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SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AND THE PERFORMANCE OF MICRO AND SMALL ENTERPRISES IN OKADA, EDO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the effect of social media marketing on the performance of micro and small enterprises (MSEs) in Okada, Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined the influence of social media platform usage, frequency of social media use, and paid social media advertising on enterprise performance. A quantitative cross-sectional survey research design was adopted. The study population comprised approximately 7,000 registered and unregistered MSEs operating within the study area. Using the Yamane (1967) formula for finite populations, a sample size of 378 respondents was determined and selected through simple random sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed on a five-point Likert scale. A pilot study established the reliability of the instrument, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.76 to 0.84, indicating satisfactory internal consistency. Of the 378 questionnaires administered, 370 were correctly completed and returned, representing a response rate of 97.9%. Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 26. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize respondents' characteristics, while Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and multiple regression analyses were used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that all three dimensions of social media marketing had significant positive relationships with the performance of MSEs. Social media platform usage exerted the greatest influence on enterprise performance ($\beta = 0.385$, $p < 0.001$), followed by frequency of social media use ($\beta = 0.294$, $p = 0.001$) and paid social media advertising ($\beta = 0.182$, $p = 0.003$). Collectively, the three predictors explained 52.4% of the variation in MSE performance ($R^2 = 0.524$), leading to the rejection of all three null hypotheses. The study concludes that effective utilization of social media marketing significantly enhances the performance and competitiveness of micro and small enterprises in semi-urban communities. It recommends that MSE operators strategically utilize appropriate social media platforms, maintain consistent online engagement with customers, and invest in targeted paid advertising campaigns. Furthermore, government agencies and enterprise development organizations, particularly the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) and the Bank of Industry (BOI), should intensify digital marketing training and capacity-building programmes to improve the digital competitiveness and sustainability of MSEs.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Social Media Platform Usage, Paid Social Media Advertising, Micro and Small Enterprises, Enterprise Performance, Digital Marketing.

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Introduction

Social media marketing has become one of the most consequential tools available to micro and small enterprises (MSEs) seeking to compete for customer attention in increasingly digital markets. A growing number of Nigerian small businesses now use Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok, and X to advertise goods and services (Effiong, Akogwu, & Eke, 2025), and many have found that doing so provides a competitive edge, supports the achievement of business objectives, and improves organisational performance (Bakri, 2017). For MSEs specifically, digital channels create opportunities for increased customer engagement, more informed decision-making, and, in principle, access to markets that traditional promotion cannot reach (Azubuike, Sule, Adepoju, Ikwuanusi, & Odionu, 2024). Recent empirical evidence from Lagos State further demonstrates that a strong digital presence significantly enhances firms' operational performance by improving customer interactions, business visibility, and operational efficiency (Iyam, Imahsunu, & Ogu, 2025). This matters because small and micro enterprises typically lack the financial resources to reach their target markets through conventional advertising, and face intensifying competition for customer attention from rivals pursuing the same audience (Mitrevva, Arsova, & Jovanov, 2022; Khanom, 2023).

Cost is a central part of the appeal. Producing and sharing organic content on social media is, at the point of production, largely free the primary resource cost is the operator's time and digital competence rather than a marketing budget, in sharp contrast to the cost structure of radio, print, or outdoor advertising (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016). Yet recent evidence suggests that Nigerian MSEs remain under considerable competitive pressure regardless: only about 35% are able to sustain annual growth rates above 10% (Okechukwu, Jibril, & Nuhu, 2025), and the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN, 2023) attributes this partly to inadequate marketing reach, which constrains roughly 62% of MSEs, and to limited promotional budgets, which hinder client acquisition for about 58%. Beyond promotion, a lack of innovation has also been identified as a primary driver of poor MSE performance (Fitriatia, Purwanab, & Buchdadac, 2020), underscoring that marketing capability sits within a broader set of survival challenges facing this business segment.

Social media itself is best understood as a set of digital tools that allow people to interact and share content within defined networks (Siddiqui & Singh,

2016), and its business relevance has grown as customer interaction on these platforms has been shown to shape sales and productivity outcomes directly (Etuk, Anyadighibe, James, & Bassey, 2022). Comparable Nigerian evidence supports this: in Sapele, Delta State, customer interaction on social media positively influenced business sales and productivity while lowering promotional costs for adopting enterprises (Inwang, Ogosi, Usani, Andem, & Chukwuyem, 2025). Nationally, an estimated 41.5 million MSEs existed in Nigeria as of 2019, yet fewer than 10% had embraced social media marketing despite its documented benefits (Idris, Sule, & Lawal, 2023), pointing to a persistent gap between the demonstrated value of these tools and their actual uptake.

Okada, a semi-urban commercial centre in Edo State with a predominantly youthful population and close proximity to Igbinedion University, offers a distinctive setting in which to examine this gap. The town combines a digitally engaged, university-adjacent customer base with a business community in which most enterprises remain family-owned or sole proprietorships relying primarily on conventional marketing methods (Ebiye, Oge, & John, 2025). The persistence of low digital penetration alongside reported constraints in market reach, revenue, and customer retention motivated this study's effort to generate factual, locally grounded evidence on how social media marketing shapes MSE performance in Okada specifically, rather than relying on inferences drawn from national or other regional studies.

Statement of the Problem

A growing body of research documents a positive association between social media marketing and business performance at national and regional levels in Nigeria, yet locally grounded evidence for Okada specifically remains scarce. National estimates suggest that while about 65% of Nigerian MSEs maintain a social media presence, only around 35% actively use social media as a deliberate marketing strategy (Oyewobi, Adedayo, Olorunyomi, & Jimoh, 2023) a gap between presence and strategic use that points to a broader pattern of underutilisation likely to be limiting the commercial benefits available to these enterprises.

This problem is compounded by structural fragility in the wider MSE sector: only five to ten per cent of Nigerian MSEs survive to sustained maturity, with more than 80% failing within their first five years of operation (Aremu & Adeyemi, 2006). SMEDAN (2023) further reports that approximately 62% of

MSEs are constrained by inadequate marketing reach and 58% face persistent client-acquisition difficulties tied to limited promotional funding. Within Okada specifically, there is a lack of context-specific empirical evidence on which social media platforms MSEs actually prefer, how frequently they engage with them, whether paid advertising produces measurable performance benefits, and how these practices relate to enterprise outcomes. In the absence of such localised evidence, policymakers, development agencies, and business owners are left without an adequate basis for designing support programmes or making informed digital-marketing investment decisions. This study addresses that gap by examining how social media platform usage, frequency of engagement, and paid advertising relate to MSE performance in Okada.

Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine the effect of social media marketing on the performance of micro and small enterprise in Okada, Edo State. Three specific objectives operationalize this general aim:

1. To determine the effect of social media platform usage on MSE performance.
2. To ascertain the effect of frequency of social media use on MSE performance.
3. To examine the effect of paid social media advertising on MSE performance.

Corresponding to these objectives, the study was guided by three research questions:

1. What are the effects of social media platform usage on the performance of MSEs in Okada?
2. What are the effects of frequency of social media use on the performance of MSEs in Okada?
3. What are the effects of paid social media advertisements on the performance of MSEs in Okada?

Three null hypotheses were tested accordingly:

- H_{01} . social media platform usage has no significant effect on MSE performance in Okada;
- H_{02} . frequency of social media use has no significant effect on MSE performance in Okada; and
- H_{03} . paid social media advertising has no significant effect on MSE performance in Okada.

Literature Review

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Social media marketing is conceptually defined as the deliberate use of web-based social networking platforms for business objectives, including content creation intended to attract prospective customers, build brand equity, and increase sales (Jamil et al., 2022). It combines the commercial logic of identifying and persuasively reaching target audiences with the social infrastructure of digital networks user-generated content, peer-to-peer interaction, and community formation (Siddiqui & Singh, 2016). Unlike traditional one-way advertising channels, social media platforms allow businesses to build sustained relationships, respond to feedback in real time, and target messages to specific audience segments (Istijanto & Purusottama, 2023). This is consistent with the findings of Iyam et al. (2025), who reported that organizations with stronger digital presence recorded superior operational performance because digital platforms enhanced customer engagement and improved organizational responsiveness; accordingly, Nigerian and international businesses have progressively extended their use of these platforms beyond promotion into customer service, market research, and product development (Bruce, Zhao, Egala, Yegenmuradov, & Godson, 2022).

Social media platform usage (SMPU), the first independent variable, denotes the degree to which an enterprise intentionally uses one or more platforms Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok, or X to market products, interact with customers, and build brand awareness (Jamil et al., 2022; Rosario & Dias, 2023). Platform choice is a strategic decision because platforms differ substantially in user demographics, content format, and algorithmic behaviour. Facebook retains the broadest commercial infrastructure in Nigeria through its Marketplace and advertising tools, though its organic reach has declined as the platform prioritises paid content (Penttinen & Ciuchita, 2022). Instagram's visual orientation particularly favours enterprises selling visually demonstrable goods (Houshiarian, Amidi, & Nejad Mohammad Nameghi, 2024), while WhatsApp functions less as a broadcast channel and more as a conversational tool for order-taking, customer service, and relationship-based trust-building well suited to Nigeria's informal market context (Ukpong, 2023).

Frequency of social media use (FSMU), the second independent variable, captures the regularity and consistency with which an enterprise posts promotional content, responds to customer inquiries,

and maintains ongoing digital communication with its audience (Muraina & Samour, 2025). Its commercial logic operates through two mechanisms: an algorithmic mechanism, whereby platforms favour pages that post and generate engagement consistently, expanding organic reach without additional spend; and a relational mechanism, whereby regular, responsive engagement signals attentiveness and reliability, building the interpersonal trust that sustains repeat business in informal market settings (Inwang et al., 2025).

Paid social media advertising (PSMA), the third independent variable, refers to sponsored content that an enterprise pays a platform operator to distribute to target audiences beyond its existing followers, typically using demographic, geographic, and interest-based targeting (Ciuchita, Medberg, Penttinen, Lutz, & Heinonen, 2022; Flavius & Indrawati, 2023). Its value for resource-constrained MSEs lies in precision targeting, real-time performance tracking, and scalability platforms such as Meta Ads Manager allow an Okada-based enterprise to target university students or residents within a defined radius rather than broadcasting indiscriminately (Dutta, Arivazhagan, Sengupta, Shyamaladevi, & Edwin, 2024).

MSE performance (MSEP), the dependent variable, is measured in this study as a composite of self-reported outcomes spanning sales growth, profitability, market reach, customer engagement, and customer retention (Purwanto, Purba, Bernarto, & Sijabat, 2022; Okechukwu et al., 2025). Self-reported performance measures are a substantively valid approach in MSE research given that formal, externally verifiable financial records are frequently unavailable for enterprises in the informal sector. Four complementary theoretical frameworks underpin the hypothesised relationships among these constructs.

The Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989) is the primary framework: it explains heterogeneity in social media adoption among MSE operators through perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, predicting that operators who view social media as commercially valuable and accessible will use it more intensively and realise greater performance gains providing the theoretical basis for expecting positive effects from all three independent variables.

The Resource-Based View (Barney, 1991) extends this by framing social media marketing competence in audience targeting, content production, and campaign analytics as a valuable, rare, and difficult-

to-replicate enterprise resource capable of generating a competitive advantage. Social Capital Theory (Coleman, 1988) explains the frequency performance relationship specifically: consistent digital communication builds trust, reputation, and network ties that constitute relational capital, sustaining customer loyalty and referral-based growth.

Finally, the Diffusion of Innovation Theory (Rogers, 2003) accounts for uneven adoption across the sample, predicting that operators with prior digital experience, reliable connectivity, and exposure to visible adoption success stories will be further along the adoption curve a pattern consistent with the observation that adoption in the Okada sample was concentrated among younger, more digitally experienced operators (Ebiye et al., 2025).

The conceptual framework accordingly positions social media platform usage, frequency of use, and paid advertising as three distinct but related independent variables jointly predicting MSE performance, with enterprise-level digital literacy, local internet reliability, and marketing budget acting as contextual boundary conditions that influence the strength of these relationships without appearing as formal variables in the regression model.

Empirical Review

Nigerian evidence on the social-media-marketing-performance relationship is consistent across geographic contexts. Chinze (2023), studying laundry enterprises in Okada itself, found that social media marketing had a significant positive effect on business performance, with active users reporting increased patronage, improved complaint handling, and higher profitability. In Edo State more broadly, Izuagie and Mohammed (2025) found that social media accessibility and interaction had significant positive effects on financial performance and cost reduction, while Gbandi and Iyamu (2022) confirmed a significant positive effect on business growth among SMEs in Benin City, and Okenyi, Sambo, Fakah, and Adegbuyi (2025) identified marketing communication as a key determinant of SME survival in Auchi.

Beyond Edo State, Inwang et al. (2025) found that customer interaction on social media positively influenced sales and productivity among Sapele-based MSEs while lowering promotional costs relative to traditional methods. Achor and Ouseibai (2025) found a significant positive effect of platform adoption on sales and customer awareness among Bayelsa State MSEs, Ubulom and De Kok (2025) found a significant positive relationship between social media

marketing and profitability among small businesses in Obio-Akpor, Rivers State, and Ozoemelum, Nwogu, Nwosu, and Olatunji (2025) found that social media marketing activities explained significant variance in performance including sales, reach, and retention among MSEs in Aba, Abia State. At the national level, Muraina and Samour (2025) and Titilayo and Samour (2025) both confirmed significant positive effects of social media marketing on engagement, brand awareness, and overall performance across multi-sector Nigerian MSE samples, while Oyekan (2022) found that social media marketing significantly improved business-to-customer interaction and enterprise visibility, though usage and measurement remained inconsistent across enterprises.

Similarly, Iyam, Imahsunu, and Ogu (2025) examined the relationship between digital presence and operational performance in the consumer electronics industry in Lagos State. Using quantitative analysis, the study established that firms with stronger digital presence achieved significantly better operational performance through improved customer engagement, enhanced market visibility, and more efficient business operations. The findings reinforce the growing body of evidence that strategic adoption of digital technologies contributes significantly to organizational performance across different sectors of the Nigerian economy.

Two international studies extend this evidence base. Zeren, Kara, Grunwald, and Balli (2026), studying micro-enterprises in an emerging-market setting, found that platform selection the alignment between an enterprise's chosen platforms and its customers' digital behaviour was the single strongest predictor of social media marketing performance, with an effect size exceeding posting frequency and paid advertising combined. Khaki and Khan (2024), working in the tourism MSE sector using structural equation modelling, found that innovation-capability development partially mediates the relationship between social media marketing and firm performance, suggesting that the performance returns to sustained social media investment compound over time beyond immediate sales effects.

Locally, Ebiye et al. (2025) examined digital marketing and MSE growth in Okada specifically, finding that adoption remained limited overall but that adopting enterprises reported improved market visibility, with poor connectivity and insufficient training identified as the principal barriers to broader uptake. Taken together, the literature converges on three points relevant to this study: first, that social media marketing and MSE performance are positively

and significantly related across a wide range of Nigerian and comparable emerging-market contexts; second, that platform selection, posting consistency, and paid advertising each carry distinguishable, separable performance effects rather than functioning as a single undifferentiated practice; and third, that a persistent gap exists between social media marketing's demonstrated commercial effectiveness and its actual adoption among Nigerian MSEs, driven by infrastructure limitations, financial constraints, and digital-literacy gaps (Ozoemelum et al., 2025; Ebiye et al., 2025). Most reviewed studies, however, treat social media marketing as a single composite variable rather than disaggregating platform usage, frequency, and paid advertising within a unified model, and no prior Okada-specific study has done so across a multi-sector sample of the town's diverse MSE base. This study addresses that gap.

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional survey research design, appropriate for collecting standardised data from a defined population at a single point in time and testing hypothesised relationships among measurable variables using inferential statistics (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The target population comprised micro and small enterprises operating within the Okada metropolis, estimated at approximately 7,000 enterprises as reported by the Edo State Bureau of Statistics and . The sample size was determined using the Yamane (1967) formula for finite populations,

$$n = \frac{N}{[1 + N(e^2)]}$$

where N is the population size (7,000) and e is the acceptable margin of error (0.05).

This yielded a minimum required sample of approximately 378 respondents, which was adopted as the target sample to provide a buffer against non-response and incomplete returns. Respondents were selected using simple random sampling: a sampling frame was constructed through physical enumeration of MSEs across the designated commercial zones of Okada, each enterprise was assigned a unique sequential number, and a computer-generated random number table was used to select the required 378 enterprises, a procedure chosen to minimise systematic selection bias and satisfy the random-sampling assumptions underlying Pearson correlation and regression analysis (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, & Ringle, 2019).

Primary data were collected through a structured, self-administered questionnaire organised into five sections: demographic and business-profile

information; social media platform usage (SMPU); frequency of social media use (FSMU); paid social media advertising (PSMA); and MSE performance (MSEP), with the four attitudinal constructs measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree), five items per construct (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Content validity was established by anchoring items in the operational definitions developed from the literature review and subjecting all twenty Likert items to review by the project supervisor and a second marketing and entrepreneurship specialist; face validity was assessed through a pilot administration to ten Okada MSE operators outside the main sample, resulting in minor wording adjustments to three items; and construct validity was supported by anchoring measurement items in validated scales from Jamil et al. (2022), Zeren et al. (2026), Ozoemelum et al. (2025), and Purwanto et al. (2022). Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha computed from the pilot data, yielding coefficients of 0.82 (SMPU), 0.79 (FSMU), 0.76 (PSMA), and 0.84 (MSEP) all exceeding the conventional 0.70 threshold for adequate internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978; George & Mallery, 2003).

Of the 378 questionnaires distributed, 370 were returned complete and usable, a response rate of 97.9%, attributable primarily to personal administration by trained research assistants at enterprise premises, and substantially exceeding the 70% and 60% adequacy thresholds recommended respectively by Babbie (2010) and Sekaran and Bougie (2016). Data were analysed using SPSS Version 26 through descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) for the demographic and item-level data, followed by two inferential procedures used jointly to test the three hypotheses: Pearson product-moment correlation analysis, which established the direction and magnitude of the bivariate (zero-order) association between each independent variable and MSE performance, and multiple regression analysis, with MSE performance as the dependent variable and the three social media marketing dimensions entered

simultaneously as predictors, which estimated each variable's independent contribution to explained variance in performance while controlling for the variance shared with the other two predictors. All hypotheses were evaluated at the 0.05 significance level. The regression model was specified as $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon$, where Y is MSE performance, X_1 is social media platform usage, X_2 is frequency of social media use, X_3 is paid social media advertising, and β_0 through β_3 are the regression coefficients. Positive coefficients ($\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3 > 0$) were expected a priori for all three predictors, consistent with the theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence reviewed below:

Discussion of Findings

The demographic profile of the 370 valid respondents showed a sample skewed toward younger, moderately well-educated MSE operators: 58.9% were male and 39.7% female, 77% were under 36 years of age, and 57.6% held at least a first degree, consistent with Okada's university-adjacent commercial character. Retail and trading enterprises constituted the largest sector group (49.2%), and 70.3% of sampled enterprises had been in operation for six years or fewer, a profile consistent with high MSE formation rates alongside uncertain medium-term survival documented elsewhere in the Nigerian literature.

Composite construct means, computed from the five items comprising each scale, showed frequency of social media use recording the highest average agreement ($M = 3.57$), followed by platform usage ($M = 3.48$), MSE performance ($M = 3.42$), and paid advertising, which recorded the lowest mean by a substantial margin ($M = 3.05$) driven primarily by very low actual adoption of paid campaigns, with only 14.8% of respondents confirming regular use ($M = 2.49$ on that specific item). This pattern is consistent with the theoretical expectation, drawn from the Diffusion of Innovation Theory, that paid advertising's greater perceived complexity and financial risk relative to organic posting would depress adoption even where its commercial value is recognised.

Table 1: Pearson Correlation Matrix (N = 370)

Variable	SMPU	FSMU	PSMA	MSEP
SMPU	1.000			
FSMU	.542	1.000		
PSMA	.318	.421	1.000	
MSEP	.612	.589	.475	1.000

Source: SPSS Version 26 Output.

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

All three social media marketing dimensions correlated significantly and positively with MSE performance. Platform usage recorded the strongest bivariate association ($r = .612$), followed by frequency of use ($r = .589$), and paid advertising, which recorded a moderate but significant correlation ($r = .475$). Inter-predictor correlations were moderate ($r = .318$ to $.542$), and Variance Inflation Factor values from the regression (SMPU = 1.443; FSMU = 1.536; PSMA = 1.320) fell well below the conventional threshold of 10, confirming that multicollinearity did not compromise the reliability of the regression coefficients.

Table 2: Regression Result

Variable	B	SE	Std. β	t	p	VIF
(Constant)	0.812	0.194	—	4.186	.000	—
SMPU	0.412	0.068	0.385	6.059	.000	1.443
FSMU	0.308	0.072	0.294	4.277	.001	1.536
PSMA	0.187	0.063	0.182	2.968	.003	1.320

Source: SPSS Version 26 Output.

$R^2 = .524$ (as reported by the author from the SPSS model summary); Adjusted $R^2 \approx .520$; $F(3, 366) \approx 134.3$, $p < .001$ (Adjusted R^2 and F computed from the reported R^2 , N , and predictor count, as the model-summary/ANOVA table was not separately tabulated in the source document).

The regression results supported rejection of all three null hypotheses. Social media platform usage was the strongest unique predictor of MSE performance ($\beta = 0.385$, $t = 6.059$, $p < .001$), consistent with both TAM and RBV: operators who perceive platforms as genuinely useful for reach and awareness-building (SMPU2 and SMPU5 both recorded item means of 3.88, with 70.9% and 76.5% agreement respectively) are more likely to deploy them intensively and realise a corresponding performance advantage, corroborating Zeren et al.'s (2026) identification of platform selection as the strongest performance predictor in comparable emerging-market samples, and Achor and Ouseibai's (2025) Bayelsa State findings linking platform diversity to sales and awareness gains.

Frequency of social media use was the second strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.294$, $t = 4.277$, $p = .001$), consistent with Social Capital Theory's prediction that

consistent digital engagement accumulates relational trust. Respondents most strongly endorsed the relationship-maintenance and engagement functions of frequent use (FSMU4, $M = 3.78$; $M = 3.81$) while expressing comparatively less confidence in their own posting consistency ($M = 3.25$) a gap between recognised value and actual practice consistent with Ebiye et al.'s (2025) identification of time constraints and unreliable connectivity as the principal barriers to regular posting among Okada MSEs. This finding aligns with Inwang et al.'s (2025) Sapele evidence and Muraina and Samour's (2025) national-level confirmation of engagement frequency as a significant predictor of brand awareness and customer acquisition.

Paid social media advertising, despite the lowest adoption rate among the three dimensions, remained a statistically significant positive predictor ($\beta = 0.182$, $t = 2.968$, $p = .003$). That a detectable effect persists

across the full sample despite only 14.8% regular usage suggests that, among the minority of enterprises that do invest in paid campaigns, the performance returns are large enough to register at the aggregate level consistent with Dutta et al.'s (2024) evidence on the precision-targeting benefits of Meta Ads, and with comparable Nigerian findings from Ozoemelum et al. (2025) in Aba and Gbandi and Iyamu (2022) in Benin City. Jointly, the three predictors explained approximately 52.4% of the variance in MSE performance, indicating that social media marketing understood as a combination of strategic platform deployment, consistent engagement, and targeted paid investment functions as a substantive rather than marginal driver of MSE performance outcomes in the Okada context. This finding corroborates Iyam et al. (2025), who similarly found that organizations with stronger digital presence experienced superior operational performance, suggesting that digital technologies represent strategic organizational resources capable of improving business outcomes irrespective of industry context

Summary of Findings

1. The study found that platform usage has a statistically significant, positive, and practically substantial effect on MSE performance
2. The study found that engagement frequency has a statistically significant positive effect on MSE performance.
3. The study found that paid advertising has a statistically significant positive effect on MSE performance.

Conclusion

Drawing on the totality of the evidence generated by this study, social media marketing disaggregated into platform usage, engagement frequency, and paid advertising is a statistically significant and practically meaningful determinant of MSE performance among Okada-based micro and small enterprises, jointly accounting for approximately 52.4% of the variance in performance outcomes. Platform usage is the most commercially consequential dimension, particularly where enterprises deliberately match their chosen platforms to the digital behaviour of their predominantly young, university-affiliated customer base. Engagement frequency matters nearly as much, operating through the relational trust-building mechanism identified in Social Capital Theory, though a gap between operators' recognition of its value and their actual posting discipline suggests unrealised performance potential. Paid advertising, while the least adopted of the three dimensions, delivers a detectable and statistically significant performance

benefit among the enterprises that do invest in it, indicating that its low uptake reflects a financial and digital-literacy constraint rather than a lack of commercial value and therefore constitutes the area of greatest unexploited opportunity for Okada's MSE community. Collectively, these findings support treating social media marketing as a core strategic function for small enterprises in semi-urban Nigerian markets, rather than a peripheral or optional activity.

Recommendation

1. MSE operators in Okada should adopt a deliberate, audience-matched platform strategy rather than an ad hoc or imitative one concentrating marketing effort on the one or two platforms where their core customer segments are most active, while keeping business profiles complete, current, and populated with quality product content.
2. enterprise operators should treat posting consistency as a non-negotiable operational routine rather than an incidental activity, committing to a minimum publishing frequency of three to five posts per week on primary channels, prioritising prompt responses to customer messages and comments, and, where daily operations make manual consistency difficult, making use of platform scheduling features to sustain engagement without requiring constant real-time attention.
3. enterprises that have not yet used paid social media advertising should begin with small, tightly targeted campaigns starting with modest daily budgets on Meta Ads Manager, using content focused on a specific product offer, and applying demographic and geographic targeting restricted to the Okada catchment area while tracking impressions, click-through rates, and inquiries to iteratively refine future campaigns based on actual performance data rather than assumption.
4. Beyond enterprise-level action, enterprise-development bodies such as SMEDAN, the Bank of Industry, and Edo State government agencies should design digital-marketing literacy training programmes specifically calibrated to the constraints of semi-urban MSE operators emphasising practical platform management, content creation, and paid-campaign setup over abstract digital marketing theory, and delivered through accessible formats such as weekend workshops and mobile-data-compatible online modules to help close the documented gap between social media marketing's

demonstrated commercial effectiveness and its actual adoption among Okada's MSE community.

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