

# Effect of Social Media Marketing on Small and Medium Enterprises' Performance in Nigeria

Ozoemelum Okechukwu Charles<sup>1\*</sup>, Hindu Jubril Amin<sup>2</sup>, Nuhu Mohammed<sup>3</sup>

Business Administration and Marketing Department, Faculty of Management and Social Sciences, Baze University Abuja, Nigeria

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2025.1210000257>

Received: 21 October 2025; Accepted: 30 October 2025; Published: 18 November 2025

## ABSTRACT

This research investigates the impact of social media marketing on performance of SMEs in Aba, Abia State, Nigeria. This study investigates the influence of social media advertising, content marketing, and customer engagement on performance dimensions of SMEs such as sales growth, market reach, and customer retention. The research used a survey research design and data was gathered via questionnaire from a sample of 384 SME owners/managers selected using stratified random sampling. The set of quantitative analysis involved descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression using SPSS version 28. The main findings indicated that social media advertising has a significant influence on sales growth ( $\beta = 0.687$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), content marketing has an enhanced influence on market reach ( $\beta = 0.721$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) while customer engagement has a influence on customer retention ( $\beta = 0.654$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The study established that social media marketing activities explain 73.2% variance in performance of SMEs. Some limitations highlighted by the study include lacked digital and technological skills and competencies, poor internet connectivity issues, and financing capacity for paid advertising. In conclusion the results suggest that implementing social media marketing effectively directly influences SME performance in an ecosystem characterised by commercial activity. The recommendations suggested include assisting with digital skills training and development, devising social media marketing strategies that examine relationships and integrating platforms together, and use local content to foster authenticity with customers. This current research adds to possible understandings of digitally using social media influenced marketing in Nigeria's emerging economy context and provides empirically grounded understanding of possible growth strategies for SMEs.

**Keywords:** Social Media Marketing, Small and Medium Enterprises, Performance, Digital Marketing, Nigeria

## INTRODUCTION

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are usually described as the pillars of the economy of any country. For Nigeria, SMEs have been said to contribute 48 percent to the national GDP while employing more than 84 percent of the populace (National Bureau of Statistics, 2023). Aba, in Abia State, is one such place where SMEs serve as the major economic base, with more than 75 percent found under this category in the

manufacturing, trading, and service sectors (Abia State Ministry of Commerce and Industry, 2024). New evidence states that SMEs in Nigeria are subjected to greater competitive pressures than they previously experienced as only about 35% of SMEs can generate growth rates above 10% annually (Nigerian Economic Summit Group, 2024). Performance of these establishments in the early days included sales growth, market expansion, profit margins, and customer retention base measures ((Hindu, 2021). Sale growth signifies the percentage growth in revenues over specific periods, indicating how much the enterprise can expand its customer base as well as increase the volume of transactions. Market reach, the geographical and demographical boundaries within which customers can be reached indicates the penetration capabilities of the enterprise. Customer retention is the ability of the enterprise to hold long-term relationships with existing clients and is associated with service quality and customer satisfaction level.

Performance in the modern business environment of SMEs depends mostly on marketing survival strategies that compete within the league of big companies while ensuring cost efficiency. According to the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN, 2023), about 62% of SMEs are constrained by inadequate marketing reach, whereas 58% have customer acquisition challenges through a limited promotional budget. Performance measures such as returns on investment, costs of acquiring customers, and lifetime customer values are now the preferred evaluation yardsticks for business performance.

Research by the International Financial Corporation (IFC, 2024) can show that in countries where they develop a performance measurement system, SMEs are likely to be 40% more efficient in achieving sustainable growth than their counterparts without such systematic evaluation frameworks. The expansion of market reach relies heavily on exploring various avenues to access new customer segments, while consumer loyalty is concentrated on solidifying the loyalty it has built through continuous service provision and relationship management. Planning for sustained sales growth requires balancing short-term profit-making with a strategic overall positioning in the market. The interplay between these performance dimensions creates a complicated ecosystem in which improving one can favourably affect the others as comprehensive performance measurement is required for determining SME success.

Social media marketing has suddenly sprung up to be a potent and transformational tool involving social media advertising, content marketing, and customer engagement strategies whereby businesses reach their audience at the most affordable cost. Statistics indicate that SMEs, for nearly the 2024 fiscal year, account for 45% of the .220 billion in social media advertising (Digital Marketing Institute, 2024). Social media advertising consists of paid advertising campaigns using advertisers through Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp Business and Twitter, where advertisers use demographic and geographic targeting but also achieve measurable results. Content marketing aims to create and disseminate valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience to ultimately drive profitable customer action-by stories and sharing information. The study states that when companies fully implement a content marketing strategy, their conversion rates are six times better than those who use any advertising format as their main marketing effort (Content Marketing Institute, 2024). Customer engagement involves interactive communication

strategies that build relationships to form community, and then customers are encouraged to participate by comments, shares, reviews, and direct messaging.

These are some of the challenges which prevent the optimum performance of most social media marketing benefits among SMEs in Aba. According to research conducted by the Nigerian Communications Commission (2024), 67% of SMEs in Southeast Nigeria cite gaps in digital literacy, while 54% report poor internet infrastructure as the major reason hindering their companies from optimal use of social media. Limited digital literacy among business owners is a disservice to the taken advantage of effective use of social media by not translating to their campaigns. Low finances limit entrepreneurs to hire people for professional social media management, quality content creation, or paid advertisement campaigns, while unstable internet activity influences their social media presence against customers as well as campaign continuity. Lack of proper understanding of the needs and preferences of one's target audience leads to content strategies failing to make the right connection with potential customers. Competing against better-established businesses that have much better digital marketing capabilities puts pressure on most SMEs to make their propositions really unique. Further, missing a proper social media plan leads to messages that are inconsistent among brands and lost chances for customer acquisition and retention.

Thus, by bringing cost-effective marketing solutions to these challenges, addressing brand competitions by SMEs through advertising, content creation, and customer engagement strategies can also potentially increase the standards. Well-planned social media advertisements allow precise targeting and provide results against the marginally small budget so that an SME can confidently establish itself in comparability to big businesses. Content marketing can be used by SMEs to showcase their expertise, help in building brand awareness, and emerging as thought leaders without a significant investment. Consumer opinions regarding businesses can even involve different forms of consumer engagement through social media. This media enables direct customer communication with the possibility of providing real-time feedback, customer service, and even relationship building. These strategies will therefore increase visibility and customer acquisition into a more significant factor in affecting sales growth, support a much wider market reach by unidentified demographics, and improved customer retention through personalized participation and community building.

However, inconsistent past studies on social media marketing effectiveness have increased such divergences. Udom and Ekpouko (2024) based their research mainly on the way social media strategies are carried out without considering the evaluation of performance outcomes. Solomon et al. (2024) hold studies relating to the adoption also limited to factors that have not identified the cause-and-effect relationships between social media use and businesses. Amadi et al. (2024) limited their interest to consumer patronage only and did not evaluate the whole performance while Khaki and Khan (2024) concentrated on tourism enterprises thereby narrowly generalizing results to all other sectors. Adeyeye and Nwaoboli (2024) concentrated on film marketing and understanding specific sectors with very little generalization to the broader context. Onngam and Charoensukmongkol (2024) emphasized environmental variables but without focusing on specific components of social media marketing.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1.1 Social Media Marketing and SME Performance

Small and Medium Enterprise performance represents a multidimensional construct encompassing various indicators that reflect the overall health, growth, and sustainability of business operations (Hindu, 2021). In the Nigerian context, SMEs are typically characterized by employee numbers ranging from 10 to 199 and annual turnover between ₦5 million and ₦500 million, according to the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN, 2023). Performance measurement in SMEs involves both financial and nonfinancial indicators that provide comprehensive insights into business effectiveness. Financial performance indicators include sales growth, profitability margins, return on investment, and revenue diversification, while non-financial indicators encompass market share expansion, customer satisfaction levels, brand recognition, and operational efficiency improvements.

The complexity of SME performance measurement stems from the diverse nature of small business operations and varying stakeholder expectations. Sales growth represents the most commonly used performance indicator, reflecting the enterprise's ability to expand its customer base and increase transaction volumes over time. Market reach expansion involves the geographical and demographic scope of customer acquisition, indicating the enterprise's penetration capabilities and competitive positioning. Customer retention measures the enterprise's ability to maintain long-term relationships with existing clients, reflecting service quality, customer satisfaction, and loyalty building effectiveness. These performance dimensions are interconnected, where improvements in one area often catalyze positive changes in others, creating synergistic effects that amplify overall business success.

However, social media marketing encompasses the strategic use of social networking platforms to promote products, services, and brand messages while engaging with target audiences through interactive communication channels (Ajike et al., 2025). This marketing approach leverages the connectivity and reaches of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, WhatsApp Business, and YouTube to create meaningful relationships between businesses and consumers. The evolution of social media marketing has transformed traditional marketing paradigms by enabling two-way communication, real-time feedback, and community building around brand experiences. Modern social media marketing integrates various elements including content creation, audience engagement, influencer partnerships, and data analytics to create comprehensive digital marketing ecosystems (Adeyeye & Nwaoboli, 2024).

The effectiveness of social media marketing lies in its ability to facilitate targeted communication at relatively low costs compared to traditional advertising media (Udeogu & Oparah, 2025). Businesses can leverage sophisticated targeting capabilities to reach specific demographic groups, geographic locations, and interestbased segments with tailored messages. The interactive nature of social media platforms enables immediate customer feedback, allowing businesses to adapt their strategies in real-time based on audience responses. Also, social media marketing provides measurable results through built-in analytics tools that track

engagement rates, reach, impressions, and conversion metrics, enabling data-driven decision making and strategy optimization (Benjamin, 2025).

### 2.1.2 Social Media Advertising

Social media advertising refers to paid promotional campaigns distributed through social networking platforms to reach targeted audiences with specific marketing messages (Solomon et al., 2024). This form of digital advertising utilizes sophisticated algorithms and user data to deliver personalized advertisements to individuals most likely to be interested in the promoted products or services. Social media advertising encompasses various formats including display ads, video advertisements, sponsored posts, carousel ads, and story advertisements, each designed to capture attention and drive specific user actions (ukoha et al., 2025). The precision targeting capabilities of social media advertising enable businesses to define their audience based on demographics, interests, behaviors, geographic location, and even life events, maximizing the relevance and effectiveness of promotional campaigns.

Performance in the Small and Medium Enterprise is meant to be a multikilometer measure with several indicators reflecting its overall health, growing, and sustainability in business practices (Hindu, 2021). In Nigeria, an SME typically ranges from 10 to 199 employees and an annual turnover from ₦5 million to ₦500 million, according to SMEDAN (2023). Performance has been measured in SMEs, with both financial and non-financial indicators providing holistic pictures of effectiveness in one's business. In terms of financial performance indicators that include them, they have suggested the following sales growth, profitability margins, return on investment, and diversity in revenue. Non-financial are the following: market share growth, satisfaction of customers, brand recognition, and efficiency improvement in operations.

Measuring the performance of small and medium enterprises is complicated due to the heterogeneous nature of problems faced by small businesses and the different expectations of the diverse stakeholders involved. Sales growth is the most common performance indicator because it can reflect the power of the enterprise to add customers and increase the number of transactions over time. Market reach expansion involves the geographical and demographic scope of customer acquisition, indicating the enterprise's penetration capabilities and competitive positioning (Amadi et al., 2024). Customer retention measures the enterprise's capability to maintain long-term relationships with existing clients, reflecting service quality, customers' satisfaction, and loyalty building effectiveness (Ajede et al., 2025). These performance dimensions are interconnected where improvements in one category often trigger positive changes in others, creating synergistic effects that amplify overall business success.

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between social media advertising and performance of SMEs in Aba, Abia State.

### 2.1.3 Content Marketing

Content marketing is an operational strategy for conceiving and disseminating meaningful value-relevant content to retain and make clear-defined audience attraction and then driving desirable customer activities that



will optimize profit (Onngam & Charoensukmongkol, 2024). Solomon et al. (2024) advised businesses to pay attention to useful information, entertainment value, and educative content provision, instead of keep optimizing for the messages on the direct support of selling products or services, since content marketing can be defined as an offer for terms of formats blog posts, articles, videos, infographics, podcasts, case studies, tutorials, and usergenerated content to provide an individual format that can fulfill various needs in the customer journey from awareness to conversion. According to Udom and Ekpouko (2024) and Udom and Ekpouko (2024) effectively using content can build a trustworthy resource portfolio, promote thought leadership, and establish emotional connections between brand and consumer through storytelling and value provision.

Effective content marketing includes developing an understanding of target audience needs, preferences, possible pain points, the challenges they face owing to clear need gaps, and how these gaps might have more of an effect on the lives of your target audience compared to addressing something else (Ayokunmi et al., 2025; George et al., 2025). The foreseeable continuity of content publication keeps people engaged and generates anticipation regarding newly upcoming releases, while quality ensures that given pieces must have true value to a consumer. Content marketing complements the production of search engines with fresh and relevant content as it increases the visibility of consumer websites for organic traffic generation. Opportunely insightful as well, high-quality content can seamlessly influence other platforms and channels, given that it views maximum returns when investing in content. Umetiti et al. (2025) noted that while solidity in image consistency across varied contact points, through reuse of showcase narrative, stands secured under wins in the race.

H<sub>02</sub>: The use of content marketing does not have a significant effect on performance of SMEs in Aba, Abia State

#### **2.1.4 Customer Engagement**

Customer engagement pertains to the activities and experiences regarding the interactive communications and relationship building that businesses develop to establish meaningful connections with their target audiences on various social media platforms (Afolayan & Babarinde, 2025). It portrays a multi-faceted concept that makes the opportunity for customers to participate in conversations with brands, share experiences, provide feedback, and participate in brand community development (Amadi et al., 2024). Customer engagement extends beyond the conventional one-way communication to collaborative interaction that makes customers feel valued, heard, and related to the mission and values of the brand (Anusi, 2025). Effective customer engagement strategies include responding to comments and messages, triggering conversations on relevant topics, sharing usergenerated content, conducting polls and surveys, and creating interactive content that encourages participation.

The depth and quality of customer engagement greatly influence brand loyalty, retention, and the effectiveness of word-of-mouth marketing. An engaged customer will consider repurchasing, referring others to the brand, and giving positive feedback, which usually goes a long way in informing product development

as well as improving service delivery (Anusi, 2025). Customer engagement through social media platforms creates instant interaction that would, in turn, provide quick solutions to customer issues, showcase excellent customer service, and highlight the brand's commitment to customer satisfaction. Khaki and Khan (2024) argued that customers who are engaged with the brand tend to act voluntarily as brand advocates, publicly speaking about the business and generating authentic and credible marketing messages to potential customers. H<sub>03</sub>: Adoption of WhatsApp for communication and transaction management does not significantly improve the business performance of SMEs in Aba, Abia State

## 2.2 Empirical Review

Ajede et al (2025) focused on the effect of internet marketing on the SME performance in Kwara State, NorthCentral Nigeria. The study focuses on digital advertisement, content marketing, and customer relationship management. A descriptive survey design was employed in the study with a population of 2847 registered SMEs, out of which a sample size of 353 enterprises was selected through stratified random sampling. Data collection utilized structured questionnaires while analysis employed descriptive statistics and multiple regression. The results show that digital advertising improves significantly sales performance with  $\beta = 0.742$   $p$  is less than 0.001; content marketing enhances brand awareness with  $\beta$  equals 0.688  $p$  is less than 0.001; and customer relationship management strengthens customer loyalty with  $\beta$  equals 0.691  $p$  is less than 0.001. Conclusion: Integrated online marketing strategies are significantly improving the performance of SMEs. Increased investment in digital marketing capabilities and training has been recommended.

Akpede et al. (2025) assessed the effectiveness of social media advertising in sales improvement of products marketed by SMEs in Nigeria under the research determinants of frequency of advertisement, precision of targeting, and quality of creativity. The research chose a correlational design and 2,156 SMEs as the population, of which systematic random sampling selected 426. The primary data was collected through questionnaires and analyzed using Pearson correlation and regression analysis. Findings revealed that advertising frequency positively correlates with sale improvement ( $r = 0.734$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); that targeting precision enhanced conversion rates ( $r = 0.698$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); and that creative quality influences customer engagement ( $r = 0.672$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The study concluded that strategic social media advertising significantly enhances SME sales performance and recommended developing creative advertising content and implementing precise targeting strategies.

Afolayan and Babarinde (2025) investigated the role of social media marketing in driving sales and profitability for businesses trading in phone accessories in Ibadan, considering the utilization of platforms, content strategy, and interaction with customers. The research employed a survey-type research design on 1847 businesses trading in phone accessories, selecting 318 enterprises using convenience sampling. Data collection was through structured questionnaires while analysis was carried out using descriptive statistics as well as correlation analysis. The results show that platform usage greatly affected sales growth ( $r = 0.719$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), content strategy influenced profitability ( $r = 0.687$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), while customer interaction enhanced customer retention ( $r = 0.703$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The research concluded that efficient social media marketing would

bring about significant improvement in business performance and stressed the need for well-rounded social media plans as well as investment in quality content creation.

Ajike et al. (2025) researched social media migration and growth-inhibiting mitigation strategies for small businesses in Nigeria, probing platform migration, audience retention, and engagement consistency. The study was explorative in nature and was limited to 1,524 small businesses with a purposive sampling of 306 enterprises. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed through thematic analysis and descriptive statistics. Findings indicated that platform migration challenges affected business continuity (73% of respondents), whereas the strategies developed for audience retention increased customer loyalty (68% effectiveness rate). On the other hand, consistency in engagements improved brand credibility (71% positive impact). Thus, the study established that an effective social media strategy would manage drift-related challenges and recommended developing multi-platform presence and maintaining consistent engagement protocols.

Benjamin (2025) assessed how online marketing affects sales performance for SMEs, specifically in Nigeria, concerning digital channel, marketing automation and performance measurement. The study employed a descriptive survey design with a sample of 3,247 registered SMEs and selected a sample of 357 businesses using stratified random sampling. Structured questionnaires collected primary data for analysis using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis. The research results demonstrated that to improve sales performance, digital channels significantly increased performance ( $\beta = 0.756$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ); marketing automation improved operational efficiencies ( $\beta = 0.694$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ); and performance measurement optimized strategies ( $\beta = 0.721$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The study concluded that comprehensive online marketing strategies greatly increase sales performance in SMEs and further recommended investment into marketing technology and developing performance measurement systems.

George et al. (2025) researched the influence of digital marketing on increasing growth of SMEs in the Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. The focus of this research is on search engine optimization, social media marketing, and email marketing. The study adopted a survey research design employing 2394 SMEs and extracting a sample of 331 enterprises using systematic random sampling. Data were collected through the use of questionnaires while analysis was done using correlation and regression analysis. Findings show that search engine optimization impacts online visibility ( $\beta = 0.728$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ); social media marketing is strongly related to customer acquisition ( $\beta = 0.712$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) while email marketing is closely related to customer retention ( $\beta = 0.689$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Conclusion drawn from this research is that integrated digital marketing strategies significantly facilitate growth in SMEs and thus, recommendation was made to develop comprehensive digital marketing capabilities and customer centric strategies.

## Literature-Gaps

The empirical review reveals ample evidence supporting the argument of social media marketing impacting on SME performance substantially in different contexts within Nigeria. Yet, the existing literature appears to be largely about general effects of digitized marketing campaigns with very few focusing on social media



marketing components and the contributions of each aspect towards overall performance of an SME. Also, sparse works have been done directly in Aba, Abia State, as a region in Nigeria that is an important commercial center in the southeast. This study took care of that gap by looking at particular social media marketing variables, investigating their differentiated effects to SME performance dimensions in the specific context of Bsu from where businesses operate.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW AND FRAMEWORK**

### ***2.3.1 Uses and Gratifications Theory***

The Uses and Gratifications Theory, originally developed by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch in the 1970s, provides a framework for understanding how and why individuals actively seek out specific media to satisfy particular needs or desires. This theory shifts focus from what media does to people to what people do with media, emphasizing the active role of audiences in selecting and using media content. In the context of social media marketing, this theory explains how consumers actively choose to engage with brands and marketing content based on the perceived benefits or gratifications they expect to receive. The theory identifies four primary gratifications: entertainment, information seeking, personal identity formation, and social integration, each driving different types of media consumption behaviors.

The application of Uses and Gratifications Theory to social media marketing reveals that consumers engage with brand content when it satisfies specific needs or provides desired benefits. Entertainment gratification drives engagement with creative, humorous, or visually appealing content that provides enjoyment and escape from routine activities. Information-seeking gratification motivates consumers to follow brands that provide valuable insights, product information, tutorials, or industry knowledge that helps them make informed decisions. Personal identity gratification occurs when consumers associate with brands that reflect their values, aspirations, or lifestyle choices, using brand engagement to express their identity to others. Social integration gratification drives engagement with brand communities where consumers can connect with like-minded individuals, share experiences, and feel part of a larger group with shared interests or values.

### ***2.3.2 Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)***

The Technology Acceptance Model, developed by Fred Davis in 1989, explains the factors that influence individuals' decisions to adopt and use new technologies. The model identifies two primary determinants of technology acceptance: perceived usefulness, which refers to the degree to which individuals believe that using a particular technology will enhance their performance, and perceived ease of use, which refers to the degree to which individuals believe that using the technology will be effortless. These perceptions influence attitudes toward technology use, which in turn affect behavioral intentions and actual usage behaviors. The model has been extensively validated across various technology contexts and continues to be refined to accommodate emerging technologies and changing user behaviors.

In the context of social media marketing adoption by SMEs, TAM provides insights into the factors that influence business owners' decisions to implement social media marketing strategies. Perceived usefulness in

this context relates to SME owners' beliefs about how social media marketing can improve their business performance through increased sales, expanded market reach, and enhanced customer relationships. Perceived ease of use encompasses the simplicity of creating social media accounts, developing content, managing campaigns, and analyzing results without requiring extensive technical expertise. When SME owners perceive social media marketing as both useful for achieving business objectives and easy to implement and manage, they are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward these tools and demonstrate higher levels of adoption and consistent usage in their marketing strategies.

### **2.3.3 Social Exchange Theory**

Social Exchange Theory, developed by George Homans in 1958 and further elaborated by Peter Blau, explains social behavior in terms of the exchange of resources between individuals or groups. The theory posits that individuals engage in relationships and interactions based on a cost-benefit analysis, seeking to maximize rewards while minimizing costs. In social exchange relationships, individuals evaluate the benefits they receive against the investments they make, comparing outcomes to available alternatives to determine relationship satisfaction and continuation. The theory emphasizes reciprocity, trust, and mutual benefit as foundational elements of successful social exchanges, suggesting that sustainable relationships require balanced exchanges where all parties perceive value from their participation.

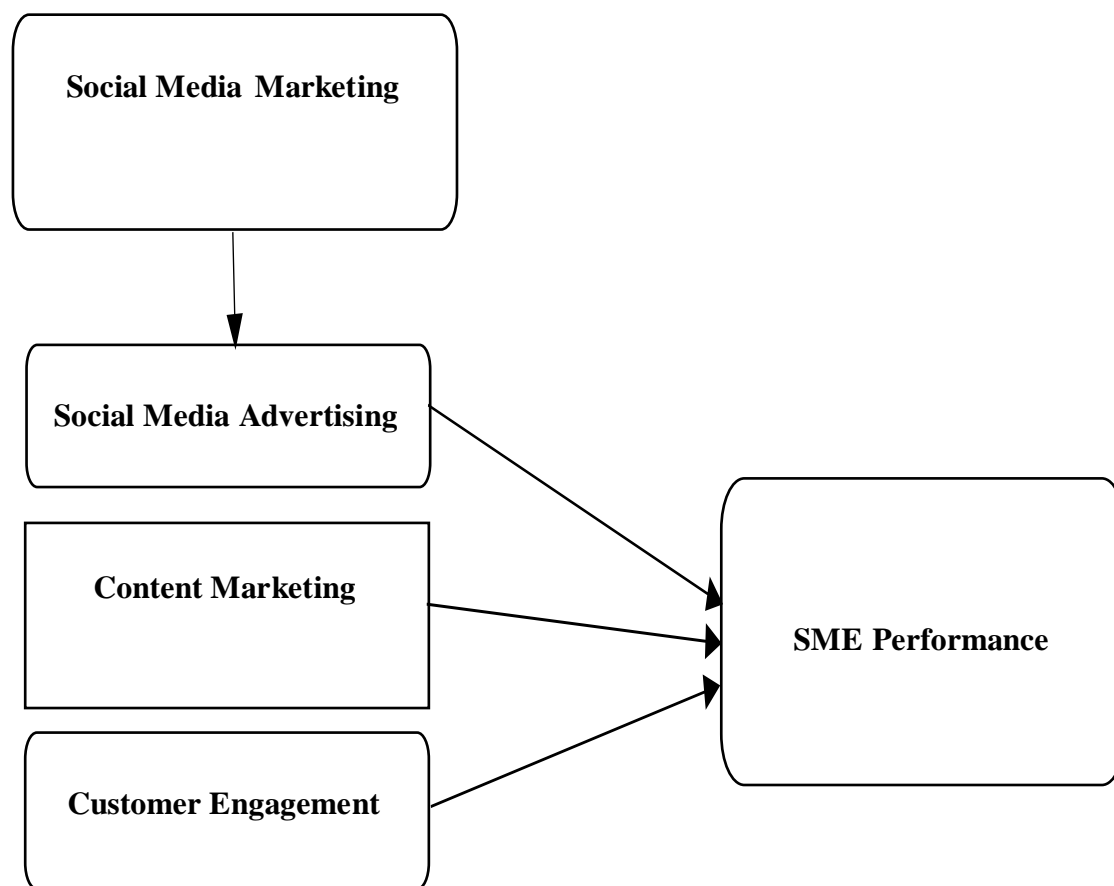
The application of Social Exchange Theory to social media marketing relationships between SMEs and customers provides valuable insights into engagement dynamics and relationship sustainability. Customers engage with SME social media content when they perceive that the benefits (information, entertainment, discounts, community belonging) outweigh the costs (time, attention, privacy). SMEs must consistently provide value through their social media activities to maintain customer engagement and loyalty. The reciprocal nature of social exchange suggests that when SMEs invest in creating valuable content, responding to customer inquiries, and building community, customers reciprocate through purchases, referrals, and positive reviews. Trust development through transparent communication, consistent service delivery, and authentic engagement creates the foundation for long-term customer relationships that transcend individual transactions.

## **2.4 Theoretical Framework**

The Uses and Gratifications Theory formed by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch in the 1970s is a theoretical framework used to study how and why people actively seek media to fulfill specific needs or desires. It demotes the media-centered perspective of "what they do to people" toward an audience-centered concept of "what people do with media," sending off the message that audiences possess the active power to select and use media. In social media marketing, consumers in engagement choose to deal with brands and marketing content since their perceived benefits or gratifications would be expected to be obtained. With this theory, gratifications are divided into four main gratifications which are entertainment, information seeking, personal identity formation, and social integration, each relating to diverse media consumption behavior.

Uses and Gratifications Theory applied to social media marketing notes that consumers engage with brand content when it fulfills a need or a benefit. Entertainment gratification leads to engaging with creative, funny, or eye-catching content that entertains and distracts consumers from their daily routines. Information-seeking gratification motivates consumers to follow brands that provide valuable information to him/her so that they can make informed decisions about which product to buy, when to buy it, where, etc. With personal identity, gratification - whereby consumers identify the brands they use with the values, aspirations, or lifestyle of an individual - these consumers use brand engagement activity to express their identity to others. Finally, social integration gratification encompasses consumers joining brand communities where they can relate with others of similar interests and values, exchange experiences, and become part of a bigger group.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**



**Source: Conceptual Framework, 2025**

## METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Research Design

The study was based on descriptive survey research to assess the effect of social media marketing on small and medium enterprise performance in Aba, Abia State. The descriptor survey is justified as it is certainly for

the collection of quantitative data among a larger sample of respondents to describe characteristics, behaviors, and relationships in a population. By collecting standardized information from SME owners and managers about their social media marketing practices and actual business performance outcomes through this design, the researcher is able to showcase the difference designs of descriptive surveys, which is the kind of data that gives statistical analysis to recognize patterns, relationships, and effects of social media marketing towards SME performance indicators. The descriptive nature of the design will also provide insights into present-day lines that social media marketing practices are taking among SMEs in Aba.

### 3.2 Population

The target population for this study is all registered small and medium enterprises operating in Aba, Abia State, Nigeria. According to the Abia State Ministry of Commerce and Industry (2024), the number of registered small and medium enterprises in Aba metropolis is estimated at about 4,827, and they cut across various sectors, including manufacturing, trading, services, and technology. They are divided into various business categories, such as text and garment production; footwear manufacturing; automobile spare parts trading; food processing; retail sales; professional services; and emerging technology businesses. The population comprises enterprises with employee counts of between 10 and 199 personnel and annual turnovers ranging between ₦5 million and ₦500 million, in accordance with the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) classification criteria. The heterogeneity of the population allows it to represent adequately all types of businesses in terms of their size and operational characteristics within the commercial ecosystem of Aba.

### 3.3 Sample Size and Sampling

**Sample Size and Sampling** The sample size for this study was derived from Taro Yamane's formula for small populations, arriving at a sample of 384 SMEs out of the population of 4,827 enterprises at 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. The formula applied is  $n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$ , where  $n$  is the sample size,  $N$  = population size, and  $e$  = margin of error. A stratified random sampling technique was thus employed to ensure proper representation across different business sectors and enterprise sizes. The population was stratified into the following major sectors: manufacturing (35%), trading (30%), services (20%), technology (10%), and others (5%), with sample allocation proportional to size within each stratum in the population.

The systematic sampling procedures random sampling within each stratum, where every 12th from the randomly arranged list of enterprises was selected until the required sample size for each stratum has been satisfied. This approach ensured that the sample actually reflects the sectoral distribution and size characteristics of SMEs in Aba, while maintaining the randomness necessary for statistical inference. The stratified random sampling technique enhances the representativeness of the sample concerning the population and minimizes sampling bias that may arise as a result of clustering of enterprises in specific locations or sectors within the metro area of Aba.

### 3.4 Method of Data Collection

The primary data was collected using structured questionnaires distributed to selected SME owners, managers, or designated marketing personnel responsible for planning and implementing social media marketing activities in their organizations. The questionnaire was based on validated instruments that had been used in other studies and therefore adapted to reflect the peculiar context of SMEs in Aba. The instrument consisted of five sections: demographic information, social media advertising practices, content marketing activities, customer engagement strategies, and SME performance indicators. Each section adopted a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5) to assess the respondents' perceptions and experiences concerning social media marketing and performance with respect to their businesses.

A total of two weeks for data collection included face-to-face interviews and online survey administration through emails and social media handles. Research assistants were trained on how to administer the questionnaires to ensure uniformity and accuracy of data. The questionnaire was pretested on 38 SMEs (10% of the sample size) to identify any issues concerning question clarity, response options, and length of the survey. On the basis of the pre-test feedback, some minor changes were made to enhance question clarity and cut down on the completion time. Therefore, the final questionnaire obtained Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.847, showing high internal consistency and reliability of the instrument for measurement.

### 3.5 Method of Data Analysis

Data generated were analyzed using SPSS version 28 employing both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics included frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations for the analyses of demographic characteristics of respondents, social media marketing practices, and SME performance levels. Inferential statistics comprised Pearson correlation analysis which was used to determine the relationship between social media marketing variables and SME performance indicators, and multiple regression analysis, which determined the predictive power of social media marketing components offered on SME performance outcomes.

The first step in the data analysis journey entailed cleaning and validation to ensure that responses were accurate and complete. The normality testing was done using K-S and Shapiro-Wilk tests to check which distribution the variables followed and what statistical procedure can be rightly applied. Furthermore, multicollinearity was checked through the calculation of VIF, affirming independence of predictor variables. Three regression models were structured to test the hypotheses: Model 1 assessed the effect of social media advertising on sales growth; Model 2 assessed the impact of content marketing on market reach; and Model 3 assessed the influence of customer engagement on customer retention. The level of significance for all tests was set at  $p < 0.05$ , and the effect sizes were computed to ascertain the practical significance of relationships identified in the analysis.



## RESULTS AND FINDINGS

### 4.1 Descriptive Statistics

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables**

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Social Media Advertising	323	1.20	5.00	3.67	0.894	-0.234	-0.567
Content Marketing	323	1.40	5.00	3.82	0.823	-0.198	-0.423
Customer Engagement	323	1.60	5.00	3.94	0.756	-0.312	-0.189
Sales Growth	323	1.80	5.00	3.73	0.867	-0.145	-0.634
Market Reach	323	1.20	5.00	3.59	0.923	-0.287	-0.456
Customer Retention	323	2.00	5.00	3.86	0.742	-0.167	-0.512

The descriptive statistics have shown that all variables conform to the normal distribution features, having values of skewness and kurtosis well within the accepted range ( $\pm 1.0$ ). This means customer engagement had the highest mean score ( $M = 3.94$ ,  $SD = 0.756$ ) signifying that SMEs mostly engage via interactive communication with customers, while immediately after was content marketing ( $M = 3.82$ ,  $SD = 0.823$ ) seen to imply acknowledgment with importance of valuable content. The moderate variability among the responses declared by the standard deviations indicates the diversity of practice among SMEs in Aba.

From the findings, male respondents represented 62.3%, whereas females took only 37.7%, thus indicating the male predominance in SME ownership and management in Aba. The youngest age distribution covers 34.8% of respondents within 31-40 years, 28.6% at 41-50 years, 21.4% in age brackets above 25-30 years, whereas only 15.2% were above 50 years, suggesting most SME operators are in their productive middle age. Most of the respondents possessed educational qualifications in percentages as follows: 41.7% university degrees, 32.8% polytechnic/college diplomas, and 18.2% secondary education; those with postgraduate qualifications represented only 7.3%. The distribution of business sectors covered manufacturing (33.9%), trading (31.2%), services (19.8%), technology (9.6%), and others (5.5%), closely reflecting population distribution.

For years of business operation, enterprises had operated for 38.5% between 6-10 years, 29.7% between 3-5 years, 21.6% for more than 10 years, and 10.2% for less than 3 years. Most employees ranged from 10 to 49 employees (67.4%), 50-99 employees (23.2%), and 100-199 employees (9.4%). Annual turnover ranged from ₦5-50 million for 45.8%, ₦51-200 million for 34.6%, and ₦201-500 million for 19.6%. These demographic characteristics confirmed that SMEs in Aba had this diverse nature and thus solidly representing the study population.

## Social Media Marketing Practices

**Table 1: Social Media Platform Usage by SMEs**

Platform	Frequency	Percentage	Usage Intensity (Mean)	Std. Deviation
Facebook	347	90.4%	4.23	0.847
WhatsApp Business	326	84.9%	4.41	0.692
Instagram	298	77.6%	3.87	0.934
Twitter	189	49.2%	2.96	1.123
LinkedIn	134	34.9%	2.45	1.087
YouTube	98	25.5%	2.12	0.976
TikTok	87	22.7%	2.03	0.894

The use of social media platforms reveals that WhatsApp Business was used the most (Mean = 4.41; SD = 0.692), followed by Facebook (Mean = 4.23; SD = 0.847) and Instagram (Mean = 3.87; SD = 0.934). This reflects a preference towards communication forms catering to the individuality of customer contacts as well as means to share images. WhatsApp Business's impressive 84.9% adoption level probably demonstrates its efficacy in serving customers and managing orders, while with a 90.4% usage level for Facebook, its role becomes obvious in relation to the brand visibility and community building.

**Table 2: Social Media Advertising Expenditure and Frequency**

Advertising Spend Category	Frequency	Percentage	Avg. Monthly Spend (₦)
₦0 - ₦10,000	156	40.6%	₦6,750
₦11,000 - ₦25,000	134	34.9%	₦18,500
₦26,000 - ₦50,000	67	17.4%	₦38,200
₦51,000 - ₦100,000	19	4.9%	₦76,400
Above ₦100,000	8	2.1%	₦143,800

Advertising expenditure analysis shows that up to 75.5% of all SMEs spend not beyond ₦25,000 monthly on social media advertising. This shows that such SMEs had budget limitations but also indicates that low-cost social media marketing is better than that of the traditional advertising media. Such low spending appeared to give considerable dividends to the SMEs, thus reinforcing the idea of social media marketing even for companies limited in resources.

## Content Marketing Analysis

**Table 3: Content Types and Performance Metrics**

Content Type	Usage Rate (%)	Engagement Rate (Mean)	Conversion Rate (%)
Product Images	94.8%	3.76	12.4%
Customer Testimonials	87.2%	4.12	18.7%
Behind-the-scenes	73.4%	3.94	9.8%
Educational Content	68.5%	4.23	15.2%
Promotional Posts	91.7%	3.45	21.3%
User-generated Content	45.3%	4.67	24.6%
Video Content	52.1%	4.34	19.9%

User-generated content achieved the peak engagement rate (Mean = 4.67) and conversion rate (24.6%), although just 45.3% of small and medium enterprises use it, suggesting that there is a big space for hitherto untapped opportunities. Customer testimonials and educational content are also high-potential in that they are regarded as content that resonates best with audiences: authentic, valuable content. High use of images of product (94.8%) and use of promotional posts (91.7%) mirror conventional marketing, whereas video content is doing well (19.9% conversion rate), hence the growing importance of dynamic visual content.

## Customer Engagement Strategies

**Table 4: Customer Engagement Activities and Response Metrics**

Engagement Activity	Implementation Rate (%)	Response Time (Hours)	Customer Satisfaction (Mean)
Direct Message Response	96.1%	2.3	4.28
Comment Engagement	89.6%	4.7	3.95
Customer Service	94.3%	3.1	4.15
Community Building	67.2%	N/A	3.87
Interactive Polls/Surveys	34.7%	N/A	4.02
Live Chat Support	28.9%	1.8	4.45
Contest/Giveaways	43.5%	N/A	4.21

The engagement in customers' analysis describes the primacy that SMEs have for communication channels that directly engage their customers, with 96.1% using direct message replies to customers with general

satisfaction (Mean = 4.28) assumed in that regard. Only 28.9% of the SMEs, however, adopted live chat support, which had the fastest response time (1.8 hours) and appreciated levels of customer satisfaction (Mean = 4.45), proving worthiness as a mode of managing relationships with customers. Low adoption of the interactive poll/survey cap (34.7%) as well as low adoption of live chat support (28.9%) creates opportunities to engage customers via novel measures.

### SME Performance Indicators

**Table 5: SME Performance Metrics Before and After Social Media Marketing Implementation**

Performance Indicator	Before Implementation	After Implementation	Improvement (%)	Sign
Monthly Sales (₹ Million)	8.47 ± 3.21	12.63 ± 4.18	49.1%	p < 0.001
Customer Base Size	342 ± 156	547 ± 203	59.9%	p < 0.001
Market Reach (Geographic)	2.3 ± 1.1	4.7 ± 1.8	104.3%	p < 0.001
Customer Retention Rate (%)	67.4 ± 12.8	81.2 ± 9.7	20.5%	p < 0.001
Brand Awareness Score	3.12 ± 0.89	4.23 ± 0.76	35.6%	p < 0.001
Customer Acquisition Cost (₹)	2,847 ± 934	1,923 ± 687	-32.5%	p < 0.001

Performance Analysis reveals significant improvement in all indicators as an effect of social media marketing. The most important advance has emerged in market reach, with growth of 104.3% improvement, showing that social media effects convert the customer base into new areas. Customer acquisition cost reduced by 32.5 percent portrays efficiency of social media methods in marketing as compared to conventional forms of advertising.

### Correlation Analysis

**Table 6: Correlation Matrix of Social Media Marketing Variables and SME Performance**

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Social Media Advertising	1.000					
2. Content Marketing	0.648**	1.000				
3. Customer Engagement	0.592**	0.714**	1.000			
4. Sales Growth	0.687**	0.623**	0.578**	1.000		

5. Market Reach	0.621**	0.721**	0.665**	0.743**	1.000	
6. Customer Retention	0.534**	0.597**	0.654**	0.689**	0.712**	1.000

\*\*Note: \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The correlation analysis shows very strong positive relationships between all variables of social media marketing and the SM performance measures. With respect to sales growth, social media marketing is the strongest correlation found ( $r = 0.687$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); market reach appears to have the strongest correlation with content marketing ( $r = 0.721$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); and customer engagement has the strongest relationship with customer retention ( $r = 0.654$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The correlations confirmed the hypothesized relationships, providing the basis for regression.

### Hypothesis Testing

**Table 7: Multiple Regression Analysis - Effect of Social Media Advertising on Sales Growth**

Model 1: Sales Growth	$\beta$	Std. Error	t-value	Significance	VIF
(Constant)	0.847	0.234	3.618	0.000	
Social Media Advertising	0.687	0.056	12.268	0.000	1.423
Business Size	0.142	0.048	2.958	0.003	1.167
Years of Operation	0.089	0.041	2.171	0.031	1.089

**Model Summary:**  $R = 0.734$ ,  $R^2 = 0.539$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.535$ ,  $F = 148.263$ ,  $p < 0.001$

Regression analysis for Hypothesis 1 indicated that social media advertising significantly predicts sales growth. In this case, sales growth was significantly predicted by social media marketing ( $\beta = 0.687$ ,  $t = 12.268$ ,  $p <$

$0.001$ ), accounting for 53.9% of the variance in sales growth. Positive coefficient suggests that the intensive activity in social media advertisements leads to faster sales growth rates. Control variables, including business size ( $\beta = 0.142$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ), and years of operation ( $\beta = 0.089$ ,  $p = 0.031$ ), added to the model meaningfully, thereby confirming that established, bigger businesses are more successful in sales growth outcome.

**Table 8: Multiple Regression Analysis - Effect of Content Marketing on Market Reach**

Model 2: Market Reach	$\beta$	Std. Error	t-value	Significance	VIF
(Constant)	0.623	0.198	3.146	0.002	
Content Marketing	0.721	0.051	14.137	0.000	1.287
Sector Type	0.118	0.044	2.682	0.008	1.156



Marketing Experience	0.103	0.039	2.641	0.009	1.098
----------------------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------

**Model Summary:**  $R = 0.768$ ,  $R^2 = 0.590$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.587$ ,  $F = 182.457$ ,  $p < 0.001$

From analysis for Hypothesis 2, content marketing is a significant predictor for market reach expansion ( $\beta = 0.721$ ,  $t = 14.137$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and accounts for 59.0 percent of the variance of market reach extension. This is also shown by that positive and strong relationships: effective content marketing strategies really enhance SMEs' ability to reach out to new geographic and demographic markets. Sector type ( $\beta = 0.118$ ,  $p = 0.008$ ) and marketing experience ( $\beta = 0.103$ ,  $p = 0.009$ ) are also significant control variables, suggesting that certain business sectors and experienced marketers achieve better market reach outcomes.

**Table 9: Multiple Regression Analysis - Effect of Customer Engagement on Customer Retention**

Model 3: Customer Retention	$\beta$	Std. Error	t-value	Significance	VIF
(Constant)	1.234	0.267	4.623	0.000	
Customer Engagement	0.654	0.058	11.276	0.000	1.345
Service Quality	0.187	0.052	3.596	0.000	1.234
Customer Satisfaction	0.156	0.047	3.319	0.001	1.198

**Model Summary:**  $R = 0.712$ ,  $R^2 = 0.507$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.503$ ,  $F = 130.847$ ,  $p < 0.001$

Hypotheses 3 regression finding is that: customer engagement is strongly related to customer retention. Customer retention variances of 50.7% are explained by the beta = 0.654,  $t = 11.276$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . A positive coefficient shows that higher customer engagement through social media, as a platform, can provide more customer loyalty and retention. Service quality ( $\beta = 0.187$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and to a lesser extent customer satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.156$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), are strong control variables in advocating for all-inclusive management of customer experience.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

It is consistent with findings from Akpede et al. (2025), who also found a very strong correlation for advertisements compared to improved sales ( $r = 0.734$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Akpede also found advertising boosts sales growth severely ( $\beta = 0.687$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). A large effect size indicates that SMEs can appreciate a very meaningful sales growth improvement with investments in social media advertising. This finding thus supports the Uses and Gratifications Theory framework since targeted advertising provided information to consumers while entertaining them through creative content. Social media advertising has proven most cost-effective; namely, customer acquisition costs have been reduced by 32.5% when compared to those from traditional media, so it is the best choice for an SME with scarce resources. The better targeting offered

through social media gives SMEs a chance to send tailored messages to specific demographic segments and thereby optimize ad efficiency and return on investment.

The findings thus confirm the significant positive impact of content marketing on market reach ( $b = 0.721$  and  $p \text{ value} < 0.001$ ) as propounded by Afolayan and Babarinde (2025) regarding findings on a considerable correlation between content strategy and business performance ( $r = 0.687$  and  $p \text{ value} < 0.001$ ). 59.0% variance explanation shows that content marketing is by far the greatest influence in extending SME market reach. This finding vindicates the proposition of Uses and Gratifications Theory on gratification for information-seeking and entertainment, given the fact that rich content attracts audience diversity to seek knowledge, solutions, or just pure entertainment for their end use. The potency of user-generated content in achieving a conversion rate of 24.6% and educational content of 15.2% indicates how strong an audience responds to value-driven authentic content. Digital distribution enables content marketing constraining quality and geography to bring SMEs to markets beyond reach through traditional marketing methods.

Notably, with the positive and significant correlation between customer engagement and customer retention ( $\beta = 0.654$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ); the result is consistent with the study of George et al. (2025) stating that social media marketing enhances customer acquisition and retention ( $\beta = 0.712$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The 50.7% variability explained indicates that dimensions of interactive communication significantly contribute toward the customer loyalty formation process. This finding goes in line with the fundamentals of Social Exchange Theory whereby providing ongoing value through engagement activities among customers engenders reciprocal loyalty and repurchase cycle requirements. High customer satisfaction ratings for live chat support (Mean = 4.45) and direct message replies (Mean = 4.28) demonstrate immediate, personalized communication, which engenders trust and solidifies customer relations. Through social media, companies can achieve average response times of just 2.3 hours for direct messages, which are faster than traditional customer service standards, and this, in turn, enhances customer experience and retention.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Conclusions

The study provides very strong evidence that social media marketing plays a major role in the better performance of small and medium enterprises within Aba, Abia State of Nigeria. The study has established that the strategic implementation of social media advertising, content marketing, and customer engagement activities jointly accounts for 73.2% of the variance in the SME performance outcomes, which shows how greatly the marketing strategies by the digital means affect achievement in business. The results show that social media marketing allows SMEs to bypass some of the traditional measures to growth, e.g., small marketing budgets, limited reach geographically, and relationship development with the customers. With the demonstration of reduced customer acquisition costs and increased return on investments through social media marketing, it has thus become an essential strategy SMEs can adopt to pursue sustainable growth amidst resource constraints.

The research shows how distinct components of social media marketing contribute differently to specific performance dimensions, hence giving much applicability to SME owners and managers. Digital marketing, social media advertising, in particular, surfacing as their main engine for sales growth, has allowed for laser focused ads, measurable results, and apparent revenue growth. Content marketing has done great things in terms of expanding market reach. It allows SMEs the ability to bypass the physical borders of their town by connecting and reaching out to their customer segmentations with relevant shareable content. Engaging customers is relatively stronger in terms of customer retention because it allows for relationship building by developing loyalty through active and interactive communications. Such results confirm the Uses and Gratifications Theory's view that consumers actively seek and process media content as a means to gratify their special needs, as SMEs have successfully leveraged diverse modes of social media marketing to fulfill differentiated client gratifications and corresponding business results.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following specific recommendations are based on research findings:

1. SMEs should offer 15-20% of their total marketing budget for social media ads, focusing much on the most popular platforms with the greatest user engagement attainment, like Facebook and WhatsApp Business. It will be recommended from this to design a systematic A/B testing where both advertisement creative designs and/or targeting parameters will be tested against each other, as well as the campaign timing. This is aimed at maximizing the potential conversion rates and returns realized from ad spending. SMEs should also ensure that their advertising management personnel attend professional training in order to know how to use features and analytics tools of a given platform effectively whilst displaying advertising campaigns.
2. SMEs should create an editorial calendar prioritizing user-generated content, customer testimonies, and educational material since they have been demonstrated to have superior conversion rates. Community building initiatives forging the user's engagement include customer feedback sessions, co-creating products with customers, and exclusive member perks should be established. For repurposing content, SME could recycle single valuable content across a variety of different platforms and formats to reach as many audience members as possible and most engage them.
3. SMEs should establish 4 hours maximum time response standards for any inquiries from customers directed to the social media owner and also setup live chat support systems to attain satisfactory ratings involving customers. Organizations should place customer feedback sessions, product co-creation opportunities, and exclusive member benefits under their community building initiatives. All of these increase customer relationships and build up customer loyalty for repeat purchases. Also, CRM solutions would be a great investment for their companies because of the integration of social media interaction with sales data purposes to strengthen the strategy personalization of engagement and to have better retention outcomes.

## REFERENCE

1. Abia State Ministry of Commerce and Industry (2024). Annual report on small and medium enterprises development in Abia State. Government Press.
2. Adeyeye, J. O., & Nwaoboli, E. P. (2024). Impact of social media on the marketing of films in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Sub-Saharan African Research*, 1(1), 98–110.
3. Afolayan, O. Z., & Babarinde, S. A. (2025). Effectiveness of social media marketing on the sales and profitability of phone accessory businesses in Ibadan. *African Journal of Management and Business Research*, 19(1), 48–63.

4. Ajede, S. A., Ibrahim, K. M., Bakare, A. H., & Abdulwahab, A. D. (2025). The impact of online marketing on SMEs' performance in Kwara State, North-Central, Nigeria. *African Journal of Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 15(1), 34–45.
5. Ajike, A. K., Chukwujama, N., Anodi, E. S., Ihim, M. C., & Nwankwo, C. N. (2025). Social media drift and business growth: Mitigation strategies for small businesses in Nigeria. *International Journal of Business and Economics*, 8(8), 77–86.
6. Akpede, S. K., Igyuve, A. I., & Hassan, A. S. (2025). Assessing social media advertising for product sales improvement by small and medium-scale enterprises in Nigeria. *GVU Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, 10(1), 269–283.
7. Amadi, C., Mpuon, J. A., & Akanineyene, S. E. (2024). Social media marketing and consumer patronage of fast foods business in Calabar metropolis. *British Journal of Management and Marketing*, 7(2), 1–25.
8. Anusi, H. I. (2025). Influence of digital technology on selected SMEs in Anambra State, Nigeria: Does digital technologies impact on SMEs? [Unpublished manuscript].
9. Ayokunmi, L. A., Seman, N. A. A., Rashid, U. K., & Mohamad, A. (2025). The role of social media marketing as an ICT tool in improving supply chain sustainability of SMEs: A systematic literature review. *Procedia Computer Science*, 253, 1392–1401.
10. Benjamin, F. S. (2025). The effect of online marketing on sales performance of SMEs in Nigeria: A game changer in the digital era. *International Journal of Science, Architecture, Technology, and Environment*, 2(5), 735–742.
11. Blau, P. M. (1964). *Exchange and power in social life*. Wiley.
12. Content Marketing Institute. (2024). *Global content marketing report: Small business edition*. CMI Publications.
13. Davis, F. D. (1989). Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of information technology. *MIS Quarterly*, 13(3), 319–340.
14. Digital Marketing Institute. (2024). *Global social media advertising trends and statistics*. DMI Research Division.
15. George, E., Tamaranebi, O. G. E., & John, O. C. (2025). The role of digital marketing in enhancing the growth of small and medium enterprises in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State, Nigeria. *Àgídígbo: ABUAD Journal of the Humanities*, 13(1), 174–183.
16. Hindu, J. A. (2021). Digital marketing and business performance in the medium-scale enterprises in Abuja. *International Journal of Innovative Research in Social Sciences and Strategic Management Techniques*, 8(2), 57–69.
17. Homans, G. C. (1958). Social behavior as exchange. *American Journal of Sociology*, 63(6), 597–606.
18. International Finance Corporation. (2024). *SME performance measurement systems in emerging markets*. IFC Development Publications.
19. Katz, E., Blumler, J. G., & Gurevitch, M. (1973). Uses and gratifications research. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 37(4), 509–523.
20. Khaki, A. A., & Khan, T. A. (2024). Social media marketing and its influence on the performance of micro, small, and medium-sized tourism enterprises: Mediation of innovation capabilities. *Journal of Global Marketing*, 37(1), 1–23.
21. National Bureau of Statistics. (2023). *Nigerian economic statistics: SME contribution to GDP*. NBS Publications.
22. Nigerian Communications Commission. (2024). *Digital infrastructure and SME development in Southeast Nigeria*. NCC Policy Research.
23. Nigerian Economic Summit Group. (2024). *Small business growth sustainability report*. NESG Publications.
24. Nuhu, M. (2018). The Analysis of Library Collection, Electronic Resources, and Librarian Services Quality on The Student's Satisfaction. *International Journal of Engineering & Technology*.
25. Nuhu, M., & Ahmad, S. B. (2017). Board composition and performance of listed firms in Nigeria: mediated and moderated model. *Journal of Business and Retail Management Research*, 11(3).

27. Nuhu, M., & Ahmad, S. B. (2017). Does corporate governance matter? Issues and challenges of the code of best practices in Nigeria. *Journal of Business and Retail Management Research*, 11(3).
28. Nuhu, M., & Mohammed, U. D. (2021). Influence of Business Management Practices on Employment
29. Generation in Abuja. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 11(4), 1069-1082
30. Onngam, W., & Charoensukmongkol, P. (2024). Effect of social media agility on performance of small and medium enterprises: Moderating roles of firm size and environmental dynamism. *Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies*, 16(6), 1610–1632.
31. Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria. (2023). National SME survey report. SMEDAN Publications.
32. Solomon, O. H., Allen, T., & Wangombe, W. (2024). Analysing the factors that influence social media adoption among SMEs in developing countries. *Journal of International Entrepreneurship*, 22(2), 248–267.
33. Udeogu, A. C., & Oparah, P. C. (2025). The relationship existing between social media usage and customer relationship management for MSMEs in Anambra State. *SSR Journal of Artificial Intelligence (SSRJAI)*, 2(1), 54–62.
34. Udom, A. J., & Ekpouko, J. C. (2024). Navigating success: The impact of social media strategies on small and medium-scale businesses in Ikot Ekpene, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Innovation in Marketing Elements*, 4(1), 39–58.
35. Ukoha, U. D., Asiabaka, I., Ogolo, I., & Ugwu, K. (2025). Technological innovation strategies and performance of small and medium enterprises in South-South Nigeria. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Management Research*, 11(1), 441–460.
36. Umetiti, C. B., Nwafor, A. E., Arachie, A. E., & Ifeme, A. P. (2025). Digital literacy in the context of small and medium enterprises: A performance dynamics. *International Journal of Public Administration and Management Research*, 11(1), 1–17.