

# APPRAISAL OF SOCIAL LISTENING STRATEGIES FOR BRAND IMAGE DEVELOPMENT OF GRAND CEREALS COMPANY PRODUCTS IN PLATEAU STATE

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## KEYWORDS

Social Listening, Brand Image, Development, Strategies, Grand Cereals

## ABSTRACT

*Effective social strategies are crucial for organizations to monitor brand conversations, respond to customer feedback, and maintain a positive brand image. Grand Cereals is a leading food processing company in Nigeria, with a strong presence in Plateau State. Despite the importance of social listening in brand image development, there appears to be a dearth of research on the social listening strategies employed by Grand Cereals in Plateau State. The research was aimed at identifying how Grand Cereals and Oil Mills Ltd carryout social listening on their company products and to assess how Grand Cereals and Oil Mills Ltd engage their online customers on the social media and examine the emerging trends in content creation. The research took its leaning from the uses and gratification theory and media dependency theory. The research was an empirical one, with primary data gathered from twenty staff of the sales and marketing department of Grand Cereal and Oil Mills Ltd, Jos, Plateau State. The findings of the research revealed that Grand Cereals and Oil Mills Ltd has no official strategy for monitoring online conversations about their company products, in addition to the fact that the company has no official engagement strategy for their online customers. The research recommended that Grand Cereals should establish a robust social media presence. The company should also utilize social listening tools to monitor brand conversations, track customer feedback, and respond promptly to customer inquiries and complaints. The study recommended that Grand Cereals should encourage online engagement with their online customers.*

## Introduction

In the fast-paced digital age of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, social listening has gained immense significance for businesses, organizations, and individuals. These practices allow for understanding consumer preferences, building brand reputation, managing crises, identifying influencers, conducting market research, and maintaining positive media presence. Tools such as social media and the internet have become essential for staying attuned to public sentiment, adapting to market trends, and effectively engaging with audiences. In the era of constant connectivity and information overload, Agozie and Nat (2023) insist that harnessing the power of social listening has become crucial for success and growth. Organizations that harness the power of these practices can gain a competitive advantage, adapt to changing market dynamics, and create a positive impact on their bottom line.

Research on social listening is multi-dimensional, consisting of trend analysis, sentiment analysis and topic modelling (Hedayati 2024). The research will address the issue of social listening strategies as a way of enabling company brands to develop their brand images for public acceptance and better audience engagement, especially within the context of the social media via the understanding of public perceptions towards their brands for better public engagement. Researchers have in the past explored roles of social listening in specific contexts or target populations. Santos and Serpa (2020) focused on assessing social listening among adolescents by analysing social media posts related to health topics. Their study revealed that adolescents with higher media literacy were more likely to engage in informed discussions and critically evaluate health information as postulated by past research.

The research will focus on the appraisal of pragmatic strategies for effective social listening among the target consumers of Grand Cereals products in Plateau State. Grand Cereals and Oil Mills Company Limited is a subsidiary of United African Company (UAC) and they produce several house hold products such as Cereals like Grand Cornflakes, and Grand Maize Brabusco. They also produce Pet Foods such as Bingo dog food and Flours and Meals such as Grand Soya flavour Oils. By studying the target consumers of Grand Cereals products in Plateau State, the

research can provide contextual data that can help Grand Cereals tailor their media messages to suit the needs of their diverse audiences and identify potential areas of improvement.

## Statement of the Problem

With the abundance of social media content and data, it has become difficult to filter through the noise and identify relevant information. Understanding the context of a conversation is crucial for accurate analysis. Social listening tools appear to struggle with understanding sarcasm, irony, or expressions specific to a particular culture or region (Hedayati 2024). This may result in misinterpretation of policies. Fake accounts or irrelevant data may skew results and lead to a misguided conclusion. Social media platforms may not provide detailed demographic information about their users, which may limit the ability to segment and analyze data based on specific demographics (Martino 2020). Social media conversations happen in real time, which requires social listening tools to constantly monitor and analyze data in real-time as well.

Human language is complex and often contains ambiguous expressions, irony or figurative language. In trying to harness social listening strategies, algorithms may struggle to accurately interpret and assign viewpoints to individual expressions, leading to incorrect results (Bhuvana 2024). Social listening heavily relies on understanding the context in which the text is written. Without proper context, social listening strategies may misinterpret the motives behind the text (Khan, 2024). Different people may interpret and express advert messages differently, this may lead to inaccurate classification in domain specific applications.

It may appear that the inability of most companies and organizations like Grand Cereals and Oil Mills Ltd, Plateau State to extract social media conversations about their brands in terms of message reception and interpretation may lead to a gross misinterpretation of companies and organizational image. This may have a debilitating impact on company or organizational policies, especially towards their target public, which could in the long run, impact on the overall image of such companies and organizations in a negative way.

## Objectives of the Study

The specific objective of the research is to appraise pragmatic strategies for effective social listening among the target consumers of Grand Cereals Ltd Company products in Plateau State. This will be done with the under listed objectives;

1. To identify how Grand Cereals and Oil Mills Ltd carryout social listening on their company products and proffer strategies of effective social listening on the social media for Grand Cereals and Oil Mills Ltd
2. To assess how Grand Cereals and Oil Mills Ltd engage their online customers on the social media and examine the emerging trends in content creation for better social media image enhancement for Grand Cereals and Oil Mills Ltd

## Conceptual Clarification

### Social Listening

Social listening constitutes the process of monitoring and analyzing social media platforms to comprehend public sentiments and opinions. It involves systematically collecting data from social media sources, such as tweets, posts, comments, and reviews, and applying analytical techniques to interpret and understand the information (Machiri, et al 2023). Stewart and Arnold (2017) emphasized that social listening provides a comprehensive view of the conversations happening around a particular topic, brand, or industry, thereby allowing companies and organizations to make informed decisions based on a deep understanding of public perceptions.

One of the primary applications of social listening examined by scholars is its capacity to generate valuable consumer knowledge (Tachi 2021). By gathering real time data, brands can analyze how consumers perceive their products and services. Researchers argue that this immediate feedback loop allows companies to identify evolving trends and adopt their marketing strategies accordingly. Another critical aspect of social listening highlighted in academic literature is its role in crisis management. Scholars suggest that social listening acts as an early warning system for

brands, enabling them to detect potential issues before they escalate.

## Literature Review

### Strategies for Enhancing Effective Social Listening on Social Media

Some of the possible ways of enhancing social listening efforts and practices according to Sakti (2023) could range from understanding social media influence, assessment of public perception, and evaluating news sources.

### Understanding Social Media Influence

Social media has become an integral part of our daily lives, shaping the way we communicate, interact, and consume information. With the rise of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X, and TikTok, social media has significantly altered the way we connect with others and access news and entertainment. Hogsnes, et al (2023) posit that one of the key aspects of social media that has garnered much attention in recent years is its influence on individuals and society as a whole. The ability of social media to shape opinions, attitudes, and behaviors is both powerful and widespread, with a vast majority of people using social media in some form or another.

The influence of social media can be crucial for several reasons. Firstly, social media has the potential to mobilize and organize large groups of people, leading to social movements and protests that can bring about significant change (Jung & Wang 2024). For example, the end SARS protest in Nigeria in October 2020 was largely fueled by social media, as protesters used platforms like Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) to coordinate their actions and spread their messages. Furthermore, social media can also influence consumer behavior, with many companies now using platforms like Instagram and YouTube to advertise their products and services (Matthew 2024). Influencers on these platforms have a massive following and can sway their audience to purchase certain products or support certain causes.

### Assessment of Public Perception

Public perception refers to the collective opinions, attitudes, and beliefs held by the general public towards a particular entity, such

as an organization, brand, individual, or societal issue. It is the image or reputation that a particular entity holds in the eyes of the public (Nwagwu, et al 2024). Public perception plays a significant role in shaping public opinion, influencing consumer behavior, and impacting decision-making processes. Assessing public perception can lead to solutions on how the public perceives and understands a particular entity. Matea and Peric (2023) posit that through public perception, companies and organizations can identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas of improvement. This knowledge enables them to tailor their strategies, communications, and offerings to better align with public expectations and preferences. Public perception can directly impact an entity's reputation (Puig & Gen 2023). Positive public perception can enhance trust, credibility, and goodwill, leading to increased support, customer loyalty, brand loyalty and positive word-of-mouth. Conversely, negative public perception can tarnish an organization's reputation, leading to a loss of trust, decreased customer confidence, and potential financial losses (Hanathasia & Lestari 2024). In this regard, public perception can influence consumer behavior. People often make purchasing decisions based on their perceptions of a brand or product. Positive public perception can drive consumer loyalty, while negative perceptions can deter potential customers.

### Evaluation of News Sources

In today's digital era, the abundance of information at our fingertips has never been greater. With just a few clicks, we can access news from all around the world, ensuring we stay informed about the latest developments. However, amidst this vast sea of information lies the challenge of distinguishing reliable news sources from less credible ones. It has become imperative for media consumers and companies alike to develop the critical skills needed to evaluate news sources accurately in order to develop their brand image.

Ensuring that the news they consume is accurate and unbiased is crucial for several reasons. Duijf (2024) suggested that relying on misinformation can lead to an uninformed citizenry, which poses threats to our democratic societies. Misinformation can shape our opinions, influence our decision-making, and impact the way we view the world. Without evaluating news sources, companies risk falling prey to false narratives and propaganda especially about their target audience and thus,

compromising their ability to form well-informed opinions. Aslet and Sanderson (2023) emphasized that the rise of fake news and deceptive news outlets has increased the need for source evaluation. Fabricated stories, exaggerated claims, and misleading headlines can spread rapidly, often going viral before their inaccuracy is discovered. Therefore, evaluating news sources allows companies to separate fact from fiction, reducing the dissemination of misinformation and ensuring that only reliable information reaches their target public.

### Emerging Trends in Content Creation and Engagement

The rapidly evolving digital landscape has witnessed significant shifts in content creation and audience engagement. With the rise of social media, streaming platforms, and personalized experiences, brands and content creators are continually adapting to emerging trends to capture and retain audience attention. Embracing these trends allows brands to create meaningful and memorable experiences that resonate with audiences in this ever-evolving digital edge.

In today's digital age, brands are constantly looking for new ways to engage with their customers and build brand loyalty. One powerful tool that has emerged in recent years is interactive content. Interactive content refers to any type of content that requires active participation from the user, such as quizzes, polls, surveys, calculators, and interactive videos (Ambarwati & Sudarmiati 2024). The impact of interactive content on user engagement and brand loyalty cannot be underestimated. Andini and Tuti (2024) posit that interactive content provides a more engaging and personalized experience for target publics, allowing them to interact with the brand in a more meaningful way. This not only captures their attention but also encourages them to spend more time on the brand's website or social media platforms. Asiyah (2024) emphasized that one of the key benefits of interactive content is its ability to capture valuable data about the user. By engaging with interactive content, users provide valuable perceptions into their preferences, behaviors, and habits. This data can then be used to create more targeted and personalized marketing campaigns, leading to higher conversion rates and increased brand loyalty.

Interactive content also encourages social sharing and virality. When users engage with interactive content, they are more likely to share it with their friends and followers, leading to increased brand visibility and reach (Rai & Dahal 2024). This word-of-mouth marketing can be incredibly powerful in building brand loyalty and driving customer acquisition. Furthermore, Idemon and Nisa (2024) stressed that interactive content allows brands to create a more memorable and enjoyable experience for their customers. By incorporating elements of storytelling, and personalization into their content, brands can create a more immersive and interactive experience that resonates with users on a deeper level. Interactive content has a significant impact on user engagement and brand loyalty. Kumaresan and Samydooss (2024) added that by providing a more engaging and personalized experience for users, capturing valuable data, encouraging social sharing, and creating a memorable experience, interactive content can help brands build stronger relationships with their customers and drive long-term brand loyalty. As such, brands should consider incorporating interactive content into their branding strategies to enhance user engagement and build brand loyalty in today's competitive digital landscape.

Personalization has become an integral part of content creation today. With the rise of digital platforms and the abundance of content available, personalization techniques have emerged as a way to engage and cater to individual users' preferences, needs, and interests. According to Sodiya, et al (2022) one of the widely used personalization techniques is demographic targeting. This technique involves creating content that appeals specifically to a particular demographic group. By analyzing demographic information such as age, gender, location, and occupation, multi-national companies can tailor their content to resonate with the intended audience (Honora & Wang 2024). For example, an online shopping platform might create content targeting young adults by featuring trendy fashion items or celebrity endorsements. Another effective personalization technique is behavior targeting. This technique involves analyzing user behavior data such as browsing history, search queries, and purchase patterns to create personalized content (Abbas 2024). For instance, a streaming service like iROKO tv might recommend Nollywood movies and TV shows to users based on their viewing history and preferences. This technique enables content creators to deliver

relevant and timely content to users, enhancing their overall experience. Iliyas (2024) averred that content creators also use collaborative filtering as a personalization technique.

Live streaming is another trend in content creation that has emerged as a powerful tool in the digital age, revolutionizing the way content is consumed and shared. It allows individuals and organizations to broadcast events, performances, and discussions in real-time to an online audience (Andari & Robbani 2023). In recent years, live streaming has gone beyond simply transmitting information. It has become a means of establishing and strengthening audience engagement and connection. Dua (2023) posits that live streaming facilitates direct and immediate interaction between content creators and their audience. Viewers can ask questions, provide feedback, and engage in discussions through live chat features. This real-time interaction fosters a sense of inclusion and involvement, as audiences feel like active participants rather than passive observers. Sonda and Balqiah (2023) maintained that this interaction is crucial in building a deeper connection with the audience and creating a community around the content. It also provides an unfiltered and authentic experience for the audience. Unlike pre-recorded content, live events showcase genuine moments, spontaneous reactions, and unscripted conversations. This transparency helps humanize content creators and organizations, making them more relatable and trustworthy. By witnessing raw emotions and witnessing content in real-time, viewers are more likely to forge a genuine connection with the creators. Live streaming eliminates geographical and physical barriers, making content accessible to a global audience (Melani & Zamzamy 2023). Regardless of their location, people can tune in to live events and be part of the experience. This inclusivity enhances engagement by allowing individuals from different backgrounds and cultures to connect and interact. Live streaming has made it possible for niche communities and interest groups to come together, share common experiences, and form meaningful connections.

In recent years, the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in various fields has become increasingly prevalent, and one area where its impact is particularly evident is content creation. Shin and Jeong (2021) proffer that AI technology, using machine learning algorithms and natural language processing, has the ability to generate



written and visual content at an unprecedented speed and accuracy. This integration of AI in content creation has had a profound effect on engagement, transforming the way businesses connect with their audience. One of the key advantages of AI in content creation is its ability to generate personalized and relevant content (Walia 2024). AI algorithms can analyze vast amounts of data, such as user preferences, browsing behavior, and demographic information, to understand what content would resonate most with individual users. This personalized approach enhances engagement by providing users with content that is specifically tailored to their interests and needs, leading to increased user satisfaction and loyalty.

Social media platforms have had a profound impact on content creation and engagement trends in recent years. These platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, X, YouTube, and TikTok, have become crucial channels for individuals and businesses alike to create and share content, fostering engagement with their target audience in unique ways. One of the key roles that social media platforms play in content creation is providing a user-friendly and accessible space for individuals to share their ideas, stories, and creations (Colombo & Gray 2023). These platforms offer a variety of features, such as text updates, photos, videos, and live streaming, allowing users to express themselves and share their content in a visually appealing and engaging manner. Najeer and Dwivedi (2024) noted that this democratization of content creation has empowered individuals to become creators, resulting in a diverse range of content that caters to various interests and passions.

## Theoretical Framework

The study took its leaning from the Uses and Gratification theory and the Media Dependency theory. The Uses and Gratification theory is a communication theory that explores why people actively seek out and use certain media and communication channels. It suggests that individuals are not passive recipients of media messages, but rather active consumers who select and use media in order to fulfil their specific needs and goals (Wibowo 2022). The theory focuses on the motivations and purposes behind media consumption, and suggests that people turn to media in order to satisfy specific psychological, social, and emotional needs. The theory also proposes that individuals have specific needs such as the need for information,

entertainment, personal connection, identity construction, and social interaction, and they choose their media consumption accordingly (Mutlari & Putri 2023). The uses and gratification theory was first proposed by Elihu Katz, Jay G. Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch in 1974. The theory was developed in response to the dominant mass communication theories at the time that focused on the effects media had on individuals.

The uses and gratification theory can be relevant to research on assessment of social listening in the following ways. Firstly, the theory suggests that individuals actively choose and use media to fulfill their needs and gratifications. Research using social listening can examine how media consumers select specific media sources or platforms for information, entertainment, or social interaction. By understanding the motives behind media selection, researchers can assess the preferences of individuals. Secondly, the theory emphasizes that individuals seek gratifications from media consumption.

The Media dependency theory on the other hand is a communication theory that examines the relationship between media and individuals or social groups. It posits that individuals or social groups become dependent on media to fulfil their information needs and to maintain social connections. The theory suggests that individuals or groups depend on the media to obtain information about the world. This can include news, entertainment, education, or any other content that fulfils their information needs. Safdar (2023) avers that the theory projects the media as a tool for facilitating social connections and interactions. This means that individuals and groups can rely on media to connect with others, maintain relationships, and engage in social activities. The theory also asserts that the media serves as a source of diversion, offering an escape from daily routines and providing enjoyment or relaxation (Chen 2023). People may depend on the media as a way to unwind, relieve stress, or find distraction from their everyday lives. The theory was first proposed by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur in the early 1970's. The theory was developed in response to the rapidly changing media landscape and the increasing influence of media on society.

The Media Dependency Theory is very relevant to this research work for so many reasons. Through the assessment of social listening, a better comprehension can be

achieved on how employees or stakeholders in companies rely on media sources for information about the organization, its industry, and relevant topics. This understanding can inform strategies for improving social listening within companies. The theory highlights the potential influence of media on individuals' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. The Media Dependency Theory recognizes that individuals engage in selective exposure and interpretation of media messages based on their existing attitudes and beliefs. Through social listening, analysis can be made on the types of media sources or platforms that employees or stakeholders prefer, identifying any patterns of selective exposure.

### Methodology

The study is an empirical one which combines qualitative analysis of relevant literature with

primary data gathered from 20 interractants using a convenience sampling technique with a five point focus group discussion guide. The interractants were grouped in fives (5) within a four day interval. The interractants were randomly chosen from the Sales and marketing department of Grand Cereals and Oil Mills Ltd, Jos South, Plateau State. All the interractants were directly involved in the publicity and marketing of Grand Cereals Company products and were also involved in one way or the other in giving feedback to the company on customer comments and reactions virtually and physically as well. The discussions took place within the period of 4 days spanning from Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> to Saturday, 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2025.

### Presentation of Findings

The responses from the interractants were collated, analyzed and presented below:

#### Q1: Socio-Demographic Distribution

Sex	Frequency	%
Males	9	45
Females	11	55
Total	20	100
Marital Status	Frequency	%
Married	9	45
Single	7	35
Divorced	1	5
Prefer not to say	3	15
Total		100
Age Range	Frequency	%

25-35	9	45
36-45	5	25
46-55	6	30
55 and above	0	0
Total	20	100
<b>Years of Experience</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
0-5	8	40
5-10	6	30
10-15	4	20
20 and Above	2	10
Total	20	100
<b>Membership of Professional Body</b>		
<b>NIPR</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>APCON</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Source: Field Survey 2025**

From the tabulation above, it shows that 9 (nine) of the interreactants were males making up 45% while 11 (eleven) of the interreactants were females, making up 55 %. This shows that majority of the interreactants randomly chosen were females. The table also revealed that nine of the interreactants were married, while seven of the interreactants were single. One of the interreactants was divorced while three of the interreactants preferred not to disclose their marital status.

The table above also shows that nine of the interreactants were within the age range of 25-35 while five of the interreactants were within the age range of 36-45 and six of the interreactants fall within the age range of 46 to 55. None of the interreactants from the table above fall within the age range of 55 and above. The table above also depicts that eight of the interreactants had a work experience of zero to five years while five of the interreactants had work experience of between five to ten years and four of the interreactants had work experience of between ten to fifteen years and two of the interreactants had a work



experience of fifteen years and above. Coincidentally, none of the interractants was a registered member of either the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) or the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON).

**Question One: What Strategy Does Grand Cereals and Oil Mills use to monitor Conversations about their Company Products online?**

Six of the interractants revealed that although, there is no official strategy for monitoring mentions about the company products online, but most of their marketers and sales representatives identify conversations about their company products online through hashtags, especially industry specific hashtags. However, eight of the participants on the other hand affirmed that online conversations about their company products mostly come to the company through influencers whom they have developed relationships with. These influencers according to them, sometimes deliberately create conversations about their company products to sample opinions by online users of their company products. Consequently, four of the interractants asserted that sometimes, they create online engagements about their company products to stimulate conversations and sample public opinion online while the rest of the two interractants affirmed the submission of all of the above interractants.

**Question Two: Does Grand Cereals and Oil Mills have a social media Page on any of the Social Media Platforms?**

A total of nine of the interractants affirmed that the company had a social media page on Facebook, registered under their parent company, United African Company (UAC) and not as Grand Cereals and Oil Mills with a total of one thousand eight hundred followers as at February 2025. Six of the interractants were not sure whether the Company had a page on the social media while four of the interractants were not aware that the company had a page on any social media platform.

**Question Three: How Does Grand Cereals and Oil Mills get feedbacks from Customers about their products online?**

Seven of the interractants averred that some of their customers give feedbacks about the company's products in comment sections on Facebook when the company advertises some of its products. Subsequently, six of the interractants affirmed that the company also receives feedbacks from some of its customers on company products from company emails. Four of the interractants posited that some of the company's customers reach out to the company through direct messages (DM) via Facebook messenger while three of the interractants were not certain about the online feedback mechanism.

**Question Four: How Does Grand Cereals and Oil Mills respond to Customers' concerns about their Company products online?**

A total of eleven of the interractants posited that the company seldom responds to customers' enquiries and concerns on company products online. They disclosed that the company usually compensates their customers when concerns about company products arise through the company's distributors by way of offering extra products and packages especially during festive periods. Consequently, seven of the interractants asserted that the company provides compensations for customers who proffer concerns about company products through sales promotions where discounts of a certain percentage are made for customers also through the company distributors. Two of the interractants were unsure of response mechanisms of the company.

**Question Five: Does Grand Cereals and Oil Mills have a Social Media Content that fosters online engagement with Customers?**

Fourteen of the interractants averred that the company had no official social media content that fosters online engagement with customers while the rest of the six interractants were not sure whether the company had any in the distant past before their arrival in the company as employees.

## Discussion of Findings

The first objective of the research was to identify how Grand Cereals and Oil Mills Ltd carryout social listening on their company products and proffer strategies of effective social listening on the social media for Grand Cereals and Oil Mills Ltd. Findings reveal that Grand Cereals and Oil Mills have a social media page on Facebook, however, the company sales representatives on their own deploy the use of company hashtag to identify and monitor conversations about their company products online, while some of their sales representatives and marketers relate with social media influencers whom they rely on to create conversations about their company products online in order to sample online opinions about their company products and relate same to company management. Findings also revealed that the company seldom responds to online queries and inquiries by online customers due to company policy. This falls in line with the assumption of the uses and gratification theory which suggests that individuals are not passive recipients of media messages, but rather active consumers who select and use media in order to fulfil their specific needs and goals. The theory also focuses on the motivations and purposes behind media consumption, and suggests that people turn to media in order to satisfy specific psychological, social, and emotional needs. The findings implies that there is a dire need for Grand Cereals and Oil Mills as a company to actively engage with their online customers in order to portray and enhance a better image for the company in addition to their direct sales and advertisement strategies.

The second objective of the research was to assess how Grand Cereals and Oil Mills Ltd engage their online customers on the social media and examine the emerging trends in content creation for better social media image enhancement for Grand Cereals and Oil Mills Ltd. Findings reveal that the company has no official content for online customer engagement thus far. In line with the assumptions of the media dependency theory which provides that individuals or social groups become dependent on media to fulfil their information needs and to maintain social connections. The theory suggests that individuals or groups depend on the media to obtain information about the world. This can include news, entertainment, education, or any other content that fulfils their information needs. The theory also projects the media as a tool for facilitating social connections and

interactions. The implication of the above findings in line with the media dependency theory infers that since a lot of people, especially customers of grand cereals depend on the media to meet their information needs, the absence of same could lead to false and misinformed perceptions of Grand Cereals and Oil Mills Company Ltd by their online public, regardless of how well intentioned their policies appear to be.

## Conclusion

The study set out to appraise the social listening strategies employed by Grand Cereals for brand image development in Plateau State. The findings revealed that Grand Cereals has a limited online presence, which hinders effective social listening and brand image development. Grand Cereals' social media presence is limited, making it challenging to engage with customers and monitor brand conversations. The company's social listening efforts are insufficient, leading to missed opportunities for customer feedback, complaint resolution, and brand advocacy. The study highlights the importance of social listening in brand image development, emphasizing the need for Grand Cereals to prioritize online engagement and customer feedback.

## Recommendations

The study made the following recommendations;

- i. Grand Cereals should establish a robust social media presence, leveraging platforms like Facebook, X, Instagram and LinkedIn.
- ii. The company should utilize social listening tools to monitor brand conversations, track customer feedback, and respond promptly to customer inquiries and complaints.
- iii. Grand Cereals should encourage online engagement through contests, giveaways, and interactive content, helping to build brand awareness, loyalty, and advocacy.

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