

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON THE PERFORMANCE OF ONLINE
BASED SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA

BY

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A Research Project Proposal Submitted In Partial Fulfillment Of The Requirement Of The Award
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DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been presented to any other university or institution for any award



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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my mother, Lucy Waithera Oywaya for constantly pushing me and believing in my ability to complete my Masters.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The Buffer website defines social media marketing as the use of social media platforms to connect with your audience to build your brand, increase sales and drive website traffic. This involves publishing great content on your social media profile, listening to and engaging your followers, analyzing your results and running social media advertisements. Major social media platforms ranked according to their monthly active users (MUA) include; Facebook with 2.23billion, YouTube with 1.9 billion MUA, Whatsapp with 1.5 billion, Instagram with 1 billion, Twitter with 335 million, LinkedIn with 294 million, Snapchat with 255 million and Pinterest with 250 million.

Amber King, writing for Yahoo Small Business, highlights the significance of the dot-com bubble from 1992 to 2002 in transforming the internet into a viable marketing tool. It marked the beginning of search marketing, prompting brands to establish an online presence by websites. As search engines like Yahoo and Google continued to evolve, companies increasingly adopted SEO strategies to maintain their top positions in search results. The rise of blogs further underscored the potential of content marketing, which marketing experts soon recognized.

Between 2003 and 2004, social media platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and MySpace played a pivotal role in transitioning internet marketing from multiplayer online games to social networking sites. Eventually, there was a positive effect of social media on ecommerce and businesses started creating their own profiles on networking sites. Nowadays, 90 percent of marketing executives utilize social media as part of their marketing strategies and successful businesses utilize social media marketing for branding, lead generation, customer retention and e-commerce.

As per the "State of the Internet in Kenya 2017" annual report, which is published by the Bloggers Association of Kenya (BAKE), the following statistics were reported: there are 12 million Kenyans on WhatsApp, 7.1 million on Facebook, 8 million on YouTube, 4 million on Instagram, 1 million on Twitter, 1 million on LinkedIn, and 0.25 million on Snapchat. According to government data by the Communication Authority, broadband penetration grew to 43 percent in March 2018 up from 40 percent at the end of 2017. The regulator also reported nearly 43 million mobile phone subscriptions for a penetration rate of 95.1 percent as of March 2018 up from 88.2 percent the previous year.

Internet speeds in Kenya have made great strides, according to a report by the Worldwide Broadband Speed League and Kenya has the second fastest internet in Africa, following Madagascar and is ranked 64th globally with average speeds of 10.1 Mbps. Social networks constitute one of the most rapidly expanding industries globally, and the prevalence of social media in Nairobi has soared. Virtually every individual or organization in the city now maintains some type of social media presence. Kenyan news channels have likewise embraced the use of social media as a means to involve the public and gather their opinions on significant national matters, such as during general elections. We have also seen the power of social media during the terror attack at Dusit D2 Hotel as social media platforms were used to call attention to the attack happening at 14 Riverside Drive, prompting Kenyan police to respond faster as compared to the Westgate Attack of September 2013.

Twitter has also become very popular especially when it comes to discussing political matters and in recent years we have seen the hashtag Kenyans on Twitter become very popular. A recent example is when the New York Times came under pressure from Kenyans on Twitter to take down disturbing images of victims of the Dusit D2 Hotel terror attack and the New York Times responded by publically apologizing on Twitter and taking down the photos.

According to the seventh annual social media marketing industry report by Social Media Examiner, a staggering 92 percent of marketers who work with small businesses, specifically those with two to ten employees, concur that social media plays a pivotal role in their marketing endeavors. Small businesses also affirm that social media has contributed to increased sales within a five-year timeframe, with a noteworthy 70 percent of businesses reporting a return on investment resulting from their social media presence.

Most SMEs in Kenya operate within the informal sector, which encompasses self-employed individuals and small-scale businesses. The informal sector makes up around 98 percent of businesses in Kenya, offering employment to about 30 percent of the nation's workforce and contributing approximately 3 percent to Kenya's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). These statistics have been obtained from the Kenya Agribusiness and Agro Industry Alliance. According to the 2017 Doing Business in Kenya report, the ease with which a business can be registered has a bearing on the number of entrepreneurs who start business in the formal sector. In Kenya starting a business involves seven procedures, takes 22 days and costs 21.1 percent income per capita for both men and women. Although the country has made progress in making it easier to start a business, there is a question as to how easy starting a business is especially for SMEs.

According to the 2016 Small Business Technology Impact Study, having a robust social media presence is crucial for the success of small businesses. Rhett Rower, the president of Capital of Merchants states that small companies cannot match the sheer volume of content generated by big companies due to their limited resources. Hence, small businesses should prioritize expanding brand awareness, boosting website traffic, and fostering a loyal community of followers.

There is rapid growth in the number of Kenyans browsing the internet and making purchases online. According to the Business Daily, 90 percent of Kenyans have mobile phones out of which 44 percent now have internet ready phones and mobile phones are getting cheaper every day.

Therefore, SMEs must establish an online presence and utilize social media platforms to stay competitive and relevant.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Social media refers to the online platforms and interactions where individuals come together to share information, insights, and viewpoints using various communication tools. It operates on the internet, enabling rapid electronic dissemination of content (Qualman, 2009.) Initially, social media primarily served as a way to connect with friends and family, but businesses quickly recognized its potential as a unique communication channel for engaging customers (Funk, 2013.) These networks empower businesses to promote deeper social interaction and establish strong ties within the digital community, prompting users to actively participate in conversations about their offerings and services.

Social media plays a crucial role for businesses, as companies utilize the platform to interact with customers, boost sales through advertising and promotions, and provide customer support. Research has demonstrated that a significant 74 percent of consumers develop a more favorable brand perception after engaging with a company through social media.

Purchase likelihood increases 51 percent after a customer clicks the like button and when customers receive a good customer service experience, social media users tell three times as many people about it. The 2016 Small Business Technology Impact report showed that many small businesses lack digital marketing experience and it was discovered that 20% of small businesses do not intend to allocate any resources for digital marketing investments.. The report also showed that almost 50 percent of respondents have no idea what their return on investment (ROI) is and 14 percent of respondents said that they were not receiving any ROI on their digital marketing.

According to the content marketing institute's benchmark, budgets and trends report, many SMEs do not have a structured content marketing strategy in place. 65 percent of business to business marketers, say they do not have a documented content strategy in place. The biggest challenge SMEs are facing is, lack of digital marketing expertise that will allow them to scale and reach a wider market. Mainstream advertising is costly and ranking on Google search engine requires hiring a search engine expert which is expensive.

Many major corporations collaborate with advertising agencies and social media specialists, wielding sizable budgets to generate content and amplify their visibility on social media platforms. In contrast, small businesses typically lack the substantial budgets required to compete with larger companies, and in many instances, social media marketing is handled by the owner of the business, who is most likely not a social media expert.

The availability of the internet has transformed the way SMEs conduct business, with social media platforms playing a significant role in reducing marketing costs, shortening the time required for marketing products and services, and ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of marketing efforts. President Uhuru's Big Four agenda had technology and innovation as one of the macro elements enabling the big four agenda. Key factors under technology and innovation that the government had stated as a priority include; National fibre optics rollout across the 290 constituencies. This improves accessibility to the internet and therefore, access to social media platforms.

According to the National Broadband Strategy 2018-2023, the government aims to achieve a 94 percent 3G broadband coverage for the population by 2020. Additionally, the strategy seeks to enhance digital literacy in schools to reach 85 percent and extend broadband access to all 47 counties. The implementation of broadband infrastructure is expected to facilitate connections that will create opportunities for innovative solutions, revolutionizing the daily lives and creative potential of Kenyan citizens. Consequently, this will promote the emergence of business concepts

regardless of geographical location, leading to societal and economic benefits stemming from the digital transformations. The National Broadband Strategy aligns with both Vision 2030 and the Government's Big Four Agenda with the aim of making Kenya globally competitive and informed society, with access to high speed, reliable, secure and affordable broadband. Hence, this research aimed to address the inquiries regarding the impact of social media marketing on the performance of SMEs, particularly focusing on those SMEs that have established their presence on social media platforms in Nairobi.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of social media marketing on the performance of SMEs with a focus on online businesses based in Nairobi

1.4 Objectives of the study

This study was guided by the following objectives:-

- 1.To examine how brand awareness influence the performance of an SME
- 2.To examine how quality of content influence the performance of an SME
3. To examine how video content can influence the performance of an SME
4. To examine how content consistency can influence the performance of an SME

1.5 Research questions

The study sort to answer the following research questions:-

- 1.How does brand awareness influence the performance of an SME?
- 2.To what extent does quality of content influence the performance of an SME?
- 3.How does video content influence the performance of an SME?
- 4.To what extent does content consistency influence the performance of an SME?

1.6 Hypothesis of the study

The study sort to test the following hypotheses:-

1. There is no significant relationship between brand awareness and performance of an SME
2. There is no significant relationship between quality of content and performance of an SME
3. There is no significant relationship between video content and performance of an SME
4. There is no significant relationship between content consistency and performance of an SME

1.7 Significance of the study

This study will provide valuable insights for entrepreneurs operating online businesses and those seeking to identify weaknesses in their social media marketing strategies. By examining existing online businesses, this research will serve as a helpful reference for other SMEs. In the modern world, social media marketing is an indispensable element of any business's marketing strategy. It's not sufficient merely to maintain a social media presence; you must also develop an effective social media strategy tailored to your business.

This study will also be beneficial to social media experts hired to run social media pages on behalf of SMEs or corporate organizations. The data collected and information will act as a guide to help social media experts come up with effective social media marketing strategies for their clients.

This study will also be crucial in assisting inventors of social media platforms to see how they can make their platforms SME friendly and what elements they can include or remove from their platforms to allow entrepreneurs set up and effectively run their online businesses. This study will

also provide necessary data to the Kenyan government, since ICT is a major factor in Vision 2030 and SMEs have a significant contribution to the national economy and provide sustainable job opportunities and create numerous jobs (UNDP 2015).

Social media is significantly contributing to the generation of employment opportunities for the youth in Kenya. Therefore, this study is crucial to the youth and the government by providing relevant information that will ensure the success of social media platforms in Kenya by implementing laws that allow online freedoms and fair regulations that will allow the youth to create business opportunities.

1.8 Limitation of the study

Several challenges hindered the study's efficiency, including limited funding for a comprehensive census. Our research specifically targeted two major platforms, namely Facebook and Instagram, which represent only a small fraction of the broader SME population spread across various social media platforms.

A majority of SMEs have a social media presence but only a small percentage consistently update their content on all their social media platforms. Also, some SMEs were active on one platform and not on others. Therefore, the data from these SMEs may not be sufficient.

There is also an issue of falsifying information, SMEs or individuals running social media pages have come into scrutiny when it comes to sharing false information or updating plagiarized content and this will affect the data we collected.

1.9 Delimitation of the study

This study only covered online businesses based in Nairobi County and this is majorly due to access to the internet. Improved internet speeds, rising fibre connectivity and reduced costs of internet have progressively improved in Nairobi over the past few years and this has created the

ease for entrepreneurs to set up online businesses. Reduction in average price of smartphones and the competitive landscape in the smartphone industry have also led to access to high spec phones and decreasing price points and this has led to more people accessing the internet via mobile phones.

In this study, we primarily concentrated on two social media platforms: Facebook and Instagram. According to the 'State of the Internet, 2017,' Facebook ranked second with 7.1 million monthly active users, while Instagram ranked fourth with 4 million monthly active users. Notably, Facebook also reported that Kenyan entrepreneurs were highly engaged, with 3 million small businesses generating revenue through Facebook advertising.

1.10 Assumptions of the study

The assumptions of this study were:-

- 1.Brand awareness, quality of content, video content and consistency are an appropriate measure of performance of SMEs.
- 2.The participants will give honest and truthful responses to their outlook on the issues raised in the study.
3. The tools employed in this study will precisely evaluate the influence of social media marketing on the performance of SMEs.
- 4.The results of the study are a representation of all SMEs of the whole country of Kenya.

1.11 Definition of Significant Terms as Used In The Study

Social Media/Social media platform- This is a form of electronic communication in which users create online communities to share various types of content such as information, ideas, personal messages, videos, and more. Examples of platforms for this communication method include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.

Social Media Marketing- This is a type of internet marketing that involves creating and sharing content on social media platforms to achieve your marketing and branding goals. Social media marketing involves activities such as posting text and image updates, sharing videos, and other content to encourage audience engagement.

Social media content- Anything that someone has posted on a social media platform and shared with others

Brand awareness- This refers to the degree to which consumers are acquainted with the characteristics or image associated with a specific brand of products and services.

Content marketing- These are strategies through which businesses and individuals leverage their social media content to draw in and maintain customers or followers.

Content creation- This involves the procedure of generating topic ideas that resonate with your buyer persona, crafting written or visual content based on those ideas, and presenting that information to your audience in various formats such as blogs, videos, infographics, and more.

Video content- This is the process of creating and sharing valuable and consistent video content with your target audience to attract, engage, and convert qualified leads.

Content consistency- This is the process of continuously uploading relevant content on social media platforms to keep audiences engaged

Organic reach- These are the number people who have seen your post on social media through unpaid distribution

Paid social media advertisement- This represents a cost-effective method for promoting a business on social media platforms. Each platform employs the pay-per-click payment model, which means you only pay when the targeted users take the desired action.

Social media engagement- These are public shares, likes and comments from social media marketing efforts

Monthly Active Users (MAU)- This is a crucial performance metric employed by social networking and other companies to measure the count of unique users who have visited a site in the previous month.

SME-Small and medium-sized enterprises are firms that have very few employees or members and have varied activities. Online businesses fall under SMEs as they are involved in entrepreneurial activities.

Performance of SME-. This refers to the SME's capability to accomplish its goals and objectives, which may be expressed in monetary terms, market share, or shareholder value.

Broadband- This is a form of constant connectivity that ensures a minimum data transfer rate of 5 Mbps to both homes and businesses.

Millennials- This is an identity given a broadly and vaguely defined group born between 1981 to 1991.

YouTuber- A person who uploads, creates, or appears in videos on a video sharing website is often referred to as a content creator or video producer.

YouTube Algorithms- A process or set of rules or instructions for solving a problem or accomplishing an operation

HashTag- This is a label or tag used to categorize content, making it easier for individuals interested in specific topics to locate related content quickly. It is typically represented by the symbol "#" and is known as a hashtag.

Organic Content-. These are website pages that are primarily discovered and accessed when users enter search queries into search engines like Instagram, TikTok and Youtube.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the literature review of the effects of social media marketing on the performance of SMEs. It covers studies on the effects of brand awareness, quality content, consistency and the impact of video content on the performance of SMEs.

The study has a conceptual framework, which shows the relationship between independent, dependent and moderating variables.

2.2 History of Social Media

Social media marketing is defined as a form of internet marketing that involves creating and sharing content on social media networks in order to achieve your marketing and brand goals. Social media marketing activities include; posting text and images, video and other content that drive audience engagement (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010.) The concept of social media began to take shape in the early 1970s, partly influenced by developments like email. (Jessica Milner, 2016.)

However, it wasn't until the 1980s and 1990s that personal computers became widely accessible, laying the foundation for the rise of social media. The emergence of blogging in the 1990s was a pivotal moment in the evolution of social media. The idea that an ordinary person could access the internet, share their thoughts, and make them available to a global audience started to reveal the full potential of the internet's impact on our lives (Jessica Milner, 2016.)

The first social media site was called Six Degrees, named after the six degrees of separation theory by Kevin Bacon. The site allowed people to make individual profiles and add others on their personal network. It was officially launched in 1997 and lasted until 2001 (Terrell, 2018.) Friendster made its debut in 2002 as a contender to Six Degrees. On this social platform, users

could share videos, photos, and messages with fellow users, and they had the ability to leave comments on other people's profiles (Terrell, 2018). In 2011, it underwent a rebranding as a social gaming site, but in 2015, it suspended all its services and ultimately shut down on January 1, 2019.

Following these developments, a series of social media platforms emerged. LinkedIn, founded in 2002, aimed at professional networking. MySpace, established in 2003, quickly rose to become the largest social media site globally, leading to its acquisition by a UK-based media conglomerate in 2005 for a staggering USD 580 million. (Terrell, 2018.) In 2006, MySpace overtook Google as the most visited website globally. However, as Facebook began to grow, MySpace experienced a decline, and in 2008, Facebook took over its position as the most visited site. (Terrell, 2018)

Facebook opened its' first headquarters in Africa in 2015, this is according to (Kimanthi, 2015.) The new office established in Johannesburg, South Africa, will have a specific focus on expanding into the emerging markets of Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa. As per Mendelsohn (2015), who serves as Facebook's Vice President for Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, Africa is a pivotal region where they anticipate a significant portion of their next billion users to originate from.

2.3 Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing brings about audience engagement which is a vital metric for any business looking to attract consumers. It shows how your audience is responding to the content you are posting or uploading (Sinclair & Vogus, 2011.) High audience engagement means people like the content you are posting and are spending some time reading or watching and probably interacting further by commenting or sharing. The utilization of paid advertising on social media enables businesses engaged on these platforms to precisely target specific demographics. The effectiveness of your advertisement hinges on selecting the appropriate social media strategy

(Statistica, 2016). For instance, the Facebook user demographic has evolved, with 73 percent of users falling within the 30 to 49 age group. Conversely, Instagram's demographic skews much younger. (Statistica, 2016.)

There are metrics often used to measure audience engagement and this include; session duration this is how long your audience is spending on your website or content. Bounce rate, this is the percentage of people who open a page or website and leave without viewing any other pages (Statistica, 2016.) The number of pages per session shows how many of your page users viewed in a single session. Returning or new visitors are the people returning to view your content and the more returning visitors you have, the more engaging your content is (Statistica, 2016.)

Social media has ushered in a significant shift in the tools and strategies that companies employ to communicate with their customers. Social media marketing empowers companies to gain a deeper understanding of customer needs, which in turn helps them forge more effective and meaningful relationships with their audience (Cox, 2012.) Global companies have acknowledged the power of social media marketing as a robust advertising platform and are utilizing them innovatively (Neti, 2011). Social media marketing also offers numerous opportunities for small businesses to foster closer and more profitable relationships with their customers. Being well-versed in how to effectively employ social media marketing for your business, including recognizing emerging platforms and identifying outdated ones, provides a distinct advantage to any SME over its competitors (Milner, 2016).

Social media platforms are constantly evolving, and it's crucial for SMEs to create content that the audience will see, since the audience is now more accessible than ever and social media platforms are providing opportunities for advertising and specific targeting opportunities (Jessica Milner, 2016.) SMEs in Kenya have a chance to use the African internet space to grow and expand their businesses through reaching the expansive clientele that consists of over 22 million Kenyans

who have access to the internet (Mwangi & Birundu, 2015.) Nonetheless, a significant hurdle for many small businesses is their inability to harness the full potential of social media, primarily stemming from a lack of technical expertise required to understand how to effectively leverage social media for business growth. (Abott, Donaghey, Hare & Hopkins, 2013)

2.4 Brand Awareness in relation to performance of SMEs

According to the American Marketing Association, the term "brand" is defined as a name, term, design, symbol, or any other distinctive feature that distinguishes one seller's goods or services from those of others. Allie Decker (2018) defines "brand awareness" as the degree to which consumers can recall or recognize a brand, indicating how familiar the target audience is with the brand and how easily they can identify it. Many small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) recognize the significance of branding and brand awareness in achieving business success. However, the act of establishing a brand for SMEs often involves trial and error due to a lack of expertise in this field. It's worth noting that Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) play a crucial role in contributing to a country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in various regions across the globe. Unfortunately, a significant challenge they face is that nine out of every ten new businesses fail within the first two years, with SMEs constituting a substantial portion of this statistic. (KNBS, 2015)

Establishing brand awareness is a gradual process, and building a strong brand presence requires a combination of ongoing efforts that go beyond simply acquiring paying customers (HubSpot, 2018). The social media landscape is highly competitive, with a global population of 7.7 billion as of May 2019, 4.4 billion of whom are internet users, and 3.499 billion actively engage on social media platforms (Kit Smith, Brandwatch, 2019). Social media plays a pivotal role in

marketing and nurturing customer relationships, and its relatively low entry barriers have prompted many small businesses to use it as a key marketing tool (SME Digest, 2015.)

Regrettably, numerous SMEs face challenges when it comes to effectively utilizing social media. They often lack a clear strategy for engaging customers, leading to missed opportunities for growth and engagement (SME Digest, 2015.) Creating brand awareness for SMEs include, choosing the right social media channels to focus on, SMEs should consider the products and services they offer as well as who is their target audience. Learning how to carry out social media marketing on one or two valuable platforms is much better than being active in many social media platforms and knowing very little about each of them. (Buffer, 2019)

Additionally, it's crucial for SMEs to look out for major social media platforms to promote their businesses. Facebook stands out as the most widely used platform, boasting over 2 billion monthly users, with 65 million businesses utilizing Facebook pages, and more than 6 million advertisers actively marketing their businesses on the platform (Buffer, 2019.) Creating brand awareness includes giving your brand some personality, followers are no longer looking for promotions and continuous selling they want to see and feel more personal and human centric connection to your brand. Tag other people in your post to get them talking is also a way of creating brand awareness. Anyone you tag in your post receives a notification instantly and this creates an opportunity for engagement (Cox, 2012.)

Sharing great content with your followers will also create brand awareness. Good content will encourage customers to engage with you and customers will probably share your content with their friends, therefore creating awareness of a SMEs product and services. (Cox, 2012)

Leveraging the potential of hashtags is a valuable strategy for building brand awareness. Hashtags play a significant role in increasing the visibility of SMEs' content and can serve as a critical element in the process of brand awareness (Buffer, 2019). Hashtags help in tracking and

connecting conversations happening across the internet and can draw new followers to an SME's page. It's worth noting that posts with hashtags tend to receive more engagement compared to those without them (Buffer, 2019.)

Paid advertisements and campaigns are effective means of generating brand awareness for SMEs on social media. Businesses recognize the essential role social media platforms play in today's marketplace, and a majority of SMEs intend to boost their investment in this area. Among social media platforms, Facebook remains the most valuable for SMEs, with over 58 percent of small businesses planning to increase their investment in it. (Harris & Rae, 2009.)

2.5 Quality of content in relation to performance of SMEs

Content creation is the process of generating topic ideas that appeal to your buyer persona, creating written or visual content around those ideas and making that information accessible to your audience as a blog post, e-book, tweet, video, infographic or other formats (HubSpot Blog, 2018.) In this digital age, we all rely on the internet for information and SMEs should therefore be able to create content that provides useful information or solve problems in order to engage their customers. When creating content, SMEs should focus on using; keywords, current trends, state the benefits of their product and services and updates that cover their industry (HubSpot Blog, 2019.)

Creating good content for social media marketing requires planning. Consumers of today are smart, due to the internet that provides them with information that helps them distinguish between direct selling and informative content which is indirect selling. Recent research proves that creating quality content makes customers 131 percent more likely to buy from your business (Lessing, 2004). Content ideas come from within the business or from the customers but also,

SMEs active in various social media platforms, need to create content catered for every platform because each platform works differently (Lessig, 2004.)

Content is critical and it is necessary to ensure that all links to a website, blog or telephone contact on all social media accounts are updated and that SMEs provide consistent information on all platforms on the brand, image, profile picture and tagline (Jenkins, 2009.)

It is also essential to evaluate the performance of the content posted to know what is working from what is not working. Keeping an eye on the competitors' content can also give SMEs loads of insight on how their content is working on various platforms and also uncover areas of strength and weakness in their approach. SMEs can use this data to cover an area that their competitors are not, therefore, giving them an edge with the consumers (Jenkins, 2009.)

2.6 Effect of video content on performance of SMEs

Video is an influential medium for storytelling and holds significant potential to impact the success of SMEs' promotional campaigns and content marketing endeavors. According to the 2017 State of Video Marketing Report by Wyzowl, a striking 97 percent of businesses employing explainer videos find them effective in helping users understand their business. Additionally, 73 percent of consumers admit to making a purchase after watching a video.

YouTube, is the second highest visited website globally following Google. It is estimated to have over 1.9 billion monthly active users, making it a formidable platform for SMEs to consider in their marketing strategies. There are twice as many small and medium sized businesses advertising on YouTube since 2016 and in 2015, according to a Google Analytics Report, 2015, "how to" videos on YouTube grew at a rate of 70 percent year after year.

Videos provide SMEs with a compelling means to convey their stories, and video content excels in engaging the target audience. In the contemporary digital environment, consumers are drawn

to visually appealing content, and video plays a significant role in visual storytelling. Video content enhances the comprehension of an SME's products and services, particularly when it's challenging to describe them adequately through images or written blog posts alone. But viewer understanding increases by 74 percent when they watch a video (Ben Stegner, 2018.)

Recent trends indicate that today's consumers prefer watching videos about products rather than reading about them, as reported by E-marketer in 2018. Additionally, research conducted by Microsoft reveals a significant decline in the average human attention span, declining from 12 seconds in the year 2000 to just eight seconds. This shift has implications for content marketing, as it suggests that consumers have less time and patience to read through lengthy content (Cision, 2018.)

Watching videos offers consumers a combination of audio and visual stimulation, which engages different areas of the brain. This heightened engagement leads viewers to develop stronger connections and a deeper interest in the content they are consuming, as noted by E-Marketer in 2018. The production of video content has become more accessible for SMEs, thanks to the decreasing costs of smartphones and the increasing availability of high-speed fiber connectivity, particularly in places like Nairobi. These factors have lowered the barriers to entry, making it easier for SMEs to produce video content and share it with their customers (NCDP report 2018-2023.)

As internet access grows, many Kenyans are turning to YouTube as an opportunity to create jobs and earn an income for themselves by; setting up YouTube channels, posting regular content and learning how to monetize their channels (Ooko, 2015.) The term "YouTubers" has recently gained popularity in Nairobi and refers to a category of internet celebrities and videographers who have garnered fame through their videos on the video-sharing platform YouTube (Mwendwa, 2018)

The YouTube platform allows creators to earn money through their video content by; selling and promoting products or services, Google adsense, merchandise sales, sponsored content and receiving free merchandise from companies in exchange for reviewing products and services.

Forbes ranked the ten highest paid YouTubers and number ten on the list earns \$14.5million and the highest earner is a seven year old boy who reviews toys and earns \$22million (Robehmed, 2018.) Kenyans are therefore seeing opportunities to start their own SMEs through the YouTube platform.

Video is a potent medium for learning, and YouTube offers a vast array of resources to aid individuals in acquiring new skills, advancing in their careers, preparing for new jobs, or expanding their businesses. The platform witnesses more than 500 million views of learning-related videos each day, and these videos are created by YouTubers who are professionals or possess expertise in specific fields (Cano, 2018)

2.7 Content Consistency

The appearance, tone, and behavior of an SME have a direct impact on how both current and potential customers perceive the business. Consistency in brand messaging is one of the many factors that determine the growth and success of an SME and consistency builds trust, credibility and strengthens business reputation (Jenkins, 2006). Consistency can be looked at in four main ways; Consistency in the brand voice. A brands' voice is the brand personality and is described in an adjective. A brand voice can be serious, playful or professional. As an SME it is important to determine what is the brand voice when developing content for social media (Mark Schaefer, 2014).

Consistency in branding extends to an SME's presence on social media platforms. If an SME maintains an active presence on multiple social media platforms, it's crucial to ensure that key

elements of the company, such as the logo, tagline, and contact information, remain consistent across all platforms. This consistency is important to avoid confusing customers, as highlighted by Mark Schaefer in 2013. It's also worth noting that there have been instances of individuals creating fake social media pages, which can be highly detrimental. Such fraudulent activity not only risks damaging customers' trust but can also result in financial losses for the business.

Consistency in customer experience is also essential for SMEs on social media. Customer experience activities include; engaging with your customers this includes, responding to questions or inquiries. Taking note of posts that customers like, share or tag your business in, this allows the SME to know what content customers appreciate and what they are saying about your brand (Mark Schaefer, 2014).

Consistent posting maximizes organic reach, most social media platforms run off an algorithm and if an SME posts content consistently the algorithm will have a better idea of who to show your content organically. If an SME is not posting consistently on social media the algorithm will put your competitor's updates at the top of the list. (Google Analytics Report, 2017) Posting consistently not only helps achieve organic response on social media posts, but allows for customers to know your business well. This is according to Scott Martineau the co-founder of Infusionsoft. An article by NY Times stated that people spend an average of 50minutes each day on Facebook, Instagram and Messenger platforms and that is not including the popular app WhatsApp (Stewart, 2016) therefore, posting consistently will allow SMEs to target potential customers.

2.8 Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the 4P's of marketing by Jerome McCarthy, the 4P's of marketing constitute the common variable used in constructing the marketing mix (McCarthy, J, 1960.) The 4Ps of marketing, also known as the marketing mix include product, price, promotion and place.

The 4P'S Model

The product is defined as a tangible or an intangible service that seems to meet a specific customer need or demand. Indeed, it is crucial for SMEs to obtain a clear understanding of what makes their business unique before embarking on a successful marketing campaign. This unique selling proposition (USP) helps differentiate the SME from competitors and serves as a cornerstone for effective marketing strategies, allowing businesses to communicate their distinct value to customers. Understanding and articulating the uniqueness of their offerings can significantly enhance an SME's ability to attract and retain customers in a competitive marketplace. (Armstrong & Kotler 2007). Price is defined as the actual amount the end user is expected to pay for a product or service. How a product is priced directly affects how it sells. Price determines the profit margins, supply and demand (Baker &Hart, 2008.)

Promotion refers to the activities and strategies undertaken to convey the value, benefits, and features of a product/service to consumers. It encompasses a range of marketing efforts aimed at informing, persuading, and influencing the target audience to make a purchase or take a specific action related to the product or service. These efforts can include advertising, public relations, sales promotions, content marketing, and various forms of communication to engage and attract customers (Levy & Weitz, 2007). Indeed, effective promotion strategies often include elements such as advertising, sales promotions, and special offers. When crafting promotions for a business, the primary goal is to motivate the target market to take action. To achieve this, it is

crucial to empathize with consumers and see your business from their perspective. Understanding how customers perceive your business and what appeals to them can help tailor promotions that resonate with their needs, preferences, and desires, ultimately leading to more successful marketing campaigns (Levy & Weitz 2007.) Placement, also known as "place" in the marketing mix (4Ps), refers to the strategic decision-making process regarding how an SME positions its product or service in the market. This involves assessing the most suitable distribution channels and locations to effectively convert potential customers into actual clients. In the context of social media marketing, choosing the right social media platforms as channels of choice is a critical aspect of placement. By selecting the appropriate platforms that align with the target audience and business goals, SMEs can enhance their chances of successful customer engagement and conversion (Rea & Keizner 1997).

In the context of social media marketing, an SME's product or service can be equated to the content they create and share. The quality of this content significantly impacts the achievement of their marketing goals. Therefore, it is vital to ensure that content adheres to a consistent theme, style, and quality across all social media platforms, as noted by Handy in 2013.

In regards to "price" aspect in social media marketing, it refers to the expenses associated with the tools and resources that help an SME accomplish their marketing objectives. These costs can include advertising budgets, software subscriptions, content creation expenses, and other investments made to support the social media marketing efforts. An SME needs to know what kind of return the tools available on social media will provide the business (Handy, 2013). The place is where the target consumers are located, on what social media platforms are the ideal customers' active in? and what are the strategies in place to attract their attention to the business (Handy, 2013.)

In the realm of social media marketing, "promotion" encompasses all the activities undertaken by an SME to raise awareness of its products and services among its target audience. This includes a wide range of efforts and strategies, and it's not limited solely to paid advertising. Promotion on social media can also involve organic content creation, engaging with followers, running contests, sharing valuable information, collaborating with influencers, and leveraging user-generated content, among other tactics. Paid advertising is indeed one avenue within the broader spectrum of promotion in social media marketing (Handy, 2013.)

2.9 The action theory

The study is also based on the action theory of modern marketing by Seth Godin. The theory states that every marketer, business and product must address four key elements in the modern marketing model the elements include; emotion, change, alert and share (Seth Godin, 2018)

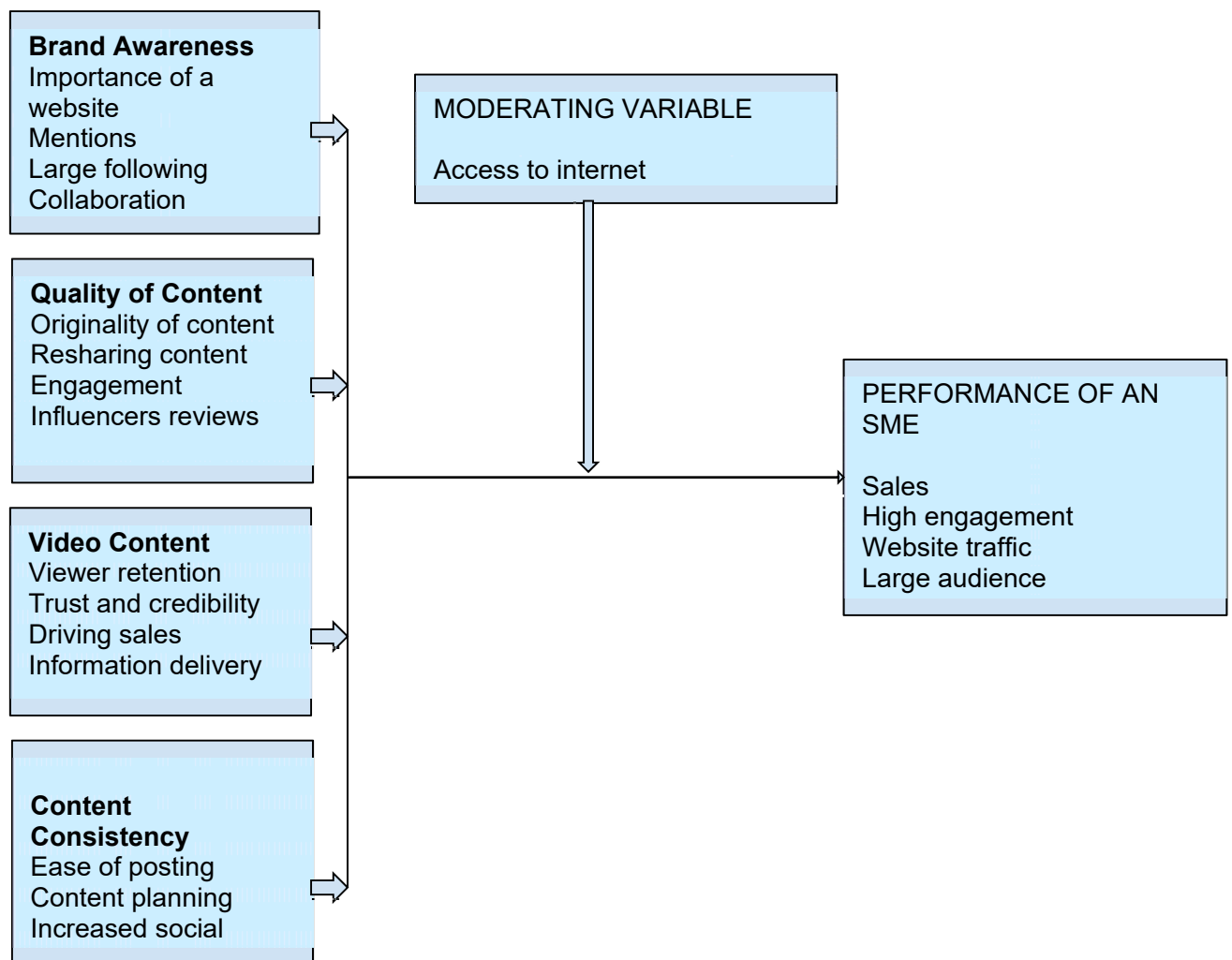
Emotion states that to truly connect with consumers we must tap into their emotions. It is only by addressing strong emotions within our target market that we will truly connect and cut through. There are two key emotions a business connects to buyers; delight and fear. Delight is defined as how a business can best exceed the expectations of the consumers and create a product that delights them and fear is creating the urgency to purchase a product or services and creating a fear of missing the opportunity to make a purchase (Seth Godin, 2018).

Change aims to cause the customers to change their behavior and the way they think. It is through this change spurred on by a brand that the bond with the customers is forged (Seth Godin, 2018). Example of a brand that causes change in consumers is Charity Water who show exactly where the funding goes by photographing the people who receive access to clean water.

Alert is when a company is granted the privilege by consumers to alert them on new products, services, new development and personally curated messages. At this level a company is able to

find products for consumers rather than finding customers for the products. Customers tell each other about a company's products and services and also advocate for your brand and this causes the brand to grow organically (Seth Godin, 2018).

Fig 1.1 Conceptual Framework



The conceptual framework indicates a possible relationship between the variables. The first independent variable is brand awareness; its indicators are importance of a website, mentions, large following and collaborating. The second independent variable is quality of content, its

indicators are; originality of content, resharing content, engagement and influencer reviews. The third independent variable is video content, its indicators are; viewer retention, trust and credibility, driving sales and information delivery. The fourth independent variable is content and its indicators are; ease of posting, content planning, increased social media presence and social media algorithm

The dependent variable is the performance, its indicators are; customer purchases, organic engagement, customer referrals, organic growth. The five independent variables are likely to have an influence on the dependent variable.

2.11 Summary of literature review and research gaps

Previous studies have looked into the effects of social media marketing and some of the studies include the effects of social media marketing in the banking industry in Kenya (Njeri, 2014) and despite banks not falling in the SME category the findings showed a strong association between social media marketing and performance.

The study conducted by Kimaru in 2012, which examined the utilizing social media as a marketing tool in the Kenyan tourism industry, found that social media was a potent and effective tool for marketing within that specific sector. It's worth noting that this study was primarily focused on the tourism industry and its findings may not necessarily represent the validness of social media marketing in all industries or sectors. The applicability and impact of social media marketing can vary significantly depending on the specific characteristics, target audience, and objectives of each industry.

Khamis Abdul, (2018) study looked into the influence of social media marketing on the performance of small and medium enterprises in Nairobi County, Kenya and the findings showed that social media marketing has a significant influence on the performance of SMEs in Nairobi

County. The study you mentioned also highlighted that SMEs in the tourism industry utilized social media platforms to gather customer experiences and public opinions about their organizations. In a similar vein, research conducted by Al-Sadani in 2015 explored the effectiveness of social media marketing as the primary marketing tool for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The findings suggested that, at least within the context of the tourism industry, social media was indeed an effective marketing tool.

Furthermore, the study indicated that the right methods, approaches, and tools could be highly successful and cost-efficient for many SMEs. It emphasized the importance of positive reviews and feedback on social media platforms, underscoring their significant role in shaping the perception and success of a company.

This research looks to bridge the gap by focusing on online based SMEs and how factors like; Brand awareness, quality of content, video content and content consistency have on the performance of an SME. Hopefully, findings from this research will give SMEs based online an insight on how best to strategize their businesses for social media and also give SMEs that are not active on social media an insight on why social media is essential in overall performance of a business.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the method in which the research study was carried out. It explains the method in which the data was collected, processed and analyzed. The chapter covers the following areas: the research design, the target population, the sample size and sampling procedures, the methods of data collection, validity and reliability and finally the operationalization of variable

3.2 Research design

The target population suggests a gathering of people, items or objects from which tests are taken for estimation (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2008.) An exploratory study aims to find out what is happening in a given environmental setting with regard to the topic under study through asking questions. A descriptive study refers to portraying an accurate outline of persons, situations so as to bring out more information and it aims at establishing an association between study variables (Yin, 2013.)

Cross-sectional study was an effective study guide as it seeks to measure the association of variables so as to describe the incidence of a phenomenon and how the variables are related (Sanders, 2009)

3.3 Target Population

A population is a collection of elements, objects or individuals forming the central focus of a study. The individuals or objects must have similar observable characteristics (Cooper, 2011.) The target population of this study is 1000 SMEs located in Nairobi County, that have established their

businesses on social media platforms, use these platforms to create awareness about their businesses and are active on both Facebook and Instagram.

3.4 Sample size

A sample size is the number of observations used for calculating estimates of a particular population. The sample size for this research was 100 SMEs located in Nairobi County and are active on Facebook and Instagram. When a study population is less than 10,000 a sample size of 10-15% is acceptable (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003)

3.5 Sample Procedure

Mugenda and Mugenda, (2003) define sampling as the choice of elements in a universe to be included in a study and forming the basis of inferential statistics. The definition of sampling provided by Orodho and Kombo in 2002 is accurate. Sampling is the process by which a researcher selects a subset or a number of units from a larger population that the study is based on. The idea is that the results obtained from the selected sample are assumed to represent or provide insights into the characteristics of the entire population from which the sample was drawn. Simple random sampling was applied in this study, we worked with 100 SMEs and each SME was selected by random. Any SMEs on Facebook and Instagram social media platforms has a chance of being included in the sample

3.5 Data Collection

The study is to collect primary data from SMEs active on the Facebook and Instagram platforms. Questionnaires and interviews were the research instruments used. Kothari (2003) suggests the use of questionnaires in research because they enable researchers to collect data from respondents and gain insights into real-time events. Questionnaires are a structured method of

data collection that allows researchers to gather information, analyze responses, and generate reports based on the data obtained. They are particularly useful for gathering specific information from a sample of individuals or a target population and can provide valuable insights into various research topics.

Questionnaires provide participants with the opportunity to articulate their perspectives on current conditions as opposed to the ideal scenario. The questions encompass facets related to social media marketing and small business practices. This questionnaire incorporates both open-ended and close-ended questions, which allow respondents to provide detailed and free-form responses. This dual approach helps gather comprehensive and precise insights into the subject matter.

3.7 Pilot testing of the instruments

It is essential to pilot all questions to ascertain the amount of time needed for successful completion Bell, (1999). Oppenheim, (1992) describes the function of a pilot is to improve reliability, validity of questions, eliminating ambiguities, checking readability, gaining feedback, identifying omissions, checking completion time, identifying redundant questions and identifying any misconstrued questions.

3.8 Validity of the instruments

Validity of a research tool is the extent by which a research measures what it was designed to measure (Kothari, 2004.) The research instrument was administered to a random sample of SMEs active on Facebook and Instagram platforms.

The content validity of the questionnaire and interview questions was validated by consulting the supervisor of this study under the University of Nairobi, this enabled professional commentaries and modification of the research instruments.

3.9 Reliability of the instruments

Reliability is a concept that depicts how well the different items in a single dimension merge to measure the same thing (Winterstein, 2008.) The reliability method I used for this research is the split half reliability test. Reliability was ensured through the use of the same environment for conducting the interviews and maintenance of a similar tone and expression by the interviewer.

The Spearman-Brown formula is:-

$$\rho = \frac{r(\sqrt{r^2 + 2c(1 - r^2)} - r)}{c(1 - r^2)}$$

3.10 Method of data collection

Qualitative data was collected using both the questionnaire and interview questions while quantitative data was gathered using questionnaires. During data collection the researcher visited the business or contacted them via social media, email, telephone calls to schedule a meeting.

The researcher explained the aim of the study and assured confidentiality. The researcher also secured a letter from the University of Nairobi. A letter of introduction was written to the sampled business owners. The researcher visited the various places of business and personally administered the questionnaires.

3.11 Data analysis

Data analysis is indeed the process of transforming raw data, which may consist of facts, figures, and numerical information, into meaningful and insightful information. This transformation is achieved through various steps, including sorting, coding, cleaning, and processing the data.

Once the data has been prepared, it can then be interpreted and analyzed to derive meaningful insights, patterns, and conclusions that are relevant to the research or study at hand. Data

analysis is a crucial component of the research process and is essential for making informed decisions and drawing valid conclusions (Cohen, Manion & Marrison, 2007.)

The quantitative data was categorized and organized in accordance with the objectives of the study for analysis applying Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Spearmans' correlation was used to determine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The qualitative data collected from the interview schedule was analyzed, interpreted and presented descriptively using tables to enhance efficiency of the study.

3.12 Ethical consideration

Johnson (2008) defines ethics as principles and guidelines that aid us to uphold the things we value. The researcher ethics is an essential consideration and I obtained a permission letter from University of Nairobi to be allowed to carry out the interview and distribute the questionnaire.

It is essential in research to maintain ethical standards and ensure that participants understand the nature of their involvement. By obtaining approval from the participants and explaining the terms of their participation, including the voluntary nature of their involvement, the commitment to keeping their data confidential, and the research objectives, you demonstrate a commitment to ethical research practices. This transparency and informed consent process help build trust with participants and uphold the integrity of the research study..

3.13 Operationalization of variables

The operationalization table shows the various variables in the study which were investigated. The following is the table of variable operationalization

Table 1.1 Table of variable operationalization

Objectives	Variables	Indicators	Measurement scale	Tool of analysis	Type of analysis
To examine how brand awareness influence the performance of an SME	Independent	Importance of a website Mentions Large following Collaboration	Nominal	Qualitative and quantitative	Descriptive
To examine how quality of content influence the performance of an SME	Independent	Originality of content Resharing content	Nominal	Qualitative and quantitative	Descriptive

		Influencer reviews Engagement			
To examine how video content influence the performance of an SME	Independent	Viewer retention Trust and credibility Driving sales Information delivery	Nominal	Qualitative and quantitative	Descriptive
To examine how content consistency influence the performance of an SME	Independent	Ease of posting Content planning Increased social media presence Social media algorithm	Nominal	Qualitative and quantitative	Descriptive

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is structured into six sections. The first section delves into the return rate of the questionnaires. The second section focuses on gathering demographic information about the respondents. The third section evaluates the performance of online-based SMEs in Nairobi County. The fourth section has 4 subsections based on the study objectives which relate to brand awareness, content creation, video content and content consistency. The fifth section deals with the results from hypothesis testing. The sixth section gives a summary of the interview schedule.

4.2 Questionnaire Return Rate

The return rate is calculated by the proportion of the responses over the sample size. There were a total of 50 respondents that returned the questionnaires out of the expected 100 this indicated in Table 4.1

Table 4.1 Return rate of respondents

Questionnaire	Responses	Percentage %
Answered & Returned	51	51%
Did not return	49	49%
Total	100	100%

It can be observed from chart 4.1 that 50% of respondents answered and returned the questionnaire. As someone with an active business on social media with a focus on creating

content for SMEs, I have a following of 104 people and majority of the respondents are actual SMEs that I interact with or follow.

4.3 Demographic Information

Respondents were asked to indicate the following demographic characteristics that relate to them: gender, level of education, how long the respondent have had a business, how long the respondents have had an active business on social media and type of industry of the group

4.3.1 Age of respondents

Respondents were requested to indicate their gender. Their responses are shown in table 4.2

Table 4.2 Gender of respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Male	12	23.5
Female	36	70.6
Other	3	5.9
Total	51	100.0

According to table 4.2, the majority of the respondents were female with 70.6% , 23.5% male and 3% other. "Other" represent individuals who identify as members of the LGBTQIA+ community and do not believe in restrictive gender roles and do not identify as male or female.

According to UN Women "Globally women only make 77 cents for every dollar men earn. In Sub Saharan Africa and South Asia the gender pay gap is 31% and 35% respectively.' This according to an article by Forbes magazine is the reason why women are favoring entrepreneurship

4.3.2 Respondents level of education

Respondents were requested to indicate their level of education. Their responses are indicated in table 4.3

4.3 Education level of respondents

	Frequency	Percent
PHD	1	2.0
Masters	11	21.6
Undergraduate	31	60.8
Diploma	6	11.8
Highschool	2	3.9
Total	51	100.0

From table 4.3, It is observed that majority of the respondents had reached undergraduate level, which accounted for 60.8%, 21.6% had a masters degree, 11.8% had a diploma, 3.9% had a highschool certificate and 2% had a PHD.

4.3.3 Duration in business

Respondents were requested to indicate for how long they have been in business. Their responses are shown in table 4.4

Table 4.4 Duration in business of respondents

	Frequency	Percent
0-1 year	6	11.8
2-3 years	23	45.1

3-4 years	9	17.6
4-5 years	3	5.9
5 years+	8	15.7
Total	49	96.1
Missing	2	3.9
Total	51	100.0

From table 4.4, it can be observed that 45.1%, have been business for 2 to 3 years, 17.6% 3 to 4 years, 15.7% 5 years and above, 11.8% 0 to 1 year and 5.9% 4 to 5 years. According to an article by Money254, a significant number of small businesses in Kenya face challenges right from their inception and struggle to establish stability. The article provides statistics indicating that approximately 20% of small businesses fail within their initial year of operation. Furthermore, 30% of these businesses do not make it past the second year, and by the end of the fifth year, nearly half of them have ceased operations. Ultimately, after a decade, only 30% of these businesses manage to remain in operation, reflecting a high 70% failure rate.

4.3.4 How long respondents been active on social media

Respondents were requested to indicate for how long they have had their business active on social media. Their responses are shown in table 4.5

Table 4.5 Active social media presence of respondents

	Frequency	Percent
0-1 year	14	27.5

2-3 years	19	37.3
3-4 years	5	9.8
4-5 years	6	11.8
5+ years	5	9.8
Total	49	96.1
Missing	2	3.9
Total	51	100.0

A notable 37.3% of the respondents indicated that they have actively used social media for a period ranging from 2 to 3 years, 27.5% for 0 to 1 year, 11.8% for 4-5 years, 9.8% for 3 to 4 years and 9.8% for more than 5 years.

4.3.5 Type of Industry

This is an analysis of the type of industry each respondent belongs to. Respondents were requested to indicate the type of industry that they belonged to

Respondents covered a wide variety of industries, these include: Accessories and pop culture items, arts, books, clothing, coaching, community, consumer goods, content creation, creative/creative design, digital marketing and graphic design, eco friendly and toxin free homecare products, entertainment, entertainment events, film and photography, FMCG, fashion, fashion accessories, handmade items, health, health and wellness, hospitality, jewelry production, manufacture and engineering, mental health practitioner, non profit, podcast, printing and branding, communication, public relations, recycled goods, retail, salon, sustainable fashion, tech, telecommunication, tours and travel, visual arts, weddings and food and beverage

4.3.6 The importance of social media to the respondents

Respondents were requested to indicate how important social media is for their SME. The data representing their responses can be found in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 SMEs active on social media

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	46	90.2
No	5	9.8
Total	51	100.0

According to the data presented in Table 4.7, a significant majority of respondents, specifically 90.2%, believe that social media platforms play a crucial role in their SME, while a smaller percentage, 9.8%, do not share this belief.

4.3.7 Physical location

Respondents were requested to state whether their businesses have a physical location in addition to being active on social media platforms. Their responses have been documented in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Physical location of SMEs

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	16	31.4
No	34	66.7
Total	50	98.0
Missing	1	2.0
Total	51	100.0

Among the respondents, 66.7% exclusively maintain an online presence on social media without a physical location, while 31.4% have both a physical location and an active social media presence.

4.3.8 Trust with customers

Respondents were requested to indicate whether customers trust SMEs with a physical location, more than those purely active on social media. Their responses are indicated in table 4.8

Table 4.8 SMEs with a physical location vs. Online based SMEs

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	31	60.8
No	18	35.3
Total	49	96.1
Missing	2	3.9
Total	51	100.0

According to table 4.8, we see 60.8% of respondents agreed and 35.3% of respondents disagreed

4.3.9 The importance of a website for an SME

Respondents were asked to indicate whether having a website was important for an SME. Their responses are shown in table 4.9

Table 4.9 The importance of a website to the respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	23	45.1

No	26	51.0
Total	49	96.1
Missing	2	3.9
Total	51	100.0

According to table 4.9, we see that 45.1% of respondents have a website and 51% of respondents do not have a website.

4.4 SMEs and their presence on various social media platforms

Respondents were asked to indicate which social media platforms they are active on. The responses are indicated below

4.4.1 SMEs and Facebook

Facebook is a social networking site that makes it easy to connect and share with family and friends online. Based on data from 2022 provided by Statista, Facebook stands as the largest social media platform, boasting a staggering 2.89 billion monthly users. Their responses are shown on table 4.10

Table 4.10 Respondents active on Facebook

	Frequency	Percent
Ticked	21	41.2
Not Ticked	30	58.8
Total	51	100.0

According to table 4.10, we see 41.2% of respondents are active on Facebook and 58.8% are not active or did not indicate whether they were active.

4.4.2 SMEs & Instagram

Instagram, recognized as a photo and video sharing application, holds the fourth position among the most popular social media platforms. In 2022, it reported having a substantial user base of 1.4 billion monthly active users, according to Statista. The responses are shown in table 4.11

Table 4.11 Respondents active on Instagram

	Frequency	Percent
Ticked	45	88.2
Not Ticked	6	11.8
Total	51	100.0

According to table 4.11, 88.2% of respondents are active on Instagram and 11.8% are not active or did not indicate

4.4.3 SMEs and TikTok

TikTok is a video sharing app that allows users to create and share short form videos. The social media platform gained widespread popularity in 2020 and has since grown to reach 1 billion monthly active users as of January 2023, as reported by Statista 2023. The corresponding responses are presented in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12 Respondents active on TikTok

	Frequency	Percent
Ticked	15	29.4
Not Ticked	36	70.6

Total	51	100.0
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According to table 4.12, 29.4% of respondents are active on TikTok and 70.6% of respondents are not active on TikTok or did not indicate

4.4.4 SMEs and YouTube

Youtube is a global video sharing website that makes it easy to watch and upload online videos. According to Statista 2022, Youtube currently has 2.5 billion monthly active users. The responses are represented in table 4.13

Table 4.13 Respondents active on Youtube

	Frequency	Percent
Ticked	11	21.6
Not Ticked	40	78.4
Total	51	100.0

According to table 4.13, we see 21.6% of respondents are active on YouTube and 78.4% of respondents are not active on YouTube or did not indicate

4.4.5 SMEs and Whatsapp

WhatsApp is a free, cross-platform messaging application that enables users to send text messages, make video calls, and conduct voice calls. According to Statista 2022, Whatsapp has 2 billion monthly active users. The responses are indicated in table 4.14

Table 4.14 Respondents active on Whatsapp

	Frequency	Percent
Ticked	23	45.1
Not Ticked	28	54.9
Total	51	100.0

According to table 4.14, 45.1% of respondents are active on Whatsapp and 54.9% of respondents are not active on Whatsapp or did not indicate

4.4.6 SMEs and Twitter

Twitter is an online platform where users communicate through short messages known as tweets. As of 2022, Twitter boasts 436 million monthly active users, according to Statista. The corresponding responses can be found in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15 Respondents active on Twitter

	Frequency	Percent
Ticked	7	13.7
Not Ticked	44	86.3
Total	51	100.0

As per table 4.15, we see 13.7% of respondents are active on Twitter and 86.3% are not active on Twitter

4.4.7 SMEs and other platforms

This category includes social media platforms such as; Pinterest, Snapchat, Telegram and Reddit. The corresponding responses are displayed in Table 4.16.

Table 4.16 Respondents active on other social media platforms

	Frequency	Percent
Ticked	2	3.9
Not Ticked	49	96.1
Total	51	100.0

We asked respondents whether they were active on any other platforms 3.9% indicated yes and 96.1% of respondents said no or did not indicate

4.5 SMEs and Facebook Following

Respondents were asked to indicate how many followers their SME has on Facebook. Their responses are indicated in table 4.17

Table 4.17 Respondents Facebook Following

	Frequency	Percent
Less than 500	22	43.1
501-1000	7	13.7
1001-5000	9	17.6
5001-10000	2	3.9
10001+	3	5.9
Total	43	84.3

Missing	8	15.7
Total	51	100.0

According to table 4.17, 43.1% have less than 500 followers, 17.6% have 10001 to 5000 followers, 13.7% have 501 to 1000 followers, 5.9% have 10,001 and more followers, 3.9% have 5001 to 10,000 followers and 8% are either not active or did not indicate on Facebook

4.6 SMEs and Instagram Following

Respondents were asked to indicate how many followers they have on Instagram. Their responses are indicated in table 4.18

Table 4.18 Respondents Instagram following

	Frequency	Percent
Less than 500	11	21.6
501-1000	5	9.8
1001-5000	24	47.1
5001-10,000	5	9.8
10,001+	4	7.8
Total	49	96.1
Missing	2	3.9
Total	51	100.0

According to table 4.18, 47.1% have 1001 to 5000 followers on Instagram, 21.6% have less than 500 followers, 9.8% have 501 to 1000 followers, 9.8% have 50001 to 10,000 followers and 8.2% have 10,000 plus followers

4.7 SMEs and content creation

We wanted to know whether the respondents create their own content or use a third party. Their responses are indicated in table 4.19

Table 4.19 Respondents and content creation

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	49	96.1
No	2	3.9
Total	51	100.0

According to table 4.19, we see 96.1% of respondents create their own content and 3.9% do not create their own content

4.8 SMEs and Social media strategy

Respondents were queried about the presence of a social media strategy in their business and their knowledge of creating one. A social media strategy plays a pivotal role for SMEs as it facilitates the planning of distinctive content, audience building, and guiding leads through the buying cycle, encompassing stages from awareness to consideration and ultimately purchase. Their responses are indicated in table 4.20

Table 4.20 Respondents importance of a social media strategy

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	27	52.9
No	24	47.1

Total	51	100.0
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As per the information provided in table 4.20, 52.9% of respondents responded yes and 47.1% of respondents responded.

4.8.1 SMEs knowledge on how to create a social media strategy

Respondents were asked whether they have the know how to develop a social media strategy for their SMEs. Their responses are indicated in table 4.21

Table 4.21 Respondents knowledge on how to create a social media strategy

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	24	47.1
No	26	51.0
Total	50	98.0
Missing	1	2.0
Total	51	100.0

According to table 4.21, 47.1% of respondents know how to create a social media strategy and 51% do not know how to create a social media strategy

4.9 SMEs and advertising

We asked our respondents to specify whether they have paid for ads on social media. Their responses are indicated in table 4.22

Table 4.22 Respondents and social media paid adverts

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	38	74.5
No	13	25.5
Total	51	100.0

According to table 4.22, 74.5% of respondents said yes and 25.5% said no

4.9.1 SMEs and paid social media ads

Respondents were asked to specify whether they have paid for adverts on social media and what they gained from running the paid ads

Respondents stated some of the benefits of running an advert on social media include; more profile visits, more brand awareness, generated sales, brand visibility, more followers, leads that led to conversions, many likes, more inquiries, high engagement. Some of the respondents stated that they can not advertise on social media because of the nature of their business, while others expressed that they did not perceive any advantages in advertising on social media.

4.10 Brand awareness and performance

The initial objective was to assess the impact of brand awareness on the performance of online-based SMEs. The indicators of brand awareness were; importance of a website , mentions, large following and collaborating

4.10.1 Importance of a website

Respondents were asked whether they think every SME must have a website. Their responses are indicated in table 4.23

Table 4.23 SMEs and importance of a website

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	4	7.8
Disagree	13	25.5
Neutral	14	27.5
Agree	11	21.6
Strongly Agree	6	11.8
Total	48	94.1
Missing	3	5.9
Total	51	100.0

According to table 4.23 we see, 27.5% are neutral, 25.5% disagree, 21.6% agree, 11.8% strongly agree and 7.8% strongly disagree

4.10.2 Mentions

Respondents were asked whether more mentions on social media affects the performance of their SME. Their responses are represented in table 4.24

Table 4.24 Mentions and performance of SMEs

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	2	3.9
Disagree	4	7.8
Neutral	10	19.6
Agree	24	47.1
Strongly Agree	10	19.6

Total	50	98.0
Missing	1	2.0
Total	51	100.0

According to table 4.24, 47.1% of respondents agreed, 19.6% neutral, 19.6% strongly agree, 7.8% disagree and 3.9% strongly disagree

4.10.3 Large following

Respondents were queried about whether having a substantial following on social media impacts the performance of their SME. The responses to this query are detailed in Table 4.25.

Table 4.25 Followers and performance of SMEs

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	4	7.8
Disagree	20	39.2
Neutral	15	29.4
Agree	9	17.6
Strongly Agree	3	5.9
Total	51	100.0

According to table 4.25, 39.2% of respondents disagree, 29.4% are neutral, 17.6% agree, 7.8% strongly disagree and 5.9% strongly agree

4.10.4 Collaborating

We asked respondents whether collaborating with other SMEs affects the performance of SMEs. Their responses are indicated in table 4.26

Table 4.26 Collaboration and performance of SMEs

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	2.0
Disagree	1	2.0
Neutral	7	13.7
Agree	31	60.8
Strongly Agree	8	15.7
Total	48	94.1
Missing	3	5.9
Total	51	100.0

According to table 4.26, 60.8% of respondents agree, 15.7% strongly agree, 13.7% neutral, 2% strongly disagree and 2% disagree

4.11 Content and performance

The second objective aimed to assess how content creation affects the performance of online-based SMEs. This was evaluated through various indicators of content creation, including the originality of content, resharing content, levels of engagement, and influencer reviews.

4.11.1 Originality of content

We asked respondents whether original content affects the performance of an SME. Their responses are indicated in table 4.27

Table 4.27 Originality of content and performance of SMEs

	Frequency	Percent
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Strongly Disagree	1	2.0
Disagree	1	2.0
Neutral	11	21.6
Agree	27	52.9
Strongly Agree	10	19.6
Total	50	98.0
Missing	1	2.0
Total	51	100.0

According to chart 4.27 we see 52.9% of respondents agree, 21.6% are neutral, 19.6% strongly agree, 2% strongly disagree and 2% agree

4.11.2 Resharing content

We asked respondents whether resharing content that shows customers using their products or services affects performance of an SME. Their responses are indicated in table 4.28

Table 4.28 Resharing of content and performance of SME

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	2.0
Neutral	13	25.5
Agree	20	39.2
Strongly Agree	14	27.5
Total	48	94.1
Missing	3	5.9

Total	51	100.0
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According to table 4.28, 39.2% of respondents agree, 27.5% strongly agree, 25.5% neutral and 2.0% strongly disagree

4.11.3 Engagement

We asked respondents whether posting consistently affects the performance of SMEs. Their responses are shown in table 4.29

Table 4.29 Consistency and performance of SMEs

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	2	3.9
Neutral	12	23.5
Agree	24	47.1
Strongly Agree	12	23.5
Total	50	98.0
Missing	1	2.0
Total	51	100.0

According to table 4.29 we see that 41.7% agree, 23.5% strongly agree, 23.5% neutral and 3.9% strongly disagree

4.11.4 Influencer reviews

We asked respondents whether sharing content that highlights influencers using their products or services affects the performance of SMEs. Their responses are indicated in table 4.30

Table 4.30 Influencers and performance of SMEs

	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	2	3.9
Neutral	18	35.3
Agree	20	39.2
Strongly Agree	9	17.6
Total	49	96.1
Missing	2	3.9
Total	51	100.0

According to table 4.30, we see that 39.2% of respondents agree, 35.3% neutral, 17.6% strongly agree and 3.9% strongly disagree

4.12 Video content and performance

The third objective was to determine the influence of video content on the performance of online based SMEs. The indicators of video content were; viewer retention, video view time, unique website visits and referrals.

4.12.1 Viewer retention

We asked respondents whether video content performs better than pictures. Their responses are indicated in table 4.13

Table 4.31 Video content and performance of SMEs

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	2.0

Disagree	2	3.9
Neutral	14	27.5
Agree	20	39.2
Strongly Agree	12	23.5
Total	49	96.1
Missing	2	3.9
Total	51	100.0

According to table 4.31, we see, 39.2% agree, 27.5% neutral, 23.5% strongly agree, 3.9% disagree and 2.0% strongly disagree.

4.12.2 Trust and credibility

We asked respondents whether showing your face in your content builds more trust with followers. Their responses are indicated in table 4.31

Table 4.31 Showing face and performance of SMEs

	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	7	13.7
Neutral	11	21.6
Agree	23	45.1
Strongly Agree	7	13.7
Total	48	94.1
Missing	3	5.9
Total	51	100.0

According to chart 4.32, 45.1% agree, 21.6% neutral, 13.7% strongly agree, 13.7% disagree

4.12.3 Driving sales

We asked respondents whether video content generates more sales in comparison to pictures.

Their responses are indicated in table 4.33

Table 4.33 Video content and performance of SMEs

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	2	3.9
Disagree	5	9.8
Neutral	26	51.0
Agree	14	27.5
Strongly Agree	1	2.0
Total	48	94.1
Missing	3	5.9
Total	51	100.0

According to table 4.33, we see 51% are neutral, 27.5% agree, 9.8% disagree, 3.9% strongly disagree and 2% strongly agree

4.12.4 Information delivery

We asked respondents whether video content allows followers to understand SMEs products and services better than pictures. Their responses are shown in table 4.34

Table 4.34 Video content and performance of SMEs

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	2.0
Disagree	2	3.9
Neutral	11	21.6
Agree	20	39.2
Strongly Agree	15	29.4
Total	49	96.1
Missing	2	3.9
Total	51	100.0

According to table 4.34, we see 39.2% agree, 29.4% strongly agree, 21.6% neutral, 3.9% disagree and 2% strongly disagree

4.13 Consistency and performance

The fourth objective was to determine the influence of consistency on the performance of online based SMEs. The indicators of content consistency were; ease of posting, content planning, increased social media presence and social media algorithm. Their responses are shown in table 4.35

Table 4.35 Content consistency and performance of SMEs

	Frequent	Percent
Strongly Disagree	12	23.5
Disagree	17	33.3
Neutral	10	19.6

Strongly Agree	6	11.8
Agree	3	5.9
Total	48	94.1
Missing	3	5.9
Total	51	100.0

4.13.1 Ease of posting

We asked respondents whether posting consistently on social media is easy. Their responses are indicated in table 4.35

Table 4.35 Content consistency and performance of SMEs

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	12	23.5
Disagree	17	33.3
Neutral	10	19.6
Agree	6	11.8
Strongly Agree	3	5.9
Total	48	94.1
Missing	3	5.9
Total	51	100.0

According to table 4.35, 33.3% disagree, 23.5% strongly disagree, 19.6% neutral, 11.8% agree and 5.9% strongly agree

4.13.2 Content planning

We asked respondents whether having a content calendar is essential for SMEs. Their responses are indicated in table 4.36

Table 4.36 Importance of a content calendar to SMEs

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	3	5.9
Disagree	4	7.8
Neutral	14	27.5
Agree	19	37.3
Strongly Agree	9	17.6
Total	49	96.1
Missing	2	3.9
Total	51	100.0

According to table 4.36, we see 37.3% of respondents agree, 27.5% neutral, 17.6% strongly agree, 7.8% disagree and 5.9% strongly disagree

4.13.3 Increased social media presence

We asked respondents whether posting consistently on social media guarantees success. Their responses are shown in table 4.37

Table 4.37 Content consistency and success on social media

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	2.0
Disagree	4	7.8
Neutral	10	19.6
Agree	23	45.1
Strongly Agree	9	17.6
Total	47	92.2

Missing	4	7.8
Total	51	100.0

According to table 4.37, 45.1% agree, 19.6% neutral, 17.6% strongly agree, 7.8% disagree and 2% strongly disagree

4.13.4 Social media algorithm

We asked respondents whether the social media algorithm favors content consistency. Their responses are expressed in table 4.38

Table 4.38 The social media algorithm

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	2	3.9
Disagree	5	9.8
Neutral	8	15.7
Agree	22	43.1
Strongly Agree	11	21.6
Total	48	94.1
Missing	3	5.9
Total	51	100.0

According to table 4.38, we see that 43.1% of respondents agree, 21.6% strongly agree, 15.7% neutral, 9.8% disagree and 3.9% strongly disagree

4.10 Summary of the Interview Schedule

The respondents were asked to explain why having a social media strategy was essential to the performance of an SME. Majority of the responses agreed that it was important to have a strategy in place for the following reasons; it provides a road map on when to upload, the kind of content to upload and the best time to upload.

It helps identify the goal of the account, it shows that the SME understands their market, customers and are able to project different scenarios in advance. A schedule reduces the randomness in posts and provides a flow. It helps to plan ahead as one collects new ideas for future content, it ensures continuous activity of a social media account and a reminder to followers that your business exists and finally a good social media strategy can create targeted marketing that generates sales.

We asked respondents what factors they think affect the performance of an SME, some of their responses include; a lack of a content plan, posting poor quality content, lack of consistency and content overload. The ability to storytell, constant algorithm changes, poor branding, packing and product photography. Lack of originality, low marketing budget, providing a human element in your content, catchy photos, relatability, influencer mentions, using appropriate hashtags, if the person behind the brand is well know or a celebrity , verified accounts and giving your customers rewards example; discount codes, giveaways and rewarding loyal customers.

We asked respondents whether they keep up with social media trends. Respondents provided a mixture of responses; some respondents said yes in order to make the algorithm happy, to keep up with the latest sounds for reels and TikTok videos. Other respondents said sometimes or no because they either do not see the need or they only use trends if it is relevant to their messaging. Respondents were questioned about the role of social media and social media marketing in the future of marketing. The majority of participants expressed agreement, highlighting that social

media stands as a potent marketing tool due to its accessibility, cost-effectiveness, and the considerable amount of time customers spend on these platforms. They emphasized the importance of SMEs maintaining an active presence on social media, as it enables them to extend their customer reach and attract new clientele from diverse locations. Additionally, social media facilitates sales for SMEs without necessitating the establishment of physical storefronts, thereby reducing the expenses associated with traditional brick-and-mortar operations.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter gives the summary of the research findings, discussions, conclusions and the recommendations of the study

5.2 Summary of findings

There was a response rate of 51 out of the 100 questionnaires that were distributed to the selected online based SMEs located in Nairobi county. The response rate was 51%. The primary objective was to ascertain the influence of brand awareness on the

performance of SMEs. The group of respondents agreed that brand awareness influenced the performance of online based SMEs. Factors like influencer mentions, collaborations, having a social media strategy and paid advertisements positively helped SMEs increase their reach in terms of brand awareness. A factor that did not greatly influence brand awareness is having many followers and It was also determined that growing organically on social media was not easy.

The secondary objective was to investigate how the quality of content influenced the performance of online based SMEs. The respondents agreed that quality of content influenced performance, stating factors like; posting original content, highlighting customer feedback of a product or service, showing the face behind a business and content highlighting influencers using an SMEs product or service helped build trust with their respective audience and positively influenced performance.

The third objective was to examine the influence of video content on the performance of online based SMEs. After analysis, it was seen that video content influenced the performance of SMEs. Respondents indicated that video content was more impactful and performed better than pictures, video content allowed customers to understand their product or services better and that video content generated more sales in comparison to pictures.

The fourth objective was to determine how content consistency influenced the performance of online based SMEs and after analysis, it was seen that content consistency influenced the performance of SMEs. The respondents cited factors like; having a content calendar and posting consistently positively influenced performance. Respondents stated that content consistency was not easy and that the social media algorithm favored consistency.

5.3 Discussion of findings

The research conducted by Otieno in 2014, focusing on the utilization of Facebook as a marketing tool within the Kenyan tour operators industry, shed light on various difficulties

faced. These included a lack of regular updates on Facebook pages, as evidenced by the research which found that 44% of respondents never updated their organizations' Facebook pages. Furthermore, 37% reported updating them once a month, and 19% did so weekly. The study also revealed that Facebook pages were managed by individuals who lacked both the skill and interest required for effective operation. Lastly, Kenyan tour operators encountered significant challenges in garnering Facebook likes, with 52% of respondents citing this as a primary obstacle in utilizing Facebook as a marketing tool.

The researcher's findings suggested keeping the content current and fresh on Facebook as an important factor to attracting repeat visitors. Findings from our study corroborates this statement. Our research also shows the importance of creating original content as a way to increase brand awareness and provides supporting data that indicates that content consistency is important and positively influences the performance of SMEs. Respondents from our study also stated that business owners did not need video editing skills in order to create video content on social media platforms, indicating a short learning curve as an advantage.

The research conducted by Mutero in 2019 regarding the impact of social media interaction on the financial performance of commercial banks in Kenya yielded several noteworthy findings. It was observed that commercial banks in Kenya have warmly welcomed social media interaction, with Facebook emerging as the predominant platform boasting the highest user base. Consequently, it is the most frequently utilized medium for interactions between firms and their customers. This form of interaction serves as a valuable platform for marketing initiatives, promotional campaigns, and provides real-time customer feedback, thus aiding banks in gaining deeper insights into their customers' needs. Importantly, the study revealed that social media interaction led to a reduction in the cost associated with acquiring new customers for commercial banks.

The findings from our research align closely with the results of the previous study mentioned, as respondents in our study strongly affirmed the significance of maintaining content consistency for building trust and fostering robust engagement with their online

audiences. Moreover, our study also underscored that achieving high engagement is a pivotal component in gauging the success of a social media page.

The study conducted by Khamis in 2018, which examined the impact of social media marketing on the performance of small and medium enterprises in Nairobi County, Kenya, discovered that a significant majority of respondents concurred with the practice of utilizing social media platforms to gather feedback from customers, seek innovative ideas, and communicate internal organizational changes to customers. Our own research corroborates these findings and adds further insight by emphasizing the crucial role of sharing customer feedback in not only establishing brand awareness but also in fostering trust with the online audience.

5.4 Conclusions of the study

Based on the four effects of social media marketing that guided the study, it was seen that brand awareness, quality of the content, video content and content consistency has a strong positive relationship with performance of an SME.

This means the higher the brand awareness the higher the performance of an SME, the higher the quality of content, the higher the performance of an SMEs, the more the video content the higher the performance of an SMEs and the more consistent the content the higher the performance of an SME.

5.5 Recommendations of the study

Based on the study's findings and conclusions, it is advised that SMEs take steps to enhance their performance. This can be achieved through creative collaborations with other SMEs or influencers, which can significantly boost brand visibility. Additionally, the implementation of a content calendar and a well-defined social media strategy is crucial for SMEs, as these tools enable business owners to consistently produce organized content aligned with their brand objectives.

While social media platforms offer a free and extensive reach to approximately 3.8 billion users worldwide, it is equally important for SMEs to have a dedicated website alongside their social media presence. A professionally designed website instills confidence in customers and provides SMEs with an opportunity to showcase their track record, expertise, credentials, and overall trustworthiness with their clientele..

SMEs should ensure that the quality of content they produce is of a high standard. Consumers spend on average 147 minutes or 2 hours and 27 min on social media daily (Broadband Search, 2022). Therefore the content needs to achieve one or two of the four goals which are; to educate, to inspire, to entertain and to convert. Video content is a powerful and engaging tool of communication and SMEs should consider incorporating more video content into their posts.

Inventors of social media platforms should consider making user first platforms. An article by (Cybernews, 2022) points out Big tech's obsession with winning the war of attention by revamping its algorithms. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Youtube, TikTok and LinkedIn all rely heavily on algorithms to rank and recommend content and platforms like Instagram have been accused of prioritizing engagement for paid advertisements.

On January 1, 2021, the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) introduced the digital service tax, which applies to both companies and individuals offering digital services. These services encompass a wide range of activities, including but not limited to online advertising and the sale of digital content such as audio and video through digital platforms. According to a November 2022 article in Business Daily, only 9% of Kenyan citizens hold full-time permanent jobs, highlighting the prevalent issues of poverty and economic dependency in an economy where the government grapples with a severe unemployment crisis. The enforcement of such stringent tax laws can create apprehension among online business operators, leading to concerns about potential legal violations and associated fines. Our recommendation is for the government to consider implementing more flexible and accommodating regulations that enable its citizens to

engage in online business activities without unnecessary barriers and fears of non-compliance.

5.6 Suggestions for further research

The study recommends further research can be done on the impact of short form video content with specific focus on TikTok, a short form video sharing app that has drastically grown in popularity since 2020. TikTok revolutionized the social media game and influenced apps like Instagram and YouTube to incorporate short form video options like Reels and Youtube shorts into their platforms.

APPENDIX I: Letters to the Respondents

CECILIA NYAKARO OYWAYA,
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
P.O BOX 30197-00100,
NAIROBI, KENYA.

Dear respondent,

REF: RESEARCH PROJECT

I am a student at the University Of Nairobi, pursuing a Masters Degree in Project Planning and Management. I have decided to do my project based on, “effects of social media marketing on the performance of online based SMEs: A case of SME set up on social media platforms based in Nairobi County.”

I hereby kindly request you to assist me to achieve this objective by filling in the questionnaire for me as truthfully as you can. The information collected will be used for research purposes only and is strictly confidential and voluntary. Do NOT write your name on the questionnaire.

Thank you and God bless you.

Yours faithfully

Cecilia Nyakaro Oywaya

APPENDIX II: Questionnaire to the Respondents

SECTION A

Please take a few moments and fill in the section on information about yourself by ticking the appropriate area and commenting if need be.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Kindly indicate your gender

M F

2. Is your business active on social media?

Yes No

3. Does social media play an essential part in the running of your business?

Yes No

If your answer is YES, briefly explain

.....

4. Does your business have a physical location?

Yes No

5. If your answer is YES, did the Covid-19 pandemic force you to close your physical shop and solely rely on social media?

Yes No

6. Do customers trust businesses that have a physical location more than ones that are purely active on social media?

Yes No

SECTION B: INFLUENCE OF BRAND AWARENESS ON PERFORMANCE OF SMEs

Read each statement carefully and rate by ticking in the below, your level of agreement or disagreement with the statement. Use the key provided

Key: 5- Strongly Agree 4-Agree 3-Neutral 2-Disagree 1-Strongly Disagree

		RATING				
No.	Statement	5	4	3	2	1
7.	The more followers I have on my social media, the more sales I have					
8.	The more mentions my business gets on social media the more sales I get					
9.	Every SME must have a website					
10.	Organic growth on social media is easy					
11.	Paid advertisement on social media generates more sales/sales leads					
12.	Paid advertisements promote brand awareness					
13.	Collaborating with other SMEs builds brand awareness					
14.	Posting frequently leads to brand awareness					
15.	Influencer mentions leads to brand awareness					
16.	Influencer mentions generate sales					
17.	A social media strategy is essential in creating brand awareness					

SECTION C: INFLUENCE OF CONTENT ON PERFORMANCE OF SMEs

Read each statement carefully and rate by ticking in the below, your level of agreement or disagreement with the statement. Use the key provided

Key: 5- Strongly Agree 4-Agree 3-Neutral 2-Strongly 1-Strongly Disagree

		RATING				
No.	STATEMENT	5	4	3	2	1
18.	Posting original content leads to a high engagement					
19.	Posting consistently leads to high engagement					
20.	Posting consistently builds trust with customers					
21.	Creating content that highlighting customers' feedback generates more sales					
22.	Content highlighting influencers using your product or services generates more sales					
23.	Content highlighting influencers using your product or services builds trust with your audience					
24.	Showing face in your content builds more trust with your audience					

SECTION D: INFLUENCE OF VIDEO CONTENT ON PERFORMANCE OF AN SME

Read each statement carefully and rate by ticking in the below, your level of agreement or disagreement with the statement. Use the key provided

Key: 5- Strongly Agree 4-Agree 3-Neutral 2-Strongly 1-Strongly Disagree

		RATING				
No.	STATEMENT	5	4	3	2	1
25.	Video content performs better than pictures					

26.	Video content allows the customers to understand an SMEs product or services better					
27.	Video content is more impactful than pictures					
28.	You must have video editing skills in order to create video content					
29.	Video content creates more engagement					
30.	Video content generates more sales in comparison to pictures					

SECTION D: INFLUENCE OF CONTENT CONSISTENCY ON PERFORMANCE OF AN SME
Read each statement carefully and rate by ticking in the below, your level of agreement or disagreement with the statement. Use the key provided

Key: 5- Strongly Agree 4-Agree 3-Neutral 2-Disagree 1-Strongly Disagree

		RATING				
No.	STATEMENT	5	4	3	2	1
31.	You must post consistently to be successful on social media					
32.	A content calendar is essential for every SME					
33.	Content consistency is easy					
34.	The social media algorithm favors content consistency					

Thank you for taking time to answer the questions

APPENDIX III: Interview Questions

These interview questions are designed to gather data on the effects of social media marketing on the performance of SMEs

PART A BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Highest educational qualification

PHD

Masters

Undergraduate

Diploma

Form four leaver

2. Which industry is your business in?

.....

3. How long have you run your business for?

0-1 years

2-3 years

3-4 years

5 years+

4. How long have you run your business on social media?

0-1 year

2-3 years

3-4 years

4-5 years

5 years+

5. Do you have a website

Yes No

PART B

6. What platforms are you active on?

Facebook

Instagram

Youtube

- Twitter
- WhatsApp
- TikTok
- Other

7. How many followers do you have on Facebook?

.....

8. How many followers do you have on Instagram?

.....

9. Do you update and create content for your own business?

Yes No

10. Do you have a social media strategy?

Yes No

11. Do you know how to create a social media strategy?

Yes No

12. Do you think having a social media strategy is essential to the performance of an SMEs?

Briefly explain

.....

.....

13. Have you ever paid for advertisements on any social media platform?

Yes No

14. If yes for qsn.13, how did your business benefit from the paid advertisement?

.....

.....

15. In your experience, what factors affect the performance of an SMEs on social media. Briefly explain

.....
.....

16. In your opinion, which factors determine whether an account is successful on social media?

.....
.....

17. Which social media platform gives you the most sales?

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Youtube
- Twitter
- Whatsapp
- TikTok
- Other

18. Do you keep up with social media trends in order for your business to stay relevant? Briefly explain.

.....

19. Is social media and social media marketing the future of SMEs? Briefly explain

.....
.....

Thank you for taking time to answer the questions

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