

Addressing the Obstacles to the Use of Social Media in Promoting Entrepreneurship in Lafia Metropolis: Challenges and Remedies

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Abstract

This paper explored the challenges associated with using social media for entrepreneurship promotion in Lafia metropolis and identified potential remedies to overcome these obstacles. Employing a mixed-method research design, the study surveyed 340 randomly selected entrepreneurs and conducted in-depth interviews with five entrepreneurs to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. The findings reveal that high data costs and a lack of adequate knowledge and skills in social media usage are significant barriers to the effective deployment of social media in entrepreneurial strategies. The study further suggests that targeted interventions, including affordable data plans and comprehensive training programmes, are crucial to mitigating these challenges. By addressing these issues, entrepreneurs

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in Lafia metropolis can better utilise social media to enhance their business activities and contribute to the region's economic growth.

Keywords: Social Media, Entrepreneurship Promotion, Business Development, Entrepreneurial Strategy and Skill Development

Introduction

Social media has rapidly transformed into one of the most influential and pervasive technologies of our time, fundamentally altering how people communicate, share information, and engage with content globally. Facebook, one of the leading platforms, exemplifies this shift with its staggering reach, reporting 2.38 billion monthly active users and 1.56 billion daily active users as of March 31, 2019 (Facebook, 2019). This immense user base highlights the platform's role as a central hub for social interaction and content consumption. The global social media landscape is only expected to expand further, with projections estimating that by 2022, the number of social media users will grow to 3.29 billion, comprising 42.3% of the world's population (eMarketer, 2018). This widespread adoption underscores social media's critical role in daily life, as billions of people spend countless hours daily engaging various platforms.

Given this vast and engaged audience, it is no wonder that social media has become an essential marketing channel for businesses. Marketers have seized the opportunity to reach and interact with potential customers on a previously unimaginable scale. Social media platforms offer unique advantages, such as targeted advertising, real-time feedback, and the ability to foster direct relationships with consumers. This has led to the widespread adoption of social media marketing strategies, where brands can engage with their audiences more personally and dynamically.

The Academia has also recognised the importance of the social media, resulting in a substantial body of research dedicated to understanding its impact on marketing practices. Scholars have explored various aspects of social media marketing, including the influence of online word of mouth (WOM) and the dynamics of online networks. These studies have provided

valuable insights into how social media shapes consumer behaviour and how businesses can leverage these platforms to enhance their marketing efforts. However, despite the considerable progress made in understanding social media's role in marketing over the past 15-20 years, the future remains uncertain. The fast-paced and constantly evolving nature of social media means that consumer behaviours and platform functionalities are in a state of continuous flux. As a result, the future of social media marketing may not simply follow the patterns observed so far. New trends, technologies, and user behaviours could emerge, leading to shifts in how social media is utilised for marketing purposes. This unpredictability calls for ongoing research and adaptation by both marketers and academics to stay ahead of the curve and effectively navigate the future landscape of social media marketing.

The study presents a significant area of inquiry, particularly within the context of the broader discussion on social media's pervasive influence. While social media platforms have been widely recognised for their potential to drive entrepreneurship by providing low-cost marketing channels, fostering customer engagement, and facilitating networking, this potential is not without obstacles, especially in specific regions like Lafia Metropolis. First, despite the global reach and accessibility of social media, local entrepreneurs in Lafia Metropolis may face unique challenges that hinder their ability to leverage these platforms effectively. These challenges could include limited digital literacy, inadequate access to stable internet connections, and a lack of understanding of advanced social media marketing strategies. Unlike in more digitally advanced regions, where social media's benefits are well-documented and exploited, entrepreneurs in Lafia might struggle with these foundational issues, preventing them from fully realising the potential of social media.

Furthermore, the dynamic and rapidly evolving nature of social media can be a double-edged sword for entrepreneurs. While platforms continuously offer new tools and features to enhance business promotion, keeping up with these changes requires resources, time, and expertise that may not be readily available to small business owners in Lafia. This constant flux can lead to inconsistent social media strategies, where businesses fail to adapt to new trends, resulting in lost opportunities and diminished returns

on investment. Additionally, there is the issue of online credibility and trust, which is crucial in the entrepreneurial space. In areas like Lafia Metropolis, where face-to-face interactions have traditionally been the foundation of business dealings, the shift to digital platforms can create a trust gap. Customers may be hesitant to engage with local businesses online due to concerns about authenticity, security, and reliability. This challenge is compounded by the fact that social media platforms are often saturated with content, making it difficult for new or small-scale entrepreneurs to stand out and establish a strong, credible presence.

Addressing these obstacles requires a multifaceted approach that includes improving digital literacy, enhancing access to technology, and providing targeted training on effective social media marketing. Additionally, building trust through transparent online practices and local community engagement can help bridge the gap between traditional business methods and modern digital platforms. Only by tackling these challenges head-on can social media truly serve as a powerful tool for promoting entrepreneurship in Lafia Metropolis. It is against the above backdrop that this study identified the challenges of social media in entrepreneurship promotion in Lafia metropolis. And identified some possible ways of ameliorating the challenges of social media in entrepreneurship promotion in Lafia metropolis.

Social Media at Present

The current social media environment is characterised by two main aspects: the platforms themselves and the ways in which various individuals and organisations utilise these platforms to achieve their goals. These platforms, whether major or minor, established or emerging, provide the technological and business frameworks that shape the industry. The evolution of social media has had a significant impact on consumer behaviour and marketing practices, largely driven by these platforms. Early social networking sites like MySpace and Friendster were the precursors to the massive networks we see today, such as Facebook. Alongside these, other forms of social media have persisted and evolved, including messaging services that began with simple Internet Relay Chat (IRC) in the 1990s and SMS text messaging on early mobile phones. Additionally, online forums and subreddits have

catered to specific interests, while more recently, platforms like Instagram and Snapchat have emerged, where visual content takes precedence over text.

Historically and currently, the dominant business model across these platforms involves monetising users by offering advertising services to those looking to reach these audiences with digital content and marketing communications. Research has shown that social media, in its various forms, is effective for marketing purposes. Studies by Trusov et al. (2009) and Stephen and Galak (2012) demonstrated that certain types of social interactions on these platforms, such as “refer a friend” features and discussions within online communities, can positively impact key marketing outcomes like customer acquisition and sales. The value of social media advertising continues to be explored, with researchers like Gordon et al. (2019) examining its effectiveness and its interaction with traditional media such as television (Fossen & Schweidel, 2016, 2019), as well as its role in the diffusion of new products through information spread (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2015).

These insights are particularly relevant when considering the challenges of promoting entrepreneurship in Lafia Metropolis. Entrepreneurs in this region must navigate the complexities of different social media platforms, understanding both their technical aspects and how to effectively use them to engage potential customers. However, obstacles such as limited digital literacy, inadequate resources, and unfamiliarity with evolving social media trends can hinder their efforts. Overcoming these challenges requires equipping entrepreneurs with the necessary knowledge and tools to fully leverage social media, which is essential for fostering successful entrepreneurship in Lafia.

Understanding the dynamics of social media in the context of promoting entrepreneurship in Lafia Metropolis requires delving deeper into how users engage with these platforms and the implications for local businesses. Social media’s role goes beyond just the technological tools it provides; it encompasses the diverse ways in which people use these platforms to connect, share information, and influence each other.

Currently, social media serves various functions for users, including engaging with content on news feeds, exchanging private messages, and participating in discussion forums. These activities can be categorised into

three primary areas: (i) interacting with known contacts such as friends and family, (ii) connecting with individuals who share similar interests but are not personally known, and (iii) accessing and contributing to a broad range of digital content including news updates, opinions, and reviews. Each of these interactions represents a form of online word of mouth (WOM), a crucial element in marketing that can drive consumer behaviour and influence brand perception (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016). For entrepreneurs in Lafia Metropolis, leveraging these aspects of social media can be highly beneficial but also challenging. Online word of mouth (WOM) has been shown to positively impact marketing outcomes, such as customer acquisition and sales, as evidenced by studies like Babiaë Rosario et al. (2016). This suggests that local businesses can potentially harness social media to enhance their visibility and credibility. However, entrepreneurs in Lafia may face specific obstacles, such as limited digital literacy, insufficient access to technology, and a lack of familiarity with effective social media strategies. These challenges can hinder their ability to effectively use social media to promote their businesses.

Research has examined how WOM on social media influences consumer behaviour, with findings highlighting the importance of content type, user motivations, and the impact of various forms of interaction (Herhausen et al., 2019; Stephen & Lehmann, 2016; Villarroel Ordenes et al., 2017, 2018; Grewal et al., 2019; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Hollenbeck & Kaikati, 2012; Toubia & Stephen, 2013; Wallace et al., 2014). For entrepreneurs in Lafia, applying these insights involves tailoring social media strategies to overcome local barriers and capitalise on opportunities. This includes addressing the gaps in digital literacy by providing training and resources, ensuring reliable internet access, and developing targeted content that resonates with the local audience. Furthermore, as social media continues to evolve, it is crucial to broaden the perspective beyond just the communicative aspects of these platforms. Entrepreneurs need to understand how emerging trends and technologies can be integrated into their marketing strategies. This might involve exploring new social media tools, adapting to changes in user behaviour, and continuously refining their approach, based on feedback and performance metrics.

Promoting entrepreneurship in Lafia Metropolis through social media will have to involve not only understanding how users interact with these

platforms but will also have to address the specific challenges faced by local entrepreneurs. By expanding the focus to include the broader social implications and evolving trends, businesses can better leverage social media to enhance their marketing efforts and achieve growth. This comprehensive approach is essential for navigating the complex social media landscape and maximising its potential for local entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship Development

The term entrepreneur is obtained from the French word “Entreprendre” and therefore the German word “Unternehmen”, both mean “To undertake”. Three words were used to hint that the French terms point to projector, initiator and undertaker; these were used reciprocally and did not have the accuracy and attributes of a scientific articulation. The word entrepreneur, with its origin from French and German terms, refers to individuals who project, initiate or undertake an action for development and profit enhancement. Antwi, Stephen Kwadwo, Abdallah Mohammed Inusah, and Kasim Hamza (2015) define an entrepreneur as someone who intends to start a business, identify a business chance/opportunity, compose assets, supervise or oversee and inspect and also accept the danger of a business. To Khedhaouria, Anis, Călin Gurău, and Olivier Torrès (2015), an entrepreneur may be a contender, an inventor and a driver, gambler, somebody that creates something new and different, an activity, a business or organisations. He is the person responsible, the pioneer and therefore the personnel that runs the administration and leadership of a business venture. Furthermore, he/she is an individual responsible for the results that the venture produces, both positive and negative. Corroborating the above, *Business Dictionary* (2017) sees an entrepreneur as someone who exercises initiative by organising a venture to take advantage of a chance, because the administrator decides what, how, and the way much of an honest or service is going to be produced.

In the context of this research, an entrepreneur is seen as someone that finds and exploits the available opportunities, a maker who starts and spurs the method of progress (creator), starts better approaches for action (innovator), acknowledges dangers, uses instinct, is ready, identifies, maps business openings, production of latest initiatives and investigates new

business leadership. He/she is someone who is preoccupied with business chance, executes new innovation (new and better ways of doing old things) and sees risks as a stepping stone to going forward creatively.

Entrepreneurship is the process of making or grabbing a chance and seeking after it, no matter the resources currently controlled. It is a process of seeing and evaluating business openings and opportunities, assembling the relevant resources to take advantage of them and starting activities to assure achievement. To further give credence to entrepreneurship as a concept, the governing body of Nigerian Universities sees entrepreneurship as self-employment of any kind, that recognises opportunity inside the economic framework; the formation of a latest organisation; the eagerness and capacity of an individual to look out for venture openings during a situation and have the capacity to line up and run an endeavour effectively in light of the identified opportunities (Nigerian Universities Commission, 2013). Entrepreneurship is essential for the economic promotion and development of any nation.

Entrepreneurship Development, however, may be a well-designed and precise improvement and advancement. It is a way of industrialisation and a solution for unemployment issue for any state or nation. The aim of entrepreneurial promotion is to influence a person for entrepreneurial vocation/skill and to form him equipped for seeing and exploiting any effectively open doors for business undertakings (Prama, 2003). Similar view is uttered by US Department of State (2007) that entrepreneurship is an important element for strengthening economic process and job creation in the society. Within the developing world, successful small businesses are the vital constituent of job creation, pay improvement, and reduction of poverty and hardship.

Theoretical Framework- Social Exchange Theory

The Social Exchange theory was propounded by George Homans, a sociologist, in 1958. It first appeared in his essay “Social Behaviour as Exchange”. Given that all social media are hooked on the ability of users providing content, an understanding of the motives of why individuals participate is fundamental. Social exchange theory originated from sociology studies exploring exchange between individuals or small groups (Cook,

Karen, and Emerson, 1978). The idea mainly uses cost-benefit framework and comparison of alternatives to elucidate how citizens communicate with one another; how they form relationships and bonds and the way communities are formed through communication exchanges (Homans, George C., 1958). The idea states that individuals engage in behaviours they find rewarding and avoid behaviours that have too high a price. In other words, all social behaviour is predicated on each actor's subjective assessment of the cost-benefit of contributing to social marketing strategies exchange. They convey or exchange with one another contingent reciprocal actions from the opposite communicating party (Cook & Emerson, 1978). The mutual reinforcement might be analysed through a microeconomic framework, though repeatedly the rewards are not monetary but social, like opportunity, prestige, conformity, or acceptance (Cook & Emerson, 1978). The idea was arguably best summarised by Homans (1958:606) as cited by McLean and Power (2014) when they wrote:

Social behaviour is an exchange of products, material goods but also non-material ones, like the symbols of approval or prestige. Persons that give much to others attempt to get much from them, and persons that get much from others are struggling to offer much to them. This process of influence tends to figure out at equilibrium to a balance within the exchanges. For an individual in an exchange, what he gives could also be a price to him, even as what he gets could also be a gift, and his behaviour changes less because the difference of the profit tends to a maximum.

Hence, the explanations why people engage during a social exchange are posited as an expected gain in reputation and influence on others; an anticipated reciprocity on the part of others; altruism; and direct reward. As long as participation within the social media is not compensated, the primary three reasons appear to possess particular relevance to why people participate in social media. Though obviously much more research is required to check the validity of such groupings, segmenting users on their exchange behaviours features a certain level of face validity. Given such a hierarchy of users supported their active exchanges, firms attempting to leverage

social media to their advantage should plan to engage consumers of all four segmentation levels.

For watchers, the task is to first identify the precise social media being used, what information is sought, and what makes it engaging, in an attempt to develop and position content that is relevant. An equivalent strategy and content should be useful also for sharers. However, the tendency of sharers should be facilitated by marketers by simplifying the method of forwarding content (e.g., Retweet and Facebook forward links) also as recognising and rewarding the specified behaviour.

Facebook's Open Graph has enabled users to "like" or "comment" on any content online (Zuckerberg, 2010). Firms may find advantages in adopting this trend by proactively adding a commenting feature to every one of their web pages. By doing so, they will directly manage the content of such comments, which in effect will discourage spammers and trolls. Lastly, concerning producers, attempts by firms to interact with their customers who create unique platforms for their customers may produce dividends at the brand or chain level. Publicly recognising such sites that are helpful to the firm and increasing their visibility through programme marketing are options.

Social exchange theory is suited for this study as it advocates for the exchange of ideas within society and the exchange of ideas which can be between a consumer and an entrepreneur or any member of society. Some of the key tenets of the theory are hinged on the fact that the exchange of ideas will lead to socioeconomic change, transformation of traditional economics and political economic development.

Methodology

The research design for this study employs a survey method to address the research problem, utilising both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Surveys are effective for measuring characteristics, opinions, or behaviours of a population by examining a sample and generalising the results (Abacigil et al., 2019). This method is particularly valuable for capturing opinions and trends from a large population through systematic data collection via questionnaires. The mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative research, allows for a comprehensive understanding of the topic by validating findings through multiple data sources (Kothari, 2004).

The study focused on Lafia metropolis, which has a projected population of 348,000 according to the 2021 estimates (World Population Review, 2021). Given the unknown number of entrepreneurs within this population, the research utilised a sample size of 340 respondents, selected randomly to ensure representativeness and minimise bias. The probability sampling technique, specifically simple random sampling, was employed to provide each individual an equal chance of selection, thereby enhancing the accuracy and reliability of the data collected (Kothori, 2004).

Data was gathered using a structured questionnaire and in-depth interviews (IDI). The questionnaire was designed to collect information on participants' social characteristics, behaviours, attitudes, and beliefs (Bulmer, 2004). In-depth interviews, involving individual conversations with five selected entrepreneurs, provided qualitative insights into their perspectives and experiences (Boyce & Neale, 2006). Data analysis was done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for quantitative data, which was presented in percentages, frequencies, and tables, and applying a descriptive thematic method to transcribe and analyse qualitative data. This approach aimed to explore the relationship between social media and entrepreneurship promotion, combining both quantitative and qualitative insights for a robust analysis.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

Benefit of Social Media in the Promotion of Entrepreneurship

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Social Media influences entrepreneurship promotion in Lafia metropolis		
Yes	296	93.4
No	21	6.6
Can Social Media create a paradigm shift for entrepreneurship promotion in Lafia metropolis		
Yes	296	93.4
No	21	6.6
Total	317	100.0

Source: *Researcher's fieldwork in Lafia metropolis, 2022.*

Table 1 shows that 296 (93.4%) respondents of the study are of the view that Social Media influences entrepreneurship promotion in Lafia metropolis while 21 (6.6%) did not agree with the above claim. It can therefore be noted from the table that the highest number of respondents agree that Social Media influences entrepreneurship promotion in Lafia metropolis. Substantiating the above view, Mr. Sunny Andrew is of the perception that:

Social Media has actually exposed and is still exposing my craft to the world. It has helped me to get my work to the nooks and crannies of Lafia and even outside Lafia. It has brought many entrepreneurs to the limelight. All thanks to Social Media if not a whole lot of entrepreneurs would have not been known nor be heard of. It has also helped the new entrepreneurs in their business as well (IDI, 2022).

Summing up the above view, the place of Social Media in the success of businesses cannot be overemphasised as business owners who deploy social media in their businesses have reaped and are still reaping the fruits of using social media in their business endeavour.

Among the 317 respondents, 296 (93.4%) agreed that social media can create a paradigm shift for entrepreneurship promotion in Lafia metropolis, while 21 (6.6%) did not agree with the above claim. It can therefore be deduced from the table that the highest number of respondents are of the view that Social Media can create a paradigm shift. Agreeing with the above view, Mr. Sunny Andrew posits that:

The coming of Social Media in businesses brought in competition amongst various craft men and women because everyone wants to showcase his/her works and at the end of the day, there is a lot of competition that brings about innovation and people tend to give their best and it has brought about paradigm shift from low quality production to professionalise ways of doing things. You can also learn from colleagues who are doing better than you. Social media has created a shift for entrepreneurship promotion in Lafia metropolis. Therefore, it has helped in product modification (IDI, 2022).

Corroborating the above position, Mr. Sunday Clement is of the view that:

Actually, the role of social media cannot be over emphasised, it creates a paradigm shift in the aspect whereby you, as an entrepreneur, there are levels you can access your performance. Using the principle of SWOT analysis i.e strength, weakness, opportunity, threat, as this provides an avenue for self-rating. The comments and likes on your products will tell of your strength, and they will also tell you of your weaknesses and opportunities that are there. It will expose you to them. It is therefore left for you to use the opportunities in social media to build yourself, that is, customers also shape entrepreneurs in terms of what they give out to them through some level of criticism (IDI, 2022).

Agreeing with the above point of view, Najime Tivlumun holds that:

Right from the establishment of this bakery, the use of social media has given us another view of our business up to the extent that we have a good number of customers who got to know about our business from the online platform (IDI, 2022).

The presence of Social Media in the promotion of entrepreneurship cannot be overemphasised and the dimension which it has brought to business is tremendous. It has made businesses competitive, making the best to come out of people. The end users get to select from the different businesses made available to them through the social media, if it is not satisfactory, they move to the next store for purchase.

Distribution on ways Social Media has aided customers to understand entrepreneurs' business

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Prices of the products are provided on social media	78	24.6
Description of the products are provided on Social Media platform	131	41.3
All of the above	108	34.1
Total	317	100.0

Source: *Researcher's fieldwork in Lafia metropolis, 2022.*

Table 2 above shows that 78 (24.6%) respondents are of the view that social media has aided customers to understand entrepreneurs' businesses by the prices that are provided online. In another purview, 131 (41.3%) of the respondents are of the opinion that Social Media has aided customers to understand entrepreneurs' business by the description of the products that are provided on the platform. Furthermore, 108 (34.1%) respondents agree that both the first and the second option have aided customers in understanding entrepreneurs' business. It can therefore be noted from the table that the highest number of respondents are of the view that social media has aided customers to understand entrepreneurs' business by description of the products provided on the social media platforms. Mr. Sunny Andrew agreed with the above as he states that:

Social media has created a signature for my brand that my customers easily know my products. My customers have been communicating with me through the social media platform to make orders and this translates into more sales and more money for me as an entrepreneur (IDI, 2022).

In another view, Najime Tivlumun said that "we use to collect our customers' phone number to send messages to them when there are new developments. This is aside the usage of social media; we also make home deliveries once an order is made by a customer" (IDI, 2022). The provision

of the description of a product online is good for the customers would be able to know what they are buying and this can make more customers patronise that business if there are good testimonies about the product from people. These testimonies come either through comments or rating that customers provide.

The importance of social media to entrepreneurs

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Social Media is a necessary tool for entrepreneurs		
Yes	266	83.9
No	51	16.1
Do online business thrive in Lafia metropolis		
Yes	230	72.6
No	87	27.4
Social Media marketing is more effective than door to door or street marketing		
Yes	209	65.9
No	108	34.1
Total	317	100.0

Source: *Researcher's fieldwork in Lafia metropolis, 2022.*

Table 3 above shows that, 266 (83.9%) respondents are of the view that social media is a necessary tool for entrepreneurs while 51 (16.1%) disagree with the above claim. Observing the table, it can be noted that the highest number of the study's respondents are of the opinion that social media is a necessary tool for entrepreneurs. The necessity is for business promotion and advancement. Agreeing with the above postulation, Engineer Arewa Ubugushiki Nigeria points out that "without the use of social media our business would have not advanced. It is therefore very important for entrepreneurs who intend to advance their businesses" (IDI, 2022). Elaborating on the point of Engineer Arewa, Mr. Sunny Andrew said that:

Without social media, it would not be possible to send pictures and receive video. So what we do with our customers is online conversation, they get to make their choices and we in turn send pictures and videos for clarification. A customer

may want to show us a design and distance may be a barrier but with the presence of social media that has been taken care of (IDI, 2022).

Supporting the above view, Mr. John Aku is of the view that:

Social media is very necessary for entrepreneurs. You see I told you earlier that it is because that we do not use social media however I must tell you social media is a good tool and is necessary for entrepreneurs only if you have what it takes to use it. You can post or place your product, telling them the price and location of your business where they can reach you, the price also can be there for customers to see (IDI, 2022).

In another view, Mr. Najime Tivlumun points out that:

Social media is a necessary tool for every entrepreneur because it will boost the customer's morale that are patronising you. Even those that do not know you will trace you in order to patronise you. Most of the lecturers in your university (Federal University Lafia) do come to buy from us and they got to know about us through social media. They usually order for meat pie and doughnuts when they have a programme or event in the school, even yesterday I supplied them some pieces of doughnuts (IDI, 2022).

Furthermore, Mr. Sunday Clement is of the view that:

Limiting it to myself I have seen the effectiveness of social media because it has attracted lots of friends and customers and we can also sell our goods to many people at distant places and the role of social media is enormous (IDI, 2022).

The thriving of online stores such as Ali express, Jiji, Konga, Jumia and a host of others is more attributed to the use of social media. More people got to know about the stores from social media. More customers will be attracted to a business if Social Media is effectively used as justified by the different interviewees above.

The second item on the table has it that 230 (72.6%) respondents agree that online businesses thrive in Lafia metropolis while 87 (27.4%) respondents are not in agreement with the above claim. It can therefore be deduced from the table that the highest number of the study's respondents thinks that online businesses thrive in Lafia metropolis. Substantiating the above view, Mr. Sunny Andrew said that:

Doing business online has helped me as an individual; concurrently, the business is thriving for me as an individual. Some people may have their reservations. I have made sales online and I have a lot of customers who are patronising me now because of the platform of Social Media (IDI, 2022).

Agreeing to the above position, Mr. Najime Tivlumun holds that:

The thriving of online businesses in Lafia is very low because the mode of exposure is very low, for most of them are illiterates; it is only a few educated ones that know what is happening when they see new products posted online (IDI, 2022)

Corroborating the above view, Mr. Sunday Clement posits that:

Online business has thrived for me because I have got lots of customers through Facebook and from my interactions with other people who are into one business or the other. They have attested to the good side of online business in Lafia (IDI, 2022).

In another light, Engineer Arewa Ubugushiki Nigeria is of the view that:

It has thrived and it is still thriving tremendously. Before now to do advert you have to go round but with the advent of this new media, it has reduced the stress. Social Media has made business easier for entrepreneurs and has also reduced the cost of going door to door for advertisement (IDI, 2022).

In a different purview, Mr. John Aku points out that:

Online business is a new thing coming to Lafia all together. Like in bigger cities, yes it is very good but Lafia, is still one big local government. It is not like other places like Kano, Port Harcourt, Ibadan, Benin City etc. Lafia to Akwanga joined together is not up to Ikoyi in Lagos State, so online businesses in these places thrive well but for Lafia we are still moving towards that. I know some people are into online businesses here but not as seen in Lagos or Kano (IDI, 2022).

Out of the total retrieved copies of the administered questionnaire, 209 (65.9%) respondents of the study are of the view that Social Media marketing is more effective than door-to-door or street marketing, while 108 (34.1%) disagree. Agreeing with the above view, Mr. Sunny Andrew holds that:

What Social Media has done over time is that it has reduced time and energy spent and has also increased the customer base, because with Social Media you can reach a larger group of people within the shortest time. In comparison with the house-to-house or door-to-door, the number of people that one may get across to will not be much (IDI, 2022).

Agreeing with Mr. Sunny, Mr. Sunday Clement said:

Utilising a door-to-door approach will attract just a handful of people who may not be interested in your craft but with social media, you are required to just log in into Facebook then place an advert. And people will start placing their order or book for delivery. Like me I have friends and customers within and outside Nasarawa State, so if not for social media, I cannot go round to tell all these about my business, even if I am able to go will they have interest in what I do? What about time and energy to be spent? Social media is able to bridge the gap (IDI, 2022).

In a contrasting opinion, Mr. John Aku's view is that:

Yes, Social Media actually helps in reducing going door-to-door advertisement, because from your mobile device you

can see the product, the location and even the price from there and you do not need to wait for a person to do a door-to-door advert before you make enquiry on the product. Through Social Media you will know the price and even place an order which will be supplied to your door step. The effectiveness of Social Media marketing depends on the society, if it is an advanced society it will be more effective than the door-to door but if it is not in advance society, it will not be effective. Most people in the villages have phones but not smart ones that will enable them to use Social Media so dealing with people in this kind of society, one need not use Social Media in terms of advertisement (IDI, 2022).

Agreeing with the above view, Mr. Najime Tivlumun is of the view that: Social Media marketing cannot be effective more than door-to-door marketing because of the less exposure in Lafia. This is why we use our van to move from shop to shop. There are instances that even if you send or post a product it may not be viewed which is why we adopted the door-to-door approach of marketing that is more effective than the Social Media for us (IDI, 2022).

Distribution on the frequency of post done on Social Media for products or services

Variables	Frequency	Percent
1-4 posts per week	90	28.4
5-10 posts per week	188	59.3
11-25 posts per week	39	12.3
Total	317	100.0

Source: *Researcher's fieldwork in Lafia metropolis, 2022.*

Table 4 shows that 90 (28.4%) respondents of the study do post their products and services 1-4 times per week, 188 (59.3%) post 5-10 per week, 39 (12.3%) post 11-25 times per week. It can therefore be deduced from

the table that the highest number of the study's respondents do post their products and services 5-10 times a week. Given the above findings, Mr. Sunny Andrew said "the number of times that I post varies but on an average, I post 3-4 times in a week" (IDI, 2022). Similarly, Engineer Arewa Umbugushiki Nigeria revealed that, "I post my products and services 2 to 3 times in a month, not minding the fact that I use social media every now and then" (IDI, 2022). In another vein, Mr. Sunday Clement is of the view that "In a week, I usually post my products twice and in a month about 8-9 times" (IDI, 2022). In a different point of view, Mr. Najime Tivlumun said that "We usually post our products twice a year and not more than that" (IDI, 2022).

Distribution showing if there are more disadvantages than advantages for those using social media as a marketing tool in Lafia metropolis

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Yes	84	26.5
No	233	73.5
Total	317	100.0

Source: *Researcher's fieldwork in Lafia metropolis, 2022.*

Table 5 shows that 84 (26.5%) respondents of the study agree that there are more disadvantages than advantages for those using social media as a marketing tool, while 233 (73.5%) respondents disagree with this claim. Observing the table, it can be noted that the highest number of the study's population are of the view that those who use social media as a marketing tool in Lafia metropolis are at advantage than those who do not. Agreeing with this finding, Mr. Sunday Clement is of the view that social media "helps in product marketing" (IDI, 2022). Substantiating this, Mr. Sunny Andrew is of the view that:

There are lots of advantages for those using social media because with social media, an entrepreneur will have a large customer base. The entrepreneur who uses social media has

more to gain than those not using it. It is more advantageous to those using it than those that do not (IDI, 2022).

Agreeing with the above viewpoint, Mr. Najime Tivlumun points out that:

The advantages of social media include: you cannot carry your products on a door-to-door marketing. Once the product is posted someone at the comfort of his/her home can see it; you do not spend money on movement except if you are to deliver the product to a customer (IDI, 2022).

Corroborating the above postulations, Engineer Arewa Umbugushiki Nigeria said that:

It has thrived and it is still thriving tremendously. Before now to do advert you have to go round but with the advent of this new media, it has reduced the stress. Social Media has made business easier for entrepreneurs and has also reduced the cost of going door-to-door for advertisement (IDI, 2022).

Giving a different angle to the above viewpoint Mr. John Aku holds that:

Yes, there are advantages on both sides because the issue is this, we are talking about money, using social media has its own cost because you have to subscribe, you need gadgets to be able to go online and you discover you are already spending to use social media. Whereas those who are not using social media, that cost of spending on it is off, so at the end of the day when preparing the account of the expenses you will discover that the person using social media will have to deduct or will include the cost of the use of social media which may not be in the account prepared by the person not using it. Secondly, the person using social media may be making good sales compared to the other person not using it. That is the advantage. Using Social Media depends on the locality in which you are operating. When we deal with customers who are advanced technologically you will enjoy using social media but in a less advanced area you will

not enjoy it or it will not thrive well in a society that is not advanced. In a society that is not advanced no one will care to check or view what you are placing on social media handles (IDI, 2022).

Distribution on the expensive nature of Social Media to its users

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Yes	287	90.5
No	30	9.5
Total	317	100.0

Source: *Researcher's fieldwork in Lafia metropolis, 2022.*

Table 6 above shows that 287 (90.5%) respondents of the study agree that social media usage is expensive, while 30 (9.5%) disagree with the above claim. It can therefore be deduced from the table that the highest number of the study's respondents are of the opinion that social media is expensive. Corroborating the above finding, Mr. Sunday Clement is of the view that:

The cost of maintaining and managing the platform in terms of subscribing for data for the platform at which I market my products. Sometimes subscription may finish impromptu and may be you do not have any money for subscription and probably you need to send or post some product for customer's benefits (IDI, 2022).

Agreeing to the above with a justification, Mr. Sunny Andrew said that:

We use money to source for money, so if the need arises for me to subscribe or purchase data, I will do that for the wellbeing of my business. The data will be used in the posting of my products, which can be a form of advertisement or business promotion (IDI, 2022).

Mr. John Aku is of the opinion that:

It depends on the platform you want to use, whether am going to use radio, television, whatsapp or Facebook. The cost of buying data is the problem, assuming I bought ₦5000 data in a month; I should be able to see the difference in terms of patronage and in terms of my sales. If I don't see or gain more than what I spent then there is no point using social media. You know we use money to get more money but in a case you use money and you are not yielding a better outcome, then something is wrong (IDI, 2022).

Mr. Najime Tivlumun is of the view that:

Because of the situation now, the level which we want to stage our advertisement, we cannot reach out to our prospective customers due to the cost of maintaining the social media platforms. However social media has helped in boosting our own bakery as a business that, I must say (IDI, 2022).

Distribution on the amount spent on data/social media promotion monthly

Variable	Frequency	Percent
₦500	36	11.4
₦1000	161	50.8
₦1,500	51	16.1
₦2000 and above	69	21.8
Total	317	100.0

Source: *Researcher's fieldwork in Lafia metropolis, 2022.*

Table 7 shows that 36 (11.4%) respondents of the study's population spend ₦500 monthly on data and social media promotion, 161 (50.8%) respondents of the study say that they spend ₦1000 monthly on data and social media promotion. Furthermore, 51 (16.1%) spend ₦1,500 monthly

on data and social media promotion and 69 (21.1%) spend ₦2000 and above on data and social media promotion monthly. It can therefore be deduced from the table that the highest number of the study's population spends ₦1000 monthly on data and social media promotion of their goods and services.

Distribution on the reason(s) why entrepreneurs in Lafia metropolis do not use social media for the promotion of their entrepreneurship skills

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Lack of adequate knowledge and skills in the usage of social media	137	43.2
Fear of criticism/risk of getting negative feedback	15	4.7
Lack of smart phones and fund for the purchase of data	66	20.8
The presence of fraud has created a lot of doubts in people	37	11.7
Financial setback and lack of data	3	.9
Lack of adequate knowledge and skills in the usage of social media, lack of smart phones and funds for data	34	10.7
Lack of smart phones and funds for data and the presence of frauds has created a lot of doubts in people	6	1.9
Lack of adequate knowledge and skills in the usage of Social Media and the presence of fraud has created a lot of doubts in people	9	2.8
Lack of adequate knowledge and skills in the usage of Social Media and fear of criticism/risk of getting negative feedback	10	3.2
Total	317	100.0

Source: *Researcher's fieldwork in Lafia metropolis, 2022.*

The above Table 8 shows that 137 (43.2%) respondents of the study are of the view that lack of adequate knowledge and skills in the usage of social media is the reason why entrepreneurs in Lafia metropolis do not effectively use social media for the promotion of their entrepreneurship skills. Among the retrieved questionnaire, 15 (4.7%) respondents are of the view that the fear of criticism/risk of getting negative feedback is the reason for the low usage of social media. A fraction of the respondents, 66 (20.8%) think that the lack of smartphones and funds for the purchase of data is the reason for the low usage of social media. In another perception, 37 (11.7%) and 3 (0.9%) respondents believe that the presence of fraud has created many doubts in people, financial setbacks, and a lack of data as their reasons for the low usage of social media in promoting entrepreneurship activities in the Lafia metropolis.

Other respondents 34 (10.7%) and 6 (1.9%) believe that lack of adequate knowledge and skills in the usage of social media, lack of smartphones, funds for data and the presence of frauds have created a lot of doubts in people. Giving another purview to why entrepreneurs do not use social media, 9 (2.8%) and 10 (3.2%) hold that the lack of adequate knowledge and skills in the usage of social media and the presence of fraud have created a lot of doubts in people. There is also the fear of criticism/risk of getting negative feedback. It can therefore be deduced from the table that the highest number of respondents are of the view that the lack of adequate knowledge and skills in the usage of social media is the main reason why entrepreneurs within Lafia metropolis do not use social media for the promotion of their entrepreneurship skills promotion. Giving a plethora of reasons for the non-usage of social media by entrepreneurs in Lafia metropolis, Mr. Sunny Andrew points out that:

The first item is finance. Money can be a strong hindrance to the utilisation of social media by entrepreneurs within Lafia metropolis. The knowledge may be there but finance is the driving force that is needed. Money is needed to purchase the necessary gadgets. Another set may have the gadgets but not the money to purchase data. Also, another set of entrepreneurs may have all or what it takes to use the social media yet they do not use it. They do not use it because they believe social media do not have an impact on their businesses whereas some feel they have lots of

customers whom they cannot even satisfy, so to such kind of entrepreneurs they feel contented and they may not like to use it for any reason for their business. That is their mind set and its final (IDI, 2022).

Giving his own reason as to why entrepreneurs have not yet embraced fully the deployment of social media, Mr. John Aku said that “Lafia is a small place; people are just coming up, very small compare to Lagos. Lafia has not developed or advanced to this level of technological usage of computer gadgets” (IDI, 2022). Providing another view for the reasons for none or low usage of social media for entrepreneurship development, Mr. Najime Tivlumun is of the view that:

I think the number one reason here is illiteracy because some people jumped into business but cannot operate it well, they do not know that there are processes that you will pass through before you place your products in the market (IDI, 2022).

Giving different reasons as to why entrepreneurs in Lafia do not use social media, Mr. Sunday Clement said that:

Your inability to subscribe to the criteria involved in using social media goes a very long way; some cannot meet these demands. Entrepreneurs in Lafia do not use social media because of the problem of maintenance. Other reasons include not having what it takes to go online, like devices or gadgets (IDI, 2022).

Engineer Arewa Umbugushiki Nigeria is of the view that:

What I think about upcoming business owners (entrepreneurs) is the challenges of having the gadgets that will enable you go online. One needs to start with a phone not less than ₦15000. When you see an organisation that is not using social media, it means they are constrained financially (IDI, 2022).

There can be a plethora of reasons as to why entrepreneurs do not use social media for the promotion of their businesses in Lafia metropolis but the reasons are not farfetched from the views above, ranging from the lack

of finance and literacy level. If these two issues can be addressed, then there would be more entrepreneurs deploying social media in the promotion of their business. In line with the above, this paper discovered that social media usage for entrepreneurship development is expensive as most entrepreneurs use a minimum of ₦1000 monthly for subscription. It was found that the lack of adequate knowledge and skills in the usage of social media is one of the reasons why entrepreneurs in Lafia metropolis do not deploy social media in their strategy.

Conclusion

This study has highlighted the significant challenges that entrepreneurs in Lafia metropolis face when attempting to leverage social media for business development. Despite its potential as a powerful tool for promoting entrepreneurship, the high cost of data subscriptions and the lack of adequate knowledge and skills remain substantial barriers. These obstacles hinder the effective use of social media platforms, limiting the ability of entrepreneurs to reach wider audiences and enhance their business strategies. To address these challenges, there is a need for targeted interventions, such as affordable data plans and training programmes, to equip entrepreneurs with the necessary skills and resources. By overcoming these barriers, entrepreneurs in Lafia metropolis can fully harness the benefits of social media, fostering greater economic growth and innovation in the region.

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