



NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY

**INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES
MASTER BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

**THE MEDIATING ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BETWEEN FACTORS
AFFECTING PERFORMANCE OF SMEs DURING COVID-19
PANDEMIC**

MASTERS THESIS

MARAM IBRAHIM SHETAYA

Nicosia

2022

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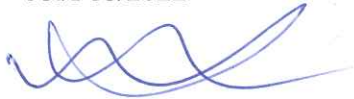
ACCEPTANCE

We certify that we have read the thesis submitted by MARAM IBRAHIM SHETAYA titled "THE MEDIATING ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BETWEEN FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE OF SMEs DURING COVID-19." and that in our combined opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Educational Sciences.

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Declaration

I, Maram I.Shetaya hereby declare that all information, documents, analysis and results in this thesis have been collected and presented according to the academic rules and ethical guidelines of Institute of Graduate Studies, Near East University. I also declare that as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced information and data that are not original to this study.

MARAM IBRAHIM SHETAYA

08/Feb/2022

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Maram Ibrahim Shetaya

ABSTRACT

THE MEDIATING ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BETWEEN FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE OF SMEs DURING COVID-19

This research sets out to analyze the performance of Small and Medium-scale Enterprises (SMEs) as they apply social media throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. A cross-sectional descriptive research design was adopted, where a survey was used to obtain relevant evidence from 254 SMEs in Northern Cyprus. Both Descriptive and Inferential statistics were employed, while the Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling was employed to test hypotheses proposed in the study. Results discovered that Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Twitter were the commonest social media platforms used by SMEs owners and operators during the pandemic in reaching out to their customers. Furthermore, it was evidenced that all identified except facility conditions are positively significant and related to SMEs performance while cost harmed performance. The study also provided inference on social media significantly mediating the influence of cost, compatibility, perceived usefulness on SMEs performance. Hence, useful insights were proffered on opening for future studies.

Key Words: COVID-19, social media, SMEs, performance, perceived utility, perceived ease-of-use.

ÖZ

KOVID-19 SIRASINDA KOBİ'LERİN PERFORMANSINI ETKİLEYEN FAKTÖRLER ARASINDA SOSYAL MEDYANIN ARACILIK ROLÜ

Bu araştırma, COVID-19 salgını boyunca sosyal medyayı uygularken Küçük ve Orta Ölçekli İşletmelerin (KOBİ'ler) performansını analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Kuzey Kıbrıs'taki 254 KOBİ'den ilgili kanıtları elde etmek için bir anketin kullanıldığı bir kesitsel tanımlayıcı araştırma tasarımı benimsenmiştir. Hem Tanımlayıcı hem de Çıkarımsal istatistikler kullanılmış, çalışmada önerilen hipotezleri test etmek için Kısmi En Küçük Kareler Yapısal Eşitlik Modellemesi kullanılmıştır. Sonuçlar, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp ve Twitter'ın KOBİ sahipleri ve işletmecilerinin pandemi sırasında müşterilerine ulaşmak için kullandıkları en yaygın sosyal medya platformları olduğunu ortaya çıkardı. Maliyet performansına zarar verirken KOBİ'lerin performansı. Çalışma ayrıca, maliyet, uyumluluk ve algılanan faydanın KOBİ'lerin performansı üzerindeki etkisine önemli ölçüde aracılık eden sosyal medya hakkında çıkarım sağlamıştır. Bu nedenle, gelecekteki çalışmalara açılma konusunda faydalı bilgiler sunuldu.

Anahtar Kelimeler: COVID-19, sosyal medya, KOBİ'ler, performans, algılanan fayda, algılanan kullanım kolaylığı.

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List of Abbreviations

SMEs : Small And Medium-Scale Enterprises .

S.M: Social Media .

PEU: Perceived Usefulness .

PEOU: Perceived ease-of-use.

COM: Compatibility.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Recently, social media usage has grown significantly, whereby technology helps firms to become more effective in addition to being competitive as a unified component of running business operations (Abed, 2020) and represent a new and improved version of nimble method of conducting business (Ahamat et al., 2017). It is therefore clear that social networking has become a need for all businesses, irrespective of their sizes (Ahmad et al., 2018). There are several advantages to businesses that embrace this strategy, including advertising, marketing and branding, consumer feedback, and market research as well as product development (Ainin et al., 2015; Ahmad et al., 2018). Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) are no longer exempt from these benefits since social media have become significant to these businesses as well (Ajibade, 2018).

Despite the importance of social media adoption from existing literature (Ajzen, 2011), it indicates that solely a minute low range of The apparent benefits and value are convincing to SMEs. (Akgül, 2018). The entire outcome was revealed. a continuing drawback for its implementation, like imprecise knowledge and inadequate relevance among small businesses, which is partially utilized (Akpan et al,2020). Furthermore, is a lack of an effective framework and metric for measurement implementation (Al-Tawara, & Gide, 2017).

There have been noticeable global economic changes as a result of the Corona virus disease-19 (Al-Adwan, A& Kokash,2019). The novel COVID-19 pandemic has led many nations to take extreme measures. Restrictions and total lockdowns on most economic as well as social activities have been detrimental to many business organizations, SMs enterprises inclusive (Al-Adwan, et al,2020). These changes had significant impacts on the capital and supply chains, as well as availability, and distribution of products. For instance, a halt in production in China

as a result of the shut-down of factories and drops in supply; this was due to the fall in demand for automotive parts, clothing, and components (Al-Ajlouni, 2020). A significant global increase in the unemployment rate has resulted from the closure of major travel, hospitality, and retail industries. The negative effect COVID-19 on the global economy within a short time frame is unprecedented (Al-Khalidi, 2021). The severity of the pandemic tells more on SMEs when juxtaposed with the larger firms as the significant decline has been recorded in the output of the SMEs (Alismailli et al,2020). The economy has been sustained by this situation due to the critical beneficial roles SMEs play globally. An example is the United Kingdom which had Small companies number 5.94 million. in 2020 amounting to 99.3% of all businesses with 13.3 million people employed and a turnover of approximately 1.6 trillion dollar. Furthermore, more than 90% of businesses in Africa are SMEs and these SMEs have been responsible for empowering the sustainability transformation admits this period of COVID-19 crisis.

The SME sector which usually act as a safeguard for the economy with a captivating workforce in times of economic and financial crisis can no longer play this role considering the adversative of the pandemic. The catastrophe which resulted from COVID-19 had a huge negative effect on SMEs as they were the sectors most prone to the economic crisis experienced globally (Aljowaidi, et al, 2015). These small businesses have limited workers amounting to less than 50 and some businesses are run by families comprising of one or two employees which makes them more vulnerable to the consequences of COVID-19. There have been various complaints received globally with regards to the effect of COVID-19 since March 2020 by ministries of Cooperatives and SMEs. There will be a definite increase in the number of complaints considering the reports of major actors in the business sector, coupled with data gotten from the government. These data projects that sales and low demand complaints amounted to 68%, capital generation complaints of 14%, with 9% reacting negatively to the

delay in distribution and operation. Availability of the raw materials was also a major issue as recorded by 5% who tendered their complaints, with the other 4% reporting stunted production.

The impact of Corona on SMEs stemmed from the fact that restrictions were placed on movement in the community and also there was the imposition of social distancing by the government. This is a measure to minimize the contact level with other people and as a result, minimize transmission and spread of any disease (Alrousan et al,2020). When there is an absence of a vaccine, social distancing is the most potent way of combating any epidemic until the vaccine is available on a wide scale. This however has hugely impacted negatively on the functioning and marketing of SMEs globally.

Considering the ravaging menace of the COVID-19 pandemic on SMEs there is a need for these SMEs to continue operating especially since they add value to the economic status of the economy. This has led to the adoption of online marketing on a global scale since the restrictions prevent face-to-face business transactions. Many companies have implemented this approach of online marketing and it has served as an alternative to shopping for customers as it has increased in popularity and patronage from the general public. The most potent means of communicating with customers is a digital marketing and this tool has come into full use due to the pandemic. Digitization has come to be seen as the solution to the policy of quarantine and this has helped the SMEs to still market their products. Attractive, accurate, and useful information has been provided to customers by the SMEs using E-marketing.

According to study Alshamaila et al. (2013), technical skills of the human resources for implementing and operating digital marketing are lacking. There is also a wrong and limiting perception by SMEs demanding the use of social media at a very high cost, but this is not the case for those that employ social media as actions such as home telework, virtual conferences, and online shopping keep on growing popular amongst SMEs businesses. There are skeletal operations of SMEs that deal in food supplies like cafeterias, retail enterprises, and restaurants

while full attention is channeled to online ordering, picking up, and delivery. It could be said that the COVID-19 pandemic although catastrophic, made SMEs discover new opportunities. The lesser capital reserves, lower production rate, and less inventory of SMEs have made them more prone to crisis compared to larger businesses coupled with the fact that they practice more one-on-one transactions (Awa et al, 2015). The leaders and small companies confront hurdles also in a time of crisis. SMEs are also financially obligated to the salaries of employees and cost of the facility even though they might lack a notable overseer (Barney, J. (1991). SMEs are doing all possible to maintain business activities by employing flexible strategies and constantly looking out for new market opportunities. Despite these efforts, there has been a revelation of how frail and vulnerable many SMEs operating through the pandemic among poor countries. Research conducted by McKinsey, discovered an estimated figure of 50 million as the number of informal jobs like retail, wholesale, trade, and manufacturing in Africa that are more likely to be affected by economic shocks as a result of the pandemic. In some developing countries like Nigeria, the informal economy may stand for 70% of the Gross Domestic Products (Basit et al,2020). Technologies that are related to digitization have become more important during the pandemic due to the restriction and social distancing measures put in place as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. SMEs' vulnerability has however been exacerbated by the fact that they lack the digitization, implementation of technology and have a low online presence; this is especially severe for family businesses (Bertoni, 2020).

Limitations for adopting social media by SMEs have been analyzed by Bhattacharya & Wamba, (2018) where he proposed three ways, namely; social media competence, organizations, and individuals which comprises employees. It has also been discovered that environmental, organizational, and technological factors had direct effect on successful adoption of SME technology (Biucky, & Harandi, 2017). It was also shown in previous studies that in order to adopt digital technology, SMEs have to modify on new ways for operating

(Chiu et al,2017). Although this change is one of the biggest challenges that small businesses face, it always pays off when the challenge is surpassed. One major advantage of SM adoption is that, it gives SMEs access to resources that to a large extent are consumed by larger companies (Chong & Olesen, 2017). Social media also gives small businesses the ability to compete outside their localized range.

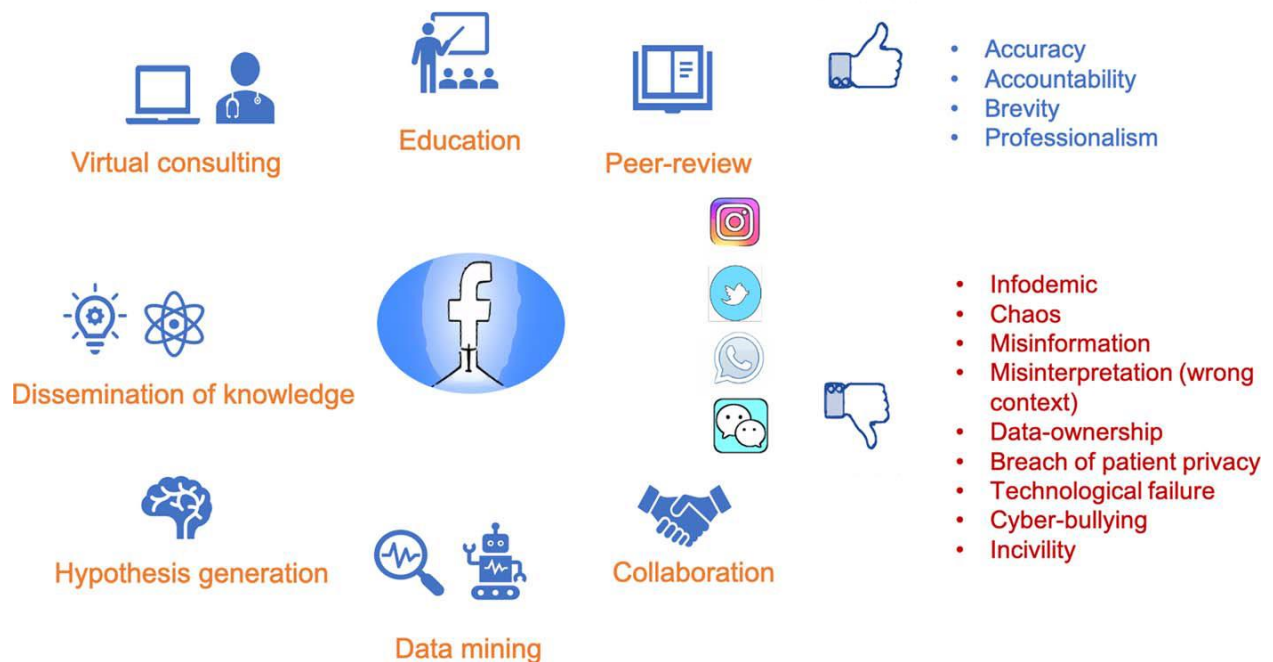


FIGURE 1: social media—utility and pitfalls.

It is uncertain how long COVID-19 will remain globally and even more unclear that the status quo will be re-established. It remains a fact that COVID-19 has pushed SMEs to introduce digital technologies to help maintain their customer base to stay in business. The SMEs that emerge stronger after the pandemic through the use of social media will likely transit into larger companies (Coombs, 2007).

1.2 Problem statement

The way the world communicates has altered as a result of social media. influenced the message channel to a large extent. This new communication trend is therefore needed especially in this

time of restriction and unlimited curfews to relate with the customers and get feedback from them to deliver the best to them irrespective of the pandemic.

SMEs' performance before the outbreak was on the rise but since the inception of the COVID-19 pandemic, this performance scale has dropped drastically due to the curfews and restrictions placed by the authorities and this has resulted in a huge loss on the part of the SMEs. One means of addressing this major problem will be to develop a means where the SMEs can reach out to customers and deliver their products or services to them in their homes despite the restrictions put in place.

However, most SMEs don't have the wherewithal to apply social media marketing successfully, and as a result, their businesses are dealt a huge blow and sometimes lead to them folding up the business. The lack of social media literacy has placed most businesses in a disastrous state as they have no means of reaching out to customers and delivering their products or services which would have meant they stay in business despite the pandemic restrictions.

Regardless of the free accessibility of social media to small businesses, most of them still lack the literacy to use it credibly and effectively, and as such their products are not well represented in the large market and this results in huge losses and financial decline which stood as a foremost delinquent this current research intends solving.

1.3 Research questions

This research considers several SMEs have come to realize that, if they want to maintain a high market value, attract an influx, and blossom financially during this COVID-19 pandemic, they must be ready to search for and adopt social media techniques to stay in touch with their customers hence the need to groom staff to master the art of social media marketing to access the majority of people rather than the traditional strategy which was in place before the

pandemic. The aforementioned discussions yields the following research questions which are considered relevant to the study:

- To what extent does social media usage by SMEs in North Cyprus?
- What are the factors influencing SME's performance and social media?
- What are the mediating roles of social media on factors influencing SMEs performance?
- Are there any effect of social media marketing on SMEs performance?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

Broadly, this study intends to identify influencers of social media marketing on SMEs performance, and incisively determine the mediating role of social media on factors affecting SMEs performance throughout the COVID-19 epidemic in North Cyprus, while specific objectives are to;

- determine the extent of social media usage by SMEs in North Cyprus
- identify factors influencing SMEs performance and social media
- examine the mediating role of social media on factors influencing SMEs performance
- analyze the effect of social media marketing on SMEs' performance.

1.5 Scope of the study

Several social media marketing techniques were analyzed in this research coupled with the benefits, uses, and impacts of adopting them. Empirically, more prominence were on the financial performance of SMEs resulting from social media applications. Assessment of the nexus between social media marketing and firms' performance in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic is carefully observed in this study.

The rationale for the study hinged on intent to examine the mediating role of social media on factors affecting the performance of SMEs during the COVID-19 epidemic in North Cyprus. The study will capture social media in terms of facilitating condition, compatibility, and cost affecting the SMEs performance in North Cyprus

1.6 Significance of the study

Results obtained from the study will aid future research related to social media marketing in epochs of pandemics. Study will also provide information that will assist laymen to make decisions based on social media marketing to improve their marketing techniques and also assist students who know nothing about social media marketing considering that their fields are different. This study can give companies a better understanding of social media marketing and help them to build and maintain a sound and profitable plan thus assisting them to meet the very purpose of their establishment despite the COVID-19 pandemic. On a final note, the mind and knowledge of major stakeholders in firms and even ordinary people, researchers, and others can be broadened about social media marketing and how it can be utilized.

1.7 Operational Definition of Terms

Social Media: social media was defined by Dahnil et al (2014), as a service that is based on the web and enables individuals to develop profiles that can be publicized, and also have access to the links posted by other users in a system

SMEs: are outlined as non-subsidiary and freelance venture engaging services of limited workers.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Concept of social media

The term "social media" denotes an application that permits handlers to interact with each other, by manufacturing and sharing innovative forms of text, visual, and audio information (Davis, 1989). Social media was defined by Fill (2009), as a service based on the web and enables individuals to develop profiles that can be publicized, and also have access to the links posted by other users in a system. He also mentioned that for social media to be effective and useful in reaching out, there has to be some level of social media awareness which he defined as the knowledge or understanding of something that happens around someone to a large extent. Social media usage has been opposed by the lack of awareness as pointed out by Fornell & Larcker, (1981). The awareness of social media has also been identified as the prior determinant for informal communication. There has been an improvement in information dissemination and clearer understanding as a result of media awareness (Gangwar, et al,2015). The decision to continue using web-related technology has been influenced by awareness which is a vital factor (Gavino et al, 2019).

Computer networks all across the globe are connected via the internet protocol suite, which serves billions of users. The way individuals communicate daily has been profoundly altered by media technology breakthroughs. In today's youthful generation, social media use is on the rise, especially among college students. It's a chance to meet individuals both within and outside of school (Govinnage, & Sachitra,2019). Participating in social networking can make people feel like they are part of a larger group. Concerns concerning the impact on students' grades of their increasing use of social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace had been

raised as a result of their rising popularity. Mobile and web-based technology usage creates extremely dynamic platforms for people to trade, collaborate, produce, discuss, and alter user-generated content (Grobler, 2014). So-called "social media" has become overused in recent years. One of the most interesting aspects of this website is the way it engages the user. Apps for creating and sharing user content are included in this category of web-based apps. Social media and news can easily be mistaken for each other because they're often used interchangeably in our daily lives.

2.1.2 Social Media Marketing

Companies and consumers, i.e., users, both contribute material to social media, according to Irvine and Anderson (2006)'s definition of social media. Customers increasingly have more influence, particularly in the tourism business, where other people's evaluations and views have a considerable impact on purchasing decisions (Itliong, 2020). While social media gives companies with new problems and chances for keeping up with their markets, learning about the wants and opinions of their consumers, as well as communicating directly and personally with them, Web 2.0 also presents businesses with new obstacles and opportunities. It's now possible to communicate directly with customers and deliver customized messaging via social media (Karimi & Naghibi, 2015). Customers and producers may communicate with each other in a variety of ways via social media, including consumer to consumer and consumer to producer (Kim et al, 2013).

Before incorporating social media into a company's marketing plan, there are a few factors to keep in mind. A business needs to be active on social media if its customers expect it to be (Low et al, 2011). There are five key guidelines to follow while managing SMM, according to Lutfi (2020). These are; be active, interesting, humble, casual, and honest.

A company's social media operations should also be dependable on the organization's core values. Social media marketing initiatives should be integrated into the company's overall

marketing strategy in light of IMC (Kotler et al. 2016). Charlesworth (2015), discovered many organizations today lack stated goals for their social media presence, and instead use these channels because everyone else appears to be doing so. When introducing a new marketing channel, setting goals for the company's SMM is essential. Social media marketing (SMM) is a different marketing channel with its own set of qualities that must be taken into account by organizations (Hays et al. 2012). Social media's unique feature is that information is shared in real-time and is extremely accessible (Hays et al. 2012). Hence, the following social media marketing tools are available:

a) Facebook

Over 1.1 billion people have signed up for Facebook, presenting it as the world's most widespread social network (Naquetta, 2020). When it comes to connecting with potential customers, businesses may utilize Facebook as a reliable communication tool. The firm has to create a Facebook page that is well-intentioned of the platform's courtesy and then shares information with individuals who are interesting and noteworthy to the customers. Information about the company's goods and services, new releases, and other events may then be added to the material. Facebook should be a social network for consumers, not a broadcasting tool, and you should be able to browse the site without being invited. There is a delicate balance to be struck between helping clients achieve their social demands and satisfying their other desires. To avoid coming off as a salesperson, instead of pushing your product or service, consider being a community-oriented marketer that acts as a bridge between practitioners and consumers. Since a firm, you must first invite close friends or missionary customers to join the company's page on Facebook, as they have the potential to develop a budget. Incentives or recognition should be given to those who identify new needs. The sorts of Internet users outlined in the preceding sections should guide your actions. It's an inordinate way to boost a firm's online presence. People who are interested in the business may simply express their

thoughts with current or future consumers about the organization. Create forums where customers may voice their opinions on your products and services (Nofal et al., 2021).

b) Twitter

Admirers from all across the world follow celebrities and politicians on Twitter since it is a popular microblogging site. Tweets are being sent out at a rate of 400,000,000 per day, with 500 million registered users and 400 million tweets per day (Nofal et al., 2020). Each user is limited to a single 140-character message. A firm needs to have a distinct personality. Twitter is a place where people interact and share ideas. Consequently, businesses have a wonderful chance to advertise their brand. Additionally, several companies have set up Twitter accounts to engage with their target populations (Obar & Wildman, 2015).

Businesses may create a twitter account to trail industry leaders, and other key players, as well as to keep their consumers abreast of important announcements and other noteworthy tweets. Get the word out about your business by enlisting your customers' and followers' favorite influencers and media sources. You have an average of 208 followers for each registered user, so if your material resonates with them, they'll retweet it. A tweet can expand substantially if it's retweeted several times. A few little adjustments allow you to accomplish all you can on Facebook.

c) LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a social networking platform focusing mostly on professional and business networking. This platform includes the creation of a LinkedIn company page. Connecting with clients and professionals is easier with a LinkedIn profile (OECD, 2020). AIDA stands for attention, interest, desire, and action, and it should be a constant reminder to us. Obtain endorsements from people who have a lot of influence, such as your friends and family. The "follow" option is a great way to obtain more exposure for your company on LinkedIn, but

don't stop there. Remember that images are more powerful than words when it comes to conveying information (Nofal et al., 2020).

d) **Google+**

Google+ has 343 million monthly visitors and 343 million registered members. Social media marketing may take advantage of a wide range of capabilities in this network. You may use the share button, for example, to send split and filtered Google circles links, movies, and photos. As a further advantage, the cover image may be made larger and crisper. In business, it is important to employ key terms knowingly. Connections to other websites and social networking platforms might be invited. Even if a firm utilizes other resources such as stories, events, hangouts, and the Google+ community, it still must treat its consumers with respect, prudence, and candor (Papadopoulos, Baltas & Balta, 2020).

Several Google properties are linked to a user's publicly viewable Google+ profile. As well as having a profile picture, a section called "About Me," a backdrop photo, and a place to post status updates among other features. A contributor profile and other identification services sections allow users to link their "properties throughout the web," which is another benefit of the system. Additionally, you may provide links to any other social media accounts you have or have made, as well as any blogs or websites to which you've contributed (Obar & Wildman, 2015).

Instagram

Instagram is a popular photo and video-sharing platform that Facebook recently acquired. It boasts 130 million monthly active users. In addition to photos and videos, the corporation may link to other social media sites and allow users to vote for their favorites. Publish new photographs of your performances frequently if you want to keep up to date with the latest fashions. Their social, cognitive, emotional, and epistemological needs are all being met by this arrangement. Organize competitions for photo sharing, give out discount coupons, collect testimonials, and make use of hashtags (Pavlou & Fygenson, 2006).

2.1.3 Advantages of Social Platform Marketing

Since social networking gives various possibilities to address challenges and enhance affordances for its customers, several organizations now often use overtly accessible social networking and micro-blogging sites for innovation, marketing, and after-sales care. Understanding the motivations of users to share their knowledge and making use of social network connections may be accomplished through the use of transactive memory, public goods, and other theories of social capital capitalization (Qalati et al., 2021). In several ways, social media's affordances make it possible for users to share information and have discussions in public. Meta-voting, prompted attention, network-informed associating, and generative role-playing are among the benefits given, as are visibility, permanence, editability, and association (Razak & Latip, 2016). Some challenges remain, such as governance, an excess of information, deciphering quality and accessibility conflicts, contextual cues, and an echo chamber.

Social media marketing has enormous potential for business growth. Recruiting new employees and consumers, building brand awareness and intelligence, fostering word-of-mouth or viral marketing, building customer communities, and doing market research are all made easier with its help (Reeves et al., 2020). It also aids consumers in their communication

and decision-making processes by allowing them to read or hear evaluations, protecting their conversations with other sources of information, and therefore reducing their cognitive burden. Businesses can generate user-targeted content that will help them get a greater audience. Strategic management of social media may elevate it to the status of core competency. In comparison to other forms of information, it is a hip and low-cost alternative. When consumers engage with one another in a wide range of ways, they can learn about and demand information about products, services, brands, and other interests, as well as share their own experiences. Involving clients in designing, producing, and consumption of products and services results in better products and services for them. It offers a chance to compete with sponsored advertising. While the company has some obstacles, the most important of which is the requirement for resources to be committed as well as the difficulty of measuring return on investment (ROI). To better serve its customers, the company can learn about their buying habits and preferences, interact with current and potential customers, identify brand advocates and leaders in word-of-mouth marketing (WOM), enhance the customer experience throughout the entire decision-making procedure, partake in trade shows, and monitor the rivalry (Religia, et al., 2021). Platforms for social networking operate in a variety of ways, including:

Innovation: Using social media, businesses enjoyed improved consideration of their customers' experiences and thoughts, which can lead to new ideas for growth and innovation. A growing number of dealings are turning to social media as a strategy for obtaining fresh ideas from the marketplace without having to spend a thing (Rogers, 2002).

Purchasing Decisions: Consumer involvement and participation in multistage problem-solving assignments culminates in purchase behaviour, which is guided by consumer decision-making models. Need identification, information gathering, alternative assessment, assessment conclusion, and post-purchase assessment are the steps (Rowe et al, 2012). Consumers can help the learning process by which they acquire knowledge about purchase and consumption via the

use of social media marketing. When people absorb new information by reading, watching, participating in debates, or having virtual or actual experiences, their perspectives on learning and behaviour might shift. Consumer insights on intending and definite positions can be inclined by social platforms, which may result in dynamic or latent subject awareness, as well as the provision of a remedy to the problem, through social media. A social platform can support in the second step of "the information search" by assisting to search both internal and external memory resources (Rowe et al., 2012).

A high degree of customer involvement and engagement may be achieved via social media platforms practice. Customer engagement in the purchasing process is measured by the amount of mental and physical effort the customer expends during the transaction. Affective and cognitive decision-making methods are used more frequently when people are more involved in making decisions (Salamzadeh, 2020). A person's ability to digest information, make informed decisions, and respond to advertising can be influenced by their level of involvement. Customer churn can be caused by a lack of adequate management of contact points and customer experiences. The social platform not only improves client relationships, but also boosts customer loyalty and happiness by involving customers and managing encounters in a social, emotional, visual, aural, and kinesthetic manner (Rowe et al, 2012).

In creating more awareness of promising firms, use of SMM platforms such as facebook and twitter are inevitable. On social media, people use a product, and share their experiences with others, by encouraging others to reconsider their purchase decisions. With this kind of platform, businesses can communicate with consumers and assist them to meet their requirements by responding quickly when they have a problem (Sugandini, 2020)

2.1.4 Challenges for Organisations in Using Social Marketing

Social media, like any other type of communication, has its own set of issues for businesses. Some of the most serious threats to social media's long-term viability include privacy invasions, aggressive advertising, a lack of online commerce capabilities, a lack of brand ownership, and many legal traps. They do not appreciate invasive advertising and communications, and they do not want to give up their privacy on an online platform. Ads that are aggressive have no place on an internet platform. Intruding strangers, forceful messaging, and oversold products are not welcome on social media sites where people are there to connect with their friends. Legal frameworks connected to data mining, research, and internet sales must be avoided by enterprises. One error by a corporation on social media might result in a brand campaign spiraling out of control since social media is dominated by user-created content (Wang et al., 2016).

2.1.5 Concept of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises

National economies have historically been supported by SMEs, since the sector is seen as a great contributor to the economy, most governments perceive it as an important job-creator as well (Yaseen et al., 2017). Since the introduction of Because of the availability of low-cost hardware and operating systems, most countries' growth over the last two centuries has been based on them. Studies evidenced that SMEs have significant influence on economies of their respective countries. SMEs accounted for the mainstream of establishments in Europe, hence, more than 99 percent of firms in the United Kingdom are SMEs (BEIS, 2018). Small and Medium scale enterprises accounted for 40 to 70 percent of new job creation, with the majority of these jobs being created in the high-tech and other creative sectors (OECD, 2017). Modern economies rely heavily SMEs, being a sector that is appealing and exceedingly inventive.

Small and Medium-Scale Enterprises were instituted in the late 1940s, their major goal was to increase commerce and industrialization in the industrialized nations. This is according to the OECD (2004). In each nation, the definitions of SME are mainly drawn from the function of SME in the economy, policies, and programs developed by certain authorities or institutions that have been given the authority to promote SME. Even in developing economies like Nigeria, a small business may be a medium or large-scaled enterprise, as it is in Japan, Germany, and USA. Aside from policy variations between agencies and new organizations, the definition of SMEs stood as a source of confusion, as it changes overtime (Rowe et al., 2012). SMEs are characterized by factors such as turnover, the number of workers employed, profit, market share, relative size, capital used, and the amount of money that is available for investment. Several business metrics, such as revenue, net worth, and profit margin, are quantitative measures of a company's size. Another common metric used to measure this scale is the number of people. Some instances of how this is done: The Companies Act 1975, in the United Kingdom defined small and medium-sized businesses, and big and medium-sized businesses respectively, as having a turnover of more than \$5.7 million. As a result of this classification, small businesses were referred to as less than 50 employees, medium businesses with 50 to 250 employees, and large businesses with more than 250 people. For the European Union (EU), In 1995, the term "small and medium-sized enterprise" (SME) was coined. as any firm employing less than 250 people, and the EU further subdivided the SME into micro, small and medium-sized businesses (workers ranging from 50 to 249).

In many ways, relying solely on quantitative indexes to identify small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) has been ineffective. These indexes might be deceiving because of the frequent changes they undergo as a result of inflation. One thing to keep in mind is that the above-mentioned CBN definition of SME may not encompass all of Nigeria's micro-enterprises. Another fallacy is the idea that a labor-intensive company will have a huge

workforce, whereas a capital-intensive company will have a substantial asset-based, but with fewer employees. Since both small and large companies might lose money at some point, profit is not a good yardstick for determining the size of small businesses.

The SME sector includes a wide variety of enterprises from a variety of industries. Limited and micro businesses operating at the survival level offer employment and income primarily to their owners and a small number of employees fall into two categories; growth-oriented and subsistence-oriented. Majorly, SMEs in developing nations are subsistence businesses, while the growth-oriented type tends to grow through acquisitions and is characterized by creative firms that often function in budding markets and/or efficient enterprises industries that are network oriented.

2.1.6 Social Media Marketing and Small and Medium Scale Enterprises

Social media is the trading of ideas between individuals in simulated groups, and networks via communal means. This category of Web 2.0-based apps, known as social media, enables the production, and trade of user-generated content through the internet. Mobile and web-based technologies are used to develop a vastly-interacting platforms, where individuals and communities exchange material provided by others. They have a profound impact on how businesses, communities, and individuals communicate. The quality, reach, frequency, usefulness, immediacy, and longevity of social media differ from conventional or industrial media in numerous ways.

2.1.7 Overview of SMEs During Covid-19

The COVID-19 epidemic has put a lot of obstacles in the way of SMEs; thus, they need to implement innovative technologically based tactics to overcome them. Nevertheless, this technology must be both simple to use and simple to implement. These technologies' worth has been evaluated in terms of their applicability and efficacy, according to several kinds of research.

Due to limits on mobility, businesses were left with a lack of raw materials, which resulted in difficulty in operating. Several organizations encountered difficulties in delivering finished goods to their customers. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO) research, employees are coping with the effects of the epidemic. So many businesses are working hard to expand their reach, increase their revenue, and streamline their supply chains by utilizing the internet to their advantage. New items like masks and sanitation were requested by customers during this epidemic (Cheng et al., 2020).

According to research, there is a correlation between perception of use (PEU) and social media usage about marketing. An investigation on the relationship between perceived utility, and technology used by Kim et al. (2019), evidenced that there is a positive correlation among people's perceptions on its usefulness and usage of modern technology, such as smartphones. When we talk about a technology's "perceived usefulness," we're implying that users have confidence in its efficiency, reliability, and ability to mitigate risk. According to Chatterjee and Kumar Kar, 2020, the perceived utility also includes risk issues, security, and privacy. SME's are expected to gain a lot if these issues can be dealt with successfully. However, it was concluded that perceived usefulness impacts SMEs and SMM usage positively.

The willingness of an SME to use a particular technology is dependent on how easy the technology is, this will lead to the SME applying much effort to ensure that it utilizes such easy technology. This is known as (PEOU) stands for 'perceived ease of use', and it deals with its efficiency or simplicity (Cheng et al., 2020). Consequently, people want to adopt ideas that are simple to implement, and they use the technology (Ware, 2018). A favourable association between PEOU and innovative technologies has been shown. An investigation by Yoon et al. (2016), opined on PEOU and SMM having favourable correlation. Accordingly, it is widely accepted that SMEs' perceptions of SMM's ease of use influence its adoption.

Although these technologies are accessible to small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) for adoption, they must meet the requirements of the SMEs and align with their business model (Chatterjee & Kumar Kar, 2020). If technology is compatible with an SME, it will be an effective assessment tool if it is compatible to a certain degree (Yoon & Cho, 2016). An SME cannot deploy social media marketing technology unless it is compatible with the SME itself. This is a critical factor in determining whether or not new technologies are adopted (Wang, Wang & Yang, 2010). To be embraced, the technology must be compatible with the SME's working style (Venkatesh et al., 2012). Since social media marketing is the most sought-after idea in times of pandemic, the business performance of SMEs may improve dramatically if they use it properly; it also has the power, if utilized successfully, to reach prospective target customers (Cheng et al., 2020). Because of this, several studies have shown that social media marketing for small businesses benefits from compatibility.

As a result of COVID-19's social distance, conventional corporate communication is moving online. During the contagion, social media usage have received negligible attention among several researchers who have examined the topic. Venkatesh et al. (2012), investigated the use of social media by SMEs for marketing, and found that perceptions of usage, perceived convenience, and compatibility had a substantial influence on social media marketing. A study by Cheung et al. (2020), found that smartphone users in China and Hong Kong utilize social media to create value and connect with brands.

SMEs can utilize social media to develop their customer base regardless of the COVID-19 pandemic's limits because it is technologically driven and aims to stimulate communication as well as user collaboration (Ahmad et al., 2018; Chatterjee and Kar, 2020). More than 330 minutes daily are spent on social media platforms, and it has become a simple way of initiating communications worldwide; between consumers and businesses, or between consumers and customers; this is particularly performed by SMEs (Venkatesh et al., 2012). Users of social

networking site now have a way to keep up to date on one another's global attitudes. The development of a company's brand through of social media practice might result to an intensification in commercial activity. Social media encourages SMEs to participate and invest more in digital marketing because of this (Venkatesh et al,2012).

Many small businesses have been badly impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. Considering Pakistan, government imposed a lockdown on its manufacturing sector, which is largely dependent on textile tobacco, and beverage exports. This has resulted in a reduction in exports that will have a significant impact on export revenues, which account for about 53% of total manufacturing output (World Bank 2020b). Because the epidemic has made it nearly impossible to transport gathered goods, the goods have been ruined owing to storage difficulties, which is exactly what has happened in the agriculture sector.

The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on 571 small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) were examined in ILO research. Seventy percent of SMEs reported on pending production due to COVID-19. Additionally, 63 percent of enterprises were found to have halted and demanded their employees to opt for paid or unpaid leave. Some employees of SMEs have lost their jobs due to the pandemic, and numerous enterprises reported cash flow difficulties (Venkatesh et al., 2012).

More than seven million individuals have been diagnosed with COVID-19 since January 2020, and this has had a significant impact on most parts of the world. Because of the disease's high contagiousness, governments had no choice but to enforce quarantine measures to stop its spread. A decrease in demand, consumption, and exports has resulted from these actions. Imports have been banned because of the possibility of viral transmission, and people are being asked to stay at home. Countries like China, whose economy is heavily dependent on exports, felt effects of these policies, as their gross domestic product fell by 6.8 percent during the first three months of 2020 (Venkatesh et al., 2012).

2.1.8 Overview of SMEs and Covid -19 Pandemic

In many aspects, the pandemic had a major impact on enterprises, since the risk that comes along with the limits stops them from spending more in order not to record large volume of losses. Recent studies show that firms using social media increases yearly. Researchers say that small businesses are starting to see the value in using social media, and that there's a positive attitude toward the use of these technologies. One study found that half of the SMEs polled had established online profiles on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn. In separate research, 54% of the businesses polled admitted to utilizing social networking programs for a variety of reasons (Praveena & Thomas, 2014). Con). According to Burgess, Marwick, and Poell (2017), 85 percent of Australian SMEs use Facebook to communicate with their clients. Companies have boosted on their social media usage over past decade (2007-2017), with 96% reporting a presence in 2017 vs only 57% in 2008, according to statistics compiled over this period (Reluga, 2010).

Social media has been studied as a source of customer knowledge. According to Kaur and Misra (2019), businesses should use social media to understand more about their customers. involve them in knowledge exchange (Leonardi, 2014). With the help of social media, Businesses may create brand communities and engage customers in in-depth conversations about their products and services (Aspania & Ourania, 2014; Lacho & Marinello, 2010). Many people believe that deep consumer participation fosters a culture of open sharing and exchange of ideas, which may lead to new product creation and the development of a company's brand identity.

Cuckerty et al. (2020), when it comes to using input from both internal and external sources, social media technologies help organizations advance toward this goal. This is one of the reasons why social media platforms have been recommended as the best tool for businesses to

build their relationships with clients around the world and collect critical feedback (Praveena, & Thomas, 2014).

Social media has had a huge impact on the industry as well human resources (HR) business. Social networking may be used to assess job candidates for some companies. Social media has influenced conventional HR employability, career development, and staff selection are examples of procedures. and job-seeking behaviour in a significant manner. Many ethical concerns have arisen as a result of the widespread usage of social media in the workplace, as well as the external communication of an organization's corporate responsibility efforts. For empirical research, it has been difficult to keep up with the fast expansion of At many levels of society, social media technologies are being used. Interdisciplinarity has been encouraged by the "far-reaching repercussions of social media," yet some researchers believe that information system or communication studies are best prepared to play a major part (Praveena & Thomas, 2014). The way people work, how they work, and where they work have all been impacted by the rise of social media. Consequently, with the advent of mobile internet and other interactive multimedia platforms, companies have seen an improvement in operational, tactical, and strategic processes.

2.2 Theoretical Review

The research is based on two theories; Uses and Gratification theory, and the Competence and Performance theory. For small and medium businesses, social media marketing obliges as a strategy for marketing and communication, making it one of the most important platforms for obtaining information and conducting business on the internet. SMEs' success during the COVID-19 epidemic will be determined by their social media usage, and the results will reveal whether or not using social media promotes academic accomplishment.

2.2.1 Uses and Gratification theory

Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch created Uses and Gratification in 1974. According to Katz (1959) cited in Idakwo (2011), "what people do with media" rather than "what media do to people" is more important than "what media do to people" There are many different forms of media, as well as different sorts of content, that may be used to meet a person's social and psychological requirements.

Due to the collaborative character of social networking sites, they lend themselves to the uses and gratifications method (Basit, 2020). Researchers have traditionally concentrating on the use of media to solve cognitive issues and emotional demands relating to personal and entertainment requirements (Bertoni, 2020).

Arousal, friendship, escape, habit, learning, passing time, and relaxation are among the most often claimed advantages of uses and gratifications (Bhattacharya et al., 2018). Each member of the audience or user of the social media platform can discern how to best satisfy his or her needs for a given integrative and interactive use. The audience is assumed to be active on the social media platform. Many college students utilize social media to get their fix, but it can't meet everyone's demands. There is a strong connection between media consumption and a person's fundamental needs. Media consumers frequently go to major media outlets for fundamental gratifications such as education, entertainment, and current event information. Analysis of internet-based media use patterns relies heavily on the concept of "Uses and Gratification" (Battacharya et al, 2018). For those who want to understand why individuals engage in media consumption, the Uses and Gratifications hypothesis is a good starting point.

It is the goal of the book Uses and Gratifications to show and explain why people choose one kind of media over another. As an illustration, a hypothetical study in the journal Uses and Gratifications may investigate why television news audiences are increasing but newspaper subscriptions are decreasing. Also recognized and contested in the field of media studies, it has

witnessed a surge of attention in the Internet Age. In this view, individuals use mass media to meet their basic human needs. Individuals' usage and enjoyment of the media were examined instead of the media's impact on people, according to Katz, who is quoted in Battacharya et al (2018). An engaged audience is further supported by the notion of uses and pleasure. According to this theory, media consumers are goal-oriented and use media sources to attain their objectives. They know what they want from media and pick the content, tools, and platforms that meet those expectations. People/audiences actively and functionally participate in selecting and/or influencing the tools for creating, communicating, and interpreting reality in the process of mass communication, according to Battacharya et al. (2018).

Thus, when the media or technology fails to fulfill the expectations of a user, they seek out alternate sources of information, in this case, an expanded model of social media via mobile phones and the internet that may satisfy those needs. As stated by the idea, "the media compete with alternative sources of news and entertainment to satisfy the requirements and pleasure of users and audience beyond the speed determinant of contact. " In this era of breathtaking Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), users not only seek alternate sources of knowledge, but they have also taken up responsibilities as makers and disseminators of their information. It is also possible that students' desire for increased involvement, which might have a favourable or bad influence on their academic growth and performance, could be connected to their enjoyment and pleasure from using social media platforms on the internet and their mobile devices (Battacharya et al., 2018).

This theory is relevant to this present study because it helps to explain the impact of social media on tertiary students' academic performance. Negative or positive influences are derived from the usage depending on the frequency of the user's time invested in it. Abdullahi (2013) explained that technology devices used for communication and social net media are mostly used for potential ability to meet predetermined needs. Moreover, social media used by tertiary

institution students is because of its ability to meet their predetermined needs. Undergraduate students who use any social network site to gratify their emotional needs create procrastination on their academic work. Though only the user can say the actual benefits. Frequently students are addicted to browsing and chatting on Facebook, 2go, or WhatsApp to the detriment of other academic work. They spend their time posting comments, sending pictures, and carrying out other social activities which are irrelevant to the academic progress. There is always diversion from searching academic information to social, activities. Students lack concentration and are distracted from their school work due to the gratification derived from social network usage, in fact, their study habit deterioration is on the alarming side (Battacharya et al, 2018).

2.2.2 Competence and Performance theory

In this sense, "competence" is a term for capacity Among undergraduate students (requires knowledge and abilities) that has been obtained in actuality by the students themselves. Students' incentive to take part in their studies, persevere, and work hard is explained in this study by the notion of competence (Rumelt, 1994). Students are more likely to engage in extracurricular activities if they believe they can succeed at them, according to this theory's key claim (Coombs, 2007).

In higher education, there are many examples of great accomplishments that can be found daily (Dahnil et al., 2014). Aspiring students are encouraged to pursue their goals by an adviser. Students seem to be drawn to a teacher by some enchantment. The fundamental questions a researcher asks are what sparks paradigm shifts in thinking. Deans motivate an entire college to work together and achieve fantastic results. To perform is to carry out a set of acts requiring the application of a wide range of abilities and knowledge to yield a worthwhile outcome. The performer may be an individual in various cases (Pellegrino et al., 2001). Another type of performance is a group of individuals working together, such as an academic department, a research group, a board of advisors, or a group of students (Faqir et al., 2014)

High-level performances yield worthwhile outcomes, making a performance theory helpful in a wide variety of educational settings. Students' performance and improvement may be explained using the Theory of Performance, which consists of six core ideas that can be linked together. When you perform, you're delivering on your promise to deliver something of value. A performer can be either an individual or a group of individuals working together. As a professional, your level of performance is an indicator of where you are in the process of improving. Current undergraduate student performance is influenced by six different factors: the context, students' degree of knowledge, their level of ability, their level of identification, their characteristics, and the fixed characteristics of their education and upbringing. To help undergraduate students, enhance their performance, three axioms have been offered. Students' mindsets, exposure to enriched environments, and participation in reflective practice are all part of this (Fornell et al., 1981).

2.2.3 Diffusion of Innovation Theory

One of the first ideas in social science is E. M. Rogers' 1962 Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DIO). When a concept or item acquires the force of nature spreads across a social group or population structure, it is known as diffusion. Taking a new approach to a past task. Adoption is mostly dependent on whether or not the target audience considers the concept, behaviour, or product to be novel or groundbreaking. Because of this, it is feasible to disseminate. It's the method of disseminating information. a concept or put into practice through time, as a result of a social structure like Neighborhoods, through certain channels. A new concept or invention can only spread if it goes through four stages: awareness, interest, evaluation, and testing and adoption. Bittner (1984) acknowledges that the media can encourage someone to become aware of an item's existence. A trial touch and evaluation of the product is the first step in making a final decision on whether or not the product will be purchased by him.

By studying how new ideas are propagated through the media, Rogers' (1983) diffusion of innovation theory sought to answer this question. New ideas and technologies flow through societies following a principle known as diffusion. Changes in behavior or products are not adopted by everyone in a social system at the same time; rather, it is a process where certain individuals are more likely to accept the innovations than others. Diffusion of innovation was popularized by Everett Rogers, a rural sociology professor, in his 1962 book. Innovators, early adopters, the early majority, the late majority, and the laggards are the many types of adopters (Rogers, 1962). The focus of the change agent is on the factors that influence whether or not a new concept will be embraced. To put it another way, they assist the audience in deciding by altering their perception of a certain circumstance. According to Goodhart et al. 1975 and Barwise et al. 1982, a large portion of media consumption is unrestricted and habitual. It discusses the media's utility and the extent to which it may influence humanity. Students in higher institutions may be affected by this idea because of their use of social media and their academic achievement.

2.2.4 Constructivism Theory

This theory was propounded by Jean Piaget (1975) constructivist learning and teaching are based on active processes and the construction of knowledge that originates from learning by doing. Constructivists benefit from the new habits of perception fostered by social media. According to the constructivist hypothesis, technology, particularly Facebook, has a significant impact on how people think, feel, and act, as well as how societies are structured and run. It's impossible to overstate how important the idea is to this investigation. The notion of constructivism has changed our environment to the point that kids have the chance to learn about various views, cultures, and forums on global concerns. ' Cooperative projects, such as a networked writing project or the creation of distinct engineering phases that allow students to receive and respond to each other's work, are possible for students in the classroom. A new

generation of students is now able to communicate with one another in a variety of ways, including through the sharing of ideas, images, videos, likes, and dislikes.

To support sociological constructivism's notion that social interactions and learner experiences assist construct new knowledge, the usage of social media in business education (Aliowaidi et al, 2015). It is possible for students to contribute feedback on course content and lectures via social networking and microblogging, as well as to learn from their peers' comments and queries via backchannel forums.

The constructivist learning environment's component of increased cognitive flexibility is made possible in part by social media (CLE). For students to get a broader understanding of complex subjects, they need to be able to communicate with others outside of the classroom (Jonassen, 1999). As part of a constructivist learning environment (CLE), "rich sources of knowledge" that are "learner-selected" and "Just-in-time" are necessary (Berny, 1991). By using Twitter feeds or posts on social networking sites, educators may share links to fresh resources with students, and students can do the same with their peers by using social bookmarking sites.

In addition, the "environment of individual accountability paired with communal sharing" that computer-mediated communication through social media fosters the development of communities of learners (COLS) (Basit et al., 2000). Students can build their knowledge and constrain their thoughts while working with others and achieving comparable understandings of the challenges they are dealing with. By requiring students to conduct online research and then publish their findings via social bookmarking sites, COLIs may be further enhanced. This can aid in the creation of new perspectives and a unified front. Additionally, social media has a huge role in academic success. Because social media marketing and utilization may increase an organization's exposure, interaction, and cost-effectiveness, the variables are important to the study of technical aspects (Bjucky et al., 2017).

2.3 Empirical Review

To better understand the influence of social media on student SMEs, several studies have been conducted by different scholars. Using technology such as the internet is one of the most critical aspects that might impact student performance favorably or adversely, according to Basit et al. (2015), Abed, (2018), Chong, (2017), and Coombs, (2017).

Student opinions of social media's influence on corporate success were examined by Gangwar et al., (2015). They discovered that Facebook and email were the most popular (in terms of popularity) among the thirteen other sites, instant messaging was the second most popular (at 85 percent), and other sites were less popular. This study is connected to the previous one because both evaluate the impacts of social media on students' SMEs performance and gather data using questionnaires, using a descriptive design and a similar style of data analysis. They also both utilize questionnaires to collect data.

David (2014) studied the impact of Facebook on small and medium-sized firms' performance. In this study, it was found that 26% of respondents felt their usage of Facebook had a favourable impact on their academics, 32% felt it had no effect at all, and 42% felt it had a bad impact. This suggests that students' Facebook activities have a direct impact on their academic success. Both studies employ a descriptive research methodology and a survey questionnaire to gather data from participants to determine the impact of Facebook usage on small businesses' performance.

Gullivan et al. (2015) researched in Ghana to examine the impact of social media on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Data was collected gathered Using a questionnaire as a tool. The survey found that the majority of respondents owned mobile phones with Internet access and were aware of a wide range of media outlets. According to the findings, most people use their smartphones to access social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter daily for thirty minutes to three hours. In addition, the survey found that respondents' performance in

their SMEs had been severely impacted by their usage of social networking sites and that there was a clear link between their use and their performance in their SMEs.

In Pakistan, a study by Govinnage et al (2019) found a link between the usage of social media and the performance of SMEs. According to the findings, there is a negative correlation between the performance of SMEs and their use of social media. Additionally, Awa et al. (2015) conducted a research project utilizing Nigeria as a case study to examine the impact of internet usage on small and medium-sized business performance. The data was gathered through the use of surveys and questionnaires. Students' capacity to learn and succeed in school and in the workplace has improved thanks to the Internet, according to the study's findings.

Social media, according to Oyekan and Kamiyo (2008), has a significant impact on corporate performance. The outcomes of the study showed that S.media has both beneficial and detrimental effects on business performance. Social media's detrimental influence on students' small business (SMEs) performance was also noted in the report. This included measures such as limiting students' access to social media sites and limiting the amount of time they spend on social media sites.

The research was conducted by Naquetta (2020) to examine the impact of the increasing usage of social networking sites on the SMEs performance of students at universities and colleges in the United States. A random sample of 300 pupils was chosen. Data were gathered through the use of a questionnaire. Descriptive statistics were used to examine the responses to the survey. The results show that social media may have a favorable impact.

Lutfi (2020), used primary data to examine social media's impact on pupils. Research on S.media's impact on students has been highlighted in both studies, highlighting both the beneficial and bad effects on students' SMEs performance. The study stressed the need of balancing social media and academics to avoid setbacks for kids. The findings showed a favorable correlation between pupils and social media.

A study on the influence of social media on the Nigerian youth burden was conducted by Kamenga & Alexander (2017). Primary data was used to condemn Nigerian youths' excessive use of social media. There is an urgent need to address the amount of time that young people spend on social media. When it comes to misinformation and dangerous schemes, some men find social media comforting. There is a direct correlation between excessive online socializing and academic failure, according to the findings of the study.

Nigerian SMEs' performance was studied by Herbane (2013), who discovered S. media had a big impact. The a questionnaire used as a collecting of information tool in the method of survey research According to the report, data, they have a lot of social media access and are spending a lot of time on social media. Students' use of social media appears to have a detrimental impact on their academic performance, according to the study's findings. According to the findings, undergraduates at Kogi State University choose Facebook over other social media platforms. The article finds that Kogi State University students who are exposed to S.media has a negative impact. impact on their SME's performance.

Facebook's perceived impact on business activities in Nigeria is examined by Patma (2020). A structured questionnaire was used to gather data from 80 randomly selected agricultural students, and descriptive statistical methods such as frequency, mean, and percentages were used to evaluate the data. According to the results, 64 percent of the agriculture students were female and 87.4 percent were between the ages of 21 and 30 years, with the majority of them. The most often utilized social media platforms among college students were determined to be Facebook (94 percent), Blackberry Messenger (90 percent), and Whatsapp (72.5 percent). According to the study's conclusions, students should be encouraged to use Facebook for its educational benefits but should be discouraged from using it excessively for recreational purposes.

2.4 Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses Formulation

For small and medium-sized businesses to leverage social media marketing, certain criteria must be taken into consideration. These elements play a key role in the company's success small companies, in particular during the COVID-19 outbreak when the usage of S.media for businesses determines which enterprises will prosper or fail. Perceived utility, perceived ease of use, compatibility, and cost are all part of this equivalence.

2.4.1 Facilitating Conditions and SMEs Performance

Facilitating Conditions are the requirement for a person believing that suitable technical infrastructure and top management support exist to be used for a new system (Venkatesh et al., 2003). The Competence and Performance Theory and the Gratification Theory are two theories that have been used in recent research to explain why people accept new technologies. For example, environmental factors such as industry features are taken into account in both models, which explain how quickly new ideas or concepts and technologies are adopted by various organizations and people. Studies using the Competence and Performance theory have shown that it is a useful theory for understanding the adoption of IT innovation, particularly SM, in small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs). Research using the Competence and Performance theory framework has explored many determinants and discovered such elements for information system uses. To be sure, unlike some other internet-based systems or technological advancements, SM is a completely new and open system that comes with both pros and cons. In other words, SM's adoption in organizations might be hampered by characteristics unique to the technology, the organization, and the environment (Ozili et al., 2020).

Companies may communicate with their consumers using SM's comment and reply features, which are critical to the technology's acceptance and widespread use. More than 200 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) were polled and discovered that the use of Supply-chain Management (SM) may assist product and service-based SMEs in a variety of ways. In

particular, companies that produce tangible goods are more likely to use SM since it is more cost-effective than other methods. Because SM adoption and use may increase visibility, interaction, and cost-effectiveness, the determinants are of great importance to enterprises. Contrary to previous research and growing concern for SMEs' interest in adopting new technologies, several ideas have been proposed: Previous research has shown that enabling conditions have a substantial impact on the adoption of new technologies. In addition, the usage of SM should be compatible with cultural concerns (Praveena & Thomas, 2014). As long as the staff is adequately taught in using SM, and if the company has internet access at a cheap cost, and if there is no opposition from any end to the adoption of social media, small and medium-sized businesses will not hesitate to use SM. SMEs will grab the chance to use SM if conditions are right. In light of the foregoing explanation, it is reasonable to postulate the following;

H1a: there is a positive relationship between facilitating conditions and SMEs performance

H2a: there is a positive relationship between facility conditions and social media.

H3a: S.media mediate the connection between facility conditions and SME performance.

2.4.2 Cost and SMEs Performance

Prior research shows that cost is an important factor in determining whether or not a company should use new technology to expand its business. There is a correlation between the cost of technology and its adoption, according to a previous study. Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) are more likely to use SMM because of the low barrier to participation, the inexpensive cost, and the low degree of IT skills required (Praveena & Thomas,2014).

Internal characteristics of the company, such as the kind and size of the staff, the number of employees, the formalization or centralization of procedures, and management challenges, are all considered organizational factors. Management assistance and its influence on the

investment possibilities were highlighted. Top management also has an influence on the coordination and availability of resources by confirming that sufficient human talents, time, and financial resources are available for the adoption of the new SM strategy (Ozili et al,2020). Because of this, current research suggests that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are most often run by their owners or chief executive officers. In Ozili et al. (2020), it was suggested that top managers who have a good attitude and outlook towards the implementation of SM are better placed to support the adoption of SM in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). According to Mustkibil (2019), there is a strong correlation between the effectiveness of an organization's senior management teams. Firms' adoption of new technology has previously been linked to the level of managerial assistance they receive. Support from the top is critical in creating a conducive climate and allowing the necessary resources for the adoption of new technologies (Wang, 2016). If the cost of setting up the SMM mechanism is prohibitive, small businesses will not use it. Aside from that, it's well-known that Indians are extremely cost-conscious (Oyekan et al., 2008, 2009). In all other respects, social networking is a low-cost option. Small and medium-sized businesses may use it to interact with their customers at a reasonable cost (Kaplan et al, 2019). As a result, if the associated costs are affordable, an organization is likely to employ SMM. Relatively to the above discussion, the following hypothesis is formulated and will be stated in null form.

H1b: cost has a negative impact on the SMEs performance

H2b: there is a positive relationship between cost and social media

H3b: social media mediate the relationship between cost and SMEs performance

2.4.3 Compatibility and SMEs Performance

The idea of compatibility refers to how well the new technology can fit in with the SMEs' existing practices and demands, as well as their existing values (Rogers, 1983). Several studies have shown that the degree of compatibility between current and new technological goods is an effective and major assessment factor for the users of that service (Yoon & Cho, 2016). SMM's acceptance would be impossible without COM, which is viewed as a critical component (Wang, Wang, & Yang, 2010). Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are more likely to accept new technologies if they believe they are compatible with their work systems (Praveena & Thomas, 2014).

Market structure and variables originating from the firm's external environment are included in the environmental factor. Competitive pressure, regulatory support, external pressure, bandwagon effect, consumer pressure, uncertainty, and institutional pressure are just a few of the elements of the environment. Competitive pressure, intensity, and the bandwagon effect have been incorporated into the TOE framework for SMEs following earlier studies. When there are a large number of rivals on the market, but only a small number of competitive forces, the adoption of SM and the performance of SMEs are more likely to be intense. It's known as the "contagion effect" or the "bandwagon effect." As a concept used in the field of psychology, it argues that organizations and people may pursue certain activities, such as using new technology, because their competitors or coworkers are doing so, rather than for strategic reasons (Abed, 2020). There is an increase in demand for other companies in a sector/industry to utilize a certain technology when more and more companies in that sector/industry begin to embrace it. When the climate is more variable, such as in the digital climate, the bandwagon effect is more pronounced.

The length at which an inventive technology can be applied according to the operational firm requirement is known as compatibility (Chatterjee & Kumar, 2020). Users of these services

can be evaluated to determine the level of compatibility of new technological products as this has proved very effective (Yoon & Cho, 2016). Compatibility is essential when trying to adopt a novel technology, such as social media marketing (Razak et al., 2016). There must be some level of compatibility with the work application pattern if any technology is to be adopted by an SME. Social media marketing use by SMEs is a very critical aspect of business operations as it can reach out to aspiring consumers with a focus on the target population and as a result, assist in the growth and development of the SME.

Incorporating social media SMEs into an organization's marketing strategy is regarded to be a best-fit notion since it would be able to reach prospective customers and boost the organization's commercial health (Ajibade, 2016). An organization's procedures and responsibilities must be aligned for its personnel to utilize social media without feeling constrained by their prior understanding of this technology in this situation. As a result of the debate above, the following hypothesis has been suggested and claimed to be tested;

H1c: there is a positive relationship between compatibility and SME performance.

H2c: there is a positive relationship between compatibility and social media.

H3c:S, media mediate the connection between compatibility and SME performance.

2.4.4 Perceived Usefulness and SMEs Performance

Previous studies have shown the connection between the perception of use and social media (SM) usage. Research centered on this correlation was conducted by Kim and Chiu in 2019 where they proposed that a positive bond is an inexistence between PEU and usage of new technology. Also, Park, Kim, and Kwon in separate research in 2016 pointed out that PEU has a positive relationship with technology that has to do with the use of a smartphone. Perceived usefulness is generally viewed as confidence in risk, performance, effectiveness, and trust in a particular technology. Other parts of perceived usefulness are risk factors, privacy, and security

(Fernandes, 2020). SMEs will benefit hugely from social media usage for marketing if these factors can be subdued.

H1d: there is a positive relationship between perceived usefulness and SME performance

H2d: there is a positive relationship between perceived usefulness and social media

H3d: S,media mediate the connection between perceived usefulness and SME performance.

2.4.5 Perceived Ease of Use and SME Performance

This has to do with the idea of expanding one's endeavor to the utilization of a system or technology (Kamenga, & Alexander, 2017). SMEs are encouraged to embrace social media because they believe in their ability to succeed (Kim et al, 2013). Thus, shows that SMEs are more likely to accept new technology if it is easier to use, and this proves that (PEOU) has a positive relationship with the use of innovative technology. Chatterjee and Kumar Kar (2020) also found that PEOU and social media marketing (SMM) use are positively associated.

H1e: there is a positive relationship between perceived ease of use and SME performance

H2e: there is a positive relationship between perceived ease of use and social media

H3e: social media mediate the relationship between perceived ease of use and SME performance

2.4.6 social media and SMEs' performance

According to several academics, small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) are increasingly adopting and using social media. Another suggestion made by the authors was that academics should focus on how SM adoption might help small and medium-sized businesses and researchers collaborate more effectively. In a study of 215 global small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), researchers found that SMEs' performance was positively influenced by

the use of social networking sites. According to a study of 217 small businesses in Thailand, there was a strong link between SM and the success of those businesses. 204 small businesses in Kenya were studied in a second research. found that technological innovation had a considerable impact on company performance. However, the researcher proposes to investigate the function of social media as a mediator between the elements influencing SMEs' performance during COVID-19 (Praveena & Thomas, 2014). Therefore, it can be hypothetically stated that social media has a favourable impact on the performance of small and medium-sized businesses.

H4: social media is positively related to SMEs performance

Sequel to the debatable hypothesis to be tested, Fig 2 below depicts the research model for the study

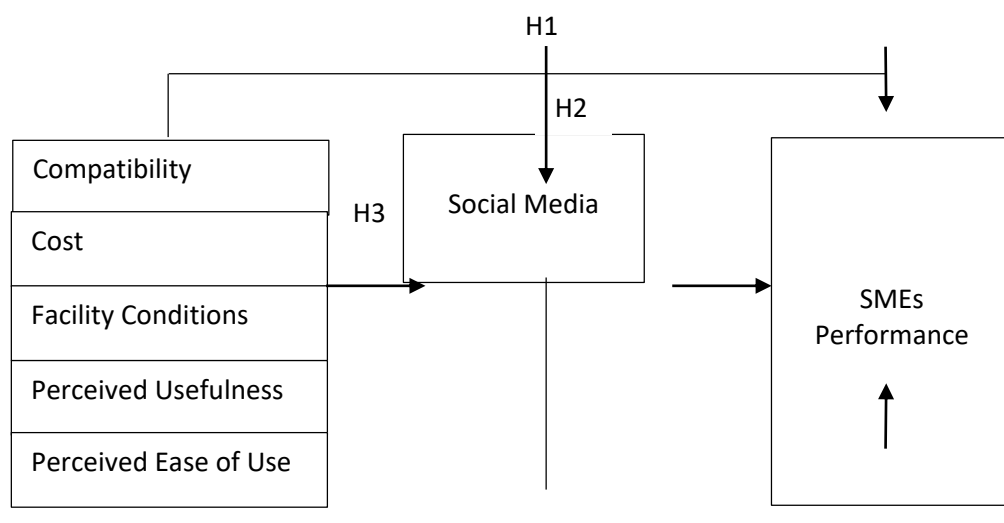


Figure 2: *Conceptual model for influencers of social media marketing*

2.5 Gaps and Contribution to Literature

Studies found that there was a lack of unanimity in the research findings of prior researchers, which suggests that there is still a need for further study in this area. Social media adoption and entrepreneurial business is the focus of many researchers from developed countries, which is

considered one-sided in the discourse of social media marketing and shows a lack of effort to connect the emerging social media technology impacts as an influencer of adoption, despite evidence that suggests there were many impacts within business organizations. Only a few examples exist of how social media is utilized in the real world by small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs), and these examples tend to be specialized and susceptible to specific circumstances.

The uniqueness of this research emanated from viewing the influence of social media on SMEs in North Cyprus from a wider perspective and concentrating on examining the mediating role of social media on SMEs' performance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study Area

The concentration of the study area is small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) in Northern Cyprus with a focus on businesses in Lefkosa, Girne, and Famagusta. The reason these towns were chosen since they were the major market hub of Northern Cyprus.

3.2 Research Design

Research design is the approach for making findings on the association among the variables of the study. This research was designed with the sole aim of delivering credible results bearing in mind that the data obtained could be useful for future references. This study employed a descriptive cross-sectional design, where an investigation of identified variable factors was conducted. Hence, this research was conducted within July and September within the business community of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

3.3 Sources of Data and Collection Method

The data for this study came from both primary and secondary sources. With the help of, we were able to gather primary data. the aid of a well-designed questionnaire and oral interview conducted with owners and operators of the firms; hence, primary source data was sought after simply because there was a need to gather information from first-hand users of social media platforms for business transactions during the COVID-19 pandemic. The secondary source of data included exploration from the internet and published or, and unpublished magazines, texts, journals, and students' research works.

3.4 Population, Sample Size, and Techniques

The unit of analysis involved the owners and operators of small and medium scale enterprises in North Cyprus that utilize social media platforms for business purposes. The purposive sampling technique was employed since it is a technique that allows the researcher to set criteria for required sample units, in as much type of the participant is already known. Based on the prevailing numbers of SMEs in North Cyprus, especially the business hub of the country, three towns; Girne, Lefkosa, Famagusta were selected and one hundred business was proposed to be selected from each town selected to give a totality of three hundred as potential sample size.

Determine Sample Size

Confidence Level: 95% 99%

Confidence Interval:

Population:

Sample size needed:

(<https://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm>)

3.5 Measures and Research Instrument

The study adopted a well-structured questionnaire from previous research works on the various concepts under investigation, which are; compatibility, cost facility conditions, Perceived utility, perceived simplicity of use, social media, and the performance of SMEs are all factors to consider. The performance of a small business was measured using the scale used by Elbanna et al. (2019); Aral et al. (2013); Chung et al. (2017); Dwivedi et al. (2017), which comprises five items. Meanwhile, the influencing factors were measured as follows; perceived usefulness (Alalwan et al., 2017; Chung et al., 2017; Dwivedi et al., 2015; Abed et al., 2015a, 2015b), perceived ease of use (Rana et al., 2019; Ware, 2018; Kuo & Yen, 2009; Park, 2009; Harris et

al., 2008), cost (Zhang et al., 2019; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Acquity Group, 2014), compatibility (Misirlis & Vlachopoulou, 2018; Derham et al., 2011; Yoon & Cho, 2016; Mangold & Faulds, 2009), facility conditions (Ng et al., 2019; Hung & Lai, 2015; Sykes et al., 2009; Venkatesh et al., 2003). Social media being the mediating variable was measured with a 4-item scale from extant studies (Shareef et al., 2019; Dwivedi et al., 2015; Culnan et al., 2010). Respondents were asked to select the option that most closely captured their perceptions, each item is measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 representing 'Strongly Disagree' to 5 indicating 'Strongly Agree'. Questions asked are closed-ended to assist the respondents in giving quick and succinct responses to aid in the research data collation. A sample of the questionnaire used is presented in the appendix and the research instrument contained five sections. Section A makes up the participant's demographic and business profile which includes gender, age, age, and business nature. It was necessary to verify the business profile to ensure that the business was in operation and most importantly utilize social media platforms in its operations. Section B is made up of questions that assess how well the SMEs know and apply numerous social media marketing in their business operations; extent of usage, and influence on business operations. Section C contains statements addressing the independent variables; compatibility, cost, facility conditions, perceived usefulness, and perceived ease of use, while section D consists of the intervening variable; social media marketing, and section E comprises statement relating to SME's performance.

3.6 Data Analysis Techniques

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. the quality of responses from participants was also checked using the descriptive statistics, mostly ratio, percentage, tables, and graphs. This was necessary as the research set out to attain credibility of data and presentation for easy understanding. The researcher conducted a descriptive analysis, using the SPSS software to

describe the respondents' demographic and business profile. Inferential statistics in form of correlation and regression was also conducted to establish relationships, while the proposed structural model was subjected to strings of tests; psychometric and multi-collinearity, with confirmation by the Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 3.0 version. Hence, significance level and their path coefficients were examined using the bootstrapping method.

3.7 Validity and Reliability of Instrument

Instrument validity involves verifying the authenticity of what is being measured to what is included in the measuring instrument. The predictive content validity was employed, whereby expert's opinion was sought and obtained concerning the appropriateness of the questions contained in the instrument, thereafter a face validity was conducted where the expert rated and approved the questions based on subjective judgment, as appropriate for use, as a measuring instrument for the study. Reliability is the consistency in independent measurements of the same phenomenon, which concerns instruments' predictability, dependability, and stability. For this study, Cronbach's alpha was used where its coefficient value ranges from 0 to 1.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

This section gave detail on the result analyzed, ranging from descriptive to inferential statistics, including hypothesis testing. Meanwhile, 290 questionnaires were circulated to different small and medium scale enterprises in Lefkosa, Girne, Famagusta, and other parts of Northern Cyprus, but upon reception of the results, only 254 questionnaires were valid, while 46 were deleted as outliers due to its inability to meet the required standard about the information provided.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Two hundred and fifty-four (254) respondents were assessed using this questionnaire and of this number, 155 have a staff strength of 10 employees or fewer (micro-sized), 70 had between 11-50 staff strength (small-sized), while 29 had between 50-250 (medium-sized). With regards to the location, the majority of SMEs (48%) were based in Lefkosa, 32% in Girne, while 28% were based in Famagusta with the other 2% based in other parts of Northern Cyprus. As for the sectors which were considered in this research, the sampled SMEs touched all sectors of economic activity.

4.1.1 Demographic Profile

The study sample comprises 254 small and medium-scale manufacturing firms in North Cyprus. Out of this sample, 73.2% were male and 26.8% were female. On average, the majority had age falling within 36-40 years, while the least age was of those below 30 years. Statistics of nature of business revealed that the majority of the respondents engage in food service as a firm of SMEs, while the least response emanated from software business operations. Finally, the year of operations denoted the professional expertise developed by the respondents. It had

been revealed that on average, the majority had an experience of 11 years and above, while the least opined on experience above 15 years. Hence, the demographic profile is presented in table 1 below:

Table 1: Demographic profile of the respondents

Variables	Categories	Freq (n=254)	Percentag e
Gender	Male	186	73.2
	Female	68	26.8
Age	Below 30 years	18	7.1
	30 - 35 years	71	28.0
	36 - 40 years	91	35.8
	Above 40 years	74	29.1
Nature of Business	Software	17	6.7
	Food Service	97	38.2
	Construction	42	16.5
	Manufacturing	42	16.5
	E-commerce	56	22.1
Years of Operations	Below 5 years	51	20.1
	5-10 years	71	28.0
	11-15	104	40.9
	Above 15 years	28	11.0

Source: Author's survey and computation, 2021

4.1.2 Social Media Usage and Its Prefix

This section described the extent to which social media is used to improve the performances of firms. Respondents' distribution based on the extent of social media usage indicates that the majority (78%) use social media very well, 17% often use social media, while 5% were said to rarely use social media and none gave a response of not using social media. This implies that SMEs in North Cyprus are actively involved in social media marketing during, and after COVID-19, to enable them to expand their customer base, which shall result in to increase in performance.

Table 2: the extent of social media usage by firms

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all	-	-
Rarely	13	5.0
Often	43	17.0
Very well	198	78.0
Total	245	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

4.1.3 Social Media Platforms and Rate of Influence on Business Operations

Table 3 revealed the diverse social media platforms used by owners or operators of SMEs in North Cyprus, and their usage level in boosting the business operations. From the majority view of responses made, it was revealed that WhatsApp and Instagram as a social media platform had a very good influence on business operations, while Facebook was evidenced to a make a good impact and twitter had a fair impact on business operations.

Table 3: distribution based on social media platforms influence on business operations

Social Media Platforms	Very Poor		Poor		Fair		Good		Very Good	
	Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent
WhatsApp	-	-	3	1.2	14	5.5	83	32.7	154	60.6
Instagram	2	0.8	17	6.7	45	17.7	83	32.7	107	42.1

Facebook	11	4.3	20	7.9	26	10.2	109	42.9	92	36.2
Twitter	29	11.4	54	21.3	107	42.1	46	18.1	18	7.1

Source: Field Study, 2021

4.2 Correlational and Regression Analysis

The intercorrelations of the latent and observed variables (social media and SMEs performance) are shown in Table 4. Explicitly, social media is positively related to SMEs performance ($r = 0.539$, $p < .01$) with large effect size. A moderate and positive relationship was found between the influencing factors; compatibility, cost, facility conditions, The perceived utility, perceived simplicity of use, and the performance of SMEs are all factors to consider. Furthermore, the ordinary least square (OLS) regression result depicts that SME's performance is positively affected by social media marketing with an R^2 value of 0.292, which is positively significant at 5% ($t = 10.197$; $p < 0.05$).

Table 4: Correlation for the observed and latent variables

Variables	Mean	SD	COMP	COST	FC	PEU	PEOU	MSME	SM
Compatibility	3.469	1.186	1	0.818	-0.036	0.351	0.700	0.313	0.824
Cost	3.358	0.884		1	0.011	0.345	0.677	0.363	0.847
Facility Conditions	4.724	0.481			1	0.074	0.087	0.112	- 0.012
Perceived Usefulness	3.594	1.063				1	0.277	0.532	0.368
Perceived Ease of Use	3.528	0.835					1	0.379	0.695
SMEs performance	3.346	1.056						1	0.539
Social Media	3.398	0.998							1

Survey: Authors Computation. SD =Standard Deviation

Table 5: OLS result of social media on SMEs performance

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	1.245	0.207		6.008***	0.000
Social Media	0.588	0.058	0.540	10.197***	0.000

Dependent Variable: MSME; P *** < 0.05

Table 6: regression model summary

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	0.540 ^a	0.292	0.289	0.68350

Predictors: (Constant), SM

4.3 Hypotheses Testing

4.3.1 Measurement and Structural Models

Both measurement and structural models were examined using Andersen and Gerbing's (1988) two-stage partial least squares (PLS) model. The measurement model was tested using convergent validity. The validity of an instrument evaluating the same notion is determined by how well many items in the instrument agree. Convergent validity was used to determine the factor loading (λ), average variance extracted (AVE), and composite reliability (CR).

The overall measurement shows an acceptable fit and moderate predictive power, as all items have outer loadings (λ) above 0.5 as suggested by Lin & Wang (2012) and Igbaria et al. (1995), and for composite reliability and its sister metrics (Cronbach's alpha and rho_A), all constructs provided values above the threshold of 0.7 as suggested by Dijkstra & Henseler (2015). The measurement model's item-construct structure is convergent. In addition, the values of AVE are greater than 0.5, except for social media having AVE value of 0.478, but since the CR and CA are above 0.6, it still falls within the acceptance region, indicating that construct's convergent validity is still adequate, as shown in previous research (Olaleye et al., 2020; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Hence, Table 7 summarizes the findings.

Table 7: measurement model

Latent Variables	<i>Convergent validity</i>		<i>Internal consistency</i>			
	Indicators	<i>Loadings(λ)</i>	CA	rho_A	CR	AVE
COMPATIBILITY (COMP)	COMP1	0.881***	0.814	0.827	0.890	0.730
	COMP2	0.885***				
	COMP3	0.793***				
COST	COST1	0.839***	0.820	0.821	0.893	0.736
	COST2	0.890***				
	COST3	0.843***				
FACILITY CONDITIONS (FC)	FC1	0.827***	0.937	0.969	0.950	0.759
	FC2	0.908***				
	FC3	0.892***				
	FC4	0.872***				
	FC5	0.833***				
	FC6	0.894***				
PERCEIVED EASE OF USE (PEOU)	PEOU2	0.810***	0.853	0.855	0.901	0.694
	PEOU3	0.841***				
	PEOU4	0.855***				
	PEOU5	0.827***				
PERCEIVED USEFULNESS (PEU)	PEU1	0.805***	0.865	0.865	0.908	0.712
	PEU2	0.834***				
	PEU3	0.858***				
	PEU4	0.876***				
SOCIAL MEDIA (SM)	SM1	0.510***	0.618	0.652	0.779	0.478
	SM2	0.820***				
	SM3	0.808***				
	SM4	0.574***				
SMEs PERFORMANCE (MSME)	MSME1	0.763***	0.822	0.826	0.883	0.653
	MSME2	0.848***				
	MSME3	0.834***				

	MSME4	0.785***				
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Source: Author's Computation, 2021

Notes: CA=Cronbach's Alpha, CR=Composite Reliability, rho= rho_A reliability indices, AVE= Average Variance Extracted. ***PEOU1, PEU5, COST4, COMP4, MSME5 were deleted due to poor loadings

4.3.2 Discriminant Validity

Fornell-Larcker's (1981) principle was applied in ascertaining discriminant validity, inter-construct correlation values, and the square root of AVEs for each construct. Meanwhile, the square root of all AVE is presented in the diagonal in Table 8, and the inter construct correlation is depicted below. The measurement model is said to be accepted since the square root of AVE is greater than the inter-construct correlation of each construct, indicating the presence of incidence of discriminant validity amidst constructs in the model.

Table 8: Discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker's criterion)

Variables	COMP	COST	FC	PEU	PEOU	MSME	SM
Compatibility	0.854						
Cost	0.818	0.858					
Facility Conditions	-0.036	0.011	0.871				
Perceived Usefulness	0.351	0.345	0.074	0.833			
Perceived Ease of Use	0.700	0.677	0.087	0.277	0.844		
SMEs performance	0.313	0.363	0.112	0.532	0.379	0.808	
Social Media	0.824	0.847	-0.012	0.368	0.695	0.539	0.692

Source: Author's Computation, 2021

*Diagonal values in bold are the square root of AVE, when using Fornell-Larcker's criteria.

4.3.3 Collinearity Statistics

In assessing the measurement model, multicollinearity between and among the predictors is tested by calculating the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) for each independent variable as reflected in the add-on table below. The results depict the absence of collinearity or multicollinearity issue since all the VIF values meet the threshold value of below 10 (Hair et al., 2017; Sarstedt, Christian & Ringle, 2017).

Table 9: Structural Model Multicollinearity (Inner VIF Values)

Variables	MSME	SM
Compatibility (COMP)	4.000	3.536
Cost (COST)	4.296	3.267
Facility Conditions (FC)	1.037	1.035
Perceived Usefulness (PEU)	1.177	1.162
Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU)	2.227	2.142
SMEs performance (MSME)	-	-
Social Media (SM)	4.566	-

Source; Authors Computation

4.4 Structural Model

Apart from the measurement model, this study also assessed the structural model. The Structural model is usually adopted to test the causal relationship among the constructs in the instrument, by providing a path coefficient, the R-squared, t-statistics, P-value, and f^2 using a bootstrapping of 5000 re-sampling procedure.

The direct effects of the predictor variable on the outcome variables are examined, with the result showing that some factors are identified as influencer on SMEs performance; perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are positively and significantly related to SMEs performance (H1d: $\beta = 0.152$, $t = 2.150$; H1e: $\beta = 0.441$, $t = 8.283$ $p < 0.05$), while cost and compatibility had a negative and significant influence on SMEs performance (H1b: $\beta = -0.191$, $t = 2.031$ $p < 0.05$; H1c: $\beta = -0.399$, $t = 4.381$, $p < 0.01$), but the path between facility conditions and SME performance is said to be insignificant (H1a: $\beta = 0.063$, $t = 1.226$, $p > 0.05$). Furthermore, hypotheses 2b-2d were said to be significant and positively related to social media, while facility conditions (H2a) and perceived ease of use (H2e) were insignificant since the p-values are greater than 0.05. Meanwhile, H4 revealed that social media is positively and significantly related to SMEs performance ($\beta = 0.733$, $t = 6.362$, $p < 0.05$). Finally, the indirect

effect of social media on the relationship between SM influencer and SME performance is all said to be significant, except for facility conditions (H3a: $\beta = -0.017$, $t = 0.802$, $p > 0.05$) and perceived ease of use (H3e: $\beta = 0.017$, $t = 0.701$, $p > 0.05$). Hence, social media was said to positively mediate the following paths; $COST \rightarrow MSME$, $COMP \rightarrow MSME$ and $PEU \rightarrow MSME$.

The estimation of coefficients of the determinant (R^2) in the first hypothesis reveals that Cost, Compatibility (COMP) Facilitating Conditions (FC) Perceived Usefulness (PEU), and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU), can explain and interpret SMEs performance to the tune of 51.4%, since the concerned coefficient of the determinant is 0.514, comparatively, Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) has the highest magnitude of concerned path coefficient (0.441). Meanwhile, the influence of the factors (COST, COMP, FCO, PEU, and PEOU) on SM revealed a strong coefficient of the determinant ($R^2 = 0.781$), denoting that the factors accounted for 78.1% influence on social media marketing, having cost with highest concerned path coefficient is 0.485 is significant at 0.05. Finally, 0.514 shown as the R-squared on the path ($SM \rightarrow MSME$), revealed that social media (SM) tends to account for and construe SME's performance with explanative power of 51.4%, hence 48.6% variations in SMEs performance is explained by other factors.

Subsequently, in addition to observing the beta coefficients (β), statistical significance (p -value) and variance explained (R^2), Sullivan & Feinn (2012), recommended that the substantive significance (f^2), be reported to reveal the actual magnitude of the observed effects. The effect sizes of the direct paths are recorded in table 10 presented below. Relying on the magnitude of effects sizes, three paths ($PEOU \rightarrow MSME$; $COST \rightarrow SM$; $SM \rightarrow MSME$), recorded moderate effect sizes, since the f^2 value fell within the limit of 0.15 - 0.35 as suggested by Cohen (1988). Equally, five paths ($COST \rightarrow MSME$; $COMP \rightarrow MSME$; $PEU \rightarrow MSME$; $COMP \rightarrow SM$; $PEU \rightarrow SM$) had a low antecedent effect on social media and SMEs performance, since their f^2 values fell within the range of low effect threshold (0.02 – 0.15), while the effect sizes of facility

conditions on social media and SMEs performance ($f^2 = 0.002$; $f^2 = 0.009$), as well as, the PEOU → SM path ($f^2 = 0.012$) had insignificant magnitude, since f^2 values fell below the three thresholds.

Considering the overall goodness-of-fit (GoF), which can be accessed via tests of model fit or the use of fit indices, indicators like the SRMR and normal fit index (NFI) become significant if the SRMR is less than 0.08 and NFI fell within the range of 0 and 1. Hence, the study model is said to be statistically fit (SRMR = 0.046; NFI = 0.721) as evidenced by Henseler, Hubona, and Ray (2016).

Table 10: path analysis result

		Model fit summary			SRMR = 0.046		NFI = 0.721		Chi-Square = 1,502.926	
Hypotheses	Relationship	Std. Beta	Std. Error	T- Value	p-value	F ²	R ²	Decision		
H1a	FC → MSME	0.063	0.051	1.226	0.220	0.009	0.514	Not Supported		
H1b	COST → MSME	-0.191	0.094	2.031	0.042***	0.029	0.514	Supported		
H1c	COMP → MSME	0.399	0.091	4.381	0.000**	0.090	0.514	Supported		
H1d	PEU → MSME	0.152	0.071	2.150	0.032***	0.014	0.514	Supported		
H1e	PEOU → MSME	0.441	0.053	8.283	0.000**	0.292	0.514	Supported		
H2a	FC → SM	-0.024	0.030	0.793	0.428	0.002	0.781	Not Supported		
H2b	COST → SM	0.485	0.042	11.547	0.000**	0.315	0.781	Supported		
H2c	COMP → SM	0.350	0.050	6.957	0.000**	0.131	0.781	Supported		
H2d	PEU → SM	0.121	0.046	2.626	0.009**	0.040	0.781	Supported		
H2e	PEOU → SM	0.023	0.033	0.688	0.491	0.012	0.781	Not Supported		
H4	SM → MSME	0.733	0.115	6.362	0.000**	0.331	0.514	Supported		
<i>Indirect Effects</i>										
H3a	FC → SM → MSME	-0.017	0.022	0.802	0.423	-	-	Not Supported		
H3b	COST → SM → MSME	0.356	0.060	5.909	0.000**	-	-	Supported		
H3c	COMP → SM → MSME	0.256	0.053	4.816	0.000**	-	-	Supported		

H3d	PEU → SM → MSME	0.089	0.038	2.317	0.021***	-	-	Supported
H3e	PEOU → SM → MSME	0.017	0.024	0.701	0.484	-	-	Not Supported

Source: Author's Computation, 2021. Significant at $P^{**} < 0.01$; $P^{***} < 0.05$

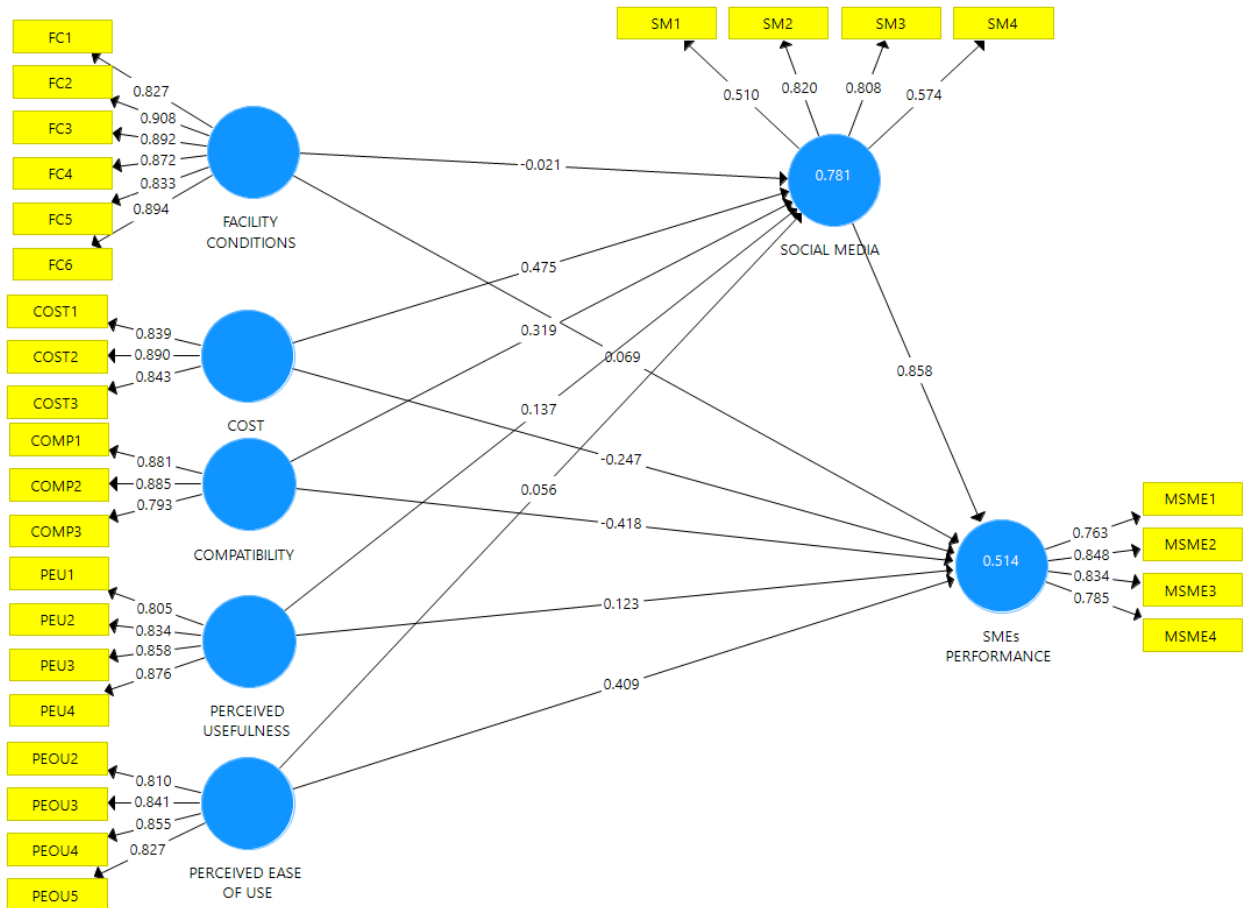


Figure 1: Structural Model on Paths

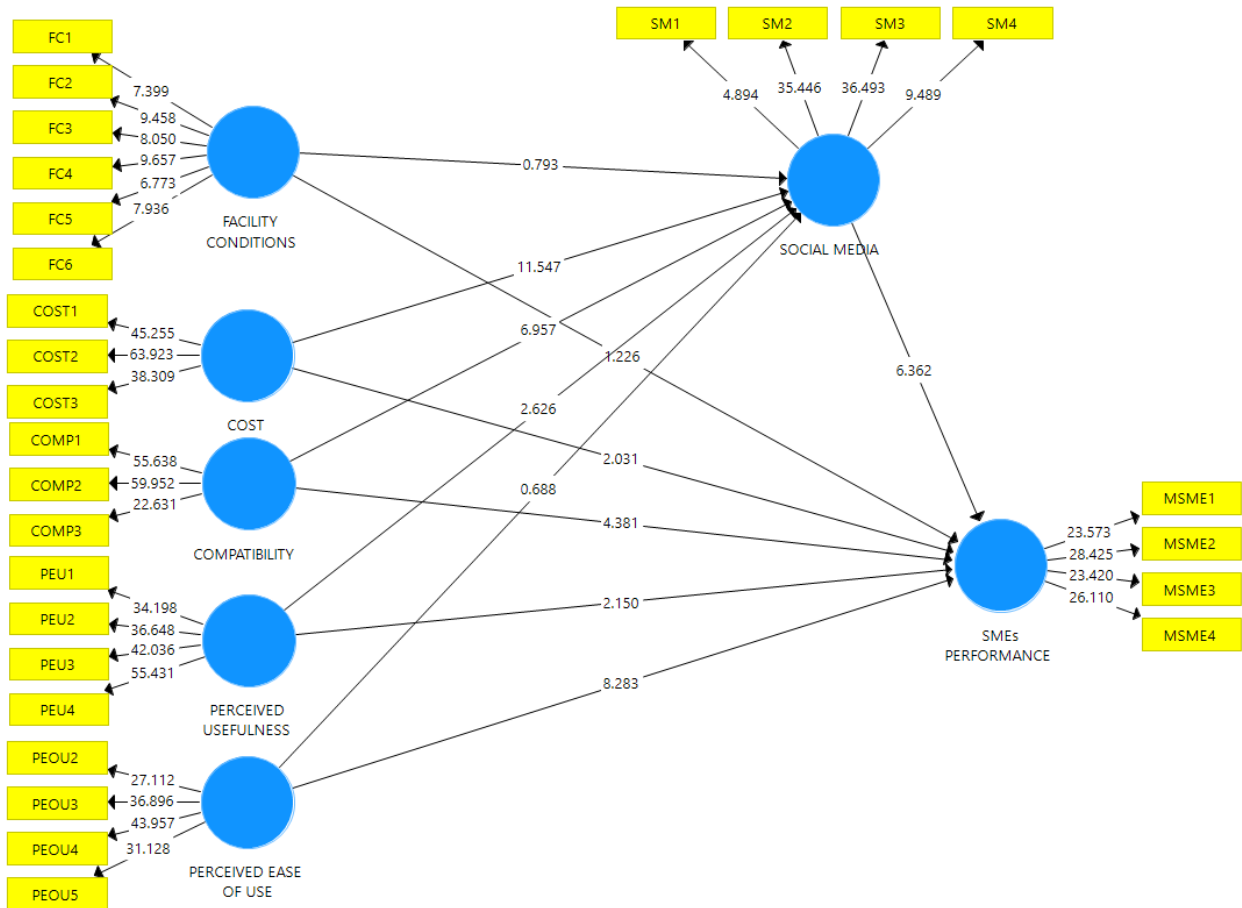


Fig 3: t-statistics

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

5.1 Discussion of Findings

This section took an in-depth look at the operational strategies applied by the SMEs with emphasis on gains of using social media in place of responses from consumers and profitability. The degree of using social media was one of the parameters analyzed and it was discovered that 78% of SMEs utilized social media to a very large extent in their business operations.

Among the SM platforms used by SMEs, WhatsApp turned out to be the most used followed by Instagram and Facebook, while the least adopted social media platform was Twitter. This was partly since WhatsApp has gained popularity over other social media platforms in recent times and coupled with the fact that it is easy to use, it boasts of reaching huge numbers of consumers. This was confirmed in the next parameter which sorts out to unravel the social media platform that is mostly used, and it was found out that WhatsApp was the most utilized followed by Instagram. Also, it was necessary to know the level of social media impact on some key parameters in business and transactions of the SMEs during the pandemic. The parameters considered were marketing, sales, and selling, financial performance, operational efficiency, etc. It was discovered that social media impact was hugely felt in Marketing. This was hanged on the sole aim of using social media is to reach out to consumers via promotional adverts and build the consumer base as a result. Another significant aspect of social media impact during the pandemic was in sales and selling as it aided the SMEs in selling their products and delivering services at a fast rate during the pandemic. It also had a fair impact on operational efficiency and this was because some of the staff were not familiar with the strategies needed in operating and utilizing social media in business applications, hence the low operational efficiency.

Furthermore, the degree to which social media impacted SMEs' financial growth with regards to the customer base, sales and turnover, profitability, market share, working capital, and financial growth was analyzed and it was discovered that SM usage had positively impacted SMEs growth, as they reported positive turnovers and customer base resulting in financial growth. Most of the SMEs recorded an improvement in the financial growth despite the pandemic; accrued to social media marketing application and strategy during the pandemic to overcome the restrictions and lockdowns. The majority of the respondents assessed also mentioned that they had recorded an upsurge in the profit realized from social media marketing strategies. This increase in profit was hitherto insignificant but for the social media, strategies employed. There was also a significant increase in the customer base and market share as a result of SMEs practices on social media usage.

The COVID-19 pandemic invariably led to the SMEs adopting social media marketing strategies, and half of the respondents reported that they recorded an increase in the overall performance despite the pandemic. It is a known fact that the technology is expensive, and its adoption as a marketing technique demand financial power, but the ROI seem to worth the effort, since majority reported that benefits far outweigh cost incurred.

Furthermore, the question relating to social media influence on SMEs' turnover, opined with more than half of the SMEs reported that they had a positive turnover which implied that social media marketing should be adopted. The COVID-19 pandemic rather than being a menace to SMEs has become a means of growth for SMEs that applied social media in their commercial strategies. The use of SM was not popular before the pandemic but the restrictions and lockdown by the government led to its adoption and this has been advantageous to the SMEs.

The four specifically formulated hypotheses explicitly connote the bond existing between influencer factors, SM utilization, and SME's performance. Firstly, all the factors except facility conditions had support for the significance on SMEs performance. Meanwhile, a

positive connection was said to occur among compatibility, perceived utility, and perceived ease of use, being factors influencing to SMEs performance, while cost is negatively related to SMEs performance. Secondly, FC and PEOU were said to have insignificant impact on social media, while other factors; cost compatibility and perceived usefulness have positive significance on social media usage. Hypothesis three revealed that SM significantly mediates the association of cost, compatibility perceived usefulness, and SMEs performance but a non-support decision was given to the insignificant effect of SM in mediating the FC → MSME and PEOU → MSME path. Finally, hypothesis four tested positive and supported the significance of social media on SMEs performance.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.1 Conclusion

The present research investigated factors influencing performances, and the mediating role of social media among SMEs in Northern Cyprus. Using 254 SMEs selected from three towns known to be well-recognized business hubs in TRNC. The ability to utilize social media during the pandemic is very necessary because there have been restrictions in all social and physical activities. Supporting facilities are much needed possessing the ability to utilize social media for business operations; these facilities include infrastructure, compatibility, and knowledge of information technology are all important factors. and the ease of using For business use of information technology compatibility, perception of the usage of information technology, as well as, the ease of usage have been evidenced to meaningfully influence social media as shown in this research. The suitability of the business or product with social media users is displayed by compatibility, which implies that social media will be used more often for SMEs needs, if the is compatible in promoting the business. For information technology to be useful, there is a need to acquire good knowledge and understanding, implying that , information technology application in business operations is apparent to increase the worth and efficiency of the SME, it will advance the use of S.media for promotional media.

Evidenced from results of the study opined that the adoption of social media for marketing affects the performance of SMEs positively with regards to customer relationships, creativity, productivity, and sales increase. This implies that if there is a better way to manage social media, the performance of SMEs will improve significantly. Social media has become a very important business tool for promoting enterpruise image since customers are becoming glued

to social media and also considering that the pandemic has made it impossible to establish physical contact with the customers. Small and medium scaled enterprises have recorded significant improvement in their financial status irrespective of the COVID-19 pandemic and this can be attributed to social media practices. SMEs only had to ensure they have the technical know-how to strategically implement the use of social media and the result was an inevitable surge in financial performance. This has resulted in a significant shift from normal traditional marketing to an online business community. The possibility that this pattern of doing business through social media will persist long after the COVID-19 pandemic is high considering the significant positive growth SMEs have recorded. However, it is recommended that social media is a very potent means of advancing the performance of SME's during the COVID-19 pandemic, and impetus for SMEs to invest in the knowledge of social media for business operations.

6.2 Policy Implications and Theoretical Contributions

The performance of small and medium scale enterprises (SME) globally has been immensely affected by the presence of the COVID-19 pandemic. This negative impact is large as a result of the physical and social limitations that have resulted in very sparse community activities; the outcome of this is the physical shut down of many businesses or companies. Online media is one of the strategies employed by most companies in their business operations and it serves as an alternative to the normal procedure and ensures that companies always have another means of staying in operation in the event of any mishap as in the case of the COVID-19 pandemic. The utilization of social media marketing is a very effective form of online media as it breaks all the boundaries and enables the firms to reach the customers irrespective of their location and as a result, boosts the income of SMEs. This method of using social media marketing in business operations for SMEs is nascent, hence the need to consider some important things before it is adopted. Conditional state of the facilities, costs, compatibility,

technology needed to use effectively, and ease-of-use are most of the factors that directly influence the adoption and use of social media marketing (Chatterjee & Kumar Kar, 2020). Possession of the right infrastructure and facilities that support the use of social media marketing is very necessary if the aim is to promote products and the need for good investment and competent personnel is also an important factor as this will maximize the use of social media for marketing. This research discovered that although all the SMEs sampled use social media in their business operations especially since the COVID-19 pandemic, about 30% of them do not have the facilities that will significantly foster the use of social media for marketing. They seem to lack suitable infrastructure, deficient in strategies that will maximize promotion on social media, absence of social media investment, lack of social media expertise, and lack of training for employees on social media. The study conducted by Chatterjee and Kumar Kar (2020) and Venkatesh (2012) supports these outcomes.

There is a lot of expenses that go into using social media for marketing especially with regards to paying for advertisements. Also, training of human resources to improve their capabilities as it concerns social media marketing and the development of infrastructures is cost-effective. Although studies point out that SMEs do not spend much on social media marketing since they do not fully use paid advertising media in the promotion of their products but rather use unpaid media to promote their products. This invariably results in the SME's inability to reach a wider scale of their target consumers and gives them access to only a limited number of consumers.

One major factor that also affects the application of social media as a tool for marketing to a large extent is the compatibility of the company; this is because social media is not required as a medium of promotion for all products or companies especially SMEs. This research points out from the results that social media marketing is positively affected by compatibility which indicates that the the product or type of business is more compatible, the more probable it is that social media marketing will be applied for SMEs during the pandemic. There is also an

indication from this that most SMEs have products that are compatible with social media and this resulted in the frequent use of social media by the SME owners. The results of this research support research conducted by Brown & Russel (2007), Wang and Kim (2017), and Chatterjee and Kumar Kar (2020). There is also a variety of social media to choose from by the players in SMEs as they each offer different and unique facilities and limitations; they make choices based on their ability to apply social media as a means to display and During the COVID-19 epidemic, companies will be able to sell their products. It is also seen from the results of this research that the effect of perceived usefulness on social media for marketing is positive. This positive effect is depicted by the fact that S.media is used to a greater extent if the SME benefits from it. The various SMEs assessed also agreed to the fact that social media use has increased their productivity and as a result will become a useful tool in their business operations even after the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, during this COVID-19 pandemic, social media has been seen as a tool that helps give better management to the company and consequently increases the satisfaction of the customers. These results are supported by studies carried out by Park, Kim, and Kwon (2016).

The level of ease-of-use determines the the efficiency with which social media can be used as a marketing tool and most SMEs see the need to master the technology that enables them to adopt social media marketing with ease and produce positive results. It was realized from this research that there is a positive effect on the use of S.media marketing by the perceived ease of use. This is a clear indicator that if a social media marketing tool is easy to use, the SME will apply it more in its business operations. Some indicators point out if a social medium has ease-of-use and these include easy to learn, It's simple to find new customers, and it's also simple to spot consumer need.. This also results in the ease of determining the advert strategy to apply on social media platforms due to the information gathered by the customers which are easily

identifiable. The result derived from this study is supported by research by Henderson and Divett (2003), Ware (2018), and Chatterjee and Kumar Kar (2020).

Social and physical activities have been restricted during this time of COVID-19 to curtail the spread of the virus. The side effect of this for SMEs has been a significant reduction in the sales turnover and this has led most SMEs resulting to sell their products online mostly using social media to achieve this. It is expected that the use of S.media will increase sales turnover and re-establish the status quo before the pandemic or even surpass the previous financial state. The performance of the SMEs has been improved by the use of social media which is a positive significant effect on the SMEs in this research. This indicates that if the SMEs apply social media marketing in their business operations more often, they will achieve an increase in sales, customer relationships, productivity, and creativity. SMEs use social media in their business operation to gain a competitive advantage over their competitors, connect with customers and achieve other marketing techniques. The results obtained from this study are in line with that carried out by Rana et al. (2019), Fatima and Bilal (2019), Chatterjee and Kumar-Kal (2020).

6.3 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Studies

Despite contributions from the study; several confer still exist. Firstly, considering the sample size used, the generalization of the study becomes debatable, more industrialists ought to have been considered, and for a more longitudinal period, and views from other geographical context could be of added asset to future research. Secondly, there is an omission of demographic and cultural differences as controlling social media practices as it results to increased performance. It is advisable therefore, that future research focus its attention on demographic and cultural variables which will to improve the study's outcomes. Importantly, this research was conducted during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic when SMEs were threatened by bankruptcy; it is suggested that further research can analyse the implementation of social media in the post-COVID-19 era, as this will present a more accurate illustration of the differences in the use of

social media marketing for SMEs during the pandemic, and also during normal conditions. Finally, other variables such as trust, quality could also be tested in form of mediating or moderating influence.

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List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Research questionnaire

Near East University

**Department of Business Administration MSC, School of Social Science Graduate
Program.**

Dear Sir/Madam,

My Name Is Maram Shetaya , last Year Master's Student at Near East University. I am expected to conduct and present my academic thesis titled “**THE MEDIATING ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BETWEEN FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE OF SMEs DURING COVID-19**” the main objective of the study is to Broadly, this study intends to identify influencers of social media marketing on SMEs performance, and incisively determine the mediating role of social media on factors affecting SMEs performance throughout the COVID-19 epidemic in North Cypruss. To realize this objective, the methodology requires the collection of primary data from SME in North Cyprus (Lefkosa, Girne, Magusta) via the instrument of the questionnaire survey. Therefore, I seek your consent to participate in this study. All the information gathered from this survey will be held strictly confidential and will only be used for academic purpose. I appreciate you taking your time out of your busy schedule to participate in this questionnaire survey.

NOTE: Please take your time in answering the questionnaire.

Instruction: Please click (*) where appropriate.

SECTION A: Demographic Information

Demographic Information	
1. Gender	Male() Female ()
2. Age	Below 30 years () 30-35 () 36-40 () Above 40 ()
3. Years of operation	Below 5 years () 5-10 years () 11-15 years () above 15 ()
4. Nature of business	Software () Food service () Construction () Manufacturing () E-commerce ()

SECTION B:

5. To what extent do you make use of social media in your firm?

- A) Very well () b) partially () c) rarely () d) not at all ()**

6. Does your firm make use of social media?

- A) Yes () b) No ()**

7. Do you use these social media platforms?

Digital marketing technique	Yes	No
Facebook		
Instagram		
WhatsApp		
Twitter		
Others ()		

8. How would you rate the level of use of the following social media platforms on a scale of 1-5 in your business?

Keys: 1= Very poor, 2=Poor, 3=Fair, 4=Good, 5=Very Good

Social media platform	1	2	3	4	5
Facebook					
Instagram					
WhatsApp					
Twitter					

9. To what extent has the application of social media affected the following business operations during COVID-19 pandemic?

1= very low, 2= Low, 3= Average, 4= High, 5= Very High

BUSINESS OPERATIONS	1	2	3	4	5
Marketing					
Sales and selling					
Financial performance					
Operational efficiency					
Please specify others and rate					

10. To what extent has the application of social media affected the following financial growth measures?

BUSINESS OPERATIONS	1	2	3	4	5
Customer base					
Sales and turnover					
Profitability					
Market share					
Working capital					

Financial growth					
Please specify others and rate.....					

11. There has been improvement in the financial growth between the period before Covid-19 pandemic and the period after?Rate: Very low () Low () Moderate () High () Very High ().

12. Since the introduction of social media in your business, how has been the profit performance?

Steadily decreasing () Decreasing () Static () Increasing () Steadily Increasing () No idea ()

13. What is the percentage increase in your customer base and market share owing from the use of social media?

A) 0 - 30% () b) 31 - 50% () c) 51 – 100% () d) 100% and above ()

14.What is the percentage increase in the overall performance of the business owing from the use of social media during COVID-19 pandemic?

A) 0 - 30% () b) 31 - 50% () c) 51 – 100% () d) 100% and above ()

15. Do you think the benefits of social media outweighs the cost incurred

YES () NO ()

16. Do you think social media usage has effect on your turnover?

YES () NO ()

Thank You,,,,,

Appendix 2

Turnitin Similarity Report

THE MEDIATING ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BETWEEN FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE OF SMEs DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

ORIGINALITY REPORT

15% SIMILARITY INDEX **12%** INTERNET SOURCES **10%** PUBLICATIONS **4%** STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	www.koreascience.or.kr Internet Source	1 %
2	Sikander Ali Qalati, Li Wen Yuan, Muhammad Aamir Shafique Khan, Farooq Anwar. "A mediated model on the adoption of social media and SMEs' performance in developing countries", <i>Technology in Society</i> , 2021 Publication	1 %
3	Submitted to University of KwaZulu-Natal Student Paper	1 %
4	www.revistaclinicapsicologica.com Internet Source	<1 %
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11	etd.uum.edu.my Internet Source	<1 %
12	theses.gla.ac.uk Internet Source	<1 %
13	Sheshadri Chatterjee, Arpan Kumar Kar. "Why do small and medium enterprises use social do small and medium enterprises use social	<1 %

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Appendix 3

Ethical Committee



BİLİMSEL ARAŞTIRMALAR ETİK

KURULU

05.10.2021

Dear Maram Ibrahim ~~Abdelhafez Shetaya~~

Your application titled **“The Mediating Role of Social Media Between Factors Affecting Performance of Smes During Covid-19 Pandemic”** with the application number NEU/SS/2021/1092 has been evaluated by the Scientific Research Ethics Committee and granted approval. You can start your research on the condition that you will abide by the information provided in your application form.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Direnç Kanol

Rapporteur of the Scientific Research Ethics Committee

Note:If you need to provide an official letter to an institution with the signature of the Head of NEU Scientific Research Ethics Committee, please apply to the secretariat of the ethics committee by showing this document.