The Impact of Social Media Marketing On SMES: A Case Study of Nigeria

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of social media marketing on Nigerian SMEs, using a case study approach. The focus will be on the role played by social media marketing, social media, word of mouth, purchase intention, customer engagement, and brand awareness, in the growth of SMEs in Nigeria.

Methodology: The study will adopt a quantitative approach using online questionnaires to gather data. The research will adopt a case study approach, where respondents from SMEs from various industries will participate voluntarily in the study. The research will collect up to 200 data from different locations and industries in Nigeria. The questionnaire will be designed to take cues from (Nya Gibson 2018; Danho et al 2020). The collected data will be processed using a 5-point Likert scale, and the relationship between variables tested with Cronbach reliability test, correlation, and regression analysis.

Findings – The research findings strongly indicate that social media marketing has a significant and positive impact on both brand awareness and customer engagement for Nigerian SMEs. This study concludes that there exists a significant and positive relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention for Nigerian SMEs. The research reveals a positive relationship between social media marketing and word of mouth for Nigerian SMEs.

Originality/value – The value of the study is that it will evaluate the impact of social media marketing on SMEs in Nigeria. It will also examine the role of social media, word of mouth, customer engagement, purchase intention, and brand awareness has played in the growth of SMEs in Nigeria. The study will also highlight the challenges faced by SMEs while implementing social media marketing and then proffer suggestions on how to mitigate them.

Introduction
1.0 Overview

This chapter gives context for the research by identifying gaps in the current literature, hence giving justification for the investigation. The study aims, objectives, and questions will be explored, as well as the research contribution and organization. The chapter will conclude with a summary and introduction to the following chapter.

1. 1 Research Background

Social media marketing is gaining popularity among businesses due to its ability to connect with potential consumers at a low cost, ease of use, and technical manageability. It involves publishing content, engaging followers, analyzing results, and running advertisements (Chatterjee, S., & Kumar Kar, A., 2020). The rapid emergence of social media marketing has led to increased market competition, with many SMEs considering it from a business-to-consumer perspective. Social media marketing is essential for promoting economic growth and maintaining relationships with customers (Alalwan, 2018). It offers numerous benefits and opportunities for companies, including attracting new customers, maintaining existing relationships, and intensifying cooperation with customers (Lawal et al 2022).

Marketers feel that social media platforms are an important aspect of their marketing efforts because they enable firms to trade directly with end customers at cheap prices and boost productivity (Singh, & Singh,

2018). Companies, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), are using social media for a variety of marketing goals, including branding, research, customer relationship management, services, and sales promotions (Samat et al, 2018).

As more people use social media sites and use them efficiently and consistently, social media marketing is becoming increasingly vital for SMEs in Nigeria (Morah & Omojola 2018).
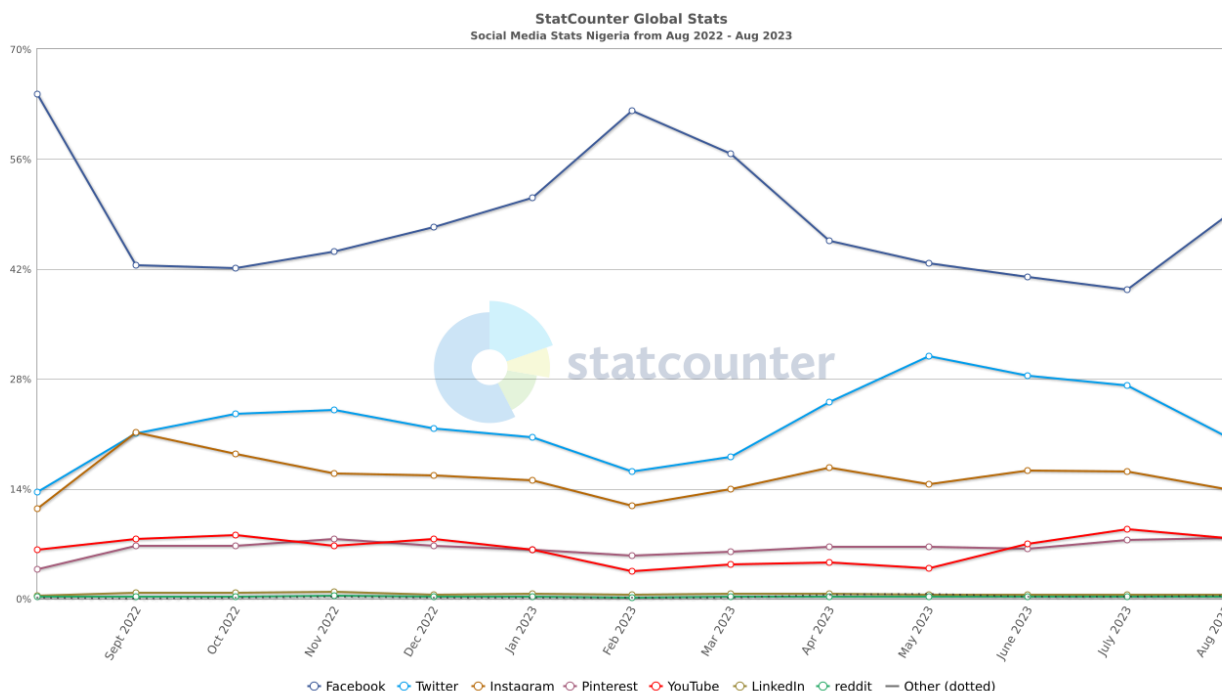

Figure 1: Social Media Use by Nigerians Picture Courtesy of Statcounter

Social media marketing is a crucial aspect of SMEs' growth, as it allows them to promote their products and services, increase visibility on the internet, and develop a social network for exchanging ideas and knowledge. Different communication methods are perceived as more favorable on certain social media networks, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube (Jimada, U, 2019; Gbandi & Iyamu 2022).

Customers can get relevant information about other products on social media, which leads to high customer satisfaction and repeat purchases (Salem and Salem, 2019; Olujide, O., & Philip, D. O., 2020). Traditional media marketing is giving way to social media marketing as businesses urge customers to visit their platforms for additional information (Gbandi & Iyamu 2022).

SMEs have grown at an unprecedented rate worldwide, contributing significantly to economic progress (Bajdor, Pawełoszek & Fidlerova, 2021). In Nigeria, the SME sector employed 84.02% of the total labor force in December 2017 (NBS, 2021). However, due to fierce competition among SMEs for the same target market, many SMEs find it difficult to survive. Social media marketing can help disadvantaged SMEs revamp their growth and successes by reaching existing and prospective customers worldwide, promoting and showcasing their products and services, and engaging meaningfully with current and potential customers (Salam & Hoque, 2019; Lawal & Adejuwon 2023).

The use of social media by small businesses is an important but under-researched area, as it provides leverage for SMEs by creating mechanisms for attaining sustainable competitive advantage. However, most SME business operators in Nigeria have not embraced the immeasurable advantages of social media marketing in their businesses (C.M Ile et al 2018).

SMEs face challenges like high startup costs, market visibility to over 200 million people, high cost of advertisement, cost of engaging customers, and brand awareness. Many SMEs get frustrated and leave the business, while others adopt marketing strategies that help project their services and products to their customers. One of these strategies is the adoption of social media marketing as a means to project their business and engage the customer (Danish, 2019).

Traditional forms of promotion, such as advertising, public relations, publicity, sponsorship, and sales promotions, require huge capital outlays and professional or technical know-how to understand and operate. Social media platforms seem to meet this need for SMEs, but there are issues of data cost, fluctuating

network services, creation of attractive content and posts, and audience engagement on social media (Kumar & Ayedee, 2018).

1.2 Research Gap

C.M Ile et al (2018) did a research focused on using social media as a tool on innovativeness and customer relationship management by SMEs. Nuha Hassan E.E et al, (2018) did a study focused on the application and impacts of social media on SMEs with an emphasis on strategy, marketing opportunities, and marketing challenges. Kateri Zahradden (2021) research focus was on Kano State and the relationship between social media adoption and business performance. Ndife Chinelo (2020) carried out a study with a focus on the relationship between social media and sales performance, customer base, and profitability of SMEs in Anambra State.

A thorough review of the literature identified gaps in several areas of study addressing social media marketing and SMEs in Nigeria. For starters, there has been little study on social media marketing to SMEs in Nigeria. Second, there has been little research on the role of word of mouth in social media marketing for SMEs. Third, there has been little research on the relationship between social media marketing and SMEs' purchasing intentions. Fourth, there is minimal research on the problems experienced by SMEs when adopting social media marketing efforts, and finally, there is insufficient study on identifying essential success criteria for SMEs in Nigeria when implementing social media marketing initiatives.

1.3 Research Rationale

In recent years, the proliferation of social media has transformed the business landscape, offering new opportunities and challenges for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria. While some research has delved into the impact of social media on SMEs in the Nigerian context as mentioned in the research gaps, a comprehensive understanding of this dynamic relationship is still lacking. This research rationale aims to address several significant gaps identified in the existing literature, emphasizing the need for a more nuanced and holistic investigation of social media marketing's role in enhancing SMEs' performance.

One of the critical gaps in the current literature is the limited research dedicated to understanding the intricacies of social media marketing within the context of SMEs in Nigeria. While several studies have explored the broader landscape of social media and its implications for businesses, there is a pressing need for research that specifically targets SMEs. These SMEs often operate in unique conditions, characterized by resource constraints and specific market dynamics. Investigating how SMEs in Nigeria utilize social media platforms to gain a competitive edge can provide valuable insights into tailoring marketing strategies for this sector.

Word of mouth (WOM) remains a potent force in shaping consumer perceptions and purchase decisions. However, the existing literature has not adequately explored how WOM operates within the realm of social media marketing for SMEs in Nigeria. Understanding how online WOM (eWOM) influences brand awareness, reputation, and customer engagement is vital for crafting effective social media strategies tailored to the Nigerian SME context.

A critical aspect of any marketing strategy is its impact on consumers' purchase intention. Yet, there is a dearth of research examining the relationship between social media marketing efforts and the purchase intention of customers specifically for SMEs operating in Nigeria. Investigating how social media engagement, content strategies, and consumer interactions affect purchase intent can provide actionable insights for SMEs striving to increase sales and revenue.

The implementation of social media marketing strategies poses unique challenges for SMEs in Nigeria, ranging from limited resources to digital literacy issues. Current research lacks a comprehensive analysis of these challenges, hindering the development of effective solutions. Investigating the specific obstacles that SMEs encounter in adopting and maintaining successful social media campaigns can inform policymakers and practitioners on how to overcome these hurdles.

Finally, the literature falls short in terms of identifying the critical success factors that underpin effective social media marketing initiatives for SMEs in Nigeria. Understanding what drives success in this context can guide SMEs in developing strategies that yield tangible results. This gap underscores the necessity of conducting research that extracts actionable insights for SMEs looking to leverage social media as a catalyst for growth.

In conclusion, addressing these research gaps is imperative to enhance the understanding of how social media marketing can be harnessed effectively by SMEs in Nigeria. Such insights can lead to the development of tailored strategies, better resource allocation, and ultimately contribute to the sustainable growth of SMEs in Nigeria's evolving business landscape. This research rationale sets the stage for a comprehensive investigation into the dynamic relationship between social media marketing and SMEs in Nigeria, aiming to fill these crucial knowledge gaps.

1.4 Research Questions
1. How does social media marketing impact brand awareness and customer engagement for Nigerian SMEs, and what are the implications for business growth?
2. What is the influence of social media marketing on purchase intention for Nigerian SMEs, and how can it be optimized to increase sales?
3. What is the relationship between social media marketing and word of mouth for Nigerian SMEs, and how can it be leveraged to drive company growth?
4. What challenges do Nigerian SMEs face in implementing effective social media marketing strategies, and how can these challenges be addressed to enhance their marketing success?

1.5 Research Objectives
1. To investigate the impact of social media marketing on brand awareness and customer engagement for Nigerian SMEs, and to ascertain its implications for business growth.
2. To assess the influence of social media marketing on purchase intention for Nigerian SMEs and recommend optimization strategies to enhance sales.
3. To explore the relationship between social media marketing and word of mouth for Nigerian SMEs, with the aim of identifying methods to leverage this relationship for company growth.
4. To identify and analyze the challenges faced by Nigerian SMEs in the implementation of effective social media marketing strategies, and to provide practical recommendations and solutions for overcoming these challenges.

1.6 Research Contributions
The contribution of the study is that it will evaluate the impact of social media marketing on SMEs in Nigeria. It will also examine the role of social media, word of mouth, customer engagement, purchase intention, and brand awareness has played in the growth of SMEs in Nigeria. The study will also highlight the challenges faced by SMEs while implementing social media marketing and then proffer suggestions on how to mitigate them. These findings will be beneficial to entrepreneurs who create social media platforms. Academicians, SME owners, and government agencies will benefit from the research findings. The benefits inherent in these value offerings for SMEs will spur more SMEs into harnessing social media marketing for their businesses. The platforms used by these SMEs in harnessing these offerings are valuable information that will affect a lot of stakeholders (potential start-ups, platform owners, content creators, academicians, and students).

1.7 Research Structure
This research study's format begins by introducing the research backdrop, questions, objectives, and contributions. The second chapter will include a survey of the topic's literature as well as hypotheses linked with it. The chapter will go into great detail on SMEs in Nigeria, social media marketing (word of mouth, brand awareness, purchase intention, and customer intention), and SME growth utilizing a balanced scorecard. The conceptual framework and hypotheses will be presented at the conclusion of the chapter. The third chapter will go into the research study's methods; research philosophy, research design, study population, and study sample. It is essentially the methodological choices made in the study to gather and evaluate data while keeping the research objectives and questions in mind. The fourth chapter will provide the analytic results and report the findings, while the final chapter will evaluate the research findings and limits, as well as make recommendations for future research.

1.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided the research background, research question, and aim to give the reader an idea of what to expect throughout the study. The next chapter will look at marketing communication theories and extant literature on social media marketing and SMEs in Nigeria.

Literature Review
2.1 Chapter Overview
This section will concentrate on marketing communication theories, a review of the study's literature, the conceptual framework, and hypotheses. The literature study will primarily include an overview of Nigerian SMEs, the notion of social media marketing, social media, word of mouth, customer interaction, purchase intention, brand awareness, and social media platforms. It will also emphasize the connection between social media marketing and SMEs.

2.2 Overview of SMEs in Nigeria
SMEs are critical for economic growth and development, with governments in both developed and developing countries recognizing them as a source of employment, innovation, and wealth creation (Effendi et al., 2020). SMEs provide over 50% of jobs in developing countries and have been shown to relieve poverty, notably in Nigeria (Lorenz & Pommet, 2018; Redjeki & Affandi, 2021). They also communicate using social media, exchanging information about discounts, promotions, and sales procedures (Isiaka et al 2022). Profitability, growth, market value, total return on shareholder, economic value contributed, customer satisfaction, and stakeholder expectations may all be used to assess the success of SMEs (Eze et al., 2021). Non-financial indicators include firm goodwill, sales, employment, assets, turnover, profits and output, brand image, and value produced. Businesses frequently emphasize sales, which leads to the use of social media in advertising and engaging customers in order to enhance sales (Hossain et al., 2018).

Social media usage in business has greatly expanded the operations of small and medium-sized firms (SMEs), lowering unemployment and contributing to economic growth (Syaifullah et al., 2021; Guo et al., 2020). Social media has evolved into an important channel for SMEs to sell their products, allowing them to reach a bigger audience and facilitating smooth interactions between marketers and potential buyers (Ahmad et al., 2018). This has improved customer satisfaction and given SMEs an edge over competitors. The 4th Industrial Revolution has enabled improved information and communication technology (ICT), leading to companies like Amazon selling worldwide through their online platforms. In Nigeria, businesses are using social media platforms to advertise and market their products to a large global audience. Social media usage has not only improved product marketing and customer satisfaction but also improved employee attitudes towards remote working, enhancing hiring expertise and knowledge sharing, and promoting new innovations (Qalati et al., 2022).

Social media is a popular choice for SMEs due to its benefits such as improved interaction, clear communication, proactive responses to customer needs, and cost-effective strategic options (Nuseir, 2018). However, adoption requires a supportive culture and employee encouragement. The high mortality rate of SMEs in Nigeria poses a significant threat to the economy. Businesses must use opportunities while avoiding flaws in order to thrive. Without original formulations, strategic adjustments such as expansion, cash sales policy, innovation strategy, manufacturing techniques, local sourcing, backward integration, and mergers might occur. Entrepreneurs must be innovative, visionary, adventurous, risk-taking, gutsy, and sensitive to changes in the business environment in order to find business possibilities. Many small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) have adopted social media marketing to acquire a competitive edge and develop their businesses (Locket, 2018).

In respect to this study, Yin argues that case studies are valuable because they offer a way to deeply explore and understand complex real-world phenomena within their specific contexts. They provide empirical evidence, allow for flexibility in application, and are particularly useful for capturing the richness and intricacies of the cases they investigate (Yin, 2014)

2.3 Social Media Marketing
Social media marketing is a sort of internet marketing that involves the use of social networking sites as a marketing strategy (Gurney et al., 2004; Vila & Kuster, 2004). The goal of social media marketing is to produce information that people would share on social media, therefore supporting a company in improving brand awareness and widening customer reach (Ogbonnaya 2019). It uses podcasts, wikis, blogs, online videos, photo sharing, news sharing, message boards, and posts on social networking sites to reach a large or targeted audience. Because of the rise of social media, the marketing environment has shifted dramatically in the previous decade (Nkpurukwe et al 2022). Consumers now have much more power and influence over

their peers as a result of their increasing usage of social media and word-of-mouth. Users can utilize social networking platforms and tools to post material, propose items, and so on (Madu et al 2021).

The concept of social media marketing has evolved, especially with the advancement of digital marketing applications. It refers to the use of internet platforms in creating product, service and organizational presence as well as building diverse relationships. Lawal (2021) conceived it as the use of social media platforms, blogs, social news and bookmarking, micro-blog, forums and virtual worlds, media sharing, and rating and reviews pages for marketing purposes. Currently, social media marketing is gradually gaining momentum as a strategic tool that could help business organizations create product and/or service awareness, take different market offerings to the target audience, as well as create marketing networks with other organizations (Lawal 2021).

However, as technological innovations continue to influence different phases of marketing activities, it has equally affected the way and manner with which firms offer their products and communicate with their customers (Sarah 2018). Social media marketing has revolutionized the traditional ways of marketing products and services to modern technological developments, which, if not properly managed, may serve as a serious threat to most telecommunication firms that operate in a highly competitive market (John et al, 2019).

Social media marketing has introduced a new concept of exponential dissemination and trust to mass communication and mass marketing by encouraging users to share messages to personal contacts. There are multiple social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus, and LinkedIn, that assume various shapes and have various functionality. Facebook's primary aim is to empower people to share and to make the world more open and connected. Other social networking sites, such as Twitter, Google Plus, and LinkedIn, may differ in various ways, but they all operate on the same basic principles (Gekombe, Tumsifu, & Jani, 2019).

2.3.1 Social Media
Social media has had a transformative impact on the organization, both within and outside. Recent advances in relational inference about client preferences, innovative peer-to-peer and targeted marketing methods, and demand forecasting have all depended on it (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Muller & Peres 2019, Quinton & Wilson 2016). Furthermore, social media is transforming the way businesses interact with their employees, enabling them to form flexible connections with faraway talent, crowdsource new ideas, and engage in micro outsourcing (Adoyi et al 2022).

Social media is a platform that allows individuals to create, share, and/or exchange information and ideas by allowing them to join in virtual communities and networks. It is efficient and has motivated many companies to join the social media platform in order to participate in the successful online environment (Gironda & Korgaonkar, 2014; Kim et al., 2014). Based on ownership, social media platforms are divided into two types: firm-sponsored or individual publications (e.g. blogs) and third-party forums (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn) (Locket 2018; Muk & Chung, 2014; Smith et al., 2012). According to some, social media may improve a range of facets of a company's performance, including client interactions and customer service operations. Marketing performance is multifaceted, and organizations frequently make critical decisions that represent a trade-off between stressing effectiveness or efficiency (Gekombe, Tumsifu, & Jani, 2019).

Adoyi et al. (2022) defined marketing performance characteristics such as single financial output. According to studies, social media technologies may enhance company operations and performance. Some academics have discovered that corporate social media adoption delivers advantages, and some of them have discovered a favorable association between social media adoption and business performance (Kwok and Yu, 2013). Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are widely recognized across the world as powerful vehicles for wealth growth, job creation, and sustainability. According to studies, SMEs have maintained their status as the global economy's backbone (Cooley and Smith, 2010).

Adoption of technology improves both financial and nonfinancial performance, and SMEs are worldwide acknowledged as tools for wealth growth, job creation, and sustainability. The Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) sector in Nigeria contributes significantly to the economy, employing 84.02% of the total labor force (NBS 2021). As it may contribute to a nation's cultural, personal, social, political, and economic growth, social media has played a critical role in boosting the competitiveness of SMEs. However, the recent Twitter ban imposed by the Federal Ministry of Information and Culture has had a rippling effect

on millions of Nigerians, inciting outrage among Nigerians who regard it as a government attack on free expression. Nigerian businesses are especially sensitive to the issues provided by the recent Twitter ban (Seyi 2021).

Twitter has played an important part in brand and corporate marketing strategies, improving brand recognition, reaching and engaging a target audience, and driving overall brand growth (Anakle.com 2021). However, the Nigerian government has essentially crippled its economy and restricted SMEs' ability to efficiently perform their economic responsibilities. Due to many prospective clients not having access to Twitter or opting out, SMEs promoting their products on Twitter may experience major revenue decreases (Ekundayo 2021).

Social media is a valuable instrument in the marketing area since it may reach the targeted audience at the lowest possible cost and aid in the development of future clients. Many techniques for customers to communicate with businesses and their brands are explained in research, such as consumer involvement with company Facebook pages, publishing brand content on YouTube or Twitter using some social media platforms (Adoyi et al 2022). According to the report, about 60% of marketers employ video tools backed by social media for marketing reasons, and more marketers are now utilizing the new hot technology of live video streaming (Adoyi et al 2022). Furthermore, actions such as engaging consumers by publishing relevant material on social media, gathering feedback and smartly reacting to it, and finally altering marketing strategy based on feedback enhance web traffic, which leads to being at the top of search engine optimization. According to Adoyi et al. (2022), social media are platforms on which individuals develop networks and share information and/or feelings in a commercial environment.

Social media has caused three fundamental disruptions in the economy by allowing businesses and customers to connect in ways that were previously impossible. The degree and range of social relationships determine whether they are strong or weak (Muller & Peres 2019). Social media has changed the way businesses and customers communicate and influence one another. Social contact entails "actions" that impact the choices and consumption habits of others. Social media data has made it more viable for businesses to better manage consumer interactions and improve corporate decision making (Muller & Peres 2019).

In summary, the transformative impact of social media on businesses is undeniable. It has redefined customer relationships, reshaped marketing strategies, and empowered firms to make data-driven decisions. By embracing the opportunities and challenges presented by social media, businesses can navigate the evolving digital landscape and foster stronger connections with their audience.

2.3.2 Electronic Word of Mouth

Because of its capacity to travel swiftly and casually, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) is a potent weapon in the corporate sector (Zhang et al., 2010). EWOM refers to online remarks regarding a product or service made by people who are not directly involved in its sale or distribution (King et al., 2014). These reports are easily accessible to consumers, Internet users, and dealers worldwide. In many aspects, EWOM is comparable to traditional WOM, except that it conveys news more swiftly and consistently (Lawal & Adejuwon 2023).

Social media influencers are important actors in the marketing industry because they have a large following of people who trust their opinions on products and companies. Social media influencers become the face of your business or product, a known individual with a large following (Chatterjee, 2001). As consumers increasingly utilize numerous platforms to communicate information and even influence purchasing behavior, word-of-mouth marketing is a linked endeavor that also incorporates offline marketing (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Kim & Park, 2013). Marketers have discovered that integrating word-of-mouth exposure with peer-to-peer programs and activities such as customer evaluations, social media-related WOM activities, referral marketing, and so on, may increase the worldwide effect of their marketing initiatives.

It entails encounters and experiences with firms, including conversations about businesses and products (Kumar & Benbasat, 2006). WOM results in more customers, quicker sales cycles, better branding, and much more customer information on product and service marketing (Cheung and Thadani, 2012). Because of the unpredictable nature of customer reactions, communication appears to be much more personalized and uncontrollable than ever before with the emergence of social media, but at the same time the dynamic changes in social media have made it a more complex and involved medium for marketers (Bickart &

Schindler, 2001; Zhang et al., 2010). Word-of-mouth marketing results in additional consumers, quicker sales cycles, greater branding, and much more customer information on product and service marketing (K.R. Subramanian, 2018).

Word-of-mouth (WOM) is an informal communication regarding a product or service consumption related viewpoint experience that is exchanged between current and prospective users of the same product or service (Zhu & Zhang, 2010). WOM may be good or bad, with positive WOM referring to consumers making favorable suggestions with the goal of spreading the word, and negative WOM referring to actions that might harm the image of a company, brand, or product (Purnasari and Yuliando, 2015). Both types of WOM are primarily carried out through two ways of communication: face-to-face and electronic media. Traditional fWOM is defined as oral, person-to-person, or face-to-face communication between a receiver and a communicator of noncommercial information about a brand, product, or service. (Oraedu 2020).

In support of the fWOM idea, eWOM has arisen as a technology-enabled form of communication. Electronic or computer-mediated platforms are used to share experiences and source information in eWOM (Zhang, J. Q.; Craciun, G.; Shin, D., 2010). With over 67% of internet users utilizing social media platforms, it has become a simple tool for customers to exchange experiences and get information. The media platforms Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter are of particular importance in this study. Telecom consumers have various preferences and motivations for adopting any of these media to meet their information source and processing needs (Teng et al., 2014). The Facebook "like" and "comment" capabilities serve as information-sharing and information-building tools, whereas Twitter's tweet and re-tweet tools serve to engage customers and boost web traffic. WhatsApp status updates and comments, as well as video uploads, provide users with a unique platform for sharing their experiences with their contact base (Oraedu 2020).

2.3.3 Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is an essential aspect in brand loyalty perception. It is the amount of acceptability of a certain product in the mind of the client, which is unrelated to brand class and is based on perceptual frequency (Kim, Kim, Kim, Kim, Kim, & Kang, 2008). The initial steps in brand communication are brand awareness and recall. Without brand awareness, a corporation may be unable to communicate effectively with its consumers (Kapferer, 2008). Marketing managers and executives in the restaurant business dedicate a significant amount of time and resources to increasing brand recognition and developing continuous, linked programs (Gautam & Shrestha, 2018).

However, the restaurant sector has its own set of problems that must be addressed if success is to be achieved. Marketers of hospitality products and services ensure that product information is up to date and easily accessible via different forms of mass, conventional, and social media (Keller, 1993). Customers' understanding of a company's product or service is influenced by brand awareness (Yoo & Donthu, 2001). There are two kinds of awareness: assisted awareness and top of mind awareness. Aided awareness occurs when a buyer can identify/recognize a certain brand, whereas top of mind awareness occurs when the name of a brand is instantly recalled (Ritanjali Majh, 2020).

In many ways, brand awareness assists customers in their decision-making about the purchase of a certain product, such as using it as a nominal anchor in their buying decisions (Yoo & Donthu, 2001). It also helps a customer comprehend which product or service category a certain brand belongs to, as well as what items and services are sold under the brand name. This implies that a well-known brand among customers is more likely to outperform a lesser-known brand that is poorly advertised or is recently developed (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Brand awareness influences consumer purchasing decisions and improves the relationship between a firm and its clients (Kumar and Moller, 2018).

2.3.4 Customer Engagement

L. Hollebeek (2018) defines customer engagement as a customer's personal connection to a brand as evidenced in cognitive, emotive, and behavioral behaviors. Customer engagement may also be defined as "making the brand a meaningful part of consumers' conversations and lives by fostering direct and continuous customer involvement in shaping brand conversations, experiences, and community" (Wajdy Omr 2021). Following marketers' enthusiasm for two-way communication capabilities afforded by social media platforms, and bolstered by rapid development in brand pages on Facebook for engaging consumers (Kaur et al., 2018), social media channels have been embraced to engage customers. As a result, consumers

have become co-creators and transporters of brand messages, providing organizations with an enormous chance to gain from free word of mouth (Leckie et al.,2018).

According to recent academic interest, consumer engagement research will provide a significant boost in relationship marketing (Carlson, 2018). Customer engagement has been seen as a notion with the potential to increase customer behavior prediction and clarification. client Engagement (CE) is defined as a psychological process that promotes client loyalty (Coelho & Santos, 2018). It is viewed as a probable precursor to repeated purchases (behavioral loyalty) prompted by a strong internal propensity over time. There has been a large body of research on consumer repeat purchases in marketing as a result of happiness, participation, and a pleasant customer experience (Palusuk et al., 2019, Bçakcolu et al., 2018).

Researchers observed that engagement has a favorable impact on recurrent purchases, and that it shows substantially more variety in loyalty than typical patterns including value, quality, and satisfaction. Customer engagement has been proposed to be a superior predictor of customer loyalty in interactive environments, where traditional models such as satisfaction, comfort, and usability are indicators of customer loyalty but only include the cognitive side in making a customer's purchase decisions (Shamah et al., 2018). Customer engagement is the motivating condition that arises when customers actively participate in cooperative, two-way interactions with a brand. It is the degree to which a client invests his or her ideas, feelings, and actions in encounters with a brand. Customer engagement is a multifaceted notion having cognitive, emotional, and/or behavioral elements that plays an important part in the process of relational exchange. Other related ideas might be engagement antecedents and/or outcomes in iterative engagement processes within the brand community (Lawal & Adejuwon 2023).

2.3.5 Purchase Intention

Purchase intent is a mix of customer interest in and desire to purchase a specific goods. It happens throughout the decision-making process of customers who are ready to commit to a specific product or brand (Liu et al., 2019). Purchase intention is an essential indicator for evaluating consumer behavior since it measures customers' willingness to acquire a product. It is critical to understand customer purchase intentions since purchase intentions can predict consumer behaviours (Lita et al., 2020). Because purchase intention is a complicated process including customer behavior, perceptions, and attitudes, it may be used to anticipate the purchasing process (Adelina et al 2022).

Several research on the impact of social media marketing on customer behavior, particularly purchase intention, have been undertaken. Alfeel and Ansari (2019) discovered that online social networks influence every step of a consumer's purchase choice process, with convenience being the primary motivator. Purchase intentions of consumers are an attitudinal variable for gauging their future contributions to product purchases (Oliver & Bearden, 1985). Consumer purchasing intentions are formed based on their overall opinions regarding a certain product. Positive purchase intentions frequently represent the customer's positive involvement or loyalty toward items (Kahraman & Kazançolu, 2019).

Intention, as defined in the literature, signifies the subjective probability that a particular action will be executed (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007). In the context of consumer behavior, purchase intentions serve as valuable indicators for predicting the items customers are likely to purchase during their next shopping endeavor. This predictive aspect aids businesses in tailoring their offerings to align with customer preferences and needs (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007).

Moreover, the impact of social media extends beyond consumer buying behavior and delves into the realm of travel experiences. Research conducted by Baabdullah et al. (2019) provides insights into the positive influence of social media on travel planning and experiences. Specifically, their study underscores the constructive relationship between the use of social media in travel planning and the enhancement of travel experiences. Furthermore, the research findings highlight the role of sharing behavior and experiences on social media platforms, reinforcing the positive association between the two variables and the act of sharing travel experiences within the digital sphere (Baabdullah et al., 2019). This illustrates the growing significance of social media in shaping and augmenting various aspects of contemporary consumer experiences, including those related to travel.

2.3.6 Measuring SME Growth Using the balanced Scorecard

The concept of the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) was initially introduced by Kaplan and Norton in 1992 as a comprehensive framework of measures designed to offer top-level managers a holistic and efficient way to

assess business performance (Kaplan & Norton, 1992). This framework encompasses not only traditional financial metrics, which provide insights into past performance, but also incorporates operational metrics related to customer satisfaction, internal processes, and the organization's innovation and improvement endeavors (Išoraitė Margarita, 2008).

Crucially, the BSC is deeply rooted in an organization's strategic objectives and competitive imperatives, serving as a direct derivative of its vision and strategic direction. The objectives and performance indicators outlined in the scorecard are intricately linked to the organization's overarching vision and strategy. The BSC's unique perspective encompasses four key dimensions: financial, customer, internal business processes, and learning and growth (Kaplan & Norton, 1992). These dimensions collectively provide a comprehensive view of organizational performance and value creation activities.

Notably, the BSC is instrumental in capturing the critical activities that drive value within an organization, a factor heavily reliant on the skills and motivation of its participants. While the financial perspective addresses short-term performance, the balanced scorecard is particularly adept at highlighting the value drivers that underpin sustained long-term financial success and competitive superiority (Kim Anh Vu Thi et al., 2018).

In essence, the Balanced Scorecard not only aligns organizational performance with its strategic vision but also equips management with a multifaceted tool for evaluating and enhancing performance across critical dimensions, ultimately contributing to both short-term financial results and long-term competitiveness (Kaplan & Norton, 1992; Išoraitė Margarita, 2008; Kim Anh Vu Thi et al., 2018).

Financial performance measurements are an important component of the BSC since they reveal if a company's strategy, implementation, and execution are leading to bottom-line growth. They are retroactive performance metrics that reflect the outcomes of previous managerial decisions, and relying only on them causes firms to underperform (Kaplan and Norton 1997). Return on equity, return on assets, cash flow, earnings per share, sales, earnings before income tax (EBIT), sales/total assets, return on capital employed, fixed costs, labor costs, scrap, rework, revenue growth, profit margins, cash flow, and net operating income are among these measures (Kim Anh Vu Thi et al 2018). A customer perspective plan helps business unit managers to develop a customer and market-based strategy that will produce superior future financial returns. Customer satisfaction, customer retention, new customer acquisition, customer profitability, and market and account share are all important outcome indicators. The sector specific drivers of core customer outcomes are the elements that influence consumers' decisions to transfer or remain loyal to their providers. This viewpoint helps business unit managers to create a customer- and market-based strategy that will produce superior future financial returns (Kim Anh Vu Thi et al 2018).

Internal business process measurements reflect a company's degree of performance and what it needs do internally to reach customer and financial goals. They must be carefully crafted by individuals who are familiar with the firm's internal operations, drawn from the firm's specific vision and mission statement/strategy. The fundamental abilities and critical technologies are then determined (Kim Anh Vu Thi et al 2018).

The BSC's Learning and development viewpoint emphasizes the infrastructure that businesses must construct in order to achieve long-term development and progress. People, systems, and organizational processes are all included. Businesses must spend in reskilling personnel, improving information technology and systems, and harmonizing organizational processes and routines in order to reduce gaps (Kim Anh Vu Thi et al 2018).

2.4 Theories and Frameworks
2.4.1 Marketing Communication Theory
Marketing communication theories are essential for comprehending and implementing efficient methods for advertising products and services to target consumers. These theories offer frameworks and insights on how to utilize communication to influence customer behavior and achieve marketing goals. Here are some major marketing communication theories:

1. IMC is a philosophy as well as a collection of business strategies that enable consistent messaging across channels and give customers with a unified brand experience. This core marketing concept applies to all forms of business communication, not only advertising. The goal of integrated marketing is to provide clients with a consistent and positive experience every time they encounter or interact with a brand (Adobe

Communication Team, 2022). IMC theory emphasizes the significance of coordinating numerous communication channels and messages in order to provide a consistent and coherent brand image. Its primary goal is to achieve synergy among advertising, public relations, sales promotion, direct marketing, and other communication techniques (Mirosława Pluta-Olearnik, 2018).

2. The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) explains how people digest persuasive information and make judgments based on central and peripheral processing paths. It emphasizes the impact of communication substance, credibility, and audience motivation on attitudes and actions (Octafiola U.A & Yuliati E, 2022). The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), as proposed by Petty and Cacioppo in 1983, offers a valuable perspective on attitude change that intersects with other theories in the field (Browning, N., Gogo, O., & Kimmel, M. 2018). It has demonstrated its efficacy in predicting individual attitudes towards marketing communications, garnering attention from both advertisers and marketing experts (Belch, G. E., & Belch, M. A., 2018; John, S. P., & De'Villiers, R., 2020).

The ELM framework delineates two distinct routes within the persuasion process, namely the central and peripheral routes (Griffith, E. E., Nolder, C. J., & Petty, R. E., 2018). This model provides a comprehensive lens through which to understand how individuals engage with and respond to persuasive messages. It underscores the significance of cognitive elaboration in shaping attitudes and, ultimately, behavioral change. As such, the ELM remains a valuable tool in the arsenal of researchers and practitioners seeking to unravel the complexities of attitude formation and change (Petty & Cacioppo, 1983; Browning, N., Gogo, O., & Kimmel, M. 2018; Belch, G. E., & Belch, M. A., 2018; John, S. P., & De'Villiers, R., 2020; Griffith, E. E., Nolder, C. J., & Petty, R. E., 2018).

3. Diffusion of Innovation theory investigates how new ideas, goods, or technology spread and are embraced by people and societies. It analyzes critical adoption criteria such as perceived relative benefit, compatibility, complexity, how the new invention can be observed and tried. It was propounded by E.M. Rogers in 1962, and is one of the oldest social science ideas. It was created in communication to explain how an idea or product gains traction and diffuses (or spreads) over time within a certain demographic or social system. Individuals adopt a new notion, habit, or product as part of a social system as a result of this diffusion. Adoption occurs when a person does something different from what they previously did (for example, acquiring or utilizing a new product, learning and executing a new habit, etc.). Adoption necessitates that the individual consider the notion, activity, or product to be innovative or imaginative, as this is the only way for dissemination to occur (Wayne W. LaMorte 2022).

4. Social Exchange Theory: This theory investigates the formation and maintenance of interpersonal relationships through the exchange of resources and benefits. It describes how customers assess the value proposition supplied by businesses and make decisions based on perceived advantages and costs in the context of marketing communication. The Social Exchange Theory explains four main constituents of the social behaviour of individuals: reinforcement tools (rewards/benefits and resources of exchange) and mechanisms of exchange (subjective cost-reward analysis). Rewards are the result of positive relationships, whereas resources are a characteristic that gives a person the power to enable the reward. Resources provide for two forms of rewards: socioemotional advantages and economic benefits. The second component is exchange mechanisms, which hypothesize that resources are transferred based on a subjective cost-reward analysis. This analysis is based on two major conditions that define a person's decision to engage in exchange relations: a) the degree to which a similar performance has been rewarded to a person or other people in the past, and b) the degree to which the result of the exchange is valuable to a person (Davlembayeva, D., & Alamanos, E., 2023).

Because the circumstances and duties are not clearly established, the cost and benefit elements in social trade differ from those in commercial transaction. To comprehend a user's perception, it is necessary to comprehend distinctions across persons in terms of trade orientation, variances in the comparison of costs and benefits over time, and changes in situations ((Mostafa & Bottomley, 2020). Social structures and social capital variables such as conventions, regulations, communication routes, expectations, and duties promote social exchange linkages. Social capital may both support and constrain the development of social connections and their effects, such as the distribution of power and equity within social networks. Reciprocity, the fourth mechanism underlying social interaction, generates duties between the parties (Wang & Liu, 2019).

According to research in experimental economics and evolutionary psychology, people are evolutionarily predisposed to behave in ways that assure reciprocation. People have created mental matrices that reflect the

balance of benefits and costs in relationships that support decision making. On the one hand, reciprocity is the norm, shaping ideas about trade outcomes and motivating behavior. On the other hand, it functions as a regulatory mechanism, assuring mutually beneficial connections based on the interdependence of participants. The positive or negative treatment of the target of trade, which can reflect the supply of support, high-quality service or commodities, or the sacrifices that the target undergoes, initiates social exchange (Davlembayeva, D., & Alamanos, E., 2023).

5. Uses and Gratifications Theory: The purpose of this hypothesis is to explain why individuals actively seek out and use media and communication venues. It analyzes customers' motivations, wants, and gratifications as a result of interacting with marketing messages and media content. In the early 1940s, Katz and Blumler (1974) proposed the uses and gratifications concept. It focuses on why people use various types of media, what expectations they have for them, and how much happiness they get from using them. It is predicated on two media assumptions: that audiences are active media members, and that consumers are more conscious of why they chose the specific media they use or consume. Furthermore, the theorists (Katz, Gurevitch, & Haas, 1973) divided the uses and gratifications hypothesis into specific needs, such as emotional, cognitive, personal, integrative, and tension-free needs. The theory emphasizes the importance of these needs in understanding the uses and gratifications theory (Faiswal Kasirye 2022).

6. Cultivation Theory: According to this hypothesis, long-term exposure to media material influences people's perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. It investigates how advertising and promotional messages impact customers' views of brands and goods over time in the context of marketing communication. In attempt to better comprehend and explain this phenomenon, George Gerbner developed Cultivation Theory, a macrolevel framework of explanation regarding mass media. By the 1970s, media researchers all across the world were becoming more interested in the concept of cultivation. Over 500 research on Cultivation Theory have been published since then. Gerbner claimed that it was critical to look beyond the short-term impacts of media on a person's views and to consider how media might gradually but cumulatively impose effects over time. He felt that changes in mass-produced and swiftly circulated communications can cause systematic shifts in the content of public statements transcending prior boundaries of location, time, and social groupings (Obert-Hong 2019).

Cultivation Theory was developed in response to what Gerbner saw as the dominant form of mass media studies at the time: micro-focused studies that used experiments to determine whether or not differences between features of media messages could explain immediate responses in attitudes, behaviors, and knowledge. Gerbner contended that when individuals were exposed to media messages in their daily lives, wider themes progressively influenced them. He said that message mass production and quick distribution produce new symbolic landscapes that mirror the structure and functions of the organizations that convey them. He also asserted that some meanings are mass-produced and widely disseminated by mass media, and that the meanings disseminated through media foster popular beliefs. This idea may appear simple and far-fetched to merit skepticism, yet Cultivation Theory and the research that has gone into it have grown into a major field of mass media studies (Obert-Hong 2019).

7. The Theory Of Hierarchy Of Effects: The hierarchy effects hypothesis is divided into six stages: awareness, knowledge, liking, preference, conviction, and purchase. According to the hierarchy of effects hypothesis, marketing communicators should communicate their message in six stages. The six stages described by Lavidge and Steiner fundamentally reflect consumer purchase behavior. The first two phases are cognitive in character (awareness and knowledge), the next two are effective, and the last two are behavioral in nature (Chakravarty & Sarma, 2018).

The idea of hierarchy effects includes two stages of development. The Early Development Phase (1898-1960) was a hierarchical model devised by E. St. Elmo Lewis (1898) to comprehend how a customer would react to sales and advertisement presentations and make purchasing decisions. Lewis (1898) created a three-stage AID (Attention-Interest-Desire) paradigm, which Barry (1987) and Barry and Howard (1990) noted. Printer's Ink (1910) proposed a four-step AICA model, emphasizing that advertising and selling must capture Attention, pique Interest, create Conviction, and elicit Action. In his AIDAS (favourable Attention-Interest-Desire-Action-permanent Satisfaction) model, Sheldon (1911) expanded on Lewis' work by stating that Attention must be 'favourable' and Satisfaction must be 'permanent' (Chakravarty & Sarma, 2018).

Throughout the history of advertising models, successive stages stressed different parts of the advertising process. The five-step Attention-Interest-Confidence-Conviction-Action paradigm was established by early models such as Hall (1915) and West Coast Life Insurance Company (1920). This concept stressed the need

of creating ads to increase customer interest, accelerate sales closure, and, most importantly, retain clients over time (Hall, 1915; West Coast Life Insurance Company, 1920).

Later, Lavidge and Steiner (1961) developed a more complex viewpoint that stressed the complex interaction between advertising and customer purchasing behavior. They proposed that the efficacy of an advertising is defined not only by its immediate impact, but also by its capacity to elicit a favorable response in the audience that lasts long after the advertisement is no longer in circulation.

Similarly, in his famous work titled 'Defining Advertising Goals for Measured Advertising Results' (DAGMAR), Colley (1961) established his Awareness, Comprehension, Conviction, Action (ACCA) model. This model presented an organized approach to advertising objectives and acknowledged the stages of awareness, comprehension, conviction, and action as essential components of effective advertising (Colley, 1961).

Furthermore, the Advertising Research Foundation (1961) contributed to a better understanding of consumer purchasing by emphasizing the function of communication in not only developing product knowledge but also molding customer attitudes. This highlighted the importance of advertising messages in shaping customer perceptions and choices (Advertising Research Foundation, 1961).

2.4.2 Integrated Marketing Communication Tools:

The concept of integrated marketing communication (IMC) emerged in the mid-1990s, when it was discovered that in order to accomplish effective marketing communication, numerous tools and communication channels must be coordinated in such a manner that the message provided by a firm is cohesive. In the years thereafter, there has been a shift in perception of IMC from a limited to a more holistic perspective. Researchers presented an example of a restrictive approach of the term when they concluded that IMC is a concept of building marketing communication programs that encompass all aspects of promotion (Mirosawa Pluta-Olearnik 2018).

Some scholars believe that IMC refers to managing an organization's dialogue with its internal and external stakeholders, in which the tools used must be consistent with the organization's goals and strategy, and the recipients must recognize all signals coming from the organization (Orasmäe Avery, 2017). Integrated marketing communication (IMC) is a strategic business process that is used to plan, develop, execute, and evaluate a coordinated, measurable, and convincing program of brand communication with consumers, potential clients, and other internal and external target recipients (Kliatchko 2005). It has gained popularity as a result of an increasing number of books on the subject as well as examples from corporate practice demonstrating the efficiency and efficacy of IMC initiatives. IMC is described as a strategic business process that is used to design, create, implement, and evaluate a coordinated, quantifiable, and persuasive program of brand communication with customers, potential clients, and other internal and external target receivers (Pickton & Broderick, 2005). IMC issues are researched on three bases: managing an organization's (brand's) integrated marketing communication, the process of integrated marketing communication, and integrated marketing communication tools used in purposefully chosen channels of communication with the environment (Mirosawa Pluta-Olearnik 2018).

Advertising, promotion, sales promotion, public relations, public relations and publicity, direct sales, sales personnel, personal communication, direct marketing, sponsoring, event and experience marketing, interactive marketing, buzz marketing, fairs and exhibitions, communication in social media, and event marketing are among the 41 marketing communication tools (O. Holm, 2006). The creation and functioning of a fairly disorderly and arbitrarily perceived internal structure is the outcome of an apparent dispersion and diversification of conceptual contents linked to certain communication instruments (V. Gabrielli & Balboni B., 2010). The modes of marketing communication stated above are formal in nature, but there is also informal communication that occurs through social media (Fam & Kim-Shyan, 2001). The growth of social media platforms has increased the environmental impact of marketing communication. The Internet and interactive media have enabled firms in the twenty-first century to monitor and gather data about consumers, understand their expectations, and change their purchase patterns (Mirosawa Pluta-Olearnik 2018).

This has resulted in the development of more intimate, personalized relationships between businesses and customers, as well as the ability to influence the market and its players (Duncan, T., and C. Caywood., 1996). Companies employ increasingly complicated communication models that take into account both mass

media and personalized techniques of influencing customer behavior. The 360 degree communication paradigm (Mirosawa Pluta-Olearnik 2018) describes this technique.

2.5 Conceptual Framework and Research Hypotheses
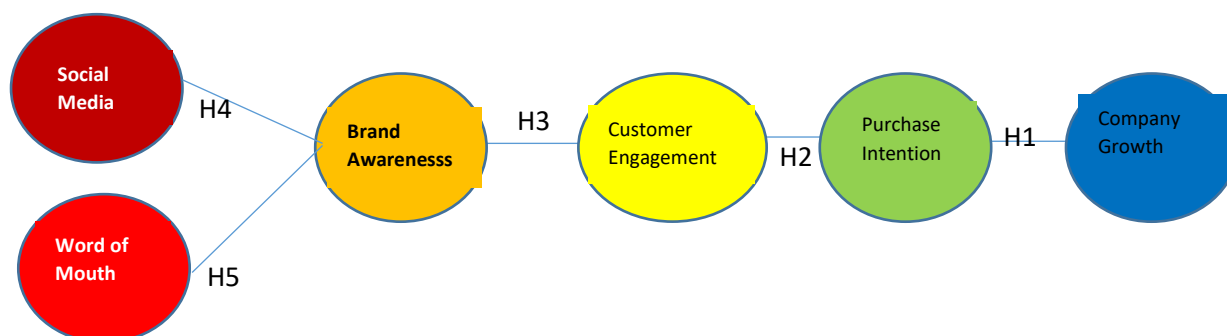
All the hypotheses will be set to null.
H1: There is no significant relationship between purchase intention and SME growth.
H2: There is no significant relationship between customer engagement and purchase intention for SMEs.
H3: There is no significant relationship between brand awareness and customer engagement for SMEs.
H4: There is no significant relationship between social media usage, brand awareness, customer engagement, purchase intention, or SME growth for SMEs.
H5: There is no significant relationship between word of mouth, brand awareness, customer engagement, purchase intention, or SME growth for SMEs.

2.6 Chapter Summary
The literature review provided an in-depth analysis of the influence of social media marketing on Nigerian SMEs, shedding light on the challenges faced during the implementation of these strategies. It also explored the applicability of marketing communication theories in deciphering how SMEs can harness social media marketing for their benefit. The subsequent chapter will delve into the research methodologies employed in this study.

Methodology
3.1 Chapter Overview
In this chapter, we delve into the methods and strategies applied throughout the research process. This encompasses the research methodology, the research's underlying nature, the chosen research philosophy, the overall research design, the defined study population, the employed sampling techniques and the determined sample size, as well as the selected methods for data collection and the subsequent data analysis techniques.

3.2 Research Philosophy
This study will embrace a positivist research philosophy, aligning with the perspective that places trust primarily in "factual" knowledge acquired through empirical observation, including measurement. Within the positivist paradigm, researchers assume a constrained role, focusing on the collection and objective interpretation of data, with an emphasis on observable and quantifiable research findings (Collins, H., 2010). Positivism is a research philosophy that emphasizes the importance of empirical observation, measurement, and the use of the scientific method in the pursuit of knowledge. It is characterized by the belief that the only valid knowledge is that which can be directly observed and measured, and that this knowledge can be obtained through systematic, objective, and verifiable means. Positivism is often associated with quantitative research methods, as it seeks to establish causal relationships and generalizable findings (Bryman, 2016)

3.3 Research Approach
This research study employed a quantitative research approach to investigate the influence of social media marketing on Nigerian SMEs. This approach entailed the creation of a structured research questionnaire, the collection of responses, the transformation of these responses into numerical data, and subsequent analysis

of the numerical data to discern patterns and correlations between Nigerian SMEs and their engagement with social media marketing. As Bryman (2001) points out, the utilization of a quantitative research approach facilitates the use of statistical data, thereby streamlining the research process and conserving both time and resources. Furthermore, quantitative research places a strong emphasis on the acquisition and examination of numerical data, rendering it a scientifically rigorous and efficient methodology (Gorard, 2001; Connolly, 2007). According to Lichtman (2013), a key advantage of the quantitative research approach is its replicability. By adhering to well-defined guidelines and objectives, a study can be conducted in a manner that is generalizable to a wider audience, and the replication of the study is likely to yield consistent results (Shank and Brown, 2007; Eyisi Daniel, 2016).

Furthermore, quantitative research prioritizes the collection and analysis of numerical data, making it a scientifically rigorous and efficient technique (Gorard, 2001; Connolly, 2007). The replicability of the quantitative research technique, according to Lichtman (2013), is a fundamental benefit. A research may be done in a way that is generalizable to a larger audience by following to well-defined rules and objectives, and repetition of the study is likely to give similar results (Shank and Brown, 2007; Eyisi Daniel, 2016).

3.4 Research Design

The research design for this study utilizes the Saunders onion framework, which provides a systematic approach to research design (Saunders et al., 2019). The research strategy for this study is a survey. A survey strategy allows for the collection of data from a large sample of SMEs to examine the impact of social media marketing on their businesses (Bryman & Bell, 2019). It enables the collection of quantitative data and provides a broad understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. The time horizon for this study is cross-sectional. A cross-sectional design allows for the collection of data at a specific point in time to provide a snapshot of the relationship between social media marketing and SME performance (Creswell, 2014). This design is suitable for exploring the impact of social media marketing on SMEs in Nigeria within a specific time frame.

The research approach for this study is deductive. A deductive approach involves testing existing theories and hypotheses to examine the impact of social media marketing on SMEs (Saunders et al., 2019). It allows for the formulation of specific research questions and hypotheses to guide data collection and analysis. The data collection method for this study involves the use of a structured online questionnaire. The questionnaire will be designed to gather information on various aspects related to social media marketing, such as SME characteristics, social media, word of mouth, customer engagement, purchase intention, and perceived impact on business performance. The structured questionnaire will ensure consistency in data collection and enable quantitative analysis of the collected data (Creswell, 2014). The link for the online questionnaire is https://forms.gle/qQG7dn2RmGxsmZjU7

3.5 Study Population

The study's sample population comprises Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) operating across various sectors in Nigeria. It will encompass a broad spectrum of SMEs, spanning diverse industries, including retail, services, and manufacturing. Selection within the sample population will be contingent on active involvement in social media marketing endeavors. The research aims to engage employees from various departments and hierarchical tiers within these SMEs, ensuring the representation of both frontline staff and managerial personnel.

3.6 Sampling Size

The determination of the sample size will be conducted using the Cochran formula, as developed by Cochran (1977), which is employed to calculate a representative sample for proportions. The formula is as follows:

$$N_0 = Z^2 pq / e^2$$

Where:
N_0 = sample size
Z = value for confidence interval
e = margin of error

p = probability for success
q = 1 - p

In this study, we have chosen a minimum confidence interval of 90%, implying a margin of error of 10%. Furthermore, we assume p = 0.5 and q = 0.5. The Z value for a 90% confidence interval is 1.645. Therefore, calculating N_0:

$N_0 = 1.645\text{^}2 * 0.5 * 0.5 / 0.1\text{^}2 = 68$

Hence, the sample size for this study is determined to be 215 individuals.

3.8 Sampling Technique

The sampling technique for this study will be purposive sampling. Purposive sampling involves selecting SMEs that actively engage in social media marketing to capture a representative sample of businesses affected by this marketing approach (Baiju Thomas, 2022). This approach ensures that the sample consists of SMEs with relevant experience and insights into the impact of social media marketing on their business performance.

3.9 Data Analysis Technique

The online questionnaire was structured using a 5-point Likert scale, spanning from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree." The data collected will be assigned weighted values ranging from 1 to 5. The analytical approach for this study encompasses both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics will serve to succinctly summarize and present the data gathered regarding various aspects of social media marketing and SME performance. Inferential statistics, such as correlation analysis and regression analysis, will be harnessed to delve into the relationships between social media marketing activities and business outcomes (Creswell, 2014). To execute these analyses, statistical software like SPSS will be applied. Additionally, the reliability of the data will be assessed through Cronbach's Alpha. The dataset collected in this study will be subjected to correlation and regression analyses to elucidate the relationships between the variables. A combination of descriptive and inferential statistics will be instrumental in rigorously testing the hypotheses (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). These statistical tools are essential in uncovering and comprehending the interconnections among the study's variables.

3.10 Research Measurement

Descriptive Statistics: In this study, descriptive statistics was used to summarize and present data in a way that illustrates and provides an overview of key characteristics, such as central tendency (mean, median, mode), dispersion (variance, standard deviation, range), and distribution (histograms, box plots). (Trochim, W. M., & Donnelly, J. P., 2008).

Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Test: The Cronbach's alpha test was used to assesses the internal consistency or reliability of the questionnaire by measuring how closely related multiple items measuring the same construct are to each other (Cronbach, L. J., 1951).

Cross-Tabulation (Contingency Tables): The study relied on cross-tabulation as a technique in analyzing categorical data from the demographics of the research by creating tables that show the distribution and relationships between two or more categorical variables (Hair, J. F., et al 2010).

Factor Analysis: Factor analysis was used in this study to identify underlying factors or latent variables that explain the patterns of correlations among observed variables. It reduces data complexity by grouping related variables (Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S., 2013).

Correlation Analysis: Correlation analysis was used to measure the strength and direction of the linear relationship between the variables (SMEs) and social media marketing components using correlation coefficients such as Pearson (Gravetter, F. J., & Wallnau, L. B., 2014).

Regression Analysis: This study used regression analysis to examine the relationship between the dependent variable (SME) and independent variables (social media, word of mouth, brand awareness, customer engagement, purchase intention and SME growth). It was useful in predicting the value of the dependent variable based on the values of the independent variables (Field, A., 2013).

Hypothesis Testing: This study made use of hypothesis testing as a statistical method to determine whether there was a significant difference or relationship between variables. It involves formulating null and alternative hypotheses and conducting significance tests (Howell, D. C., 2012).

3.11 Justification of Method

The use of a quantitative research approach is appropriate for this study since it allows for the measurement and analysis of numerical data, allowing for the formation of statistical correlations between social media marketing and SMEs performance results. The study used a 5-point Likert scale to capture SMEs' thoughts and attitudes regarding social media marketing and its influence on their business outcomes. The use of the Saunders Onion research technique provided a methodical framework for performing quantitative research, assuring the rigor and reproducibility of the study. Finally, this research will provide empirical data as well as objective insights on the influence of social media marketing on Nigerian SMEs.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are paramount in research to ensure that studies are conducted responsibly and do not harm participants or the broader community. Participants provided voluntary, informed, and written consent before participating in a study. The study fully disclosed the purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits of the research (World Medical Association, 2013). The study put efforts in place to protect participants' privacy and confidentiality by making the response anonymous to prevent the disclosure of sensitive information (American Psychological Association., 2017). This study was conducted with integrity, honesty, and transparency. Data was not falsified or manipulated (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine., 2017).

The research would not disclose any potential conflicts of interest, financial or otherwise, that may compromise the integrity or objectivity of the research (World Health Organization., 2012). The study will ensure secure storage and management of research data to prevent unauthorized access, tampering, or loss (Office for Research Protections, The Pennsylvania State University., 2020). With the positivism approach, the study would report findings accurately and transparently, even if the results are not in line with expectations (American Psychological Association. (2017). Finally, before the distribution of online questionnaire, the ethical approval from the University was obtained.

Results, Findings & Discussions
4.1 Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Gender	215	1	3	1.68	.495	.245
Age	215	1	5	2.88	.964	.929
HAQ	211	2	4	2.68	.737	.543
Cadre	215	1	2	1.24	.426	.182
Experience	215	1	5	3.05	.999	.998
SM1	215	2	5	4.40	.661	.436
SM2	214	1	5	4.30	.767	.588
SM3	215	2	5	4.32	.758	.574
SM5	215	2	5	4.19	.801	.641
WOM1	215	2	5	4.48	.784	.615
WOM2	215	1	5	4.23	.804	.647
WOM3	215	1	5	4.20	.797	.635
WOM4	215	1	5	4.15	.837	.701
WOM5	215	1	5	4.16	.856	.732
BA1	215	2	5	4.48	.760	.578
BA2	215	2	5	4.37	.815	.663
BA3	215	1	5	4.23	.816	.665
BA4	215	1	5	4.31	.796	.634
BA5	215	1	5	4.31	.808	.653
CE1	215	2	5	4.38	.799	.639
CE2	215	2	5	4.10	.767	.588
CE3	215	2	5	4.13	.790	.624
CE4	215	2	5	4.05	.825	.680

CE5	215	1	5	4.04	.839	.704
PI1	215	2	5	4.05	.863	.745
PI2	215	2	5	3.76	.817	.668
PI3	215	2	5	3.75	.860	.740
PI4	215	2	5	4.09	.879	.773
PI5	215	1	5	4.13	.889	.790
SME1	215	2	5	4.52	.735	.540
SME2	215	3	5	4.38	.719	.516
SME3	215	1	5	4.33	.846	.716
SME4	215	1	5	4.39	.867	.752
SME5	215	1	5	4.43	.856	.733
Valid N (listwise)	210					

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

4.2 Reporting Descriptive Statistics

REPORTING DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS				
Demographics		**Percent%**	**Frequency**	
	Above 18	100	215	
	Gender			
	Male	33	71	
	Female	65.6	141	
	Prefer Not To Say	1.4	3	
	Age			
	18 - 29	7.4	16	
	30 - 39	27	58	
	40 - 49	39.5	85	
	50 - 59	22.3	48	
	Above 60yrs	3.7	8	
	Highest Academic Qualification			
	Secondary School	48.3	102	
	Graduate	35.5	75	
	Post Graduate	16.1	34	
	Others	0	0	
	Cadre			
	Management	23.7	51	
	Non Management	76.3	164	
	Experience			
	0 – 5yrs	6.5	14	
	6 – 10yrs	20	43	
	11 – 15yrs	43.7	94	
	16 – 20yrs	21.9	47	
	21yrs Above	7.9	17	
Social Media				
I have used Social media as a platform for social media marketing.				
	Strongly Agree	48.8	105	
	Agree	42.3	91	

	Neutral	8.4	18	
	Disagree	0.5	1	
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	
SMEs have been using social media for their business operations				
	Strongly Agree	46.7	100	
	Agree	38.8	83	
	Maybe	13.1	28	
	Disagree	0.9	2	
	Strongly Disagree	0.5	1	
Social media is linked to SME growth.				
	Strongly Agree	47.9	103	
	Agree	38.1	82	
	Maybe	12.1	26	
	Disagree	1.9	4	
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	
Which of the social media platforms do you use? (YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Whatsapp)				
	YouTube	34.4	74	
	Facebook	25.1	54	
	Instagram	17.7	38	
	Twitter	12.6	27	
	Whatsapp	10.2	22	
Social media helps me measure my business success.				
	Strongly Agree	41.4	89	
	Agree	38.1	82	
	Maybe	18.6	40	
	Disagree	1.9	4	
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	
Word of Mouth				
Word of mouth is an aspect of social media marketing.				
	Strongly Agree	64.2	138	
	Agree	21.4	46	
	Maybe	12.6	27	
	Disagree	1.9	4	
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	
Word of mouth is used by SMEs to market their products and services.				
	Strongly Agree	42.3	91	
	Agree	42.3	91	
	Maybe	12.1	26	
	Disagree	2.8	6	
	Strongly Disagree	0.5	1	
Word of mouth is instrumental to SME growth in business.				
	Strongly Agree	39.5	85	
	Agree	43.3	93	
	Maybe	15.3	33	

	Disagree	0.9	2	
	Strongly Disagree	0.9	2	
Customers were influenced to buy my products through word of mouth.				
	Strongly Agree	40	86	
	Agree	38.6	83	
	Maybe	18.6	40	
	Disagree	2.3	5	
	Strongly Disagree	0.5	1	
Word of mouth helped my business serve their customers better.				
	Strongly Agree	40.9	88	
	Agree	38.1	82	
	Maybe	17.2	37	
	Disagree	3.3	7	
	Strongly Disagree	0.5	1	
Brand Awareness				
SMEs have been using social media marketing for brand awareness.				
	Strongly Agree	63.7	137	
	Agree	21.9	47	
	Maybe	13.5	29	
	Disagree	0.9	2	
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	
Brand awareness contributes to SME growth.				
	Strongly Agree	54.4	117	
	Agree	31.6	68	
	Maybe	10.2	22	
	Disagree	3.7	8	
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	
Awareness of products and services increased after social media marketing.				
	Strongly Agree	42.8	92	
	Agree	41.9	90	
	Maybe	11.6	25	
	Disagree	3.3	7	
	Strongly Disagree	0.5	1	
It is easier to create brand awareness on social media than with traditional media.				
	Strongly Agree	48.8	105	
	Agree	35.3	76	
	Maybe	14	30	
	Disagree	1.4	3	
	Strongly Disagree	0.5	1	
My business grew after I created brand awareness on social media.				
	Strongly Agree	50.2	108	
	Agree	32.1	69	
	Maybe	16.3	35	
	Disagree	0.9	2	
	Strongly Disagree	0.5	1	

Customer Engagement				
Customers use social media to engage product sellers.				
	Strongly Agree	57.2	123	
	Agree	24.7	53	
	Maybe	17.2	37	
	Disagree	0.9	2	
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	
Customer engagement is good in social media marketing.				
	Strongly Agree	33	71	
	Agree	46	99	
	Maybe	19.1	41	
	Disagree	1.9	4	
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	
SMEs have benefitted from customer engagement on social media.				
	Strongly Agree	37.2	30	
	Agree	39.1	24	
	Neutral	22.8	1	
	Disagree	0.9	2	
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	
Customer engagement on social media has helped me serve my customers better.				
	Strongly Agree	33.5	72	
	Agree	40.5	87	
	Neutral	23.3	50	
	Disagree	2.8	6	
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	
Sellers make improvements on their products and services through social media customer engagement.				
	Strongly Agree	33	71	
	Agree	41.4	89	
	Neutral	23.3	50	
	Disagree	1.4	3	
	Strongly Disagree	0.9	2	
Purchase Intention				
Most customers use social media to know more about the products or services they are interested in.				
	Strongly Agree	38.8	83	
	Agree	27.1	58	
	Neutral	33.6	72	
	Disagree	0.5	1	
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	
Purchase intention helps SMEs to know what their customers want.				
	Strongly Agree	21.4	46	
	Agree	36.3	78	

	Neutral	39.5	85	
	Disagree	2.8	6	
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	
SME growth is associated to purchase intention on social media.				
	Strongly Agree	23.4	50	
	Agree	31.3	67	
	Neutral	41.6	89	
	Disagree	3.7	8	
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	
Customers use social media to make orders on my products.				
	Strongly Agree	40.4	86	
	Agree	29.6	63	
	Neutral	27.7	59	
	Disagree	2.3	5	
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	
Purchase intention on social media helps sellers to engage their customers.				
	Strongly Agree	43	92	
	Agree	30.4	65	
	Neutral	23.8	51	
	Disagree	2.3	5	
	Strongly Disagree	0.5	1	
SME Growth				
Social media marketing has assisted financial growth in SME.				
	Strongly Agree	65.1	140	
	Agree	23.3	50	
	Neutral	10.2	22	
	Disagree	1.4	3	
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	
SMEs have benefitted from the use of social media.				
	Strongly Agree	51.6	111	
	Agree	34.4	74	
	Neutral	14	30	
	Disagree	0	0	
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	
Social media marketing is associated with SME growth in customer base and satisfaction.				
	Strongly Agree	52.6	113	
	Agree	31.2	67	
	Neutral	13.5	29	
	Disagree	1.9	4	
	Strongly Disagree	0.9	2	
Social media marketing through purchase intention and customer engagement has helped SME in learning and growth.				
	Strongly Agree	59.1	127	
	Agree	24.7	53	

	Neutral	13	28	
	Disagree	2.3	5	
	Strongly Disagree	0.9	2	
Social media marketing has assisted tremendously in enhancing the internal processes of SMEs.				
	Strongly Agree	63.7	137	
	Agree	19.1	41	
	Neutral	14.4	31	
	Disagree	2.3	5	
	Strongly Disagree	0.5	1	

Table 2: Reporting Descriptive Statistics

The table above presents descriptive statistics related to various aspects of social media marketing and its impact on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs):

Demographics: The gender distribution of the respondents shows that 33% are male, 65.6% are female, and 1.4% prefer not to disclose their gender. The majority of respondents are in the age group of 40-49 (39.5%) and 30-39 (27%). Only a small percentage are above 60 years (3.7%). The age distribution suggests that the sample has a significant representation of middle-aged individuals.

Most respondents have a secondary school qualification (48.3%) followed by graduates (35.5%) and post-graduates (16.1%). No respondents fall into the "Others" category.

23.7% of respondents belong to the management cadre, while the majority (76.3%) belong to the non-management cadre.

Respondents with 11-15 years of experience form the largest group (43.7%), followed by those with 6-10 years of experience (20%). Only a small percentage have 21 years of experience or more (7.9%).

Social Media: In response to the question "I have used Social media as a platform for social media marketing," a substantial portion of respondents expressed strong agreement (48.8%) while a significant number also agreed (42.3%). This suggests that a majority of participants have actively engaged in social media marketing. Similarly, when asked if SMEs have been using social media for their business operations, a notable percentage strongly agreed (46.7%) with the statement, and a substantial number agreed (38.8%). These responses indicate a general consensus that social media is indeed utilized by SMEs for business purposes. In the context of social media's link to SME growth, nearly half of the respondents strongly agreed (47.9%), while a significant portion agreed (38.1%), underscoring the belief that social media plays a crucial role in SME development. Regarding the specific social media platforms used, YouTube emerged as the most frequently utilized platform (34.4%), followed by Facebook (25.1%), Instagram (17.7%), Twitter (12.6%), and WhatsApp (10.2%). In terms of measuring business success through social media, a substantial percentage strongly agreed (41.4%), and a similar number agreed (38.1%). This suggests that many participants find social media to be a valuable tool for assessing business performance.

Word of Mouth: The responses related to word of mouth marketing on social media indicate a strong consensus. A significant majority strongly agreed (64.2%) that word of mouth is an integral aspect of social media marketing. Additionally, a substantial portion agreed (21.4%) with this statement. Similarly, when asked if word of mouth is used by SMEs to market their products and services, respondents were evenly divided between strong agreement (42.3%) and agreement (42.3%). This suggests that the role of word of mouth in SME marketing is widely recognized. The belief in the importance of word of mouth in SME growth was also evident. A significant proportion strongly agreed (39.5%) that word of mouth is instrumental to SME growth, while a substantial number agreed (43.3%) with this statement. Responses regarding the influence of word of mouth on customer behavior were consistent. A substantial percentage strongly agreed (40%) that customers were influenced to buy products through word of mouth, and a similar number agreed (38.6%). In terms of word of mouth's impact on improving customer service, a substantial percentage strongly agreed (40.9%), and a significant number agreed (38.1%). This highlights the perceived positive effects of word of mouth in enhancing customer relations.

Brand Awareness: Regarding the use of social media marketing for brand awareness, a considerable majority strongly agreed (63.7%), while a smaller but significant percentage agreed (21.9%). The belief that brand awareness contributes to SME growth was widely shared, with more than half strongly agreeing (54.4%) and a substantial number agreeing (31.6%) with this statement. Respondents also indicated that awareness of products and services increased after social media marketing. A significant percentage strongly agreed (42.8%), and a similar number agreed (41.9%). When comparing social media to traditional media for creating brand awareness, a substantial portion strongly agreed (48.8%) that it's easier to achieve brand awareness on social media, and a significant number agreed (35.3%). The notion that creating brand awareness on social media positively impacts business growth was widely held, with a majority strongly agreeing (50.2%) and a significant number agreeing (32.1%).

Customer Engagement: In the context of customer engagement on social media, a majority of respondents strongly agreed (57.2%), and a significant number agreed (24.7%) that customers use social media to engage product sellers. This suggests a consensus that social media is a platform for customer engagement. Respondents also expressed agreement about the quality of customer engagement in social media marketing. A combined total of 71.7% (Strongly Agree + Agree) believe that customer engagement is good in social media marketing. Regarding the benefit of customer engagement to SMEs, a notable proportion strongly agreed (37.2%), while a substantial number agreed (39.1%). However, a significant percentage remained neutral (22.8%), indicating some uncertainty about this aspect. Respondents also recognized the potential for customer engagement on social media to enhance customer service, with a combined total of 73.5% (Strongly Agree + Agree) expressing positive views in this regard. Furthermore, a significant number of respondents strongly agreed (33%) and agreed (41.4%) that sellers make improvements on their products and services through social media customer engagement. However, some participants remained neutral (23.3%) or disagreed (2.3%) with this statement.

Purchase Intention: When assessing purchase intention on social media, a significant percentage of respondents strongly agreed (38.8%), and a notable number agreed (27.1%) that most customers use social media to know more about the products or services they are interested in. However, a considerable portion remained neutral (33.6%) on this issue. Similarly, when considering whether purchase intention helps SMEs to understand their customers' preferences, a combined total of 57.7% (Strongly Agree + Agree) expressed agreement, while a significant number remained neutral (39.5%). The association between purchase intention on social media and SME growth generated mixed responses. While a notable portion agreed (31.3%), and a substantial number remained neutral (41.6%), some respondents disagreed (3.7%) or strongly disagreed (0.5%). Respondents also indicated that customers use social media to make orders on products. A significant percentage strongly agreed (40.4%), while a substantial number agreed (29.6%). A notable portion remained neutral (27.7%), indicating that this aspect may require further exploration. The role of purchase intention in helping sellers engage their customers received a combined total of 73.4% (Strongly Agree + Agree) in agreement, with some participants remaining neutral (23.8%) or expressing disagreement (2.3%).

SME Growth: In terms of the impact of social media marketing on SME growth, a significant percentage strongly agreed (65.1%), and a substantial number agreed (23.3%) that it has assisted financial growth in SMEs. Only a small portion remained neutral (10.2%) or disagreed (1.4%) with this statement. Respondents expressed positive views on SMEs benefiting from the use of social media, with a majority strongly agreeing (51.6%) and a significant number agreeing (34.4%). Some participants were neutral (14%), and none disagreed. The belief in the association between social media marketing and SME growth in customer base and satisfaction was evident. A combined total of 83.8% (Strongly Agree + Agree) expressed agreement, while some respondents remained neutral (13.5%) or disagreed (1.9%). In terms of learning and growth through social media marketing, a significant majority strongly agreed (59.1%), and a notable number agreed (24.7%). Some participants were neutral (13%), and a small portion disagreed (2.3%) or strongly disagreed (0.9%). Lastly, the idea that social media marketing enhances the internal processes of SMEs garnered a strong agreement from a majority (63.7%) of respondents. However, a significant portion were neutral (14.4%), while a smaller number disagreed (2.3%) or strongly disagreed (0.5%).

4.2 Cronbach Alpha Reliability Test

Reliability Statistics

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
SM1-5	.724	.723	4
WOM1-5	.770	.770	5
BA1-5	.790	.790	5
CE1-5	.654	.654	5
PI1-5	.654	.654	5
SME1-5	.799	.800	5

Table 3: Cronbach Alpha Reliability Test

The table provides reliability statistics, specifically Cronbach's Alpha, for various sets of variables. Cronbach's Alpha is a measure of internal consistency or reliability of a scale or a set of items. It assesses whether the items within each variable group are consistently measuring the same underlying construct. Cronbach's alpha serves as a reliability indicator, indicating the extent to which items within a set exhibit strong correlations with each other. For Cronbach's alpha to be considered adequate, it should exceed 0.7, and the ideal value for Cronbach's alpha approaches 1.0 (Kline, 2013; George & Mallery, 2003; DeVellis, 2016). Here's an analysis of the reliability statistics:

SM1-5 (Social Media): Cronbach's Alpha: 0.724
A Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.724 suggests good internal consistency for the set of four items related to social media.

WOM1-5 (Word of Mouth): Cronbach's Alpha: 0.770
The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.770 for word of mouth indicates a reasonably high level of internal consistency among the five items. This suggests that these items reliably measure the same construct related to word of mouth.

BA1-5 (Brand Awareness): Cronbach's Alpha: 0.790
The brand awareness variable shows a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.790, indicating strong internal consistency among its five items. This suggests that these items consistently measure the brand awareness construct.

CE1-5 (Customer Engagement): Cronbach's Alpha: 0.654
Customer engagement exhibits a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.654, indicating moderate internal consistency. While it's moderately reliable, but the questions did not pass the standard for 0.7.

PI1-5 (Purchase Intention): Cronbach's Alpha: 0.654
Purchase intention also shows a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.654, which suggests moderate internal consistency. Similar to customer engagement, this did not pass the standard.

SME1-5 (SME Growth): Cronbach's Alpha: 0.799
The SME growth variable exhibits a high Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.799, suggesting strong internal consistency among its five items. This indicates that these items consistently measure the SME growth construct.

4.3 Cross Tabulation

		Use of Social Media Platforms (SM4)					
	Count	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	Whatsapp	YouTube	Total
Gender	Male	14	17	13	6	21	71
	Female	40	20	13	16	52	141
	Rather Not Say	0	1	1	0	1	3
	Sub Total	54	38	27	22	74	215
Age	18 – 29yrs	4	4	2	3	3	16
	30 – 39yrs	15	12	10	6	15	58
	40 – 49yrs	19	11	12	11	32	85

	50 – 59yrs	12	9	3	2	22	48
	60yrs and above	4	2	0	0	2	8
	Sub Total	54	38	27	22	74	215
HAQ	Secondary School	31	13	8	9	41	102
	OND/BSc	15	16	14	9	21	75
	Post Graduate	6	9	5	4	10	34
	Sub Total	52	38	27	22	72	211
Cadre	Non Management	45	27	19	15	58	164
	Management	9	11	8	7	16	51
	Sub Total	54	38	27	22	74	215
Experience	0 – 5yrs	3	2	2	5	2	14
	6 – 10yrs	12	9	8	3	11	43
	11 – 15yrs	24	15	11	12	32	94
	16 – 20yrs	9	11	3	2	22	47
	Above 20yrs	6	1	3	0	7	17
	Sub Total	54	38	27	22	74	215

Table 4: Cross Tabulation

This table presents data on the use of social media platforms categorized by various demographic variables.

Gender: The table shows the count of individuals from different gender categories (Male, Female, and Prefer Not To Say) who use various social media platforms. Among males, Facebook (14 users), Instagram (17 users), and YouTube (21 users) are the most popular platforms. Among females, Facebook (40 users), YouTube (52 users), and Instagram (20 users) are the top choices.

In the "Prefer Not To Say" category, there are only a few users across different platforms.

Age: Facebook is popular across all age groups, with the highest usage in the 40-49 age group (19 users) and the lowest in the 60+ age group (4 users). Instagram and YouTube also show consistent usage across age groups. Twitter and WhatsApp have relatively lower usage compared to Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

Highest Academic Qualification (HAQ): Facebook and YouTube are popular among individuals with secondary school qualifications.

Those with OND/BSc qualifications show relatively balanced usage across platforms. Postgraduate degree holders exhibit more balanced usage, with no platform standing out significantly.

Cadre: Non-Management individuals tend to use Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube more than Management individuals. Management individuals show slightly higher usage of Twitter and WhatsApp compared to Non-Management individuals.

Experience: Across all experience levels, Facebook and YouTube appear to be consistently popular. Twitter and WhatsApp have relatively lower usage but still exhibit some degree of consistency. Instagram shows variation across experience levels.

4.4 Factor Analysis

	SM1	SM2	SM3	SM5	WOM1	WOM2	WOM3	WOM4	WOM5	BA1	BA2	BA3	BA4	BA5	CE1	CE2	CE3	CE4	CE5	PI1	PI2	PI3	PI4	PI5	SME1	SME2	SME3	SME4	SME5

Correlation	SM1	1.000	.345	.342	.344	.179	.228	.250	.312	.216	.302	.357	.251	.319	.252	.231	.207	.168	.188	.145	.124	-.031	.069	.129	.196	.369	.317	.252	.118	.285
	SM2	.345	1.000	.476	.409	.271	.340	.269	.320	.343	.374	.348	.328	.368	.325	.222	.186	.249	.280	.277	.212	.034	.065	.101	.235	.299	.330	.352	.372	.472
	SM3	.342	.476	1.000	.453	.274	.290	.336	.370	.277	.386	.431	.354	.339	.403	.297	.209	.161	.364	.271	.234	.192	.080	.227	.324	.403	.354	.368	.300	.515
	SM5	.344	.409	.453	1.000	.531	.418	.359	.417	.545	.464	.460	.397	.369	.422	.243	.295	.185	.397	.371	.082	.113	.110	.070	.377	.444	.469	.363	.351	.576
	WOM1	.179	.271	.274	.531	1.000	.369	.303	.355	.434	.312	.355	.275	.234	.363	.226	.237	.117	.252	.244	.022	.040	.010	.016	.309	.374	.403	.221	.364	.465
	WOM2	.228	.340	.290	.418	.369	1.000	.389	.413	.453	.318	.456	.366	.354	.364	.186	.212	.177	.280	.207	.106	-.020	.045	.078	.264	.338	.464	.417	.407	.472
	WOM3	.250	.269	.336	.359	.303	.389	1.000	.475	.369	.328	.358	.325	.346	.305	.181	.228	.253	.235	.275	.048	.124	.059	.137	.300	.399	.328	.258	.336	.438
	WOM4	.312	.320	.370	.417	.355	.413	.475	1.000	.458	.404	.390	.324	.405	.378	.260	.230	.227	.357	.258	.042	.042	.179	.142	.223	.432	.432	.390	.336	.481
	WOM5	.216	.343	.277	.545	.434	.453	.369	.458	1.000	.275	.471	.399	.315	.344	.215	.276	.167	.282	.278	.009	-.001	.097	-.005	.360	.403	.425	.409	.350	.421
	BA1	.302	.374	.386	.464	.312	.318	.328	.404	.275	1.000	.440	.290	.379	.488	.276	.333	.238	.367	.275	.101	.122	.036	.178	.271	.405	.396	.386	.344	.572
	BA2	.357	.348	.431	.460	.355	.456	.358	.390	.471	.440	1.000	.407	.562	.512	.186	.352	.223	.371	.353	.122	.159	.129	.232	.423	.433	.487	.465	.482	.628

BA3	.251	.328	.354	.397	.275	.366	.325	.324	.399	.290	.407	1.000	.364	.344	.219	.291	.240	.234	.259	.071	.022	.165	.143	.195	.396	.353	.247	.434	.445
BA4	.319	.368	.339	.369	.234	.354	.346	.405	.315	.379	.562	.364	1.000	.528	.173	.239	.335	.347	.280	.197	.113	.146	.217	.443	.396	.461	.419	.443	.512
BA5	.252	.325	.403	.422	.363	.364	.305	.378	.344	.488	.512	.344	.528	1.000	.200	.236	.198	.342	.235	.154	.104	.029	.260	.306	.454	.487	.379	.383	.532
CE1	.231	.222	.297	.243	.226	.186	.181	.260	.215	.276	.186	.219	.173	.200	1.000	.311	.179	.242	.184	.144	.078	.111	.121	.197	.236	.189	.187	.180	.291
CE2	.207	.186	.209	.295	.237	.212	.228	.230	.276	.333	.352	.291	.239	.236	.311	1.000	.382	.266	.226	.155	.173	.074	.140	.302	.305	.279	.179	.300	.318
CE3	.168	.249	.161	.185	.117	.177	.253	.227	.167	.238	.223	.240	.335	.198	.179	.382	1.000	.337	.247	.136	.125	.065	.141	.250	.222	.358	.200	.212	.248
CE4	.188	.280	.364	.397	.252	.280	.235	.357	.282	.367	.371	.234	.347	.342	.242	.266	.337	1.000	.384	.155	.178	.164	.215	.234	.299	.348	.265	.123	.441
CE5	.145	.277	.271	.371	.244	.207	.275	.258	.278	.275	.353	.259	.280	.235	.184	.226	.247	.384	1.000	.016	.119	.140	.154	.312	.182	.267	.230	.266	.338
PI1	.124	.212	.234	.082	.022	.106	.048	.042	.009	.101	.122	.071	.197	.154	.144	.155	.136	.155	.016	1.000	.340	.198	.124	.065	.184	.077	.094	.044	.156
PI2	-.031	.034	.192	.113	.040	-.020	.124	.042	-.001	.122	.159	.022	.113	.104	.078	.173	.125	.178	.119	.340	1.000	.349	.113	.070	-.024	.024	-.049	-.053	.093

	PI3																												
PI3	.069	.065	.080	.110	.010	.045	.059	.179	.097	.036	.129	.165	.146	.029	.011	.074	.065	.164	.140	.198	.349	1.000	.239	.117	.022	.014	.092	.005	.062
PI4	.129	.101	.227	.070	.016	.078	.137	.142	-.005	.178	.232	.143	.217	.260	.121	.140	.141	.215	.154	.124	.113	.239	1.000	.141	.084	.143	.177	.204	.232
PI5	.196	.235	.324	.377	.309	.264	.300	.223	.360	.271	.423	.195	.443	.306	.197	.302	.250	.234	.312	.065	.070	.117	.141	1.000	.330	.280	.389	.345	.440
SME1	.369	.299	.403	.444	.374	.338	.399	.432	.403	.405	.433	.396	.396	.454	.236	.305	.222	.299	.182	.184	-.024	.022	.084	.330	1.000	.445	.380	.347	.491
SME2	.317	.330	.354	.469	.403	.464	.328	.432	.425	.396	.487	.353	.461	.487	.189	.279	.358	.348	.267	.077	.024	.014	.143	.280	.445	1.000	.445	.420	.485
SME3	.252	.352	.368	.363	.221	.417	.258	.390	.409	.386	.465	.247	.419	.379	.187	.179	.200	.265	.230	.094	-.049	.092	.177	.389	.380	.445	1.000	.484	.497
SME4	.118	.372	.300	.351	.364	.407	.336	.336	.350	.344	.482	.434	.443	.383	.180	.300	.212	.123	.266	.044	-.053	.005	.204	.345	.347	.420	.484	1.000	.481
SME5	.285	.472	.515	.576	.465	.472	.438	.481	.421	.572	.628	.445	.512	.532	.291	.318	.248	.441	.338	.156	.093	.062	.232	.440	.491	.485	.497	.481	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed) SM1		.000	.000	.000	.004	.000	.000	.000	.001	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001	.003	.017	.035	.328	.157	.030	.002	.000	.000	.000	.042	.000
SM2	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001	.313	.173	.070	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
SM3	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001	.009	.000	.000	.002	.123	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

SM5	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.003	.000	.000	.0117	.050	.055	.153	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
WOM1	.004	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.044	.044	.000	.000	.0374	.0278	.0439	.0409	.000	.000	.000	.001	.000		.000	.000
WOM2	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.031	.015	.000	.001	.062	.0384	.0256	.0128	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
WOM3	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.004	.000	.000	.0244	.0345	.0194	.0243	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
WOM4	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.0272	.0271	.0104	.0119	.001	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
WOM5	.001	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001	.000	.007	.000	.000	.0447	.0495	.0779	.0472	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
BA1	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.070	.038	.300	.005	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
BA2	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.003	.000	.001	.000	.000	.000	.037	.010	.030	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
BA3	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.001	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.0151	.0373	.008	.0199	.002	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
BA4	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.006	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.002	.050	.016	.001	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
BA5	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.002	.000	.002	.000	.000	.000	.012	.064	.335	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
CE1	.000	.000	.001	.000	.000	.003	.004	.000	.001	.000	.003	.001	.006	.002		.004	.000	.003	.018	.0129	.0438	.0339	.002	.000	.003	.003	.04	.000
CE2	.001	.003	.001	.000	.000	.001	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.012	.006	.0140	.002	.000	.000	.000	.004	.00	.000

CE3	.007	.000	.009	.003	.044	.005	.000	.000	.007	.000	.001	.000	.000	.002	.004	.000		.000	.000	.024	.034	.171	.020	.000	.001	.000	.002	.001	.000
CE4	.003	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.012	.004	.008	.001	.000	.000	.000	.000	.036	.000
CE5	.017	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.003	.000	.000	.000		.406	.041	.021	.012	.000	.004	.000	.000	.000	.000
PI1	.035	.001	.000	.117	.374	.062	.244	.272	.447	.070	.037	.151	.002	.012	.018	.012	.024	.012	.406		.000	.002	.035	.173	.004	.130	.085	.259	.011
PI2	.328	.313	.002	.050	.278	.384	.035	.271	.495	.038	.010	.373	.050	.064	.129	.006	.034	.004	.041	.000		.000	.050	.153	.363	.361	.236	.220	.087
PI3	.157	.173	.123	.055	.439	.256	.194	.004	.079	.300	.030	.008	.016	.335	.438	.140	.171	.008	.021	.002	.000		.000	.043	.373	.421	.089	.471	.182
PI4	.030	.070	.000	.153	.409	.128	.023	.019	.472	.005	.000	.119	.001	.000	.339	.220	.020	.001	.012	.035	.050	.000		.019	.110	.018	.005	.001	.000
PI5	.002	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001	.000	.000	.000	.002	.000	.000	.002	.000	.000	.000	.000	.173	.153	.043	.019		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
SME1	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001	.000	.004	.004	.363	.373	.110	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
SME2	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.003	.000	.000	.000	.130	.361	.421	.018	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
SME3	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.003	.004	.002	.000	.000	.085	.236	.089	.005	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
SME4	.042	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.004	.000	.001	.036	.000	.259	.220	.471	.001	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
SME5	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.011	.087	.182	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	

table 5: Corelation Matrix

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.913
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2283.087
	df	406
	Sig.	.000

Table 6: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
SM1	1.000	.436
SM2	1.000	.430
SM3	1.000	.584
SM5	1.000	.658
WOM1	1.000	.530
WOM2	1.000	.495
WOM3	1.000	.361
WOM4	1.000	.464
WOM5	1.000	.631
BA1	1.000	.500
BA2	1.000	.604
BA3	1.000	.382
BA4	1.000	.593
BA5	1.000	.510
CE1	1.000	.437
CE2	1.000	.647
CE3	1.000	.626
CE4	1.000	.568
CE5	1.000	.577
PI1	1.000	.694
PI2	1.000	.657
PI3	1.000	.630
PI4	1.000	.569
PI5	1.000	.393
SME1	1.000	.526
SME2	1.000	.506
SME3	1.000	.528
SME4	1.000	.619
SME5	1.000	.664

Extraction Method: Principal
Component Analysis.

Table 7: Communalities

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	9.347	32.230	32.230	9.347	32.230	32.230
2	1.858	6.406	38.636	1.858	6.406	38.636
3	1.234	4.257	42.893	1.234	4.257	42.893
4	1.205	4.156	47.048	1.205	4.156	47.048
5	1.165	4.016	51.064	1.165	4.016	51.064

6	1.012	3.491	54.555	1.012	3.491	54.555
7	.991	3.419	57.974			
8	.934	3.222	61.196			
9	.913	3.149	64.345			
10	.866	2.988	67.333			
11	.804	2.773	70.105			
12	.797	2.747	72.853			
13	.688	2.372	75.225			
14	.662	2.283	77.507			
15	.641	2.210	79.717			
16	.622	2.145	81.863			
17	.588	2.026	83.889			
18	.566	1.950	85.839			
19	.517	1.784	87.623			
20	.489	1.686	89.309			
21	.435	1.501	90.810			
22	.406	1.401	92.211			
23	.385	1.327	93.538			
24	.371	1.279	94.817			
25	.347	1.196	96.013			
26	.330	1.138	97.151			
27	.319	1.101	98.252			
28	.288	.994	99.246			
29	.219	.754	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 8: Total Variance Explained
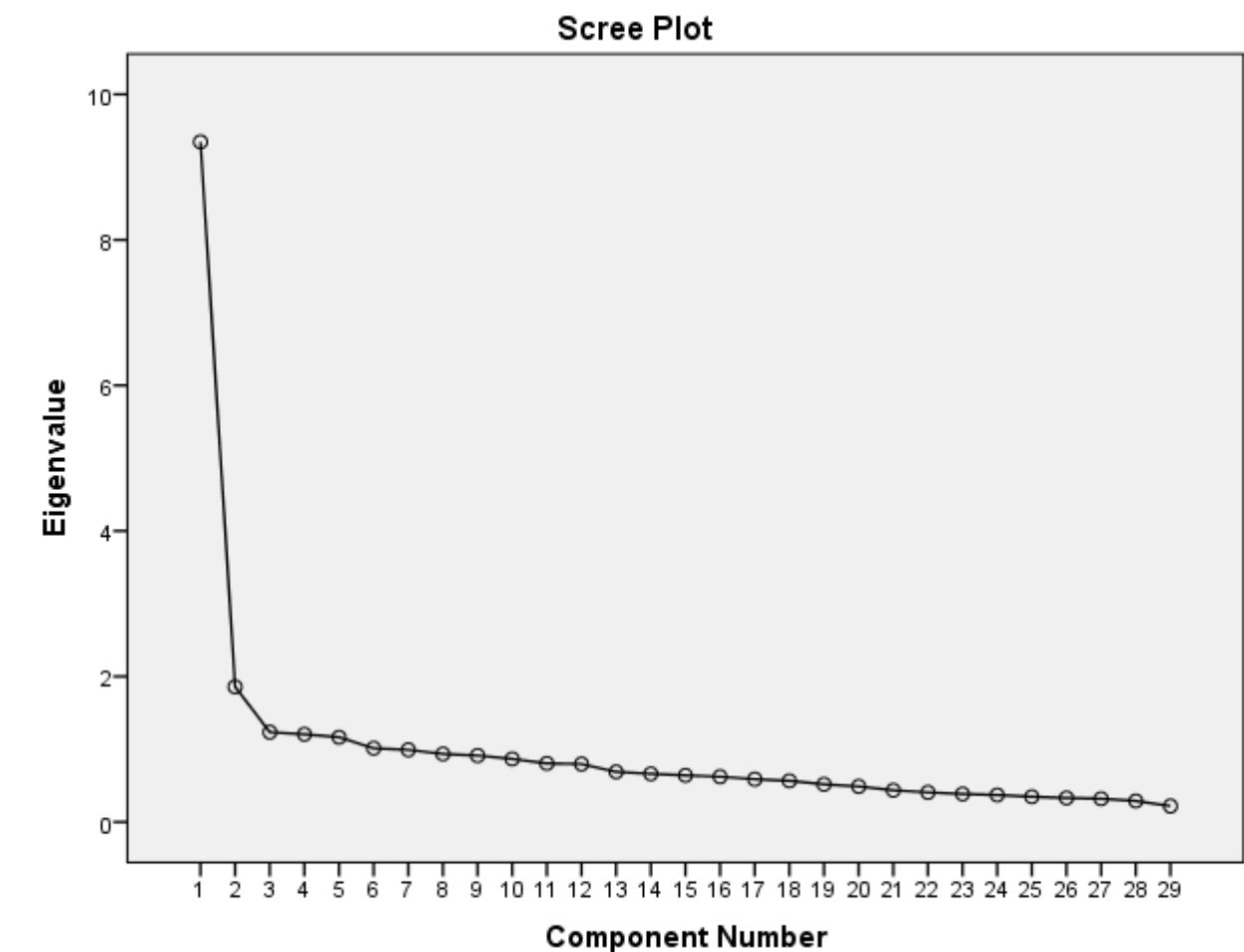
Figure 9: Scree Plot

Component Matrix[a]

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
SM1	.466	.009	-.023	-.458	-.002	-.089
SM2	.584	.009	-.045	-.282	.074	-.048
SM3	.628	.164	-.035	-.320	.158	-.185
SM5	.713	-.104	.289	.000	.206	-.111
WOM1	.559	-.251	.347	.075	.168	.026
WOM2	.613	-.235	-.017	.066	.160	.184
WOM3	.573	-.058	.121	.094	.059	.052
WOM4	.645	-.083	.093	.009	.158	-.087
WOM5	.628	-.270	.257	.197	.201	.138
BA1	.645	.035	-.007	-.178	-.091	-.207
BA2	.745	.015	-.174	.126	.049	.033
BA3	.581	-.053	.022	.063	.030	.190
BA4	.673	.098	-.330	.079	-.072	.099
BA5	.667	-.003	-.235	-.084	.029	-.054
CE1	.396	.120	.307	-.311	-.263	-.074
CE2	.476	.198	.278	.061	-.473	.277
CE3	.416	.240	.093	.120	-.591	.151
CE4	.548	.282	.189	.044	-.084	-.379
CE5	.478	.133	.196	.348	-.106	-.400
PI1	.212	.555	-.064	-.369	.140	.425
PI2	.144	.706	.214	.109	.233	.161
PI3	.162	.561	-.015	.343	.408	.064
PI4	.278	.398	-.470	.113	-.103	-.298
PI5	.549	.014	-.046	.269	-.125	.045
SME1	.653	-.133	.028	-.237	.006	.160
SME2	.683	-.153	-.061	.011	-.090	.065
SME3	.618	-.149	-.348	.047	.028	.008
SME4	.614	-.228	-.291	.207	-.111	.223
SME5	.803	-.037	-.067	-.033	.050	-.097

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 6 components extracted.

Table 10: Component Matrix a

The provided component matrix represents the loadings of each variable (SM1 to SME5) on six extracted components as a result of Principal Component Analysis (PCA). PCA is a technique that helps identify underlying patterns and relationships within the data by transforming the original variables into a set of linearly uncorrelated variables called principal components (Jolliffe, I. T., 2002). The components picked from the component matrix as having the best representation of the variables are (SM5, WOM4, BA2, CE4, PI5, and SME5) (Abdi, H. & Williams, L. J., 2010).

4.5 Regression Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
SME5	4.43	.856	215
PI5	4.13	.889	215
CE4	4.05	.825	215
BA2	4.37	.815	215

WOM4	4.15	.837	215		
SM5	4.19	.801	215		

Table 11: Descriptive Statistics for Regression Analysis

Correlations

		SME5	PI5	CE4	BA2	WOM4	SM5
Pearson Correlation	SME5	1.000	.439	.435	.629	.474	.575
	PI5	.439	1.000	.234	.422	.223	.377
	CE4	.435	.234	1.000	.364	.362	.397
	BA2	.629	.422	.364	1.000	.383	.458
	WOM4	.474	.223	.362	.383	1.000	.416
	SM5	.575	.377	.397	.458	.416	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	SME5	.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	PI5	.000	.	.000	.000	.000	.000
	CE4	.000	.000	.	.000	.000	.000
	BA2	.000	.000	.000	.	.000	.000
	WOM4	.000	.000	.000	.000	.	.000
	SM5	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.
N	SME5	215	215	215	215	215	215
	PI5	215	215	215	215	215	215
	CE4	215	215	215	215	215	215
	BA2	215	215	215	215	215	215
	WOM4	215	215	215	215	215	215
	SM5	215	215	215	215	215	215

Table 12: Correlations for Regression Analysis

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.743[a]	.552	.541	.580	.552	51.459	5	209	.000	2.178

a. Predictors: (Constant), SM5, PI5, CE4, WOM4, BA2
b. Dependent Variable: SME5

Table 13: Model Summaryb for Regression Analysis

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.017	.287		-.059	.953
	PI5	.127	.051	.132	2.515	.013
	CE4	.122	.055	.117	2.224	.027
	BA2	.372	.060	.354	6.235	.000
	WOM4	.167	.055	.164	3.060	.003
	SM5	.265	.061	.248	4.341	.000

a. Dependent Variable: SME5

Table 14: Coefficients for Regression Analysis

The "Model Summary" table presents the results of a regression analysis. The analysis is aimed at predicting the dependent variable, SME5, based on the predictors (independent variables) listed: SM5, PI5, CE4, WOM4, BA2.

The correlation coefficient (R) is a measure of the linear relationship between the dependent variable (SME5) and the combination of independent variables (predictors). In this model, R is 0.743, indicating a moderately strong positive linear relationship between the predictors and the dependent variable (Montgomery, D. C., Peck, E. A., & Vining, G. G., 2012; Kutner et al 2004).

From the table, the coefficient of determination (R^2) represents the proportion of variance in the dependent variable (SME5) that can be explained by the predictors. In this model, R^2 is 0.552, meaning that approximately 55.2% of the variance in SME5 is accounted for by the predictors. This suggests a reasonably good fit of the model to the data (Kutner et al 2004).

Durbin-Watson statistic (2.178) represents the presence of autocorrelation (serial correlation) in the residuals. A value close to 2 suggests no significant autocorrelation. In this case, the value is approximately 2.178, which is within an acceptable range (Gujarati & Porter 2009).

4.6 Correlation Analysis

Correlations

		SM5	WOM4	BA2	CE4	PI5	SME5
SM5	Pearson Correlation	1	.416**	.458**	.397**	.377**	.575**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	215	215	215	215	215	215
WOM4	Pearson Correlation	.416**	1	.383**	.362**	.223**	.474**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.001	.000
	N	215	215	215	215	215	215
BA2	Pearson Correlation	.458**	.383**	1	.364**	.422**	.629**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	215	215	215	215	215	215
CE4	Pearson Correlation	.397**	.362**	.364**	1	.234**	.435**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.001	.000
	N	215	215	215	215	215	215
PI5	Pearson Correlation	.377**	.223**	.422**	.234**	1	.439**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.000	.001		.000
	N	215	215	215	215	215	215
SME5	Pearson Correlation	.575**	.474**	.629**	.435**	.439**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	215	215	215	215	215	215

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 15: Correlation Analysis

In the above "Correlations" table, the study presents the Pearson correlation coefficients between several variables, including SM5, WOM4, BA2, CE4, PI5, and SME5. Pearson correlation measures the strength and direction of the linear relationship between pairs of variables (Hair et al 2010, Field 2013).

SM5 shows positive correlations with all other variables: WOM4 (r = 0.416), BA2 (r = 0.458), CE4 (r = 0.397), PI5 (r = 0.377), and SME5 (r = 0.575). All of these correlations are statistically significant at the

0.01 level (2-tailed), denoted by "**". This indicates a strong positive linear relationship between SM5 and the other variables (Hair et al 2010, Field 2013)

WOM4 is positively correlated with all other variables: SM5 (r = 0.416), BA2 (r = 0.383), CE4 (r = 0.362), PI5 (r = 0.223), and SME5 (r = 0.474). They are statistically significant at the 0.01 level, indicating a strong positive linear relationship between WOM4 and the other variables (Hair et al 2010, Field 2013).

BA2 exhibits positive correlations with SM5 (r = 0.458), WOM4 (r = 0.383), CE4 (r = 0.364), PI5 (r = 0.422), and SME5 (r = 0.629). These are statistically significant at the 0.01 level, suggesting a strong positive linear relationship between BA2 and the other variables (Hair et al 2010, Field 2013).

CE4 shows positive correlations with SM5 (r = 0.397), WOM4 (r = 0.362), BA2 (r = 0.364), PI5 (r = 0.234), and SME5 (r = 0.435). All of these correlations are statistically significant at the 0.01 level, indicating a strong positive linear relationship between CE4 and the other variables (Hair et al 2010, Field 2013).

PI5 exhibits positive correlations with SM5 (r = 0.377), WOM4 (r = 0.223), BA2 (r = 0.422), CE4 (r = 0.234), and SME5 (r = 0.439). These correlations are statistically significant at the 0.01 level, suggesting a strong positive linear relationship between PI5 and the other variables.

SME5 demonstrates positive correlations with SM5 (r = 0.575), WOM4 (r = 0.474), BA2 (r = 0.629), CE4 (r = 0.435), and PI5 (r = 0.439). All of these correlations are statistically significant at the 0.01 level, indicating a strong positive linear relationship between SME5 and the other variables. The study observes that Brand awareness (0.629) and Social media (0.575) are more correlated with SME growth. In summary, the correlations reveal strong positive linear relationships among the variables SM5, WOM4, BA2, CE4, PI5, and SME5. These relationships are statistically significant, suggesting that changes in one variable tend to be associated with consistent changes in the others. These findings suggest that brand awareness and social media are more impactful to SME growth.

4.7 Test of Hypotheses

To test the hypotheses, the study used the correlation table, by assessing the significance of the relationships between the variables mentioned in each hypothesis. The study used a significance level of 0.01 to determine whether the relationships are statistically significant (Field, 2013; Kutner et al 2004; Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S., 2019).

H1: There is no significant relationship between purchase intention and SME growth.

To test this hypothesis, the study examined the correlation between purchase intention (PI5) and SME growth (SME5). The correlation coefficient between PI5 and SME5 is 0.439, which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Since the correlation is statistically significant, we reject H1. There is a significant positive relationship between purchase intention and SME growth.

H2: There is no significant relationship between customer engagement and purchase intention for SMEs.

Again we examine the correlation between customer engagement (CE4) and purchase intention (PI5). The correlation coefficient between CE4 and PI5 is 0.234, which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Since the correlation is statistically significant, we reject H2. There is a significant positive relationship between customer engagement and purchase intention.

H3: There is no significant relationship between brand awareness and customer engagement for SMEs.

The study examined the correlation between brand awareness (BA2) and customer engagement (CE4). The correlation coefficient between BA2 and CE4 is 0.364, which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Since the correlation is statistically significant, we reject H3. There is a significant positive relationship between brand awareness and customer engagement.

H4: There is no significant relationship between social media usage, brand awareness, customer engagement, purchase intention, or SME growth for SMEs.

This hypothesis covers multiple relationships between different variables and there exists evidence of significant relationships between these variables in the correlation table. Therefore, we reject H4. There are significant relationships between these variables.

H5: There is no significant relationship between word of mouth, brand awareness, customer engagement, purchase intention, or SME growth for SMEs.

Similar to H4, this hypothesis covers multiple relationships between different variables. The study have already observed significant relationships between these variables in the correlation table. Therefore, we

reject H5. There are significant relationships between these variables. Based on the correlation analysis, the study posits that all the tested hypotheses are rejected because there are significant relationships between the variables mentioned in each hypothesis. These results suggest that these relationships exist in the dataset, and they have practical implications for SMEs in terms of their growth, engagement, brand awareness, and purchase intention strategies.

Conclusions and Recommendations
5.1 Conclusions
The research findings strongly indicate that social media marketing has a significant and positive impact on both brand awareness and customer engagement for Nigerian SMEs. The positive correlations between brand awareness and customer engagement with social media marketing (SM) activities suggest that SMEs can leverage social media platforms to enhance their brand recognition and engage with their target audience effectively.

This study concludes that there exists a significant and positive relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention for Nigerian SMEs. Customers are influenced by social media marketing efforts when making purchase decisions. Social media provides an effective channel to showcase products or services and encourage potential buyers.

The research reveals a positive relationship between social media marketing and word of mouth for Nigerian SMEs. A well-executed social media marketing strategy can stimulate word-of-mouth discussions and recommendations, amplifying the impact of marketing efforts through customer referrals.

The research highlights several challenges faced by Nigerian SMEs in implementing effective social media marketing strategies. These challenges include limited resources, lack of expertise, and concerns about negative feedback.

5.2 Recommendations
1. Invest in Social Media Marketing: SMEs should allocate resources to invest in social media marketing campaigns, focusing on building brand awareness and engaging with their customers on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, and YouTube.
2. Content Strategy: SMEs should develop a well-thought-out content strategy that aligns with the target audience's preferences and interests. Consistently post relevant and engaging content to maintain customer interest and interaction.
3. Monitoring and Analytics: SMEs should continuously monitor the performance of social media campaigns using analytics tools. Adjust strategies based on data insights to optimize brand awareness and customer engagement efforts.
4. Customer Feedback: Actively seek and respond to customer feedback on social media platforms. Engage in conversations, address concerns, and build positive relationships with customers.
5. Product Showcase: Showcase products or services creatively through visual content (e.g., images and videos) to attract and engage potential customers.
6. Customer Testimonials: Share customer testimonials and reviews on social media to build trust and credibility.
7. Promotions and Discounts: Offer exclusive promotions or discounts to social media followers to incentivize purchases.
8. Call to Action (CTA): Include clear and compelling CTAs in social media posts, guiding users toward making a purchase or taking a specific action.
9. Encourage Sharing: Create shareable content and encourage customers to share their positive experiences with the brand on social media platforms.
10. Referral Programs: Implement referral programs that reward customers for referring friends and family to the business.
11. Engagement with Advocates: Identify and engage with brand advocates on social media who can help promote the business to their networks.
12. Training and Skill Development: Invest in training and skill development for staff responsible for social media marketing to enhance their expertise.
13. Budget Allocation: Allocate a portion of the marketing budget specifically for social media marketing to ensure adequate resources are available.

14. Feedback Management: Develop strategies for handling negative feedback effectively, including addressing issues privately and professionally.
15. Outsourcing: Consider outsourcing social media management to professionals or agencies with expertise in the field.

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ETHICS CODE: 950532-950514-112061799
Final ethics form 22 23 BEI

Response ID	Completion date
950532-950514-112061799	15 Jun 2023, 19:06 (BST)

1	Title of study	THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON SMEs: A CASE STUDY OF NIGERIA.

2	Person responsible for the study. If you are a student or research assistant/post doc, the person responsible for the study will be your supervisor. If you hold a personal fellowship you are responsible for the study.	MURAINA OLUBUNMI TITILAYO

3	**Name and role of person collecting data. if you are a student or RA/post doc please say name, UG/Masters/PhD student or RA/post doc.**	MURAINA OLUBUNMI TITILAYO/MASTERS

4	Names of any Co- applicants (Staff, PhD, Masters): Co-applicants (Staff, PhD, Masters) and their specific role (e.g. Staff, Masters, PhD, PI/CoI on grant etc). For team projects this may include undergraduate co-applicants. For grant funded research this may involve collaborators at other institutions.	N/A

5	date of application?	15/6/2023
5.a	and when is data collection due to start?	20/6/2023

6	Please list the email addresses of all applicants	olubunmititilola@gmail.com

7	School	School of Business, Economics and Informatics

8	Department	Management

9	If you are a student what is your programme of study?	Msc Marketing

10	**is your application routine or non routine?**	routine

11	**Is your research externally funded?**	no

12	**Where will the data collection take place?**	in participants homes outside the UK
13	**Briefly (~200 words)** **describe the purpose and rationale of the research, make the objectives of the study clear**	The purpose of the study is to examine the impact of social media marketing on the growth and success of Nigerian SMEs. The rationale stems from the identified gaps in many aspects of research concerning social media marketing and SMEs in Nigeria. Firstly, there is no sufficient research on social media marketing targeting SMEs in Nigeria .Secondly, there is limited research on the role of word of mouth in social media marketing regarding SMEs in Nigeria. Thirdly, there is inadequate investigation of the relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention for SMEs in Nigeria. Fourthly, there is limited research on the challenges faced by SMEs in implementing social media marketing initiatives and lastly ,there is insufficient research in identifying critical success factors for social media marketing initiatives for SMEs in Nigeria. Objectives: 1.To examine the impact of social media marketing on brand awareness and customer engagement for Nigerian SMEs. 2.To evaluate the influence of social media marketing on purchase intention for Nigerian SMEs. 3.To explore the relationship between

		social media marketing and word of mouth for Nigerian SMEs. 4.To identify the challenges faced by Nigerian SMEs in implementing effective social media marketing strategies, and recommend solutions to overcome them.
14	**Describe the methods and procedures of the data collection, please provide FULL information: Do not merely list the names of measures and/or their acronyms; summarize them briefly (e.g. Buss-Durkee Hostility Inventory: a standardized self-report measure of trait aggression). Include any information about any interventions, interview schedules, duration, order and frequency of assessments and so on. It should be clear exactly what would happen to participants.**	The study is a quantitative research, an online questionnaires will be used to collect data. The questionnaire will be structured in 5 sections .The first section will collect necessary demographic (Age, Sex, Level of education etc) while the remaining 4 sections will deal with questions that helps answer the research questions. The study will use a quantitative tool called 5-point Likert scale to assess responses. The sample population is all SMEs in Nigeria but the study will employ random sampling to get the sample size .Data from the study will be subjected to Cronbach's reliability test .Regression and correlation analysis using SPSS will be used to analyze the relationship between the variables .The philosophy behind the methodology is the POSITIVISM.
15	**Please list all instruments, materials and techniques described above and confirm they are attached (e.g. questionnaires, specific information about particular techniques such as EEG). These are in addition to the general information sheet about the study, the consent**	SMEs in Nigeria mostly have social media forums. This social media platform will be utilized in distributing the online questionnaires with the information sheet. The link will be sent to different whatsapp groups while data provided by the respondents will be collated. An SPSS software will be used to run the reliability test, regression analysis, correlation, cross tabulation and descriptive statistics.

	form, the protocol and any further necessary information such as a Data Management Plan.	

16	Who will the participants be? Describe (a) the groups of participants that will be recruited; (b) the main inclusion and exclusion criteria; (c) make clear how many participants you plan to recruit into the study in total and (d) the expected age range of your participants.	The participants will be staff and management staff of the SMEs in Nigeria. As many respondents that answers the questionnaire will be used for data analysis. The study expects not less than 200 respondents.
16.a	Are there any potential conflicts of interest with your participants? A conflict of interest is a situation where personal or professional factors could affect - or could be reasonably assumed by an external party to have affected - your judgement in your research. In some situations a conflict of interest is unavoidable.	N/A
16.b	Do you anticipate that you will recruit Birkbeck staff and/or students (or people closely related to Birkbeck staff and students) in your data collection?	N/A

17	Describe any potential risks to or adverse effects on the researcher who is collecting the data resulting from conducting the research and what measures have been taken to address them? Describe any discomfort or inconvenience that researchers may experience including distress resulting from the subject matter. Include information about location of the study and when the study is taking place if this introduces possible safety risks to the researcher. Please ensure that your methods have a valid safety and risk assessment.	NONE

18	Describe any potential risks to or adverse effects on the participants resulting from participation and what measures have been taken to address them? Describe any discomfort or inconvenience that participants may experience. Include information about procedures that for some people could be physically stressful or might impinge on the safety of participants, e.g. noise levels, visual stimuli, equipment; or that for some people could be psychologically stressful or distressing, e.g. mood induction procedure, questions about sensitive or painful personal experiences.	NONE

19	Is there a possibility of a participant disclosing (or the researcher identifying) any issues of concern (e.g. legal, emotional, psychological health)? If yes please describe.	NONE

| 20 | Describe the recruitment procedures for the study. Give details of how potential participants will be identified and/or recruited. Include all advertising materials (posters, emails, letters etc.) as appendices and refer to them as appropriate. Describe any screening and selection procedures (e.g. collecting SES information) and explain why they are necessary | The Nigerian SMEs are known with some identifiable social media platforms that are been used in connecting each other. The questionnaire link will be sent to different whatsapp groups. |

21	Describe the procedures to obtain informed consent. Describe when and how consent will be obtained. Give details of who will take consent and how it will be done. If you plan to seek informed consent from vulnerable groups (e.g. people with mental or physical health problems or learning difficulties, victims of crime, individuals in any form of custody or detention, those aged under 18), say how you will ensure that consent is voluntary and fully informed. Please note that taught students are not allowed to carry out research with vulnerable groups and/or on sensitive topics such as discrimination, bullying and harassment, whistleblowing.	N/A

22	Will consent be written?	no
22.a	If yes, will this be based on your Schools template consent form? (you will be required to provide a copy of the form)	no

23	**What will participants be told about the study? Will any information on procedures or the purpose of the study withheld? If any information is to be withheld, justify this decision.**	Brief information about the research study will be provided on the first page of the questionnaire.

24	**will you provide a written information sheet? If yes you will need to provide a copy**	yes

25	Describe the procedures in place for making sure that participant personal information and data collected will be treated with confidentiality and their anonymity respected. Please list all people who will have access to the data. This description should include how you will protect your participants identity as you collect the data, as you analyse the data, and in anything you produce from the data such as a thesis, paper or other report for a third party. It should also consider how, and up to what stage, a participant may withdraw their data from the analysis. Please note, sharing raw data (i.e. data which has not been effectively anonymised) with an external organisation is not permitted unless a suitable data sharing agreement is in place and the necessary consents have been obtained from participants.	The questionnaire is designed in a generic pattern and does not request any personal information of respondents. However, it may require some information about the occupational status and experience of the participants.

26	**Will participants receive payments, expenses or other benefits and inducements?**	no

27	**At the end of the study, what will participants be told about the investigation? Give details of debriefings, ways of alleviating distress that might be caused by the study etc.**	N/A

28	**Has the person carrying out the study had previous experience of all of the procedures to be used in the study? If not, who will supervise and/or train that person?**	Yes, I had undergone the marketing research module which has impacted me with the necessary knowledge of a proper research process.

29	**Describe what you have done to ascertain that you are not collecting more personal data than you need or data which is not pertinent to your research questions**	N/A

30	Please briefly describe the nature of the personal data you will be collecting. Personal data is data which can make an individual identifiable or which when used in combination with other data can make an individual identifiable	N/A

31	How many participants will you be collecting personal data from?	N/A

32	Are you recording personal identifying information other than on the consent form (such as recording an individuals name at the start of an interview recording)?	no

33	Will you be using any software (e.g. Qualtrics, Nvivo) in processing your data? if so please name the software	Google form will be used to design the questionnaire while data will be analyzed via IBM SPSS.

34	Will any third parties (e.g. a transcription service, an external collaborator) be involved in processing the data prior to anonymisation? If yes please say who the third party is and what data processing they will be doing	N/A

35	Why do you need to record personal identifying information?	N/A

36	How long will personal identifying information be kept and why has this time period been selected? (until the end of the study or (for students) assessment, for a defined period, in perpetuity etc.)	N/A

37	How are you ensuring that personal identifying information will be kept separate from research data? (for example, hard copy consent forms only held in a locked filing cabinet with research data on a password protected hard drive)	N/A

38	**Will you be uploading your anonymised data to an online repository?**	yes
38.a	**If yes, please explain how, where the data will be stored, any necessary retractions or restrictions to access etc.**	The data collected will be kept on Birkbeck Computer prior submission of the dissertation and will be destroyed after the submission.

39	**If you are collecting any special category data then further legal considerations apply. Is any of the data you are collecting considered to be special category data? Tick all that apply**	none of my data will fall into any of these categories
39.a	**Is the lawful basis for processing this special category data public task or legitimate interest? (public task relates to research undertaken as part of day-to-day activities for the college, legitimate interest applies when the research is sponsored by an external body)**	N/A

39.b	I confirm that the appropriate Article 9 condition for processing the special category data applies. This data processing is in the public interest for scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes, and shall be subject to appropriate safeguards, in accordance with data protection regulations, for the rights and freedoms of the data subject. Those safeguards shall ensure that technical and organisational measures are in place in particular in order to ensure respect for the principle of data minimisation. Those measures may include pseudonymisation provided that those purposes can be fulfilled in that manner. Where those purposes can be fulfilled by further processing which does not permit or no longer permits the identification of data subjects, those purposes shall be fulfilled in that manner.	yes

39.d	If you are processing data of this type you must complete and supply a data management plan and this must be reviewed by our Research Data Support Manager. Have you done this?	N/A
39.e	Have you included specific information about the processing of special category data in the information sheet for individuals involved in this project	N/A

40	A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) is a process to help you identify and minimise the data protection risks of a project. You must do a DPIA for processing that is likely to result in a high risk to individuals or for any other major project which requires the processing of personal data. To assess the level of risk, you must consider both the likelihood and the severity of any impact on individuals. High risk could result from either a high probability of some harm, or a lower possibility of serious harm. For projects where the risk is lower, a data management plan should be sufficient, and for projects which have a low or very low risk of severe impact on individuals the information provided in the ethics application should be sufficient. Which level of data management do you think is appropriate for this project?	Ethics Approval

40.a	**why?**	This is because the research study does not require any personal information that could have an impact on individual respondents.

41	**Are any Risk Assesments required for this research?**	no

Appendix

Dear Respondent,
QUESTIONNAIRE
I am a student in the School of Business, Economics, and Informatics at Birkbeck University of London. As part of the requirements for my Master's Dissertation, I am conducting a research study on the topic **"THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON SMEs: A CASE STUDY OF NIGERIA"**. Consequently, you have been selected as part of the respondents; I therefore humbly solicit your co-operation in providing answers to the questions asked. Your view on the questions asked will be highly appreciated, as this will help in the validity and reliability of the outcome of the research. Please be assured that responses will only be used for academic purpose, and as such will be treated with strict confidence.
Yours faithfully,

Muraina Olubunmi Titilayo
13822030

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHICS
1. Gender
    a. Male
    b. Female
2. Age
    a. 18 - 29
    b. 30 – 39
    c. 40 – 49
    d. 50 – 59
    e. 60 above
3. Highest Academic Qualifications
    a. Primary School
    b. Secondary School
    c. HND/BSc
    d. Post Graduate
4. Cadre
    a. Non-Management
    b. Management
5. Experience
    a. 0 – 5yrs
    b. 6 – 10yrs
    c. 11 – 15yrs
    d. 16 – 20yrs

e. 21 – Above

(Note: Questions in the preceding section have option A to E ranging from Strongly Agree, Agree, Not sure, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree)

SECTION B1: SOCIAL MEDIA
6. I have used Social media as a platform for social media marketing.
7. SMEs have been using social media for their business operations.
8. Social media is linked to SME growth.
9. Which of the social media platforms do you use? (YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Whatsapp)
10. Social media helps me measure my business success

SECTION B2: WORD OF MOUTH
11. Word of mouth is an aspect of social media marketing
12. Word of mouth is used by SMEs to market their products and services.
13. Word of mouth is instrumental to SME growth in business.
14. Customers were influenced to buy my products through word of mouth.
15. Word of mouth helped my business serve their customers better.

SECTION B3: BRAND AWARENESS
16. SMEs have been using social media marketing for brand awareness.
17. Brand awareness contributes to SME growth.
18. Awareness of products and services increased after social media marketing.
19. It is easier to create brand awareness on social media than with traditional media.
20. My business grew after I created brand awareness on social media.

SECTION B4: CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT
21. Customers use social media to engage product sellers.
22. Customer engagement is good in social media marketing.
23. SMEs have benefitted from customer engagement on social media.
24. Customer engagement on social media has helped me serve my customers better.
25. Sellers make improvements on their products and services through social media customer engagement

SECTION B5: PURCHASE INTENTION
26. Most customers use social media to know more about the products or services they are interested in.
27. Purchase intention helps SMEs to know what their customers want.
28. SME growth is associated to purchase intention on social media.
29. Customers use social media to make orders on my products.
30. Purchase intention on social media helps sellers to engage their customers

SECTION C: SME GROWTH
31. Social media marketing has assisted financial growth in SME.
32. SMEs have benefitted from the use of social media.
33. Social media marketing is associated with SME growth in customer base and satisfaction.
34. Social media marketing through purchase intention and customer engagement has helped SME in learning and growth.
35. Social media marketing has assisted tremendously in enhancing the internal processes of SMEs.