

# **ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH VIA SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS AND EVENT MARKETING: PROMOTION OF RIVERS STATE CARNIVAL (CARNIRIV)**

## **VICTOR ONYEBUCHI OKOLO**

Department of Marketing, University of Nigeria Enugu Campus, Nigeria.

## **WALI KEMKAMMA**

Department of Marketing, Ken Saro Wiwa Polytechnic Bori, Nigeria.

## **OBIKEZE, CHINEDUM OKEY**

Department of Marketing, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus, Nigeria.

## **ORANUSI, IFEANYICHUKWU NWADIOGO**

Department of Marketing, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Nigeria.

## **GBEMISOLA OGBOLU**

Department of Leadership, Management and Human Resources, Teesside University, UK.

## **IKPO KOBİ PAMELA\***

Department of Marketing, University of Nigeria Enugu Campus, Nigeria. (\* Corresponding Author)

## **ATTAMAH IKECHUKWU JOSEPH**

Department of Management, University of Nigeria Enugu Campus, Nigeria.

### **Abstract**

Electronic word of mouth via social media platforms is a robust marketing strategy since it triggers consumer attitude and purchase intentions towards products, services, and events. The credibility of electronic word of mouth in attracting visitors to carnivals is undeniable, given that attendees vigorously exploit it as a third-party endorsement for the carnival brand. However, this study investigated the influence of electronic word of mouth on promoting Carniriv, a carnival organized by the government of Rivers State. The study specifically assessed the influence of word of mouth via Instagram on promoting Carniriv. Similarly, it ascertained the influence of word of mouth via Facebook on promoting Carniriv. In addition, it determined the influence of word of mouth via X on promoting Carniriv. The population of the study consists of 2023 Gen Z attendees of Carniriv. The sample size was determined using Cochran's formula since the population of attendees was non-finite. Purposive and convenience sampling techniques were used in selecting the respondents from whom data was obtained through questionnaire administration. Analysis of data was conducted using simple linear regression. The findings revealed that word of mouth via each of Instagram, Facebook, and X has a significant positive influence on promoting Carniriv. Since these constructs have proven to be robust in promoting Carniriv, the government of Rivers State is advised to further explore these platforms to improve attendee participation through sharing their memorable experiences with their fans, friends, and community, to boost future attendee traffic and improve revenue generation for the state.

**Keywords:** Marketing, Word of Mouth, Electronic Word of Mouth, Event Marketing, Carniriv, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter (X).

## INTRODUCTION

The social media has truly changed the communication narrative across the globe. It is a powerful marketing communication channel that can be used to hold a conversation between a company and a customer, and between two or more customers in what is known as word of mouth. As a viable communication media, Okolo et al. (2017) described how it can be used to market a political candidate's image. However, billions of people have been using social media like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, TikTok, Snapchat, etc., to communicate with their various stakeholders. Since its evolution, social media marketing has been pervasive and has recorded unprecedented growth in the past few decades (Tuncdogan & Hughes, 2022). Tuncdogan and Hughes (2022), observed that about 4.5 billion people across the globe have adopted social media, and this statistic has been increasing since 2015. However, since the evolution of the internet, the business environment has transformed into connecting one-on-one with customers to get closer to them, speak, and listen to them in order to provide and satisfy their needs in a more personalized manner. This is what is called true right-touching or contact strategy (Caffey & Smith, 2008). However, the promotion of carnivals via social media instead of solely through traditional media is a manifestation of personalization strategy in marketing which demonstrates a paradigm shift in the way businesses are conducted nowadays. This shift is consequent upon the internet and digital media revolution which accorded individuals the opportunity to participate in accessing and sharing information (user-generated content).

Although the application of traditional media to promote Carniriv may be effective, it is not interactive and cannot offer attendees the kind of engagement that social media will offer, since it does not have a feedback system. In other words, it lacks message personalization and social engagement that social media readily offers. Despite that, Guanah et al. (2020) in their study, gave invaluable insights into the efficacy of newspapers in promoting carnivals. Interestingly, the government of Rivers State uses both traditional and social media; however, because Gen Zs are addicted and always glued to social media with their smartphones, this study focuses on the use of word of mouth via social media to promote Carniriv. Moreover, across Nigeria and especially Rivers State, carnival is a major aspect of tourism development (Onu et al., 2025). Hence, the Rivers State Ministry of Culture and Tourism has since 2008 organized Carniriv to expose their cultural heritage, engender unity (Ibekwe, 2019) among their diverse tribal extractions, and build businesses for economic growth (Zibaghafa & Krama, 2022). Indeed, Carniriv is pivotal to tourism and economic development for the state and generates a substantial amount of revenue from visitors within and outside the state during the event (Ine-ere, 2021; Zibaghafa & Krama, 2022; Majebi & Anierobi, 2017; Omitola, 2017).

Arowosafe et al. (2020) added that it fosters social cohesion among citizens since it gathers people from different cultural backgrounds to display their heritage in grand entertainment. Fortunately, Carniriv has been projected as an awesome festival to tourists

and citizens because of the rich costumes and ornaments worn by the revelers (Ine-ere, 2022). In addition, being a powerful strategy for tourism and socio-economic development (Ibekwe, 2019), Carniriv is a wonderful investment asset for Rivers State government since it contributes significantly to her GDP. This improved GDP is not fortuitous since Carniriv drives local economic growth, provides job opportunity, supports private sector partnerships, boosts the hospitality and tourism industry, and promotes infrastructural development in Rivers State. All these boost the corporate image and reputation of the state. In line with this, Ikwumezie et al. (2020) conducted a study that evaluated the contributions of carnival and other festivals to Nigeria's GDP.

Nevertheless, carnival is a major aspect of tourism and event marketing, and being an event, marketers and institutions leverage carnivals to promote their brands. Event marketing is a promotional approach where companies organize events or sponsor event (event sponsorship), such as trade fairs, sporting events, carnivals, etc., to engage one-to-one with their target audience. It is a marketing strategy where a company integrates the sales of their brands with a live event; created by them or another company, to enable customers to associate the company's brand with the event (Itasari et al., 2018). It is a strategic mission of an organization in which an event is hosted to offer customers a memorable experience by exposing them to people's cultural heritage, thus drawing them toward a brand. Incidentally, people pull up to carnivals for a confluence of vibes; having fun and entertainment, excitement and escape, cultural vibes, food and treats, and the purchase of other brands of products and services from companies. The fun and entertainment aspect of a carnival is typical of experiential marketing, since it exposes a nation's cultural heritage to street parades, masquerade shows, beauty pageants, boat regattas, cultural exhibitions, music, and dance performances. Furthermore, this study is interested in promoting Carniriv via electronic word of mouth, which, according to Tuncdogan and Hughes (2022), is an interpersonal approach to communication. Word of mouth refers to an informal face-to-face communication between two or more people give accounts or narratives about their positive or negative brand experience. Conversely, electronic word of mouth is an online or social media information sharing between consumers about their memorable brand experience. Kartika and Pandjaitan (2023) argued that electronic word of mouth leverages digital platforms like Instagram, Facebook, X, and WhatsApp while according users the opportunity to review and refer products and services to other users. Remarkably, the Rivers State Ministry of Culture and Tourism communicates via Instagram, Facebook, and X. Hence, during Carniriv word of mouth is encouraged by the state government through these platforms from potential, current, and past attendees through hashtag campaigns, reposts, engagement prompts, challenges, and shoutouts. Through these engagements via social media, attendees automatically become Carniriv ambassadors. In the literature, the conversation on deploying electronic word of mouth to promote carnival as a festive event is scarce. Besides, businesses on their own have not started organizing carnivals as part of event marketing strategy. Rather, they leverage carnivals conducted by federal and state governments to promote their brands to their target audience. The promotion of carnival

in Nigeria and specifically Carniriv through social media is incipient. Consequently, the initiation and encouragement of attendees to share content pertaining Carniriv is also nascent. Although, there are discrete studies on event marketing and electronic word of mouth (Okolo et al., 2024; Ngo et al., 2024; Uz Zaman et al., 2024; Candra & Yasa, 2022), none has been done on the influence of electronic word of mouth on the promotion of carnival, specifically the use of Instagram, Facebook, and X to promote Carniriv via word of mouth. Against this backdrop, this study intends to explore Carniriv as part of event marketing and tries to determine the influence of electronic word of mouth on promoting it, which is the gap that this study focuses to close.

## **REVIEW OF RELEVANT AND RELATED LITERATURE**

### **Electronic Word of Mouth**

Word of mouth is fundamentally more credible and persuasive than traditional advertising which marketers deploy as a hard sell approach. Word of mouth marketing is a major discourse that traverses and dominates literature in the 21st century. As one of the oldest forms of communication, the dependability of brands on word-of-mouth marketing to earn a competitive advantage through third-party endorsements have become a viable and successful business option (Mosavi & Gunawan, 2024). Undoubtedly, customers naturally expect their needs to be met satisfactorily, and when this happens, they communicate their positive experience to other customers through traditional word of mouth. Conversely, when their aspirations are not met, they expressly communicate their negative experience (disappointment) to other customers. In retrospect, customers traditionally conduct word of mouth through face-to-face communication before the advent of social media.

Nowadays, marketers try to develop and build quality brands to encourage positive word of mouth, since customers no longer depend holistically on traditional advertising to make choices of the products and services they purchase. Word-of-mouth marketing is the act of orally sharing positive or negative product and service experiences with other customers, such as one's immediate family, neighbors, and other acquaintances. Electronic word of mouth began as a result of the growth of the internet and social media technology. It is ineluctably important in achieving customer satisfaction, retention, repurchase intention, and loyalty in many business organizations across the globe. It is a testimonial transfer of positive or negative product and service experience from the source to the receiver. Positive electronic word of mouth attracts more customers, increases customer retention and loyalty, enhances sales and profit, expands market share, and bolsters a company's good corporate image and reputation. In contrast, negative electronic word of mouth leads to brand switching, poor sales, lack of profit, decreased market share, and bad corporate image and reputation for a company. Surprisingly, Shashikala and Thilina (2020) observed that though customers complain about negative word of mouth in the fast-food industry, their sales have never dropped since it is obvious that the industry is the most competitive one across the globe.

In the hospitality and tourism industry, Yoopetch and Chirapanda (2024) found that the intention of tourists to revisit wellness sites was dependent on the effectiveness of electronic word of mouth. Also, Alsheikh et al. (2023) remarked that tourists depend on reliable information-sharing sources whenever they want to purchase any travel package. Ezzat and El Salam (2022) found that consumer purchase intentions, brand trust, and brand image were significantly triggered by electronic word of mouth.

### **Word of Mouth Via Instagram**

Instagram currently has 2 billion monthly active users and more than 500 million daily active users, making it the world's third most popular social media platform; Gen Zs being the key users of this platform (Instagram Statistics, 2026). The top three Instagram users globally include India (392.3 million), United States (172.6 million), and Brazil (141.4 million) (Instagram Users by Country, 2026). Assuredly, Instagram is a very robust social media platform for communicating electronic word of mouth (Purbohastuti et al., 2024). According to Instagram Users by Country (2026), Nigeria has about 12.6 million users, with males making 53.5%, while females making 46.5%.

However, as a powerful marketing strategy, electronic word of mouth has evolved particularly through Instagram, X (Kartika & Pandjaitan, 2023), Facebook, and WhatsApp platforms. Electronic word of mouth is a resolute driver of consumer confidence and purchase behavior given that information about products and services is shared by those who either have good knowledge about them, or possess evocative experience about them. Erkan (2015) noted that marketers easily promote their brands to their different customers through Instagram word of mouth, thereby energizing many popular brands to possess an Instagram account. Guidry et al. (2015) reported that brand personality and loyalty can be established using electronic word of mouth via Instagram.

It is quite breathtaking that photos, audios, videos, stories, and live streaming are shared via the Instagram app between users to keep abreast of topical issues and developments across the globe, in many sectors of life. For instance, Instagram users can seamlessly share messages concerning social relationships, shopping activities, music, lifestyle, religion, education, arts, research and breakthroughs, sports, festivals, tourism, healthcare, politics, etc. Purbohastuti et al. (2024) declared that since 2017, Instagram has been used as a vigorous tool by marketers for conveying electronic word of mouth. Alfian and Nilowardono (2019) reaffirmed that Instagram is a marketing strategy that uses photos, videos, and images to deliver electronic word of mouth to customers. Apparently, it is a newer social media platform when compared with Facebook and X; nonetheless, it is a visual-centric platform that is used for community building and sustenance, personal expression, and for marketing products and services on a one-on-one basis to potential and loyal customers. With over 400 million monthly active users and more than 80 million photos shared on Instagram daily, it is globally recognized as the fastest-growing social media platform (Serrano & Ramjaun, 2018). In juxtaposition with other social media networks, Instagram has the highest proportion of user engagement since on average, users on a daily basis spend 2.5 hours on it. Arguably, Delafrooz et al. (2019) proclaimed

that Instagram is used by 71% of popularly known brands across the globe. So, being one of the fastest-growing platforms, Instagram has played a significant role in people's daily interactions and business engagements (Delafrouz et al., 2019). Nursyabani and Silvianita (2023) declared that due to the features Instagram offers, the food and beverage industry uses it to market its products and services, build customer trust and loyalty and earn word of mouth communication. Categorically, word of mouth on Instagram from potential and current Carniriv attendees to their acquaintances will definitely trigger their awareness and interest to attend. Against these contributions, we propose that:

H1: Word of mouth via Instagram has a significant influence on promoting Carniriv

### **Word of Mouth via Facebook**

Word of mouth is essentially face-to-face oral communication and is the oldest means of communication (Ismagilova et al., 2017). Electronic word of mouth originated with the internet and social media evolution. Being the most visited social media, with 1.44 trillion active users (Rahmadini & Halim, 2018) as of 2018, Facebook is a robust platform for connecting people to share opinions, ideas, relationships, events, in what is known as electronic word of mouth (Anastasiie & Raluca, 2018). Electronic word of mouth via Facebook consists of positive and negative comments and reviews made to potential, current, and former customers to persuade them to patronize a specific brand (Afolabi & Zolkepli, 2023). According to them, electronic word of mouth occurs through consumer product and service experience, assessments, and reviews. Through electronic word of mouth via Facebook, consumers can conveniently express their positive or negative experiences and opinions about brands to their acquaintances (Ismagilova et al., 2017).

Ladhari and Michaud (2015) found that guests' attitude toward a hotel was significantly affected by comments shared via electronic word of mouth via Facebook. Argan and Argan (2017) posited that being the most popular social media platform, Facebook has improved the efficacy of electronic word of mouth. As a matter of fact, an individual's Facebook fan page acts as a conduit through which electronic word of mouth promotion flows - fans can like, share posts, comment on posts in their own networks, tag friends, as well as offer reviews and referrals to their followers (Rahmadini & Halim, 2018). Comments made about an event can encourage people to participate in that event, thus allowing the sharing of information and experience on Facebook. By sharing their experiences through electronic word of mouth with their Facebook friends about events, the interest of potential participants to attend the event rises (Du et al., 2020). In the same vein, when Carniriv potential and current attendees share texts or livestream it to their friends, they will be interested in participating. Anastasiie and Raluca (2018) revealed that customer brand engagement, which triggers purchase intention and electronic word of mouth was influenced by Facebook's perceived usefulness. Du et al. (2020) conducted a study on social media word-of-mouth communication and people's satisfaction towards sporting events, and found that electronic word of mouth via Facebook significantly impacted university students' satisfaction. In that study, electronic word-of-mouth

communication significantly impacted the level of students' understanding of sporting events. Based on these narratives, we hypothesize that:

H2: Word of mouth via Facebook has a significant influence on promoting Carniriv

### **Word of Mouth Via X**

Benevento et al. (2025) expressed that positive brand perception is triggered by social media engagement. Sustaining this, Araujo et al. (2017) affirmed that more 70% of users of social media engage themselves online through electronic word of mouth, making conversation about their experiences with brands. However, X is a social media platform where short messages called tweets are posted so that users can share important information that concerns their interests. It is a channel of communication similar to Facebook and Instagram. However, it is quite different from television, radio, newspaper, magazine, billboard, books, and other traditional media forms, since messages are posted and feedback is received among users in the communication process continuum. According to Alwash et al. (2021), X is a two-way symmetric platform that businesses have adopted to entertain customer feedback in the course of delivering customer services. It is an effective channel for electronic word of mouth since personal and trustworthy, ideas, reviews, testimony, and referrals about products, services, entertainment, events, etc., are delivered to users or customers through real-time engagement. Using images, videos, and interactive elements, X leaves a lasting impression on the target audience by allowing companies to promote their products and services through thorough and thoughtful engagements (Almarzoqi et al., 2025). Besides that, Almarzoqi et al. (2025) commented that X is a germane conduit for propagating customer engagement and electronic word of mouth. Alwash et al. (2021) confirmed that the richness of information on X depicts its credibility. For them, electronic word of mouth via X can invigorate a brand's value proposition. Consequent upon these accounts, we tentatively state that:

H3: Word of mouth via X has a significant influence on promoting Carniriv

### **Event Marketing**

Individuals, business organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and institutions have many avenues for creating awareness toward encouraging consumer attention, purchase attitude, and intentions. The channels that are most common to them include advertising, public relations, personal selling, sales promotion, and direct marketing. However, event marketing is a robust strategy in which brands synergistically leverage marketing communication strategies to create a live or virtual experience. Overtly, companies organize events to showcase their brands, build an enduring legacy by offering vigorous and rigorous customer engagements, generate buzz, build a strong corporate image and unshakable reputation, while leveraging other "promotools" (Nwosu, 2001). Miryala et al. (2024:23) added that "rituals and festivities can assist organizations in establishing a strong relationship with their stakeholders and fostering an influential culture." The following are the events that marketers invest their assets in: national and

international sporting events, religious pilgrimages, national and international festivals, trade fairs, Independence Day celebrations, international conferences and summits, music concerts and live performances, award ceremonies, fashion shows and beauty pageants, comedy shows and theatre performances, charity galas and fundraising events, etc. These events offer opportunities for brand exposure, customer engagement, and partnership, since they draw targeted crowds.

Moreover, event marketing is a strategic promotional element used by marketers and institutions like states and national governments to market their brands to the target market through organizing or sponsoring live events, aimed at attracting, retaining, and building customer satisfaction and loyalty. Unlike advertising that mainly promotes a product or service through awareness creation, event marketing allows customers to directly experience the products and services since customer engagement is unavoidable. Okolo et al. (2024) defined event marketing as the creation of an event by a company to offer its available brands to customers. Also, Nufer (2016) defined it as the conflation of integrated marketing communication into the management of events. Seturi and Surmava (2023) asserted that an event can only achieve its desideratum, if it is adequately planned. On the other hand, event marketing refers to creating people's awareness about special events like carnivals and sporting events, and encouraging them through the media to participate. Apparently, marketers capitalize on such events to market their brands because of the enormous crowd they pull. Corroborating this, Seturi and Surmava (2023) added that events grow a company's customer base, since numerous visitors are attracted to it.

In addition, Tolosa (2025) argued that the influence of event marketing on the behavior of consumers has not been fully investigated, even though it has evolved as a forceful communication strategy. Event marketing is concerned with customer perception of a brand as they experientially participate in the event (Miryala et al., 2024). According to Tolosa, customer brand perception, engagement, buying intention, and decision are the results of event marketing. In a study to assess the impact of event marketing, using Bgi Beer Factory in Hawassa, Ethiopia, Tolosa (2025) revealed that purchase intention was significantly impacted by the independent constructs that served as proxies for event marketing - "brand image, event sponsor fit, customer engagement, attitude toward event, and brand awareness. Consistent with this, Gbadebo (2025) revealed that market share, brand engagement, and buying intention were significantly influenced by event marketing.

### **The Carniriv**

There are six major cultural festivals in Nigeria in which Carniriv is one of the most prominent (Travelstartblog, 2016). According to Travelstartblog, it is a highly celebrated festival that attracts more than two million people to Port Harcourt, Rivers State in Nigeria every year. It is a seven-day event that starts a few weeks before Christmas (Wikipedia, 2017). It integrates fashion, lifestyle, creativity, beauty, tradition, culture, and relationships into a seven-day funfair with an abundance of seafood to savor; all in a bid to showcase the rich African heritage. Carniriv originated out of the death of "RIVIFEST," which was

formerly organized by the Rivers State government to harbor peaceful understanding, acceptance, and coexistence among cultural diversities in the state (Edum, 2016). Mmom and Ekpenyong (2015) agreed with Edum, noting that during the event, warring and disputing communities gather together, throwing their differences aside, allowing peace to reign. Edum noted that the event has metamorphosed into a global event from 1988 to date and flourishes as a result of a combination of cultures from over 200 different extractions showcasing dances, songs, masquerades, artifacts, including fishing and farming. Nwankwo et al. (2018) associated Carniriv with the Ikwere people of South-South Nigeria. It is managed by the Rivers State government under the auspices of the Rivers State Tourism Development Agency (RSTDA) (Edum, 2016).

Carniriv is regarded as one of the biggest tourism exports of the government of Rivers State (Wikipedia, 2017), and as a result of the effect of climate change and the federal government of Nigeria's economic policy of diversification, the government of Rivers State has made serious commitments toward developing Carniriv into an unrivalled, highly competitive market for tourists around the world. In other words, Rivers State government wants to de-emphasize the "fossil fuel economy" by emphasizing "tourism" as an alternative economy (Wikipedia, 2017). Indeed, it improves the economy of Rivers State by enhancing tourism and trade through cultural events and displays (Nutsukpo, 2018). It combines a purely traditional and Caribbean style (Edum, 2016) that showcases singing, dancing, and other shows from both foreign and domestic artists.

### **Media Richness Theory**

Media richness theory, which is sometimes called the information richness theory (Dennis & Valacich, 1999), is a media theory that identifies a medium of communication as rich or lean. Propounded in 1986 by Richard L. Daft and Robert H. Lengel, this theory of the media is used to showcase the capacity of the media to transmit accurate and timely messages (Wikipedia, 2018). The theory serves as a benchmark for ranking the media according to their ability to qualify and convey social cues such as gestures and body language. Roach (2013) noted that video conferencing as a medium can reproduce social cues, while phone calls and emails cannot. Research revealed that users of videoconferencing consider it a highly rich medium compared to other media (Campbell, 2006).

Okolo et al. (2024) espoused that the richest medium of communication is face-to-face communication and this is true since face-to-face is supported by physical presence, nonverbal signals, immediate feedback, contextual richness, and emotional connection. Face-to-face interpersonal communication is regarded as the richest medium due to its ability to accommodate immediate feedback and allow vague information to be straightened out. It allows direct perception of gestures and their interpretations to suit emotions and situations (Roach, 2013). Social media (Facebook) is regarded as a very rich medium too and therefore occupies the formation of higher communication stages (Attouni & Mustaffa, 2014). Facebook had been a powerful medium for interaction and had been a successful tool for disseminating topical and timely information during wars,

natural disasters, terrorism occurrences, eclipses, entertainments, political electioneering campaigns, soccer tournaments, pageantries, technological innovations and inventions, trade, etc. Media richness theory has been applied in both theoretical and empirical studies (Mirawati et al., 2025; Syed & Shaheen, 2025; Vercic et al., 2025) and has been proven effective in resolving certain intractable issues. It emphasizes that the richer media are more credible in communicating to the audience about issues of public interest. Apparently, this theory is capable of changing audience perception concerning topics that ordinarily would be perceived as vague and untrue (Ekstrom & Svensson, 2016). In support of this, Dennis and Valacich (1999) argued that in a situation of doubt or vagueness of message, the audience yields more confidence and trust in the richer media.

In the context this study, the traditional media is often compared with the social media since before the era of social media, what the government of Rivers State has been deploying in terms of conveying messages concerning Carniriv is basically the traditional media - radio, television, newspaper, and magazine. Therefore, in comparing the richness of traditional media and social media, it is evident that the traditional media is a lean media since it is unidirectional and does not possess a feedback system. In this context, Rivers State government does not offer room for participants' engagement, rather, it only creates awareness about Carniriv by releasing information to the participants. In contrast, social media (Instagram, Facebook, and X) provides a strong engagement between the government of Rivers State and Carniriv participants as well as among those participants themselves. Thus, Instagram, Facebook, and X are viable platforms for communicating Carniriv experience through word of mouth.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In this study, the descriptive survey method was adopted and a questionnaire was designed using a 5-point Likert Scale (Strongly Agree = 5, Agree = 4, Undecided = 3, Disagree = 2, and Strongly Disagree = 1). For face and content validity, 3 copies of the questionnaire were vetted by 3 Marketing professors to ensure that the statements in the research instrument accurately measure the contents of the constructs. A pilot survey was conducted by distributing 25 copies of the questionnaire. Subsequently, the returned copies were subjected to a reliability test using Cronbach's alpha and 0.963 was obtained. This indicates that there is internal consistency of the research instrument. However, the population of the study consists of Gen Zs who attended Carniriv in 2023. Gen Zs are those born between 1997 and 2012 (between 13-28 years of age), and they were chosen because they are digital natives, super active online, trend shapers, and easily accessible. Thus, it is a non-finite population, hence, the Cochran's formula was adopted in determining 384 as the sample. The 384 copies of the self-administered questionnaire were distributed to the attendees who were intercepted before the carnival parade started. In other words, the purposive and convenience sampling techniques were used in selecting the respondents. After retrieve 301 copies, 255 were well responded to and were used for data analysis. In testing the hypotheses, the simple linear regression

technique was adopted with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.

## RESULTS

The data obtained from the field study were presented and analyzed with descriptive statistics to provide answers to the research questions, while the corresponding hypotheses were tested with simple linear regression at a 0.05 alpha level.

### Hypothesis One

**H1:** Word of mouth (WOM) Via Instagram has a significant influence on promoting Carniriv.

**Table 1: Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.977 <sup>a</sup>	.955	.955	.26368	.145
a. Predictors: (Constant), WOM Via Instagram					
b. Dependent Variable: Promoting Carniriv					

**Table 2: ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	1133.651	1	1133.651	16305.005	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	53.050	763	.070		
	Total	1186.701	764			
a. Dependent Variable: Promoting Carniriv						
b. Predictors: (Constant), WOM Via Instagram						

**Table 3: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.240	.030	8.001	.000
	WOM Via Instagram	.957	.007	.977	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Promoting Carniriv					

### Interpretation

Table 2 indicates that the regression sum of squares (1133.651) is greater than the residual sum of squares (53.050), indicating that more of the variation in the dependent variable is not explained by the model. The significance value of the F-statistic (0.000) is less than 0.05, meaning that the variation explained by the model is due to chance. In Table 1, R, the correlation coefficient, having a value of 0.977, indicates that word of mouth Via Instagram has a significant and positive influence on promoting Carniriv. R<sup>2</sup>-the coefficient of determination shows that 95.5% of the variation in promoting Carniriv is explained by the model. With reference to the linear regression model, the error of the estimate is low, having a value of 0.26368. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 0.145 is less than 2, indicating that there is no autocorrelation. However, word of mouth Via Instagram coefficient of 0.988 indicates that there is a significant and positive influence on promoting

Carniriv, which, in Table 3, is statistically significant (with  $t = 127.691$ ). The hypothesis is therefore accepted.

**H2:** WOM Via Facebook has a significant influence on promoting Carniriv.

**Table 4: Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.988 <sup>a</sup>	.976	.976	.201	.265
a. Predictors: (Constant), WOM Via Facebook					
b. Dependent Variable: Promoting Carniriv					

**Table 5: ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1224.415	1	1224.415	30440.239	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	30.691	763	.040		
	Total	1255.106	764			
a. Dependent Variable: Promoting Carniriv						
b. Predictors: (Constant), WOM Via Facebook						

**Table 6: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	-.051	.023		-2.208	.028
	WOM Via X	1.015	.006	.988	174.471	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Promoting Carniriv						

## Interpretation

Table 5 indicates that the regression sum of squares (1224.415) is greater than the residual sum of squares (30.691), indicating that more of the variation in the dependent variable is not explained by the model. The significance value of the F-statistic (0.000) is less than 0.05, meaning that the variation explained by the model is due to chance.

In Table 4, R, the correlation coefficient, having a value of 0.988, indicates that word of mouth Via Facebook has a significant and positive influence on promoting Carniriv. R<sup>2</sup>-the coefficient of determination shows that 97.6% of the variation in promoting Carniriv is explained by the model. With reference to the linear regression model, the error of the estimate is low, having a value of 0.42336.

The Durbin-Watson statistic of 0.265 is less than 2, indicating that there is no autocorrelation. However, word of mouth Via Facebook coefficient of 0.988 indicates that there is a significant and positive influence on promoting Carniriv, which, in Table 6, is statistically significant (with  $t = 174.471$ ). The hypothesis is therefore accepted.

## Hypothesis Three

**H3:** WOM Via X has a significant influence on promoting Carniriv.

**Table 7: Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.984 <sup>a</sup>	.968	.968	.22504	.210
a. Predictors: (Constant), WOM Via X					
b. Dependent Variable: Promoting Carniriv					

**Table 8: ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	1187.927	1	1187.927	23457.129	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	38.640	763	.051		
	Total	1226.567	764			

a. Dependent Variable: Promoting Carniriv

b. Predictors: (Constant), WOM Via X

**Table 9: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.065	.027		-2.439	.015
	WOM Via X	1.013	.007	.984	153.157	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Promoting Carniriv

## Interpretation

Table 8 shows that the regression sum of squares (1187.927) is greater than the residual sum of squares (38.640), indicating that more of the variation in the dependent variable is not explained by the model. The significance value of the F-statistic (0.000) is less than 0.05, meaning that the variation explained by the model is due to chance. In Table 7, R, the correlation coefficient, having a value of 0.984, indicates that word of mouth Via X has a significant and positive influence on promoting Carniriv. R<sup>2</sup>- the coefficient of determination shows that 96.8% of the variation in promoting Carniriv is explained by the model. With reference to the linear regression model, the error of the estimate is low, having a value of 0.22504. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 0.210 is less than 2, indicating that there is no autocorrelation. However, electronic word of mouth Via X coefficient of 0.984 indicates that there is a significant and positive influence of word of mouth Via X on promoting Carniriv, which in Table 9 is statistically significant (with t = 153.157). The hypothesis is therefore accepted.

## DISCUSSION

The study found that word of mouth via Instagram has a significant positive influence on promoting Carniriv (r = 0.977; t = 127.691; F = 16305.005; p < 0.05). What this signifies it that word of mouth via Instagram is an effective means of stimulating current and potential attendees to participate in Carniriv. This stems from the reality that word of mouth is personally and credibly transmitted from someone who has experienced the past event(s). In a similar study, Okolo et al. (2024) found that in marketing Calabar Carnival, the impact of Instagram was significantly substantial. This is because the comments, photos, and videos that were uploaded to users and other people on the Instagram network were convincing enough to trigger interest and action. Through word of mouth

via Instagram, a user can livestream the event, thus encouraging participation. Also, Serrano and Ramjaun (2018) found that Instagram word of mouth, which was assessed based on the source and content, triggered consumer brand engagements. Also, Ramdani and Kusumahadi (2023) revealed that consumer purchase decisions were significantly influenced by word of mouth on Instagram. Similarly, it was revealed that the word of mouth via Facebook has a significant and positive influence on promoting Carniriv ( $r = 0.988$ ;  $t = 174.471$ ;  $F = 30440.239$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). This denotes that using word of mouth via Facebook to narrate and communicate Carniriv funfair to friends and members of the Facebook community will persuade and encourage them to participate in future events. This aligns with Okolo et al. (2024), who revealed that Facebook communication created people's robust awareness about Calabar Carnival. Also, the study carried out by Jasi (2022) provided a backup that word of mouth via Facebook positively and significantly influenced purchase intention and brand image. In line with this, Saleem and Ellahi (2017) revealed that consumer purchase intention for the fashion brands was triggered by word of mouth via Facebook. According to their study, what predicted word of mouth includes trustworthiness, homophily, expertise, influence of the information, and high fashion involvement of the person initiating the word of mouth. Du et al. (2020) in a study to determine social media word-of-mouth and people's satisfaction towards sporting events, revealed that electronic word of mouth via Facebook impacted university students' satisfaction significantly. Moreover, it was revealed that word of mouth via X has a significant and positive influence on promoting Carniriv ( $r = 0.984$ ;  $t = 153.157$ ;  $F = 23457.129$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Consistent with this, Wajiyanti et al. (2018) found that electronic word of mouth via X significantly influenced the purchase intention for Starbucks coffee in Indonesia. Similarly, Sulthana and Vasantha (2019) found that the purchase intention for products and services was significantly influenced by word of mouth via X. Also, Jasin (2022) found that word of mouth via X positively and significantly influenced the purchase intention and brand image for SME Products. Fasanmi et (2024) found that positive and negative word of mouth via X has a significant effect on purchase intention. This indicates that referrals offered via online reviews and comments to customers determine their intentions to either buy a product or service or not.

## CONCLUSION

Word of mouth via Instagram, Facebook, and X has a significant and positive influence on promoting Carniriv to the members of the social media community. Since the evolution of the internet and the adoption of social media, users perceive messages from those they communicate with in the platform as believable. This credibility is consequent upon the fact that since the source of the message is not from the government that conducts the carnival, but from those who have experientially witnessed it first hand, or perceived it on the internet or social media, they are bound to believe it. More so, the nature of the messages is highly believable due to the presence of texts, audio messages, and livestreaming videos that the receiver can offer feedback to. This is contrary to the mass media information passed to the public via channels like television, radio, newspapers,

magazines, etc. These media channels are unidirectional and hence, offer no feedback to their audience. This is in line with the media richness theory, which projects Instagram, Facebook, and X as very rich media compared to traditional advertising. The researchers thus recommend that the Rivers State government should encourage public participation in the run-up to future carnivals via Instagram, Facebook, and X word of mouth to increase public awareness, participation, and memorable experience.

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