SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING STRATEGIES AND BUSINESS SURVIVAL: A SURVEY OF SME’S IN DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

Odita Anthony Ogomegbunam

1Deptartment of Business Administration, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria.

Corresponding Author: Odita Anthony Ogomegbunam
Corresponding Author Email: oditaao@delsu.edu.ng, tonyodita2002@gmail.com

Article Received: 03-01-23 Accepted: 28-01-23 Published: 16-02-23

Licensing Details: Author retains the right of this article. The article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial 4.0 License (http://www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/), which permits non-commercial use, reproduction and distribution of the work without further permission provided the original work is attributed as specified on the Journal open access page.

ABSTRACT

The study examined social media marketing strategies adopted by SMEs for their business survival in Delta State, Nigeria. The research population consists of all 3,976 registered SMEs with the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria, Delta State office (SMEDAN). Three hundred and ninety-eight (398) registered Small and Medium Enterprises in Delta State were used as sample which represents ten percent (10%) of the total number of registered SMEs which is in line with keilinger recommendation of sample study. A self structured questionnaire was used for data collection titled "Social Media and SMEs Questionnaire" (SMAPSMEQ). Data were analyzed using the descriptive and inferential statistics. The simple percentage, frequency count, mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data received via research questions. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the three hypotheses. Findings shows that there exists a significant relationship between the impact of cause marketing strategy and customer’s loyalty among Small and Medium Enterprises, as an increase in the cause marketing strategy of SMES also leads to a corresponding increase in their customer’s loyalty and vice versa. A statistically significant relationship exist between the adoption of relationship marketing as social media marketing strategy and customer’s patronage among Small and Medium Enterprises in Delta State, which
implies that maintaining a good relationship with its customers will have positive influence on the customer’s patronage, encourage mutual relationship, cheaper customer acquisition of Small and Medium Enterprises. Findings also shows that there exist a significant relationship between the adoption of scarcity marketing as social media marketing strategy and the volume of sales among Small and Medium Enterprises in Delta State, which means that if a good scarcity marketing strategy is maintained by a Small and Medium Enterprises, their volume of sales would also be positively affected. Based on the findings, it was recommended that small and Medium Scale Enterprises should give adequate attention to improving their cause, relationship and scarcity marketing strategies by setting up unit committees in their organization to see that these objectives are achieved. Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria, Delta State office (SMEDAN) should continually encourage Small and Medium Scale Enterprises to uphold the use of these business strategies by using them as benchmark for raising the standard of their Enterprises across Delta State.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, SMEDAN, SMAPSMEQ, SMES, Strategies and Survival.

INTRODUCTION

One method that may help small businesses survive is social media marketing strategies (SMMS) (Wamba& Carter, 2014). Engaging with consumers online utilizing marketing tactics such as cause marketing, relationship marketing, and scarcity marketing is described as social media marketing strategies (Neti, 2011, Agbogun, and Ehiedu, (2022), Bayem, Ehiedu, Agbogun, and Onuorah, (2022), Ehiedu, and Obi, (2022). When designing marketing strategy, many small and medium-sized business owners have neglected to include digital media (Hassan, Nadzim, &Shiratuddin, 2015). There is a scarcity of research on how social media has improved corporate performance (Paniagua&Sapena, 2014).

The scarcity of literature on the benefits of SMMS and understanding of organizational consequences suggests that more research is needed (Charlesworth, 2014). Future research could reveal best practices and effective SMMS techniques to assist business leaders in maximizing potential advantages and determining which social media tools and strategies are most effective in gaining a competitive edge (Boling, Burns, & Dick, 2014). This study may help practitioners obtain a better understanding of the dangers and advantages of social media, allowing them to make more educated decisions about whether or not to use SMMS methods (Paniagua & Sapena, 2014).

Nigeria, like the rest of the world, has advanced technologically in recent years, particularly in terms of communication and interpersonal interactions. The majorities of people are now familiar with and use social media to manage many aspects of their lives, including their businesses. The majority of business is now done through social media. Social media adds a new dimension to operations. It is a business model that has changed the way things are done. Businesses now have access to materials that were previously unavailable. Social media has benefited businesses in enhancing their credibility, creating strategic connections, and expanding touch with customers and suppliers as a communication tool.

According to studies, social media is used not only for product promotion, but also has an impact on users and other people, as well as on young people's well-being. They have had a significant impact on the tourism industry and have made it easier for organizations and
individuals to share information (Snijders and Helms, 2014; Swist, Collin, and McCormack, 2015; Odita & Agbada 2020).

In today's world, businesses have taken on new dimensions in terms of ownership, available resources, management, and control, all of which have changed the small-scale business model. As proven by the experience of most emerging countries' economies, such as Nigeria's aims, small and medium-sized businesses can contribute meaningfully to the achievement of national economic objectives (Abu & Ezike, 2012, Onuorah & Odita, 2013) and substantially lead to an improved business (Odita, Ehiedu & Kifordu, 2020). Small businesses, in particular, have the potential to achieve development goals such as increased output, job creation, income redistribution, indigenous entrepreneurship promotion, and technological advancement, to name a few. As a result, this research looked at the social media marketing strategies used by SMEs in Delta State to ensure their survival.

Statement of the Problem

Businesses all across the world are moving their modes of reaching out to and connecting with their customers from traditional face-to-face marketing to digital marketing, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. People are increasingly using the internet and social media to buy and sell their goods and services. Many entrepreneurs, both large and small, were encouraged to accept and use social media as a tool for their business operations in proposition to this belief.

However, given the fact that business operators have begun to use the internet/social media as a way of doing business in recent years, it is obvious and understood that not all SMEs have fared well in terms of performance and sustainability. While some SMEs are succeeding, others are not, for a variety of reasons, the most significant of which is the disparity in marketing strategies used by SMEs. Companies using social media to persuade consumers that their products and services are worth buying gave birth to the concept of social media marketing. Although small business owners are increasingly using social media, there are still several industries that have not made it a primary priority. The problem is that most business owners do not completely comprehend how to use social media marketing to engage customers. The specific business issue is that some business owners are unable to adopt social media marketing techniques that effectively engage customers.

Small and medium scales enterprises are more likely to invest in sophisticated relationship marketing efforts. Relationship marketing is a technique that touches every department in certain major corporations with a client-facing goal (sales, customer service, shipping etc). Industry leaders are continually up against new competitors claiming to offer similar items with a superior degree of service. The only way they can keep their position at the top of their business is to keep their existing customers. From cell phones to baby food, this is true for businesses in every industry. Relationship marketing is a style of marketing that focuses on establishing long-term and meaningful connections between a company and its customers. Relationship marketing's key goals, in contrast to the typical sales-focused approach, are to increase client loyalty and involvement. As a result, the purpose of this research is to learn about the social media marketing methods used by SMEs in Delta State in order to ensure their survival.
Objectives of the Study
The broad objective of this study was to examine social media marketing strategies adopted by SMEs for their business survival in Delta State. The specific objectives are to:

1. To find out the impact of cause marketing and customer’s loyalty among SMES in Delta State.
2. To assess the relationship between relationship marketing and customer’s patronage among SMES in Delta State.
3. To examine the impacts of scarcity marketing and volume of sales among SMES in Delta State.

Hypotheses
To permit empirical investigation of the subject matter, the following null hypotheses have been raised:

Ho1: There is no statistically significant relationship between the impact of cause marketing strategy and customer’s loyalty among SMES in Delta State.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between the adoption of relationship marketing as social media marketing strategy and customer’s patronage among SMES in Delta State.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between the adoption of scarcity marketing as social media marketing strategy and the volume of sales among SMES in Delta State.

Social Media Marketing
Different researchers have given different definitions to social media marketing, but only a handful of these concepts will be explored in this study. It's been summed up as "interacting with customers online" (Neti, 2011). This definition considers social media to be an online medium for reaching out to customers. A computer-mediated technology that allows individuals to produce, share, and exchange information, ideas, and pictures/videos in virtual communities and networks is known as social media (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy and Silvestre, 2011). In other terms, social media are internet-based tools enabling people to share and discuss information (Neti, 2011).

The word 'social media' is derived from two words: 'social' and 'media.' According to Neti (2011), "social" refers to individual interactions inside or among groups, and "media" refers to a communication platform created and supported by interpersonal interactions among individuals via a specific medium. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), social media is a collection of web-based apps that are built on the conceptual and technological underpinnings of Web 2.0 and allow for the creation and exchange of user-generated content. In this article, the term "social media marketing" refers to natural social media activity. As a result, using social media to market your brand without the need of paid advertising is a viable option (e.g Facebook Ads or PPC for example). This could be done through interesting blog posts, clever infographics, or in-house videos that give your potential customers a better understanding of your company.

Social Media Marketing (SMM) Strategies
The methodology, method, technique, or plan that an individual or organization intends to use to achieve success in the marketplace or in society is referred to as strategy. According to Gleuck (1984), as stated in Achumba (2000:2), strategy is a cohesive, comprehensive, and integrated plan that links the firm's strategic advantage to environmental concerns. He went on to say that businesses that want to not only survive but also increase their marketing
effectiveness and efficiency must learn how to develop and improve solid marketing strategies. The marketing reasoning through which a firm seeks to develop customer value and profitable partnerships is also defined as marketing strategy (Kotler and Armstrong, 2014). The business determines which clients it will serve (segmentation and targeting) and how they will be served (differentiation and positioning). According to Kotler and Armstrong (2014), through marketing research, planning, implementation, and control, a company creates an integrated marketing mix made up of components under its control - product, place, pricing, and promotion. Because of its comprehensiveness, this study uses Kotler and Armstrong's (2014) definition of social media.

Types of Social Media Marketing Strategies
According to Herman (2015) small and medium-sized businesses can use a variety of social media marketing methods. Cause marketing, relationship marketing, scarcity marketing, and undercover marketing are a few examples. Customer interaction, word-of-mouth, electronic word-of-mouth, user-generated content, and branding are among the others (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016).

Cause Marketing Strategy: Cause marketing is advertising done by a for-profit company that aims to raise revenues while also improving society through corporate social responsibility initiatives, such as integrating activist statements in advertisements. Cause-related marketing is a term that refers to a subset of cause marketing that involves a for-profit company and a non-profit organization working together for mutual gain. Customers are invited to support a cause with a charitable gift at checkout counters, which is a high-profile kind of cause-related marketing. Cause marketing differs from corporate giving (philanthropy) in that the latter usually entails a specific tax-deductible payment, whereas cause marketing is a promotional effort that is not always predicated on a donation.

Relationship marketing Strategy: Customer retention and happiness, rather than sales transactions, are the focus of relationship marketing, which evolved from direct response marketing efforts. It differs from other types of marketing in that it understands the long-term value of client connections and goes beyond invasive advertising and sales promotional messaging to communicate with them. Relationship marketing has continued to evolve as the Internet and mobile platforms have opened new collaborative and social communication channels, such as tools for managing customer relationships that go beyond demographics and customer service data collection. Inbound marketing, a combination of search optimization and strategic content, public relations, social media, and application development are all examples of relationship marketing.

Scarcity marketing Strategy: Scarcity marketing is marketing that capitalizes on a customer’s fear of missing out on something. It’s based on the psychological principle that people want what is difficult to acquire. Stores always have sales that are ‘ending soon’. Or they offer discounts that expire on a certain date. Some only create a limited range of products. When an individual booking a train ticket from Bournemouth to London, you can see how many tickets are left: A popular tactic used by travel sites, Booking.com displays how many rooms there are left for some hotels, so customers will have to hurry. To play up the scarcity game, they also indicate how many people are currently viewing the same hotel, so customers will have to act even faster. Scarcity marketing is a marketing strategy that plays on a prospect’s fear of missing out on a purchase. It’s based on the psychological principle that we tend to want what is in
demand and hard to attain.

**Business Survival**

The basic goal of any business, great or little, is to survive or continue to exist. As a result, the concept of business continuity emerges. Because small and medium-sized businesses are regarded to be lacking in sufficient resources, the focus of most academic work has been on large multinationals and lesson SMEs (Salimzadeh, Courvisanos and Nayak, 2013). In their research, Ehiedu, Onuorah, and Mbagwu (2022), Ehiedu, (2022), Ehiedu and Imoagwu, (2022), Pojasek (2007) defined business survival as a way of attaining an organization's vision and mission. It is the application of information, skills, tools, and processes to a variety of activities, goods, organizations, and services (Pojasek, (2007), Ehiedu, (2022). Gbadeyan and Boachie – In their research, Mensah (2016) defines business survival as any method by which an organization can achieve its mission and vision by performing its business activities in such a way that it does not harm the society in which it works while also preventing the firm from dying prematurely. According to a survey, SMEs are the fastest expanding sectors in various countries due to their significant contribution to export and employment (Jaiswal, 2014, Ehiedu, (2022). Small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) would help alleviate poverty by creating wealth and jobs if fully established, but the current economic and political conditions in most developing economies have not allowed SMEs to grow (Etuk, Etuk and Michael, (2014), Ehiedu, (2022), Ehiedu and Imoagwu, (2022).

**Theoretical Framework**

This research is based on the principle of diffusion of innovation. Rogers (1962), Obi, and Ehiedu, (2020), Onuorah, Ehiedu and Okoh, (2021), Onuorah, Ehiedu and Okoh, (2021), Odita, and Ehiedu, (2015), devised the Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) Theory, which is one of the oldest social science theories. It was first used in communication to describe how an idea or product develops traction and diffuses (or spreads) through a population or social system over time. The eventual effect of this dissemination is that people adopt a new concept, habit, or product as part of a social system. Adoption entails a person doing something different from what they previously did (i.e., purchase or use a new product, acquire and perform a new behavior, etc.). Adoption depends on the person's perception of the idea, behavior, or product as novel or unique. Diffusion is conceivable as a result of this. This study's theoretical framework is the diffusion of innovation theory, which allowed for many areas of investigation into how small company retailers developed and implemented SMM strategies to attract customers. As a result, the researcher will be able to better understand and identify the social media marketing methods employed by SMEs to engage customers and stay in business by using the DOI theory in this study. Ehiedu, Onuorah, and Owonye, (2022), Ehiedu and Okorie, (2022), Ehiedu, (2021), using the DOI theory, semi-structured interviews, observations, and a thorough assessment of current literature, researchers were able to better understand how small firms used SMM methods to engage customers.

**Review of Empirical Studies**

Sebastian Molinillo, Pere Mercadé-Melé2, and Teresa De Noronha (2020), Obaro Onuorah, Ehiedu, (2020), Ehiedu, (2021), Evesi and Ehiedu, (2022), Meteke, Ehiedu, Ndah, and Onuorah, (2022), investigated the impact of a cause-related marketing action's performance on consumer loyalty. The goal of this study is to determine the impact of a company's performance of a cause-related marketing action on customer loyalty. The study also looks into the
moderating effect of the publicizing media. Data from a face-to-face questionnaire completed by 421 respondents in a medium-sized city was used to test the proposed theoretical model. The findings supported the suggested model by demonstrating that the functional and image fit between social acts and firms are important antecedents of perceived corporate competence (CA) and credibility. It was discovered that CA affects customer satisfaction directly, that credibility affects customer contentment indirectly through perceived corporate social responsibility, and that satisfaction affects customer loyalty directly and favorably.

The outcomes of the study demonstrated that employing digital marketing tools and methods had a positive influence on the quantitative and qualitative performance of small businesses in Sweden. Is-haq (2019) Ehiedu, (2020), Ehiedu, (2021) looked into the impact of digital marketing on small and medium-sized business sales in Nigeria. A standardized questionnaire was used to collect primary data from randomly selected respondents in the SMEs sector. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. According to the study's findings, increasing SMEs' sales with digital marketing tactics such as e-mails, search engine optimization, pay per click, and online advertising would be highly advantageous. However, the findings suggest that SMEs must employ more than one digital tool as part of their marketing activities in order to retain improved sales in the industry.

Vicente, Oltra-Badenes, Gil-Gomez, and Fernandez (2021), Ehiedu, (2020), investigated the relationship between customer relationship (CRM) as a dimension of SCM practice and a firm's performance in the winemaking sector in Spain. The study's population consisted of 2,575 Spanish enterprises registered with the National Statistics Institute (NE) with the code CNAE-1102 and an annual invoice of at least 2 million Euros, of which only 418 were sampled for the study. The fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis was used to determine the essential circumstances for an outcome to occur.

Nuseir and Aljumah (2020), Ehiedu, (2020), investigated the influence of digital marketing on small and medium-sized businesses in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). For the study, marketing and IT managers from SMEs were questioned. The data was evaluated with SMART-PLS, and it was based on the conclusions of a research on how digital marketing influences business performance. The study discovered that digital marketing activities carried out by apps have a positive impact on the performance of UAE SEMs, and that firms can reach out to clients remotely by utilizing cutting-edge technology. The current research's recommended factors showed no evidence of moderation, according to the study.

**RESEARCH METHOD**

A descriptive survey study approach was used to investigate the Social Media Marketing Strategies and Survival of Small and Medium Enterprises in Delta State. The research population comprises of all 3,976 registered SMEs with the Nigerian Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency (SMEDAN), Delta State office, as of June 2021. The study's sample size was made up of 398 registered small businesses in Delta State. That's ten percent (10%) of the entire number of SMEs who have registered, which is in line with Keilinger's advice that a study's sample elements should make up 10% of the whole population. Using simple random sample techniques and the first contact method, a created questionnaire was randomly distributed to the selected respondents in their SMEs location (venue) in the final stage. This ensured that everyone in the target demographic has an equal probability of being picked for the study.
The data gathering method for the study was a structured questionnaire titled "Social Media and SMEs Questionnaire" (SMaPSMEQ). In the meantime, the response scales for the items in the questionnaire sections were organized. The descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data collected from the respondents. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation, on the other hand, was used to test all of the hypotheses because it helped assess how closely one independent variable was related to a dependent one. For evaluating the hypotheses, the alpha threshold of significance was fixed at 0.05.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A total of 398 copies of the questionnaire were distributed and 320 (80%) copies were returned without errors and found useful. The response rate of 80% is considered adequate for the study because the standard and acceptable response rate for most studies is 60%.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Items on cause marketing strategy of SMES</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>My business is enjoying customer loyalty as a result of my application of cause marketing strategy</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>1.2487</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Customers always call for more purchases whenever my organization apply cause marketing strategy</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>1.0416</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The use of cause marketing strategy has increased the number of my customers.</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>1.2146</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The use of cause marketing strategy has helped me to open new branches as result of customer loyalty.</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>1.0091</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I make more profit in my sales owing to customers' royalty since I started using cause marketing strategy.</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>1.1958</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Cause marketing strategy profit me much more than any other marketing strategy as it enhances customers' loyalty.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>1.3959</td>
<td>Not Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Customers don’t usually beg for reduction of price tag fixed on products/services since I started using cause marketing strategy.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>1.1909</td>
<td>Not Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I make more money from sales due to the number of customers who patronize my business since i started using cause marketing strategy.</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>.8804</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I make more profit in my sales with less stress since i started using cause marketing strategy for m business publicity.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>1.3115</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

NB: The criterion mean for accepting an item as significant is 3.00

Table 1 reveals information concerning the cause marketing strategy of SMES. Out of the 10 items, only five items (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, and 10) are considered significant since the mean scores of the respondents’ responses on the statements raised on cause marketing strategy of SMES are above 3.00 (the criterion mean). The respondents were negative towards the other five items (7, and 8) since the mean scores did not exceed the criterion mean. This analysis therefore means that the small and medium scale business under study practices cause marketing strategy at a moderate level.
Table 2
Descriptive Statistics on Relationship Marketing Strategy of SMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Items on relationship marketing strategy of SMES</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The good relationship strategy that exists between this organization and its customers make it get recommendations resulting to increased customer patronage. This organization-client relationship strategy is strengthened when clients’ problems are solved efficiently resulting to increased customer patronage.</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>1.4982</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>This organization provides good after-purchase services to its customers and this sustains its relationship strategy resulting to increased customer patronage. This organization rewards all customers’ loyalty and uses relationship strategy which encourages them to make more patronages. This organization treats all its customers with respect which encourages them to make more patronages.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>1.3361</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>This organization provides good after-purchase services to its customers and this sustains its relationship strategy resulting to increased customer patronage.</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>1.3882</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>This organization rewards all customers’ loyalty and uses relationship strategy which encourages them to make more patronages. This organization treats all its customers with respect which encourages them to make more patronages.</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>1.5497</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Customers’ experiences with this organization as result of its relationship strategy always turn out better than the business expectations. This organization does not treat any customer less importantly due to its relationship strategy which encourages them to make more patronages. The relationship strategy this organization builds with its clients always turns out long-lasting resulting to increased customer patronage.</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>1.1563</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Not Significant</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>1.0512</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The level of awareness of people about my business activities is higher in recent times since I started using scarcity marketing strategy.</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>1.0987</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Customer’s patronage has increased in recent time due the organization use of relationship marketing strategy</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>1.2361</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>More customers seem to be interested in the organization’s product through the organization’s website as result of relationship marketing strategy</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>1.5497</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The average scores of the respondents' opinions on their organization's relationship marketing approach are shown in Table 4. Six of the eight items on the subject matter are considered significant (1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, and 10) because the mean scores of the respondents' responses on the statements raised are greater than 3.00. (the criterion mean). However, because the mean scores for items 6 and 7 did not exceed the criterion mean, the respondents did not believe the claims to be true. As a result of this investigation, small and medium-sized enterprises have a strong position in relation to their relationship marketing approach.</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>1.1563</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The average scores of the respondents' opinions on their organization's relationship marketing approach are shown in Table 4. Six of the eight items on the subject matter are considered significant (1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, and 10) because the mean scores of the respondents' responses on the statements raised are greater than 3.00. (the criterion mean). However, because the mean scores for items 6 and 7 did not exceed the criterion mean, the respondents did not believe the claims to be true. As a result of this investigation, small and medium-sized enterprises have a strong position in relation to their relationship marketing approach.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics on Scarcity Marketing Strategy of SMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Statements on scarcity marketing strategy of SMES</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I have more customers calling me for products/services since I started using scarcity marketing strategy. The level of awareness of people about my business activities is higher in recent times since I started using scarcity marketing strategy.</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>0.8636</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>150</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>1.4877</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Both known and unknown customers are patronizing my business since I started using scarcity marketing strategy.

There has been a difference in awareness and patronage of my business ever since I started using scarcity marketing strategy.

New ideas are coming to me on how to improve my business since I started using scarcity marketing strategy.

The use of scarcity marketing strategy assists me to rebrand my products/services to attract more customers.

The use of social media for publicity helps most SMEs to adopt new and current strategies for their business.

My customers usually reach out to me and I reach out to them easily using the social media platform.

I usually get updates on current products, customers’ need and market trends as well as get my customer satisfied through the use of social media in my business.

I easily receive my customers’ order of goods and services through my social media platform.

Except for items 4 and 5, which the respondents did not consider genuine statements since their mean score is less than the criterion mean of 3.00, practically all of the statements raised on scarcity marketing strategy of the sampled small and medium scale business are significant, as shown in Table 5. This study shows that small and medium-sized enterprises use scarcity marketing strategies to a large level.

**Testing of the Hypotheses**

In order to test this hypothesis, the Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation was adopted. The result of the data analysis is presented in Table below:

**Table 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pearson Correlation Moment correlation coefficient</th>
<th>Cause marketing strategy</th>
<th>Customer’s loyalty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation (r)</td>
<td>.981**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer’s loyalty</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.981**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>320</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**Correlation is significant at the 1% level (2-tailed).

Table 7 reveals the correlation between the impact of cause marketing strategy and customer’s loyalty among SMES in Delta State. The result shows that the correlation coefficient, r, is .981 while the significant level (α) is .000 which is lesser than the alpha level (α) of.05. This is an indication that a high positive correlation exist between the impact of cause marketing strategy and customer’s loyalty among SMES in Delta State. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no statistically significant relationship between the impact of cause marketing strategy and customer’s loyalty among SMES in Delta State is rejected. This implies that, an increase or decrease in cause marketing strategy SMES may lead to a corresponding increase or decrease in their customer’s loyalty.
Table 5  
**Relationship Marketing as Social Media Marketing Strategy and Customer’s Patronage among SMES in Delta State**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pearson Correlation Moment correlation coefficient</th>
<th>Relationship marketing</th>
<th>Customer’s patronage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship marketing</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation (r)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.788**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer’s patronage</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.788**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).  
** Correlation is significant at the 1% level (2-tailed)

Table 9 displays the correlation result between relationship marketing and customer’s patronage. The result indicates that the correlation coefficient, r, is .788 while the significant level (α) is .000 which is lesser than the alpha level (α) of .05. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between the adoption of relationship marketing as social media marketing strategy and customer’s patronage among SMES in Delta State is rejected. This implies that, an increase or decrease in the relationship marketing of small and medium scale enterprises may lead to a corresponding increase or decrease in their customer’s patronage.

Table 6  
**Scarcity Marketing as Social Media Marketing Strategy and the Volume of Sales among SMES in Delta State**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pearson Correlation Moment correlation coefficient</th>
<th>Scarcity Marketing</th>
<th>Volume of Sales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scarcity Marketing</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation (r)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.865**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volume of Sales</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.865**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).  
** Correlation is significant at the 1% level (2-tailed)

Table 9 shows the correlation analysis between scarcity marketing and volume of sales. The result indicates that the correlation coefficient, r, is .865 while the significant level (α) is .000 which is lesser than the alpha level (α) of .05. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between the adoption of scarcity marketing as social media marketing strategy and the volume of sales among SMES in Delta State is rejected. This implies that, an increase or decrease in scarcity marketing may lead to a corresponding increase or decrease in the volume of sales of small and medium scale enterprises.

**DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

This section discusses the findings of the study. The findings are been discussed drawing inferences from authors’ views in the review of related literature and relating them to the researcher’s findings from the study.

**Cause Marketing Strategy and Customer’s Loyalty among SMES in Delta State**

The results of testing hypothesis one of this study revealed that there is a statistically significant relationship between the impact of cause marketing strategy and customer loyalty among SMES in Delta State, with an increase or decrease in the small and medium scale business's cause...
marketing strategy or practices leading to a corresponding increase or decrease in their customer loyalty. This study is consistent with Jones, Borgman, and Ulusoy's (2015), Ehiedu, Onuorah, and Owonye, (2022), Ehiedu, Odita, and Kifordu, (2020), Ehiedu and Brume-Ezewu, (2022), Ehiedu and Olannye, (2014), that using cause marketing as a social media marketing approach has a minor impact on customer loyalty among small businesses, implying a favorable relationship.

**Relationship Marketing and Customer’s Patronage among SMES in Delta State**

The results of testing hypothesis two found that there is a statistically significant association between the use of relationship marketing as a social media marketing approach and consumer patronage among Delta State SME's. This means that establishing a relationship with clients will have a beneficial impact on customer patronage among Delta State SME's. This finding supports that of Adegbuyi, Akinyele, and Akinyele (2015), who discovered that a high level of relationship marketing as a social media marketing strategy among SMES would increase customer loyalty, lower customer acquisition costs, close deals faster, improve their public image, lower operational costs, reduce lead time, improve customer service levels, and cause quick response to market changes, all of which are reflections of a great organization.

**Scarcity Marketing and the Volume of Salesamong SMES in Delta State**

The result of testing hypothesis three revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between the adoption of scarcity marketing as a social media marketing strategy and the volume of sales among SMES in Delta State, which means that if SMES maintain an effective scarcity marketing strategy, their volume of sales will increase. This study is consistent with that of Bocconcelli, Roberta, Marco Cioppi, and Alessandro Pagano (2017), who discovered that having a sound scarcity marketing strategic practice is critical to increasing sales volume among SMES in Delta State.

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

SME's in Delta State must have a Social Media Marketing Strategy (SMMS) in order to achieve business excellence and gain client loyalty. Based on the findings of the study, it can be inferred that the SME's under investigation embrace and employ social media marketing approach to some extent. These companies have an excellent reputation in terms of their social media marketing approach, and they have a high level of customer relationship management. Their scarcity marketing, on the other hand, is abysmal. Thus, conclusions can be drawn from the tested hypotheses that there is a statistically significant relationship between all of the studied dimensions of SMMS in this study (cause marketing strategy, relationship marketing strategy, and scarcity marketing) and customer loyalty among SMES in Delta State, Nigeria. In the light of the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Delta State no doubt, recognize the essence of valuable social media marketing strategy (SMMS) in their business operations. Based on this, the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria, Delta State office (SMEDAN) should continually encourage these Small and Medium Scale Enterprises to uphold the use of this business strategy by using them as benchmark for raising the standard of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises across Nigeria.

2. Since a positive relationship exists between cause marketing strategy and customer’s loyalty among Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Delta State, the owners as well as of the operators of these businesses should ensure that this strategic policies as well
as relationship is not broken by introducing more social media marketing strategy (SMMS) concepts and policies in their organization.

3. Small and Medium Scale Enterprises should give adequate attention to improving their relationship marketing strategies by setting up unit committees in their organization to see that this objective is achieved.

References


Obi, C.K., & Ehiedu, V.C. (2020). Testing the efficacy of Wagner’s Law on public expenditure in Nigeria. SciPap Scientific Papers of the University of Pardubice. Faculty of Economics and Administration. PP. 103-114


