ADOPTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AMONG OWNERS OF SMALL AND MEDIUM-SCALE ENTERPRISES FOR BUSINESS SUCCESS IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study ascertained the adoption of social media marketing among owners of small and medium-scale enterprises for business success in Anambra State. One research question guided the study, and two null hypotheses were tested. A descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised 2,222 registered SME owners from manufacturing, construction, services, and distributive sectors in Anambra State. Three hundred and thirty-eight SME owners were selected using Taro Yamane's formula, through a multi-stage sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a 12-item structured questionnaire. The instrument was validated by three experts. To determine the internal consistency of the items, the Cronbach's alpha method was used and yielded a reliability coefficient value of 0.90. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research question, while a t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at the 0.05 alpha level. The findings of the study revealed that owners of SMEs highly adopt social media marketing for business success in Anambra State. SMEs and the location of businesses did not significantly influence their mean ratings on the extent of adoption of social media marketing for business success. The study concluded that social media marketing is highly adopted among owners of SMEs for business success in Anambra State. It was recommended, among others, that SME owners should always transact their business using social media marketing because it would improve their business success in the State and would provide many opportunities to create awareness about their goods and services. This will enable them to reach out to a wider market and customers.

Keywords: Small and Medium Scale Enterprises, Owners, Social Media Marketing

Introduction

One of the electronic marketing channels is social media marketing. Social media marketing (SMM) is a major channel within electronic marketing, which is often broadly

referred to as online marketing or digital marketing. Social media are indeed internet-based tools designed to facilitate virtual communication and the exchange of user-generated content among registered participants, typically in an interactive, two-way manner, fostering communities and connections (Etim *et al.,* 2021). Social media marketing is, therefore, the adoption and utilization of social networks and platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube to run advertisements or other promotions; interact with target customers; deliver customer services; carry out sales and build harmonious relationships with the target market (Leung, Bai and Stahura, 2015). Social media has fundamentally transformed the web landscape and, as a direct consequence, marketing tactics have had to evolve significantly. The indelible mark it has left is characterized by several key shifts in communication, targeted reach and personalization, influence of peer recommendations, among others. Odimmega *et al.* (2016) added that social media marketing involves using peer recommendations, sharing, building brand personality and addressing the market as a heterogeneous group of individuals. Njelita, Onyeagwara and Ekwunife (2023) opined that social media marketing was highly adopted for business success among SMEs in Onitsha, Anambra State. Nuni and Feika (2022) stated that social media and internet were highly adopted for improving SMEs performance in Sierra Leone. It also uniquely encourages customers to create content and buzz around a product themselves.

One of the important of social media marketing is that operators of SMEs can target their audience precisely and very specifically, resulting in a much higher return on investment and a higher click-through rate to their website or product pages. Social media tools are relatively easy to use, cheaper than traditional media and do not require specialized technical skills. Njelita *et al.* (2023) reported that social media marketing had significantly influenced customer satisfaction and loyalty among SMEs as result of size of businesses. Ezebor, Moses, Ogbari, Gberevbie and Irawor (2022) noted that social media marketing had a significant effect on the growth of higher institutions' productivity, profitability, expansion and customer satisfaction. This means that anyone can learn to use them effectively, whether as small scale enterprise or medium scale enterprise.

Small scale enterprises (SSE) are typically independently owned and managed, operate with limited resources, and often demonstrate agility and quick decision-making. However, the number of employees used to define an SSE is not a universal standard of 1 to 5 employees. Small-scale enterprises tend to be more innovative and creative than medium ones. Small-scale enterprises have the capacity to operate on slim margins and can take decisions very quickly. Small scale enterprise is defined as an independently owned or managed business organization employing less than ten to fifty people with a significance that is limited within an industry, where the omnipresence of owner and manager creates a management style that is highly personalized (Fletcher and Peters, 2017). The Central Bank of Nigeria defined small-scale enterprises as having an annual turnover not exceeding 500,000 naira (CBN, 2015). Meanwhile, medium scale enterprises, according to in Nigeria various agencies have given different definitions based on different policies. Ilegbinosa and Jumbo (2015) defined medium scale enterprises as a firm with a total investment (excluding cost of land but including capital) of up to #50,000,000 and paid employment of up to fifty (50) persons. In the context of this study, medium scale enterprises refer to enterprises which are relatively small in nature compared to public limited liability companies in the State.

Small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) are indeed vital independent businesses whose definitions typically hinge on criteria such as the number of employees, total assets, and annual turnover, which vary significantly depending on country and industry. According to Nwoko and Obi (2024), small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) are different kinds of firms that could be found in different business activities across the country. They include artisans producing local agricultural implements, the coffee shop owners, tailor shop owners,

iron fabricators, roadside mechanics, small transport firms, internet cafés, small engineering or software firms, and a medium-sized automotive parts manufacturer. In the context of this study, small and medium-scale enterprises refer to all businesses with an asset base between 5 million naira and 100 million naira and a staff strength of between 1 and 100 that are involved in businesses, construction, services, and manufacturing enterprises in Anambra State. Therefore, to maximize profit, owners of SME need to secure adequate funding and maintain accurate financial records of all business transactions.

Owners of SMEs are people who provide the initial capital or assets for an enterprise to operate. Owners of small and medium-scale enterprises, according to Okoli and Anyansi (2023), are entrepreneurs who own a business who could also be managers of enterprises saddled with the responsibilities of managing the day-to-day affairs of an enterprise. In the context of this study, owners of SMEs are people who invest capital or people who manage the business for others. This study is therefore imperative as it ascertained the extent to which owners of small and medium-scale enterprises adopt social media marketing for business success in Nigeria and Anambra State in particular.

Anambra State is one of the 36 States situated in south-eastern Nigeria. Anambra State is a prominent economic hub located in southeastern Nigeria, well-known for its vibrant commercial activities and high concentration of industries. The state's economy is significantly driven by many successful industrialists, leading to a strong manufacturing and industrial sector. Anambra State is renowned for its commercial prowess, particularly in areas like trade, small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs), and market activities, contributing significantly to the state's economic landscape. Major commercial cities within the state include Onitsha, which hosts one of the largest markets in West Africa, Nnewi (known as a hub for auto parts and industrial manufacturing), and the state capital, Awka. The region has a notable history of entrepreneurship, with locals actively engaged in various forms of trade and innovative businesses. Apart from SMEs' contributions to the state, most of the SMEs in the state, instead of succeeding, many of them fail and fold up because they do not have the necessary capital and machinery to stay afloat. Most of them could not adopt social media marketing to promote their products and services to the public.

From the trend, social media marketing is vital to the success of SMEs in the marketplace. Literally, success is the achievement of goals and objectives. In the context of this study, success is the achievement of goals and objectives of small and medium-scale enterprises in the marketplace. Although there is no universally acceptable definition of SMEs adoption success, most business literature ascribed SMEs adoption success from the perspective of performance in the marketplace (Etuk, Udoh and Udowong, 2021). In this view, Etuk *et al.* (2021) averred further that SMEs adoption success refers to the ability of managers and owners of SMEs to create acceptable outcomes and actions with their products and services that can satisfy the expectations and desires of customers in the target market in order to achieve long-term sustainable operations.

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) owners can create acceptable outcomes and actions by implementing customer-centric strategies focused on understanding and adapting to the expectations of their target market to ensure long-term sustainability. Anekwe and Nwokediba (2019) revealed that most of SME's operation in Anambra State seem to adopt the right social media marketing to boost business attraction, especially to prospective customers, which gives them a competitive presence against established larger firms. Okoro (2021) opined that the advent of social media marketing has opened new opportunities to retailers as it has reduced the importance of location and improved their reach to consumers that need their services. Ebenuwa (2019) noted that major businesses in the world today have capitalized on the use of social media marketing to improve their profitability and business performance. This means that SMEs struggle to stay competitive, often facing logistical

hurdles like traveling for supplies, which is costly and inefficient. Therefore, to remedy challenges facing SMEs, social media marketing offers ways to improve efficiency, reach, and customer service and boost competitiveness in Anambra State. The influencing variables used for adoption of social media marketing could be business size (resources) and its physical location (market access, infrastructure), which significantly impact its ability to adopt these digital tools.

Size of business refers to the volume or how small or large the business operates in the marketplace. Odimmega *et al.* (2016) revealed that the size of business operations could determine the adoption of social media marketing, as it helped SMEs to make purchases, sell, distribute, and provide sales support services for their products and services aachieve nd maximum profitability. Etim *et al.* (2021) reported that small and medium-scale enterprises are always seen at the forefront of exerting and adopting social media marketing for business compared to their counterparts due to the volume of their business operations. Contrarily, Adio (2019) noted that small-scale enterprises tend to adopt social media marketing for business more than medium-scale enterprises. This inconclusive argument prompts the researchers to investigate the size of the business as it influences adoption of social media marketing for business success among SME operations.

Another factor that can influence adoption of social media marketing for business success among small and medium scale enterprises owners/managers is business location. Business location of this study refers to the geographical area in which the owners of SMEs run their businesses, which can be in urban or rural areas. Alonta and Okeke (2023) revealed that owners of SMEs in urban areas adopt social media marketing because they face fewer network problems than their counterparts in rural areas who always have network issues. This inconclusive argument also prompts the researchers to assess whether the location of the business has a significant influence on SME owners' adoption of social media marketing for business operations. In the view of Etim *et al.* (2021), business operations and owners need to adopt the use of social media marketing because it promotes effectiveness to business operations systematically and more properly. This will equally help owners of SMEs to change both the shape and nature of businesses all over the world for successful business operations. The increased usage of social media marketing might create not only a lot of opportunities for SMEs but also eliminate a lot of threats to reaching customers. These views are theoretical assumptions and have not been empirically proven in Anambra State; hence, the study aims to ascertain the adoption of social media marketing among owners of small and medium-scale enterprises for business success in Anambra State.

Statement of the Problems

The majority of SMEs in Anambra State still have a limited extent of social media marketing integration, while those who adopt report positive effects on profitability; numerous barriers hinder wider adoption, such as high costs, limited digital literacy/skills, lack of accessibility to infrastructure, and trust/security concerns, which are major deterrents. Most SMEs are reluctant to invest "huge amounts" without tangible proof of return on investment, especially given unpredictable consumer behavior in local markets. The purpose of the study was to ascertain the precise extent of adoption and the factors influencing it, arguing that failure to address these barriers will continue to hinder SME growth, profitability, and sustainability in the region. To bridge this gap and encourage adoption, practical strategies and resources are needed for Anambra State SMEs, focusing on low-cost solutions, skill development, and building trust. Therefore, strategies to increase social media marketing adoption for SMEs in Anambra State involve leveraging free or low-cost platforms like Facebook Business, Instagram for Business, and Google Business Profile for significant reach without huge amounts spent.

Thus, the initial focus should be on organic reach and engagement rather than paid advertising. Access to practical, locally relevant training is crucial. The Nigerian government could offer some initiatives, and local private organizations could provide resources. SMEs should utilize Google Digital Garage for free online marketing courses, Meta Blueprint for specific training on Facebook and Instagram tools, and local workshops and training provided by state agencies, such as those potentially linked via the Anambra State Ministry of Trade & Commerce website. SMEs could build consumer trust in a digital environment. SMEs can achieve this by ensuring clear contact information is available on all social media pages, implementing secure payment gateways for online transactions, and encouraging customer reviews and testimonials to build social proof. To overcome reluctance regarding return on investment (ROI), SMEs should begin with modest, trackable campaigns (e.g., tracking website visits or direct inquiries from specific social media posts). This systematic collection of data can provide the tangible evidence needed to justify further investment. By systematically addressing these specific barriers, SMEs in Anambra State can better harness the opportunities presented by social media marketing to improve business success and sustainability.

Research Question

One research question guided this study:

1. To what extent do owners of small and medium-scale enterprises adopt social media marketing for business success in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance:

1. Small and medium-scale enterprise owners in Anambra State do not differ significantly in the mean ratings on the extent they adopt social media marketing for business success based on their business size.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of SME owners in rural and urban areas on the extent they adopt social media marketing for business success in Anambra State.

Methods

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised 2,222 registered owners of SMEs from manufacturing, construction, services, and distributive in Anambra State. A sample size of 338 SMEs owners in the area was selected using Taro Yamane's formula through a multi-stage sampling technique. Data were collected using a 12-item structured questionnaire. The structured questionnaire was validated by three experts-two in Business Education and one in measurement and evaluation all from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Their comments enhanced the content validity of the instrument. To establish the internal consistency of the instrument, a pilot test method was conducted. Data collected in the pilot test were analyzed using Cronbach's alpha method and obtained a reliability coefficient value of 0.90. Out of 338 copies of the questionnaire distributed to respondents in their businesses, 331 copies (representing 98 percent) were retrieved with an attrition rate of 7 copies (representing 2 percent) and used for data analysis.

Data collected regarding the research question were analyzed using mean and standard deviation, while a t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. To determine the adoption of social media marketing for business success among owners of small and medium scale enterprises for business success in Anambra State, a decision rule on the questionnaire items and research question based on the item and clusters mean scores relative to the real limits of numbers was used such that ratings between

3.50-4.00 were regarded as very highly adopted, items with mean ratings of 2.50-3.49 were considered as highly adopted; items with mean ratings of 1.50-2.49 and 1.00-1.49 were considered as moderately adopted and lowly adopted respectively. In testing the null hypotheses, a t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The t-test was used to test all the null hypotheses. The justification for the t-test was to test variables that are two and suitable when comparing two groups. A null hypothesis was rejected where the calculated p-value was less than the 0.05 level of significance; it means that there was a significant difference. Conversely, where the calculated p-value is greater than or equal to the level of significance (0.05), it means that there was no significant difference and the hypothesis was not rejected.

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: To what extent do owners of small and medium scale enterprises adopt social media marketing for business success in Anambra State?

Table 1: SME owners' mean ratings on the extent they adopt social media marketing for business success in Anambra State. N =331

S/N	Social media marketing	$\overline{X}$	SD	Remarks
1.	Using peer recommendations	2.60	0.66	Highly Adopted
2.	Sharing information about products and services	2.64	0.64	Highly Adopted
3.	Building brand personality	1.72	0.60	Lowly Adopted
4.	Addressing the market as a heterogeneous group of individuals buzz around a product themselves	2.71	0.62	Highly Adopted
5.	Uniquely encourages customers to create content	2.48	0.69	Moderately Adopted
6.	Targeting audience precisely and very specific	3.27	0.56	Highly Adopted
7.	Using Facebook to obtain competitive intelligence	3.22	0.59	Highly Adopted
8.	Using WhatsApp to increase exposure to global markets	3.53	0.46	Very Highly Adopted
9.	Using Twitter to enhance business performance	3.49	0.49	Highly Adopted
10.	Using Telegram to generate sales leads	3.40	0.51	Highly Adopted
11.	Using TikTok positively to associate with Customer Acquisition and retention	3.35	0.53	Highly Adopted
12.	Using Paid advs to significantly reduce transaction costs due to the aggregation of buyers	2.41	0.73	Moderately Adopted
	Cluster Mean	**2.90**		**Highly Adopted**

In Table 1, the analysis shows that the respondents rated item (8) of the 12 social media marketing very highly adopted for business success with a mean rating of 3.53. Eight items (1,2,4,6,7,9,10 and 11) with mean ratings from 2.64 to 3.49 were rated as highly adopted. Two items (5 and 12) had mean ratings of 2.41 and 2.48, were rated as moderately adopted, while the remaining one item (3) have mean rating of 1.72, was rated as lowly adopted by owners of small and medium-scale enterprises for business success in Anambra State. The standard deviation of 0.49 to 0.73 showed that respondents are not wide apart in their mean ratings, which indicates homogeneity. The cluster mean score of 2.90 indicates

that social media marketing is highly adopted by owners of small and medium-scale enterprises for business success in Anambra State.

Hypothesis 1: Small and medium-scale enterprise owners in Anambra State do not differ significantly in the mean ratings on the extent they adopt social media marketing for business success based on their size of businesses.

Table 2: Summary of t-test analysis on the mean ratings of SME owners in Anambra State on the extent they adopt social media marketing

Size of Businesses	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	df	t-cal	p-value	Decision
Small scale	199	3.19	0.21	329	3.101	.053	Not Significant
Medium scale	132	3.15	0.17				

The results in Table 2 show that the mean score for owners of small scale ($\overline{X}$*=3.19, SD=0.21*) was significantly greater than that of owners of medium scale ($\overline{X}$*=3.15, SD=0.17*), t (329) =3.101, *P*-value of .053. The null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups on the extent to which they adopt social media marketing for business success in Anambra State was therefore not rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of SME owners in rural and urban areas on the extent they adopt social media marketing for business success in Anambra State.

Table 3: Summary of t-test analysis on the mean ratings of SMEs Owners in rural and urban areas on the extent they adopt social media marketing

Business Location	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	df	t-cal	p-value	Decision
Rural Areas	124	3.05	0.71	329	-0.151	.131	Not Significant
Urban Areas	207	3.07	0.67				

The results in Table 3 shows that the mean score for owners of SMEs in rural areas ($\overline{X}$*=3.05, SD=0.71*) was significantly less than that of owners of SMEs in urban areas ($\overline{X}$*=3.07, SD=0.67*), t (329) =-0.151, *P*-value of .131. The null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups on the extent to which they adopt social media marketing for business success in Anambra State was therefore not rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the research revealed that owners of small and medium-scale enterprises highly adopt social media marketing for business success in Anambra State. This implies that social media marketing was highly adopted to change both the shape and nature of businesses all over the world for successful business operations. This finding is in line with Njelita, Onyeagwara and Ekwunife (2023) who revealed that social media marketing was highly adopted for business success among SMEs in Onitsha, Anambra State. The findings agreed with Nuni and Feika (2022), who stated that social media and the internet were highly adopted for improving SMEs' performance in Sierra Leone. This means that high adoption shows that social media is used by SMEs to access useful information that helps them acquire market share and improve business success.

The findings of hypotheses one and two further revealed that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of small and medium-scale enterprise owners in Anambra State to adopt social media marketing for business success based on their size of businesses and

business location. The finding agrees with Adio (2019) noted that small-scale enterprises tend to adopt social media marketing for business then medium scale enterprises. These findings disagree with that Njelita *et al.* (2023), who revealed that social media marketing has significant influence on customer satisfaction and loyalty among SMEs in Onitsha, Anambra State, as a result of the size of businesses. In disagreement, Ezebor, Moses, Ogbari, Gberevbie and Irawor (2022) noted that social media marketing has a significant effect on the growth of higher institutions' productivity, profitability, expansion and customer satisfaction. The reason for the similarities in the tests of hypotheses one and two is that small and medium-scale enterprise owners in Anambra State use social media marketing to encourage higher attention and participation from the consumers using social networks.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that social media marketing was highly adopted among owners of SMEs for business success in Anambra State. Furthermore, social media marketing enables SMEs to buy, sell, distribute and provide sales support for their products and services through electronic marketing channels. Despite the adoption of social media marketing to high level by owners of SMEs in Anambra State they are challenged with inadequate communication infrastructure, high cost for development of internet connectivity, poor supply of electricity and so on.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. SMEs owners should always transact their business using social media marketing because it would improve their business success in the State and would provide many opportunities to create awareness about their goods and services. This will enable them to reach out to a wider market and customers.
2. Anambra State Ministry of Commerce and Industry should provide information and communication technology (ICTs) training for SME operators on e-marketing channels. This is strongly supported by research showing ICT gaps, low adoption, and challenges like poor infrastructure, making training crucial for competitiveness, growth, and better integration into the digital economy. Such programmes should focus on practical skills in online platforms, digital analytics, e-commerce systems, and multichannel marketing, addressing the identified needs for skill enhancement and resource provision to boost SME sustainability and job creation in the state.

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