

## **Social Media Marketing and Customer Patronage of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study examined the effect of social media marketing on customer patronage of small and medium scale enterprises in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. Specifically, it examines the effects of X, Facebook and Instagram on customer patronage of small and medium scale enterprises. Five hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, and a purposive sampling technique was employed to select 246 respondents using Topman formula since the population was infinite. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, while multiple regression was used to test all the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. From the findings of the study it was revealed that X, Facebook and Instagram, all have a significant effect on customer patronage. It was therefore recommended that SMEs should allocate a portion of their budgets to sponsored advertisements on platforms like Facebook and Instagram, which offer affordable and targeted advertising options for small businesses.

**Keywords:** *Social Media Marketing, Facebook, X, Instagram, Customer Buying Behaviour, Small and Medium Scale Enterprises, Uyo metropolis.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Social media marketing has changed the way businesses engage with customers, especially for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which often have limited resources for traditional advertising. In Uyo metropolis of Akwa Ibom State, where SMEs play a vital role in economic development, social media has become a strong tool for growth.

Amoah and Jibril (2021) noted that platforms like X, Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp provide affordable and accessible marketing channels that allow SMEs to reach a wider audience, build brand awareness, and drive customer engagement. Entrepreneurs leverage these platforms to showcase their products, communicate with customers, and manage sales efficiently without the need for physical stores.

However, despite the increasing use of social media, many SMEs still find it difficult to convert their online presence into regular customer patronage (Asuquo et al, 2024). This

study seeks to investigate how social media platforms like X, Facebook and Instagram affect customer patronage among SMEs in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The growing adoption of social media marketing has created new opportunities for SMEs to reach a wider audience, enhance brand recognition, and increase sales. However, the extent to which social media marketing translates into actual customer patronage remains uncertain, especially among small and medium-sized businesses in developing economies like Nigeria (Lin et al., 2021).

However, while these social media platforms have the potential to increase customer patronage, many small businesses still struggle to experience real growth in customer patronage and loyalty. There is, therefore, a need to empirically examine how the social media marketing variables of X, Facebook and Instagram affect customer patronage of SMEs in Uyo Metropolis of Akwa Ibom State.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The broad objective of the study was to examine the effect of social media marketing on customer patronage of small and medium scale enterprises in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

The specific objectives include;

- i. to examine the effect of X marketing on customer patronage of small and medium scale enterprises in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State
- ii. to examine the effect of Facebook marketing on customer patronage of small and medium scale enterprises in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State
- iii. to determine the effect of Instagram marketing on customer patronage of small and medium scale enterprises in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were stated in null form.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** X marketing has no significant effect on the customer patronage of small and medium scale enterprises in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Facebook marketing has no significant effect on the customer patronage of small and medium scale enterprises in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State

**H<sub>03</sub>:** Instagram marketing has no significant effect on the customer patronage of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Concept of Social Media**

According to Attih et al. (2024), social media platforms are valuable communication tools that have become increasingly important to companies, marketers and consumers. Nowadays, most companies use social media to showcase their products and services to encourage consumer purchase.

Atejahwari, Joshi and Mandhari (2020) opined that most companies use social media to encourage feedback; this shift away from traditional marketing methods has meant that customers have started to shop online using social media websites or applications. From another perspective, social media may refer to web-services in which the content is generated by the users of the service themselves (Asangaeneng et al., 2024; Macaulay et al., 2023).

## **Dimensions of Social Media**

### **Twitter**

Twitter serves as a powerful marketing tool, allowing businesses to promote their products or services to a large audience. Businesses can leverage Twitter to create brand visibility using hashtags, mentions, and retweets, which allow content to spread virally across the platform (Uford et al., 2022). Marketing campaigns conducted on Twitter can reach a broader audience, especially when supported by influencer endorsements or trending topics. (Nana et al., 2025).

### **Facebook**

Facebook remains one of the most widely used social media platforms globally, providing businesses with powerful tools to enhance their performance through strategic engagement. One of the primary advantages of Facebook is its vast user base, which exceeds 2.9 billion monthly active users as of 2024 (Statista, 2024).

### **Instagram**

Instagram, a visual-centric social media platform, has emerged as a pivotal tool for personal expression and business marketing since its launch in 2010. With over 2 billion monthly active users as of 2024, Instagram has garnered a reputation for its unique ability to engage users through visually appealing content, including photos, videos, and Stories (Statista, 2024).

## **Customer Patronage**

Customer patronage refers broadly to a customer's decision to purchase from and continue buying a firm's goods or services, as well as their willingness to maintain a relationship with that firm rather than switching to competitors. Several authors define patronage as the extent to which buying units concentrate their purchase activity over time on a given product, brand or supplier (Udo et al., 2024).

One way to understand customer patronage is through its behavioural manifestations. For example, repeat purchase behavior, where the customer returns to buy again from the same firm is a key dimension of patronage (Peter, 2025; Udo et al., 2024).

## **Theoretical Review**

### **Four–Cs Theory (4Cs) Propounded by Bob Lauterborn (1990)**

Four-C theory is an internet marketing theory propounded by Bob Lauterborn in 1990 serves as the best fit theory. It proposes 4Cs model which gives a more customer-centric take on traditional marketing mix mapping than the 4Ps of marketing mix. The four 4Cs are: consumer (corresponding to product), cost (equivalent to price), convenience (corresponding to place) and communication (equivalent to promotion). Consumer focuses on the study of consumer needs and wants via tracking log-in data across all touch points and personalizing products and services for customer satisfaction. Cost focuses on easy access to price offered by competing firms and emphasizes business firms setting up right prices for goods and services. Convenience deals with direct link between customers and firms and as well shopping convenience. E-marketing provides consumers the convenience of purchasing goods and services from around the world from the comfort zone of their homes and offices.

**Relevance of the Theory:** The Four-Cs theory is relevant to this study because it shifts the marketing focus from the firm's perspective to the customer's perspective which are central to customer patronage.

### **Empirical Review**

Attih et al (2024) examined the relationship between social media platforms and consumer buying behaviour of products in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The survey research design was used for the study. Data for the study were obtained through questionnaire administered to the respondents. A convenience sampling technique was used to select 213 respondents for the study. Descriptive statistics basically mean, standard deviation, kurtosis and skewness were used to analyze the scores obtained on each of the variable while bivariate correlation between variable was carried out using Pearson correlation. Four hypotheses were formulated and tested at the 0.05 level of significance. Hypotheses were tested using multiple linear regression model. The results clearly revealed that there is a significant relationship between Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram, WhatsApp and consumer buying behaviour. Based on the findings, it was recommended that manufacturers of products should continuously create awareness about their products on social media platforms to ensure visibility in order to attract high consumers' patronage.

Smith and Johnson (2022) examined the role of social media in small and medium size enterprises: a comparative analysis of Cameroon and Finland. Descriptive survey design was used; a sample of 25 SMEs were sampled from Cameroon and 25 from Finland as well. Primary data was collected using questionnaires. Analysis was done using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Study findings indicated that the social media were highly instrumental in the growth of SMEs in Cameroon and Finland. Additionally, adoption of social media tools like Facebook, twitter, WhatsApp, Blogs were important in reaching out to potential customers of SMEs in Cameroon related to growth of SMEs. Therefore, findings indicated that high growth of SMEs was mostly associated with usage of social media. The study recommended that SMEs should consider using the Internet through software solutions, meet increasing use and for research to be conducted to identify additional challenges that will enable SMEs operations to be efficient, ensure growth and sustainability.

Wu at al (2022) examined the benefits of using social media by small and medium enterprises (SMEs), how the SMEs can engage the customers and business for achieving their marketing objectives and the challenges pose to the SMEs in the adoption of the social media in North-Western Nigeria. The study is purely based on secondary source of data- Books, journals and other secondary data to examine the benefits, engagement and the challenges. Sample of four media platform namely WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram were used to highlight the engagement. The study reveals that social media is beneficial to SMEs performance, marketability, competitiveness and innovativeness, there numerous ways SMEs can engage their customers for achieving the marketing objectives and the emergence of social media about some marketing challenges to the SMEs. The study concludes that the use of social media by SMEs in the North-Western Nigeria, can lead to the improvement of the SMEs performance, marketability and competitiveness, and that SMEs in the study area need to address their performance, marketability and competition in the emergence social media environment.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **Research Design**

The survey research design was used in this study. It involved gathering primary data through a structured questionnaire administered to respondents.

#### **Population, Sample Size/ Sampling Technique**

The population of the study comprised customers of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The sample size of 246 Small and Medium Scale Enterprises and was selected using purposive sampling technique.

This section focused on the methods and procedures for collecting and analyzing data for the study. It consists of research design, population, sample size/sampling technique, source and nature of data, reliability of the research instrument and methods of data analysis.

### Sources of Data Collection

Data for this study were obtained using primary source. The primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to respondents. Sources of Data Collection

### Reliability of the Research Instrument

To determine the reliability of the instrument, Cronbach Alpha method of reliability was employed and the result reveal reliability coefficients of .840, .913, .960 and .955 for Facebook, X, Instagram and WhatsApp respectively. For customer patronage, Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of .960 was obtained. These reliability coefficients were all greater than .70 which indicates that the instrument is reliable.

### Methods of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics basically mean, standard deviation, kurtosis and skewness were used to analyse the scores obtained on each of the variable while bivariate correlation between variable was carried out using Pearson correlation. The hypotheses were tested using multiple linear regression model. Data computation was carried out using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 25) and p-value less than .05 was considered statistically significant.

## DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

**Table 1: Multiple linear regression analysis result on joint effect of Twitter, Facebook and Instagram on customer patronage**

Variable	Parameters	Coefficient	Std error	Tcal – value
Constant	$\beta_0$	1.369	0.552	2.480**
Twitter(X <sub>1</sub> )	$\beta_1$	0.120	0.117	1.020
Facebook(X <sub>2</sub> )	$\beta_2$	0.715	0.050	14.190***
Instagram(X <sub>3</sub> )	$\beta_3$	0.241	0.092	2.612***
R-Square (R <sup>2</sup> )		0.726		
Adjusted R – Square (R <sup>-2</sup> )		0.721		
F – Statistics		109.371		
F – Probability		0.000		
Durbin-Watson stat		2.170		

Decision Rule: If  $F_{cal} > F_{tab}$  accept the alternate and reject Null hypothesis. Otherwise accept the null hypothesis.

(\*\*\* = 1%), (\*\* = 5%), and (\* = 10%) denotes significance of coefficient at level respectively; t-tab value = 1.972, df = 224, Dependent Variable: customer patronage, Predictors: (Constant), Facebook, Instagram and Twitter

**Source: Field Survey, 2025 (SPSS Version 23 computation)**

The revealed that the t-calculated value of Twitter, Facebook and Instagram were 1.020, 14.190 and 2.612 which three of the t-values (14.190, 2.612 and 2.102) are greater than t-tabulated value of 1.972. Signifying that, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram significantly affect customer patronage of small and medium scale enterprises in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

The ( $R^2$ ) coefficient of multiple determinations value of 0.726 was observed, implying that, 72.6% variation in dependent variable was explained by changes in the independent variable while 27.4% were unexplained by the stochastic variable. This implies that, the independent variables (Twitter, Facebook and Instagram) were able to explain 72.6 percent disparities in dependent variable (customer patronage) while 27.4 percent was explained by the stochastic variable. The  $R^2$  adjusted value of 72.1% was observed indicating a goodness of fit of the regression model adopted in this study which is statistically significant at 5% probability level. F-stat value of 109.371 with F-prob. value of 0.000 against 2.170 t-table value and 0.05 was observed from the regression result, indicating a goodness of fit of the regression model adopted in this study which is statistically significant at 5% probability level. Thus, the researcher concluded that, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram have significant effect on customer patronage of small and medium scale enterprises in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

### **Discussion of findings**

Findings from test of the hypotheses revealed that there is a significant positive effect of Twitter, Facebook and Instagram on customer patronage of SMEs in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. This means that Twitter, Facebook and Instagram jointly affect customer patronage of SMEs in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

This result of the analysis is in tandem with the work of Wu et al. (2022) that examined the benefits of social media by small and medium enterprises (SMEs) for customer engagement and patronage in North-Western Nigeria (WhatsApp, Facebook, X, YouTube, and Instagram) were used to highlight the engagement. The study reveals that social media is beneficial to SMEs performance and patronage.

The result is also supported by Smith and Johnson (2025) who examined the role of social media in small and medium size enterprises: A comparative analysis of Cameroon and Finland. Findings indicated that the social media tools like Facebook, X, WhatsApp and Blogs were highly instrumental in the growth of SMEs in Cameroon and Finland.

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study was carried out to examine the effect of social media marketing on customer patronage of small and medium scale enterprises in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. The results clearly showed that there is a significant effect of X, Facebook, and Instagram on customer patronage.

Therefore, it is concluded that social media marketing play an important role in influencing customer patronage of SMEs. Based on the findings, it was recommended that firms of products should continuously create awareness about their products on social media platforms to ensure visibility in order to attract high consumers' patronage. The implication of this study is that the manufacturers of products can further influence customer patronage by aggressively advertising their products on social media platforms.



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