

Engaging Social Media for Health Information on Marketability of Herbal Drugs Among Herbal Drug Dealers in Nnewi, Anambra State

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Abstract

This study examined the prospects of engaging social media for health information in marketability of herbal drugs. The study investigated the extent social media boosts sales of herbal drugs. To this end, three popular herbal drugs were studied. The study was anchored on AIDA Marketing/Advertising model which states that advertising and marketing objectives are met through effective integration of four elements: attention, interest, desire and action. The study adopted in-depth interview of select salespersons/distributors of herbal drugs under study. This research design was adequate because the study focused on marketability of these select drugs vis-à-vis social media. Findings of the study showed that although these drugs are marketed online, the sales methods are rather through networking method (as in Kedi Healthcare), personal selling and the use of sales promotional strategies (as in Dr Agnes Nwamma Herbal Dental Power and Dan-Iyk Aloe vera product). Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that the use of social media should be augmented with the use of mainstream media of communication to increase the marketability of herbal products.

Keywords: Herbal Drugs, Health Information, Social Media, Mainstream Media, AIDA

Background to the Study

In recent times, there has been significant increase in the use of herbal products as alternative medicine. World Health Organisation (2005) defines herbal drugs as plant-derived materials or preparations with therapeutic or other human health benefits, which contains either raw or processed ingredients from one or more plants. In some traditions, materials of inorganic or animal origin may also be present. Herbs include plant material such as leaves, flowers, fruit, seeds, stems, wood, bark, roots, rhizomes or other plant parts, which may be entire fragmented or powdered. The efficacy of herbal products continues to elicit scholarly discourses.

Ekor (2013) agrees that the use of herbal medicinal products and supplements has increased tremendously over the past three decades with not less than 80% of people worldwide relying on them for some part of primary healthcare. Tamuno, Omole-Ohonsi and Fadare (2010) observe that the relative high demand of herbal products is as a result of its efficacy claims in contrast to orthodox medicine which is often adjudged to be easily adulterated. These herbs exist in natural forms and may be processed in some cases. Current discourses focus on full global integration of alternative medicine (herbal medicine) in medical practice. People use herbal products for different reasons, however; Shehu and Sheshi (2007) identify time delay, cost of orthodox medicines, fake drugs and unfriendly attitude of modern medical practitioners as reasons for the geometric increase in the adoption of herbal products as alternative medicine. The perception of fetish beliefs as the main healing component of healing power of herbal drugs is also a worrisome challenge about herbal drug use.

Herbal products also exist as food supplements. EU Regulations (2017) defines food supplements as foodstuffs of which the purpose is to supplement the normal diet and which are concentrated sources of nutrients or other substances with a nutritional or physiological function, alone or in combination, marketed in dose form, namely forms such as capsules, pastilles, tablets, pills and other similar forms, sachets of powder, ampoules of liquids, drop dispensing bottles, and other similar forms of liquids and powders designed to be taken in measured small unit quantities. Like natural herbs, food supplements are often criticised on unexpected risks associated with certain active ingredients that have strong effects in the body (Mayo, 2017). This is the reason for regulation of food supplements by the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC).

The use of herbs for the cure and prevention of diseases span through ages, however, its usage is somewhat tied to cultural background of the users thus determining their health belief systems. Herbs are discussed in relation to cultural and spiritual beliefs of a people. Among the Yoruba of Nigeria, herbal drug (medicine) forms the epicenter of their health system. The Igbo of southeastern Nigeria occupies an agrarian land that supports agriculture and herbal products. Among Hausa of northern Nigeria, herbologists play significant roles in the collection and sale of medical herbs (Kenechukwu, 2018). For purpose of this study, three herbal products were selected: Kedi Healthcare, Dan-Iyk Aloe vera product, Dr Agnes Nwamma

Herbal Product. These products were chosen to reflect two broad categories of herbal products: supplements which have undergone some degree of processing and partially synthesised such as Kedi Healthcare and indigenous herbal products that exist largely in its natural forms as in the case of Dr Agnes Nwanwa herbal powder and Dan-Iyk Aloe vera product.

Statement of Research Problem

The nature of herbal products continues to elicit scholarly and clinical discourses on the efficacy of herbal drugs vis-à-vis health implications. Arguments on the efficacy of herbal drugs are ongoing discourses. This is because; there is much individual-based approach to issues of efficacy of herbal drugs than a clinically based approach. From a medical viewpoint, herbs have been criticised based on factors that inhibit its usefulness such as unhygienic processing and unregulated composition and dosage. Besides, there is a problem of adopting appropriate marketing media and strategies for herbal drugs. The commonest strategy is personal selling through the use of transit advertising. This method has limitations in scope of product sales as products circulate only within immediate environment. In marketing these herbal products, health information about such herbal products may be distorted or disseminated with misleading information. The efficacy claims often contradict the nutritional composition of such herbs. Some herbal products do not have social media presence to boost patronage. In cases where social media sites exist, product specifications may carry frivolous claims on the efficacy of advertised herbal products. These problems necessitated this study of evaluating the efficacy claims as well as methods of marketing of these herbal products.

Objectives of the Study

In general, the study examined the efficiency of use of social media for health information on marketability of herbal drugs. Specifically, the study sought to:

- a. find out the marketing strategy adopted in the sale of select herbal products in Nnewi, Anambra State;
- b. ascertain whether the marketers of the select herbal products engage social media in their product marketing activities in Nnewi, Anambra State;
- c. determine the authenticity of health information on herbal drugs of select products vis-à-vis efficacy claims; and
- d. determine the efficiency of social media platforms adopted for product marketing of select herbal products.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to strengthen the study:

- a. What is the marketing strategy adopted in the sale of select herbal products in Nnewi, Anambra State?

- b. To what extent do the select herbal products engage social media in product marketing in Nnewi, Anambra State?
- c. What is the authenticity of health information on herbal drugs of select products vis-à-vis efficacy claims?
- d. What is the efficiency of social media platforms adopted for product marketing of select herbal products?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant in many ways. First, it will clear some misconceptions about herbal drugs. Herbal drugs are alternative medicines derived from nature. The study is useful to companies, distributors and marketers of herbal drugs to enable them revisit current marketing strategies and devise ways of improving on current marketing methods. The study will enable NAFDAC revisit its marketing policy on herbal products to be sure that the use of Networking business method does not encourage the sale and distribution of unlicensed products. Finally, findings of the study will add to existing literature on herbal medicine thus, it will serve as reference material for studies on related fields.

Review of Related Literature

Herbal Drugs: Meaning and Classifications

Herbal drugs otherwise known as alternative medicine consists of medicinal herbs made up of plants, trees or fungi. Although herbal drugs are said to be derived from nature, however, being ‘natural’ doesn’t necessarily mean they are safe for human consumption. The use of herbal drugs has been criticised based on unverifiable efficacy claims and unhygienic processing. Operationally, herbal drug consists of plants, or mixtures of plant extracts, to treat illness and promote health. It equally involves all food supplements either in powder form, in liquid or taken as herbs (Kenechukwu, 2018).

It should be noted that not all herbs are medicinal in nature. It then, translates that herbal drugs must be discussed within the context of use for healing purposes or as food supplements. To this effect, World Health Organisation (2004) defines herb to include crude plant materials such as leaves, flowers, fruits, seeds, stems, wood, bark, roots, rhizomes or other plant parts which may be entire, fragmented or powdered. Herbal drugs (medicine), therefore includes herbs, herbal medicine, herbal preparations and finished products.

In Nigeria, the practice of herbal medicine has continued to grow at a geometric rate with new herbal mixtures competing with popular herbal products. This raises two pertinent issues: a case of ensuring quality control and surviving marketing competition. The production and distribution of food and drugs (also herbal medicine) is regulated by National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC). It is an agency that ensures strict compliance with approved herbal guidelines (NAFDAC, 2015). Regrettably, there is high proliferation of herbal

products without registration as prescription and non-prescription drugs in Nigerian markets.

On the basis of classification of herbal medicines, World Health Organisation (2004) identifies four major classifications based on their origin, evolution and the forms of current usage:

1. **Category 1:** Indigenous Herbal Drugs (Medicine) which is used in a local community freely by the local community or in the local region such as Benbela herbal products, *Dr Agnes Nwamma* herbal medicine, Dr Igogo herbal cleanser, *7-Keys Power Mixture* or the popular *Ogbogboriche* mixture.
2. **Category 2:** Herbal Drugs (Medicines) in Systems involves herbal products that have been used for a long time with proper documentation of efficacy claims and longstanding period of use among users and accepted by regulatory bodies of country of use.
3. **Category 3:** Modified Herbal Drugs (Medicines) which are modified herbal medicines that have been in the market for a long time. These herbal drugs have been modified into varieties of shape, dosage or mode of administration. They equally vary in herbal medicinal ingredients, methods of preparation and medical indications. However, these herbal products must meet the national regulatory requirements of safety and efficacy of herbal medicines. Examples include Kedi Healthcare herbal products.
4. **Category 4:** Imported Products with Herbal Drugs (Medicine) Base which covers all imported herbal medicines including raw materials and products. These herbal products must be registered and marketed in the countries of origin. These herbal products are packaged as nutritional/medicinal supplements such as *Cellgevity* etc.

There is also another aspect of herbal product. This group consists of processed herbal products in forms of food or nutrient supplements. Mayo (2017) sees herbal supplement as one type of dietary supplement available for purchase. Herbal supplements are taken as add-ups to food and boost nutritional value of food. Although most herbal supplements are in capsule or caplet forms, they supplement normal diet and may have medicinal value for the cure of chronic diseases. Notable examples of food supplements include Kedi Healthcare, Cellgevity, Edmark herbal products etc.

Herbal Drugs as Alternative Medicine: Kedi Healthcare, Dr Agnes Nwamma Herbal Dental Powder and Dan-Iyk Aloe vera Product.

The discourse on whether herbal medicine should be integrated into mainstream orthodox medical practice has remained a continuous scholarly issue. Orthodox medicine is an outgrowth of scientific inquiry and the technological revolution with its

test-tubes, use of laboratory, synthesised chemicals and high-tech diagnostic equipment (Pharmanews, 2006 cited in Osemene, Elujoba and Ilori, 2011). Contextually, it refers to modern medical procedures that adopt scientific method unlike traditional medical practice. On the other hand, alternative medicine (such as herbal medicine) is either non-scientific or quasi-scientific but derives its viable constituents from nature. The plants used in herbal medicine carry their own in-built safety mechanisms (Osemene, Elujoba and Ilori, 2011).

Although herbs have been used in the treatment of ailments for decades, its efficacy claims have largely been undocumented and often do not give room for clinical verifications. Okwuonu, Ezeani and Aniede (2014) agree that herbal medicine is an alternative medicine as its use for treatment of chronic diseases has been on the increase globally. The reports of the Centre for the Study of Religion and Culture (2005) classifies herbal (medicine) drugs as an alternative or non-conventional mode of treatment often involving the use of herbs in a non-orthodox manner as well as the process of consulting herbalists who may adopt all native forms of healing and incantations.

Arguments against mainstreaming of herbal medicine in orthodox medical practice are attributed to factors such as adverse side effects of herbal drugs and unregulated method of processing and administration (Talalay, 2001). Apart from risks associated with herbal constituents, there is also the danger of leaving users to determine prescriptions and dosages. This unregulated consumption of herbal medicine encourages drug abuse.

For the purpose of this study, three select herbal products were used. They include: Kedi Healthcare, Dr Agnes Nwamma Herbal Dental Powder and Dan-Iyk Aloe vera product. Kedi Healthcare products come as herbal supplements for prevention, management and cure of certain health ailments. Prominent products of Kedi Healthcare are: Re-vive, Golden Six, Vigor Essential, Reishi, V-Ca, Cordy Active, Golden Hypha and other Kedi herbal products. Dr Agnes Nwamma Herbal Dental Powder specialises in prevention and treatment of teeth ailments. Dan-Iyk Aloe vera products cover a wide range of herbal products such as Herbaroot, Ladies Super Circle, Herblin Complex, Rinbacin, Mascum Herbal Pride, Normolin, Afocin, AloEgel, V.Wash, and other herbal products.

Audience Perception of Herbal Drugs: Positive and Negative Effects

The use of herbal drugs in the treatment of ailment has remained an age-long practice among developing countries. The preference of herbal drugs to orthodox medicine among rural dwellers has continued to raise concerns surrounding their safety and efficacy claims. Ekor (2014) points out that patients' freedom of choice of a practitioner is also encouraging their utilisation of alternative treatments and herbal remedies, although many select herbal medicines from a deductive approach based on anecdotal information that it works for all. Herbal medicines are acclaimed to be effective.

Era (2002) states that herbal drugs have good values in treating many diseases including infectious diseases, hypertension etc. Similarly, Temitope and Lawal (2014) state that traditional medicine enjoys wider acceptability among the people of developing countries than does orthodox medicine because herbal drugs are readily into the socio-cultural life of the people in whose culture it is deeply rooted. On the other hand, herbal drugs (medicine) have been criticised on various health grounds.

Ekeanyanwu (2011) also states that the biggest problems with herbal drugs are lack of standardisation and safety regulations. Standardisation is about making sure the extraction, processing and distribution of herbal drugs are done within the ambits of safety regulations. The Drug and Related Products (Registration etc) Act 1996 (As Amended) of National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (2015) states that (1) No herbal medicine and related product shall be manufactured, imported, advertised, sold or distributed in Nigeria unless it has been registered in accordance with the provisions of the Act and (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of sub-regulation (1), the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control may grant a permit for the importation or manufacture of samples of herbal medicines and related products for the purpose of registration or clinical trial, and the importation or manufacture shall be in accordance with the conditions specified in the permit. In conclusion, herbal drugs are adjudged to have both positive and negative effects; however, individual preference is equally a factor in deciding who, when, and why people take herbal drugs.

Marketability of Herbal Drugs

The end process in product distribution is making sure a product gets to consumers. Marketing, therefore, involves the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchange that satisfies individual and organisational objectives (Arens, Weigold and Arens, 2008). It is a key ingredient in economic growth and development (Kenechukwu, 2014). A good marketer of herbal drugs must be abreast with all marketing and advertising strategies.

A good advertisement will engrave the product in the minds of consumers and a good marketing strategy will take the product to them. For the marketability of herbal drugs, a producer studies the demographics and socioeconomics of his consumers. Four forms of marketing are readily available: personal selling, direct marketing, viral marketing and networking method. Personal selling involves direct face-to-face relationship with sellers and potential customers which provides immediate feedback. Direct marketing refers to sales made directly to the customer rather than through intermediaries. Viral marketing is online-based sale of products and services. Network marketing method involves the use of awards and bonuses to accumulate sales points at the end of which a person wins a prize or award. It is done by registering somebody who in turn, registers another person and gradually the first person would have acquired reasonable points to win a mega prize.

The choice of marketing strategy is largely dependent on budget and coverage of such product. If a product has wide circulation, more marketing and advertising efforts will be invested; for instance, in the case of select herbal products, it is obvious that Kedi Healthcare is a conglomerate with different herbal products, therefore, the use of viral marketing is effective. In the case of Dr Agness Nwamma Herbal Dental Powder and Dan-Iyk Aloe vera product, the use of personal selling, direct marketing and transit advertising will be productive. Most imported herbal products adopt the network marketing style. This is because, it stores up points and forces a registered member to always buy the product at least once month otherwise, he or she loses his or her chance of winning a mega prize.

Social Media: Use of Social Media in Marketability of Herbal Drugs

The era of computer technology has revolutionised the marketing of herbal drugs. Now, more herbal companies continue to utilise the limitless array of online transactions. Users can access information on herbal product at a click of computer mouse. Heldman, Schindelar and Weaver (2018) define social media as the collection of digital channels and tools (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube) used for public health communication. One defining characteristic of all social media is their potential to facilitate engagement—the interactive, synchronous communication and collaboration among numerous participants via technology.

Guistini, Ali, Fraser and Boulos (2018) assert that the emergence of social media and social networking services to communicate in real-time and on-the-go by patients and health professionals was recognised as an important public health development more than a decade. Today, doctors-patients' interaction is expedited through online chats in which a patient can easily inform his or her doctor of early health issues. Moorhead, Hazlett, Harrison, Carroll and Irwin (2013) identify the following seven key ways that social media are used in healthcare: (a) to provide information on a range of issues, (b) to provide answers to medical questions, (c) to facilitate dialogue between patients and health professionals, (d) to collect data on patient experiences and opinions, (e) to use social media as a health intervention, for health promotion and health education, (e) to reduce illness stigma and (f) to provide a mechanism for online consultations.

There are limitless numbers of social media sites for various media interactions. In health for instance, doctors/pharmaceutical companies create different platforms for doctors-patients' interactions and as feedback mechanisms. There are testimonies of benefits of social media in healthcare delivery. Moorhead, Hazlett, Harrison, Carroll and Irwin (2013) attest that patients say that the Internet is a helpful way to find answers to health problems; in fact, the research shows that frequent use of social networks is associated with increased patient awareness and empowerment. Grosberg, Grinvald, Reuveni and Magnezi (2016) state that health professionals have increased their social networking via Twitter, Facebook, blogs, vlogs (video blogs, e.g., on YouTube), infotainment, games and infographics.

The underlying factor in marketability of herbal products vis-à-vis social media is that herbal companies that utilise the benefits of social media make bountiful sales than companies that adopt traditional personal selling or direct marketing methods. The use of social media in marketability of herbal product helps to boost sales and circulation of herbal products. Kedi Healthcare, for instance, utilises social media handles in creating awareness on herbal products on the company's product chains. Herbal products of indigenous makeup that do not use social media restrict product recognition outside the immediate environment of manufacture and distribution; Dr Agness Nwanmma Herbal Dental Powder and Dan-Iyk Aloe vera products fall within this category.

The major constraint of the use of social media in marketing of herbal product is the constraint in satisfying mass audience. Most social media sites do not pass for a mass distribution of information on herbal drugs. Also, there is a problem of literacy as the medium admits certain degree of literacy and Internet compliance thereby making social media admits limited users. Notwithstanding the shortcomings of social media in the marketability of herbal drugs, Heldman, Schindelar and Weaver (2018) observe that there is also an expectation of direct relationships with organizations and individuals through social media. Social media allow users unprecedented access to public health organizations and leaders. A growing number of public health leaders are establishing an official spokesperson presence in social media.

Understanding Health Information

Information is at the centre of media practice. The mass media collect, store, process and disseminate news and messages in order to bring about attitudinal change and make the audience to take appropriate decisions. Information, therefore, is important in understanding health and healthcare delivery. Health information, therefore, is the product of health communication. It consists of messages about health and related fields. Kenekwue (2018) states that health information involves the dissemination of health-related communication and messages through mainstream media outlet. It also involves the use of face-to-face interaction to engage in health-related discussions.

The mainstream media of health communication include radio, television, newspaper, magazine and the Internet. In relation to herbal drugs and health information, Batta (2013) points out that the problem of herbal drugs in Nigeria have been the reluctance of herbalists to divulge their medicinal secrets. This has inhibited effective use and practice of herbal medicine in Nigeria.

Similarly, social media has remained a veritable medium of health information. Salmon and Arkins (2003) point out that social media platforms have now become indispensable for health literacy and an overall improvement of health outcomes. Similarly, Shweta, Mayanka and Swatikwatra (2013) remark that health information gathering is no exception to this phenomenon: social media provides an outlet for the publication of health information to consumers, while allowing consumers to respond and contribute to advice that was traditionally only issued by providers.

Various herbal companies adopt different media of communication in advertising and marketing. Each method is dependent on budget, target consumers and nature of coverage of products and services. Kedi Healthcare, for instance; has sustained stiff competitions among other herbal companies. This is due to the company's online presence which widens information coverage of its herbal products.

Theoretical Framework: AIDA Marketing/Advertising model

The study was anchored on the AIDA Marketing/Advertising model. This model states that advertising and marketing objectives are met through effective integration of four elements: attention, interest, desire and action. This model argues that for effective advertising activity, the message must be designed to draw attention of consumers to the product. This attention will facilitate interest in the mind of consumers. The interest will boost desire for action. A postulation of American advertising and sales pioneer Elias St. Elmo Lewis in the late 1800s, the theory shows the four steps that marketers and advertisers adopt to attract customers to purchase a product.

The application of AIDA model to the study on herbal medicine shows that for a herbal product to be sold, its content and packaging must be designed to attract attention (product identification). This attention will instill interest (product acceptability), then desire to buy such product (product preference) and finally consumers take actions (product usage) by making purchases of the production.

The weakness of this model is that socioeconomic means can affect consumers' behaviour as in the case of herbal products of Kedi Healthcare. A consumer's socioeconomic means can limit his ability to take action (product usage) even when he has attention (product identification), interest (product acceptability) and desire (product preference). The relevance is that AIDA model galvanises sales by stimulating interest. Once a marketing strategy grabs attention of users, it invokes interest towards the product by increasing demand and supply. Finally, consumers have to take favorable actions towards the product by ultimately purchasing the product.

Method

The study adopted in-depth interview. This is a qualitative research design that is thematic-based and elicits information through oral interview. In using this design, six persons were selected from Kedi Healthcare, Dr Agness Nwanmma Herbal Dental Powder and Dan-Iyk Aloe vera products in Nnewi, Anambra State-Nigeria. These selected persons were distributors/facilitators and major salespersons in the three select herbal companies. These individuals were asked questions based on the research questions with some follow-up questions. The responses were thematically analysed.

Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Four research questions were formulated, tested and analysed below:

Research Question 1: What is the marketing strategy adopted in the sale of select herbal products? On the marketing strategy adopted by the select herbal products, Kedi Healthcare adopts a mix of personal selling and networking strategy. The company's use of personal marketing method is minimal due to relative high cost of Kedi Healthcare supplements. The company depends mainly on networking method as it offers registered consumers the opportunity of winning awards (bonuses) and other benefits such as car prizes or overseas travel opportunities. The advantage of networking method is that it works on a long-term investment based on the number of uplinks and downlinks of individuals in the platform. On the other hand, Dr Agnes Nwamma Herbal Dental Powder and Dan-Iyk Aloe vera adopt personal marketing without networking method. The implication is that Dr Agnes Nwamma Herbal Dental Powder and Dan-Iyk Aloe vera boost of direct contact with users thereby consolidating interpersonal relationship between users and companies under study.

Research Question 2: To what extent do the select herbal products engage social media in product marketing? On the extent of engagement of social media in product marketing, Kedi Healthcare uses social media outlets such as Google search, Facebook and Twitter handles. Other herbal companies: Dr Agnes Nwamma Herbal Dental Powder appeared on Google search. It also has a Facebook handle with minimal online patronage in terms of web-visits by consumers. Dan-Iyk Aloe vera product does not appear on Google search, Facebook or Twitter but it has distribution outlets scattered across Nigeria. Major source of health information is print – health book that chronicles the company's products and locations. The implication is that social media is a veritable medium of marketing herbal products thus, the findings of Salmon and Arkins (2003) affirmed that social media platforms have now become indispensable for health literacy and an overall improvement of health outcomes.

Research Question 3: What is the authenticity of health information on herbal drugs of select products vis-à-vis efficacy claims? The three herbal products are duly registered with National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC). However, Kedi Healthcare consists of processed herbal products and supplements. The products are mainly imported so they have passed through regulations from the country of import and Nigeria, the country of product consumption. This boosts Kedi Healthcare's credibility in the business of herbal products. Although Dr Agnes Nwamma Herbal Dental Powder circulates within Southeastern states, it is duly registered with NAFDAC. Its credibility is based on long-age use among people of Igbo-speaking areas. It is a household name in Southeast Nigeria. The other herbal product, Dan-Iyk Aloe vera product derives its credibility based on individual use of the product.

Research Question 4: What is the efficiency of social media platforms adopted for product marketing of select herbal products? Among the studied herbal products, only Kedi Healthcare products enjoy significant and efficient use of social media in advertising and marketing. This is the major reason Kedi Healthcare has continued to survive competition among numerous food supplements. The efficiency of social media use for marketing of Dr Agnes Nwamma Herbal Dental Power is minimal while Dan-Iyk Aloe vera product does not.

Conclusion

Summarily, major findings of the study showed that although these drugs are marketed online, the sales methods are rather through networking method (as in Kedi Healthcare), personal selling and the use of sales promotional strategies (as in Dr Agnes Nwamma Herbal Dental Power and Dan-Iyk Aloe vera product). The study discovered that Kedi Healthcare relies heavily on networking method than personal marketing. It was equally observed that economic means affect patronage of herbal product in Kedi Healthcare as costs of products are relatively high and the networking method is too cumbersome to operate. It takes about ₦4000 to register and then buy monthly product in the range of ₦60,000 to ₦90,000 to win bonuses. A user can also buy Kedi Healthcare products around ₦7000 or more depending on the type of product. Dr Agnes Nwamma Herbal Dental products are relatively cheap and affordable. The study also showed that indeed, there is significant use of herbal products among residents of Nnewi, Anambra State. Finding also supported the AIDA marketing/advertising model because choice of patronage of herbal products is borne out of consumers' interest and preferences.

Recommendations

The study made the following recommendations:

1. To boost sales, the use of social media should be augmented with the use of mainstream media of communication. The audiovisual quality of television provides aesthetic platform for advertising these herbal products thus, boosting sales of products.
2. The use of networking method to market herbal product is relatively productive, however, the study recommends that Kedi Healthcare and other similar herbal companies that use networking method to consider cheap amount for renewing and winning bonuses. This recommendation will encourage wider use of such products thus; more consumers will buy and use such herbal product.
3. There is need for periodic review of manufacture and operational licences of herbal companies to ensure strict compliances with extant laws guiding herbal products.

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