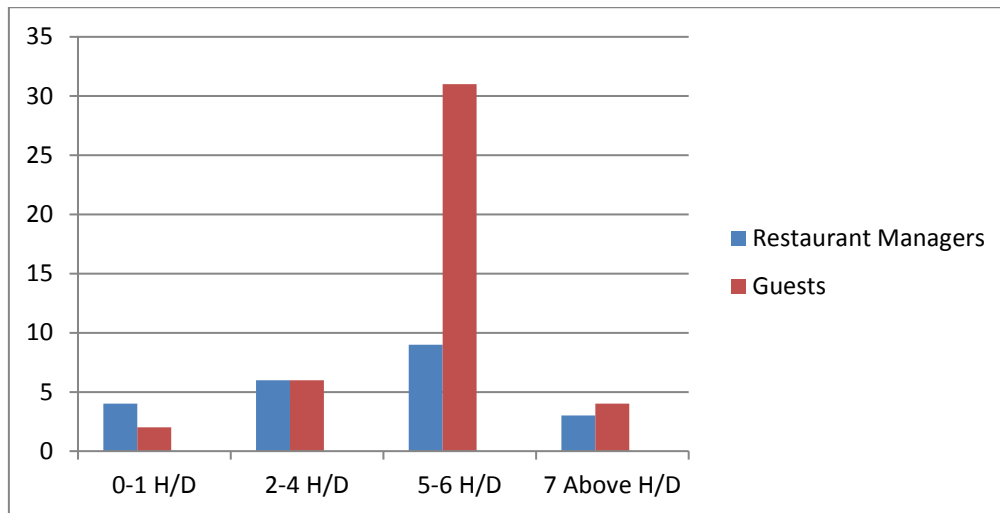


Figure 5: Frequency of using Social Media Sites

Figure 5 contains the results of the analysis of frequency of using social media on h/d basis by the restaurant staff and guests in the study area. It was indicated that majority of the restaurants 9 representing 40.91 percent and 31 guests representing 72.10 percent are using their social media sites between 5 to 6 hours per day. This segment of respondents was followed by the categories using their social media sites between 2-4 hours per day which 6 restaurants representing 27.27 percent and 6 guests representing 13.95 percent of the total.

This finding corroborate with Jennifer (2010) who opined that in most parts of the world people of different age and gender spent roughly 20 percent of their total time online using personal computer and 30 percent of total time online via mobile. For example, in the United States total time spent on social media using personal computers and mobile devices increased 37 percent from 88 billion minutes in July, 2011 to 121 billion minutes in July, 2012. This finding agrees with Pan and Chiou (2011) who opined that a figure of about 65% of all adults in the USA have reported that they

use social media at different times during a month with nearly 90% of those aged 18 to 29 most likely to use social media at any time.

Benefits of Social Media Consumption to Restaurant Marketing

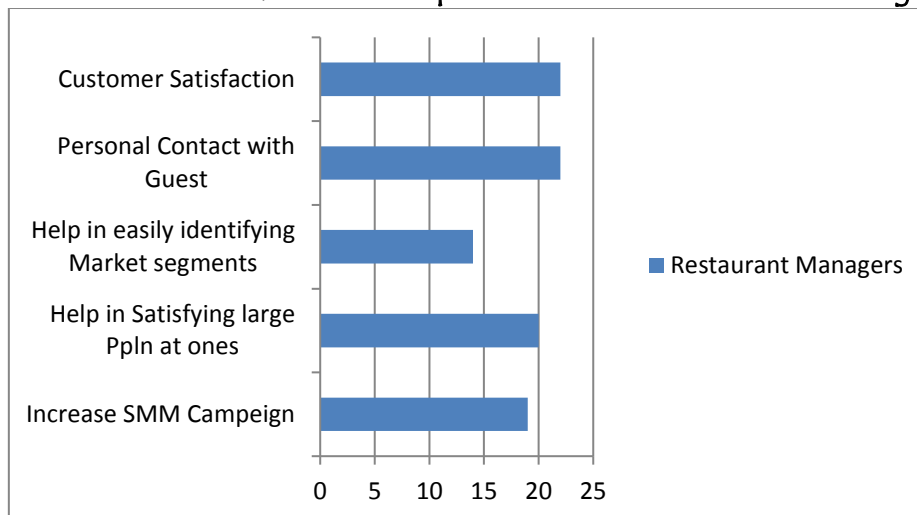


Figure 6: Benefits of Restaurants from Social Media Consumption
Figure 6 presents the summary of how restaurants are benefiting from social media consumption based on their marketing strategies. It was indicated that majority of the restaurants 22 representing 100 percent of the total restaurants shows that, social media consumption is important to their marketing as in help in increasing their customer satisfaction. According to Wendy (2010) It is believed that satisfied customers are the returned customers and that is one of the major target of restaurant marketing. Many restaurants over the globe have now adopted social media in their marketing and it changes many of their marketing aspects as customer relation, sales promotion, and even purchasing. The result also shows that all the sampled restaurants for the study indicated that social media consumption is helping their marketing strategy in having direct contact with customer. This will enable the restaurant to understand the needs and demands of the guest who are feeling shy to express their feelings in an online community. Pan and Crott (2012) are of the view that restaurant operators now understand that with social media they have vast number of opportunities in dealing with their customers to achieve their target aim of generating revenue to maximise profit.

The finding also shows that 14 of the respondents representing 63.34 percent of the total indicated that they are benefiting from social media consumption through identifying their market segment. Segmenting a market is of utmost importance to restaurant business, as they will be able to understand the needs of a particular segment such as age group, individuals, family and so on at a particular time. The finding reveals that 20 of the respondents representing 90.91 percent are of the view that social media consumption is important to their business as it is helping them in reaching and satisfying large and hard to reach population at ease. According to Wendy (2010), One added advantage with social media is that, while traditional media keeps customers informed, it goes a step further by keeping the customers stimulated and involved. When a company gets their customers involved and engaged, it leads to lasting working relationships with organizations. The level of customer support increases with the use of social media since it is personal and interactive.

The study finding also revealed that 19 respondents representing 86.37 percent indicated that social media consumption is helping them a lot through increasing their social media marketing campaign. This is because when your tools are efficient and you are frequently using your social media platforms through regular posts/updates, your customers will be happy and feel satisfied. As such they will feel motivated to continue patronising your product, and in some instances even market the restaurant to outside world. According to Nielsen Company (2010) Any organisation that doesn't have effective tools to marketing their products and services online or their social media platform is not frequently used through posts, updates and review will be missing a lot (The Nielsen Company, 2010).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the fact that customers of this generation are more resourceful and do a lot of online search before they embark on

patronising any product, restaurants are continuously devoting a lot of resources in order to make it effective. Social media consumption if fully and effectively maintained is proved to be a means of increasing restaurant marketing. The restaurants and their guests are all accessing social media through various technological tools such as computers and mobile handsets, and are using at various hours in a day. Despite being Whatsapp as the major social network site used majority of the respondents, other social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and twitter are still being used. Social media consumption is accepted as means of increasing restaurant marketing because of its ability to help the restaurants in various ways, such as providing customer satisfaction, increasing restaurant social media marketing campaign, ease of reaching target customers and so on.

There are clear evidences based on literatures that social media consumption if fully utilised is a good tool that will increase restaurant marketing opportunities. If a restaurant put emphasis on two factors; the tools in use and frequency of usage, there is no doubt that it will maximize the benefits of social media consumption. It is therefore recommended that; since social media is a platform for communication, the restaurant should therefore understand the target audience to engage on conversation with specific tool at a specific time. Despite been social media inexpensive, it is still time expensive as for you to strive with it, it requires much of your time. So when using social media consumption by restaurant to increase their market opportunities, they must have set objectives and a clear strategy of how to meet each objective.

Limitation and Further Research

Despite this study has achieved its aim of identifying how social media consumption can help to increase restaurant marketing success, there are still some limitations that need further research. This study only focused on the technological tools used in social media consumption, so there need for further studies on the online tools such as buffer, sprout social, buzzsumo, feedly on how they can help

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restaurants in their marketing process. Even though many restaurants have adopted social media consumption as a means of their increased marketing chances, there is need to always put in mind the restaurant's defined social media goals as the direction of its online marketing.

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