Effect of Social Media Usage on the Performance of Micro and Small-Scale Enterprises in Lagos State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Social media has rapidly transformed how micro and small enterprises (MSEs) engage customers and access markets, yet many MSEs in Lagos State continue to struggle with leveraging these platforms effectively for business growth. This study therefore examined the effect of social media usage on the performance of MSEs in Lagos State, Nigeria, responding to the need for empirical clarity on how different platform types shape revenue growth. The objective was to assess the combined effect of social media, involving visual-centric, professional networking, real-time engagement, and community-driven platforms on MSE performance, particularly revenue growth among MSEs in the area. A descriptive survey design was adopted, and data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered to 781 respondents drawn from a population of 3,337,198 MSE owners using Taro Yamane's formula, with reliability established through pilot testing and Cronbach's alpha values above acceptable thresholds. Multiple regression analysis showed that all four platform dimensions significantly enhanced revenue growth, with visual-centric platforms (1.921) exerting the strongest effect, followed by professional networking (1.835), real-time engagement (1.817), and community-driven (1.763) platforms. The study concluded that social media is a critical performance-enhancing tool for MSEs, supporting revenue expansion and customer engagement across Lagos State. It recommended strategic investment in visual content creation, deeper participation in professional and community networks, and increased use of real-time platforms to strengthen responsiveness.

Keywords: MSEs, professional networking, revenue growth, social media, visual-centric

INTRODUCTION

The fast growth of social media has clearly changed how businesses, especially micro and small-scale enterprises (MSEs), communicate and market their products. With continuous advances in digital technology, social media plays a key role in boosting business visibility, engaging customers, and reaching wider markets. It provides cheaper options compared to traditional marketing methods. Alalwan (2020) and Dwivedi et al. (2021) noted that platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, and WhatsApp among others help businesses interact with customers instantly, build brand awareness, and improve sales. Appel et al. (2020) added that social media allows businesses to collect feedback, tailor their messages, and grow lasting customer relationships, which helps retain customers and improve business performance. Kapoor et al. (2022) also stated that using social media helps small businesses become more innovative, flexible, and competitive in the digital age. However, how well businesses use social media still depends on their digital skills, strategic focus, and available resources.

In developed countries, social media plays a key role in helping MSEs grow and perform better. It offers low-cost marketing, wider customer access, and better communication. Papadopoulos et al. (2020) and Ibidunni et al. (2021) explained that social media helps MSEs overcome common barriers like lack of funding, limited support services, and strict regulations. Durkin et al. (2020) also noted that social media increases online visibility and draws investor attention, making it easier for businesses to get finance and market data. Dwivedi et al. (2021) found that digital tools improve access to support networks and help businesses follow government rules through clearer information sharing. Sharma et al. (2022) confirmed that when used wisely, social media boosts efficiency and competitiveness, even in markets with heavy regulations, by closing gaps in support and funding.

In many African countries, social media is playing a big role in how MSEs work and grow. It opens up new ways to market products, connect with customers, and drive innovation. In Egypt, El-Kasheir et al. (2021) found that Facebook and Instagram help businesses gain visibility and boost online sales, especially in areas where formal financial services are limited. In Morocco, Bouzidi et al. (2022) noted that small firms use social media to reach customers quickly and follow market trends, despite weak institutional support. In Algeria, Bennani and Belalia (2023) showed that social media helps businesses avoid delays from government rules and build informal networks that improve productivity and knowledge sharing. These findings showed that social media supports MSE performance by improving communication, cutting costs, and increasing access to useful business information.

According to Appel et al. (2020) and Dwivedi et al. (2021), social media has changed how MSEs operate. It gives them affordable ways to market, connect with customers, and share information. In Kenya, Onyango et al. (2021) found that MSEs use WhatsApp and Facebook to reach more customers and lower advertising costs. In Ghana, Asare et al. (2022) reported that digital engagement helped boost sales and keep customers. Across Nigeria, and Lagos State in particular, Odoom and Kosiba (2020) noted that more access to smartphones and internet has increased the use of social media to solve problems like poor access to funding, weak support systems, and tough government rules. The significance of this study lies in its contribution to understanding how social media tools shape MSEs' performance amid resource constraints and policy gaps in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study is scoped to evaluate the link between social media use and business performance among MSEs in Lagos State, Nigeria, and guide stakeholders on how to improve digital access.

Globally, social media has changed how MSEs handle marketing, engage customers, and improve performance. Appel et al. (2020) and Durkin et al. (2020) showed that it boosts visibility and builds stronger customer relationships. In African countries, El-Kasheir et al. (2021) and Bouzidi et al. (2022) found that it helps businesses grow by cutting marketing costs and improving communication. In Lagos State, Omotayo and Adebayo (2021), Mhlanga (2020), and Boateng and Okoe (2022) confirmed that social media helps MSEs deal with problems like limited funding, weak business support, and strict government rules. However, many previous studies focused on single platforms or one dimension of social media, without looking at the combined effect of different dimensions like visual-centric, professional networking, real-time engagement, and community-driven platforms. This gap justifies the present study, which seeks to examine the combined effect of social media usage on the performance of MSEs in Lagos State's unique business environment.

The main objective of this study is to examine the effect of social media usage on the performance of micro and small-scale enterprises in Lagos State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

i) assess the effect of visual-centric platforms on MSEs' performance in Lagos State, Nigeria;

ii) examine the effect of professional networking platforms on MSEs' performance in Lagos State, Nigeria;

iii) investigate the effect of real-time engagement platforms on MSEs' performance in Lagos State, Nigeria; and

iv) analyse the effect of community-driven platforms on MSEs' performance in Lagos State, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Media

Social media has transformed how businesses interact with customers, share information, and promote their products. It offers real-time communication, wide reach, and low-cost marketing, making it valuable for MSEs.

Appel et al. (2020) opined that social media is the online platforms that allow users to create, share, and exchange content within virtual communities. According to Kapoor et al. (2022), social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp support business activities by enabling engagement, brand promotion, and customer feedback. These platforms help MSEs build brand identity, access broader markets, and improve customer relationships without heavy financial investments. The interactive nature of social media also allows businesses to monitor customer preferences and adjust their strategies accordingly. For MSEs with limited resources, social media improves visibility, encourages innovation, and supports performance by reducing marketing costs and enhancing communication with customers. Consequently, this study concentrated on four specific dimensions of social media which include visual-centric platforms, professional networking platforms, real-time engagement platforms, community-driven platforms. The next paragraphs contain the conceptual review of these four dimensions of social media.

Visual-Centric Platforms

Visual-focused platforms play a major role in how MSEs communicate and market their products. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube use images and videos to boost customer engagement and brand awareness. Appel et al. (2020) defined visual-centric platforms as digital tools that let users share and create content instantly. Dwivedi et al. (2021) described it as a flexible platform that allows direct interaction and user-driven content, which is vital for today’s businesses. Sharma et al. (2022) observed that these visual platforms help MSEs market at low cost, show how products work, and catch customers’ attention better than text-only platforms. These features help businesses grow by expanding their reach, raising sales, and building strong customer ties. The engaging nature of visual content also helps small firms stand out and respond fast to market changes.

Professional Networking Platforms

The rise of digital tools has changed how businesses connect, share ideas, and build relationships. Professional networking platforms, a type of social media, have become key tools for MSEs to grow their networks and enter new markets. Appel et al. (2020) described these platforms as online apps where users create, share, and exchange ideas in virtual communities. Platforms like LinkedIn and X (formerly Twitter), as noted by Sharma et al. (2022), help MSEs connect with experts, follow industry trends, and attract investors or partners. These networks also boost credibility, visibility, and access to mentorship, all of which improve business performance. Dwivedi et al. (2021) confirmed that using these platforms strategically helps businesses grow by strengthening customer ties, spreading knowledge, and opening access to key resources.

Real-Time Engagement Platforms

The digital age has changed how businesses connect with customers, with real-time engagement platforms now playing a major role for MSEs. These platforms support instant communication, quick feedback, and fast customer service. Appel et al. (2020) defined them as digital tools that let users share and exchange content in online communities. Examples include WhatsApp, X (formerly Twitter), and Facebook Messenger. These tools allow live conversations, helping MSEs stay connected with customers and respond fast to market needs. Boateng and Okoe (2022) found that real-time engagement increases customer satisfaction, builds loyalty, and boosts sales. MSEs also benefit from quicker information sharing, better crisis response, and stronger brand trust. As a result, real-time platforms are vital for improving business performance, especially in fast-paced and competitive markets.

Community-Driven Platforms

Community-driven platforms have become a key part of digital interaction, letting users create, share, and exchange ideas, experiences, and resources (Appel et al., 2020). These platforms rely on user content and peer engagement, forming strong social media communities. Appel et al. (2020) described them as online spaces where users actively post content, join discussions, and shape the platform based on common interests. Platforms like Facebook Groups and Reddit help MSEs build brand loyalty, get quick customer feedback, and earn trust. Dwivedi et al. (2021) found that these platforms support informal marketing, direct customer service, and product innovation by allowing direct talks with target audiences. Regular activity on community-driven platforms helps MSEs grow their audience, keep customers, and react fast to changing needs and boosting overall business performance.

Micro, and Small Enterprises

Micro and small enterprises drive economic growth, promote innovation, and create jobs across the world. Yet countries do not use one common definition for these businesses. In developed countries like the United States, micro enterprises are classified as having fewer than 10 employees, while small ones have under 50 workers (OECD, 2021). The European Union uses similar staff limits but also adds annual turnover and balance-sheet size as criteria (European Commission, 2020). African countries use different measures. In Kenya, micro businesses are defined as having fewer than 10 workers, and small businesses employ between 10 and 49 people (KNBS, 2021). Ghana considers both the number of employees and the value of a firm's assets (Boame & Tutu, 2021). In Nigeria, the Central Bank and SMEDAN classify micro businesses as those with fewer than 10 workers and assets below ₦5 million. They define small businesses as those with 10–49 employees and assets between ₦5 million and ₦50 million (SMEDAN, 2022). This study uses SMEDAN's definitions to assess how social media usage affects the performance of SMEs in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Performance of MSEs

The performance of MSEs is central to economic growth, especially in developing countries where they form a large part of the private sector. MSE performance is defined by different disciplines using varied indicators. For instance, in accounting, Atristain-Solis and Rajagopal (2021) linked it to financial results like profit and revenue growth. In business, Sharma et al. (2022) saw it as customer retention, innovation, and market share. Economists measure it by how well a firm uses resources and adds to GDP (World Bank, 2020). The IMF and African Development Bank focus on productivity, job creation, and revenue growth (AfDB, 2021). For this study, revenue growth is adopted as a performance metric. Dwivedi et al. (2021) described revenue growth as the rise in sales income driven by better customer engagement, digital marketing, and improved online visibility through social media platforms.

Theoretical Review

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), developed by Davis (1986), explains how people accept and use technology based on how useful and easy it seems to them. Venkatesh and Bala (2008) later expanded the model to include factors like social influence and available support. Dwivedi et al. (2021) noted that TAM assumes a person's intention to use technology, shaped by their attitude, predicts actual usage and benefits. Some critics say the model ignores cultural, organisational, and situational factors. Still, Sharma et al. (2022) highlighted TAM's strength in being simple, flexible, and reliable across digital platforms, including social media. This study uses TAM to show how MSE owners accept social media tools based on their perceived value and ease of use. It helps examine how social media acceptance affects business performance like customer reach and revenue growth.

Empirical Review

Ndegwa and Wambugu (2022) explored the influence of social media marketing on the performance of micro-enterprises in Nairobi, Kenya. A cross-sectional survey design was used. Data were collected from 300 micro-entrepreneurs using semi-structured questionnaires. Stratified random sampling was employed to select 150 participants. Data were analysed using correlation and regression methods. Results showed that frequent social media use enhanced customer reach and contributed to improved revenue and brand recognition. Similarly, Okolo and Edeh (2022) examined the effect of visual-centric platforms on the performance of micro and small-scale enterprises in urban markets in Eastern Nigeria. The study employed a descriptive survey design to explore how platforms like Instagram and TikTok influence sales and customer engagement. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data from a population of 500 registered MSE operators in Enugu and Aba. A sample of

220 respondents was selected through purposive sampling, targeting enterprises that actively use visual-based platforms. The researchers analysed the data using multiple regression techniques. Findings revealed that regular posting of visual content, such as product videos and photos, significantly enhanced business visibility, customer interest, and revenue growth.

Banda and Chiumia (2022) investigated the effect of community-driven platforms on the performance of micro and small-scale enterprises (MSEs) in Lilongwe, Malawi. The study adopted a descriptive survey design to assess how peer-driven digital interactions influenced business growth. Data were collected using structured questionnaires from a population of 500 registered MSEs. A sample size of 220 respondents was selected using purposive sampling, focusing on businesses active on Facebook Groups and WhatsApp Communities. The researchers employed multiple regression analysis to evaluate the data. Findings revealed that active participation in community-driven platforms significantly improved customer engagement, knowledge sharing, and sales performance.

Muriithi and Wanjohi (2022) examined the effect of real-time engagement platforms on the performance of micro and small enterprises in Nairobi County, Kenya. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. Data were collected using structured questionnaires administered to owners and managers of small businesses. The study population comprised 500 registered MSEs, from which 220 participants were selected through simple random sampling. The data collected were analysed using multiple regression analysis. Findings revealed that real-time engagement through platforms such as WhatsApp and Twitter significantly improved customer satisfaction, sales volume, and brand visibility.

Akanbi and Ogundele (2021) investigated the effect of social media usage on the performance of small-scale businesses in Ibadan Metropolis, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Data were collected using structured questionnaires administered to a population of 500 registered small-scale business owners. A sample of 220 respondents was selected using purposive sampling. The data were analysed using multiple regression analysis. Findings revealed that social media tools such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram significantly influenced business visibility, customer engagement, and sales growth.

Okanga and Nzewi (2021) investigated the impact of professional networking platforms on small business performance in Johannesburg, South Africa. A quantitative descriptive survey design was adopted. Data were collected using structured questionnaires administered to 300 small business owners registered with local business chambers. Using stratified random sampling, 150 respondents were selected as the sample size. The researchers employed multiple regression analysis to evaluate the relationship between professional networking platform usage and business performance indicators. Findings revealed that active engagement on platforms like LinkedIn significantly improved access to market information, business partnerships, and customer acquisition, which in turn enhanced revenue growth and firm visibility.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative approach using a descriptive survey research design to investigate how social media usage affected the performance of micro and small enterprises (MSEs) in Lagos State, Nigeria. Lagos State, the nation's commercial centre, was selected because it hosted a large concentration of MSEs operating across multiple industries and played a pivotal role in the country's economic activities. The investigation spanned all 20 Local Government Areas (LGAs) of the state. The population for the study consisted of 3,329,156 micro-enterprise owners and 8,042 small-enterprise owners, amounting to 3,337,198 MSE operators engaged in sectors such as agribusiness, retail, and various service-based activities, all of whom provided paid employment to others (NBS, 2017). The sample size was derived using Taro Yamane's formula, which produced 400 micro-enterprise owners and 381 small-enterprise owners, giving a total of 781 respondents.

Data were obtained through a structured questionnaire. To ensure the validity of the instrument, specialists reviewed its content, after which a test–retest pilot exercise involving 97 MSE owners outside the sampled LGAs was carried out over a two-week interval. Insights from this procedure led to revisions that improved clarity and enhanced the relevance of the questionnaire items. Reliability of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, and acceptable coefficients were recorded for the major constructs: visual-centric platforms ($\alpha = 0.768$),

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professional networking platforms (α = 0.758), real-time engagement platforms (α = 0.762), community-driven platforms (α = 0.750), and revenue growth (α = 0.726). The collected data were analysed using multiple regression analysis to determine how social media usage affected MSE performance. All statistical procedures were executed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 25.

Model Specification

In simple mathematical form, the model is written as follows:

Where: P= Performance (revenue growth), X_{1i}= visual-centric platforms, X_{2i}= professional networking platforms, X_{3i}= real-time engagement platforms, X_{4i}= community-driven platforms, β_0 = Intercept, β_1 - β_3= Regression Coefficient, μ= Stochastic error term.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Testing of Hypothesis

All 781 questionnaires distributed to MSE owners in Lagos State, Nigeria were completely filled out and handed back, giving a 100% response rate. This full participation was achieved because trained research assistants supported the participants to ensure their answers were clear and thorough.

Table 1: Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0.822[a]	0.676	0.675	1.6313	1.792

a. Predictors: (Constant), visual-centric platforms, professional networking platforms, real-time engagement platforms, and community-driven platforms

b. Dependent Variable: revenue growth

Source: Field survey, 2025

From Table 1, the regression model indicated that social media usage demonstrated a strong positive association with the revenue growth of MSEs in Lagos State, as shown by the correlation coefficient (R = 0.822). The R^2 value of 0.676 revealed that 67.6% of the changes in MSE revenue growth were accounted for by social media usage. The Adjusted R^2 of 0.675 further confirmed the model's explanatory strength after adjusting for predictors. The Durbin–Watson value of 1.792 suggested that the residuals exhibited minimal autocorrelation, thereby supporting the statistical soundness of the model.

Table 2: ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	168.746	4	72.325	524.326	.000[b]
	Residual	.728	776	.317		
	Total	169.474	780			

a. Dependent Variable: revenue growth

b. Predictors: (Constant), visual-centric platforms, professional networking, real-time engagement platforms, and community-driven platforms

Source: Field survey, 2025

From Table 2, the ANOVA results showed that the regression model testing the effect of social media usage on the performance of MSEs in Lagos State was statistically significant ($F = 524.326$, $p < 0.001$). The regression sum of squares (168.746) captured nearly all the explained variation in MSE revenue growth, while the residual sum of squares (0.728) indicated very limited unexplained variance. With 4 degrees of freedom for regression and 776 for residuals, the high F-value confirmed that the model possessed strong explanatory capacity in predicting MSE revenue growth.

Table 3: Results of the multiple regression analysis showing the effect of social media usage on the performance of MSEs in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	24.106	1.318		42.825	.000
	visual-centric platforms	1.921	0.851	0.837	1.652	.000
	professional networking platforms	1.835	0.816	0.793	1.628	.000
	real-time engagement platforms	1.817	0.763	0.714	1.546	.000
	community-driven platforms	1.763	0.657	0.692	.894	.000

a. Dependent Variable: revenue growth

From Table 3, the regression results indicated that social media usage significantly predicted the performance of MSEs in Lagos State. The coefficients showed that visual-centric platforms ($B = 1.921$, $p < 0.001$) had the strongest effect, followed by professional networking platforms ($B = 1.835$, $p < 0.001$), real-time engagement platforms ($B = 1.817$, $p < 0.001$), and community-driven platforms ($B = 1.763$, $p < 0.001$). Their corresponding beta values ($\beta = 0.837$, 0.793, 0.714, and 0.692) further confirmed their relative contributions to performance. The constant term ($B = 24.106$, $p < 0.001$) was also significant, indicating baseline performance independent of the predictors.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study provide strong empirical insight into how social media usage affects the performance of Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) in Lagos State, Nigeria. The regression results demonstrate that social media platforms, particularly visual-centric and professional networking channels, exert significant positive effect on enterprise performance. This finding reinforces the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which asserts that users adopt technologies, such as social media, when they perceive them as useful and easy to integrate into their operational processes. The substantial unstandardised coefficients recorded in the model indicate that social media tools are not merely supplementary communication channels, but core performance-enhancing resources for MSEs. These findings strongly align with Ndegwa and Wambugu (2022), who established that frequent social media use enhances customer reach, strengthens brand recognition, and boosts revenue, thereby supporting the overall objective of this study.

Regarding the first specific objective, the effect of visual-centric platforms on MSE performance was positive and significant ($B = 1.921$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that platforms dominated by images and videos substantially contribute to business visibility and customer engagement in Lagos. This result supports the findings of Okolo and Edeh (2022), who demonstrated that consistent posting of visual content, such as product photos, promotional videos, and branded graphics, enhances customer interest, widens market reach, and increases revenue growth. When interpreted through the TAM framework, the ease with which entrepreneurs can create and share visual content appears to increase their perceived usefulness of these platforms, stimulating adoption and thereby improving performance.

For the second specific objective, professional networking platforms also exhibited a strong positive effect on MSE performance ($B = 1.835$, $p < 0.001$). This underscores the value of networks that facilitate business-to-business interactions, knowledge exchange, and market intelligence. The result corroborates Okanga and Nzewi (2021), who observed that active participation on platforms such as LinkedIn enhances access to market information, customer acquisition, and strategic partnerships, ultimately improving revenue outcomes. TAM further explains this by suggesting that entrepreneurs adopt these platforms because they perceive them as useful for expanding business networks and improving decision-making.

Concerning the third objective, real-time engagement platforms ($B = 1.817$, $p < 0.001$) significantly predict revenue growth. This reflects the value of instant communication and rapid customer feedback loops. The result is supported by Muriithi and Wanjohi (2022), who reported that platforms enabling real-time interactions, such as WhatsApp and Twitter, enhance customer satisfaction, sales volume, and brand visibility. This demonstrates high perceived usefulness, consistent with TAM's adoption framework.

Finally, the fourth objective on community-driven platforms ($B = 1.763$, $p < 0.001$) reveals their significant contribution to knowledge exchange, customer engagement, and sales growth. Banda and Chiumia (2022) similarly observed that participation in community-oriented digital groups strengthens customer loyalty and improves business performance. This finding reinforces TAM by showing that interactive community environments motivate sustained platform adoption among MSEs. Collectively, these findings affirm that social media constitutes a valuable technological resource capable of driving revenue growth among MSEs in Lagos State.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the conclusion is that social media usage significantly enhances the performance of MSEs in Lagos State, as confirmed by the strong explanatory power of the model and the significance of all four dimensions examined. The study concludes that visual-centric platforms exert the strongest positive effect on revenue growth, demonstrating that visually engaging content drives customer attention and business visibility in a highly competitive market. Professional networking platforms also significantly improve performance by expanding access to market intelligence, partnerships, and customer acquisition opportunities. Real-time engagement platforms further strengthen enterprise performance by supporting instant communication, quick customer feedback, and improved brand responsiveness, while community-driven platforms enhance customer loyalty, knowledge exchange, and sales through interactive digital communities. Collectively, these findings affirm that all four dimensions of social media use meaningfully contribute to MSE performance within the TAM framework, as owners adopt platforms they perceive as useful and easy to apply in business operations.

Based on these conclusions, the study recommends that MSE owners in Lagos State should invest more strategically in visual-centric content creation to maximise business visibility; deepen their presence on professional networking platforms to gain market insights; expand the use of real-time engagement tools to strengthen customer service; and participate actively in community-driven platforms to build stronger customer relationships. Policymakers and business-support agencies should provide training programmes that enhance digital literacy and encourage effective adoption of these four platform types to sustain MSE revenue growth in Lagos State.

Policy Implications and Limitations

The findings of this study carry important policy implications for strengthening the digital capacity and competitiveness of MSEs in Lagos State, given that social media usage significantly explains variations in revenue growth. Policymakers should prioritise programmes that enhance digital literacy, subsidise access to high-speed internet, and provide training on the effective use of visual-centric, professional networking, real-time engagement, and community-driven platforms to enable MSEs maximise their performance outcomes. Support agencies should also integrate social-media-based marketing modules into government-led entrepreneurship initiatives to expand market access for small firms. However, the study's cross-sectional design limits its ability to capture long-term behavioural changes in social media adoption among MSEs. Future research should therefore employ longitudinal or mixed-method approaches to better understand evolving digital practices and their sustained effects on enterprise performance.

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