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Editor's Note

This volume presents a focused and contemporary contribution to business and entrepreneurship education, with strong empirical evidence drawn largely from universities, and related contexts across Nigeria, and beyond. The articles explore emerging themes such as artificial intelligence integration, e-learning, entrepreneurship training, curriculum relevance, pedagogical innovation, and enterprise development within higher education systems. The collection reflects the growing intersection between technology, pedagogy, and entrepreneurial outcomes, while also addressing practical concerns such as poverty reduction, market sustainability, and small business performance. The institutional coverage highlights the University of Calabar, University of Cross River State, and other affiliated academic and professional environments, reinforcing the regional relevance and broader applicability of the findings.

The journal invites scholars, researchers, and practitioners to contribute high-quality manuscripts that advance knowledge in business education, entrepreneurship, digital transformation, and related disciplines. Submissions that offer empirical rigor, theoretical advancement, and practical relevance to developing and global education systems are particularly encouraged.

UTILIZATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR DIGITAL MARKETING BY SMALL BUSINESS ENTERPRISE OPERATORS IN TARABA STATE NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the utilization of social media for digital marketing by small business enterprise operators in Taraba State, Nigeria, with specific focus on Facebook and Instagram. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The population comprised 1,245 registered small business enterprises, while a sample of 100 operators was selected using simple random sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled —Utilization of Social Media and Digital Marketing Questionnaire,‖ which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.88 using Cronbach Alpha. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while independent sample t-test was used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that Facebook was utilized to a great extent (cluster mean = 4.33), while Instagram was utilized to a moderate extent (cluster mean = 3.49) for digital marketing. The results further indicated that there was no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female operators on their utilization of Facebook ($p > 0.05$) and Instagram ($p > 0.05$). The study concludes that while Facebook remains a dominant digital marketing tool among small business enterprises, Instagram usage is still developing. It was recommended that operators should enhance their strategic use of Instagram to improve digital marketing effectiveness and overall business performance.

Keywords: Social media, Digital marketing, Small business enterprises, Facebook, Instagram

Introduction

In today's digital age, marketing has evolved into a dynamic phenomenon that integrates customization with mass distribution to achieve organizational goals (Griese and Topic, 2020). Digital marketing refers to the promotion of goods and services through digital technologies such as display advertisements, mobile advertising, and social media platforms including Facebook and Instagram (Sahem, 2023). Most contemporary marketing activities are now conducted through digital platforms using the internet, computers, and mobile devices. According to Li, Su, Zhang, and Mao (2017), a brand without an effective digital marketing strategy is comparable to a car without tires, as its efficiency and functionality are significantly limited. Over time, many business organizations have shifted from traditional marketing approaches to digital platforms to enhance competitiveness, expand their customer base, and improve overall performance (Lee et al., 2011). The adoption of digital tools has enabled small business enterprises to compete more effectively with larger organizations by improving their market reach and operational efficiency (Chapman et al., 2000).

The emergence of the internet has transformed not only interpersonal relationships but also business operations by creating new opportunities for communication, networking, and entrepreneurship. Organizations increasingly rely on internet-enabled technologies to promote their products, engage customers, and achieve business growth. Consequently, businesses now prioritize digital marketing strategies such as social media marketing to enhance brand visibility and increase customer engagement (Pinerrotero and Martinegerola, 2016).

Social media has significantly transformed the operational landscape of small business enterprises by providing platforms for interaction, communication, and marketing. It offers unprecedented opportunities for promoting goods and services, attracting new customers, and retaining existing ones. As a result, social media has become an indispensable marketing tool for businesses seeking to enhance their competitive advantage. Social media marketing has emerged as a critical strategy for engaging target audiences and promoting products and services (Gbandi and Iyanu, 2022). In Nigeria, small business enterprises are increasingly adopting social media platforms for marketing purposes (Lawal and Adeyuwon, 2023). Gbandi and Iyamu (2020) noted that social media marketing enhances customer satisfaction and loyalty among small business enterprises. Commonly used platforms include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube, although this study focuses specifically on Facebook and Instagram. Olakunle et al. (2024) observed that Facebook is widely utilized by small business enterprises in Nigeria to build brand awareness and engage customers. Its large user base and targeted advertising capabilities provide opportunities for businesses to reach specific audiences effectively. Features such as Facebook Groups and Facebook Live further enable businesses to interact with customers and provide support services.

Instagram, on the other hand, is a visual-oriented platform that allows users to share photos, videos, and stories (Kotler and Keller, 2016). It provides businesses with opportunities to showcase products through visually appealing content. Features such as Stories, Reels, and IGTV enable businesses to diversify their content and engage customers, while its shopping feature facilitates direct purchasing

(Voorveld et al., 2018). Social media marketing enables businesses to increase engagement, enhance brand awareness, and drive customer traffic at relatively low cost compared to traditional advertising (Funk, 2014). It also facilitates better interaction between firms and customers, leading to improved relationships, customer retention, and decision-making (Li and Larimo, 2020). As marketing strategies continue to evolve, businesses must adapt to platform-specific content requirements to achieve optimal results (Funk, 2014).

Despite these opportunities, many small business enterprises face challenges in effectively utilizing social media for digital marketing. Evidence indicates that a significant number of small businesses struggle to sustain growth due to inadequate marketing strategies (Ripsas et al., 2018). Furthermore, Montgomery (2018) reported that a considerable proportion of small business failures is attributed to poor digital marketing practices. Given these challenges, it becomes imperative for small business enterprises to leverage social media platforms to enhance their competitiveness and sustainability. However, it appears that the extent of social media utilization among small business enterprises in Taraba State remains relatively low. This situation necessitates empirical investigation into the extent to which social media is utilized for digital marketing by small business enterprise operators in the state.

Objectives of the study

The study sought to examine the utilization of social media for digital marketing by small business enterprise operators in Taraba State. Specifically, the study aimed to determine the extent to which Facebook and Instagram are utilized for digital marketing.

Research questions

The following research questions guided the study:

To what extent do small business enterprise operators in Taraba State utilize Facebook for digital marketing?

To what extent do small business enterprise operators in Taraba State utilize Instagram for digital marketing?

Hypotheses

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female small business enterprise operators on their extent of utilization of Facebook for digital marketing. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female small business enterprise operators on their extent of utilization of Instagram for digital marketing.

Methods

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population comprised 1,245 registered small business enterprises in Taraba State. A sample of 100 operators was selected using simple random sampling from major markets in urban areas including Jalingo, Dan Anacha, Maihula, Zing, Iware, Wukari, and Mutum-Biyu. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled ―Utilization of Social Media and Digital Marketing Questionnaire.‖ The instrument consisted of demographic items and sections measuring the utilization of Facebook, Instagram, and digital marketing activities. The instrument was validated by three experts, and necessary corrections were incorporated. A reliability coefficient of 0.88 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha. The questionnaire was administered using the direct delivery method, and 95 copies were retrieved, representing a 95 percent response rate. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while independent sample t-test was used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research question 1

To what extent do small business enterprise operators in Taraba State utilize Facebook for digital marketing?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Utilization of Facebook for Digital Marketing (N = 95)

S/N	Items	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	SD	Decision
1	I use Facebook to advertise my products/services	4.54	0.62	Very Great Extent
2	I use Facebook to reach potential customers	4.51	0.65	Very Great Extent
3	I use Facebook to communicate with customers	4.31	0.71	Great Extent
4	I use Facebook to promote brand awareness	4.28	0.73	Great Extent
5	I use Facebook to share business updates	4.22	0.75	Great Extent
6	I use Facebook to respond to customer inquiries	4.18	0.77	Great Extent
7	I use Facebook to monitor customer feedback	4.13	0.79	Great Extent
8	I use Facebook to increase sales	4.52	0.64	Very Great Extent
	Cluster Mean	4.33		Great Extent

This research question was answered using mean and standard deviation. The summary of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

The results in Table 1 show that the mean ratings ranged from 4.13 to 4.54. The cluster mean of 4.33 indicates that small business enterprise operators utilize Facebook for digital marketing to a great extent. The relatively low standard deviation values suggest those respondents' opinions were closely related, indicating consistency in responses.

Research question 2

To what extent do small business enterprise operators in Taraba State utilize Instagram for

digital marketing?

This research question was answered using of the analysis is presented in Table 2. mean and standard deviation. The summary

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Utilization of Instagram for Digital Marketing (N = 95)

S/N	Items	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	SD	Decision
9	I use Instagram to showcase my products	3.64	0.88	Great Extent
10	I use Instagram to communicate with customers	3.46	0.92	Moderate Extent
11	I use Instagram to promote brand awareness	3.25	0.95	Moderate Extent
12	I use Instagram to attract new customers	3.57	0.90	Great Extent
13	I use Instagram to respond to customer feedback	3.41	0.94	Moderate Extent
14	I use Instagram to increase sales	3.60	0.89	Great Extent
	Cluster Mean	3.49		Moderate Extent

The results in Table 2 indicate that the mean ratings ranged from 3.25 to 3.64. The cluster mean of 3.49 shows that small business enterprise operators utilize Instagram for digital marketing to a moderate extent. The standard deviation values indicate that the responses were fairly consistent among respondents.

Test of null hypotheses

The null hypotheses were tested using independent sample t-test at the 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female small business enterprise operators on their extent of utilization of Facebook for digital marketing. The summary of the analysis is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Independent Sample t-test Analysis of Male and Female Respondents on Utilization of Facebook

Gender	N	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	SD	t-value	df	p-value	Decision
Male	52	4.31	0.70				
Female	43	4.34	0.47	0.228	93	0.820	Not Significant

The result in Table 3 shows that the p-value of 0.820 is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This implies that there is no significant difference between male and female small business enterprise operators in their utilization of Facebook for digital marketing.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female small business enterprise operators on their extent of utilization of Instagram for digital marketing. The summary of the analysis is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Independent Sample t-test Analysis of Male and Female Respondents on Utilization of Instagram

Gender	N	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	SD	t-value	df	p-value	Decision
Male	52	4.31	1.19				
Female	43	4.34	0.83	0.850	93	0.398	Not Significant

The result in Table 4 indicates that the p-value of 0.398 is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This shows that there is no significant difference between male and female respondents in their utilization of Instagram for

digital marketing.

Discussion of findings

The findings reveal that small business enterprise operators utilize Facebook to a great extent for digital marketing. This indicates that Facebook remains a dominant platform for promoting business activities, enhancing brand visibility, and engaging customers. This finding aligns with Adoyi et al. (2022), who reported a significant relationship between Facebook usage and brand awareness. It also supports the assertion that social media enhances customer interaction and promotes product awareness (Baker et al., 2016; de Langhe, 2016; Chigora, 2016).

The study further reveals that Instagram is utilized to a moderate extent. This suggests that while some operators have adopted Instagram, others are still in the early stages of utilization. This finding is consistent with Oyekan (2020), which indicated moderate readiness among small business managers to adopt Instagram. It is also supported by Ismail (2017), who reported that Instagram positively influences brand loyalty. The hypotheses tested revealed no significant difference between male and female operators in their utilization of Facebook and Instagram. This implies that gender does not significantly influence the adoption of social media platforms for digital marketing among small business enterprises in Taraba State.

Conclusion

The study concludes that social media platforms, particularly Facebook and

Instagram, play a significant role in digital marketing among small business enterprises in Taraba State. While Facebook is widely utilized, Instagram is moderately utilized, indicating the need for increased adoption and effective usage. Social media provides opportunities for enhancing brand awareness, customer engagement, and business growth.

Recommendations

Small business enterprise operators should enhance their utilization of social media platforms, particularly Instagram, to improve digital marketing outcomes. There is also a need for continuous training and capacity development programmes to equip operators with the skills required for effective social media marketing.

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