

# Digital Marketing and Performance of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in University of Benin

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## Abstract

This study investigated the impact of digital marketing strategies on the performance of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the University of Benin. A cross-sectional survey design was adopted to collect data from 50 SMEs through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to capture demographic information and assess the adoption of digital marketing tools such as social media marketing, affiliate marketing, and online advertising. Descriptive statistics such as frequency distributions, percentages, and means, were employed to summarize the data, while regression analysis was used to test the relationships between digital marketing strategies and SME performance. The results indicate that 54% of respondents were male, with the majority falling within the 18-25 age group (64%). Most respondents held HND/BSc qualifications (64%) and had less than five years of work experience (72%). Regression analysis revealed a positive and significant impact of social media marketing, affiliate marketing and online advertising ( $p = 0.001$ ) on SME performance. The study concludes that social media marketing, affiliate marketing, and online advertising play pivotal roles in SME success, reinforcing the need for SMEs to embrace digital marketing for sustainable growth. It is recommended that SMEs should be encouraged to leverage social media platforms more effectively, as this strategy significantly improves performance by enhancing customer outreach and engagement. Training programmes on social media management could be offered to business owners to help them maximise these opportunities.

**Keywords:** Affiliate Marketing, Digital Marketing, Online Advertising, SME Performance, Social Media Marketing

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In recent times, firms of different classification in virtually all industrial sectors are constantly enriching their domain with digital tools (Bokša, Šaroč, & Bokšová, 2020). Digitalization is believed to be a major topic in all aspects of society, with a keynote on the effects it poses on economic, political and social elements. Li, Su, Zhang, and Mao (2017) opined that the introduction of the Internet has propelled many firms to network via multiple computers, reaching out to each for sole purposes of expansion and growth. In this regard, virtually all management domains and employees in both large and medium firms, now access the computers via the internet to constantly create awareness. A brand without an effective digital marketing strategy is like a car without tires. Its efficiency and essence are bound to be limited.

According to the American Marketing Association (2017), marketing is the activity, set of institutions and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, partners, and society at large. Digital marketing is a method of marketing that links consumers with producers or sellers electronically using interactive technologies and devices such as emails, websites, online groups, interactive television and mobile communication (Kotler & Armstrong, 2009). Digital marketing includes all marketing efforts that utilize an electronic device or the internet (Alexander, 2019).

Digital marketing is at the forefront of every marketing campaign in every business. Organizations have continued to prioritize the urgency to boost their brand productivity, increase customer base and realize more turnover by applying effective digital marketing strategies. Rowley (2016) posits that for a company to effectively leverage its digital marketing capacity its digital platforms must be well organized and designed, and user friendly to continuously attract the target audience. Excellently structured digital platforms allow customers to have easy navigation. This goes a long way to emphasize the need for marketing consultants and agents should always aim to create a forum where potential clients or web visitors can interact with the product or service, ask questions, and get technical support.

Digital platforms provide an excellent ability to grow the SMEs brand (Xie, Han, Anderson & Ribeiro-Navarrete, 2022). A massive number of corporations compete in different parts of the world as SMEs, even though the performance level of SMEs varies, they play an important role in the overall performance of the whole economy, despite the challenge of sustained performance in the long term. Development of corporate identity in modern times is an important strategic requirement for SMEs to grow their own brand marketing methods and processes (Mingione & Abrarr, 2020). There is a drastic need for SMEs to apply social networks, online advertising campaigns and different virtual approaches to boost their companies' developmental growth, which is in cognizance with adapting to new and innovative ways to improve and adapt to a rapid transformational growth (Mohsen, Saeed, Raza, Omar, & Muffatto, 2020).

Small and medium-sized enterprises operate in a complex and unpredictable business environment, faced with the constant challenge of competing and providing value to customers, against established business organizations due to their size and economic capacity. They enable people to use their ingenuity to solve urgent social problems, which help to create

jobs. As Hossain (2020) noted, small and medium-sized enterprises, however, are at a significant risk of failing, particularly in the first five years of operation this can be because of the lack of digital marketing operations, utilization, and maximization.

The application of digital tools on business activities has been found to improve business competitiveness and opportunity base for SMEs to compete on closer terms with larger organisations. Chapman, Fames-Moore, and Szizygeil (2000) emphasized the need for special significance on the projection of business activities through effective digital marketing strategies with the most popular method of marketing in the modern technological era. The purpose is not only to sell products and services, but also to build relationships with customers. A prerequisite for SMEs to explore the digital space via sustainable digital marketing practices which help assess and communicate to a wider range of customers for a better productive output (Mazzarol, 2015).

It is important to note that SMEs that engage in digital marketing, compared to those that do not, are more likely to be those that achieve higher sales growth, higher returns on assets, higher margins on profit, higher customer engagement and higher employee growth.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Small and Medium Scale Enterprises Performance**

Typically, performance is ultimate outcome expected in every business activity (Akhatar, Ahmed, Jafar, Rizwan & Nawaz, 2016). SME performance is the total performance of the firm and is shown by the performance of finance, marketing, and human resource functions of the organization. Performance measures the organizations' effectiveness against these set objectives. Thus, organizational performance refers to the ability of an organization to attain its goals such as high-profit margin, product quality, and larger market share, better financial results at a stipulated time and by applying the relevant strategy. Organizational performance has many dimensions which may be difficult to quantify. SME performance shows the actual output or results of organization as measured against its proposed outputs (or goals and objectives). It is one of the most important variables in the field of management research today. Although the concept of SME performance is very common in academic literature, its definition is not yet a universally accepted concept. Richard et al, (2006) view SME performance as comprising three specific areas of firm outcomes: financial performance (profits, return on assets, return on investment and so on); product market performance (sales, market share and so on); and shareholder return (total shareholder return, economic value added, etc.).

Waiganjo, Mukulu and Kahiri, (2012) note that SME performance may be assessed in terms of its multiple objectives of profitability, employee satisfaction, productivity, growth among many other objectives. Proponents of the balanced score card performance management system have suggested a broader performance appraisal approach that recognizes both the financial and non-financial measures including sales, profitability, return on investments, market share, customer base, product quality, innovation and company attractiveness. Richard et al, (2009) explains

that SME performance includes the actual output or results offers as measured against its intended outputs (goals and objectives).

### **Digital Marketing**

Digital marketing is a method of marketing that links consumers with producers or sellers electronically using interactive technologies and devices such as emails, websites, online groups and news groups, interactive television and mobile communication (Kotler & Armstrong, 2009). Digital marketing includes all marketing efforts that utilize an electronic device or the internet (Alexander, 2019). Digital Marketing is the use of internet-based applications that allows dissemination of information among users (Kim & Kim, 2018). According to Rowley (2016), for a company to effectively leverage its digital marketing capacity its digital platforms must be well organized and designed, and user friendly to continuously attract the target audience. Excellently structured digital platforms enable customers to have easy navigation. Marketers should always aim to create a forum where potential clients or web visitors can interact with the product or service, ask questions, and get technical support. Pay-per-click advertising is also another rising online marketing tool which utilizes Google Ad words and Facebook (Rowley, 2016). The components of digital marketing discussed in this study are social media marketing, affiliate marketing and online advertising.

### **Social Media Marketing**

Social media is defined as an online platform which people use to build social networks or social relationships which other people who share similar personal and career interests, activities, backgrounds or real- life connections. Social media marketing, also known as social network marketing is a form of e-marketing that utilizes social networking websites and platforms as a marketing tool (Bansal, et al, 2014). According to Olsson and Jarusriboonchai (2020), information and technology have revolutionized how people interact with each other irrespective of time and place. Over the last decade, computer mediated communication has exploded with various social media and online communication applications, which has allowed a variety of new forms of mediated social interplay (Turyakira & Mbidde, 2015). Online platforms enable people to communicate, usually for a social purpose, through a variety of web-based services, which offer opportunities for people to interact over the internet. Adopted as social media technologies, these services allow real-time, direct knowledge exchange between two or more people-within and outside the organization, using most internet-enabled devices. In particular, the usage of social networking tools within the organization has brought radical changes to the organization in its efforts to improve performance. Therefore, SMEs utilization of these social networking tools can bring about radical changes to them in their performance and sustainability.

Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn are some of the most popular social networking platforms today (Walsh & Lipinski, 2009). Facebook is known for its robust platform for customer relationship management (Poppetal., 2016); Twitter is known for its ability to communicate brand messages and quick consumer responses in real-time (Culotta & Cutler, 2016); Instagram is a platform for sharing image-based content (Muñoz & Towner, 2017) and YouTube is a platform for sharing videos (Indvik, 2011).

### **Online Advertising**

The implementation of digital marketing strategies has demonstrated that they are easy policies if appropriately carried out, business owners/managers can reap the full benefits of their investment. They also emphasized the benefits of virtual advertising for SMEs and indicated that it is devoid of any complications, as anyone with basic or fundamental knowledge should be able to put them into the right effect. Similarly, Kim et al., (2014) opined that any SMEs that struggle to put into effect some digital tools for its online brand marketing, is probable to place itself at a critical aggressive disadvantage. Savey et al. (2020) revealed that a global survey of 6000 people highlights a rising transition of customers towards Smartphone and tablets. Small and medium enterprises need to fully utilize emerging digital technologies, to improve their business operations and boost brand image while competing in a very challenging business environment (Mazzarol, 2015). Online advertising helps to make goods and services known to people both far and near and it is generally paid for on a cost per acquisition (CPA) basis.

### **Affiliate Marketing**

In general, affiliate marketing is one of the online marketing platforms offered today, whereby a company will sign an agreement with a third party (i.e. individual or organization) to feature a link on the affiliate's site (Dwivedi et al., 2017). Affiliate marketing means an organization hired trusted affiliate marketers (third-party publishers) to promote the goods and services of an organization through its website (Duffy, 2005; Lammenett, 2017; Mazurek & Kucia, 2011). It is a type of performance-based Internet marketing that normally reflects the amounts of revenue (organization), and commissions earned (affiliate marketer). The primary objective of affiliate marketing is to promote and sell products or services via other distribution channels, following which purchase information is transmitted to the clients for the completion of the sale transaction. It is associated with the creation of transactions from online customers, which will result in commission generation in return (Fox & Wareham, 2010). Theoretically, the core activities of affiliate marketing can be summarized as follows: First, an affiliate tries to direct potential customers to a client's website via the use of ad links. Second, these potential customers will perform an action necessary for the completion of the sale transaction.

### **Digital Marketing and SMEs Performance**

Well-incorporated digital marketing strategies help to grow businesses by creating the awareness needed to attract new customers and retain existing ones (Chaffey, 2020). Numerous digital platforms are being set out to ensure businesses (SMEs) can build and keep in contact with customers on a regular basis, receive feedback that helps in making required improvement in their product or service delivery to respective customers (Teixeira et., al 2018). Therefore, creating a visible online brand with good value proposition can easily influence the customer buying behavior (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016).

Scholars are of the opinion that adopting relevant marketing digitalization models and innovations are key important elements in building and sustaining good SMEs performance in the long run. There is a pertinent need for SMEs to create value through innovation to improve their performance in a real-life changing business environment. Adopting the right digital

marketing strategy boosts business attraction especially to prospective customers and gives them a competing presence against established or larger firms (Davila, 2012). Small and medium scale enterprises should ensure they strategically execute their brand marketing strategies. Using their limited resources in a creative and unorthodox manner to create value and achieve an impactful momentum (Haereid & Indregard 2015). it is crucial for SMEs to emphasize the economic aspect of marketing on online platforms such as social media marketing, email as well as visualizing their concepts and value proposition to aid customer attraction and patronage (Stokes, 2000). Despite their dominance and contributions to the national economy, SMEs face fierce competition from large corporations and imported products, goods and services.

Further development and application of digital technologies presents a great incentive, yet typically challenging and tricky for small and medium scale Enterprises (Mazzarol, 2015). SMEs obviously have constraint of limited resource, which requires them to be creative when investing in or applying marketing strategies with the sole intent of reaching out or projecting their brand to a wider consumer group (Mazzarol, 2015). At this point the application of an effective digital marketing strategy becomes inevitable to their continued business growth as its significantly cheaper than conventional marketing. Established digital marketing platforms such as viral marketing, social media, blogs, etc. are propelling tools when properly applied can connect with a wide range of audience., ensuring new target interest or audience as well as establishing viable relationships with customers and relevant stakeholders (Barone, 2020).

Digital marketing is known for its revolutionary impact on business and subsequent significant impact on brand consumers. It becomes pertinent for SMEs to always facilitate consumer connections (Makrides et al., 2020). Digital marketing platforms like social media helps SMEs increase brand value through networking, interactions and community development (Karamianet al., 2015). Through this process, brand names can have a significant impact on customers (Bhati & Verm, 2018).

Branding attempts need to be balanced with developing a framework for designing and implementing technological and digital brand presence. SMEs can use digital marketing to build relationships with existing buyers, therefore influencing their personal view of the brand by sharing their own perceptions in communicating with potential customers (Krishnapabha & Tatunika, 2020).

Digital marketing ensures SMEs keep in regular contact with customers, in the process fostering good relationships Akhtar et al. (2016), is of the opinion that adoption of digital marketing strategies enables SMEs to realize significant benefits and promote competitiveness and increase their investment invisibility through web-based networking channels. Digital marketing provides companies who fall under the SMEs business category with a very strong growth outlook. Digital marketing strategies enable SMEs to powerfully portrait and promote their brand products and services using relevant online medium, which helps in achieving a sustainable amount of success (Chaffey, 2020). Digital marketing is the essence and core of small and medium scale enterprises growth and a realistic way to manage expenses without necessarily limiting product and service exposure (Chaffey, 2020)

The Strategic awareness, generation and adequate integration of effective digital marketing strategies and patterns have the potential to guarantee the competitive, comprehensive and profitable accomplishments of SMEs companies. Digital marketing strategy ensures new customer acquisition, business expansion and improved sales, contributing to the overall outlook of the business objectives (Jangongo & Kinyua 2016). Digital marketing ensures proper engagement with prospective customers and perceived investors using different platforms.

The main objective of this study is to determine how digital marketing impact the performance of small and medium scale enterprise in university of Benin. Other specific objectives include, to:

- i. ascertain the impact of social media marketing on the performance of small and medium scale enterprises in University of Benin;
- ii. investigate the impact of affiliate marketing on the performance of small and medium scale enterprises in University of Benin and
- iii. determine the effect of online advertising on the performance of small and medium scale enterprise in University of Benin.

The hypotheses of the study are stated as follows:

H<sub>01</sub>: Social media marketing does not have a significant impact on SMEs performance

H<sub>02</sub>: Affiliate marketing does not have a significant impact on the performance of SMEs

H<sub>03</sub>: Online advertising does not have a significant impact on the performance of SMEs

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is built on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The model was proposed by Fred D. Davis in 1986. It is a critical framework for understanding how individuals adopt and use new technology. In the context of digital marketing and SME performance, TAM provides valuable insights into how entrepreneurs embrace digital tools such as social media to enhance their business operations. Developed to explore technology adoption at an individual level, TAM focuses on two main factors: Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEU). PU refers to the extent to which an individual believes that using specific technology will improve their work performance, while PEU pertains to the belief that the technology will be easy to use, requiring minimal effort.

For SMEs, digital marketing presents opportunities for growth, yet the adoption of these tools often depends on the entrepreneur's perception of their utility and ease of use. If business owners perceive that using social media platforms will lead to improved marketing outcomes, such as increased customer engagement or sales, they are more likely to adopt these technologies. This aligns with Davis's (1989) assertion that PU drives behavioural intentions, which subsequently lead to actual usage. Additionally, the belief that these tools are straightforward and not overly complex encourages wider acceptance, particularly in resource-constrained SMEs where time and expertise may be limited.

TAM serves as a relevant model for studying digital marketing in SMEs. It helps explain how perceived benefits and ease of use influence entrepreneurs' attitudes toward social media adoption. This, in turn, impacts on their overall marketing performance and business growth. By applying TAM, researchers can better understand the factors driving digital marketing adoption, ultimately offering strategic insights for enhancing SME competitiveness in the digital age.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The research design employed in this study is a cross-sectional or social survey design, as described by Bryman and Bell (2011). This design falls under the broader category of descriptive research, which is well-suited for analysing and measuring the characteristics of a research problem at a specific point in time. The cross-sectional approach allows for data collection from multiple respondents simultaneously to offer a snapshot of the relationship between variables such as digital marketing adoption and SME performance. The primary advantage of this design is that it enables researchers to identify patterns of association between variables while remaining cost-effective and time efficient. This is particularly relevant to the present study, as it allows for the exploration of digital marketing phenomena as they manifest in real-world business contexts, such as SMEs in the University of Benin.

The population for study consisted of the staff of selected small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) located in the University of Benin. These enterprises include the University of Benin Bread Bakery, Water Factory, and various shops operating on the campus. The focus on SMEs within this specific locale allows the researchers to examine a relatively homogenous population in terms of institutional setting, providing an ideal framework for investigating the impact of digital marketing on business performance.

A sample size of fifty (50) SMEs was determined for this study, drawn from businesses operating within the University of Benin. A convenience sampling technique was employed, which, while not random, was justified due to the proximity of the sample to the researcher and the stability of the population. This sampling method ensures that all participants operate in a similar institutional context, enhancing the reliability of the findings.

The primary data collection instrument used in this study was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: Section A gathered demographic information from respondents, while Section B focused on the key variables of the study, measured using a five-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was validated through expert review while reliability test was performed using Cronbach's Alpha with scores ranging from 0.736 to 0.875 for different variables.

Descriptive statistics were employed to summarise the data, using tools such as frequency tables, percentages, and means to provide a comprehensive overview of the variables. Finally, regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictive impact of digital marketing on SME performance. The choice of regression analysis was justified by its ability to assess the strength of relationships between independent and dependent variables.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The demographic data of the respondents is presented in this section below.

Table 1: Demographic data of respondents

Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	27	54
Female	23	46
Total	50	100
Age		
18-25 years	32	64
26-30 years	8	16
31-40 years	8	16
41 years and above	2	4
Total	50	100
Educational level		
NCE	10	20
HND/BSc	32	64
MSc/MBA	3	6
Others	5	10
Total	50	100
Work Experience		
Less than 5 years	38	72
6-10 years	8	16
21 years and above	4	8
Total	50	100

In terms of the gender of the respondents, Table 1 showed that majority of the respondents were male. This category of respondents accounted for 27(54.0%) of the total respondents while 24(48.0%) were females. On the age range distribution of the respondents, Table 4 indicates that most of the respondents were between the ages of 18-30 years, this category of respondent's accounts for 32(64.0%) of the total respondents, while 8(16.0%) were between the ages 26-30 years, 8(16.0%) were aged 31-40 years, and 2(4.0%) were between the age of 41years and above. On the level of education attained by the respondents, 32(64.0%) indicates that most of the respondents attained HND/B.SC level of education, while 10(20.0%) are NCE holders, 3(6.0%) has MSc/MBA, while 5(10.0%) of the total respondents are classified as others. On the level of work experience, Table 1 shows that majority of the respondents had work experience that is less than 5(five years). This category of respondent's accounts for 38(64.0%) of the total respondents while 8(16.0%) of the respondents had work experience between ages 6-10yrs, while 4(8.0) of the total respondents had work experience between 21 years and above.

**Relationship between digital marketing and SMEs performance and hypotheses testing**

Table 2: Estimated model of digital marketing and SMEs performance

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant)	.988	.289	-	3.882	.001
SMM	.217	.089	.239	4.081	.016
AFM	.040	.075	.046	2.780	.002
OAD	.025	.078	.052	2.452	.001

R<sup>2</sup>= 0.510; Adj R<sup>2</sup>= 0.481; F-Statistic = 54.487; F-Statistic (Prob) = 0.000;  
 Durbin-Watson = 1.621; Number of Observation = 50  
 Dependent Variable: SME Performance

Table 2 presents the summary of the regression analysis to illustrate the model's efficacy in explaining the variance in the dependent variable (performance of small and medium scale enterprises) through independent variables such as social media marketing, affiliate marketing, and online advertising. An R-squared value of 0.510 signifies that the model accounts for 51% of the fluctuations in SMEs performance indicating a substantial explanatory capacity. This high level of explanation suggests that the model has been meticulously and accurately constructed, making its predictions reliable for the formulation of policies. F-Statistic of 54.487 showed that the model is statistically significant. Furthermore, the Durbin Watson statistic, standing at 1.621, approximates the ideal value of 2, indicating an absence of autocorrelation issues within the model. This absence of autocorrelation reinforces the model's efficiency in reflecting true relationships without the distortion of repetitive patterns in the data.

*H<sub>01</sub>: Social media marketing does not have a significant impact on SMEs performance*

The results in Table 2 showed that a positive and significant relationship exists between social media marketing and the performance of SMEs. Based on the statistical evidence, where the p-value is recorded at 0.016 significantly lower than the threshold of 0.05 ( $p = 0.016 < 0.05$ ), coupled with a t-statistic of 4.081, which surpasses the critical value of 2, the study leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis in favour of the alternative. It is therefore concluded that social media marketing does have a significant impact on SMEs performance.

*H<sub>02</sub>: Affiliate marketing does not have a significant impact on the performance of SMEs*

The results in Table 2 showed that a positive and significant relationship exists between affiliate marketing and the performance of SMEs. Based on this evidence, the null hypothesis is refuted in Favor of the alternative hypothesis, given that the observed p-value of 0.002 is below the threshold of 0.05 ( $p = 0.002 < 0.05$ ,  $t = 2.780 > 2$ ). It is therefore concluded that affiliate marketing does have a significant impact on SMEs performance.

*H<sub>03</sub>: Online advertising does not have a significant impact on the performance of SMEs*

The results in Table 2 showed that a positive and significant relationship exists between online advertising and the performance of SMEs. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted based on the p-value (0.001) not exceeding the threshold of 0.05 ( $p = 0.001 < 0.05$ ; t-statistic = 2.452) which surpasses the critical value of 2. It is therefore concluded that online advertising does have a significant impact on SMEs performance.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The study found that social media marketing has positive and significant relationship with the performance of SMEs. This finding is in tandem with the studies of Etuk, Udoh and Udowong (2021) and Wantchami, Ngange and Efosi (2021) who revealed that social media marketing has served as a tool in building brand awareness, customer relationships and reinforcing sales. Findings further indicate that for Small and Medium Scale Enterprise (SME) operators who engage in social media marketing, the benefits far outweigh the cost as they have incorporated promotional strategies and even taken supplies to customers' doorsteps.

It was also found that affiliate marketing has positive and significant relationship with the performance of SMEs. The application of affiliate marketing strategies by SMEs will contribute to a competitive advantage within the industry, Affiliate marketing has helped many SMEs achieve its marketing and sales objectives. These findings are in tandem with the result of Etim et al. (2021) and Suryanarayana et al. (2019) who revealed that affiliate marketing had significant positive effects on the performance of SMEs in the new-normal era.

Lastly, the study found that social online advertising has positive and significant relationship with the performance of SMEs. Also, the application of digital advertising strategies by SMEs has contributed to a competitive advantage within the industry. These findings are in line with the study of Etim et al. (2021) who reported that: Online advertising and email marketing had significant positive effects on the performance of SMEs in the new-normal era.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study highlighted the significant role of digital marketing strategies - social media marketing (SMM), affiliate marketing (AFM), and online advertising (OAD) - on the performance of small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs). The regression analysis indicates that these strategies account for 50% of the variation in SME performance. Social media marketing, affiliate marketing, and online advertising all show positive and statistically significant relationships with SME performance to affirm their potential in the performance of SMEs. It is therefore recommended that:

- i. SMEs should be encouraged to leverage social media platforms more effectively, as this strategy significantly improves performance by enhancing customer outreach and engagement. Training programmes on social media management could be offered to business owners to help them maximise these opportunities.

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- ii. SMEs should explore affiliate marketing, as it has been shown to significantly impact their performance by expanding their customer base. Collaborating with influencers and other businesses can help SMEs achieve competitive advantages in their markets.
- iii. SMEs should continue investing in online advertising to boost visibility and sales. A well-structured online advertising campaign can drive traffic, increase customer loyalty, and contribute to long-term business sustainability.

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