A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE INCOME STRUCTURE OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES.

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A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION FACULTY OF ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, EDO STATE. IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF ARTS (B.A HONS) DEFREE IN MASS COMMUNICATION.

SEPTEMBER, 2025

DECLARATION

I declare that this project is based on a study conducted by me in the department of mass communication, faculty of Arts, University of Benin under the supervision of Prof. Daniel O. Ekehareafo

All findings, ideas, views and analysis in the study are products of my personal research and where the views of others have been used and expressed were duly acknowledged.

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project has been approved as an original work written and submitted by LAWAL EVIDENCE OMOBOSEDE with MAT NO: ART2100970, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of B.A in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Benin city, Edo state.

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DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to Almighty God who gave me the wisdom and strength to complete this study and whose foremost mercies gave me an opportunity to acquire knowledge in my course of study. I also dedicate this project to family members, Lecturers and friends for their unconditional love, guidance, financial and moral support.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of social media on the income structure of Small Businesses (SMEs) in Ekehuan campus, Benin City, Nigeria. The research focused on which social media platforms are most effective in influencing SMEs income structure, the shift from traditional sales channel to social media driven streams, how it is used to expand businesses, the challenges faced, and the strategies employed to overcome these challenges. A total of 109 respondents participated in the study. The findings revealed that social media has become a critical tool for SMEs in Ekehuan Campus with platforms such as WhatsApp Business, TikTok, Facebook and Instagram being the most preferred for business activities. A great number of respondents use social media daily or weekly to generate sales, customer engagement and create brand awareness all which contribute to expanding the business and making it known. Based on the findings, it is evident that social media plays a vital role in the growth and development of small businesses in Ekehuan campus. It serves as a powerful platform for engaging with customers, expanding market reach, and improving brand visibility. These benefits have enabled businesses to enhance their Marketing efforts, foster customer relationships, and achieve better competitive positioning in the market. However, the study also identifies several challenges, including time constraints, High advertising cost, difficulty in measuring ROI and lack of technical skills in managing social media activities.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In such a short time Social media has reshaped modern business strategies by offering low-cost marketing, enhanced customer engagement, and direct sales channels. In the past time, businesses depended on TV, Radio and Ad agencies to reach potential and targeted audiences to make sales, although it was quite effective but it was so much for so little, especially for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) However, within the SME landscape there is a noticeable divergence: some businesses actively leverage social media to drive growth, while others maintain a traditional approach.

Social media has become an integral part of communication and marketing strategies for businesses including small and medium enterprises. (SMEs)

In recent years, social media have become a new marketing communication tool in rapid and dynamic pace. Increasing numbers of businesses leveraging the social media and other electronic media in conducting their marketing efforts, giving the chance for electronic based marketing researchers to study more in this area. Implementing social media marketing by SMEs might create not only a lot of opportunity but can change the shape and nature of doing business all over the world.

Notwithstanding, idea of social media marketing via platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter may be relatively new to a vast number of and its adoption by businesses, brick and mortar or online cannot be generalized as swooping, hence the need to analyse the use of this medium of advertising among online businesses in Nigeria.

Platforms like TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, thread and linked in all have more than 100,000,000 (one hundred million) registered users. When we look at it from the brighter side, it is more of an advantage because it now essential for marketing, communication, customer service and networking, allowing SMEs to trade and compete effectively in the global world.

The role of SMEs in economic development of any nation cannot be overemphasized. This is because of their contributions to their respective country GDP. However, the emergence of social media has provided a paradigm shift in the modus oparandi of SMEs globally. One country that has benefited from this new wave of social media marketing is SMEs in Nigeria.

The Central bank of Nigeria(CBN) 2014 defines small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) as businesses that employ fewer than 300 people that generate annual revenues of under N100 million. SMEs are seen as the engine of economic growth and development in many nations since such industries are likely to facilitate the development of broad-based indigenous entrepreneurial culture and value added to domestic industrial production (Olorunsola, 2001).

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are often considered the backbone of many economies worldwide. They play a crucial role in job creation, innovation, and fostering competition. SMEs can be found across virtually every sector—from manufacturing and retail to technology and services—and are integral to both local communities and the broader economic landscape

Despite the dynamic and important role played by SMEs in economic development. The influence of social media on SMEs is undeniable. SMEs that embrace social media platforms stand to gain a competitive edge and enhance their overall business performance.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

One of the main challenges faced by SMEs is competing with larger corporations in terms of marketing and reaching their target audience.

Social Media has become a significant element in our everyday life. It allows people to shop, bank communicate and entertain.(Croteau & Hoynes,2003)In today's digital age, social media has emerged as a powerful tool for business promotion, customer engagement, and sales generation. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs), in particular, increasingly rely on social media platforms to market their products, reach wider audiences, and reduce traditional marketing costs. However, while many SMEs invest time and resources into social media strategies, the actual influence of these platforms on their income structures remains unclear and likely varies across different industries, scales of operation, and geographic locations.

Social media offers a cost-effective and efficient way for SMEs to connect with customers, build brand awareness and promote their products or services.

Most businesses lack the digital literacy, time constraints and technical expertise needed to utilize these platforms effectively. Moreover, the competitive and dynamic nature of social media marketing requires constant innovation and adaptation to remain relevant (Tajudeen, Jaafar, & Ainin, 2018). Despite the growing adoption of social media by SMEs, there is limited comparative research that evaluates how effectively these platforms contribute to changes in income generation and distribution. Questions remain as to whether social media usage leads to significant revenue growth, changes in cost structures, or shifts in income sources.

Furthermore, it is uncertain whether all SMEs benefit equally from social media or whether certain characteristics (e.g., size, sector, digital literacy) lead to different outcomes.

This study seeks to address this gap by comparing the influence of social media on the income structure of selected SMEs. The goal is to understand the extent of this influence, identify the platforms that drive the most impact, and determine the differences across various types of SMEs.sc

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study focused on the following objectives which are to;

1. Compare the effectiveness of various social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and LinkedIn) in influencing SMEs' income structures.

2. Evaluate the shift in income structure from traditional sales channels to social media-driven revenue stream
3. Explore how SMEs use social media platforms to expand their businesses
4. Identify key challenges SMEs face in leveraging social media for income generation.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide this study

1. Which social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn) are most effective in influencing SMEs' income structures?
2. How does social media contribute to the shift from traditional sales channel to social media driven streams for SMEs?
3. How do SMEs use social media platforms to expand their businesses?
4. What are the key challenges SMEs face in leveraging social media for income generation?

1.5 Significance of the Study

Understanding how social media affects SMEs' income structure will help businesses optimize their digital marketing strategies. By identifying the most effective platforms and content types, SMEs can enhance revenue generation, reduce marketing costs, and improve profitability.

This study provides valuable and in-depth insights that can greatly assist policymakers, academia, industry/businesses, Society/country as well as individuals and organizations involved in using social media to support small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) development.

- **Academia:** This study significantly contributes to the academic field by enriching the existing literature on the intersection of social media and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). It bridges the knowledge gap in how digital platforms can impact SME development and performance. The findings also highlight new areas of inquiry, prompting future research on social media's evolving role in business practices, digital marketing strategies, and its broader implications for economic development.
- **Industry/Business:** For businesses, especially SMEs, this study offers practical insights into the strategies that can maximize the benefits of social media for business growth. It identifies both the successful tactics used by SMEs and the common challenges they face, such as limited digital literacy, inadequate resources, or difficulties in reaching target audiences online. By providing

actionable recommendations, this research helps businesses optimize their use of social media for marketing, customer engagement, and brand building.

- **Society/Country:** On a broader societal and national level, this study is a valuable tool for both policymakers and organizations working to foster SME development. By pinpointing the specific needs, challenges, and opportunities SMEs encounter with social media, the research provides data-driven insights that can inform targeted support initiatives. Governmental and non-governmental bodies can leverage this knowledge to develop training programs, subsidies, and policies that address digital literacy issues and create a more supportive infrastructure for SMEs. In doing so, the study aids in promoting entrepreneurship, reducing unemployment, and contributing to economic growth.

1.6 Scope of Study

This study focused on SMEs in the country and how they are the backbone of the country's economy. The study focused on small businesses in Ekehuan campus, Benin City, a comparison of SMEs that uses social media and those that do not. It examines how various social media platforms impact revenue generation, marketing strategies, customer engagement, and overall financial performance.

To gather data, the study employed quantitative research methods, primarily involving questionnaires. The outcome of this research was crucial not only for SMEs in Ekehuan Campus but also for similar businesses in other regions, providing valuable insights into effective social media strategies for business growth and development.

1.7 Definition of Terms

To ensure understanding and avoid miscommunications and errors, key concepts will be defined.

Digital Marketing: The use of online channels, including social media, search engines, and email, to promote products or services and engage with customers.

E- Commerce: The buying and selling of goods or services online, often integrated with social media platforms for direct transactions.

Income Structure: The composition of an SME's revenue sources, including direct sales, online transactions, advertising revenue, partnerships, and other financial streams.

Small and Medium Enterprises: Businesses smaller than large corporations but essential to economic development.

Social Media: Social media is made up of websites, apps, and other platforms that allow users to share information and ideas with virtual communities through text, photos, videos, and more.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Social Media

Social media has transformed the way people communicate, interact, and conduct business especially when it comes to their profession. The use of internet technology has become a common practice in the workplace (Chen et al., 2008). The internet enabled communication media, helps organizations to conduct business anytime from anywhere (Chen et al., 2008). A number of studies investigated the use of Facebook among SMEs and found SMEs used Facebook for various organizational objectives such as marketing, communication, sales, advertising, innovation, problem resolution, customer service, human resources, information technology, driving cultural change (Bhanot, 2012), advertising on the social network (Beloff and Pandya, 2010; Handayani and Lisdianingrum, 2012) andinternet marketing (Congxi et al., 2010). Meske and Stieglitz (2013) indicated that SME uses social media technologies like Facebook as a way to communicate with their customers and support internal communication and collaboration.

Social media has changed the way businesses communicate with their customers. They represent one of the most transformative impacts of information technology on business, both within and outside firm boundaries (Aral, Dellarocas & Godes 2013). In particular, social media have been integral to recent advances in relational inference about consumer preferences

To this end, the transformative power of social media extends beyond marketing and aspects of consumer behaviour. Increasingly, social media are also transforming the way businesses relate to workers, allowing them tobuild flexible relationships with remote talent, to crowd source new ideas (Di Gangi & Wasko,2009), or to engage in micro outsourcing(Goldman, Little & Miller, 2011; Paolacci, Chandler & Ipeirotis, 2010).

According to Katona and Sarvary (2014), social media is a mechanism for people to participate in virtual communities and networks to produce, share, and/or exchange information and ideas. In comparison with the traditional media, social media has a very high level of efficiency and this has prompted many organizations to get in to the social media platform to be able to take part in the successful online environment (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Social media are commonly defined by specific applications and/or Web tools, most of which are widely accessible and free to use or available at minimal cost. These applications may be categorized by purpose, including such functions as professional networking (LinkedIn, Doximity), social networking (Facebook, Google), recommending/filtering (Yelp, Delicious), media sharing (Flickr, YouTube), content production (blogs, Twitter) (Gekombe, Tumsifu, & Jani, 2019).

Locket (2018) averred that social media platforms are classified into two types based on ownership, such as firm sponsored or individual publications (e.g. blogs) and third-party forums (e.g. Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn). Although Scott (2014) and Grahl (2015) classified social media into six types based on the main activity of the platform, which includes social networks: Facebook, Linkedin, Google; media sharing: YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, microblogging: Twitter, Tumblr; blog comments nd forums: blogger; Book marking: Dig eddit; web conferencing: Skype, Zoho meetin etc. These platforms perform different functions, and they have been employed by different individuals and organisations for different reasons to assist their businesses grow (Vries, 2015).

Ainin, Parveen, Moghavvemi, Jaafar and Mohd-Shuib (2015) argued that social media can boost a variety of aspects of a company's performance, including customer interactions and customer service operations. Although social media consumes the minds and lifestyles of customers, it also poses obstacles for businesses. According to the Social Media Trends 2020 survey (Danish, 2019), businesses must reconsider their social media message plans. As a result, a firm must have a thorough understanding of how to engage customers through social media posts while also achieving the organization's objectives.

Meanwhile, marketing performance is multidimensional in nature. Though, that which constitutes superior marketing performance may differ between businesses (Vorhies & Morgan, 2003). However, because the effectiveness and efficiency dimensions of performance may not converge and may even be inversely related in the short term (Bhargava, Dubelaar & Ramaswami, 1994), firms tend to make important decisions that reflect a trade-off between emphasising either effectiveness or efficiency. Following on the approach used by Homburg et al. (2007), marketing performance is herein defined as the effectiveness and efficiency of an organization's marketing activities with regard to market-related goals such as growth, market share, brand awareness, brand loyalty, customer satisfaction and sales performance, etc. In relating social media to market performance dimensions, various studies have shown that social media technology can improve business processes and performance (Paniagua &Sapena, 2014).

2.1.1 The Origins of SMEs

The concept of small businesses has existed for centuries. In ancient economies, small-scale merchants, craftsmen, and traders formed the backbone of economic activity.

The Small and Medium Enterprises Credit Guarantee Scheme (SMECGS, 2013) defined SMEs as enterprises with a total capital employed not less than N1.5 million, but not exceeding N200 million, including working capital, but excluding cost of land and/or with a staff strength of not less than 10 and not more than 300. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) as defined by the National Council of Industries (2010) refer to business enterprises whose total costs excluding land is not more than two hundred million naira (N200, 000,000.00) only.

The Central Bank of Nigeria defines a Small and Medium Scale Enterprise operating in Nigeria as an enterprise with fixed capital or asset between N5million and N500 million ($26,932 and $2,693,240), turnover of less than 100 million ($538,648) per annum and labor force between 11 and 300 (CBN, 2003). Small and medium enterprises are assumed to be steps for entrepreneurship, development and innovation

SMEs are recognised as critical agents of economic growth as they account for most enterprises worldwide and contribute significantly to job creation and global economic development (Al Khasawneh et al., 2021; Dirgiatmo, 2015). However, the sector accounted for almost 90% of enterprises and more than 50% of jobs globally. Moreover, in developing countries, conventional SMEs generate about 40% of domestic income (She et al., 2020). As a result, SMEs have significantly contributed to the global economy, including employment creation, poverty reduction, income creation, support for major industries, innovation, entrepreneurship promotion, and rapid industrialisation (Ahmad, 2020).

Small and medium-sized businesses also need to understand and recognize the impact of social media on the organization's performance in order to achieve a long-term competitive edge from the adoption of social media. Practical implications According to the findings, small construction firms can benefit from marketing the brands through social media channels and improved learning capability. In terms of accessibility, cost savings and improved relationships with customers, research shows that social media promotion can be beneficial to businesses. A study like this has the potential to show how social media can help striving small businesses interact cost-effectively with customers all over the world, opening new doors for sales and continuous improvement. Originality/value the relationship between SME performance in Nigeria and the use of social media has received very little attention despite social media's promising potentials, particularly for small businesses.

As per Jones et al., (2015), the benefits of using websites and social media channels involve increased awareness and queries, improved customer relationships, a rise in the number of prospective consumers, an optimized ability to access customers on a global scale, and the promotion of local businesses that strengthen the reputation of small businesses. A similar study was conducted by Ekanem and Erukusin (2017), who argued that social media contributes to or Research Paper increases sales figures, brand recognition, and exposure, all of which lead to better performance.

This was supported by Syaifullah et al. (2021) and Fakhreldin et al. (2020), who noted that using social media for marketing has a positive impact on the operation of MSMEs, particularly in terms of improving sales, customer connections, efficiency, and inventiveness. Moreover, Ekanem and Erukusin

(2017) also suggested that microbusinesses should establish their presence on social media platforms to boost their performance.

2.2 Opinion Review

2.2.1 Social Media Marketing (SMM) and SMEs:

Social media marketing, fostering interaction and information exchange in virtual communities, depends on mobile and web-based technologies. Effective utilization of IT, including social media, can enhance enterprises' productivity, revenue, and profit (Nurfarida et al., 2021). Social media encourages innovation by monitoring customer communications, feedback, and opinions (Al-Busaidi & Al-Muharrami, 2021). Research on the influence of social media on technology and organizational performance in the entrepreneurial context is limited (Hudson et al., 2015).

According to Tata Consultancy Services (2016), 33% of participants in a study on social media and entrepreneurship in 15 European countries used social media daily for hiring, client communication, networking, collaboration, and skill development. Sixty per cent found freelancers through social media, and 62% used it to expand their business networks.

Social media comprises various online forums, such as blogs, discussion boards, chat rooms, and social networking sites. Understanding every aspect of social media as a marketing tool is crucial for retailers. Web 2.0 describes a new collaborative way users interact with the World Wide Web, where content is continuously altered by all users (Constantinides, 2014). It is more about what people do with technology than the technology itself, allowing users to create and consume content, adding value to websites (Cheung et al., 2022).

There is growing research in the literature on social media and SMEs. For instance, Ikotun (2011) in his study on financing small and medium scale enterprises in Nigeria: interest rate implication evaluated the impact of government policy on various sources of finance available to SMEs. His study revealed that deregulation of interest rate made it difficult for the SMEs to secure loans due to high interest rate, short-term and the loan are small in amount which are usually not sufficient for meaningful investment. However, their study does not seek to investigate the impact of social media marketing on SMEs in Nigeria.

Ekpenyong (2009) examined the characteristics, problems and sources of finance to SMEs. The study revealed that much of initial financing for SMEs came from personal savings of the operators themselves and from informal financial institutions. The study further revealed that by their nature SMEs have 46 insufficient accesses to formal financial institutions, and as a result, rely more and more on their own or friends

2.2.2 Marketing Communication Mix

Marketing communications are vital in contemporary marketing activities, stimulating engagement with target audiences and fostering improved commercial relationships (Raji et al., 2019). According to Egan, it is how suppliers represent themselves to their audience, encouraging a dialogue that leads to enhanced relationships. (Hoang & Bui Thanh, 2021) emphasizes that marketing communication has evolved into a more intricate and expansive realm, providing marketers with diverse tools and technologies to convey messages and elicit desired feedback.

- **Advertising:** Advertising, a paid form of non-personal communication about organisation and its products, is a mass marketing technique with a broad audience reach (Nelly Awinja & Isola Fatoki, 2021). While it builds awareness and supports sales efforts by creating a strong brand position, its impersonal nature limits its ability to answer specific questions or close a sale.

- **Personal Selling:** Personal selling involves oral communication directly with the purchaser (Cheng & Chang, 2016). Its interactive nature allows immediate responses to questions and concerns, and the verbal approach can be tailored to customer needs. Although personal selling leads to sales closure, its downside lies in being costly and time-consuming.
- **Sales Promotions:** Sales promotions offer incentives like competitions and special offers to stimulate purchases (Raji et al., 2019). While effective in providing a quick sales boost, overuse may damage brand image, creating concerns about product quality or perceived value.
- **Direct Marketing:** encompassing direct mail, involves distributing printed materials to prospective clients based on demonstrated interest or geographic proximity (Le & Ikram, 2022). This personalised approach, often used for emotional marketing, can increase awareness and proximity to the business.
- **Public Relations:** Public relations offers a cost-effective means to communicate information without direct payment, providing highly credible messages through third-party endorsement (Zhao et al., 2022). Despite the potential for higher readership, it involves a loss of content control.

In summary, the diverse tools within the marketing communication mix serve distinct purposes, requiring strategic alignment with objectives and an understanding of their respective strengths and limitations in different contexts.

2.2.3 Experts view on Social Media and SMEs Performance

Experts like Cooley and Smith (2010), emphasize that SMEs with a large Facebook following have a better chance of increasing their business productivity because the Facebook fan page is now a crucial relationship builder with customers and clients. New marketing methods have emerged as a result of social media, which have replaced earlier sorts of promotional activity.

Scholars like Salam & Hoque (2019), examined that Customers on social media can be drawn to SMEs by providing a brief synopsis of their services and products, and if they like what they see, they can click on links to the company's website for further information. As a social technology, SM differs from conventional communication technology systems in that it allows for more clarity, open conversation, and candidness in the workplace, which may conflict with the organization's ideals.

In the Nigerian context, scholars like Asemah and other communication experts echo similar sentiments regarding the value of social media for SMEs. They emphasize how platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram provide SMEs with cost-effective means to reach and engage with their target audience, enhancing brand visibility and customer loyalty. Additionally, Nigerian scholars highlight the role of social media in facilitating market research, allowing SMEs to gather valuable insights into consumer preferences, behavior patterns, and industry trends.

Scholars like Ashrafi & Murtaza, (2008) have highlighted several significant challenges that SMEs face when utilizing social media. Among are the limited digital skills and expertise. Many SMEs lack the necessary digital literacy to manage social media effectively. Another challenge is that Businesses often struggle with content creation, engagement strategies, and analytics interpretation. Managing social media accounts requires consistent engagement, which can be time-consuming, small businesses often lack dedicated social media teams, leading to ineffective campaigns.

Unlike traditional marketing, measuring the direct impact of social media on sales and revenue is complex, SMEs struggle to link social media metrics (likes, shares) with financial outcomes. Moreover a single negative review or viral complaint can damage an SME's reputation, Many SMEs lack crisis management strategies to handle public criticism online.

SMEs are often targeted by hackers due to weaker security measures, Social media accounts can be hacked, leading to data breaches or reputational damage.

A research conducted by Quirk's Marketing Research media (2011) finds that today small and medium business investors (other than hospitality sector) have also understood the pivotal role of social media in business and were confident about ROI on marketing through various social platforms. Further it suggests that 64 percent of business get influenced by social media. Deloitte (2015) expressed that travel and hospitality decision making process worldwide was going under blanket of social media storm and thus offering both threats and opportunities. Confident, empowered and techno savvy travelers is the new breed that holds 'key to communication with brands and other consumers'. Further it adds that brands who consistently maintain their brand promise would benefit and success as spotlight will be flashed to them over social media. Social media helps SMEs reach global audiences at a low cost. Small businesses can create viral marketing campaigns that increase visibility. Compared to traditional advertising, social media offers an affordable way to advertise, interact, and promote products.

SMEs can engage customers in real time through comments, direct messaging, and live sessions, Engaging with customers on social media fosters trust and loyalty. SMEs can use feedback and reviews to improve their products and services. Moreover, Social media provides valuable insights into customer behavior, preferences, and trends. SMEs can use analytics to optimize marketing strategies and target the right audience.

Social commerce (selling through Facebook, Instagram, etc.) has enabled SMEs to generate direct revenue from social media. Well-implemented social media strategies contribute to higher conversion rates and customer retention.

Social media allows SMEs to compete with larger firms by building niche communities and personalized marketing, by leveraging trends and viral content, SMEs can stand out in crowded markets.

2.3 Empirical Review

Research from various global studies consistently demonstrates a strong link between the use of social media and the growth of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

Oyewobi and Margret Oyekan (2022) found that the study’s findings contributed to the growing body of knowledge the study's findings contributed to the growing body of knowledge about the impact of social media on the efficiency of businesses. Small and medium-sized businesses also need to understand and recognize the impact of social media on the organization's performance in order to achieve a long-term competitive edge from the adoption of social media. Practical implications According to the findings, small construction firms can benefit from marketing the brands through social media channels and improved learning capability. In terms of accessibility, cost savings and improved relationships with customers, research shows that social media promotion can be beneficial to businesses. A study like this has the potential to show how social media can help striving small businesses interact cost-effectively with customers all over the world, opening new doors for sales and continuous improvement. Originality/value the relationship between SME performance in Nigeria and the use of social media has received very little attention despite social media's promising potentials, particularly for small businesses. The authors hoped that this study will fill a gap in the authors' understanding of how social media affects the performance of small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) in the construction industry.

Mohammed et al (2023) examined that the study provides an advantageous potential of social media for SMEs while recognizing challenges such as technological constraints impeding optimal utilization. The study offers insights to streamline management systems, promoting growth and competitive advantages for SMEs. Recent trends indicate a noteworthy increase in SMM usage by SMEs in Nigeria, fostering business expansion and enhancing connections between SMEs and potential clients. Social CRM, an emerging technology, captures the dynamics of business engagement with stakeholders via social media for value generation.

SMEs embrace SMM due to its simplicity, cost-effectiveness, and efficacy, fostering innovation and responsiveness to customer demands. SMM plays a pivotal role in fortifying economic conditions for SMEs, contingent upon supportive conditions. Government initiatives, incentives, and organizational advancements can further incentivize SMEs to adopt SMM.

Remarkably, Financial Commitment Obligations (FCOs) do not impact SMM (H4), underscoring the necessity of a conducive environment for successful implementation.

In recent years social media marketing has proven to be a game changer for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) im Nigeria. According to research by

Margret Oyekan (2022) this study argues that social medium marketing has assisted SMEs in Nigeria in increase connectivity, knowledge sourcing and customer engagement. This study argues that social media has provided a lot of benefits to SMEs in Nigeria. Therefore, for SMEs owners to derive the desired benefits from social media, it will largely depend on how effective and efficient they are in their use of social media platforms. Therefore, this study recommends among other things that if SME owners should leverage on the opportunities provided for SMEs growth and development in Nigeria.

Adoyi et al(2022) The study found that there was a significant and positive relationship between the use of Facebook and brand awareness, Instagram and brand loyalty, YouTube and sales performance, LindedIn and customer satisfaction, and Google+ and brand awareness of SMEs in South East Nigeria. The study concluded that social media represents a potential vehicle to help SMEs create better brand awareness, build strong customer relationships, and also increase sales. The study recommended, among other things, that, in order to build brand awareness, SMEs should invest in social media advertising and choose appropriate channels to advertise their brands. SMEs should also prioritize leveraging social media channels to provide consumers with the most recent, up-to-date, and accurate information and trends.

Lawal and Adejuwon (2022) found that small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have been contributing immensely to the growth and development of any economy which cannot be overlooked throughout the world. It is the bedrock that leads to large businesses, economic sustainability, high standard of living, poverty reduction, economic exposure and many more. It does these by providing employment for people, production of goods and services and utilization of local resources. However, SMEs are being faced with challenges that hinder their growth, survival and sustainability. These are related to competition especially from the large businesses, and low capital to run the business.

The performance and efficacy of small and medium-sized firms as a tool for economic growth and development in Nigeria have long been questioned. This intensive scrutiny has occurred in the context of the low performance and inefficiency that have characterized small and medium-sized firms, particularly in appraising their role in economic growth and development.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

2.4.1 Diffusion of Innovations Theory

Everett Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory (1962) provides a valuable framework for understanding the dissemination of new ideas, practices, and technologies within social systems. This theory is particularly applicable to the adoption and utilization of social media by Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), as it sheds light on the factors influencing their adoption of digital marketing strategies.

The diffusion process, as described by Rogers, comprises four key elements: Innovation, Communication channels, Time and Social system.

- **Innovation:** In the context of this study, social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter represent the innovation. These platforms offer novel ways for SMEs to engage with customers, promote products, and gather market insights.
- **Communication Channels:** The channels through which information about social media spreads are critical. SMEs learn about the benefits and uses of social media through various channels, including industry conferences, peer interactions, online tutorials, and digital marketing experts.

- **Time:** The adoption of social media by SMEs occurs over time and can be categorized into different adopter categories: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards. Innovators and early adopters are more likely to experiment with social media and realize its potential benefits quickly, while the late majority and laggards may take longer to adopt these technologies.
- **Social System:** The social system encompasses the network of SMEs, their customers, and other stakeholders within a community or industry. The influence of social networks and peer recommendations significantly impacts the adoption rate of social media among SMEs. In the Nigerian context, the rapid diffusion of social media usage among SMEs can be attributed to a highly interconnected business community and the increasing digital literacy among entrepreneurs.

2.4.2 Resource-Based View (RBV)

The Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, introduced by Barney in 1991, posits that a firm's sustained competitive advantage is contingent upon its ability to acquire and manage valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) resources and capabilities. In the context of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), social media emerges as a strategic resource, offering numerous opportunities for business growth and differentiation.

Social media platforms provide SMEs with valuable capabilities, including:

1. **Enhanced Brand Awareness:** Social media enables SMEs to reach a broader audience at a relatively low cost, increasing brand visibility and awareness.
2. **Customer Engagement:** Interactive features on social media platforms foster stronger relationships between SMEs and their customers, leading to increased loyalty and satisfaction.
3. **Market Insights:** Social media allows SMEs to analyze interactions and feedback, gaining valuable insights into customer preferences, market trends, and emerging needs.
4. **Access to new Markets:** Social media platforms transcend geographical boundaries, enabling SMEs to promote their products and services to a global audience.

The strategic use of social media, aligned with the RBV framework, enables SMEs to leverage their unique resources to achieve sustained competitive advantage and drive business growth. In Nigeria, social media marketing has proven to be a transformative force for SMEs, enhancing brand visibility, trust, and customer acquisition.

By effectively utilizing social media, SMEs can overcome traditional marketing barriers, tap into new markets, and improve their operational efficiency.

The benefits of social media for SMEs include cost-effective marketing, increased customer engagement, and enhanced brand visibility, ultimately enabling them to compete more effectively in a competitive market.

2.4.3 Social Capital Theory

The Social Capital Theory emphasizes the importance of social networks in accessing resources, information, and opportunities necessary for business success.

This theory is particularly relevant for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) that use social media platforms to leverage their social capital by building and maintaining relationships with customers, suppliers, and other important stakeholders.

For SMEs, social media's interactive nature is a powerful tool for creating and nurturing relationships. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram allow SMEs to engage in real-time communication with their audience, helping to build trust and foster a sense of community around the brand. Customers who feel connected to a business are more likely to become loyal patrons and provide valuable feedback, contributing to the business's growth and sustainability.

Social media also facilitates knowledge sharing and collaboration. SMEs can connect with other businesses, industry experts, and potential partners through their social media networks, leading to valuable collaborations, joint ventures, and knowledge exchange. Through interactive social media strategies, SMEs can participate in industry discussions, stay updated on market trends, and gain insights into best practices, which can be crucial for staying competitive.

Moreover, social media provides SMEs with support that might otherwise be inaccessible, such as mentorship from more established businesses, access to new markets through referrals, and financial assistance through crowd-funding campaigns. These networks act as a safety net, providing SMEs with the resources they need to navigate the uncertainties of business operations.

Empirical studies, such as those conducted by Adeyemi (2020), highlight the significant impact of interactive social media strategies on customer engagement and loyalty. This research found that SMEs using social media to actively engage with their customers experienced higher levels of interaction and repeat business.

Social Capital Theory provides a valuable framework to understand the role of social media in SME growth and development. Social media platforms enable SMEs to build and leverage networks that provide critical resources, knowledge, and support. By enhancing their social capital through interactive and strategic use of social media, SMEs can improve customer engagement, foster loyalty, and create opportunities for collaboration and innovation, ultimately leading to long-term business success.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The survey method of research was adopted for this study. Survey is a quantitative research technique used to collect data from a predefined group of respondents. It involves using structured questionnaires or interviews to gather information about opinions, behaviors, experiences, or characteristics. According to cohen and Mansion (1989) cited in Okwechime (2012, p.11) states that "Surveys collect data at a specific point in time to:

1. Describe the current state of affairs or existing conditions
2. Establish bench marks for comparing existing conditions
3. Examine the relationship between specific variables, with a focus on analyzing the effectiveness of social media on young Nigerian Entrepreneurs.

Survey was used because it is inexpensive when compared to the information that can be obtained.

3.2 Population of the Study

Ohaja (2003) sees population as persons or things that fall under the umbrella of the topic or that can be examined to address the research problem or meet the researcher objectives

For this study, the population consists of the stakeholders, including employers and customers of selected small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in the country that actively use social media platforms for business operations and those that adopt the traditional method of business operations.

For this study, the population consist of small businesses in Ekehuan campus, Benin City that actively use social media platforms for business operations.

Based on preliminary assessments, the population is drawn from SMEs estimated to be around 150 SMEs, Therefore the total population of this study is estimated to be around 150 SMEs

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

A sample can simply be defined as the portion of the population that should represent the entire population this study utilized the purposive sampling, this is because it allowed the researcher to pick those considered to possess the required attributes or information based on her judgment. Based on this procedure, 150 Businesses was selected from the campus to represent the entire population.

3.4 Instrument of Data Collection

An instrument of data collection is any tool, device, or technique used by researchers to gather information or data from participants in a research study. The data needed for this research work was collected through administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was a combination of open and closed-ended questions to allow faster responses.

3.5 Validity/Reliability of Instrument

Validity refers to the accuracy or truthfulness of a measurement. It is the process of finding out whether the research instrument measures what it is set out to measure. Ensuring the validity of the questionnaire is crucial to accurately measure how social media influence the income structure of SMEs. For this reason, research questions was presented to the research supervisor for scrutiny to ascertain the validity before it was administered

Reliability refers to the consistency or repeatability of research measures. It is the extent to which an experiment or any measuring procedure yields the same result on repeated trials. For a research to be accurate, it's findings must be reliable. It is believed that when this same study is carried out the same result would be derived.

3.6 Method of Data Collection

The primary method of data collection adopted for this study was the questionnaire. Data were collected by the researcher by self-administered copies of the questionnaire to the various respondents of the study. The secondary method of data collection for this study involved consulting available materials on topic related to this study. These materials include textbooks journals, online materials and research projects.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

According to Asemah et al (2022) Data Analysis is seen as a process of inspecting, cleaning, transforming and modeling data with the goal of highlighting useful information, suggesting conclusions and supporting decision-making.The data collected from The respondents Was properly and efficiently analyzed in different tables using simple percentage to establish a clear understanding and interpretation of the information gathered.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

The analysis and interpretation of the data that was gathered through the use of questionnaires are presented in this chapter. The data collected are analyzed using the simple percentage method, the data for the analysis came from a research instrument that was given out to 109 participants in Ekehuan Campus, Benin city which includes customers, employees and employers of Small Medium Enterprises. The following is based on the (109) questionnaires responded to.

4.2 Presentation and Analysis of Data based on Respondents Bio-Data

SECTION A: This section covers the demography of respondents in the study

Table 1: Showing the distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	**Respondents**	**Percentage**
Male	60	40
Female	84	56

Prefer not to say	6	4
Total	150	100

Source: Field survey 2025.

Data in table 1 above shows that 60 of the respondents which represents 40 %of the the sample size were male while 84 of the respondents which represents 56 %of the sample size were female and the remaining 6 which represents 4% of the sample size preferred not to say. This shows that the female respondents were dominant.

Table 2: Showing the distribution of the respondents by Age

Age	**Respondents**	**Percentage**
16-25	70	46.7
26 - 35	50	33.3
35 - 45	20	13.3
46 and above	10	6.7
Total	150	100

Source: Field survey 2025.

Data in table 2 as shown above, 70 out of 150 respondents, representing 46.7% were between the ages of 16-25 years, while 50 of the respondents which represents 33.3% were between the ages of 26-35 years. Also 20 of the respondents representing 13.3%were between the ages of 35-46 years while 10 of the respondents representing 6.7% were between the ages of 46 and above. It is evident that majority of the respondents who participated in this study are between the ages of 16-25 years.

Table 3: Showing the Respondents roles in the business

Respondents role in the business	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	110	73.3
No	40	26.7
Total	150	100

Source: Field Survey 2025.

From table 3 above, 110 of the respondents, which represents 73.3% of the sample size have businesses while 40 of the respondents, which represents 26.7% do not have businesses. This shows that majority of the participants for this study are business owners.

Table 4: Showing the distribution of respondents by how long they have been operating in the business

Variables	Respondents	Percentage
Less than 1 year	60	40
1-3 years	70	46.6
4-6 years	10	6.7
More than 6 years	10	6.7
Total	150	100

Source: Field survey 2025.

From the above data it can be revealed that 60 respondents representing 40% have been operating for less than a year, while 70 of the respondents representing 46.6% have been operating from 1-3 years, 10 of the respondents representing 6.7% have been operating for 4-6years, while 10 of the respondents representing 6.7% have been operating for more than 6 years. It is evident that majority of the respondents have their businesses operating from 1-3 years.

SECTION B:

This section covers questions for those who actively use social media for their business

Table 5: Which Social media platforms does your businesse use?

Variables	**Respondents**	**Percentage**
Facebook	6	4
Instagram	6	4
Twitter	1	0.7
Linkedln	1	0.7
WhatsApp Business	70	46.6
TikTok	65	43.3
Others	1	0.7
Total	109	100

Source: Field survey 2025.

Table 5 reveals that 6 respondents representing 4% of the sample size uses facebook, 6 of the respondents representing 4% of the sample size used Instagram, 1 Respondent representing 0.7% uses Twitter,1 respondent representing 0.7% uses LinkedIn, 70 of the respondents representing 46.6% uses WhatsApp Business, while 65 of the respondents representing 43.3% uses TikTok,while 1 of the respondents representing 0.7% uses others. This shows that majority of the respondents uses WhatsApp Business in operating their business.

Table 6: What are your primary objectives for using social media?

Variables	Respondents	Percentage
Marketing and promotion	15	10
Customer engagement	45	30
Sales generation	55	36.7
Market research	5	3.3
Brand Awareness	30	20
Total	150	100

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 6 of the above table reveals that 15 of the respondents, representing 10% uses social media for marketing and promotion, 45 of the respondents, representing 30 uses social media for customer engagement, 55 of the respondents, representing 36.7 uses social media to generate sales,5 of the respondents, representing 20 uses social media to reach their market, while 30 of the respondents, representing 29 uses social media to create Brand Awareness. This implies that majority of the respondents uses social media to generate sales.

Table 7: How frequently do you post on social media

Variables	Respondents	Percentage
Daily	53	35.3
Weekly	42	28
Monthly	25	16.7
Occassionally	30	20
Total	109	100

Source: Field Survey 2025.

Table 7 Reveals that 53 of the respondents, representing 35.3% post on social media daily, 42 of the respondents, representing 28% post on social media weekly,25 of the respondents, representing 16.7% post on social media monthly while 30 of the respondents, representing 20% post on social media occasionally. This implies that majority of the respondents post on social media daily.

Table 8: What percentage of your revenue do you estimate comes from social media sales?

Variables	Respondents	Percentage
Less than 10%	10	6.7
10-30%	30	20
31-50%	40	26.6
More than 50%	70	46.7
Total	150	100

Source: Field survey 2025

Table 8 of the above shows that 10 of the respondents, representing 6.7% gets less than 10% revenue from using social,30 of the respondents, representing 20% gets 10-30% revenue from using social media, 40 of the respondents, representing 26.6% get 31-50% revenue from using social media, while 70 of the respondents, representing 46.7% gets more than 50% from using social media. This implies that majority of the respondent's gets more than 50% revenue from using social media.

Table 9: Has your business income increased since using social media?

Variables	Respondents	Percentage
Yes, Significantly	80	53.3
Yes, but slightly	45	30
No Noticeable change	15	10
No, income has reduced	10	6.7
Total	150	100

Source: Field survey 2025.

Table 9 above reveals that 80 of the respondents, representing 53.3% has their income increased significantly from using social media,45 of the respondents, representing 30% has their income increased slightly from using social media, 15 of the respondents, representing 10% has no noticeable change from using social media, while 10 of the respondents representing 6.7% has reduced incomes from using social media. This implies that majority of the respondents have significantly increased their incomes from using social media.

Table 10: What challenges do you face in using social media for Business

Variables	Respondents	Percentage
High Advertising cost	35	23.3
Difficulty in measuring ROI	35	23.3

Lack of technical skills	10	6.7
Time Constraints	70	46.7
Total	150	100

Survey: Field Survey 2025

Table 10 shoves shows that 35 of the respondents, representing 23.3% face high advertising cost as a challenge, 35 of the respondents, representing 23.3% face difficulty in measuring ROI as a challenge, 10 of the respondents, representing 6.7% lack technical skills which is a challenge, while 70 of the respondents, representing 46.7% are limited to time which is a challenge. This implies that majority of the respondents are restricted by time.

SECTION C:

This section covers questions that provided data concerning respondents who do not use social media for their business

Table 11: Why do you not use social media for business purposes

Variables	**Respondents**	**Percentage**
Lack of Awareness	30	20
Not relevant to my business	40	26.7
Traditional marketing	55	36.7
No time to manage social media	25	16.7
Total	150	100

Source: Field Survey 2025.

Table 11 of the above reveals that 30 of the respondents, representing 20% do not use social media because of lack of awareness, 40 of the respondents representing 26.7% do not use social media because it is not relevant to their business, 55 of the respondents, representing 36.7% do not use social media because they do it the traditional marketing way, while 25 of the respondents representing 16.7% do not use social media because there is no time to manage it. This implies that majority of the respondent's uses traditional marketing in selling their business.

Table 12: How do you primarily market your business?

Variables	Respondents	Percentage
Word of mouth	75	50
Flyers/Posters	60	40
TV/Radio	15	10
Total	150	100

Source: Field survey 2025.

Table 12 reveals that 75 of the respondents, representing 50% uses word of mouth to market their business, 60 of the respondents, representing 40% uses flyers/posters, while 15 of the respondents ,representing 10% uses TV/Radio. This implies that majority of the respondents uses word of mouth to market their business

Table 13: How do you track and analyze your business income?

Variables	Respondents	Percentage
Manual Records	60	40
Accounting Software	10	6.7
Bank statement	48	32
No formal tracking	32	21.3
Total	150	100

Source: Field study 2025.

Table 13 of the above shows that 60 of the respondents, representing 6.7% use manual records in tracking their business income, 10 of the respondents, representing 6.7% uses accounting software to track their business Income, 48 of the respondents, representing 32% uses bank statements to track their business income, while 32 respondents, representing 21.3% have no formal tracking of business income. This implies that majority of the respondents uses manual records to track their business income.

Table 14: Would you consider using social media for business growth?

Variables	**Respondents**	**Percentage**
Yes	50	33.3
No	30	20
Maybe	70	46.7
Total	150	100

Source: Field study 2025.

Table 14 shows that 50 of the respondents, representing 33.3% will use social media in the future, 30 of the respondents, representing 20% will not use social media in the future while 70 of the respondents, representing 46.7% will consider using social media for business growth. This implies that majority of the respondents will consider using social media in the future

4.3 Discussion of Findings

The discussion of findings is structured to address the specific objectives of the study, focusing on how social media has influenced the income structure of small businesses in Ekehuan campus, Benin city, Nigeria using data from 109 Respondents.

4.3.1 Research question 1: Which social media platforms (e.g, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp business and LinkedIn) are most effective in influencing SMEs' income structure?

In answering the above question, data presented in table 5 and table 7 was used. Table 5 presents data on which social media platforms are most effective in influencing SMEs' income structure, the study revealed that small businesses in Ekehuan campus actively use social media platforms, with WhatsApp business(46.6%), TikTok(43.3%), Facebook(4), and Instagram (4) are most effective in influencing their income structure. The frequency of usage further highlights the importance of these platforms, with 35.3% of respondents posting on social media daily and 28% posting weekly. This Indicates that social media has become a vital tool for SMEs to increase their income and expand their business by reaching a larger market audience and showcasing products and services, and maintaining regular customer engagement. The focus on visually engaging platforms like TikTok also highlights the strategic use of multimedia content to attract and retain customers.

Research question 2: How does social media contribute to the shift from traditional sales channel to social media driven streams for SMEs

In answering the above question table 8 and table 9 was used. Table 8 regarding what percentage of revenue do you estimate comes from social media sales? The study revealed that 46.7% of social media users have made more than 50% of income they normally would not have made from traditional sales, while 26.6% of the respondents have made 31-50% income from social media streams. While Table 9 regarding the question has your business income increased since using Social media? The study revealed that 53.3% of the respondents have their incomes significantly increased from the use of social media sales, while 30% have slightly increased their income from what the respondents normally earn.

From the findings, it is revealed that the contribution of social media from marketing to sales has greatly improved the income of small businesses, they now make two times more of what they regularly made.

Research Question 3: How do SMEs use social media platforms to expand their Business?

In answering this question table 6 was used. Table 6 regarding how SMEs use social media platforms to expand their business. The study revealed that expansion of one's business comes from sales generation (36.7%), Customers engagement (30%) engagement from customers Makes that business to expand and go viral, once one's business is reliable, The brand becomes known which is brand awareness (20%) for most business owners, What speaks for them is their brand names, every customer likes what is trendy, by so doing your business begins to expand and becomes known. The study demonstrates that constant engagement from customers directs the business posts to other customers who might be In need of that Particular product.

Research Question 4: What are the key challenges SMEs face in leveraging social media for income generation

In answering the above question table 10 was used Table 10 regarding what challenges do you face in using social media for business. The study revealed that the most significant challenge was Time Constraints (46.7%), followed by High advertising cost(23.3%), Difficulty in measuring ROI(23.3%), and lack of technical skills(6.7%).For most businesses these challenges highlight the resource-intensive nature of social media management, especially for small businesses with limited staff and budget. Addressing these issues requires adopting tools and strategies that help with time management so as not to be restricted, and then to understand the advertising plan that is suitable In regards to how much you earn then understand how to measure ROI and upgrade Technical skills so as to know what and what time you have to be active online.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

This study examined the influence of social media on the income structure of Small Businesses (SMEs) in Ekehuan campus, Benin City, Nigeria. The research focused on which social media platforms are most effective in influencing SMEs income structure, the shift from traditional sales channel to social media driven streams, how it is used to expand businesses, the challenges faced, and the strategies employed to overcome these challenges. A total of 150 respondents participated in the study.

The findings revealed that social media has become a critical tool for SMEs in Ekehuan Campus with platforms such as WhatsApp Business, TikTok, Facebook and Instagram being the most preferred for business activities. A great number of respondents use social media daily or weekly to generate sales, customer engagement and create brand awareness all which contribute to expanding the business and making it known. However, the study also identifies several challenges, including time constraints, High advertising cost, difficulty in measuring ROI and lack of technical skills in managing social media activities.

5.2 Conclusions

Based on the findings, it is evident that social media plays a vital role in the growth and development of small businesses in Ekehuan campus. It serves as a powerful platform for engaging with customers, expanding market reach, and improving brand visibility. These benefits have enabled businesses to enhance their Marketing efforts, foster customer relationships, and achieve better competitive positioning in the market.

Despite all of these social media usage comes with challenges that limit businesses from getting all of the benefits. Businesses face difficulty in management of time, high advertising cost, difficulty in measuring ROI and lack of technical skills. Nevertheless, the study found that SMEs can strive through all of these if there is proper time management, understanding of how the advertising cost plan Works, how to fully measure ROI and upgrading the technical skills.

In conclusion, social media has significantly transformed the operations of small businesses in Ekehuan campus, providing them valuable tool for achieving growth, significantly improving income and building brand loyalty. However overcoming the challenges and staying on top is crucial to fully realizing it's potential.

5.3 Recommendations

In line with the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. **Invest in Training Programs:** Investing in training programs is essential to enhance the technical skills of businesses. This will equip them with the knowledge to effectively manage time, understand how advertising cost on social media works and effectively engage with customers on social media.
2. **Exploring Affordable Online Resources:** Exploring affordable online resources or attending local workshops can help small businesses learn about advanced social media strategies. This approach allows businesses to develop expertise in-house while staying within budget.
3. Businesses should try as much as possible to be very consistent in posting daily online as it helps direct your business to the right audience, making it easier to maintain an active online presence.

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APPENDIX

Department of Mass Communication,
Faculty of Arts,
University of Benin,
Benin City,
Edo State, Nigeria.

March 11th. 2025.

Dear Respondent,

REQUEST FOR THE COMPLETION OF ITEMS IN QUESTIONAIRE

I am LAWAL EVIDENCE OMOBOSEDE, a final year student of the department of mass communication of the above-mentioned institution, conducting a research on the topic: "A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE INCOME STRUCTURE OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES". This is a partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of Bachelor of Arts (B.A) degree in Mass Communication.

Please kindly fill this questionnaire as honestly as possible and assist me in effectively carrying out this research. Every information you give will be treated with utmost confidence.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

LAWAL EVIDENCE OMOBOSEDE
Researcher

QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A: Demographic information

1. **Age Group:** [A] 16-25 [B] 26-35 [C] 36-45 [D] 46 and above
2. **Gender:** [A] Male [B] Female [C] Prefer not to say
3. Respondents Role in the Business: Yes ( ) No ( )
4. How long has your business been operating? [A] Less than 1 year [B]1–3 years [C] 4–6 years [D] More than 6 years

SECTION B:

5. Do you use social media for business purposes? Yes No…. If YES, answer questions 6–12. If NO, skip to Section C.
6. Which social media platforms does your business use? (Select all that apply) [A] Facebook [B] Instagram [C]Twitter/X [D] LinkedIn [E] WhatsApp Business [F] TikTok [G] Others (Specify) _______________.

7. What are your primary objectives for using social media? (Select all that apply) [A] Marketing and Promotion [B] Customer Engagement [C] Sales Generation [D] Market Research [E] Brand Awareness
8. How frequently do you post on social media? [A] Daily [B] Weekly [C] Monthly [D] Occasionally
9. What percentage of your revenue do you estimate comes from social media sales? [A] Less than 10% [B] 10–30% [C] 31–50% [D] More than 50%
10. Has your business income increased since using social media? [A] Yes, significantly [B] Yes, but slightly [C] No noticeable change [D] No, income has decreased
11. What challenges do you face in using social media for business? (Select all that apply) [A] High advertising costs [B] Difficulty in measuring ROI [C] Lack of technical skills [D] Time constraints [E] Other (Specify) _______________

SECTION C: SMEs Not Using Social Media

(For those who answered NO in Question 5)

12. Why do you not use social media for business purposes? (Select all that apply) [A] Lack of awareness [B] Not relevant to my business [C] Prefer traditional

marketing methods [D] No time to manage social media [E] Other (Specify) ________________

13. How do you primarily market your business? [A] Word-of-mouth [B] Flyers/Posters [C] TV/Radio Ads [D] Other (Specify) ________________
14. How do you track and analyze your business income? [A] Manual records [B] Accounting software [C] Bank statements [D] No formal tracking
15. Would you consider using social media in the future for business growth? [A] Yes [B] No [C] Maybe