

**THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON THE BUSINESS PERFORMANCE
OF AGRICULTURAL SMEs – A CASE STUDY OF FOUR AGRICULTURAL SMEs IN
SOUTHWEST NIGERIA**

BY

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**Masters Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the MSc. In International
Business**

National College of Ireland

August 2021

Abstract

This study evaluated the role that social media marketing plays on the business performance of agricultural SMEs in Southwest Nigeria. This study aimed at understanding the extent to which social media has been used in the marketing of agricultural products, promotion, brand visibility, customer interaction, and sales turnover in SMEs in Southwest Nigeria. This study used the survey research design through use of semi-structured interview questions from four agricultural SMEs in the Southwest region of Nigeria. To analyze the information collected from respondents, the study employed the triangulation of data because it helps to strengthen the source of data and show the reader the credibility of the research. The adoption of social media marketing, especially through Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, was found to enhance the business performance of agricultural SMEs in Southwest Nigeria, especially with regards to their sales turnover, brand visibility, customer interaction, promotion, and advertisement. This study concluded that adopting social media marketing as a strategy for business helps in improving the efficiency of agricultural SMEs and must be encouraged by policymakers to ensure maximum productivity.

Declaration

Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

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(Thesis/Author Declaration Form)

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August 2021.

Acknowledgment

I have put God as my best foot forward in all the things I have done, and this research project has been no different. From the point of choosing a topic to initiate my proposal, the research, writing, and all ancillary activities that have gone into the completion of this project, have all been guided by God and I am so thankful for His Grace, Mercy, and Blessings. I am also thankful to the people that have stood by me throughout my academic journey. First, I would like to appreciate my supervisor, Karen Murray, who has been here all along while I developed the topic, until the eventual findings. Her valuable comments, advice, and suggestions have been important throughout this study. I also want to thank my family for their financial and moral support, coupled with the motivation and understanding with regards to the completion of this project. Also, special thanks go out to the library team at the National College of Ireland, my classmates, respondents, and those involved in the project and its accomplishment.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to God Almighty who is my Creator and who has made it possible for me to get to this stage in my life. All glory be ascribed unto God alone. To my awesome supervisor and family who have all made my academic journey in Ireland possible, I say a big thank you, and I am eternally grateful to you all.

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List of Abbreviations

SME: Small and Medium Enterprises

NBC: National Bureau of Statistics.

SMEDAN: Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Chapter Introduction

This chapter gives a full introduction to the topic. It begins by giving a total breakdown of the chapters. The background literature related to the study is then discussed. Social media marketing has become central to SMEs for the improvement of their business performance; however, it is important to extensively analyze the benefits that social media marketing brings to agricultural SMEs in Southwest Nigeria. The background literature includes the introduction to social media platforms and how it influences SME growth, brand visibility, advertisement, customer retention, promotion, and sales, especially in the agricultural industry. This chapter also analyses the rationale behind the study, the research question, aims, and specific objectives of the project.

1.1 Background of the Study

Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) are known worldwide as viable tools for the creation of wealth, generation of employment, and sustainability. The SME sector according to PWC (2020), showed that these businesses contribute about 50% of the world's GDP and about 80% of employment opportunities. The National Bureau of Statistics (2020) reported that small and medium scale enterprises in Nigeria contributed about 48% to Nigeria's GDP in the past five years, and about 50% of employment opportunities were created, with about 90% coming from the manufacturing industry. Kemi (2020) however, reports that from the 1960s and 1970s, agricultural SMEs have been the major avenues for job creation, boasting about 70% of employment opportunities. Even with the contributions that these SMEs gave to the economy, most of the SMEs have crashed and gone bankrupt just a few years after starting operations, and this is worrying. This century has been characterized by stiff competition globally, advanced technologies and innovation, and a knowledge-based economy; social media strategies play major roles in giving competitive advantages to these SMEs (Abed *et al.*, 2015). Different studies have shown that by adopting the social media marketing strategy, SMEs can be creative, flexible and entrepreneurial than other bigger organizations through the efficient responsiveness to the needs of their customers

by leveraging the opportunity to get close to them and obtain feed-back (Mwangi and Wagoki, 2016). Therefore, social media platforms involving Twitter, blogs, YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Snapchat have increasingly become popular among these SMEs in order to obtain competitive advantage in the Nigerian space. This means that for SMEs to be rated as a success in this strict, competitive economic environment, they need to explore the possibilities of adopting social media by listening to their customers, building relationships, and interacting with them to influence their buying behavior and boost the business.

Globally, agriculture has been perceived as a key stimulant for economic development. This goes on to show that no nation can achieve sustainable development without maximizing the agricultural sector, as the green revolution is very critical to the industrial revolution (Inegbedion *et al.*, 2020). For the reduction of poverty in these nations, there must be improved productivity for agricultural performance (Nebo and Ejionueme, 2017), which aligns with two sustainable development goals by the United Nations, which are No Poverty and No Hunger. In previous times, the agricultural sector has been the subject of neglect in Nigeria and is seen as unattractive by the Nigerian youths. This shows the need to adopt a different marketing strategy for the agricultural space to ensure there is no undermining of the potential that the industry possesses. With the increased adoption of social media across various age groups in Nigeria, it is reasonable to understand that agricultural SMEs adopt these measures to impact positively on the brand visibility, promotion of products, demand of these products, and customer interaction. This extensively explains the reason for this study. The major aim of the study is to explore the role of social media marketing on agricultural SMEs, who are responsible for the livestock and crop production and logistics operations in Nigeria, with certain performance indicators like marketing, brand visibility, customer interaction, customer engagement, customer brand awareness, and product sales.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

According to PWC (2020), only about 35% of SMEs survive, due to various challenges faced, ranging from finance, marketing, technological innovations, competition, tax rates, and even the death of the owner. Most of these SMEs are challenged with having to reach a larger audience, with the traditional methods being more costly. There have not been many studies that have shown the challenges surrounding the adoption of social media marketing and how it benefits SMEs

associated with the agricultural sector. It helps these businesses to build and sustain relationships with their customers, who are the storage and transporters, input suppliers, processors of the farm products, providers of services, traders, and retailers. Most of these SMEs, specifically, those in the agricultural space, however, do not understand the value that social media brings to them, especially regarding profitability, brand visibility, customer interaction, and influencing customer interaction and retention. Marketing is deemed an expensive process for SMEs as they are usually dependent on their small profit margins for competitive advantage (Rojon, Okupe, and McDowall, 2021). Various social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Facebook, and Twitter help SMEs achieve their goals (Davidsson, 2014; Kuhakoski and Seifert, 2015). The gap arises from the lack of adequate studies on the roles that social media marketing plays on brand visibility, product promotion, advertisement, sales, and customer interaction.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study is also projected to provide a methodological support to business practice. It focuses on extending existing studies on the use of social media marketing, especially in agricultural SMEs. Secondly, the research looks to add to the improvement in the use of social media marketing in SMEs which would ensure a broader understanding of the marketing strategy (Ahmad, Abu Baker, and Ahmad 2019). Thirdly, the study offers a very complete approach to evaluating the different dimensions and factors involved in the use of social media marketing in SME settings. As the number of SMEs adopting the use of social media rises, it is necessary to ensure extensive understanding of the importance it brings and the effect it has on different business and marketing elements, and how it can fully transform organizational cultures and business operations (Basole, 2016). Finally, this research looks to provide a practical contribution by evaluating the structures that highlight the various social media platforms adopted by SMEs for marketing, promotion, and customer interaction. The researcher is focused on the development of reliable and valid measurements through capturing how social media marketing has affected agricultural SMEs in Southwest Nigeria.

1.4 Aim of the study

The study aims to analyze the role of social media marketing on the business performance of agricultural SMEs in Southwest Nigeria. To further answer the research questions, sub-objectives have been developed and they include.

1.5 Objectives of the study

The research objectives include,

- Investigating the benefit of the Facebook platform to SMEs.
- Establish and evaluate the online presence of Agricultural SMEs in Nigeria.
- Evaluating the popular social media platforms used for marketing by agricultural SMEs.
- Recommending new approaches for SMEs to harness social media as regards advertising and marketing.

1.6 Research Questions

- How beneficial is having a strong online presence in SMEs?
- What are the effective social media marketing platforms used by participants in this project?
- What are the major challenges SMEs face in adopting the strategy of social media marketing?

1.7 Thesis structure

This study has been structured into six chapters, and they include.

After the introductory chapter of the study, Chapter 2 features the review of existing literature on social media, the benefits, challenges, nature, impacts, and its outcomes.

Chapter 3 evaluates the research approach and design guiding the collection and analysis of data. It begins by discussing the philosophical element related to the research.

Chapter 4 addresses the results and findings which are pertinent to the research questions concerning the role that social media marketing plays on the business performance of agricultural SMEs in Southwest Nigeria.

Chapter 5 offers a well-articulated discussion of the results and findings which are in tandem with the research questions from the reviewed studies.

Finally, Chapter 6 represents the conclusions and contributions of the project. It evaluates the methodological and theoretical contributions of the current research, followed by its implications to business practices.

1.8 Summary of chapters

This chapter generally has given total introduction to the topic in question. It began by giving a short overview of every chapter to be included in this study and then provided significant relevant literature for the study. It has also outlined the research questions, the rationale behind the study, objectives and research aims. The next chapter, which is the literature review chapter, evaluates significant studies concerning the study, consisting of the theories, concepts, and empirical studies that have been reviewed concerning the role that social media marketing plays in agricultural SME development.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on reviewing the existing studies on the adoption of social media marketing and the role it plays on the business performance of agricultural SMEs. It involves reviewing reports, journals, articles, and projects that are keenly related to online marketing in SMEs. It extensively analyses the concept behind online marketing, social media, and the benefits it brings. This chapter also critically investigates social media marketing and how it influences business performance in SMEs in the agricultural sector. It will also investigate the ideas and findings of other researchers on the how agricultural SMEs have adopted social media marketing strategies.

2.2 Small and Medium-sized Enterprises.

The Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency (2013), define SME as an organization comprising about 10 to 199 employees. They are individually owned organizations established to create social, economic, and environmental values, to maximize profit (James *et al.*, 2018; Pinkovetskaia, Nikitina, and Gromova, 2018). These values which SMEs create, help in the economic development of a nation by creating employment opportunities and alleviating poverty (Fatoki, 2018). Jacinto and Du Preez (2018) opine that in developing and developed economies, the emergence of SMEs signals the improvement of individuals and society in general. Miranda and Miranda (2018) support this by asserting that small and medium-scale businesses have been recognized as the pillars of community empowerment and the development of the economy. These enterprises are responsible for the creation of engagement, activities, and interactions for key institutions such as finance, agriculture, supply chain, and marketing. According to Bello, Jubril, and Ahmed (2018), SMEs are a very key ingredient for economic development.

The setting up of SMEs could either be through art, and could involve areas like bag making, clothing, painting, and shoemaking with local materials (Bello, 2018). Another industry that SMEs could thrive in is the food manufacturing and agricultural industry, which helps decrease the dependency on imported food and boosts the consumption of local products, which encourages

economic development. The government generates revenue from taxes retrieved from these local manufacturing organizations. These local businesses which have been created by SMEs help in the encouragement of the social, environmental, and economic development of a country (Fatoki, 2018). Small and medium enterprise owners are individuals who are tagged as entrepreneurs sensitive enough to understand the pain points and opportunities and turn them towards economic and social development (Miller and Le Breton-Miller, 2017). Guo (2018) observes that these businesses usually emerge out of the sheer creativity and innovation of certain individuals. The social and economic activities of these entrepreneurs help in generating revenue for the government, improving citizens' lives through the alleviation of poverty and reducing unemployment (Rusu and Roman, 2017; Jang, 2018). The owners of these SMEs require very little human and capital resources for starting these businesses.

2.3 Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Southwest Nigeria

According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2019), Nigerian SMEs provide about 48.5% of the GDP of the country in the last 5 years. Totaling about 17.4 million, SMEs create about 50% of the employment opportunities and about 90% represent opportunities created in the manufacturing sector. Six states make up the Southwest region of Nigeria; Osun, Oyo, Ogun, Ondo, Ekiti, and Lagos, and they are Yoruba-speaking states, with various dialects within them. Lagos has been touted as the state with the fastest growth in West Africa. Osho and Adishi (2019) report that with about 90% representing the overall trade in Nigeria, 65% representing the manufacturing sector, and about 10% of the gross domestic product, Lagos is recognized as the fifth-biggest economy in Africa. The highest labor force is found in Lagos, boasting the largest concentration of SMEs in the country. Adebayo, Alheety, and Yusuf (2019) argue that even with the perceived benefits of these SMEs, various issues have overridden their importance.

The consensus that has been reached is that the various issues are not insurmountable. To tackle the existing challenges, there has got to be an extensive assessment of the products from these SMEs to clearly understand their weaknesses and strengths. Adebisi (2017) suggests that this extensive analysis should include an extreme focus on advanced technological innovations. A major challenge faced by SMEs in Nigeria is the lack of marketing strategies, business performance, and credit facilities. SME performance in Nigeria is influenced by financial

management activities. The funds available help these SMEs to acquire modern technology for the expansion and scaling of their businesses (Adebiyi, 2017). Studies conducted by Oluremi and Gbenga (2011) and Chukwunweike *et al.*, (2015) on SMEs in Southwest Nigeria, revealed a positive link between a developed economy and SMEs. Agbeze (2012), opines that the presence of SMEs in Nigeria has helped in developing the region and the country as a whole. Ebittu *et al.*, (2016) supported the views of the above authors, by saying that the SMEs located in southwest Nigeria helped in the generation of employment opportunities, which brought a great reward towards the development of the economy.

However, despite how blessed the Southwest region of Nigeria is, global rankings have recognized the country as one of the poorest and this is also coupled with the high unemployment rate that plagues the nation (Afolabi, 2016). Various other nations have tried hard to ensure maximum transformation, unemployment reduction, and poverty alleviation through the development of SMEs, but this cannot be said of Nigeria (Nwokocha and Madu, 2015). The report from the National Bureau of Statistics (2021) suggests that the unemployment rate in Nigeria increased to 23.1% in 2018 third quarter, from 18.8% in the third quarter of 2017. Therefore, the unemployment issues faced by the country as a whole have necessitated the need to develop SMEs in Nigeria.

2.4 Online Marketing

Human beings have always yearned for social interactions among themselves, which has necessitated the need for the development of social media networks and platforms for formal and informal communication (Oyedele *et al.*, 2020). These social networks have been extensively analyzed across different educational disciplines, ranging from science and technology to sociology. Different studies have also identified relationships between online marketing and sales. One such study defines online marketing as the ability to offer personalized interactions to customers and reach new customers, increasing sales and awareness (Jagongo and Kinyua, 2016). Online marketing is a combination of the best technical and innovative tools of the internet, consisting of development, design, advertising, and sales. Susan (2018) reiterates that the internet is where everything is, and businesses need to also leverage that. She reports, in a strategic analysis in 2017 on advertising, that about 12% represented online advertising, which explains the rationale behind online marketers developing new approaches towards internet marketing for improving

website traffic to their online and physical stores, culminating in more sales. Saulnier (2017) supports this view by asserting that the adoption of internet platforms is involved in the promotion of goods and services, including strategies and approaches targeted towards ensuring a business is visible to its target customers.

In this current dispensation, online marketing involves making use of interactive marketing, Search Engine Optimization (SEO), video marketing, and most importantly social media. To this day, online marketing has proved to be a popular and successful approach for the development of the agricultural SME industry. Steinberg (2016) reports that internet users worldwide are represented by about 3 billion people, which points to the fact that there is a high probability that they come across an online marketing method that appeals to them as customers. The use of a poor online marketing strategy puts the business in jeopardy. This has caused businesses to adopt online marketing techniques for the advertisement of their products. Booth (2017) therefore, reiterates that SMEs need to adopt online marketing strategies to improve their customer interaction, brand visibility, and sales, to ensure expansion and business success.



Figure 1: SME awareness of different online marketing strategies. Source: Colwyn (2014)

According to Colwyn (2014), British business research shows that 91% of SMEs understood the why it was necessary to adopt social media as a marketing strategy, after which about 89%

identified email marketing as a strategy, while 79% understood the need for search engine optimization, with 73% attesting to paid search. The lowest figure was inbound marketing represented by 35%. The figure above showed this information.

2.5 Social Media Marketing

This concept involves the utilization of online communities, social media platforms, blog marketing, etc. to sell products and services to an audience. It is the latest invention in marketing. Neti (2015) opines that organizations worldwide have recognized that adopting social media marketing as a business strategy empowers their advertising campaigns. Mozammel *et al.*, (2018) opines that social media marketing enables organizations and SMEs to better understand the demands of the customers, ranging from storage and transporters, input suppliers, processors of the farm products, provision of services, traders, and retailers for the effective establishment of relationships. Social media marketing engages various social platforms to improve the customer reach and brand awareness of a business. According to Cox (2012), the major objective of social media marketing is the innovation of extensive compelling content to attract the attention of the audience.

Parveem, Jafaar, and Ainin (2016) opined adopting of these social media platforms has a more assured effect on the business performance of an organization through cost reduction, enhancement of customer relations, and easy accessibility. Social media marketing also offers benefits ranging from solving client issues, creation of innovative ideas, promotion and marketing of services and products, and strengthening customer relations.

2.6 Concept of social media.

Social media has not had an exact definition due to the argument regarding the ever-evolving technological innovations that have improved the different social media platforms. Social media is a technology that is computer based and supports sharing information, thoughts, views, and ideas, via the establishment of virtual communities and networks (Dollarhide, 2021). Social media was also defined by Berger and Thomas (2014), as an umbrella word that consists of tools, applications, and platforms, which gives people the ability to communicate with their community

through electronic networks. Fernando (2016) supported this by asserting that social media are majorly internet-based tools, used for communication, discussion, and sharing of ideas and information. Even with how similar these definitions are, the scopes are different.

The impact of social media differs across different individuals and how they use these platforms in these current dispensations, but holistically, social media is utilized as a means for connecting to other facets of the community. Steakley (2014) opined that social media with all its benefits can also fuel feelings of loneliness, depression, and frustration. For small and medium scale enterprises, social media is usually seen from the perspective of business promotion. SMEs have increasingly adopted social media platforms for constant communication with existing consumers and attracting potential customers. The past few years has experienced an exponential increase in the use and purchase of smartphones, with statistics attesting to the fact that there are way more smartphone users now than there were a few short years ago (Fernando, 2016).

Tankovska (2021) reports that social media users from smartphones is projected to increase to 4.4 billion in 2025, from the present 3.6 billion users, which represents about a third of the entire world population. The figures keep increasing every year with more people making use of smartphones to access the internet, leading to increased social media platform visits. Individuals just have to download the social media application of their choice, which could be Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, WhatsApp, Snapchat, TikTok, etc. This trend has proven beneficial to SMEs who have incorporated social media as a form of business strategy to boost their brand image and improve sales (Booth, 2017).

Social media users must have experienced certain advertisements and promotions of goods and services on these platforms. Most of the time, the product advertisements pop up on their social media platforms, without them having to browse the official websites. However, some individuals find it annoying because they use social media platforms for certain specific reasons and not product viewing (Appel *et al.*, 2020). Generally, social media has enormous benefits for organizations, especially SMEs, because it attracts customers and keeps a relationship with existing ones. It can also be used in the enhancement of collaborations with consumers to help innovation, as supported by Shaltoni (2017). Social media platforms give SMEs the ability to engage with their end customers directly, at low costs of transaction and higher efficiency levels than the conventional communication tools.

Other reasons why SMEs adopt social media include customer relationship management, branding, research, sales promotions, and services. This shows that, majorly, social media helps in the branding of organizations (Halaszovic and Jacques, 2017). Tajvidi and Azhdar (2017) agree with the view that customers also get to access different company information from fellow customers, with regards to recommendations and reviews, through social media. The figure below highlights the social media growth, with a standout feature being the 99% of social media users accessing it through mobile devices.

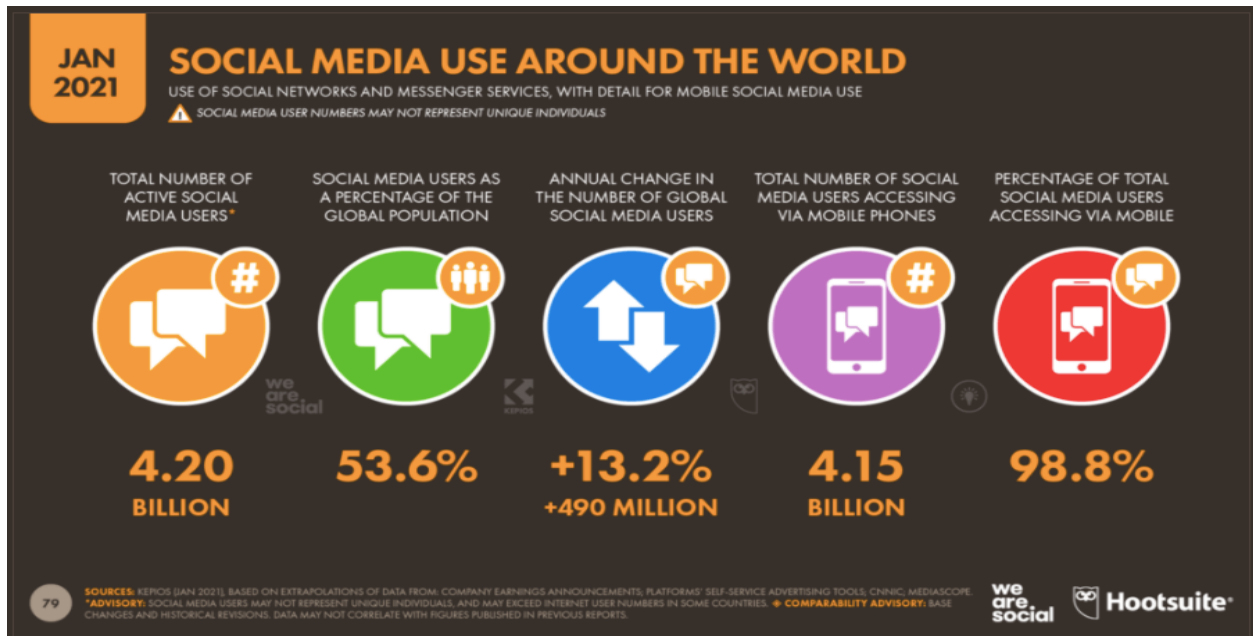


Figure 2: Users of social media around the world. Source: SmartInsights (2021)

2.7 Popular Social Media Platforms

The use of social media platforms has become increasingly popular as the years go by, with some platforms being more popular than others, in terms of activity. According to SmartInsights (2021), with approximately 2.85 billion users worldwide, Facebook is the most recognized social media platform. Various SMEs have pages, profiles, and accounts on this platform for the establishment of brand awareness and visibility. Facebook accounts are easy to establish, allowing the customers and users to like the page or interact with the SME in the right context. These customers, having

registered the interest to interact with the business, can then be kept up to date on new products and information. The figure below shows the most used social media platforms worldwide.

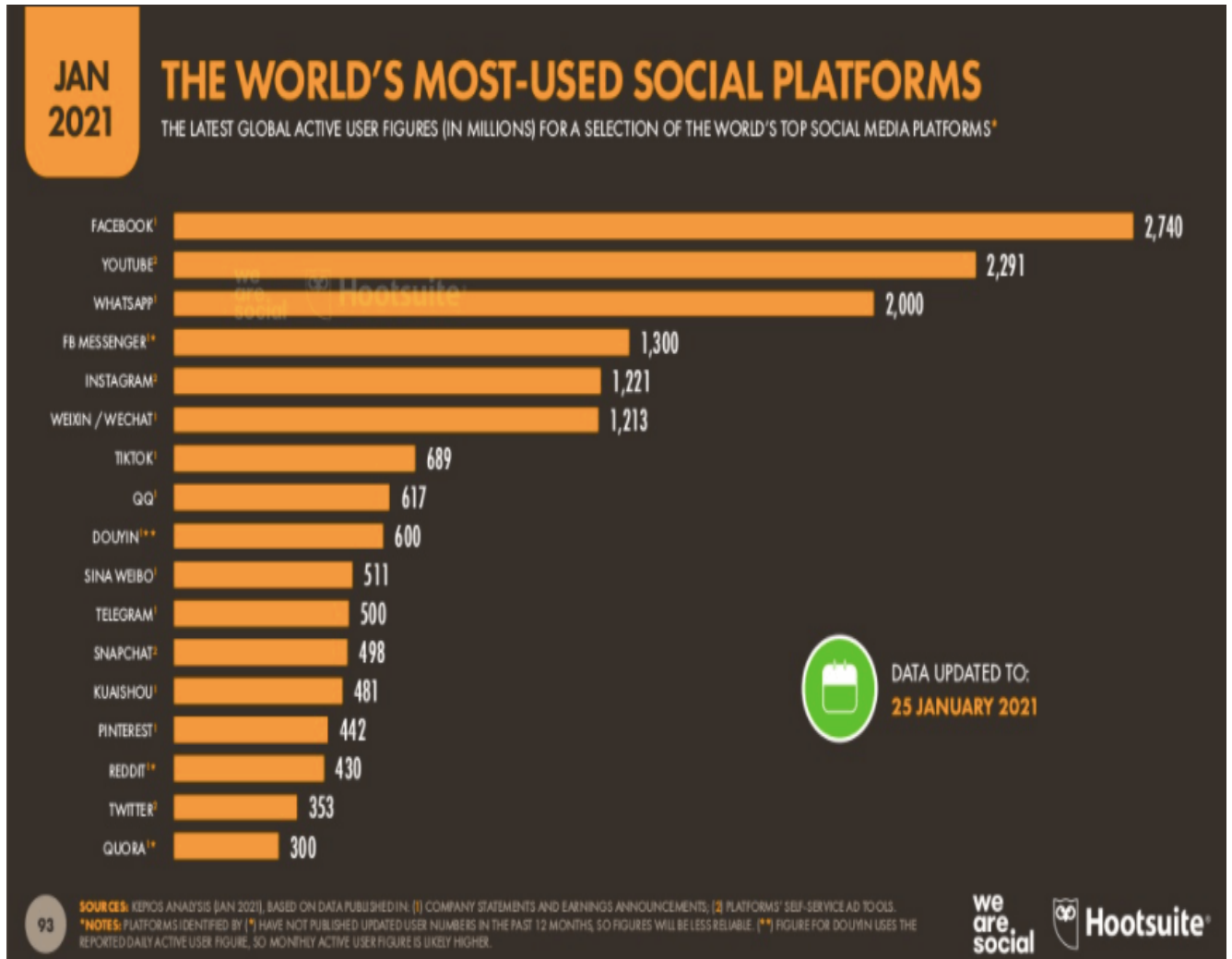


Figure 3: Most used social media platforms as of January 2021. Source: SmartInsights (2021)

2.7.1 Facebook

Statista (2021) agrees with the reports from SmartInsights (2021) that Facebook boasted about 2.85 billion users in the first four months of 2021, making it the largest social media platform globally. Statistics also showed that most of these users access Facebook through their mobile devices. These numbers indicate a huge amount of interest in the platform, and it has proven to be the best site for small and medium enterprises, for advertisement, customer interaction, and brand visibility. SMEs can create pages for themselves, enabling

them to efficiently receive reviews and feedback from customers, garner interaction on their pages, draw interest to their products, interact with their customers, and even release new products (Zephoria, 2017). When these pages are established, the latest information about the business and products, like prices, pictures, and videos, can be published, enabling interaction with customers, and fostering a stronger relationship.

2.7.2 Instagram

A report by Tankovska (2021), shows that Instagram is also a popular social media platform, boasting roughly one billion users. The report also showed that about 33% of Instagram users worldwide were between the ages of 25 and 34, which represented over two-thirds of the total Instagram audience. This provided a soft landing and suitable environment for marketers. Compared to the Facebook platform, it has considerably lower figures, with only about a third of the number of Facebook users but is still considered to be a large audience. SMEs who are looking to advertise and promote their products can employ the use of Instagram as part of their online marketing strategy. Booth (2017) opines that SMEs can easily open an account with their business name and email. It is at the discretion of the business to either keep the account locked, allowing views for just people who follow the account, or unlock it for everyone to see. Instagram is a more visual platform, supporting just pictures and videos (Booth, 2017). A caption can be used to boost the post and it serves as a useful means of getting attention. The followers of the account can also comment and send private messages, which helps customer service.

2.7.3 Twitter

A report by Tankovska (2021), showed that there were about 290.5 million users on Twitter in the year 2019, which increased to 322.4 million users in 2021 and has been projected to be about 340 million users in the year 2024. This shows that Twitter is a leading social media platform and is suitable for marketing. Encouragingly, this makes for a large audience for product advertisement by and for SMEs. In terms of posting information, pictures, and videos, Twitter is quite similar to Facebook, and posting on Twitter is termed "tweeting". The platform also has a unique feature of using hashtags to search for relevant

keywords or public tweets (Booth, 2017). For example, during the World Cup, hashtags such as #worldcup helped to show every tweet that spoke about the event. This has made it possible for SMEs to just tweet their brand name hashtag, with significant information about their business appearing for access to the general public. A downside of the platform is the limiting of tweets to just 280 characters. In getting around this issue, mobile users could write in notes and post screenshots for publishing on Twitter, which helps to solve the challenge to an extent (Booth, 2017).

2.8 Facebook Marketing

SMEs have started to incorporate social media marketing into their marketing strategy. Specifically, Facebook has garnered a lot of interest as it has the widest and largest target audience. Facebook is the largest and most widely recognized social media platform worldwide. Statista (2021) has reported that 2.85 billion individuals use Facebook. Due to the size of the audience, SMEs find it an interesting platform for their promotional operations, because it provides opportunities to reach a large audience.

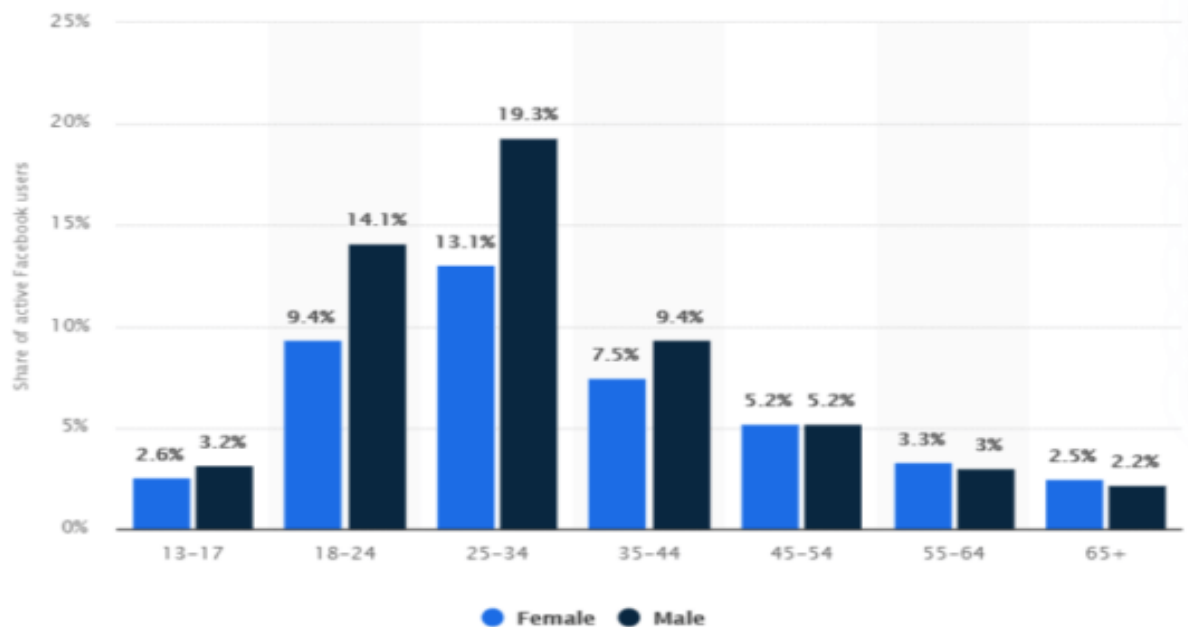


Figure 4: Global Facebook Demographics. Source: Smart Insights (2021)

2.8.1 Demographic Targeting

A study by Taneja and Toombs (2014) investigated the sustainability, viability, and visibility of SMEs that adopted social media marketing, with results showing that it helped in reaching their target market in different demographics. Facebook helps in tailoring the product to fit the specific needs, which is a significant factor for interaction and communication with customers. Shields and Shellman (2016) supported the view by asserting that adopting Facebook advertisements as a social media marketing technique helped in improving the awareness of the customers towards the goods and services of the SMEs. Facebook advertisements have enabled SMEs to efficiently target their marketing efforts towards a more defined target audience.

2.8.2 Interaction

Facebook ensures there are adequate business interactions between SMEs and their customers, therefore encouraging the development of business relationships across the world (Metcalf *et al.*, 2012). The major variables that motivate SMEs to choose Facebook as a means of promoting their services and products, include trust and cost-effectiveness (Ainin *et al.*, 2015; Prenaj, 2015). Facebook is adopted by these SMEs to interact and collaborate with their customers more efficiently. Another persuading factor that motivates SMEs to pick Facebook as a marketing approach includes its compatibility and interactivity for boosting customer loyalty (Oztamur and Karakadilar, 2014). Facebook advertising provides help in building more direct communication channels with their customers at a much lower cost (Ainin *et al.*, 2015).

2.8.3 Brand Awareness

Oestreicher-Singer and Zalmanson (2015), opine that Facebook influences brand awareness towards certain goods or services, due to the large audience and interaction on the platform. As a result of this, positive and negative reviews are substantial, even when experienced by just one user. Haque *et al.*, (2013) opined that adopting Facebook as a social media marketing strategy has helped in boosting the brand awareness of SMEs. Chigora

(2016) supported the view in his research on the effect that social media had on SME branding and identified how advertisements on Facebook improved the brand recognition and awareness of certain brands among the customers. Even with the existing customers of the business, adopting Facebook advertisements as a marketing strategy would help in the attraction of new customers and segments and encourage continued interaction with the existing ones. Srinivasan *et al.*, (2016) opined that brand awareness, image, and association were important advantages that Facebook advertisements brought to SMEs who had adopted the approach. Facebook as a means of social media marketing also improves the business performance on a different level. A study by Hanaysha (2016) on the significance of advertising on social media for improving the brand equity of firms showed that there was a positive influence on the preference, brand image, leadership, awareness, and loyalty.

However, there are stand-out features that make Facebook a more suitable social media platform for SMEs to use as a marketing approach when compared to other platforms. According to Dunay and Kreuger (2017), these features include the fact that the platform provides a suitable environment for marketers to establish their brands with the help of viral marketing capabilities and the ability of the platform to foster interaction with the customers, which breeds reviews, and the availability of search engine ranking.

2.9 Social Media Marketing benefits to SMEs

The dynamic nature of social media marketing has posed questions regarding how these platforms confer advantages to SMEs (Clement, 2020). Different studies have evaluated different perceived benefits through the provision of empirical evidence on social media marketing. In a much wider context, these studies have suggested that social media marketing brings benefits like developing brand relationships (Hudson *et al.*, 2015; Thompson *et al.*, 2018), branding (Li and Wu, 2018; Ananada *et al.*, 2019), provision of product information (Kim and Song, 2018), increasing awareness (Jones, Bergman, and Ulsuoy, 2015; Algharabat *et al.*, 2019), promotion and advertising (He *et al.* 2015; Parveen *et al.*, 2018).

2.9.1 Business Innovations

Social media has given SMEs the capability to create business opportunities consistently. The interest of the customers is being met by these SMEs; as it regards promotion, SMEs have ensured that services and products have been tailored specifically to meet their requirements, while providing an efficient communication channel for dissemination of the business activities and information to the customers, which improves financial performances (Majchrzak *et al.*, 2013). Zhang and Penina (2016) argue that the adopting social media marketing strategies by SMEs has resulted in improving the market. The cost of innovation is a major challenge that has affected SME growth and development; however, the emergence of social media has helped SMEs intensify their marketing activities. Business innovation is a major factor in the promotion of competitive advantage among organizations. This shows that issues faced by SMEs in the adoption of innovation have been seemingly solved by the introduction of social media platforms. Dahnilet *et al.*, (2014) opine that these different social media platforms have given SMEs the ability to meet the demands and tastes of the customers, due to intensive marketing research. They also opine that social media platform, have leveled the playing field in the world of business, giving SMEs the freedom to compete effectively. Social media has pushed SMEs towards embracing innovation for the satisfaction of customers (Scuotto *et al.*, 2017). Different opportunities for SMEs to leverage to promote their products and services have emerged recently. Sarosa (2012) opines that these social media platforms have brought about different kinds of innovative opportunities. According to Jagongo and Kinyua (2013), organizations and firms adopt social media for ease in gathering customer and marketing intelligence for innovation in business. Social media has given SMEs the opportunity to identify new innovative approaches for the development of new and modified products and services. Nakara *et al.*, (2015) therefore assert that these networks help businesses to utilize their limited resources to meet the ever-changing demands of the customer, to ensure optimum performance.

2.9.2 Customer Management

Ainin, Parveen, and Moghavvemi (2015) suggest that social media influences the performance of SMEs positively because it encourages excellent customer service, proper management, and sustained access to information. This is supported by Algharabat *et al.*, (2020) who opine that social media has ensured that SMEs have developed strong relationships with their customers, established cooperative experiences, customer brand engagement, and participation of customers. Ahani *et al.*, (2017) argue that social media existence has motivated the need for a strong relationship between SMEs and their customers. SMEs have adopted social media for different existential functions including customer relationship management, business intelligence, and customer cooperation. According to Vlachvei and Notta (2015), social media helps SMEs achieve efficient customer performance through an increased effort in proffering solutions to complaints from customers. Even with the lack of adequate data management processes, privacy control, and resources, SMEs must adopt social media marketing to improve their decisions regarding content creation, while having a positive impact on the customers through reviews (Guha *et al.*, 2018). Research conducted by Cheng and Shiu (2019) analyzed the involvement of customers in SME business processes. The study showed that adopting social media marketing motivates the establishment of positive strategies for customer relationships. Kamboj *et al.*, (2018) support this view by concluding that social media platforms eliminate customer relationship management challenges faced by SMEs. The research further established that through social media, SMEs have developed stronger customer relationships, which has enhanced business performance, income generation, and development of new product. These different elements culminate in helping SMEs improve their financial performance.

2.9.3 Cost Reduction

A key factor to consider by SMEs in their adoption of new technological innovations is cost. Ainin, Parveen and Moghavvemi (2015), opine that the adoption of social media by SMEs have helped to reduce cost and boost their financial performance. Crammon *et al.*, (2018) opine that SMEs reap the benefits of cost reduction because of efficiency in the use of innovative technologies, as regards transactions and advertisements. According to Kedher *et al.*, (2015), social media has had a major impact on humanity and has formed an integral part of human day-to-day activities, through communication, interaction, and information sharing across the platforms. Since these platforms are easy to use and relatively free, they have provided SMEs with faster and cheaper approaches for customer relations. Other benefits social media has brought are cost-effective production, reduction in marketing costs, and customer retention. More customers find it much easier to access information about SMEs and their services, through social media information (Dwivedi *et al.*, 2017; Jacobson *et al.*, 2020). More evidence by Rodriguez *et al.*, (2015) showed that social media influences the process of customer relations positively, which motivates a more positive business performance.

2.9.4 Financial Performance

There have been various studies carried out on the benefits that social media marketing brings to SMEs. These studies have found it difficult to adequately measure the financial benefits that social media marketing has conferred on SMEs (Ainin *et al.*, 2015). Ahmad *et al.*, (2019) suggested that firms who adopted social media for marketing did not show financial returns from these platforms. However, Parveen *et al.*, (2015) researched the influence of social media marketing on SMEs and their results showed that there was an increase in the financial performance of SMEs through the adoption of Facebook marketing, as it increased their sales transactions, inquiries, and volumes. This was supported by Jones *et al.*, (2015), who proved, with more empirical evidence, that social media influenced SME sales performance. Results from the research highlighted that social media marketing positively influences the organizational performance with regards to improved customer relations, direct access to information, and cost reduction (Tajudeen *et*

al., 2018). There have also been pieces of evidence on the fact that there is an improved level of costing and valuation, in combination with business performance and marketing strategy.

2.10 Social media Marketing adoption in Agricultural SMEs in Southwest Nigeria

Agriculture is regarded as an important determinant in ensuring that poverty, unemployment, and sustainable food security are achieved, especially in Nigeria (Osabohien, Osabohien and Urhie 2018). According to Collinson *et al.*, (2016), about 80% of the ECOWAS population's food and crops are obtained from regional farms, but in the coming years, the agricultural industry would be met by increased demand due to exponential growth. To better situate the point of view above, the agricultural sector generates approximately 48% of the Nigerian GDP (FAO, 2019). The agricultural practice in this region, however, has been seen as an unattractive aspect to individuals, for different reasons, like low returns on investments, inadequate infrastructure, and low dissemination of information. Agriculture has the overwhelming potential for providing important benefits such as employment opportunities, poverty reduction, and food security. However, it has been blighted by the lack of adequate information about services and products to the required target market.

The failure of the green revolution in Africa, coupled with political unrest, conflicts, neglect of agricultural activities, unstable food prices, and climate changes, has increased the rate of food insecurity and poverty (Rosenberg, 2014; FAO, 2015a). To solve these challenges mentioned above, there is a need for the creation of informed communities, especially in rural areas. Agricultural extensions and advisory organizations, due to their strategic positions in rural locations can reach out to the rural dwellers effectively but have been limited in reaching these stakeholders as regards newer opportunities and innovation (MEAS, 2015). The success recorded in agricultural growth can be motivated by the informed activities of individuals whose decisions are determined by adequate knowledge, information, and technological innovations available for their use (FAO, 2015b). Also, adopting information and communication technology can help in encouraging innovation, promoting communication and customer interaction.

Inegbedion *et al.*, (2020) assert that it has been shown that it is almost impossible for a nation to achieve industrialization without attaining major success in the performance of their agricultural industry, since the green revolution is important for an industrial revolution. In the reduction of poverty, the performance of the agricultural sector, via improved productivity, is a major approach (Nebo and Ejionueme, 2017) and is in line with the macroeconomic objectives of any economy, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, No poverty, and No hunger. In the past years, the agricultural industry in Nigeria has wallowed in neglect from the new generation of youths. This has inspired the need for an entirely different marketing strategy, to make sure the potential of the industry is not wasted (Inegbedion, 2018).

With the rate at which social media is being embraced by various age groups in Nigeria, it is only right that it is adopted in the marketing of agricultural services and products, which would result in an increased demand for these products. These marketing strategies are aimed at capturing the attention of storage and transporters, input suppliers, processors of the farm products, providers of services, traders, and retailers. According to Watts (2018), social media marketing gives farmers especially, the ability to put their brand and their products to the general public, for the sole purpose of sales and brand visibility. However, with the perceived benefits that social media marketing brings to agricultural SMEs in Southwest Nigeria, there are also challenges that these SMEs face in incorporating social media marketing strategies. Balkrishna and Deshmukh (2017) noted certain challenges, including the need for adequate training on how to use these platforms for agricultural marketing, the limited access to the different platforms, due to limited data and network, the trust involved in buying and selling through social media platforms and the expensive cost of technology in agricultural marketing. Therefore, SMEs must find ways to successfully adopt social media marketing strategies to obtain the benefits it brings.

2.11 Empirical Review

In developing nations around the world, the efficiency and benefits brought by SMEs have been supported by social media marketing. The uniqueness is the demographic targeting feature that social media has provided, which makes SME services more accessible and visible. Studies on the effect that social media marketing has on SME growth and development have been analyzed in this section. There has been extensive literature showing that social media marketing provides various benefits to SMEs, including, creating communication channels, fostering stakeholder

cooperation, and promoting goods and services (Oztamur and Karadilar, 2014). Wang, Pauleen, and Zhang (2016) supported the opinion of the authors above, saying that social media was an necessary approach for the development of a communication channel between SMEs and their customers.

Currently, SMEs are increasingly adopting social media as a strategy for the improvement of their financial performance through basically understanding the benefits that social media platforms bring. The adoption of social media by SMEs has been hugely connected to the achievement of certain organizational objectives such as identification of problems, proffering of solutions, advertising, sales, driving cultural values, communication, marketing, customer service, and innovation. Ainin *et al.*, (2015) opined that the achievement of these various factors culminates in the improvement of the financial performance of SMEs, and their views were supported by Attai *et al.*, (2015) and Bianchi and Andrews (2015) who identified strong relationships between social media platforms and SMEs. Their findings showed that social media marketing made room for the provision of information and reviews to customers effectively, which boosts performance, financially.

Muslim *et al.*, (2020) showed that SME customers from distant locations usually expressed their satisfaction via social media platforms, which encouraged the increase of brand awareness. Alhgarabat *et al.*, (2020) supported the views of Muslim *et al.*, (2020) by proposing that social media was an efficient approach for the marketing and advertisement of SME services and products at much lower costs. They understood that an increase in the promotion of services through tagging, commenting, messaging and notifications had made business operations more simplified, as compared to the traditional means of advertising. Kithinji (2014) linked the effectiveness of cost utilization, marketing excellence, quality of services, and customer satisfaction to the various benefits that social media marketing brings to SMEs, especially through Facebook advertising. Studies by Parveen (2012) reiterated the views of Kithinji (2014) by showing that Facebook was the most widely used platform for business. He also showed in his studies that relative advantage, compatibility, the orientation of the entrepreneur, and ease of use of these social media platforms influenced the adoption of social media marketing by SMEs, positively. Kiprotich *et al.*, (2015) supported these views by investigating the influence of social media marketing on the connection existing between the SME performance and the entrepreneurial

orientation. The study showed that there was a positive impact of social media marketing on entrepreneurial orientation and SME performance. Findings also proved that social media advertisements helped the entrepreneurship orientation by improving the ability of the SMEs to assess, analyze, and mobilize the various external resources helping to improve SME performance.

Chanthinok *et al.*, (2015) opined that social media was very important in understanding the perspectives of both the business and customers. Supporting this view, Ogunnaike and Kehinde (2013) investigated the impact that electronic social media platforms like Facebook had on the financial and sales performance of SMEs and understood that there was a significant impact. The authors also suggested that social media platforms for business were a worthy strategic approach for the successful management of a business. Also, Tajudeen *et al.*, (2017) proved in their study that the use of social media marketing had a significant impact on the financial performance of SMEs in Nigeria and also improved customer interactions and access to information.

Galati *et al.*, (2017) opined that the adoption of social media platforms was a major marketing tool for the management of any business because it helped in providing support to these organizations in the interaction with their customers resulting in boosting overall performance. Jagongo and Kinya (2013) however, argued that SMEs suffered from financial issues and were more or less reluctant to invest hugely in web-based and IT tools. Subramaniam and Nakkeeran (2016) supported this view by showing that SMEs were posed with challenges like inadequate technical support and poor infrastructure, with little knowledge on social media marketing, as a result of minimal resources. They also opined that adopting Facebook advertisements helped in providing flexibility for SME owners to interact, advertise and develop relationships with their customers, at a much lesser cost than the usual traditional advertising tools (Tikam, 2013).

There is enough empirical literature on the adoption of communication technologies in marketing agricultural products. Balkrishna and Deshmukh (2017) analyzed the influence that social media marketing played in agricultural SMEs. The findings from this research showed that social media marketing in agricultural SMEs proved useful. Studies by Akintunde and Oladele (2019) and Alavion *et al.*, (2017) evaluated the various factors that determined the use of ICT in agricultural marketing, and their findings showed that ICT activities employed by SMEs improved their marketing processes. This view was supported by Mwangi and Wagoki (2016) who analyzed the

influence that social media had on business advertisement performance and found out that social media marketing in agricultural SMEs was a key factor in their development and brand visibility.

Tajudeen *et al.*, (2017) evaluated the antecedents in the adoption of social media by SMEs in Nigeria and found out that compatibility, interactivity, advantages, and pressure from the industry were related to the adoption of social media by SMEs. However, the findings also showed that entrepreneurial orientation, support from management, and structural assurance did not positively affect the adoption of social media marketing

2.12 Conclusion

This section has evaluated the social media as a whole and the various platforms that have become popular through the increased use of smartphones. These platforms include Snapchat, TikTok, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Following the opinion of Booth (2017), these platforms have helped SMEs, especially those in the agricultural sector, to market and promote their products. The section also extensively discusses online and social media marketing and the benefits that it brings to SMEs. These include providing businesses with the opportunity of becoming innovative, helping them manage and interact with customers, reduce cost, influence the buying behaviors of customers, provide a wider market, and improve the financial performance of SMEs. This answers the research question on the impact that social media marketing plays on SMEs. This section also answered the research question on the most used platform adopted by agricultural SMEs in their marketing strategy. This showed that Facebook was the most used platform by these agricultural SMEs. This would also be confirmed in the findings of this research, by interviewing respondents. The section evaluated the states in the Southwest region, including Lagos, Ogun, Osun, Oyo, Ondo, and Ekiti, and the adoption of social media marketing by agricultural SMEs in the region. It was evident that they utilized social media marketing specially for promotion and to make sales, which was supported by Watts (2018). The section concluded with a review of existing literature of recent studies on the role that social media marketing played in agricultural SMEs. The majority of the studies found that it helped in promotion, sales, customer interaction, brand visibility, and advertising. This informed the themes for the data analysis for the research. To further buttress these roles, the next section includes the methodology, which would highlight the approach used in answering the research questions that have been outlined above.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section evaluates the method used for research in appraising the roles of social media marketing on the business performance of agricultural SMEs in Southwest Nigeria. It discusses the research methods, research design, research strategy, sampled population, method of collecting data, and data analysis techniques. It concludes with the limitations found in adopting this methodology.

3.2 Research Method

This study adopted a qualitative method to understand the tenets of the study. Researchers adopt this qualitative research approach to better acquire a more holistic view of the study, through the use of observations, interviews, and documents (Park and Park, 2016). According to Yin (2017), the adoption of an interview approach with open-ended questions is a very useful method for the gathering and collection of information and data from participants. Yin (2017) also opines that the qualitative approach helps to understand the different perspectives and views of participants, through observation and interpretation. A qualitative approach was also picked over other research methods because it provided valuable insights on the rationale for the emergence of this problem. This qualitative method was adopted to explore the following research question: How beneficial has social media been to the marketing strategies of agricultural SMEs in Southwest Nigeria, and what social media marketing strategies have these SMEs incorporated in their strategies to aid their development?

3.3 Research Design

Saunders *et al.*, (2016) assert that the research design helps to adequately cover the workings of the research question, regarding the kind of evidence that is being collected, where it is collected from, and how the information collected is interpreted and used for answering the research question. The research design involves collecting and analyzing data. This study employed the use of a semi-structured interview approach that was used to understand the role that social media

played in the marketing strategies of agricultural SMEs in Southwest Nigeria. In this approach, the researchers make use of interviews to better evaluate the topic (Dresch *et al.*, 2015). According to Yin (2017), the adoption of interviews in the research design helped for a more in-depth exploration of the problem and questions that the research has been designed to answer. It also provides an opportunity for further research on the topic. Yin (2017) also opined that there are 5 different characteristics of interview design, which include the propositions, the analysis of data, data linkage to the propositions, and the different criteria that are used for interpretation of findings. Adopting interviews as the research design helps the researcher to evaluate different strategic management aspects through semi-structured in-depth interviews via emails and phone calls (Gaya and Smith, 2016). Gaya and Smith (2016) further reiterated that it was necessary for a critical review in a qualitative study. This study employed 4 case studies, which duly followed the case study protocol, data collection approaches, and analysis methods, that involved asking very important questions, fostering source triangulation, and reporting results to make sure of the reliability and validity of the data. How important it is in ensuring there was a critical review in qualitative research was supported by the factors of transferability, dependability of data, confirmability, and credibility as proposed by Noble (2015).

3.4 Research Strategy

For this research, there is a need for a clearer research strategy for adequate findings. McCambridge *et al.*, (2014) opines that the research strategy is defined as a well-planned process and method that is used to conduct research. This strategy prioritizes helping the research study utilize the efforts and thoughts to systematically conduct the project to achieve the right results. For this particular study, considering the research questions and what the study was expected to prove, the use of a semi-structured interview was adopted to collect relevant information from marketing managers of agricultural SMEs in Southwest Nigeria. The interview style included open-ended questions that would motivate the respondent to extensively explain his answers so that certain evidence can be obtained, while still getting maximum inputs from the interviewee. The interview details outlined showed the major patterns and highlights that emerged from the interview. The interview was targeted towards owners of agricultural SMEs in Southwest Nigeria, including wholesalers and retailers (who are responsible for the distribution of agricultural produce

to the end-users) and farmers (directly involved in production). It was also targeted towards the management of SMEs, department heads, team leaders, technological operators, and processors who have had experience indirectly dealing with customers. Four agricultural SMEs located in Southwest Nigeria were adopted for this project. For this interview, a total of 8 people were used, representing two from each organization.

3.5 Population and Sampling

Sampling in qualitative research can be defined as selecting relevant sources of data that create a pool from where the researcher gets data needed to address the research aims (Gentles *et al.*, 2015). The research question ordinarily determines the size of the sample. This shows that selecting the respondents in a qualitative study is a very key decision. According to Fletcher, Massis, and Nordqvist (2016), understanding the phenomenon to be investigated is related majorly to the sampling of the case study. For selecting participants in this study, a purposive sampling method is employed. The major reason for adopting the purposive sampling method was that the participants and respondents had enough and adequate knowledge on the study topic. The purposive sampling technique is utilized by researchers because they can obtain in-depth information on the study phenomenon (Parveen, Jafaar, and Ainin, 2015). Fusch and Ness (2015) further reiterated that for the researcher to achieve data saturation, he must pick the most suitable sample size. The study selected 4 agricultural SMEs in the Southwest area of Nigeria.

3.6 Participants used in this Study.

3.6.1 Samfarm (AG1 and AG2)

This agricultural SME is involved in fish farming. It is located in Magboro, Ogun State, in southwest Nigeria. It is an SME with 3-10 employees, including the marketing manager, livestock farmers, sales staff, and is led by the manager. Two participants from Samfarm were used for this study, they are the owner and the sales manager. Samfarm was picked for this study because they gave consent and are a primary agricultural stakeholder, servicing customers directly.

3.6.2 Maize feed farms (AG3 and AG4)

This agricultural SME is involved in sowing, farming, and harvesting maize crops to be sold to customers directly. It is located in Ogun State, Nigeria. The organization consists of about 2-7 employees, including the manager, sales manager, processing officers, farmers, sales personnel, and the media communication officer. Two participants from this organization were used for this study, including the media communication officer and the sales manager. This SME was selected because it fits the description of agricultural SMEs and is grouped as farmers, which is an important stakeholder in the agricultural industry. Their consent was also given to be involved in this study.

3.6.3 Nwadugbo Livestock and Perennials (AG5 and AG6)

This organization is located in Lagos State in Nigeria. It is mainly involved in the sale of pigs to retailers/pork sellers. It is made up of about 8 individuals working in the organization. It is headed by the CEO, with other staff like the drivers, sales managers, storage officers, supply chain officers, and the media communication officer. For this study, the CEO of the organization and the media communication officer were participants. Nwadugbo Livestock and Perennials was chosen because they were involved in the transportation and logistics process of the agricultural industry and had given their consent for this study.

3.6.4 Staragri Stores (AG7 and AG8).

This organization is located in Magboro, Ogun State, Nigeria. It is primarily involved in the procurement of raw products and processed products from processors to sell to customers directly. They also buy products from farmers to sell to other agricultural processing firms and retailers in Ogun and Lagos State. The organization consists of 5 to 10 employees, ranging from the salesgirls who are responsible for marketing the products, to the farmers, the drivers, and the manager. The two participants who were involved from this organization in this study include the manager and the sales employee. Staragri was chosen because they fit the description of a wholesaler in the agricultural industry and had given their consent for this study.

3.7 Data Collection Instrument

The data collection instrument used in this research is the open-ended interview. The researcher is also an active participant in this study. Data was collected through the use of participant observation, in-depth interviews, and non-participant observation, which was postulated by Gudkova (2017). The most efficient technique for collecting data is the use of interviews. According to Yin (2017), a good interviewer must possess interaction competence and be technically sound. In qualitative research, the research utilizes the questions that have been structured for the interview and open-ended as the primary mode for data collection to better understand the topic (Parsa, 2015).

3.8 Data Collection Techniques

For this study, data was obtained from four selected agricultural SMEs in Southwest Nigeria, but first, they were contacted for their suitability and availability. Upon getting ethical approval from the school, emails were sent for introduction and to ensure they understood the objectives of the study. The researcher then scheduled phone calls to explicitly explain to them the rationale behind the study and what was supposed to be achieved. After the participants were selected, they were given the consent form for their review and signing. As soon as they were returned, the researcher arranged the location, mode, and time for the interviews. Before the interviews, the participants received copies of the questions to be asked to make sure they got familiar with the questions and enable them to relay their concerns. However, there was no incentive offered to the participants in this study. The questions were open-ended semi-structured to help understand the topic (Parsa, 2015) The interview consisted of about 19 questions that aligned with the research questions posed by the study. The interviews were conducted one by one at different times, locations, and through the employment of the modes which were most convenient to each respondent, and their views were duly recorded. Following the guidelines of Silverman (2017), the researcher transcribed the audio recordings to extract all relevant information and capture important data.

3.9 Data Organization Techniques

Study credibility is improved through an adequate data organization approach (Sutton and Austin, 2015). After comparing the transcribed notes with the audio recording, data cleanup and organization were then commenced. The data was organized by the following process: individually checking the interview that was transcribed; using a journal to note the assumptions, experiences, and thoughts obtained through the research process; entering data into an excel sheet; and then reviewing the notes jotted down with the questions asked during the interview. According to Bengston (2016), the organization of data is a critical aspect of a credible and effective qualitative research study. Microsoft Word and Excel were the major tools used for organizing data in this study. The different responses from the audio recordings from the interview questions from each participant were compiled and the different audio files and recordings were saved with the participant's number for confidentiality. The audio recordings were coded AG1, AG2, AG3, AG4, AG5, AG6, AG7, and AG8.

3.10 Data Analysis

The themes used in the data analysis consisted of challenges faced, most popular social media platform, brand visibility, advertising, promotion, sales, and customer interaction in exploring the benefits that social media marketing brought to the four agricultural SMEs chosen for this research. The interview questions structured were capable enough to provide answers to the research question. Researchers who employed case studies utilize methodological triangulation to help merge multiple approaches to reach a common conclusion that supports the study instead of making use of one method (Heese, Bright, and Zucker, 2016). The study employed the triangulation of data because it helped to strengthen the source of data and showed the reader the credibility of the research (Taylor, Bogdan, and Devault, 2015). Triangulation can be defined as an approach that helps in the reconciliation and validation of data that has been collected after different approaches and techniques have been applied to a study subject (Fusch and Ness, 2015). They also proposed that the advantage of triangulating data was the validity it brought. Following the recommendations of Hussein (2015), the research made use of the methodological triangulation technique and compared the data collected with the public record from the internet and documents. Graue (2015) opined that the researcher must be capable of interpreting and analyzing the data.

The analysis of data has proved to be an important step in qualitative research (Mayer, 2015). The coding, categorizing, analysis of data, and identification of the relevant elements make up the data analysis process (Yin, 2017). As soon as the interviews were completed, to ensure privacy and confidentiality, the responses were coded (agricultural SME owners were coded with AG1, AG2, AG3, and AG4). The study then correlated the recurring responses with the elements mentioned above. The interview transcripts were imported into Microsoft Excel for coding and identification of the themes that aligned to the conceptual framework of the study. Yin (2017) opined that the researcher utilizes data analysis for the organization and categorization of data into thematic codes. Data coding is used by researchers to prepare and organize the data for analysis (Graue, 2015). The data coding process also ensures the researcher draws credible conclusions and provides the findings of the study. The coding, categorization, and organizational process are very necessary processes in the analysis of data (Chowdry, 2015).

3.11 Reliability

In ensuring the reliability of qualitative research, it needs to be guarded against personal bias (Noble and Smith, 2015). The research method sees the researcher employing the use of credible techniques to improve the consistency of their findings. According to Leung (2015), reliability means the research can replicate the research process to get the required results. A suitable method for determining the level of reliability of a study is to get feedback responses on the interview process (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). The main goal of reliability is to obtain the same results if the study is repeated (Morse, 2015). Following the recommendations of Castillo-Montaya (2016), the reliability processes were duly followed in this study. The steps involved included the creation of an audit trail that showed the study aims, selection of participants, collection of data, analysis of data, research findings, and conclusions. To further confirm the reliability of this study, the researcher verified the interview responses' accuracy through member checking. There was also a need to make sure that the responses were in tandem with the research objectives and central research question. The researcher also ensured that the recordings were duly saved in a password-encrypted USB device, locked in a secure cabinet. The consent forms and other relevant files were stored in a computer that was passworded. In the research carried out, standard methodological techniques were employed to obtain reliability with the case study (Yin, 2017)

3.12 Validity

In qualitative research, the researchers aim at ensuring that the results obtained are transferable, credible, and can obtain confirmability in the design and implementation of the research (Morse, 2015). Credibility means the assurance of the results that address the participant's viewpoints. To improve the credibility of the study, the researcher must make sure that the objectives, questions, and design are in line with the required results (Leung, 2015). Confirmability involves the level at which the study is shaped by the participants, while transferability is the ability of the results to be applied to other settings through the adherence to data collection, saturation, and analysis approaches that are used for the case study (Sutton and Austin, 2015). Hussein (2015) opines that the research confirmability involves data collection from just the perspective of the respondents, which translates to un-bias on the part of the researcher. The suitability of the data, research methods, and the nature of the research findings show the validity of the qualitative research (Abbaszadeh and Abbaszadeh, 2016). According to Cypress (2017), the validity of the results in qualitative research shows the diligence of the researcher in the collection of data in the research process. Member checking, external audits, peer-reviewing, debriefing, research bias clarification, and triangulation are techniques used to evaluate the validity of the study. This study employed the triangulation technique through the incorporation of interviews and data from internet sources, as suggested by Marshall and Rossman (2016). For achieving data saturation, the researcher interviews various participants with the same questions (Fusch and Ness, 2015). The researcher asked the same questions to the different respondents from each of the SMEs chosen for this study. The data was collected from the respondents through the use of semi-structured interviews until it reached the point of saturation. Saturation is the point at which no more data can be collected.

3.13 Ethical Consideration

The research study has prohibited self-deception, ethical issues, negligence, and bias. For the right usage of information and data, agreements have been obtained. The study survey has been structured in a way that would ensure there is strict compliance to confidentiality and privacy. Consent was sought from the participants to ensure their suitability for this research. Personal recordings and responses were handled with confidentiality by making sure they were labeled and

stored in well-secured files. The rules and policies for the management of privacy have been followed duly. The Data Protection Act has also been followed.

3.14 Research Limitation

The present COVID-19 pandemic limits the level at which information can be collected from respondents because it was difficult to get to them, therefore we were limited to phone calls and emails. Another major limitation of this study is the lack of adequate research on this topic, which informed the need to get primary data for new findings.

3.15 Limitations of Methods

The limitations that were faced in adopting this methodology include the fact that it was a labor-intensive approach, which consumed a lot of time. Adopting the interview technique for the collection of data might have been affected by the mood of the respondents, who could end up giving incomplete information.

3.16 Chapter Summary

This chapter has extensively discussed the research methods that have been used to carry out this study. It starts with evaluating the study design that has been chosen and the justification as to why it was chosen. It then explained the strategy that would be employed in data collection, in the form of interviews. This chapter outlines the sample population required for this study, including outlining the four different agricultural SMEs located in Southwest Nigeria, that were chosen for the study. It includes the data collection techniques, the data instrument, how the data obtained was organized and analyzed. The chapter explains the ethical consideration processes, the reliability and validity and limitations of the methods. The following chapter would show the findings obtained from this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

The overarching research question of this research was: What are the roles that social media plays in the marketing strategies of agricultural SMEs in Southwest Nigeria?

Based on the methodological triangulation of data sources collected, five major themes have emerged from the data analysis process from the interviews conducted. A response was considered one of the themes if it was present in at least four respondents. The following subsections describe the eight themes and how the participants responded to the interview questions. The data that has been collected helped in answering the research question.

The five themes that were coined from the analysis of the interview included the use of elements from social media marketing and are as follows:

1. Advertising, branding, and promotion
2. Customer interaction
3. Sales
4. Challenges faced
5. Most popular platforms used

One significant finding from this analysis showed that these agricultural SMEs were able to effectively promote their brand through social media marketing, which improved their sales, customer engagement, and brand visibility.

4.2 Themes

Through the semi-structured interview, social media platforms, and different available information, an in-depth understanding of the role that social media marketing plays in the business

performance of agricultural SMEs in Southwest Nigeria has been gained. The following extensively relates the analysis of the themes.

4.2.1 Theme 1: Customer Interaction and Engagement

The data obtained from all the respondents showed that all eight respondents (100%) attested that social media marketing helped them engage actively with the customers and public. They also highlighted that social media marketing provided opportunities for customer loyalty, trust, and credibility, which reaffirm the views of Utami, Bayani and Eppriilisanti (2018). According to AG1, ‘Using social media to market my products made different customers ask me questions on the prices and benefits of the fish oils’. However, AG4 responded thus ‘social media marketing made customers compare his products with others, which was not healthy’. From the findings, the customers actively engaged with posts, pictures, and videos showing the products of these SMEs. Table 1 highlights the comments and quotes of the respondents and answers the research question on the impact social media marketing has on agricultural SMEs in Southwest Nigeria. The element of customer interaction and engagement has been proved from this study as a considerable effect of social media marketing. Customers engage with posts, videos, pictures, and adverts of these brands, which aligns with the view of Shaltoni (2017) who asserted that social media marketing helped SMEs interact with their customers at lower transaction costs and higher efficiency. The findings also supported the view of Parveen and Moghavvemi (2015) who opined that social media marketing encouraged access to information about the brand, excellent customer service, and interaction.

Table 1. Customer interaction and engagement

SMEs (AG)	COMMENTS
AG1	Using social media to market my products made different customers ask me questions on the prices and benefits of the fish oils.
AG2	Social media marketing made customers compare the SME fish oil products with others, which was not healthy.'

AG3	Social media marketing made customers enquire about maize products.
AG4	Sometimes, my posts make my customers ask questions about the company's products, therefore fueling engagements.
AG5	It made customers inquire about the benefits of the products.
AG6	One time, my social media posts caused arguments on the best market for pork meat in the world, which brought engagements
AG7	Social media marketing makes customers ask questions about the location of my shop
AG8	I get lots of comments, especially on scarce products.

4.2.2 Theme 2: Advertising, branding, and promotion

For the sustenance of business performance, SMEs must be able to attract traffic to their establishments. Therefore, it is essential for businesses to transactionally interact with customers to grow the revenue streams (Popescu, 2018). From the findings, all respondents from the 4 SMEs attested that social media marketing helped them share relevant information about their brands to the public through the advertisement posts placed by them. They also highlighted the fact that social media marketing helped in the promotion of their products and services. However, AG7, the manager, highlighted issues like 'Some customers who see my products on social media cannot purchase from me due to distance, but I still support the fact that social media marketing has improved my brand's visibility, product promotion, and advertising activities'. This view was supported by AG8, who was the sales employee. One major highlight in the responses was from respondent AG3, who asserted that social media marketing helped him win huge deals due to his adverts which answers the research question on the role that social media marketing plays on the business performance of agricultural SMEs, regarding advertising, branding, and promotion functions. Table 2 highlights the comments and quotes of the respondents and answers the research question on the role that social media marketing plays on agricultural SMEs in Southwest Nigeria

as regards advertising, branding, and promotion. The findings show that social media marketing was critical in advertising agricultural produce to the consumers, which improved the brand visibility and acceptance of these SMEs. These findings align with He *et al.*, (2015) and Parveen *et al.*, (2018) who highlighted that promotion and advertising were some of the advantages of using social media marketing.

Table 2. Advertising, branding, and promotion

SMEs (AG)	COMMENTS
AG1	Advertising on Facebook and Twitter has taken my brand to places because I get calls from people to deliver fish.
AG2	Our brand is getting into the customer's mind because social media helps us reach the target market.
AG3	Maize-feed farms have become a household name in Ogun environs because we place adverts on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.
AG4	My posts about the benefits of maize have ensured people know what we do.
AG5	I once got a massive deal of 6 million Naira because of our adverts posted on Facebook.
AG6	Our pigs and pork meat adverts travel far, especially to our export locations, due to social media marketing
AG7	Some customers who see my products on social media cannot purchase from me due to distance, but I still support the fact that social media marketing has improved my brand's visibility, product promotion, and advertising activities
AG8	We get calls from people far from our location since we started posting adverts for our services and products

4.2.3 Theme 3: Most popular platform used

Popsecu (2018) asserts that a more improved brand reputation leads to brand visibility on various social media platforms. Kujur and Sing (2016) argue that SMEs must develop social media marketing plans and social media marketing platforms. AG1, AG2, AG7, and AG8 conveyed that they majorly utilized Instagram and Twitter for their social media marketing strategies because they supported maximum exposure. AG1 and AG2 also highlighted that their Instagram page was connected to their Facebook page, which helped them post simultaneously on both platforms, compared to AG3, AG4, AG5, and AG6, who highlighted that they mostly used Facebook for their marketing strategies because most of their target customers were users of the platform, therefore ensuring a wider reach. However, it was also pertinent to note that AG5 and AG6 also used LinkedIn because it enabled them to reach professionals involved in the exporting industry, after all, they exported their pork meat to other countries. AG5 says ‘We do not use Instagram because users of that platform would only try products to enhance their looks, and we do not fit that bill’. According to AG3, ‘Facebook is best because we can run adverts on the platform, and our primary audience majorly uses the platform’. In contrast, AG2 says, ‘We use Instagram because people get to see what we do, with clear evidence of our brand’. These findings show that different SMEs utilize different social media platforms for marketing. Facebook looked to be the most widely used due to its running ads and broad audience reach. Table 3 highlights the comments and quotes on the most popular social media platform used. These findings answer the research question on the best social media platforms agricultural SMEs can use for efficient business performance. From these findings, it was concluded that Facebook is the most widely used and most effective social media platform for agricultural SMEs in southwest Nigeria.

Table 3. Most popular social media platform used.

SMEs (AG)	COMMENTS
AG1	We use Instagram and Facebook simultaneously because Instagram gives us the ability to post pictures while being linked to our Facebook page
AG2	We use Instagram because people get to see what we do, with clear evidence of our brand.'
AG3	Facebook is best because we can run adverts on the platform, and our influential audience majorly uses the platform.
AG4	Our maize products garner more interest from Facebook, especially when we run ads.
AG5	We do not use Instagram because users of that platform would only try products to enhance their looks, and we do not fit that bill
AG6	We use Facebook because we have a vast audience on the platform
AG7	Sometimes, we use Facebook to advertise our raw grains and products because most of our consumers are enormous platform users.
AG8	Facebook is the best, but sometimes Twitter can be helpful.

4.2.4 Theme 4: Challenges Faced

The results from this study highlighted that all the SMEs reported financial issues as a significant challenge. All the respondents conveyed that running advertisements on the different platforms involved financial investments, and most of their profits were not enough to take care of these advertisements. AG3 highlighted that ‘sometimes I decide not to run ads on Facebook, because what I get in a month cannot cover the expenses, but if I want to increase my sales, I need to advertise my product’. His view aligned with that of AG1 who said, ‘Finance is my only problem; we are hoping things become better’.

However, even though finance was the major challenge faced, findings showed that AG3, AG4, AG7, and AG8 reported consistent posting on the relevant platforms was a challenge to them. The reason cited by AG7 was ‘everyone is busy, and I cannot afford a social media manager at this time, and that makes us unable to use social media platforms frequently’. AG5 and AG6, in tandem with financial constraints, also outlined issues of getting people and customers to trust their brand, mainly because they were much involved in exporting their pork products. Table 4 highlights the comments and quotes on the challenges faced by the respondents. These findings outline finance, operational processes, and trust issues as challenges that SMEs face in implementing successful social media marketing activities, thus answering the research question on what challenges SMEs face in implementing social media marketing. The findings show that financial constraints are the main issue SMEs have to grapple with in implementing social media marketing. Other issues include gaining the trust of the customers and frequency of use due to operational processes.

Table 4. Challenges faced

SMEs (AG)	COMMENTS
AG1	Finance is my only problem, and we are hoping things become better.'
AG2	Sometimes we need to fund several other necessary aspects of the fish business, so sometimes running adverts are put on hold.
AG3	Sometimes I decide not to run ads on Facebook because what I get in a month cannot cover the expenses, but I need to advertise my product if I want to increase my sales.'
AG4	Money is an issue. We are just growing, and we need to input Finance in different aspects, like transporting our products to customers.
AG5	Finance is an issue, but trust from customers is another major issue because customers are not sure of the brand, so referrals are often a significant source.
AG6	Financial constraints and the lack of trust is an issue.

AG7	Everyone is busy, and I cannot afford a social media manager at this time, and that makes us unable to use the social media platforms frequently
AG8	We don't have a social media handler, so it isn't easy to post content and ads consistently. This is an issue for us.

4.2.5 Themes 5: Sales

The findings from this study showed that all the respondents from the 4 SMEs asserted that most of their sales came from social media advertisements. AG1, AG2, AG3, and AG4 conveyed that they got most of their sales from social media platforms because most people first preferred to look through their devices and order what they wanted. This set of respondents reported that about 40% of their sales came from the platforms. AG5, AG6, AG7, and AG8 showed a slight difference because these groups conveyed that about 90% of their sales came from social media platforms. Even with few financial constraints, they ran few advertisements, reflecting more in their sales. AG8 claims, 'People buy from my shop because they like what they see on my page', which is quite similar to AG2 who states that by 'posting on Facebook, my target customers order their fish and fish oils'. Therefore, overall findings from this showed that sales were a significant benefit of adopting social media marketing. Furthermore, it showed that half of the revenue generated by the SMEs chosen was received from social media marketing. This answers the research question on the role that social media marketing plays in agricultural SMEs' business development regarding the sales factor.

Table 5. Sales generation

SMEs (AG)	COMMENTS
AG1	Most of my customers come from my platforms, and I have gotten a deal to deliver fish to an event.
AG2	Posting on Facebook, my target customers order for their fish and fish oils.'

AG3	I have some consistent customers from my Facebook page,
AG4	Our Facebook page brings referrals to the organization.
AG5	Asides from referrals from friends, social media platforms have given us a significant source of income.
AG6	Facebook has generated sales for the piggery business in terms of export operations.
AG7	Our significant sales are usually gotten from referrals and our social media page
AG8	People buy from my shop because they like what they see on my page.'

4.3 Chapter Conclusion

This section analyses the results that have been obtained from this study extensively by distributing them into themes that evaluate the responses to obtain the research objectives. It focuses on the analysis, presentation, and implementation of the results. This section contains direct quotes from the respondents on their perceptions about social media marketing. It also compares the responses from each respondent to answer the research question.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The last chapter highlights the findings from the responses that have been gotten from the participants which are broken down into themes. This informs this chapter which focuses on expanding the findings from this study. It also outlines the practical implications of the findings for different stakeholders.

5.2 Theme: Brand Visibility, Promotion, Sales, Advertisement

Results from this study show that the adoption of social media marketing (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter) by agricultural SMEs in Southwest Nigeria has a positive influence on their sales, brand visibility, promotion, advertising, and sales generation. However, while the adoption of Facebook and Instagram were found to be significant influences in advertising, promotion, and branding, Twitter was not found to be significant, as SMEs preferred to use Facebook and Instagram due to their wide range of customers and the fact that it allowed the posting of products and services. The implication of this significance of social media marketing adoption shows that it enhances the efficiency in the promotion and advertisement of agricultural products. The results align with the views of Mwangi and Wagoki (2016), Alavion *et al.*, (2017), and Akintunde and Oladele (2019), who understood that social media marketing was important in the promotion and advertisement of products

5.3 Theme: Most Popular Social Media Platform

The result of this study also understands that from the different social media platforms used by agricultural SMEs in Southwest Nigeria, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, the most frequently adopted platform was Facebook. This was evident in the findings from the respondents who conveyed that Facebook gives them a wider reach which translates into more sales and more customers. It is important to note that this means that Facebook has a strong predictive power over the sales turnover. These findings are consistent with the views of Pareveen (2012), Ogunnaike

and Kehinde (2013), Tikam (2013), and Kitinji (2014), who reiterated that Facebook is more efficient as a social media marketing strategy, due to the capability to run ads and the wider reach it has.

5.4 Theme: Challenges Faced

Concerning challenges faced, the study found that trust, operational issues, and finance were the challenges outlined by the participants. However, financial issues were found to be the most frequent challenge, especially because the SMEs lacked the capital to consistently run advertisements on these platforms. This is consistent with the findings of Jagongo and Kinya (2013) and Subramaniam and Nakkeran (2016), who opine that SMEs are faced with financial issues which prevent them from investing much in social media marketing.

5.5 Theme: Customer Interaction

From this study, it is clear that the adoption of social media marketing increases the levels at which agricultural SMEs interact with their customers. This shows that utilizing social media platforms for marketing ensures the SMEs are brought closer to their existing and new customers. The customers interact with brands by asking for information on products, including benefits, prices, delivery, and the reason why they should patronize the business. The customers also look to engage with the videos, advertisements, promotions, pictures, and posts of these agricultural SMEs. This result, however, aligns with the views of Parveen and Moghaveni (2015) who opine that social media marketing encourages access to customers, and Shaltoni (2017) who asserts that social media marketing helps SMEs interact closely at lower costs and higher efficiency.

5.6 Conclusion

This section evaluates the results from the study and makes comparisons with previous studies on this topic, which achieves the research objectives. This section compares studies that have evaluated the various themes including customer interaction, challenges faced in implementing social media marketing, most popular social media platforms used, and brand visibility. The section confirms that the results obtained align with previous studies

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter critically gathers all the major talking points that have been covered in this study, including an overview of what has been discussed and how the objectives of this study have been achieved. It highlights the findings of the study, makes recommendations for future research, and identifies the limitations that hindered a more accurate representation of this study.

6.2 Summary of Findings

The study analyzed the role that social media marketing plays on the business performance of agricultural SMEs in Southwest Nigeria. The study achieved the research aims by employing the qualitative research method, through the use of interviews for data collection. The summary of the findings includes:

- The research understood that social media marketing helped in improving the brand visibility, promotion, and advertisement prospects of agricultural SMEs in Southwest Nigeria.
- Social media marketing improved the sales and profits generated by agricultural SMEs in Southwest Nigeria.
- Customer interaction and engagement are made possible through the use of social media marketing, especially through posts, pictures, and videos.
- Agricultural SMEs majorly use Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook for their social media marketing strategies.
- Also, financial issues have been understood to be the major challenge facing SMEs in the implementation of social media into their marketing strategies.

6.3 Conclusion

With the study looking to evaluate the role of social media marketing on the business performance of agricultural SMEs in Southwest Nigeria, this study has shown that the use of social media marketing, on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter platforms, has improved the business performance of agricultural SMEs in Southwest Nigeria, especially concerning brand visibility, promotion, customer interaction, and advertisements. Thus, it is clear that adopting social media platforms in marketing strategies enhances the efficiency of their interaction with their customers and their overall sales in SMEs in southwest Nigeria. This study provides key contributions to the management and marketing knowledge of SMEs. First of all, this study is part of the few research papers that has analyzed the impact that social media marketing has on the efficacy of the advertisement and promotion of their products, the efficiency of the interaction with new and existing customers, and the sales turnover of the business. Secondly, this study also makes up for the few studies that have analyzed the impact that social media marketing has on agricultural SMEs in Southwest Nigeria. A major deviation of this study from past ones is the evaluation of the implications of adopting social media marketing in agriculture to improve marketing efficiency and sales and profit generation. This study has, therefore, made an elaborated effort in drawing the interest of farmers, wholesalers, and retailers on the need to incorporate social media marketing in their business strategies for more improved productivity.

6.4 Suggested Recommendations

- The role of social media marketing in agricultural SMEs implies that policymakers in organizations and the government can embrace social media in their business strategies for sales turnover, promotion, brand visibility, and customer interaction.
- It is also pertinent to note that the growth recorded in the agricultural sector translates to a strong gross domestic product. With the research problems and findings, certain recommendations have been proposed. Policymakers should focus more on improving agricultural production and the marketing strategies of these products.
- The implication of adopting marketing strategies that involve social media is the attraction of individuals towards the agricultural sector, which would solve the issues of food security and reduce unemployment.

- Going forward, policymakers and owners of agricultural SMEs must look to incorporate social media in their marketing strategies through sensitization and education on the need to adopt the strategy.

6.5 Implication of Findings

6.5.1 Agricultural SMEs

This study will help agricultural SMEs with the knowledge of the role that social media marketing plays in business performance. It will inform SME owners of the need to incorporate social media marketing strategies for the acquisition of new customers, brand visibility and sales.

6.5.2 Policy Makers

The knowledge from this research will help policy makers understand the role of social media marketing especially to these SMEs whose contributions to the economy are important. This knowledge would inform the formulation of policies and regulations.

6.5.3 Researchers

This study will contribute adequately to the total marketing knowledge, especially those that prioritize social media marketing functions to business performance. It will also add new materials for further research into social media marketing.

6.6 Suggestions for Further Research

This study only prioritized social media marketing adoption on the business performance of agricultural SMEs in Southwest Nigeria. Further research must be done to add to existing knowledge by evaluating the various discrepancies on how social media can be used in optimizing the operations of agricultural SMEs.

6.7 Limitations

This study has been limited by certain factors. The first limitation is that out of the six Southwest states in Nigeria, only two states, Lagos and Ogun state were picked for this study, therefore, it is not certain if these chosen states adequately represent the Southwest region. Furthermore, this study targeted SMEs who satisfied the customers directly. The limitation here is the fact that other facets of SMEs targeted at other groups, could have dissenting opinions.

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APPENDIX

Title of Research: The role of social media marketing on the business performance of agricultural SMEs – A case study of four agricultural SMEs in Southwest Nigeria.

Dear Respondent,

I am Faith Jemimah Gimba, a post-graduate student researching the topic above. This survey would help agricultural stakeholders in different regions in Nigeria, understand the role that social media has on the business performance of agricultural SMEs. The ethical issues associated with this project would be handled strictly, and we assure you that your responses would be protected from third parties.

Thank you for giving me your time to attend this interview.

Interview questions.

1. What is the name of the organization?
2. What agricultural sector does your company belong to? (Processor, wholesaler, retailers, technology, farmers, science and research and others)
3. Is your company a family business?
4. How many employees work in the organization, including you? (Freelancer, less than 10, less than 50, Less than 100).
5. Is the organization a consumer or business market? (Consumer, Business to business or business to consumer)
6. Where is your company located and active? (Locally, Nationally, Regionally, or Internationally)
7. What is your role within the company? (Director/self-owned, Communication officer, marketing officer, sales manager, or social media marketing executive?)
8. Does your company have a website online at the moment?

9. Who is primarily responsible for communication and PR duties in the organization?
10. How often does your organization use social media platforms for marketing?
11. To what extent does your company use social media marketing to meet its objectives?
(Advertising, marketing, brand visibility, customer interaction, and sales)
12. Who manages the social media accounts of your company? (Anyone, social media manager, manager)
13. What social media accounts does your company primarily use? (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, others)
14. How often do you use Facebook as a social media marketing tool?
15. Are there more benefits from using Facebook marketing as compared to other social media platforms?
16. What social media platform is the most effective for your organization? Give reasons why.
17. Are there any issues and disadvantages the organization has encountered by adopting social media marketing?
18. What are the benefits that social media marketing has brought to your business?
19. What function does your organization expect social media marketing to play? (Provide information on products, meet new customers, interact with existing customers, access the customers, participate in discussions, advertise new products, make sales, showcase brand visibility, others)
20. What are the financial implications recorded by the company from adopting social media marketing?