

Usage of Social Media Content Creation by Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Lagos State

Olahuwoye, David

Abstract

The study assessed the usage of social media through Instagram creative contents by small and medium enterprises in Lagos State. Thus, the question raised was: What are the types of creative content used by photographers in Lagos State of Nigeria? Through a qualitative research method, the study used a descriptive analysis and observation research design in its investigations. The respondents were photographers who practice in Lagos state. The study also employed the non- probability sampling techniques using ten respondents with the aid of a structured interview guide designed for this study. Hence, it was found out that Instagram creative content is an effective tool for small and medium size enterprises to increase visibility and social media serves as an online portfolio for such business to display the services they offer. The investigation also revealed that the effectiveness of Instagram creative content, small and medium size enterprises still relied on the traditional marketing strategies, such as sponsorship, advertisements, word of mouth and to attract clients and enhance sales, that the non-fungible token is widely known among photographers in Lagos. However, about (90%) ninety percent have not ventured into it to enhance sales. this study recommended more usage of the NFT (non-fungible token) by photographers for more visibility for their creative content.

Keywords: social media usage, social media content, instagram, content-creation, small and medium enterprises

Introduction

A small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) is a driving force in every society. They refer to business organizations whether public or private whose scale of operation is small, based on some specific criteria, such as: size, number of employees, value and volume of interest, volume of turnover, among others. Alsbury (2001) describes SMEs as a business which is owned, led by one or few person without direct owners influence in decision making and having a relatively small share of the market and relatively low capital requirements.

The earliest manifestation of small and medium-sized enterprises in advanced countries were cottage industries that later transformed into industrial complexes and tech factories. In Nigeria, the history background of Small and Medium-sized enterprises can be traced back to 1946 Essential Paper No. 24 of

1945 on “A Ten-Year Plan Development and Welfare of Nigeria” 1964 was presented (Adeyemi, Sofoluwe, & Kadiri, 2008).

Small and medium-sizes enterprises are businesses with few staff, audience and capital. They are businesses such as, local restaurants, grocery stores, contractors or photography. Sanath (2018) explains that SMEs are the back bone of the economy of developed and undeveloped countries. These enterprises however, are growing fast and using mediums as the internet to reach their audience, create sales and brand awareness. Small business “have shifted towards” the strategies that enable small businesses grow and to flourish at the center of the innovation and technological based calculus. The evolution of Internet created new opportunities for SMEs, among which are social networks. A large number of different generic types of social media application can be identified such as Wikis, blogs, social mediums, social content communities, social workspace and the social world (Daryl, Green, Martinez, 2018)..

In recent times, businesses of all kinds have searched out ways to improve their brand, get more customers and retain old customers. With almost every marketing strategy used for business purposes, enterprises are beginning to turn toward using a new, easy and reliable platform such as social media.

Social media are works of user-created video, audio, text or multimedia that are published and shared in a social environment, such as a blog, wiki or video hosting site. Social media is an advantage to build trust between the customers and enterprises in a way that has never been seen with the traditional media. (Deelmann and Loos 2002).

Bond, Ferraro, Luxton and Sands (2010) in consonance with Kareem and Akoja (2017) affirm that social media platforms are changing business operations and strategies for organizations. Social media allow businesses to connect and engage with customers in creative and diverse ways that suits the interest and needs of the business owner. It allows business owners to develop strong relationships with their market and potential customers without huge finance and greatly improve brand visibility. Social media represents one of the most transformative impacts on businesses, both within and outside a firm, it is fundamentally changing the way we communicate through creative contents. Over the years, many researchers have analyzed the relationship between SMEs and social media. However, this paper looks at the “Use of Social Media Creative Content by Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in Lagos” while taking a close look at *Photography*. The use of social media creative content by Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME) as a marketing tool is a widely known phenomenon. According to a World Bank report, Nigeria ranked 131 out of 190 countries in business, wherein there are SMEs included. With 11, 663 small and me-

dium-sized enterprises in Lagos, based on the Lagos government statistics, 96% use social media as a marketing tool for their business enterprises.

Following the development of the internet in the 21st century, Social media has become a potentially powerful media for finding key consumer influencers, engaging them and generating brand advocates. Several studies recommend that SMEs should adopt social media tools to transform business growth (Culnan, McHugh, and Zubillaga, 2010); (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010); (Jagongo, A.O. and Kinyua, C., 2013).

The traditional and more popular modes of promotion include advertising, public relations, publicity, sponsorship, sales promotions, among others. However, these forms of promotions require huge capital outlays, engagement of expensive professionals and consultants, and invariably, the results usually take time to manifest. This accounts for why they have adopted the use is social media for their businesses.

The impact of social media on business development has been extensively discussed by other scholars, who all support the notion that companies should adopt social media to boost business growth, especially in the context of SMEs (Deans and Parker, 2009; Hannu, K., Jari, J., & Jaani, V. 2010; McCann, M. & Barlow, A., 2015; Ahmad, Ahmad & Bakar 2017). Yet, studies are seemingly inadequate on how SMEs can use creative content and user generated content to achieve the purpose of social media marketing. Studies have been carried out on how small businesses use various social media tools for growth enhancement, however, the aspect of using generated content and how SMEs have been creative with content creation has not been properly explored. It is also important to note that many small businesses that use social media may fail to understand how to use them correctly.

The social media app is likened to a social community that accommodates numerous kinds of businesses and exposes them to a wide range of possible customers or target audience through options that allow users to create post, share, like or comment on post.

Research Objectives

1. To identify the types of creative contents used by photographers in Lagos.
2. To investigate the reasons for the use of creative content by selected photographers in Lagos.
3. To examine how photographers use Non-fungible token to enhance sales.

Research Questions

1. What are the types of creative contents used by photographers in Lagos?

2. What are the reasons for the uses of creative contents by selected photographers in Lagos?
3. How do photographers use Non-fungible token to enhance sales?

Concept of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SME)

SMEs remain an important sub-sector in the nation's economy. The contribution of SMEs has been recognized as sustenance of the economy because of their capacity in enhancing the economy's output and human welfare (Akingunola, 2011). SME is one of the indices of measuring economic development, and as such, the establishment and proper management of SMEs have a positive effect on the nation's economic development. The term SMEs has been described by different authors in different ways. The Nigeria Bank for Commerce and Industry (as cited in Jimah, 2011) defined a small scale enterprise as one whose capital does not exceed ₦750,000.

The above definition plays emphasis on the capital requirement in the formation of the business. Though capital is not the only consideration in determining whether a business venture is a SMEs or not. According to Osazee and Anao as cited in Inegbenebor, (2006), a small scale business is any business undertaken, owned, managed and controlled by not more than two entrepreneurs, has no more than twenty employees, has no definite organizational structure (that is, all employees report to the owners) and has a relatively small share of its market. In a similar vein, Inegbenebor (2006) opined that the current industrial policy of Nigeria, Small and Medium Scale

Enterprises (SMEs) are now defined on the basis of employment. That is: Micro/cottage industries (1-10 workers), Small – Scale Industries (11-100 workers) Medium Scale industries (100-300 workers) Large scale industries (301 and above).

The SME sector comprises very different types of businesses across a wide range of economic sectors. There are essentially two categories: those that are growth-oriented, and those small and micro enterprises that operate at the subsistence level to provide employment and income mainly for their owners and a relatively small number of external employees. Subsistence enterprises represent the vast majority of SMEs in developing countries. On the other hand, the growth-oriented type are innovative type of businesses which usually operate in growing markets, as well as businesses that are efficiency-oriented and/or network-intensive, which tend to grow through acquisitions. Fadahunsi (1992) identifies six forms of SMEs depending on the service they render, these includes: servicing, retailing, wholesaling, manufacturing, agriculture, extractive.

Servicing includes small businesses such as photocopying, photograph-

ic, catering, barbing, transport services, among others. Etailing is to describe businesses of the person that sells finally to ultimate consumers. Wholesaling is business activities of intermediate nature that is, selling to retailer. Manufacturing involves activities concerned with production of goods and services which are distributed by agents or wholesalers and retailers. Agriculture refers to small business activities concerned with farm productions and agricultural services of all kinds and extractive are small business activities in mining and lumbering sectors of the economy.

Additionally, SMEs often become feeders for large scale enterprises, and they also service products made by large scale enterprises and provide employment opportunities. They respond quickly to business opportunities as a result of the smallness of their sizes. This leads to dynamic flexibility in their operations. They respond quickly to business opportunities as a result of the smallness of their size and decision making process is so quick, because the sole proprietor may not need to engage in extensive consultation in decision-making. However, SMEs experience high rate of business failure, because the sole proprietor bears all the risks alone, unlike other forms of business organizations where the risks are shared and they often lack sufficient capital, therefore they may not be able to expand. SMEs that provide services such as photocopying, photographic, catering, barbing, transport services are one of the most common types of small and medium enterprises. Photography among others is a potentially great creative art. Photography is essentially the production of a permanent record of an image by the combined action of light and chemical processing. The word photography is derived from the Greek word *photos* (light) and *graphos* (writing) which means drawing with light (Adewunmi & Onuora, 2006).

Social media cannot be understood without first defining Web 2.0: a term that describes a new way in which end users use the World Wide Web, a place where content is continuously altered by all operators in a sharing and collaborative way.

(Kaplan & Haenlein 2010). “It is much more to do with what people are doing with the technology than the technology itself, for rather than merely retrieving information, users are now creating and consuming it, and hence adding value to the websites that permit them to do so” (Campbell et al. 2011, 87). Web 2.0 has evolved from simple information retrieval to interactivity, interoperability, and collaboration (Campbell et al. 2011).

Social media is a group of internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and allows the creation and exchange of user generated content. (Kaplan & Haelem, 2010). Since inception in the 80s and 90s, the social media remains a central part of the internet. It is

to help users connect digitally with friends, colleagues, family, business partners and consumers. Social media is a phenomenon that has transformed the interaction and communication of individuals throughout the world. However, social media is not a new concept - it has been evolving since the dawn of human interaction. In recent times, social media has impacted many aspects of human communication, thereby impacting business. Social networking has become daily practice in some users' lives.

Social media has advanced from simply providing a platform for individuals to stay in touch with their family and friends. Now it is a place where consumers can learn more about their favorite companies and the products they sell. Marketers and retailers are utilizing these sites as another way to reach consumers and provide a new way to shop. "Technology related developments such as the rise of powerful search engines, advanced mobile devices and interfaces, peer-to-peer communication vehicles, and online social networks have extended marketers' ability to reach shoppers through new touch points" (Shankar et al. 2011).

A major feature of social media is the creation of content- user generated content which includes: picture, text, video, slideshow etc. Features like this are used on social networks as they host the target audience and consumers.

Instagram

Instagram is a mobile app (iOS and Android) that enables users to instantly turn their mobile snapshots into visually appealing images, which are then shared with others on the network (Larson & Draper, 2017). The social media platform Instagram was launched in 2010 as an application for smart phones (Instagram, 2015). Instagram started out as a mobile photo-sharing application and quickly turned into an advertising platform for all companies in social media. Now, companies utilize Instagram more than ever. It offers features that such as: sponsored advertisement, stories, reels, photo and video and to call to action sharing which allows consumers to tap on the screen and reach the product instantly and effortlessly.

With 1.386 billion users, it is one of the most used social networks worldwide; this means that if properly utilized, Instagram can share products and services of SMEs to at least 50% of Instagram users. Instagram created a strategy to focus on certain aspects of the market and target users based on identifiable similarities in the way people communicate (Larson & Draper, 2017). The business idea was to provide users with a simple way to upload and share mobile photos with friends (Instagram, 2015).

Businesses are able to create and share content with as many people as possible, get to their target audience and share on other social networks like Face-

book or Tumbler. Instagram is a platform solely dedicated on photographic content. It takes advantage of smart phones' cameras and the gallery, allowing the user to choose a picture or a video and apply filters (premade lighting effects) to them. Once the image has been edited, there is an option to add a description to it, or a caption, as it is known in Instagram. The caption can include plain text and hash tags but no links to websites. With a beautiful photo and a meaningful caption, the image is ready to be posted to the world. The user's post is automatically shared with everyone who follows the user on Instagram. When the image or video has been shared, standard social media behaviors can be used to engage with the image, for example functions such as like, comment and share are available.

Creative content is a broad term that refers to the different types of media that companies use to communicate and promote their products and services and the brand itself. This includes a variety of content formats such as blogs, e-books, photos, and brochures, but it also comprises rich media assets such as promotional videos, digital ads and photographs.

Creative content benefit SMEs by allowing them address a large audience in a cost-efficient way, creating experiences and forming relationships, attracting attention, spreading messages about the brand, and services.

Non-Fungible Token and Photography

The photography industry is gradually changing and photographers are constantly evolving and think of ways to expand their market and enhance sales. Nowadays, most photographs are digital or are scanned and become digital. Photography is most of the time in 2D, meaning flat, so it is easy to reproduce on screens and asides traditional means of enhancing sales, photographers are also finding their place in the tech world by minting their art or works into NFTs.

NFTs are tokens stored on a blockchain that can be used to represent ownership of digital assets like artworks, recordings, virtual real estate and pets. NFTs are sold on specialized marketplaces, such as OpenSea, Axie Marketplace, and Rarible. On these platforms, investors can also exchange the property right to the asset underlying the NFT. And because NFTs use smart contract technology, they can be set up so that the original artist can earn a percentage of all subsequent sales. The main difference between NFTs and crypto currencies, such as bitcoin, is that crypto currencies are fungible or interchangeable; they are all worth the same amount. However, NFTs are non-fungible, meaning that an NFT cannot be exchanged for another since each one is unique. Precisely, this uniqueness enables the use of NFTs to authenticate ownership of digital assets. Furthermore, each NFT is stored on a public and transparent blockchain (often

Ethereum's). Thus, NFTs are decentralized applications with high levels of verifiability, tamper resistance, usability, atomicity, and traceability. For additional details about the technicalities of NFTs, please see Wang et al. (2021)

Non-Fungible Token (NFT) have become increasing popular in 2021. Although it can be traced back to the man who first created one, Kevin McCoy, on May 3rd, 2014, when he minted his non-fungible token “Quantum,” way before the crypto art market exploded. NFTs slowly moved into public awareness before exploding into mainstream adoption in early 2021. A non-fungible token (NFT) is data (images, videos, GIFs, and more) kept on a blockchain that guarantees an item to be 100% unique and unchangeable. Fungible items simply mean items that can be easily replaced with another item that is basically the same thing.

“Non-fungible” literally and technically indicates that each NFT is a unique and indivisible token, hence theoretically there should be an infinite number of NFT types. NFTs are usually classified into six major categories according to the scenarios in which they are most widely used: art, collectibles, games, metaverse, other, and utility (Dowling 2022b; Bao and Roubaud 2022). A non-fungible token is one that cannot be exchanged for anything of comparable value. Non-fungible tokens can be represented by media files such as videos and images in different formats. And this is why selling photos as NFT has become so popular among photographers. NFTs can be used to represent items such as photos, videos, audio, and other types of digital files. Access to any copy of the original file, however, is not restricted to the buyer of the NFT.

In Nigeria, photographers paid more attention to NFT in April, 2022 when Adisa Olashile a National Youth Corp Member (NYSC) member sold portraits of an elderly drummer minted as NFT on open sea. It turned out Adisa captured the image of man with his instrument at the local government secretariat where the youth corps meet for their weekly CDS (Community Development Services) in Oyo, Nigeria. He minted the photos as a non-fungible token and sold them for 0.3 Ethereum (Eth) each.

Methodology

This study adopts the qualitative research method; the study used a descriptive analysis and observation research design in its investigations. The respondents were photographers who practice in Lagos state. The study also employed the non-probability sampling techniques using ten respondents with the aid of a structured interview guide designed for this study. The study takes a closer look at photographers in Lagos state. The population of the study consists of 10 photographers in Lagos state. The researcher employed the non-probability sampling technique. The respondents were purposely elected based on non-ran-

dom criteria; respondents must use social media and creative content for their business. Ten (10) respondents participated in a structured in-depth interview.

A structured interview guide was used for the purpose of this study. In-depth interview was also employed for this study. Data was collated with the use of an interview guide through face to face communication, phone calls, or emails. The data gathered was analyzed using a thematic analysis method. For proper analysis, the researcher transcribed and coded the data collated.

Findings

1. A larger percentage of photographers in Lagos use Instagram creative content for brand visibility and a wide audience reach while they rely on traditional marketing strategies for sales.
2. Social media is an effective tool for small and medium size enterprises to market their brand however enterprises have to precise on the reasons for their use of social media as social media offers different tools for different purposes.
3. About 10% of photographers in Lagos use NFT to enhance sales due to the complexity of the platform.
4. Instagram creative content allows photographers in access the percentage of visibility or engagements on a post through post algorithms as well as through the usage of business accounts on Instagram.
5. Through social media marketing offers, such as sponsored ads and paid partnerships, photographers are allowed to express their creativity and share it with thousands of people thereby increasing visibility.

Conclusion

Instagram creative content is an effective tool for small and medium size enterprises to increase visibility and social media serves as an online portfolio for such business to display the services they offer. Despite the effectiveness of Instagram creative content, small and medium size enterprises still rely on traditional marketing strategies such as sponsorships, advertisements, word of mouth and many more to attract clients and enhance sales.

The Non-Fungible Token is widely known amongst photographers in Lagos yet about 90% have not ventured into the it to enhance sales because they are well accustomed to social media marketing. Small and medium size enterprises are steadily growing into important sectors in the economic field. The use of social media has increased visibility, authenticity and enhanced sales.

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