



Research Article

Effect of Entrepreneurship on Social Media Marketing Competencies in Makurdi Metropolis

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Abstract-This study aims to determine the effect of entrepreneurship on social media marketing competencies in Makurdi Metropolis. Efficient and skillful work practices are essential and there is the need for wide utilization of social media marketing entrepreneurial development in Makurdi metropolis necessitated this study which sought to determine how competent practicing entrepreneurs are good in Makurdi metropolis. A survey research design was adopted using a purposive sampling technique. The population consisted of 201 entrepreneurs in the Makurdi metropolis. A validated 22-item on a 5-point rating scale questionnaire was used for data collection. Mean and standard deviation were used in the analysis of data. The study revealed statistically that the overall scores for AICPSM positively correlated significantly with SMMC scores ($r_{(175)} = 0.776$; $P < 0.001$). Similarly, the scores of ASCNNSM ($r_{(175)} = 0.796$; $P < 0.001$), and AMCSSM ($r_{(175)} = 0.785$; $P < 0.001$) also positively and significantly correlated with SMMC scores and that entrepreneurs in Makurdi metropolis rated themselves as incompetent in utilizing social media marketing communication. The study therefore draws the following conclusions; if entrepreneurs can utilize social media marketing competencies, they will record greater success in their businesses by boosting brand awareness and customer loyalty which will lead to higher sales turnover. Therefore, it was recommended among others that successful digital entrepreneurs should provide mentorship to beginning and prospective entrepreneurs to equip them with the competencies needed for successful social media marketing.

Article Key Information

Keywords: Social media, marketing strategies, competencies possessed, entrepreneurship, digital entrepreneurship

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Competency refers to the ability to perform a task diligently and to a specified standard of acceptance. Kiggundy (2022) viewed competency as the capacity to perform a task or tasks skillfully, efficiently, and effectively. Accordingly, Hellriegel et al. (2018) opined that competencies are sets of knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes that contribute to personal effectiveness. Penchev and Salopaju (2021) agreed by defining competencies as the sum of experiences and the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes acquired during a lifetime, which are

necessary for effective performance in a job or life role. Entrepreneurial competencies as those clusters of related knowledge, attitudes, and skills that an entrepreneur must acquire through training and development to achieve outstanding performance and maximize profit while managing a business venture or an enterprise (Inyang & Enuoh, 2019). Phelan and Sharpley (2022) are of the opinion that entrepreneurial competencies refer to the sum of an entrepreneur's requisite attributes for successful and sustainable entrepreneurship succinctly.

The concept of entrepreneurial competencies is multi-dimensional because entrepreneurship involves activities that are more than just creating a new business venture. Dixon, Meier, Brown, and Custer (2019) classified entrepreneurial competencies into eight clusters which are leadership, communication, trustworthiness, organizational skills, basic business skills, problem-solving skills, personal traits, and creativity. Similarly, Inyang and Enuoh (2019) posited that entrepreneurial competencies include time management, marketing management, business ethics, leadership, decision-making, and financial management. Mitchelmore and Rowley (2019) merged them together into four clusters which consist of personal and relationship, business management, entrepreneurial, and human resources competencies.

The 21st century age which is mainly characterized by Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has brought about a new form of entrepreneurship known as digital entrepreneurship. Digital entrepreneurship is a business venture that involves the innovation and sales of novel technological gadgets and services to meet the technological needs of consumers and the society at large. The 21st century has also changed the way businesses are created and managed on a daily basis due to the advent of the internet and web-based technologies such as social media. Digital entrepreneurship is ICT-empowered, where the utilization of internet-powered web technologies brings both entrepreneurs and jet-age consumers together in the process of manufacturing and marketing products. Pall and McGrath (2019) asserted that marketers were previously focusing on promoting their products through traditional mediums like television, radio, and newspapers. However, the authors observed that today's marketers appear to be digital in their operations as technology has become an important part of the competitive business world of this today.

Digital Entrepreneurship helps meaningfully in economic settings and digital development performances as a component for invention to entrepreneurs. Digital technologies can help entrepreneurs make use of tactical techniques to market and improve their startups, especially in developing economies. Digital entrepreneurship complexly connects entrepreneurs across various platforms and provides them with several opportunities. According to Nobanee & Dilshad (2020), the emergence of this digital concept in enterprises has opened new doors for entrepreneurs to enter global markets with growth potential. Businesses and managers in developing economies and worldwide are supporting digital entrepreneurship as a probable clarification for creating employment opportunities. This inventive usage of the technology aids in changing industries that previously were in existence in the business and also, concurrently, simplifies the development of novel enterprises (Nobanee & Dilshad, 2020). Digital tools have added to reforming outdated business organizations, procedures, and approaches to function in internationally competitive marketing atmospheres. Digital Entrepreneurship is a key factor for economic growth and also for the reduction of unemployment (Siva and Vineela, 2018). In order to be a prosperous entrepreneur, it is important to comprehend all perceptions that are linked to entrepreneurship. In order to encounter the market rivalry and accomplish the business objective, each entrepreneur ought to be informed of the fluctuations that ensue in client's needs and inclinations in the market. It is essential to make use of specific contemporary digital technologies and software to connect with the clients and also to upsurge product assessment.

According to Braune & Dana (2021), digital technologies allow enormous reduction of transaction costs which helps developing economies in their GDPs. As a result, traditional social interactions that take place in the entrepreneurial ecosystem are interrupted and a new landscape emerges. Digital entrepreneurship plays a vibrant role in enabling an entrepreneur to accomplish all the accomplishments precisely and efficiently. As this is the procedure of expanding digital applications, this aids all entrepreneurs to upsurge the market significance for products and grow the business both locally and technically. Usman & Yusoff (2023) Highlight that the whole world is revolving towards digitalization in all facets of accomplishments including businesses, which disturbs the growth of countries to some extent. However, the current prosperity in technological growth and development has resulted in numerous prospects for entrepreneurs, thus making digital entrepreneurship becoming more interesting. Despite the challenges that hinder its implementation, it also provides a better avenue for the growth and development of many developing nations like Nigeria. Digital entrepreneurship must be considered a vital instrument towards progressive economic growth and improvement in some of the peculiarities in developing economies' digitization drive and its impact on these economies includes the Novel technologies of social media,

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Blockchain technology as variables that can develop the GDP of these countries in the coming years.

In Digital Entrepreneurship social media is an indispensable tool (Parveen et al, 2018). Businesses use the platform to discover and involve customers, determine sales over marketing and advancement, measure customer inclinations, and deal with customer service and support. Social media's capability to accumulate information aids businesses to fine-tune promotion campaigns and conduct market research. It aids companies endorse products and services as it empowers the delivery of directed, timely, and special sales and vouchers to probable customers. Additionally, social media can support customer interactions through loyalty programs associated with social media. Furthermore, according to (Jones et al 2015) social media applies the concept of targeted marketing and advertising; therefore, it creates maximum brand awareness among the target audience at less cost. It also diminishes operating costs and upsurges the profit edge of the business as well as impacting positively on business. Some of the impacts of social media in digital entrepreneurship can be Trademark Loyalty, Easy Communication, Increased Customer Power, inviting a larger Audience, Competition, Decreasing Marketing and Advertising Costs.

Interestingly, consumers are frequently turning to various social media to search for information to make purchasing decisions (Vollmer & Precourt, 2018). The meaning of the term social media can be derived from two words; social and media. Social implies the interaction of individuals within a group or community while media generally refers to advertising and communication of ideas or information through publications (Neti, 2021). According to Kietzmann and Hermkens (2021), social media depend on mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content. The authors further averred that social media help to introduce substantial and pervasive changes to communication between organizations, communities, and individuals.

The use of social media as a marketing communication tool allows companies to mingle with fellow professionals, conduct research, connect with the community, and get business opportunities (Smith & Taylor, 2019). Dahnil, Marzuki, Langgat, and Fabeil (2014) quipped that social media marketing can be seen as a new business practice that involves marketing brands, goods, services, information, and opinions using social media platforms. It is on this basis that the concept of social media marketing was conceived. Marketers can no longer rely on the one-sided traditional marketing channels alone to communicate and transact business with their clients.

Blackshaw and Nazzaro (2019) described social media marketing as consumer-generated media that involves a variety of new sources of online information that are created, initiated, circulated, and used by businesses on customers' intent by educating them about products, brands, services, personalities, and issues. According to Pan, Vorvoreanu, and Zhou in Al-Mommani, Al-Afifi, and Mohammad (2019), social media marketing benefits entrepreneurs in two major aspects; cost-efficient communication with customers and capitalization of conversations among customers through word-of-mouth. Firstly, the authors maintained that social media helps companies to educate audiences about their services, identify key influencers among customers, and respond to them promptly with less cost than traditional communication tools. Secondly, they posited that social media marketing capitalizes on word of mouth which enables public customer-to-customer conversations.

Social media marketing is a modern marketing tool that empowers business organizations to use social media platforms to bring their business activities closer to consumers in and out of the marketplace. The facilitation of flexible design, user-centered content, collaborative content creation, and the establishment of social networks are some of the factors that make social media marketing attractive to consumers, entrepreneurs, and business organizations (Mannonen & Runonen, 2018). Social Media marketing communication is regarded by many practitioners today as the new arena for market communication. According to Steltzner (2019), social media marketing channels include Facebook, Blogs, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn.

Social media marketing is a strategic method of influencing a company's products, building a brand, and maintaining brand loyalty among customers through interactive platforms with opportunities for getting feedback before and after the entrepreneur's products are offered in the marketplace. Without a doubt, social media offers entrepreneurs inexpensive ways to conduct persuasive and motivational marketing activities in the consciousness of consumers. As a result, business organizations and entrepreneurs with low capital are steering away from the traditional form to the internet-based, social media-driven methods of marketing communication (Taneja & Toombs, 2019).

According to Neti (2021), social media marketing helps in: i) Generating exposure to businesses; ii) Increasing traffic or subscribers; iii) Building new business partnerships; iv) Rising in search engine rankings; v) Generating

qualified leads due to better lead generation efforts; vi) Selling more products and services and vii) Reduction in overall marketing expenses.

Mangold and Faulds (2019) averred that social media marketing allows an entrepreneur to connect with both existing and potential customers, engage with them, and reinforce a sense of community about the goods and services he has to offer. In addition, Jagongo and Kinyua (2019) affirmed that social media can help an entrepreneur develop relationships with customers by providing more effective marketing, new communication and distribution channels, shorter time to market, customized products, 24-hour online technical support, and online interactive community. The real challenge lies in the ability of entrepreneurs to adopt social media as a marketing tool to identify, capture, and engage consumers for their products. It is imperative to maintain that the extent to which entrepreneurs possess relevant competencies will determine whether they can effectively adopt social media marketing or not. It is based on the above background that this study is put in place to determine how well entrepreneurs in Benue State can adopt social media marketing for their products and services.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Undoubtedly, social media is one of the fastest-growing virtual environments connecting thousands of millions of business-minded individuals worldwide. A lot of people are using social media marketing for different reasons in many fields, such as education, business, politics, medicine, and engineering as well as journalism and so on. Social media communication platforms are less expensive, easily accessible, and utilized by a variety of potential consumers. Literature abounds on the benefits of social media marketing to entrepreneurship but it depends on the competencies possessed by entrepreneurs for social media marketing. It appears that entrepreneurs in Benue state are not utilizing social media as a marketing communication tool due to their preferences for traditional media as observed by the researchers. The problem of this study, therefore, is that the level of competencies possessed by entrepreneurs in Benue state for social media marketing is not known and requires an empirical study such as this.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Specifically, the main purpose of this study is to assess the level of competence possessed by entrepreneurs for social media marketing in the Makurdi metropolis.

1.4 Research Question

The following research question guided the study: "How competent are practicing entrepreneurs in Makurdi metropolis for the utilization of social media marketing communication?"

2. Method

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. According to Esene (2019), the descriptive survey is appropriate, especially for studies seeking individuals' opinions, attitudes, and perceptions in their natural setting. The population of the study comprised 201 entrepreneurs purposively selected from in Makurdi metropolis because this group of individuals can provide deeper insight or experience into the complex issue under review and majorly found online. This purposive sampling technique has a high potential for researcher bias due to subjective participant selection, limited generalization of findings as the findings may not represent the wider population, difficulty in replicating results, and higher risk of skewed data. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Competencies Possessed by Entrepreneurs for Social Media Marketing Questionnaire (CPESMCQ)". The questionnaire contained 22 items on a 5-point rating scale of very competent, competent, fairly competent, incompetent, and very incompetent. Content and face validity of the instrument were established with the opinion of two experts in Business Management and one expert in the Computer Science Department all in 2 different institutions. A pilot study was conducted to establish the reliability of the instrument whereby it was administered to 16 practicing entrepreneurs in Nasarawa State who were not part of the population and a reliability co-efficient of 0.89 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha. Cronbach's alpha provides a reliable indication of whether the items are consistently measuring the same concept across respondents. A higher Cronbach's alpha value signifies greater internal consistency with generally accepted good values ranging from 0.70 to 0.90 depending on the field and study. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research question and determine the closeness of the respondents to the mean. The decision was based on the real limits of numbers on a 5-point scale.

3. Results

3.1 Research Question 1

How competent are practicing entrepreneurs in Makurdi metropolis for the utilization of social media marketing communication?

Table 1: Respondents mean ratings on their level of competencies possessed for social media marketing (N = 201)

S/N	Social media marketing competencies	X	SD	Remarks
1	Ability to identify consumers of your product on social media	1.56	0.93	Incompetent
2	Ability to satisfy consumers' numerous needs on social media	1.74	0.92	Incompetent
3	Ability to maintain consumer satisfaction on social media	1.64	0.85	Incompetent
4	Ability to attract consumers closely to your products online	1.60	0.92	Incompetent
5	Ability to develop attractive product content on social media	1.87	0.85	Incompetent
6	Ability to measure results of social media marketing	2.02	0.93	Incompetent
7	Ability to launch new products to consumers on social media	1.74	0.86	Incompetent
8	Ability to build brand loyalty with consumers on social media	1.94	0.87	Incompetent
9	Ability to compete with rival entrepreneurs on social media	1.63	0.90	Incompetent
10	Ability to effectively interact with consumers on social media	2.32	0.89	Incompetent
11	Ability to use feedback to market new products on social media	2.25	0.91	Incompetent
12	Ability to effectively negotiate with consumers on social media	1.77	0.96	Incompetent
13	Ability to offer pre-sales services to consumers on social media	2.14	0.85	Incompetent
14	Ability to offer post-sales services to consumers on social media	2.37	0.88	Incompetent
15	Ability to use language skills with consumers on social media	1.78	0.94	Incompetent
16	Ability to manage different social behaviors of consumers online	1.58	0.87	incompetent
17	Ability to capture consumers away from social media distractions	1.83	0.91	incompetent
18	Ability to conduct market research on social media	1.88	0.90	incompetent
19	Ability to handle criticisms of customers on social media	1.85	0.87	incompetent
20	Ability to collaborate with consumers on community development projects on social media	1.54	0.89	incompetent
21	Ability to build online business trust for customer retention	2.05	0.93	incompetent
22	Ability to generate sales revenue on social media	2.18	0.95	incompetent
Grand mean		1.89		incompetent

Source: Researcher's Computation, 2024

Table 1 indicates that all 22 items have mean ratings ranging from 1.54 to 2.37. This indicates that entrepreneurs in Benue State are incompetent in social media marketing. The reasons entrepreneurs are incompetent and don't embrace social media marketing is because they don't know which platform will suite their business. Not all social media is created equal, which means, not every platform is going to work for their business. They face challenges such as defining their goals as they need a sense of direction and a clear vision of where they want to go and what they want to achieve from social media. What do they want their audience to take away from connecting with them? Who is their target market? Is their target market small to medium-sized companies, or large companies, do they sell to B2B (Business to Business) or B2C (Business to Consumer), how much money do they bring in, are they male or female, do they service a certain age group, location, etc., where is their audience? They need to do proper homework first before they assume their audience is on all of the major social media platforms, what platforms are your competitors using? Make a list of your local competitors and see what platforms they're on, what they're doing, and what's working for them. They don't know what to jot down what they like because that's something they can work into their social media strategy. They do not look at other companies outside of their region and look at what they're doing, what type of content are they going to share? Nor make a list of ideas. Another reason business owners don't embrace social media is because they don't know how to set them up. Their profiles should be 100% complete that way potential customers will know they are serious about their business. The standard deviations for all the items are within the same range which shows that the respondents were homogeneous in their opinions.

3.2 Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis between independent variables (entrepreneurship components) and dependent variables (social media marketing competencies) was carried out. Correlation analysis helps to find out, if a relationship between variables exists and how strong it is. The Pearson correlation coefficient was used as the data is normally distributed. A correlation of 0.30 is regarded as mention worth (Cohen, 2019). High correlation coefficients illustrate a higher level of association between the influences. According to Cohen (2019), the value of Pearson's correlation is divided into three areas. A correlation coefficient between 0.10 and 0.29 indicates a small correlation, a correlation coefficient between 0.30 and 0.49 indicates a medium correlation and a correlation coefficient between 0.50 and 1.0 indicates a large correlation.

Table 2: Correlation of Study Variables

S/N	Variable	M	SD				
1	SMMC	31.47	7.37	-			
2	AICPSM	16.37	3.20	.776**	-		
3	ASCNNSM	15.76	3.63	.796**	.766**	-	
4	AMCSSM	16.28	3.74	.785**	.765**	.775**	-

The results in Table 2 provide the descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviations) as well as the zero-order correlation between variables of the study, displaying the significant relationships that exist among them. The descriptive statistics and zero-order correlation begin with the scores of the dependent variable, social media marketing competencies (SMMC). This is followed by the scores of predictor entrepreneurship variables, namely; the ability to identify consumers of your product on social media (AICPSM), the ability to satisfy consumers' numerous needs on social media (ASCNNSM), and the ability to maintain consumer satisfaction on social media (AMCSSM).

Results in Table 2 also show that the overall scores for AICPSM positively correlated significantly with SMMC scores ($r_{(175)} = 0.776$; $P < 0.001$). Similarly, the scores of ASCNNSM ($r_{(175)} = 0.796$; $P < 0.001$), and AMCSSM ($r_{(175)} = 0.785$; $P < 0.001$) also positively and significantly correlated with SMMC scores. Furthermore, all the predictor scores positively correlated highly with those of social media marketing competencies scores.

4. Discussion

The results in Table 1 supported by Table 2 revealed that the entrepreneurs are incompetent in social media marketing in the Makurdi metropolis. This finding corresponds with the discovery of Leghara and Mbah (2019) which reported that entrepreneurship students in vocational education lack competencies in social media marketing. However, Aminu (2019) asserted that every successful entrepreneur should be able to identify their customers' needs and advertise products or services to customers for maximum patronage in any form. In agreement, Nnaji (2019) posited that technological innovations have considerably altered the nature, content, and environment of the business world. According to Nobanee & Dilshad (2020), the emergence of this digital concept in enterprises has opened new doors for entrepreneurs to enter global markets with growth potential. Businesses and managers in developing economies and worldwide are supporting digital entrepreneurship as a probable clarification for creating employment opportunities. The examples cited above are some of the results that align with global trends in digital entrepreneurship for advancing sales and performances. This development demands that entrepreneurs make efforts to acquire and utilize social media marketing communication competencies to reach a greater number of customers and satisfy them for their business growth and success. These findings corroborate the findings of Mannonen & Runonen (2018), Steltzner (2019), Taneja & Toombs (2019), Neti (2021), and Mangold and Faulds (2019) which found that entrepreneurship has a positive influence on social media marketing competencies in Makurdi Metropolis.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The quantum leap in the popularity and acceptance of social media has transformed businesses, penetrated many households, and altered the ways customers seek information in the marketplace. However, the lack of social media marketing competencies by entrepreneurs in the Makurdi metropolis will negatively affect their brand

awareness and loyalty in the marketplace. Given the findings of this study, it was concluded that if entrepreneurs can utilize social media marketing competencies, they will record greater success in their businesses by boosting brand awareness and customer loyalty which will lead to higher sales turnover. These findings corroborate the findings of Mannonen & Runonen (2018), Steltzner (2019), Taneja & Toombs (2019), Neti (2021), and Mangold and Faulds (2019) which found that entrepreneurship has a positive influence on social media marketing competencies in Makurdi Metropolis. This research can be extended to other areas such as exploring competencies in other regions or industries as well as using other variables.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made;

- i. Government should conduct seminars, workshops, and conferences for entrepreneurs in the state on the need to adopt social media marketing communication competencies in their business operations.
- ii. Policymakers, educational institutions, and non-governmental organizations can play a very significant role in improving social media marketing competencies among entrepreneurs by making good policies for citizens, knowledge for free programs and contributions as to the development of digital marketing.
- iii. Successful digital entrepreneurs should provide mentorship to beginning and prospective entrepreneurs to equip them with the competencies needed for successful social media marketing communication.
- iv. Entrepreneurs should undergo comprehensive training to acquire the needed competencies with which to utilize social media communication as an avenue for marketing their products to users of social media platforms.

Declarations

Ethical Approval and Consent to Participate:

Verbal and written informed consent were obtained from all participants before data collection. The study was done transparently.

Consent for Publication:

All authors consent to the publication of this manuscript and confirm that the work is original, has not been published elsewhere, and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere.

Competing Interests:

The authors declare no competing interests related to this study.

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Data Availability:

The datasets generated and analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Authors' Contributions:

Write each author's contribution. See the example below.

Ihembe Sunday: Conceptualization, methodology, and manuscript drafting.

Igbadio, A: Data collection, and analysis.

Ankeli M.O: Literature review and critical manuscript revision.

Wajir, T: Manuscript review before submission

All authors read and approved the final manuscript

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