

TRANSPORTATION AND LOGISTICS SMEs UTILIZATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN BUSINESS OPERATIONS: IMPACT AND CHALLENGES IN THE NIGERIAN CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

The adoption of social media for personal and organizational purposes has received considerable academic and policy attention. Organizationally, social media adoption has been applied to various industries, small, medium and large and this has been shown in previous empirical research. However, little or no empirical studies have been conducted on the adoption and utility of social media by transportation and logistics companies in the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) sectors in Nigeria. It was against this observed gap in the literature that the current study is being conducted. A primary research method was used for the study, with a quantitative paradigm adopted. A sample of 93 respondents who were owners/managers of small and medium sized transportation and logistics firms in Abuja Metropolis were used for the study. A semi-structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Data collection was done over a three-week period. Purposive and census sampling techniques were used. Descriptive statistics comprising frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and rank order were used for data analysis. Result showed that the perceived benefits of social media adoption include creating new markets, improving public awareness and recognition, provision of customized products/services, convenience for customers, accessible information for products and services, establishing business partnerships, and monitoring of customers' satisfaction. Furthermore, the major impact of social media on firms includes enhancing their marketing, improved communication with clients, product sales/distribution, competitor analysis, business management, and market research. Some challenges limiting effective usage of social media by transportation and logistics SMEs includes low awareness of social media benefits, inadequate technology, lack of belief in social media usage, inadequate IT Staff, cost of securing IT equipment, cost of staff training, fear of change in business culture and online trust issues. Implications of these findings for future research and industry practice were further discussed.

Keywords: Transportation, logistics, social media, technology adoption, technology acceptance model, small and medium enterprises.

INTRODUCTION

Recent empirical evidence and policy attention has highlighted the significant role of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) in the economic development of countries, especially those in the global south including Nigeria. It is therefore not surprising when international donor organisations and the Federal Government of Nigeria have engaged in massive policy formulations and direct contributions to improving the performance of SMEs in the country. One of such efforts made by the Nigerian government is the formulation of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) which began operations in 2003. The activities of this agency, and similar ones at the state and local levels, as well as the interventions of local cooperatives and non-governmental agencies, have positioned SMEs to be a major contributor to the Nigerian economy.

Market analysis conducted by Price Water Coopers (2021) on the Nigerian economy showed that about 48% of the national Gross Domestic Product and account for 96% of business and 84% of employment in the country. Despite this celebrated report, the SME sector is envisaged with massive challenges, including overbearing bureaucracies, weak communication networks, corruption, inadequate and inefficient infrastructural facilities, and maladministration, as posited by Ihugba, et al (2014). The outcome of these challenges is that many SMEs collapse within the first five years of their emergence, with only about 5-10 per cent surviving beyond 10 years, according to Alli and Jimoh (2013).

Considering the above challenges, previous research has made suggestions on best business practices and strategies that could be used by SMEs to achieve competitive advantage as well as enhance their survival in the dynamic global market. One suggestion that has remained relevant is the need for SMEs to outsource their logistics services to specialized logistics agencies (Mafini & Omoruyi, 2013). This has further informed the establishment of Small and Medium Transport and Logistics Enterprises (SMTLEs).

SMTLEs have become an integral part of the modern business environment in Nigeria. Nigeria has signed both multilateral and bilateral trade agreements that have opened up its market to a massive influx of goods and services (Nagy et al, 2018). Furthermore, there has been a significant growth of consumerism in Nigeria which can be partly attributed to the emergence of e-commerce and the widespread adoption of internet enabled-trade. In response to these developments, there has been a considerable increase in the need for logistics and delivery services. Most delivery companies rely on motorcycles and tricycles for ease and speed as they often have to manoeuvre traffic jams. The creation and availability of these smaller vehicles have created an opportunity for smaller players to enter the logistics and delivery industry.

Until recently, the transportation and logistics sector in Nigeria, which the Nigerian Postal Service regulated, was predominantly driven by big players such as Dalsey, Hillblom, and Lynn (DHL) International, Associated Bus Company (ABC Transport) and God Is Good (GIG) Motors (Bola-Balogun, et al, 2021). Also, the big players were focused on providing logistic services across national and state lines, with their clientele being big firms. These big players were not interested in providing town or city logistics services which created another impetus for the emergence of SMTLEs.

Although no universally-agreed definition of SMEs exists, within the Nigerian context, SMEs are companies and businesses whose personnel levels are within 10 to 49 (Taiwo, et al, 2016). SMTLEs are businesses classified under SMEs with their primary focus on planning, handling, transportation, procurement, and warehousing of goods and services to overcome time and space (Gentle, 2008). To facilitate uptake of their services, SMTLEs have been advised by Gelinias and Bigras (2004) to utilise social media. Social media utilisation by SMTLE is likely to expose prospective customers to the business and expose the business to prospective customers. It also has the potential to increase engagement and communication with existing customers and other supply chain partners (Cyriac, 2015). Therefore, if SMTLEs are to improve their market share and provide a more contemporary 21st- century customer experience, they need to make an effort to leverage this rapidly evolving channel of social media utilisation in their business operations.

Statement of the Problem

There is growing evidence that businesses who adopt social media are more likely to gain business value and achieve a higher level of competitive advantage because social media provides considerable access to resources that were previously only accessible to large enterprises (Kim et al, 2013). While effort has been made to establish the relevance of social media adoption to SMEs, these efforts have been limited to developed countries and little or no focus on SMTLEs.

Nigeria has a poor transportation network with many businesses outsourcing their logistics and delivery services to other specialized businesses. However, little empirical evidence has been established on the perceived benefits of SMTLEs entrepreneurs towards the adoption of social media, as well as the impact of social media on the performance of SMTLEs in the Nigerian context.

Research Aim and Objectives

The general aim of this study is to investigate the perceived benefits and challenges of social media utilisation among small and medium-scale transportation and logistics firms in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Objectives

1. What are the perceived benefits for which social media is used by SMTLEs in Port Harcourt Metropolis?
2. How has social media usage impacted the performance of SMEs in the logistics and delivery sector?
3. What are the challenges militating against the effective use of social media by SMTLEs in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

Literature Review

Information and Communication Adoption in the SMEs Sector

Considerable literature exists on the motivation and challenges of ICT adoption, including social media, within the SME context. Today's economy is ICT-driven with many organizations finding themselves immersed in a changing environment (Skoko et al, 2006). At both the individual and organizational levels, information and communication technologies are well-acknowledged to transform business for various reasons as stated by Damanpour and Schneider (2006). Firstly, it has changed the business structure and changed the degree of competitiveness. Secondly, it has enhanced the skills of employees, and thirdly it has been associated with a direct impact on business operations. Each of these reasons is further discussed.

From an organizational perspective, ample empirical studies have shown that ICT adoption not only boosts efficiency and competitiveness but is also a critical factor mentioned for the success of modern businesses (Manochehri et al, 2012). Similarly, as Tarute and Gatautis (2014) showed, ICT adoption has been useful in different business areas including marketing, networking, communication and resource planning, which has facilitated meeting the internal and external needs of businesses. However, most of these studies were conducted within the context of large businesses, with less attention given to ICT adoption in the context of SMEs, specifically within the Nigerian context.

There exist some peculiarities which assist SMEs to compete with bigger organizations and adopt technological innovations for their business activities. Among these features, as captured by Taylor and Murphy (2004) is that SMEs are more flexible than larger organizations because their size allows both operational and strategic decisions to be taken by a single individual. As summarized by Rahayu and Day (2015), ICT adoption in SMEs is fairly easy because one individual is responsible for the establishment of the ICT needs and goals of the organization. For these reasons, research has shown that SMEs have acknowledged the relevance of these tools to their success with considerable research showing that the inability to adopt ICT is significantly related to business failure.

Benefits of ICT Adoption by SMEs

SMEs have adopted a wide range of ICT tools, ranging from basic technologies such as Excel Spreadsheets to more complex capabilities such as Enterprise Application Systems (Zhu et al, 2012). However, the major goal for most SMEs in an era of global competitiveness is the need to remain competitive. While limited resources have remained a challenge for most SMEs, the adoption of ICT have provided a significant positive impact for businesses in at least for major business areas of performance, growth, expansion and new product (Consoli, 2012). Review by Grandon and Pearson (2004) and Ross and Blumenstein (2015)

have provided empirical evidence that technological adoption by SMEs enhances survival, increases global collaboration, enhances image and branding, and also increases profitability. Also, Haller and Siedschlag (2011) further argued that ICT adoption provides SMEs with the leverage of participating in business beyond their immediate environment and into distant markets without having to establish a physical presence.

Other studies have discussed how the adoption of ICT has impacted customer relationship management among businesses (Manochehri et al, 2015), increased operational efficiency (Ongori & Migiro, 2010), as well as internal and external communication of SMEs (Tarute & Gatautis, 2014). These benefits notwithstanding, considerable evidence abounds which suggest that there is a slow rate of adoption of ICT among SMEs (Carcary, et al 2014; Oni & Papazafeiropoulou, 2014). These might be attributed to some challenges faced by SMEs which are subsequently discussed below:

Challenges Faced by SMEs in ICT Adoption

There have been various challenges that have hindered the optimal adoption of ICT among SMEs as empirical research have shown that there is still a slow rate of adoption among SMEs. For example, Durkin et al (2013) showed that the primary challenge facing most SMEs is the lack of resources including financial, technical and expertise. Concerning financial resources, SMEs have limited capital for operational and strategic purposes and are therefore constrained from committing such resources to adopt newer technologies. According to research by Carcary et al (2014) limited financial resources continues to remain the number one cited reason which limits the adoption of ICT by SMEs. Another dimension of this financial challenge could be attributed to the actual cost of ICT tools. Beyond the initial cost of the facilities, it is also required that external support is established which is often unaffordable for most SMEs (Premkumar, 2003).

Another challenge faced by SMEs in technological adoption is the lack of relevant ICT skills among staff. Based on the assertion of Ongori (2009), most SMEs not only lack the appropriate infrastructure, there exist significant deficiencies in the skills and expertise of staff to operate the available infrastructure. This lack of skills is a considerable deterrent among SMEs owners on the potential benefits of ICT to their business operations. As obtained by Wahab and Shamsuddin (2013), most SMEs have a limited staff number with each staff playing more than one role. With no specialist IT managers as in the case of larger enterprises, it becomes relatively difficult for any staff including the owner to take up the additional role of managing ICT facilities.

In their review of the literature on challenges of ICT adoption among SMEs, Ongori and Migiro (2010) as well as Manochehri et al (2012) further identified other factors which have limited the optimal adoption of ICT by SMEs which includes lack of information on available technological resources, lack of time, negative experience with ICT facilities, lack of management support, lack of security and staff resistance.

Having discussed the benefits and potential challenges of ICT adoption within the SME context, it is imperative to now focus attention on the definition and characteristics of social media.

Social Media

There is currently no universally accepted definition of social media in the academic literature. Most definitions often adopt either a technical communication or marketing perspective (Culnan, McHugh & Zubillaga, 2010). With this challenge, it has been argued by several researchers that there can be no consensus definition of what social media is and how best to operationalize it. Despite this challenge, efforts have been made to empirically define social media as would be presented below.

To adequately situate the concept of social media, it is imperative to understand the evolution of the concept. As known in today's business environment, social media is rooted in the development of Web 2.0 which is a representation of internet development that emerged in 2004 (Stocker et al, 2004). The defining characteristic of this phase was that the internet became focused on User Generated Content (UGC). By this, users were allowed to create their own content, develop their own channels of communication between themselves and collaborate on projects without the constraint of time and space. This resulted in a more attractive, user-friendly interface as well as accessible content sharing. The resultant effect of this development was that internet users became more interested in collaboration, content sharing, and blogging. This resulted in the creation of social media networks and the establishment of some popular companies during that era such as Flickr, Youtube, Facebook, LinkedIn, Wikipedia, Blogger, MySpace etc.

As previously noted, social media are known to vary widely in the features they offers which are expected to continue in the future (Culnan et al, 2010). In this study, social media is considered from the broad dimension of applications built on the internet which allows for users to create and share their content. A broad approach to social media definition is adopted in this study to limit the possibility of focusing on a single platform that might not apply to the logistics industry.

Having discussed the development and definition of social media as applicable to the current study, it is important to now focus on the growth and adoption of social media in the organisational context with a specific focus on the SMTLE setting.

Growth and Adoption of Social Media in SMTLE Context

One advantage of social media applications is the reduced cost of associated technologies (Maguire et al, 2007) which have further empowered individuals and organizations to achieve a scale only available to larger organizations. Although social media was originally developed to allow individuals to connect regardless of geographical constraints, there has been a major boost towards adopting social media in the organizational setting.

According to Jagongo and Kinyua (2013), social media allows business and organizations to establish their presence in online "spaces" where their customers and clients inhabit. As such ample literature exists that discuss the application and utility of social media to all types of businesses, small, medium, and large in a wide range of industries. As applicable to SMEs generally, social media has witnessed a massive uptake due to the cost implications of their use. Studies by Cesaroni and Haenlien (2015) and Micharlidou et al (2011) have suggested that SMEs have adopted the use of social media because it overcomes some of the limitations of their size and resources.

In this direction, research has shown that most SMEs have created their online presence for business purposes. For instance, Viachvei and Notta (2014) have reported that over half of the sampled SMEs were using social media for various purposes and have their presence on the main social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, and LinkedIn. Similarly, after over a decade of research by Burgess et al (2015), it was shown that many SMEs have increased their social presence with 96% reporting a presence compared to 57% in 2008.

While this has been the case generally, for transportation and logistics firms this has been the reverse. In a survey reported by Pierce (2020) only 46% of 655 SMTLEs surveyed reported that they use social media for business purposes which were relatively few compared to other sectors. Among the top reasons given for the low uptake of social media includes that decision-makers do not see the advantage of social media to their business and therefore do not create a budget for it. This finding is surprising considering that social media is relatively cheap compared to other traditional marketing strategies. The conclusion drawn from this survey is that the logistics and delivery sector is far behind other industrial sectors in harnessing the potential gains of social media adoption.

To appreciate the role of social media to SMTLEs, it is imperative to understand some potential gains they might benefit from. Although there is scant empirical literature on the relevance of social media to logistics and delivery organizations, industry practitioners have highlighted some ways in which social media can benefit logistics businesses, either large or small.

Hamamci (2016), Pierce (2020), and Yaron (2017) have suggested some benefits of social media to transportation and logistics firms to include the following:

Customer Delivery: Logistic companies that have adopted social media have used it to update their shipment speed. Social media is used to relay information between the office and staff on the field which also provides real-time feedback, which in turn boosts customers' confidence.

Business Information: Social media is a platform that customers can use to get information about the major areas of business operations.

Insight and trends: Social media is very useful to transportation and logistics firms as it empowers them with insights and trends from not only customers but also other business leaders.

Branding: Social media offers businesses the opportunity to develop their brand as well as facilitate effective public relations. Social media can be useful in establishing and updating schedules faster which further increases tracking and visibility of the supply chain.

Review and Feedback: Social media enhances your business reviews and feedback from business partners and clients. With a proactive approach, a business can urgently address them and improve the processes to provide a better service.

Methods

Previous research on technology adoption by SMEs have utilized various research strategies and methods to address different research objectives, including both qualitative and quantitative approaches. For example, Kim (2004) adopted the qualitative research method to investigate the challenges and opportunities of technological adoption by tourism SMEs in South Korea. Conversely, Klanch-Ouch (2008) utilized the quantitative research method to investigate the internet threats faced by SMEs in Tunisia. However, the qualitative approach has been criticized for being subjective and difficult to replicate. It is for this purpose that the current study adopted the quantitative approach. Decrop (1999) argued that the quantitative approach is relevant in SME research because it allows for the generalization of findings from a sample to the population as well as enable the prediction of variables. Furthermore, the subjective bias of the observer or researcher is removed.

Research Area

The study was conducted within Port Harcourt Metropolis. Port Harcourt Metropolis is a combination of three local government areas in Rivers State. The area is heavily industrialized with a large presence of SMEs. Due to traffic considerations and inadequate road networks, there has been a massive uptake of logistic services by individuals and organizations. This has informed the emergence of SMTLEs in the area. Some of the popular SMTLEs in the area include AI-Express, Kwik Express, ErrandBoy and Velox Delivery.

Sampling Procedures

Sampling procedure refers to the process of identifying those who are "information-rich" in the topic of interest. There are majorly two sampling techniques available to SME researchers including probability and non-probability sampling techniques (Collins et al, 2006), with various sub-types. A researcher can combine two or more sub-types from the major techniques to draw their sample. In this research, two sampling methods were used which were the purposive and snowballing techniques. The

purposive sampling technique was used to identify owners/managers of SMTLEs. After interacting with these participants, some participated while others did not agree to participate. For those who participated, the researcher requested if they could refer the researcher to other potential participants. In total, a sample of 93 participants was used for the study.

Data Collection Procedure

A primary data collection procedure was adopted. In this direction, a researcher-developed instrument was used. This instrument was a questionnaire survey with items developed to assess the perceived benefits of social media adoption, the impact of social media adoption of SMTLEs performance and the perceived challenges militating against the effective adoption of social media by SMTLEs. The questionnaire was structured into two main sections. The first section was designed to elicit demographic information from respondents and the nature of their business. This rationale behind these questions was based on the suggestion of Mazzarol et al (1999) who proposed that understanding decision making in SMEs cannot be effectively done without understanding the personal and business context informing the decision. The second section contained items on the use, benefits and challenges of social media adoption among SMTLEs. The items in this section are comprised of structured Likert scale items.

The questionnaire delivery was done using the direct delivery approach. This approach was considered relevant compared to the use of email because the researcher needed to follow up and get a referral from the initially identified participants. Also, this method was adopted to increase the retrieval rate from the respondents. The administration and retrieval of the instrument lasted for 3 weeks. The researcher also employed the services of two research assistants.

Data Analysis Technique

Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used for data analysis. Graphs such as pie charts and bar charts were also used to illustrate the result obtained. All analysis was done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences Version 23.

Preliminary analysis

Table 1 presents the demographic data of the study participants. All participants were owners/managers of SMTLEs in Port Harcourt.

Table 1: Demographic Data of Respondents

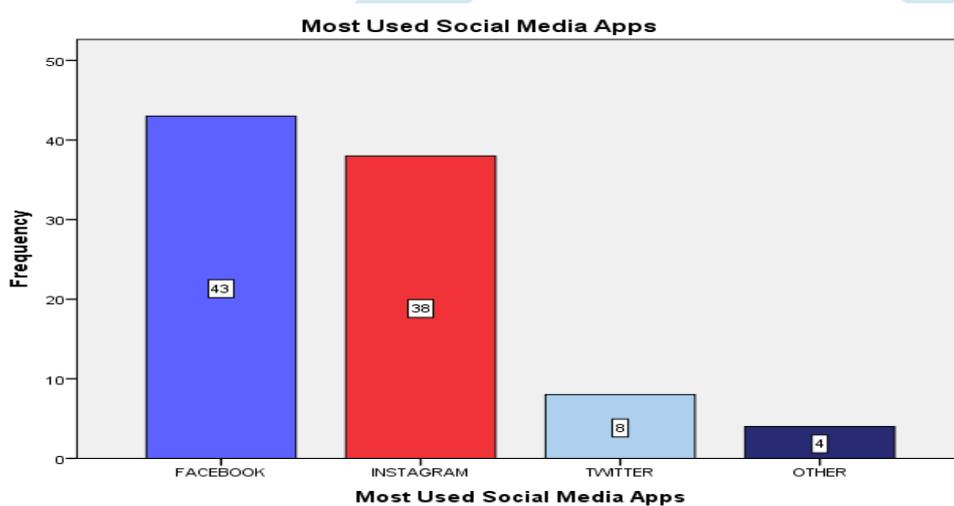
Demographic Data	Frequency	Percentage
Nature of Business		
Independent	84	90.3
Franchise	9	9.7
Number of Employees		
1-10	86	92.5
11-20	7	7.5
Role		
Owner	7	7.5
Manager	29	31.2
Owner/Manager	57	61.3
Gender		
Male	72	77.4
Female	21	22.6
Age		
20-29	23	24.7
30-39	59	63.4
40-49	11	11.8
Educational Qualification		
Primary	25	26.9
Secondary	29	31.2
Tertiary	39	41.9
Previous Experience in SMTLE		
No	39	41.9
Yes	52	55.9
Source of Initial Capital		
Self-Saving	54	58.1
Loan	29	31.2
Family	10	10.8
Years of Ownership/Management		
Less than 5 Years	58	62.4
5-10	35	37.4

From Table 1 which presented the demographic data of the respondents, it was shown that 84 respondents (90.3%) operated an independent business, while 9 (9.7%) of the respondents operated a franchise. On the number of employees, 86 (92.5%) respondents indicated that they had between 1-10 employees, while 7 (7.5%) respondents indicated that they had 11-20 employees. On the role of the respondents, 7 (7.5%) indicated that they were owners, with 29 (31.2%) indicating there are managers, while 57 (61.3%) indicated that they acted both as owners/managers. Male respondents were 72 (77.4%), while female respondents were 21 (22.6%). On their ages, 23 (24.7%) of the respondents were between 20-29 years, 59 (63.4%) were between 30-39 years, while 11 (11.8%) were between 40 and 49 years. Furthermore, 25 (26.9%) reported having primary educational qualifications, 29 (31.2%) had secondary educational qualifications, and 39 (41.9%) indicated having tertiary educational qualifications. As regards their previous experience in logistics, 39 (41.9%) indicated having no experience, while 52 (55.9%) indicated having some experience in logistics. On their sources of capital, 54 (58.1%) respondents indicated self-saving, while 29 (31.2%) reported loans, with 10 (10.8%) reporting family sources. On their year of ownership/management, 58 (62.4%) indicated having less than 5 years, while 35 (37.4%) indicated having between 5-10 years of experience.

Most Used Social Media

The figure below shows the most used social media by SMTLEs.

Figure 1: Most Used SM by SMTLEs



From the results shown in Figure 1 on the most used SMTLEs, it was shown that 43 respondents indicated Facebook, while 38 reported using Instagram, with 8 respondents choosing Twitter. Finally, only 4 respondents endorsed other social media channels.

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question One:

What are the perceived benefits for which social media is used by SMTLEs in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

On the perceived benefits of social media for SMTLEs, seven potential areas were identified which included creating a new market, improving public awareness and recognition, provision of customized products/services, convenience for customers, accessible information for product and services, establishing business partnerships, and monitoring of customers' satisfaction. After analysis, the results obtained are presented below:

As shown from Table 2 on the benefit of social media in market research 2 (2.2%) reported it as not important, 13 (14.0%) reported it as somewhat important, 22 (23.7%) indicated it is neither important nor unimportant, with 23 (24.7%) indicating that it is important, while 33 (35.5%) indicated that social media is extremely important. From this result, it is shown that the majority of the respondents consider social media as being beneficial for market research.

Table 2 Benefit of social media for SMTLEs in Port Harcourt Metropolis

S/N	Benefits of SM in	NI (F/%)	SU (F/%)	NIU (F/%)	SI (F/ %)	EI (F/%)
1	Creating new market	9 (9.7%)	15 (16.1%)	16 (17.2%)	33 (35.5%)	20 (21.5%)
2	Improving public awareness and recognition	0 (0.0%)	8 (8.6%)	29 (31.2%)	36 (38.5%)	20 (21.5%)
3	Provision of customized products	4 (4.3%)	20 (21.5%)	16 (17.2%)	33 (35.5%)	13 (14.0%)
4	Facilitate convenience for customers	0 (0.0%)	10 (10.6%)	19 (20.4%)	26 (28.0%)	38 (40.9%)
5	Product/service information	2 (2.2%)	16 (17.2%)	26 (28.0%)	25 (26.5%)	24 (25.8%)

6	Establishing business partnerships	1 (1.1%)	10 (10.8%)	4 (4.3%)	55 (59.9%)	26 (28.0%)
7	Monitor Customer satisfaction	5 (5.4%)	4 (4.3%)	14 (15.1%)	53 (57.3%)	17 (18.0%)

As shown from Table 2 on the benefit of social media in creating new markets, 9 (9.7%) respondents reported it as not important, 15 (16.1%) reported it as somewhat unimportant, 16 (17.2%) indicated it is neither important nor unimportant, with 33 (35.5%) indicating that it is important, while 20 (21.5%) indicated that social media is extremely important for creating new markets. From this result, it is shown that the majority of the respondents consider social media as being beneficial for creating a new market.

As shown from Table 2 on the benefit of social media in improving public awareness and recognition, 8 (8.6%) respondents reported it as somewhat unimportant, 29 (31.2%) indicated it is neither important nor unimportant, with 36 (38.5%) indicating that it is somewhat important, while 20 (21.5%) indicated that social media is extremely important for improving public awareness and recognition. From this result, it is shown that the majority of the respondents consider social media as being beneficial for improving public awareness and recognition.

Table 2 also shows the benefit of social media in the provision of customized products, 4 (4.3%) respondents reported it as not important, 20 (21.5%) reported it as somewhat unimportant, 16 (17.2%) indicated it is neither important nor unimportant, with 33 (35.5%) indicating that it is somewhat important, while 13 (14.0%) indicated that social media is extremely important in the provision of customized products. From this result, it is shown that the majority of the respondents consider social media as being beneficial in the provision of customized products and services.

Also on the benefit of social media in facilitating convenience for customers, the table showed that 10 (10.6%) respondents reported it as somewhat unimportant, 19 (20.4%) indicated it is neither important nor unimportant, with 26 (28.0%) indicating that it is somewhat important, while 38 (40.9%) indicated that social media is extremely important in facilitating convenience for customers. From this result, it is shown that the majority of the respondents consider social media as being beneficial facilitating convenience for customers.

Also on the benefit of social media in providing service/product information, Table 2 showed that 2 (2.2%) respondents reported it as not important, 16 (17.2%) reported it as somewhat unimportant, 26 (28.0%) indicated it is neither important nor unimportant, with 25 (26.5%) indicating that it is somewhat important, while 24 (25.8%) indicated that social media is extremely important in the provision product/service information. From this result, it is shown that the majority of the respondents consider social media as being beneficial in the provision of product/service information.

Furthermore, on the benefit of social media in the establishment of business partnerships, 1 (1.1%) respondents reported it as not important, 10 (10.8%) reported it as somewhat unimportant, 4 (4.3%) indicated it is neither important nor unimportant, with 55 (59.9%) indicating that it is somewhat important, while 26 (28.0%) indicated that social media is extremely important in establishing business partnerships. From this result, it is shown that the majority of the respondents consider social media as being beneficial in establishing business partnerships.

Finally, on the benefit of social media in monitoring customer satisfaction, 5 (5.4%) respondents reported it as not important, 4 (4.3%) reported it as somewhat unimportant, 14 (15.1%) indicated it is neither important nor unimportant, with 53 (57.3%) indicating that it is somewhat important, while 17 (18.0%) indicated that social media is extremely important in monitoring customer satisfaction. From this result, it is shown that the majority of the respondents consider social media as being beneficial in monitoring customer satisfaction.

Research Question Two:

How has social media usage impacted the performance of SMEs in the logistics and delivery sector?

To identify the impact of social media usage on the performance of SMTLEs in Port Harcourt Metropolis, the mean ratings of individual items in the questionnaire were conducted as shown in Table 3 below

Table 3 Impact of social media usage on the performance of SMTLEs in Port Harcourt Metropolis

Impact of SM on SMTLE performance	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Rank	Decision
Marketing/Advertising	93	3.6237	1.01	2 nd	Accepted
Communication with Clients	93	3.5914	.64	3 rd	Accepted
Product Sales/Distribution	93	3.6774	.70	1 st	Accepted
Competitor Analysis	93	3.3978	.70	5 th	Accepted
Management	93	3.3333	.81	6 th	Accepted
Market Research	93	3.4194	.81	4 th	Accepted

Regarding the impact of social media on the performance of SMTLEs in Port Harcourt Metropolis, the result showed that it was accepted as being used for marketing/advertising, communication with clients, product sales/distribution, competitor analysis, management, as well as market research. From the ranking conducted, it was shown that the most impact of social media usage was on product sales/distribution, while the least impact was on management.

Research Question Three:

What are the challenges militating against the effective use of social media by SMTLEs in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

For establishing the factors which are challenges militating against social media usage by SMTLEs, a mean analysis of the responses was done. For this purpose, a criterion mean of 3 was established by summing up the response options of 1 for Strongly Disagree, 2 for Disagree, 3 for Undecided, 4 for Agree, and 5 for Strongly Agree and dividing by 5 which yielded $15/5 = 3$.

Table 4: Challenges of social media usage by SMTLEs

S/n	Challenges of social media usage by SMTLEs	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Ranks	Decision
1	Low awareness of social media benefits	93	3.49	1.18	8 th	Accepted
2	Inadequate technology	93	3.69	1.12	3 rd	Accepted
3	Lack of belief in social media usage	93	3.58	1.06	5 th	Accepted
4	Inadequate IT Staff	93	3.83	1.02	1 st	Accepted
5	Cost of securing IT equipment	93	3.69	1.12	4 th	Accepted
6	Cost of staff training	93	3.50	1.21	7 th	Accepted
7	Fear of change in business culture	93	3.56	1.05	6 th	Accepted
8	Online trust issues	93	3.76	1.32	2 nd	Accepted
9	Time and cost implications of extracting information	93	2.90	1.47	9 th	Rejected

According to the result in Table 4 on the challenges of social media usage by SMTLEs, it was agreed that low awareness of social media benefits, inadequate technology, lack of belief in social media usage, inadequate IT Staff, cost of securing IT equipment, cost of staff training, fear of change in business culture and online trust issues were accepted as challenges because their item means were greater than 3.00 the criterion mean guiding the study. On the other hand, time and cost implications of extracting information were rejected as a challenge militating against the use of social media by SMTLEs?

Discussion of Findings

Perceived benefits of social media to SMTLEs

The result showed that SMTLEs consider social media as holding potential benefits by enabling them in the creation of a new market, improving public awareness and recognition, provision of customized products/services, convenience for customers, accessible information for product and services, establishing business partnerships, and monitoring of customers' satisfaction. This finding is consistent with previous research by Noroozi and Fotouhi (2010) in their study of SMEs in the Chinese hospitality industry. Based on their research, it was obtained that social media is used to access new markets at a relatively lesser cost than traditional media. This finding is not surprising because most SMTLEs within Port Harcourt must have realized that most residents in the area are active users of one or more social media channels, therefore there is a greater inclination to take advantage of this opportunity to draw new users into their business relationship.

Another finding of this research is that social media is used to provide accessible information on business products and services by SMTLEs. This result might be attributed to the fact that social media is relatively easy to implement as the business need to master minimal technical skills of image and video editing as well as text content development. These findings are in agreement with Ellion (2007) who asserted that through social media, SMEs can develop and post regular and interactive content of their product and services for prompt distribution to clients and customers.

Another finding of this objective worthy of exploration is that social media provides SMTLEs with greater leverage of monitoring customers' satisfaction. Through social media, SMTLEs can determine if customers were satisfied based on either positive or negative comments given by clients/customers. Through such information, businesses are better able to structure their services to meet the general or specific standards of their customers. These findings confirm the position of Noone et al (2011) who asserted that through social media, SMEs can review the interactions of their clients which provides businesses with insight into the characteristics of their customers/clients and make appropriate adjustments in their offerings accordingly.

Impact of Social Media on SMTLEs Performance

Regarding objective two which sought to investigate the impact of social media on SMTLEs performance, social media was reported to enhance their marketing/advertising, communication with clients, product sales/distribution, competitor analysis, business management, and market research. This finding agrees with the position of Li and Wang (2011) who opined that the development of social media has created a shift in business communication for not only larger organizations, but also smaller organizations including SMEs. Social media builds on traditional communication channels such as phones and emails to communicate not only with clients but also with members of staff. Beyond the initial communication, social media might provide clients with the opportunity to be direct in their needs because they might have explored the various offerings of the business before communicating with them.

Furthermore, as this study showed social media is relevant to SMTLEs by providing them with information about market trends. When SMTLEs can understand the nature of the market, it is more likely for them to use the information gathered to plan their business strategies. Finally, as Paudel and Hossain (2006) obtained from their study, the use of social media provides businesses with access to their competitors. Due to financial costs, SMTLEs are constrained from doing robust competitor analysis. However, social media allows them to know what similar businesses are doing well. This provides them with insight on how to improve their services and offerings.

Challenges Militating against effective adoption of Social Media by SMTLEs.

Based on the analysis of data, the major challenge militating against the effective adoption of social media by SMTLEs inadequate IT staff and issues related to online trust. This result might be attributed to the challenge of effectively controlling the social media presence of businesses. Although it is relatively easy to create social media channels, developing content and managing contents posted on social media requires considerable expertise (Oji et al, 2017). Logistics as an information-intensive industry requires curating of information and interaction with multiple business partners. Social media management often requires a dedicated staff with the expertise to create and manage the social media channels of business. For most SMTLEs, this would require additional manpower which financial resources might not allow.

Also identified as a challenge in this study is the cost of technical equipment and facilities for effective social media usage. While social media presence can be created with basic equipment, real-time communication and content creation require high-speed internet facilities and stable electricity supply which are relatively expensive within the Nigerian context. It is therefore not surprising that technical cost was identified as a challenge of effective adoption of social media by SMTLEs in Port Harcourt Metropolis. This confirms the position of Nguyen and Waring (2013) who stated that the challenge of acquiring stable electricity and reliable internet connection is a major deterrent for most SMEs to adopt ICT in developing countries.

Implications

Implication for Future Research

This study is a major contribution to the study of social media adoption and the broader field of IT adoption in the business context. While most research endeavours are tailored towards the application of complex technological integration in business contexts, this study makes a noble contribution to the limited body of academic literature in the area of social media adoption in SME contexts in developing countries. This study therefore can provide a pedestal for future researchers to investigate social media adoption by businesses in developing countries beyond Nigeria. Another implication from this study is that this study offers a modest analysis of some challenges which limits the effective adoption of social media and other technologies in the Nigerian context. Future researchers might want to build upon this to identify specifically how each or a combination of the identified factors contribute to determining technological integration in developing countries, including those in sub-Saharan Africa.

Implications for Practice

One major implication of this study for practise as applicable to SMTLEs owners/managers is the need to adopt social media within the limits of their financial and human resources. While some challenges might prevent optimal utilization of social media, the benefits accruable from early uptake are many as this study showed. When they utilize social media within the boundaries of their resources, it is most likely that they would get some benefits.

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