



Social Media Platforms Manufacturing Small and Medium Enterprises Use to Enhance Market Performance in Wakiso District, Uganda

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Abstract: Social Media Platforms are a supreme medium of communication between businesses and customers to enhance Market Performance in contemporary times. However, social medial platforms remain underexplored in the local literature, despite their usefulness to market performance. Thus, the study examined the common social media platforms used by manufacturing Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to enhance market performance in Wakiso district, Uganda. The study employed a cross-sectional survey design targeting 2,279 SMEs from 340 SMEs were determined using the Yamane formula. Data was collected through structured questionnaires using KoboCollect tool, and interviews. Thereafter, data was analyzed using SPSS v.23 to generate frequencies and percentages. Results indicated that WhatsApp (51%) and Facebook (35%) were the predominant platforms employed by manufacturing SMEs while YouTube (6.2%), Twitter (3.4%) and others (TikTok and LinkedIn) accounted for 4.5%. The results underscore the significant potential of social media platforms in boosting market performance when leveraged effectively. The study recommended that Wakiso district local government and telecommunication providers should consider policy interventions including reducing data costs, sensitization and training programs for different SMEs stakeholders. Further, SME managers should implement regulatory measures to ensure strategic use of social media platforms for sustainable market performance.

Keywords: Facebook, Market performance, Online advertising, Social Media Platforms, WhatsApp

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1. Introduction

The history of modern technologies stretches way back in the 18th Century, started in England, and spread to the rest of the world (Knell, 2021). It started as a computer-based experience, transited into mobile phones, tablets, and later into smartphones (Santos & Duffett, 2021). This is supported by higher speed wireless internet, and now readily available in homes, business and public places as smartphones are kept in the hands of the user. It was during World War II that digital computing was used to outperform analog technologies. Those using

analogue technologies had not realized how much their business ecosystem performance had deteriorated systematically until the 1990s, when Bill Gates thought to digitalize the web (Hilbert, 2020).

Notably, as more innovations were developed, fewer were recognized as beneficial to business empires. Therefore, developers kept their heads high and made sure that the digital revolution penetrated communities due to new application technologies (EPB: Urban Analytics and City Science, 2021). Thus, companies that adopted digital applications generated profits as compared to their counterparts. Remember, information

was stored in digital format since the dawn of civilization and automatically converted into actionable knowledge (Hilbert, 2020). Hence, the users benefited as more applications were developed and embedded on the web interface through hyperlinks, using the internet. This has enabled businesses to interact with their communities as they sent product information directly to the customers (Hanafizadeh & Shafia, 2021). This allowed the users on any social media platforms to easily pick from what is advertised online. Thus, Small and Medium Enterprises have significantly capitalized on the social media platforms for their daily market performance (Hanafizadeh & Shafia, 2021).

Interestingly, the introduction of smartphones in the 2000s accelerated the digital revolution era, not only for personal gain but also for business promotion, requiring large corporations to integrate their digital technologies (EPB: Urban Analytics and City Science, 2021). As a result, the merged platforms embraced online marketing, including advertising and promotion, via the web and related network structures. This meant that digital revolution has given leeway to the current modern social media platforms such as social networking sites, blogs, forums, micro blogs, photo and video sharing, evaluation communities, and social gambling (Tajvidi & Karami, 2017). Thus, the digital revolution has not only transformed the world we live in but also created new avenues to organize networks within (Hilbert, 2020).

Furthermore, Tajvidi & Karami (2017) infer that the social media platforms commonly used by business include Facebook, YouTube, X, Instagram, and online forums. The platforms are vital for business marketing, advertising and promotion, branding, and communication & information sharing. They help to bring the firm's position in the minds of the customers through brand awareness, customer loyalty and customer purchasing power. Thus, SMEs have greatly employed such social media platforms because of their ease of use, cost effectiveness, and accessibility to the users (Santos & Duffett, 2021). Thus, the digitalized world, society, and businesses prevail and transform into their growth (Knell, 2021). Currently, digitalization is seen transferring information to business communities via various digital media platforms. The entrepreneurs in developed and developing countries use social media platforms for business interactions and transactions throughout the day (Oji, Iwu, & Tengeh, 2017).

However, using social media platforms is sometimes troublesome and alters communication flow among the users (Kahiigi & Semwanga, 2020). Regrettably, banning Facebook in Uganda halted product marketing, and users had to use VPN to access Facebook to market their products. This was caused by the increased data costs, taxes on data (OTT), and inaccessibility to power, which negatively affect the use of social media platforms by some managers and proprietors of SMEs.

Remarkably, the troublesomeness of social media and COVID-19 resulted in increased use of online innovations (apps) like Uber, Glovo, Safeboda, Jumia, and Ujiji for online shopping and deliveries of all kinds of products (Uganda Communication Commission, 2020). So, as the products are delivered to customers, the costs of the product are reduced. This is because customers await their online orders via smartphone at home on the doorway. Such classic mobile phones have multipurpose functions such as music, video, cameras, gaming, voice calls, and text messaging, which quicken the process (Uganda Communications Commission, 2020). This implies that whoever sees the updates, shares in a group and other groups. As a result, the more the number of followers, the greater the number of people who view the posted messages and comment or like the page's contents. This stimulates market potential and SMEs performance.

Although various researchers have done more on social media platforms and their usefulness to market performance, inadequate research is done on the subject in Wakiso district, hence an information gap. Thus, the study examined the common social media platforms used by the SMEs to enhance market performance in Wakiso district. The following research question was addressed; what social media platforms SMEs use to enhance market performance in Wakiso district?

2. Literature Review

In business operations, communication and interaction with customers are crucial. Thus, SMEs proprietors/managers, endeavor to reach out clients through various platforms as means to achieve their set targets. Therefore, the platforms are employed to enable interaction with different people in business lines not limited to WhatsApp, Facebook, X, LinkedIn, among others. Therefore, people groups and businesses proprietors exchange information on the products and services. This allows SMEs to reach a wider audience to enhance the customer base, increase sales volumes, and market share. This further lowers costs and increases income. Below are the platforms SMEs employ to enhance market performance.

2.1 Facebook

Facebook has become necessary nowadays (Ainin, Parveen, Moghavvemi, Jaafar, & Shuib, 2015, p.570) and it is the leading platform for business performance in the world (Kazungu, Matto, & Massawe, 2017). Further, Facebook has more than 1.59 billion monthly active users, and an estimated more than 1 million small and medium-sized businesses use Facebook to advertise their business (Kazungu, Matto, & Massawe, 2017, p.146).

Furthermore, Caers, et al. (2013) reveal that organizations and businesses rely on Facebook to retain

customers and increase sales. Equally, thousands of potential buyers through Facebook news feeds post information on brands via status updates, which are viewed. Significantly, Facebook users share content (videos, pictures, and text) for the product on their Facebook profile/page to enhance market potential and performance. Thus, users search for brands and services on Facebook and for a short while Facebook attracts millions of active members (Caers, et al., 2013, p.993). Indeed, Malik, Mehta, Abrar, & Ahmad (2020) agreed that the usage of Facebook page contributes to enhancing the performance of SMEs. Note, persuasive and active Facebook pages are sources of new customers, markets and sales.

Similarly, in the United Kingdom (UK), the hotel industry prefers using Facebook to contact customers and their business partners significantly, affecting branding and innovation capabilities of the firms (Tajvidi & Karami, 2017, p.8). Meanwhile, Caers, et al. (2013, p.984) content that Facebook stimulates users' personality, their influence on building a stronger network of friends, information disclosure and interaction. Likewise, Kalkan & Bozkurt (2017) explain that the information disclosure on Facebook helps firms to reduce cost on marketing and customer service, improve customer relations and accessibility.

Notably, Facebook is used by SMEs to advertise products and provide a link to blog posts for online shoppers. So, users create Facebook pages to serve as extensions for online shops to connect with customers, distribute content, and promote product offers, services and brands as well as attracting online shoppers to enhance market performance (Ghanem & Abdul Hamid, 2020).

Moreover, Chheda (2016, p.60) reports that in India, more than 700,000 local businesses have active pages on Facebook where 70% of bloggers organically talk about brands on their blog, and 38% of them post brands or product reviews (National Associations of Countries, n.d). National Associations of Countries (n.d) ascertain that Facebook is not a one-stop shop for communication needs but furnish information on websites through posting videos or pictures on Facebook pages. The posts must be interesting, informative and positive in facilitating the conversation.

2.2 WhatsApp

WhatsApp is tremendously used as a marketing tool which promotes business interaction with users through sending and receiving text and media files. It enables enterprises to stay in touch with customers and expand their market base (Ghanem & Abdul Hamid, 2020). Although, WhatsApp is a vital tool for communication between one to one or groups those without your contact do not view and comment the products posted (Minhas, Ahmed, & Ullah, 2016).

However, users can text or send messages, images, video, audio and location. Minhas, Ahmed, & Ullah (2016) infer that WhatsApp is an effective and affordable platform for communication. They further assert that WhatsApp helps users to remain in touch with customers through sharing product information in forms of pictures and videos and in time to the customers. Note, WhatsApp was an alternative to short message services (SMS). Nonetheless, it is proved to support the exchange of variety of media information including text, pictures, calls, and location of business activities.

In addition, Tareeq Almohadatha Lel Barmajeat LLC (2021) adds that WhatsApp is the most personal and engaging channel to users, and firms use to share experiences and keep long-term relationships with their customers. In the United Kingdom, billions of consumers use WhatsApp multiple times daily as a new channel to communicate for business transactions (Devji-Jethwa, 2021). This enhances customer loyalty and increased sales volume. Consequently, WhatsApp being an affordable and reliable platform, business proprietors and managers send marketing messages to their customers to build trust and brand loyalty. Therefore, WhatsApp allows connection and interaction with customers outside the business website. In Latin America, India, and Europe, WhatsApp add almost a million users per day (Page, 2021). She adds that the app allows users to upload their product content and message to anyone with the app on their smartphone at no cost. This implies that the app is indispensable from users so, it increases market visibility and also increases customer base.

Moreso, Kahiigi & Semwanga (2020) add that WhatsApp was the highest social media platform used by retail businesses, account for 92% in Uganda. In this regard, retail businesses use WhatsApp to transform their existing traditional business and create avenues to support information exchange among groups with common interests. This ensures consumers' interactions with brand owners to gain discounts or coupons to entice their purchasing powers.

2.3 X (Formally Twitter)

Interestingly, X is an online news and social networking service where users post and interact with messages known as 'tweets' (Momani, 2016; Ninette, 2019; Chheda, 2014). Momani (2020) adds that X is a free social networking microblogging service where registered members broadcast their tweets about the businesses. With this, the members broadcast tweets and follow other users' tweets using multiple platforms and devices.

In addition, as a social networking platform, it allows groups and individuals to stay connected through the exchange of short statuses/messages (Zhang et al., 2018,

as cited in Ninette, 2019, p.16; Momani, 2016; Chheda, 2014). Thus, using X, businesses are free to share information and position their brands to a larger online target audience (customers). This helps them to improve brand loyalty, enhance customer relationship marketing and improve sales (Ninette, 2019).

Furthermore, X is not only used for lodging complaints about a company's products, but also generates new traffic by promoting product offers, advice, suggestions and new content to the entity's followers (Enli, 2017 as cited in Ghanem & Abdul Hamid, 2020, p.5). Notably, using X, users post multiple updates about company products and services, which gives an opportunity for the business entity to respond to customer issues. Thus, marketers use the platform to boost their marketing efforts and increase sales volume, customer base and increased awareness of the business outputs (Momani, 2016). In the Arab World, the usage of X as a micro blogging service has embraced a new wave for marketing strategies (Basri, 2016). This implies that X enhances product selling to online followers. This is done in a way that SMEs create online pages for their products from which potential customers can access and place their purchase orders.

Additionally, in most countries, firms use X as a marketing tool to advance their business goal (Basri, 2016). This affirms that X broadens and builds up brand identity in a genuine world and reaches an extensive group of people (Momani, 2016). Hence, X guarantees SMEs with access to the global market, reduce operation costs, and optimize profitability-market performance. Recall, X is a tool for elites, so firms are open, transparent, and audiences are shared with valuable information concerning the products (Chheda, 2014). This is because customers wish to place their purchase orders from credible companies who are transparent in their advertising campaigns.

2.4 LinkedIn

Notably, LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network with over 500 million users. It is the sales and marketing platform (Stewart, 2018). And, multiple users tremendously increased in 2021 to over 774 million users worldwide (Boyd, 2021). Thus, LinkedIn is one of the best places for B2B professionals to network, market, and develop their business reputation, and no B2B marketer should ignore such a platform (Boyd, 2021).

Further, LinkedIn is a social network and a two-way communication venue through which business owners and managers search and reach new customers to build strong relationships (Chheda, 2014). SMEs post their status updates to provide useful information to clients and explore brand expertise. Thus, as one's information base increases, the more he/she is persuaded to share it with others (Chheda, 2014, p.101). So, SMEs use LinkedIn as a platform to interact with customers and

build trust in the brand. On the other hand, building trust makes prospective clients comfortable and fear spending money and time on an inferior product/service (Ibid).

In addition, LinkedIn is a powerful tool to build and engage consumer communities into deeper insights of valuable products, which helps SMEs to increase their sales and reduce selling costs (Sharma, 2017). Sharma (2017) adds that LinkedIn allows business operators to create a list of potential customers who connect online to improve market potential of the products.

2.5 YouTube

YouTube eases content creators' ability to share their content with a large audience. YouTube has over 2.3 million active subscribers worldwide (Statista, 2021 as cited in Mohsin, 2021, n.p) who login every day to watch the posts. This implies that with such a massive and active number, marketers have the potential to tap into, thus, a great platform to ensure market potential for businesses. Research shows that businesses use YouTube to build an interactive community and SMEs display or advertise their products on the platform for the customers (Mohsin, 2020 as cited in Mohsin, 2021, n.p). In relation, over 3 billion videos are viewed every day and there are more than 400 million views per day on mobile devices. It is estimated that more than 800 million people visit YouTube per month to watch and share content (YouTube, 2018). This fits most in what is stated that, *"a picture is worth a thousand words, pictures have an impact in creating an image in the mind of a person"*. This means that SMEs have outstanding video campaigns to breakthrough, especially when the videos go viral, they multitude and enhance brand marketing.

Fascinatingly, YouTube popularizes products into a new market and increases exposure based on video the content. This implies that competitive and creative content online enhances chances to empower the audience to take action for positioning the brand. Further, advertising using social networks like YouTube, X and Facebook extend support during crucial marketing efforts. Nuseir (2018) agrees that identification of new business opportunities accelerates the internationalization of SMEs by lowering the perceived risks and the physical distances. Thus, SMEs' products have greater visibility around the clock and offer customers low cost but effective service facility in varying timelines.

3. Methodology

The study employed rigorous and systematic methodological framework integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to capture a holistic view of the variables under study.

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted cross-sectional survey design to assess social media platforms manufacturing SMEs employ to enhance market performance in Wakiso District, Uganda. The design enabled the researchers to collect data on social media platforms at a single point in time.

3.2 Study Area and Sampling Frame

The study was conducted in Wakiso District, which comprises several town councils and divisions with more manufacturing SMEs. Kasangati, Kyengeru and Nabweru were purposively selected based on the concentration of manufacturing SMEs such as concrete blocks, metal fabrication, and carpentry that contribute significantly to local economic development. The sampling frame was drawn from the registered manufacturing SMEs in these areas, totaling to 2,279 enterprises (Wakiso District Local Government, 2017).

3.3 Sample Size and Selection

A total sample size of 340 from a total of population of 2,279 manufacturing SMEs using Yamane formula (Yamane, 1967 cited in Isreal, 1992, 1992, p4) was used to determine the sample. Yamane's formula ($n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$). Where in the formula.

n = Sample

N = Population

e = Sampling error (0.05)

$$n = \frac{2279}{1+2279 (0.05)^2} = \frac{2279}{1+2279 (0.0025)} = \frac{2279}{1+5.6975} = \frac{2279}{6.6975} = 340.27$$

The study employed a systematic random sampling technique within each Town Council and division to select manufacturing SMEs. Thus, researchers randomly selected manufacturing SMEs from the existing registry to achieve the overall sample size of 340. This approach ensured diversity in business type and size while maintaining representative samples. On the other hand, researchers purposively selected two Town Councils, and one division based on the concentration and growth of manufacturing SMEs in Wakiso district.

3.4 Data Collection methods

3.4.1 Questionnaire

The researchers designed a semi-structure questionnaire to capture quantitative data on the frequency of social media platform usage such as WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, TikTok, and LinkedIn. Further, the

questionnaire was pre-tested to ensure clarity and relevance. Necessary adjustments were made based on feedback from the pilot study. The researchers recruited and trained six (6) research assistants who were deployed to the selected SMEs in the two town councils and one division. Respondents were briefed on the purpose of the study, and their informed consent was obtained before participation. The structured questionnaires were administered on-site to managers and employees of the selected manufacturing SMEs. To ensure consistency and ease of data capture, the researchers employed KoboCollect tool, a mobile data collection application which allowed for real-time data entry and reduced manual errors.

3.4.2 Interview

The researchers employed semi-structured interviews to elicit qualitative insights and contextual information on how SME proprietors strategically use social media for business promotion despite the challenges encountered such as high data costs and regulatory issues. Therefore, Face-to-face interviews were carried out with SMEs proprietors in quiet and private setting to encourage open dialogue. This method was chosen for its effectiveness in obtaining rich, detailed responses and clarifying any ambiguities in the interview guide.

3.5 Data Analysis

The researchers employed SPSS V.23 and thematic analysis to analyze the data. Data collected through questionnaire was cleaned and coded to ensure accuracy. Descriptive statistics such as percentages were generated to summarize social media platforms commonly used by SMEs proprietors to enhance market performance. Similarly, data from interviews was transcribed verbatim, and triangulated to enrich quantitative findings. Thus, the researchers employed thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and insights related to the strategic use of social media platforms.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The researchers sought approval from the Research Ethics Committee (REC). Further, the researchers applied for permission from Wakiso District Chief Administration Officer (CAO) to conduct the study. Then, CAO permitted the study through providing an approval letter which was later submitted to UNCST. Finally, UNCST approved the study which gave leeway for the researchers to the selected study area.

Notably, before the researchers moved into the community to collect data, authorization letters were presented to different town clerks for security and safeguard, a guarantee to the respondents to provide adequate information. In addition, researchers critically

explained the study to the respondents including the rationale, objectives, and their need to participate in the study.

Furthermore, during data collection process, the researchers sought informed consent form and signed by both the researchers and participants after an agreement. In addition, the researchers introduced themselves to the respondents to ensure confidentiality. Further, the researchers provided detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks.

Personal identifiers were removed from the data set to ensure that the responses remained confidential. Data was stored securely and accessed only by the research team. Further, participants were informed that their involvement was entirely voluntary, and they had the right to withdraw from the study without penalty. And, both electronic and hard-copy data were stored in secure environments to prevent unauthorized access.

4. Results and Discussion

The study explored the various social media platforms used by SMEs proprietors to enhance market performance in Wakiso district. Data was collected

through a questionnaire administered to 340 respondents in the categories of carpentry, metal fabrication and concrete blocks from Kyengera, Kasangati and Nabweru division in Wakiso district. However, 291 questionnaires were found usable for analysis after thorough scrutiny of the questionnaires, and sieved unusable and poorly filled questionnaires.

4.1 Response Rate

The response rate was calculated as follows:

$$\text{Response Rate (RR)} = \frac{UQ}{DQ} \times \text{Percent}$$

Where,

- UQ = Usable Questionnaires
- DQ = Distributed Questionnaires
- Percent = 100

$$RR = \frac{UQ}{DQ} \times \text{Percent}$$

$$RR = \frac{291}{340} \times 100$$

$$RR = 0.856 \times 100$$

$$\underline{\underline{RR = 85.6\%}}$$

Table 1: Response Rate

Statement	Response
Number of questionnaires returned	302
Non-responded questionnaires	4
Poorly filled questionnaires	7
Valid/usable questionnaires	291
Total	85.6%

Source: Primary Data, 2024

The results indicate that 85.6% of the questionnaires was reliable and acceptable as they fall in the range of 50% – 80% specified in the business management survey (Ali, Ciftci, Nanu, Cobanoglu, & Ryu, 2020) which the current study is premised. Finally, the calculation showed 85.6% response rate (Table 1).

4.2 Social Media Platforms Used by SMEs in Wakiso District

In reference to the statement above, participants were required to mention the most social media platform used for enterprise operations, and the responses are indicated in Table 2:

Table 2: Key social media platforms used by SMEs

Social media platform	Frequency	Percentage
Face book	101	34.7
Others (Tiktok, LinkedIn)	13	4.5
X	10	3.4
WhatsApp	149	51.2
YouTube	18	6.2
Total	291	100.0

Source: Primary Data, 2024

Results in Table 2 above indicated that WhatsApp is the most widely used platform among SMEs, accounting for 51% of the respondents, followed by Facebook with

35%, and YouTube with 6%. Further, TikTok and LinkedIn collectively accounted for 4% while Twitter was reported by 4% of the respondents.

The findings further reveal that most SMEs use WhatsApp as a key marketing tool for their products. Respondents indicated that they frequently use WhatsApp statuses to showcase their products, prompting potential customers to contact them via phone calls to request additional product images. Notably, WhatsApp enables users to share various forms of media, including text messages, images, videos, audio files, and business location details, enhancing communication and customer engagement. The researchers affirm that WhatsApp serves as an alternative to traditional short message services (SMS), facilitating exchange of diverse media content.

Further, the study established that WhatsApp was both affordable and reliable, making it a preferred communication platform for business proprietors/managers to connect and interact with customers beyond their business website. This aligns with the works of Minhas, Ahmed, and Ullah (2016), who inferred that WhatsApp is an effective and affordable platform of communication. It helps users to remain in touch with their customers through information sharing including pictures and videos (Minhas, Ahmed, and Ullah, 2016). In UK, billions of consumers use WhatsApp daily for multiple times as a new channel to communicate for business transactions to enhance customer loyalty and sales volumes (Devji-Jethwa, 2021).

Similarly, in Uganda, Kahiigi & Semwanga (2020) report that WhatsApp is the most utilised social media platform for retail businesses sector accounting 92%. However, prospective customers who do not have access to sellers' contact cannot view the shared information. This underscores the need for business proprietors and managers to register within relevant groups where they can share product information more broadly. This allows expanse of customer base beyond direct contacts. One of the respondents noted that,

...they use WhatsApp statuses to post the products, and whoever sees the status contacts us through call and request the pictures of the products. Note, users of WhatsApp are able to text or send messages, images, video, audios about the products and locations of the business where the products can be accessed. The researchers affirm that WhatsApp is an alternative to short message services (SMS) it is proved to support the exchange of a variety of media (Proprietor A, May 7, 2024, Kasangati TC).

Likewise, product pictures are posted on Facebook to allow people to check them out. The good thing about Facebook is that, even if someone does not have your contact, he/she is able to see what is posted. He/she can like, follow and comment on the product picture, and in any case, someone wants the products he/she can in-box

the owner of the post for further discussion. Caers, et al. (2013) complement that, potential buyers through Facebook news feed post information about brands on their status updates, which are viewed. Thus, users search for brands, products and services on Facebook and for a short while Facebook attracts millions of active members. More importantly, Facebook users share contents (videos, pictures, and words) for the product or service on their Facebook profile/page to enhance market performance. In the hotel sector too, Facebook is used to make contact with customers and business partners which significantly affects branding and innovation capabilities of the firms hence better performance (Tajvidi & Karami, 2017).

Therefore, it was noted that manufacturing SMEs in Wakiso district promptly use Facebook as a medium of advertisement for their products. SMEs proprietors/managers provide a link to blog posts for online shoppers, and they also create user Facebook pages to serve as an extension for online shops to connect with customers, distribute contents, and promote product offers, services and brands as well as attracting online shoppers which market performance (Ghanem & Abdul Hamid, 2020). However, SMEs proprietors in Wakiso district noted that they had challenges in using the Facebook as a medium of marketing because it was banned by the government. Thus, to use it one had to pay tax or download and use an app (VPN) which paralyzed promotion and advertisement of the product.

In addition, YouTube (6%) was reported as a social media platform through which SMEs in Wakiso district share products with their customers. It is through YouTube that business proprietors post their videos about the process and products online for various viewers. Note, YouTube is a content interacting community platform which reaches to large audience. Thus, sharing the videos including business details, location and contacts eases accessibility. It was reported that YouTube shows the real picture of the products available to a wide audience. Globally, YouTube (2018) adds that more than 800 million people visit YouTube every month to watch and share content. This fits most in what is stated that, *"a picture is worth a thousand words, pictures have an impact in creating an image in the mind of a person"*. This meant that SMEs had outstanding video campaigns to breakthrough especially when the videos go viral and reach multitude which enhances brand marketing. Similarly, this is a common phenomenon in Uganda where people believe by seeing and posting such a video online entices buyers' motive to view and purchase the products. Thus, SMEs' products have greater visibility around the clock and offer customers low cost but also effective service facility in varying timelines.

Results also revealed that X accounted for only 3%. The percentage indicates that very few businesses in Wakiso district refer to posting their products on X. It is

perceived that X is for the elites and rich people, a common man cannot use it. This is supported by Chheda (2014) who asserts that X is a tool for elites, so firms are open, transparent, and the audience is shared with valuable information concerning the products. On the other hand, because it supports brief and precise word content, business proprietors/managers have limited competence for designing the content to post for the viewers. Further, some proprietors/managers have no X account, hence, it is hard to post their product information. Despite its low usage, those who use X generate new traffic as they promote product offers, advice, suggestions and new content to an entity's followers (Ghanem & Abdul Hamid, 2020). Further, X posts multiple updates about the company's products and services to give an opportunity for the business entity to respond to their customer issues. Momani (2016) advises that marketers should use the platform to boost their marketing efforts and increase sales volume, customer base and awareness of business outputs.

Findings reported that other platforms like TikTok and LinkedIn accounted for 4% of the total respondents. During data collection, a few respondents reported to have posted their products on TikTok and LinkedIn. LinkedIn is reported as the world's largest professional network sales and marketing platform (Stewart, 2018). Though, in Wakiso district, X is not yet embraced by SMEs proprietors. X is for professionals, which limits SMEs from promoting their products to a wider audience via X. However, LinkedIn is one of the best places for B2B professionals to network, market, and develop their businesses reputation (Boyd, 2021). And those who use the platform gain more as compared to their counterparts. This is agreed by Chheda (2014) who infers that SMEs use LinkedIn to interact and communicate with customers to build their trust in the brand. Thus, because of the built trust, prospective clients are comfortable without any fear of wasting their money and time on inferior products.

Respondents (4%) assert that they had no accounts on TikTok because they knew it as for fun and accommodate more of the youths. Further, TikTok does not retain customers as they age. This implied that posting product information through videos with sound and filters seemed to be disturbing the audience. Regrettably, employees decline to use TikTok because it was addictive to employees at workstations hence an effect on business performance. Lennartsson (2023) reports that TikTok targets more of the youths, and capitalizes on short videos coupled with sounds, music, effects and filters liked more by the young generation. However, this would allow the user to record videos (content) using mobile phones and share them for reactions and following. Further, TikTok allowed creation and sharing of short videos to the audience which open and play automatically online.

Lennartsson (2023) informs that despite TikTok being a platform for the younger people, increased data costs and

unstable internet have lowered its ability and usage by the proprietors/managers to upload products' video content. Thus, this calls for increased sensitization and awareness among the population about the usefulness of TikTok as a marketing tool. Thus, it is a great move to embrace the tool for marketing SMEs than only those in leisure, recreation and entertainment sector (Peng, et al., 2023). Sensitization and awareness on social media platforms and their usefulness would help the users to adopt it for brand awareness and royalty. This is because social media platforms like TikTok came to stay, it is just a matter of time. And, it must be instilled in the minds of the users for SMEs marketing than what it is known for now. This helps to ascertain the market potential and promote the product beyond large target market audience.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

WhatsApp and Facebook were reported as the common social media platforms used by the SMEs in Wakiso district. Although Facebook and WhatsApp are commonly used, several SMEs do not entirely leverage their potential to enhance market performance. This is attributed to persistent use of social media platforms for personal gains than their business entities. Respondents indicated that the less usage of LinkedIn, YouTube and TikTok by SMEs as marketing tools was: 1. LinkedIn was commonly preferred to by the elites, and it was hard to open an account. 2. YouTube was used for posting videos of the products and requires a lot of data to upload just a single video. 3. TikTok was commonly referred for fun and allows posting for short videos – heavily consume data.

5.2 Recommendations

The government of Uganda should withdraw the ban on Facebook to enable SMEs to upload their products content online to reach a wider audience. The telecommunications and network companies should also upgrade their services to allow business marketers and other users the ease of uploading their product content online. And Wakiso district should conduct business clinics among the users on the applicability and usage of the social media platforms for manufacturing SMEs to improve their market performance.

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