



Social Media and Sales Performance of Clothing Small Businesses in Nigeria

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Abstract

In Nigeria, small businesses are increasingly turning to social media as an approach for marketing and boosting their sales due largely to its wide reach and cost-effectiveness. The clothing industry is no exception, as small clothing businesses in Nigeria have begun to leverage social media to reach a wider audience and increase sales performance. Apparently, despite the huge potential of social media platforms available to prospective small businesses in Nigeria, existing and prospective small business owners still struggle to utilise these platforms to improve sales performance in the country. The paper examined the level of contributions of social media on small businesses' sales performance vis-a-vis customers purchasing behaviour. Also, it explored inherent challenges clothing businesses encountered on social media platforms for improved sales performance. The study was centred on descriptive research design through a qualitative approach, which relied on interviews. For the study, a purposive sampling technique was used to select 18 participants in the clothing business (shoes, fashion clothes, hairdressing and fashion accessories and hairdressing). By implication, social media usage has a multiplier effect on small businesses vis-à-vis the economic transformation of Nigeria if harnessed in line with the function framework. The study concluded that there is an apt need for small clothing businesses in Nigeria to grasp the trajectories and dynamics of social media and engage in effective and sustainable strategies to leverage social media for optimum benefit.

Keywords *Clothing, Sales performance, Social media, Small businesses, Nigeria*

INTRODUCTION

In recent times, small businesses have gradually evolved from the traditional marketing approach to an online marketing approach using social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter to reach out to and interact with potential and existing customers. Apparently, social media usage globally is reported to have been expanding at an annual growth rate of 25%, which has endeared most businesses to advertise their products on social media platforms (Glory & Crispin, 2022). Apparently, social media is used increasingly by small businesses in Asia, Europe and the U.S.A. to connect with their potential and existing fashion consumers. This online marketing platform has become a major driver of business growth for small clothing businesses in urban areas in Africa, especially in Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, and Botswana.

It was affirmed that social media utilities on small and medium businesses have several opportunities, such as creating better brand awareness, improving information sharing, increasing sales, better relationships with customers, and creating effective communication tools between the business management and customers. Thus, the utilisation of social media allows small business owners to influence behaviour and build trust among consumers (Srirejeki, 2016; Gautam & Sharma, 2017; Ahmad et al., 2018). In addition, through the creation of social media pages and profiles, clothing businesses promote their products to a wider audience, which generates more sales for them. Studies (Maddox, 2013; Durmaz & Efendioglu, 2016) showed that users of social media platforms purchased business products more when such products are advertised on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, with 58% of information technology experts globally making use of the platforms to gain useful experiences and knowledge from reliable users that have previously

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utilised such products. Apparently, the utilisation of social media for businesses is a low-cost solution that facilitates intensive communication between business owners and customers and gains prospective customers.

In other words, [Poorthuis et al. \(2020\)](#) argued that in the contemporary global fashion industry, clothing is not the only product for many companies. Thus, for several decades, it has been conventional for fashion firms to engage in the marketing of clothing, cosmetics, perfumes, footwear, and accessories. Importantly, in Nigeria, social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp have revolutionised the way small businesses, especially clothing businesses, sell their products. This opportunity created by these platforms has encouraged potential unemployed youths to tap into this opportunity offered by the platforms to create jobs and enhance their daily business operations. This has enabled them to reach a wider audience and boost sales, and, more importantly, created job opportunities for most people with a steady income, which is not available for them in white-collar jobs or established large-scale businesses.

Ostensibly, due to the unemployment situation in Nigeria and the need for basic survival, clothing businesses, such as shoes, fashion clothes, hairdressing, and fashion accessories, have become the major businesses of interest among young business owners on social media platforms in the country. Arguably, in spite of the benefits ingrained in the usage of social media among small business owners in Nigeria, attainment of sales performance has become a Herculean task for them due largely to diverse challenges with the utilisation of social media platforms. Issues such as intense competition for attention and visibility, and the potential for negative reviews and comments are viewed as major threats to clothing small businesses' sales performance in the country. This was further buttressed by [Dos Santos and Duffett \(2021\)](#), who stated that cost, negative feedback and sentiment, and resources to navigate the platforms for business interactions in terms of time, skills, and personnel were affirmed as problems hindering small businesses' utilisation social media platforms as a strategic and business communicating channel.

Consequently, in light of these twin waves of social media on business sales performance, which are prominent among small businesses in Nigeria, [Pinto and Yagnik \(2017\)](#) contended that the benefits that small businesses derive from social media platforms for business purposes are laced with ambiguity. This may have been attributed partly to the limited resources of small business owners to understand the dynamics of social media on business performance. In other words, despite the huge potential of social media platforms available to prospective small businesses in Nigeria, existing and prospective clothing businesses still struggle to utilise these platforms to improve sales performance in the country.

Several studies ([Clark & Calli, 2015](#); [Ahmad et al., 2018](#); [Berto et al., 2022](#)) have paid attention to social media and SMEs in terms of marketing performance with limited attention to influences of social media in enhancing sales performance of clothing small businesses in Nigeria. Against this background, the paper examines the level of contributions of social media on clothing small businesses' sales performance vis-a-vis customers purchasing behaviour and also explores inherent challenges clothing small businesses encounter on social media platforms for improved sales performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

[Sithole et al. \(2018\)](#) affirmed that sustainable businesses are the ones that employ decisive marketing strategies, and small businesses and big clothing manufacturers attested to the benefit of using media to advertise clothing. Thus, these businesses, especially small businesses, combined both electronic media and traditional approaches. Sanders et al. (in [Jihyeong & Niehm, 2021](#)) affirmed that rural retailers may overcome the business disadvantages in terms of size and location through the use of social media, such as online forums, social network websites, blogs and also

create social networks between small local businesses and consumers, and businesses and suppliers.

Eckert et al. (2022) contended that small businesses with their own shop connect customers if they run their own shop physically or online, as customers often look online because pop-up shops online can be very successful. These retail facilities spurred quick feedback for retailers on specific garments, as they allowed customers to comment on their preferences and what alternatives they would have preferred in terms of colours. The author further affirmed that small businesses with reference to fashion designer network with colleagues in the same fashion business through social media during the COVID-19 crisis. For instance, a small business owner joined a network of entrepreneurs in her region through a WhatsApp group platform with the aim of enhancing her business growth and network.

Research has affirmed that attracting customers via social media is necessary because of the benefit ingrained in it, as 90 per cent of businesses that engaged in social media marketing have indicated the opportunities it provided their businesses. These benefits include improved customer satisfaction, reduced marketing costs, improved trust among stakeholders, increased marketing effectiveness, a decline in travel costs, a decline in customer support costs, and improved purchasing decisions (Bughin & Chui, 2013; Haigh et al., 2013).

A study by Yeo et al. (2020) affirmed that social media advertising has enormous benefits and commercial value of information transmission in terms of high precision and relevance, wide reach of users, rich social scenes and deep user participation. Another study by Ndung'u et al. (2020) indicated that there is a significant relationship between social media usage and customer relationship management, with 3.72 as the mean score. It was also affirmed that utilisation of social media influences interaction with customers in terms of increased frequency. The findings also indicated that the utilisation of social media for business purposes enables the creation of brand image consistency to 3.74 as the mean score. A study by Tiwasing (2021) indicated that small businesses in rural areas with businesses on social media platforms have enhanced business performance in terms of the likelihood of higher turnover and increasing sales than rural and urban small businesses without a presence on these social media platforms.

Similarly, Jihyeong and Niehm (2021) affirmed in their findings that interacting and building relationships with customers was the primary advantage of social media noted by participants. This implies that social media assisted in strengthening relationships with existing customers and also attracting new business. In addition, it was revealed that social media utilisation spurred business with valuable customer and market information. This allowed for double-approach communication to respond to customers and allowed small businesses to address customer interests and questions about business products and offerings better. Way

A study in Tanzania by Glory and Crispin (2022) affirmed that Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, respectively, are widely used social media platforms by private-sector businesses. The study contended that the majority of women's clothing retailers, that is, clothes, hairdressing, shoes, and apparel in the Nyamagana district of Mwanza City, are small businesses with one or two employees, managed and run by families. Relatedly, these social media platforms facilitate opportunities for small businesses by updating customers on business locations, promoting business details, products and services that they sell, new product arrivals, contacting small business owners, speeding up the flow of business information, and enabling flexible conversation between customers which boost sales performance (Glory & Crispin, 2022; Fulgoni, 2016).

In another study, Koch et al. (2020) findings indicate that consumers' intentions to buy clothing online are influenced by media reports and expert opinions during the COVID-19 crisis. Findings further revealed that consumers of generations Y and Z are influenced more by media and the social networks they belong to. This implies that these consumers depended on media reports

to influence behaviour due to the largely homogenous age group on social networks and consumers' lack of experience in major crises before. Similarly, [Strydom et al.'s \(2023\)](#) findings also indicated that the use of social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook seem viable for businesses. The authors further affirmed that small business owners regularly updated and posted WhatsApp profile pictures of completed garments in order to reflect the product and social image of the business. This was further stated in the excerpts of the participants that Facebook and WhatsApp encourage them to post their business products for people to see, and these platforms enable them to have space to advertise their business products to customers.

[Koch et al. \(2020\)](#) affirmed in their findings that social media have an influence on consumer purchasing behaviour. In addition, all the participants in the study attested to regularly purchasing products online. This implies that at least once every three months, 76% of the respondents purchase clothing online, 74% of the respondents regularly purchase clothing from general online platforms, 72% of the respondents purchase from online platforms for clothing, while 56% of the respondents indicated online stores of fashion brands.

[Haarman et al. \(2020\)](#) reported that small businesses perceived Facebook ads to be more cost-effective for business performance than the non-media approach to promoting business. Literature affirmed that small businesses depend largely on Instagram and Facebook for improved business performance due to the inherent attribute of the retail clothing industry of projecting visual images of their products to customers via these social media platforms, which allows them to use photos to attract customers to their business products. In essence, findings also indicated that time spent on Instagram and TikTok by customers influences the purchase behaviour of the customers ([Irene, 2018](#); [Konstantina, 2022](#)). [Salleh et al. \(2015\)](#) affirmed that out of the top ten businesses in Malaysia, seven of them have a presence on Instagram. This makes the platforms grow in popularity among sellers due largely to their photo-based social media presence in advertising the restaurants effectively. In another study, it was reported that SMEs' brand awareness improved greatly through the usage of social media platforms. This facilitates branding, advertising and promotion of SME business performance where customers forward SME messages, advertising and networking with followers via content creation with ease and thus influences the increase of social media traffic of small businesses ([Berto et al. 2022](#)).

In other words, there are small-scale fashion businesses that promote sustainability in terms of creating and using fashion and clothing despite the fact that large corporations still dominate the fashion industry. Apparently, it was argued that finding finance, premises, and suitable suppliers is one of the challenges faced in establishing any business, which, within the first few years, many small businesses faced. Thus, such businesses are run by a group or individual designer who depends on support networks to survive and succeed in many cases ([Eckert et al. 2022](#)).

Studies ([Clark & Calli, 2015](#); [Durkin et al., 2015](#)) have shown that small businesses have encountered diverse challenges in social media marketing of their brands due largely to a lack of funds, personnel and sufficient time, which hindered small businesses' sales performance. Also, the literature showed that in spite of the effectiveness and importance of social media to small businesses, its reach for connecting with all potential customers is not sufficient, which is attributed to a lack of available training. Also, the utilisation of Facebook and Instagram to promote small businesses for improved sales performance, especially in the fashion industry, comes with constraints. These constraints included the inability of small business owners to effectively manage the social media accounts for daily business operations and interrupted communication when doing business due to loss of electricity and extreme weather ([Irene, 2018](#); [Sugiyantoro & Supriyadi, 2022](#)). [Omotosho \(2023\)](#), in a study, also affirmed the lack of continuity with the social media platforms for business purposes constraint small businesses. This was attributed to a loss of interest in the platforms in terms of platform maintenance costs, increasing security and network

issues, and failure of the platforms to meet small businesses' professional demands.

In a study, [Jihyeong and Niehm \(2021\)](#) affirmed that challenges that small businesses encounter on social media platforms include a lack of knowledge of social media, economic challenges, time and effort spent in managing social media, legal and regulatory challenges, and infrastructure challenges. The authors further pointed out that some small businesses have limited ability to network customers through social network platforms due to a lack of knowledge in social media content creation, lack of experience and consistent execution of social media hampered by time constraints. It also affirmed that the lack of financial capital to outsource to a digital marketing company and hire employees to oversee their social media were challenges indicated by larger numbers of respondents. Similarly, the study indicated that some small business owners believed that violation of customer confidentiality and the extent to which they may be violating the law were the challenges faced when creating social media content vis-a-vis customer reviews on social media platforms. However, the findings affirmed that lack of educational opportunities in terms of classes, workshops to learn about social media, creation of content, and engaging it for business operations were challenges encountered by small business owners on social media. This implies that small business owners have limited knowledge of social media usage but lack the necessary skills to enhance their business marketing.

[Rugova and Prenaj \(2016\)](#) contend that ineffective social media platforms, such as presenting products and services in a commercial way, overuse of advertising, and trying too hard for sales, are some of the potential damage to small businesses' reputation that discourages existing and potential customers, which in turns decelerates business sale performance. Also, security and operational concerns hampered small businesses' growth on social media due largely to different viruses and spyware downloaded through social media platforms, which makes small business owners victims of financial risks. Similarly, [Taiminen and Karjaluoto \(2015\)](#) affirmed that small businesses find it difficult to create interesting content on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram that will boost sales performance. These challenges, according to [Levy et al. \(2004\)](#), are a result of a lack of financial resources, cost of implementation, technological complexities, lack of organisational enthusiasm, security concerns and limited media resources. These are some of the challenges small businesses face in implementing e-commerce strategies.

Theoretical Explanations

[Liu et al. \(2017\)](#) state that social network theory focuses on the role of society in channelling personal or media influence, transmitting information, and enabling behavioural or attitudinal change. A social network implies a cluster of informal and formal social relations to which an actor is connected; that is, an individual's position in a social network is determined by their social connectedness and engagement with others activities in the society ([Che et al. 2018](#); [Mirkovski et al. 2018](#)). [Jin and Ryu \(2019\)](#) contended that individuals in the current dispensation are connected to a social network based on social media popularity, which enhances online purchases through strengthening communications among users. From the lens of the theory, small clothing businesses utilised social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and Twitter largely to have positive multiplier effects in terms of connecting them easily to customers and boosting sales performances. By implication, networking with diverse people through various features displayed by social media platforms comes with its resultant challenges, which decelerate the purchasing intention of the customers and sales performance of small clothing businesses in Nigeria. These challenges become a Herculean task for small clothing businesses to navigate through the networks of people in order to influence the purchasing intention of customers and boost sales performance in Nigeria.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative design. Business centres in Lagos, Oyo, and Osun States Nigeria were selected through a purposive sampling technique. The areas were selected based on the increasing presence of small businesses in the study areas due largely to the population and accessibility of the area to other towns. A descriptive research design through a qualitative approach was adopted for the study. The qualitative method [Schutt \(2006, p.319\)](#) enables researchers to obtain a richer and more in-depth view of social reality than is possible with a more structured method. The method was used to provide an understanding of the dynamic nature of social media platforms on small businesses. The data were sourced through interviews, face-to-face interactions, and probing questions. Purposive sampling techniques were used to select a business centre in each of the selected areas (Lagos-Ikeja, Oyo-Dugbe, Osun-Ile-Ife), totalling three business centres. In-depth interviews (IDIs) sessions were conducted for six participants in the clothing business [shoes, fashion clothes, fashion accessories, and hairdressing] through a purposive sampling technique in each of the business centres, totalling 18 participants. The participants were selected based on their active involvement in social media platforms for their daily business operations. The number of participants was limited because of data management, time, and lack of access to potential participants at the time of data collection. Gender, occupation status, knowledge and involvement in small businesses were given consideration in selecting the participants in the study area. Data collected were subjected to content analysis. Gaining general familiarity with the participants' narratives was considered by carefully reading and rereading interview transcripts obtained from the fieldwork. In addition, codes/nodes were reviewed and reduced into smaller categories, as reflected by the themes in the analysis section when all the transcripts had been read and coded. For ethical considerations, the participants were assured that they would not come to any harm by participating in the study, and verbal consent was obtained from them.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings were analysed and presented with consideration for the focus of the study.

Socio-demographic Characteristics of Participants

Table 1 below shows that eighteen participants participated in the in-depth interview sessions of this study. The majority (10) of the participants were female, while eight (8) of the participants were male. This implies that small businesses were dominated more by females than males in the study area. The age of the participants ranges from 24 years to 32 years, with the majority of the participants within the age range of 24-26 years in the study areas. Equal numbers (6) of the participants were selected from each of the study areas, that is, Oyo, Osun, and Lagos states. For the participants' occupation status, close to half (6) of the participants were fashion accessories, equal (5) numbers of participants were fashion designers/wear and shoe entrepreneurs, and 3 of the participants were hairdressers.

Table 1. Socio-demographic Characteristics of Participants

Gender		Age Group		Selected Study Areas		Occupation Status	
V	F	V	F	V	F	V	F
Male	8	24-26 years	9	Oyo	6	Fashion Accessories	6

Female	10	27-29 years	6	Osun	6	Fashion Designers/ wears	5
		30-32 years	3	Lagos	6	Hairdressing	3
						Shoe entrepreneur	5

N= 18 *** V= Variable; F= Frequency; N= Total

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Social Media and Small Business Sales Performance: Level of Contributions

Social media has been affirmed by participants to have contributed immensely to customers' purchasing behaviour and boosted sales performance among small clothing businesses in the southwestern part of Nigeria. These contributions are noticeable in terms of the visibility of the clothing small businesses brands, increased sales revenue, and increased customer purchasing intention in Nigeria. This has further made the small businesses leverage the opportunities that abound on social media to boost sales and make their products more visible to prospective and existing customers:

"...The social media platform has really influenced my customer's purchasing behaviour positively. I have a range of 8-14 people who send messages to me daily, trying to find out about my products and see if they could actually get to buy from my products." – IDI, Female, 27 years, Fashion accessories, Lagos

This was further illustrated by some participants that,

"...Social media has really contributed a lot, especially in terms of the visibility of my business brand. It also shaped my customer's purchasing intention because most of them, when they come, may not be able to see most of my products in my shop, but on social media, especially on Instagram, they could be able to view the varieties of products I have on display." – IDI, Male, 29 years, Shoe entrepreneur, Oyo

"I connect more with my customers on Facebook, especially when I post pictures of myself and tag that the wear was made by me. They are ready to pay when they see the quality of the work I posted." – IDI, Male, 31 years, Fashion designer entrepreneur, Osun

Relatedly, WhatsApp, Instagram and Facebook are the social media that are widely used among the clothing small businesses in Nigeria for their business dealings with their customers, which allowed for optimisation of sales performance and boost revenue,

"...Instagram and WhatsApp have been of immense assistance in influencing customer purchasing behaviour towards products display on my page online which make it easy to sell more fashion wigs online weekly. It also boosts sales performance in terms of increasing revenue through the readiness of customers to pay higher prices for my products." – IDI, Female, 26 years, Hairdressing, Oyo

This submission was further illustrated in the excerpts that:

"...WhatsApp and Instagram have contributed notably to my business sales performance; that is, I make sales every week online when I display my business products. I received much patronage from people, and they pay a reasonable amount for my products when they order them online." – IDI, Male, 32 years, Shoe entrepreneur, Lagos

More importantly, sharing images and videos of business products and instant communication with customers have also been attributed to the level of contributions that social media platforms brought to the growth of small clothing businesses in Nigeria... This paper further affirmed that these attributes ingrained in the social media platforms had made business dealings more flexible for small clothing businesses to connect to their customers and also boost sales performance,

"...Posting of videos and picture aspect of WhatsApp and Instagram had positively influenced my business growth, for instance, when I displayed my products on these platforms, it attracts my customers, and I received a lot of patronage." – IDI, Female, 25 years, Fashion designer entrepreneur, Oyo

This was illustrated more in the excerpts that,

"I make sales anytime I posted my accessories on Instagram and Facebook. This makes me use the platforms regularly because of their flexibility in communicating with customers and also in posting my business products' videos and pictures." – IDI, Male, 24 years, Fashion accessories, Osun

"I preferred WhatsApp and Instagram in terms of posting my hairdo pictures and also showing short videos of my clients wearing the various hairstyles I initiated." – IDI, Female, 28 years, Hairdressing, Lagos

Challenges on Social Media: Clothing Small Businesses' Situations

The utilisation of social media platforms among clothing small businesses is not without its diverse challenges, which impeded improved business sales performances in Nigeria. These challenges are more pronounced in communication interruptions and security breaches, which have hindered sales performance outcomes of clothing small businesses in Nigeria,

"...There was a time that my Facebook account was hacked, together with my Instagram account, and nearly crippled my business and reputation among my customers. Security breaches on social media are a serious threat to my business, and they nearly damaged my business brands." – IDI, Male, 27 years old, fashion wear entrepreneur, Osun

This was explained further in the excerpt that,

"People hacking your pages is now rampant in this country, and it damages small businesses' growth ...when there is a breach in communication between me and my customers, I try to create an alternative medium to reach them, and they locate me through my shop." – IDI, male, 32 years, Shoe entrepreneur, Oyo

Apart from security breaches and communication interruptions, lack of access to funds, logistics problems, limited optimisation of social media platforms, and, more importantly, lack of ability to create attractive content constituted serious challenges to clothing small businesses on social media platforms in Nigeria. Importantly, findings further indicated that these challenges have led to a conflict of interest and loss of revenue, which decelerates improved sales performance among small clothing businesses in Nigeria. Consequently, these challenges have further led to little patronage from customers, which in turn hampered sales performance among small clothing businesses in Nigeria,

"...limited access to funds and limited optimisation of social media handle are some of the challenges I encountered while using the social media for my business. This has further made my sales performance move at snail-paced." – IDI, male, 26 years, fashion accessories, Osun

This submission is further illustrated in the excerpts that,

"Content customisation is a serious challenge for me on my social media business page. Content creation for the products makes business products attract people to your own page, which I find difficult to overcome for my business." – IDI, Male, 24 years, Shoe entrepreneur, Lagos

"The delivery problem is a big threat to my business sales improvement because most customers demand immediate delivery when they order their products online, which my business does not have. This has degenerated into a conflict of interest between me and customers most of the time. Social media for business has a lot of challenges for small-scale businesses." – IDI, Female, 26 years, Fashion wear entrepreneur, Oyo

Discussion of Findings

Findings indicated that social media had contributed immensely to customers' purchasing behaviour and boosted sales performance among small clothing businesses in the southwestern part of Nigeria. These contributions are noticeable in terms of the visibility of the clothing small businesses brands, increased sales revenue, and increased customer purchasing intention in Nigeria. This is supported by [Ndung'u et al. \(2020\)](#) findings that the utilisation of social media enhances interaction with customers in terms of frequency and also enables the creation of consistent brand images for business purposes at a mean score of 3.74. More importantly, the findings of this study also indicated that the sharing of images and videos of business products and instant communication with customers have also been attributed to the level of contributions that social media platforms brought to clothing small businesses' growth in Nigeria. This is in line with the literature ([Irene, 2018](#); [Konstantina, 2022](#)) that small businesses depend largely on Instagram and Facebook to improve business performance due to the inherent attribute of the retail clothing industry of projecting visual images of their products to customers via these social media platforms which allowed them to use photos to attract customers to their business products. This implies that small businesses in Nigeria have leverage on social media platforms in terms of visibly offering small businesses the ability to showcase their products to their potential and existing customers with ease, thereby improving sales performance.

Findings also showed that the utilisation of social media platforms among small clothing businesses is not without its diverse challenges, which impeded improved business sales performances in Nigeria. These challenges are more pronounced in the area of communication interruptions, security breaches, lack of access to funds, logistics problems, limited optimisation of

social media platforms, and, more importantly, lack of ability to create attractive content, which has hindered sales performance outcomes of clothing small businesses in Nigeria. This is in line with the submissions of Omotosho (2023), Sugiyantoro and Supriyadi (2022), and Rugova and Prenaj (2016) that inability of small business owners to effectively manage the social media accounts for business daily operations, and also interrupted communication when doing business due to loss of electricity and extreme weather, overuse of advertising, platforms maintenance's costs, increasing security and network issues are the major challenges that plagued small businesses utilisation of social media platforms. This implies that some of the social platforms are laced with unbridled challenges, which have multiplier effects on small businesses' sustainability despite the numerous benefits entrenched in the utilisation of social media for daily business operations.

CONCLUSIONS

Social media, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram, have twin influences on small clothing businesses' sales performance in Nigeria. Importantly, social media has contributed notably to employment situations and job creation in Nigeria, which has been a great contributor to the economic transformation of Nigeria's economic development plan. Apparently, social media platforms provide a cost-effective way to network with a larger audience and bond sellers with customers, but they also pose challenges which are detrimental to the growth and development of small businesses, especially the clothing industry in Nigeria. These problems have made it a Herculean task for small clothing businesses to optimise the opportunities that abound on social media to improve sales performances in Nigeria. However, in spite of its benefits, there is an apt need for small clothing businesses in Nigeria to grasp the trajectories and dynamics of social media and engage in effective and sustainable strategies to leverage social media for optimum benefit.

The conclusion of the study has expanded the academic research, especially on the nature and influence of social media on small business development in Nigeria. The study contributed to the frontier of knowledge by exploring the influence of social media platforms on the development of small businesses in Nigeria vis-à-vis the economic transformation of Nigeria, which was neglected in the previous studies. The study also provides a theoretical basis for the need for the Nigerian government to leverage the ingrained benefits of social media for small business development as a marker for social change in order to diversify the economy and enhance the economic transformation of the country.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

The study uses only qualitative methods. It encourages further research to cover other parts of small businesses vis-à-vis social through the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods. Further research could also examine the regulatory framework on social media for small businesses.

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