ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 10| Issue: 11| November 2024|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2024: 8.402 || ISI Value: 1.188

IMPACT OF MASS MEDIA ON LOCAL BUSINESSES CASE STUDY IN MANGOCHI DISTRICT

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Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.36713/epra18245
DOI No: 10.36713/epra18245

ABSTRACT

Every business one way or the other gets advertised, it can be a poster on one's door or a commercial advert on the national broadcasting station. The aim of all these efforts is to attract customers, increase awareness, and introduces a new product and many more. Mass media is the only platform that allows entrepreneurs to reach a wide area because of its ability to extend media coverage. Mass media refers to a diversified collection of media technologies that reach a larger audience via mass communication. Mass media is every wide area that cover different media channels form print media, electronic media and social media. All these aspects are part of mass media. Therefore, having noted what mass media is, this study will aim at finding the impacts of mass media on local businesses in Mangochi district. The research will try to find how local entrepreneurs are using mass media in their business, the challenges that local entrepreneurs are facing in relation to mass media, benefits that local entrepreneurs are obtaining with the help of mass media and many more. The aim of this study is to find whether mass media is important to a local business or not. This study will use qualitative method in collecting and analyzing the data. The researcher will collect the data from 40 prominent business entities with Mangochi using a questionnaire and will analyze the data using the thematic data analysis. From, the analysis the research will present the findings in a discussion form and a comparison with the literature review will be conducted. The aim of comparing the two (actual finds and literature review) is to know whether the researcher's findings are corresponding to what other people have already find out. Finally, the researcher will write a report on his findings and give a recommendation.

KEY WORDS: *mass media, local businesses, social media, challenges and benefits.*

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

For centuries companies, industries and organizations invested in different forms of marketing. In the mid 1820 there were minimal ways to get an advert to the intended individuals. Today things are not the same, by only a click of a button companies are reaching millions of people. This has been possible with the help of mass media; mass media refers to a diversified collection of media technologies that reach a larger audience via mass communication. It comprises of internet and mobile mass communication, outdoor media, print media, event organizing and public speaking. Malawi, like any other country, need the import and export of goods and services in order to advance economically and socially. To do this, people must first know about the product before buying it. Therefore, the use of mass media in marketing Malawian products is inevitable fact, that producer cannot deviate. Therefore, to know and study the impact of the mass media on Malawian firms is of significant importance. Malawi as a country is facing the issue of lack of foreign currency and lack of promotion for local products, mass media can therefore be the tool to solve these problems the country is facing.

Problem Statement and Justification

Malawian products are facing problems when it comes to both international and local markets. Buyers prefer to buy foreign goods rather than Malawian goods even though the goods are of high quality. In addition, entrepreneurs opt to sell their products to customers around them. This is because many consumers or buyers do not know about Malawian products and most of entrepreneurs in this country do not recognize the benefits of advance models of mass media in doing their business hence low profit is made from the products. This has been the case for a very long time and it is one of the ca causing factor that has made these entrepreneurs not to enjoy the full benefits of the market. It is therefore for this reason that the project will explore the impact of mass media on Malawian firms.

Background

Malawi is a land lock country located at the southern central part of Africa. "With a population of 16.36 million and among them 50.7% live below poverty line" according to report of international monetary fund (IMF). The country has GDP rank of 150th, which is growing at 6.2% (2015 Est.). This is the according to the reserve banks' stability report that is issued annually. Malawi's economy has not been stable for years now,

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its inflation in the year 2013 was 26.9% and now in the current year of the study its 22.6%. Malawi as a land lock country does not have direct access to the see which also make transportation, communication and other things to be high expensive. Malawi's economy is many driven through agriculture products and the tourism industry. Malawi produces different products that are exported to Canada, South Africa, japan, Germany and many other countries. This alone is not enough to support the 16.36 billion population that Malawi has. It should be indicated that many Malawians do not like to buy local products. The government in an attempt to reduce this policy passed a policy of BUY MALAWI. This was to act as the way to induce or influence local Malawians to purchase locally made products and as one way of trying to reserve the foreign currency.

Mangochi district is a tourist destination due to various local resources such as Lake Malawi, Lake Malombe and other natural beauties. Mangochi is a small district but an income generating site for the country. Different investors have come to this district and build entities and business vessels that operating and facilitating in the growth of this country. In this district there is also major business of fish trade. The fish is sold domestically and also exported to nearing country like South Africa, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Mangochi also has lime stone, this mineral is used both domestic and it is also exported outside the country.

Mass Media

Mass media refers to a diversified collection of media technologies that reach a larger audience via mass communication. It comprises of internet and mobile mass communication, outdoor media, print media, event organizing and public speaking.it should be indicated that social media is one aspect of mass media and this is the aspect that today is very vibrant in marketing products. In today's technology-driven world, social networking sites have become a way for shops to reach a wider audience with their marketing initiatives. In the 1980 people did not have social media at their disposal for marketing their products, they used newspapers and radios to make know a product. This is not the case today, hence this study divides itself from traditional ways to modern tool/ systems of marketing (e-marketing), Companies can use social media to connect with customers in order to create connections and gain a better understanding of their needs.

Local Firms

Although there is no exact definition to local business but in simple terms it means a type of business activity that is founded locally or in other words the type of business that is originally indigenous. The opposite term for local business is foreign business, the type of business that is conducted in a foreign land and by a foreigner. Malawi is one of the growing country in terms of business, different people are being involved in different types of business for small scale to large scale businesses. Studies have shown that a lot of malawian women are involved in small scale business, that are mainly aimed at accumulating only a small percentage of money for survival and other domestic needs. It should be indicated that these studies did not hide the fact that Malawians are also involved in large scale but it is at a small percentage. Anyway, that is not the emphasis for this study, it is on local business. This means that whether small or large as long as it is a local business it will attract interest.

Social Media

Social media is now the back bone of mass media; it is with the help of the latest technology that has made every individual to be part of the global communication. This has made mass media to be of two part; traditional mass media system and modern mass media system.

The Importance for the Success of Local Businesses in Mangochi

Malawi is the country that depends on agriculture for the generation of income, this means that Malawi's economy will depend on how much is the country agriculture products are being sold on the international market. Social media will be a helpful tool in creation of demand for malawian products, hence generating income for the nation.

First of all, it should be indicated that malawian firms are the source of income for this state. As it has been stated early in this chapter that Malawi is an agriculture based country, hence many Malawians depend on agriculture as source of income. Therefore, it should be indicated that local firms are very important for the stability of the country's economy.

Secondly, development of the country depends on how much is the country is exporting. It is the aim of every nation to maximize it exports in order to generate foreign income and avoid inflations. Local firms help in exporting the countries resource to the outside world. Therefore, the well-being of local firms is very essential for a country.

Impact of Mass Media

As a tool that producers use to spread information to its customer and attract them towards his/her products, mass media has got various impact on the life of the business. One of the most interesting functions of social media is that it allows customers to communicate with one another, which is essentially an extension of conventional word-of-mouth communication (Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The primary purpose of this research was to look into the impact of the media on Malawian businesses. These respondents were composed of entrepreneurs, representative of the entrepreneur in Mangochi district. Data was collected and it has been analyzed to find out if mass media has got a negative/ positive impact to local businesses.

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The study provides important implications for local businesses, It's crucial to understand the study's limitations first. The results provide an example of how local businesses in Mangochi district address the issue of marketing.

Below are some of the implications that the study came up with; Mangochi is a town center of trade and culture in Malawi this makes it a very good trading post. Hence, it is not surprising to sew a lot of trade happening in this districts. According to the study, many businesses in Mangochi are using social media marketing strategy. Malawi in terms of technology is lacking behind but when it comes to Mangochi this is not the case. Many of its people go to south Africa to work and form there they bring different advanced staff include technology. Smart phones, are local found in Mangochi and this is all because of the people that go to south Africa. Thus, since social media marketing does not require much. With only a smart phone in your hands it is possible. The research found out that all most 95% of people in Mangochi have phones which make social media marketing a very viable form of marketing products to the general public. how do they use social media in marketing their product? The researcher found out that the way social media was being used by entrepreneurs I Mangochi was quite different from the way the rest of the world use social media. An entrepreneur will have a social page, they will just use their name (name of the enterprise) and all the interested customers will look it up and contact the business. In other words, local entrepreneurs use social media just to interact with their valued customers and not to advertise their product.

The researcher also identified that with the entrepreneurs, there was poor management of social media and it was not used for its intended purpose. Therefore, entrepreneurs could not enjoy full benefits that comes in with using social media as a channel of advertising ones' product. Why are local entrepreneurs failing to manage social media effectively? The research realized that many of local entrepreneurs in Mangochi were illiterate. Past research has indicated that 80% of individuals in Mangochi are school drop outs but are very rich due to business orientated minds. This research agrees to that, the research found out that illiteracy was the big problem that the district was facing and that was the reason for poor management of social media. Due to high illiteracy rates in Mangochi that is why entrepreneurs do not like to market their products in newspaper since not many can read.

In additional, the research found out that many of the entrepreneurs use social media or internet as one aspect of their business. This clearly shows that Mangochi is adopting modern ways of marketing products since local businesses are used advanced technology in marketing their products.

Mangochi as a district it is not at a high level with e-marketing, this is according to the findings that the research yield. In Mangochi many of the entrepreneurs do not know much about e-marketing. Statistics have shown that Mangochi is not at a level of using e-marketing because of the following challenges;

1. Poor network
2. Instable power supply
3. Low technology
4. Illiterate

Therefore, Mangochi as a district is quite behind in implementing the concept of e-marketing. It should be indicated that, according to the statistics of the research, Mangochi district is on its way to achieving the levels of e-marketing.

CONCLUSION

The study began with the basic question of how the media affects small businesses. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the finding from the research. Data from the study was presented. Results of this case study revealed that mass media has got positive impact to local businesses in Mangochi district. The study demonstrates that from the beginning, the participant recognized mass media's importance. But due to other challenges like high cost, unstable power supply, high illiterate levels and poor internet connection entrepreneurs did not utilize it to its best. The study illustrates that entrepreneurs in Mangochi are using different form of marketing which are all under mass media. The study also went further to tell that entrepreneurs are using these forms due to these factors; cost effect, effective and user friendly. The study also indicated that local entrepreneurs are also using modern ways of marketing like social media and the internet. Entrepreneurs expressed that mass media has given them benefits like; high sales volume, access to international markets, creating and increasing brand awareness.

The literature suggested that often mass media do help local entrepreneurs in growing their businesses and achieving their goals. The literature supported that mass media would certainly help local firms in becoming international giants. It all depends on how entrepreneurs manage their marketing strategy.

In today's marketing environment, it is essential that local businesses understand the importance of mass media and the strategies behind using social media. With this mostly controlled medium, businesses have the opportunity to communicate with a wide variety of publics. Therefore, understanding how mass media was important to local firms in Mangochi was important.

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