International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management Practices
IJEMP
EISSN : 2600-8750
Volume 9 Issue 34 (June 2026) PP. 406-425

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (IJEMP)
www.gaexcellence.com/ijemp

BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE IN ASIA AND AFRICA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ADOPTION BY SMES IN MALAYSIA AND NIGERIA

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Article Info:

Article history:
Received date: 30.04.2026
Revised date: 17.05.2026
Accepted date: 04.06.2026
Published date: 28.06.2026

Abstract:

Information and communication technology (ICT), such as social media, has an important position in today's business ecosystem. The emergence of Web 2.0 and faster, better internet connectivity has created a paradigm shift in business-client relationships. Consumers not only use social media to stay in touch but have also begun to share their experiences, such as their purchasing habits. This phenomenon is an opportunity for SMEs to adopt social media marketing to enhance their reach to prospective and existing customers cost-effectively. This study investigated the combined relationship between perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness on the adoption of social media marketing adoption among SMEs and the moderating influence of facilitating conditions on these relationships in both Kedah, Malaysia, and Kaduna, Nigeria. This study sampled SMEs in these two regions and found that perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness have a significant effect on the adoption of social media marketing adoption among SMEs in

International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management Practices
IJEMP
EISSN : 2600-8750
Volume 9 Issue 34 (June 2026) PP. 406-425

To cite this document:

Ramanchandram, R., Rusuli, M. S. C., Abdullah, S. S., & Andow, H. (2026). Bridging The Digital Divide in Asia and Africa: A Comparative Study of Social Media Marketing Adoption by SMEs In Malaysia and Nigeria. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management Practices, 9*(34), 406-425.

DOI: 10.35631/IJEMP.934025

both Kedah, Malaysia (R2=.558, F(2,133) = 84.09, p<.05) and Kaduna, Nigeria (R2=.466, F(2,116) = 50.62, p<.05). This relationship is further strengthened by the existence of facilitating conditions as a moderator for both Kedah, Malaysia (R2 change = 0.096, F change (1,132) = 36.57, p<.05) and Kaduna, Nigeria (R2 change = 0.179, F change (1,115) = 58.2, p<.05).

Keywords:

Social Media Marketing, SME, Technology Adoption, Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness, TAM

Introduction

It is undeniable that Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) throughout the world have played an important role in the growth of their respective countries' economies. Recent studies emphasize that in the post-pandemic era, SMEs have become even more critical as drivers of digital transformation and local resilience (Smith & Jones, 2024; Abdullah et al., 2025). Their existence has improved family living standards and created stability and sustainability in socio-economic ecosystems. Previous studies conducted by academicians and practitioners to identify the problems faced by SMEs have identified two issues, such as insufficient sales and marketing activities and low adoption of new technologies in their day-to-day operations (Hashim, 2007). Apart from that, as compared to big organizations, SMEs have limitations when it comes to capital, human, and technological resources (Davis & Vladica, 2006). However, SMEs continue to face persistent hurdles. Beyond the traditional issues of insufficient sales and low technology adoption, contemporary research highlights a "digital divide" where SMEs struggle to integrate advanced AI-driven marketing analytics (Chen & Wong, 2024; Ibrahim, 2025). Apart from that, as compared to big organizations, SMEs have limitations when it comes to capital, human resources, and technological resources.

Information and communication technology (ICT), such as social media, has an important position in today's business ecosystem. The shift from Web 2.0 to more immersive decentralized platforms has further transformed business-to-client relationships. Consumers

International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management Practices
IJEMP
EISSN : 2600-8750
Volume 9 Issue 34 (June 2026) PP. 406-425

are no longer receiving promotional messages from organisations in a passive manner; they now demand personalized, real-time engagement through short-form video content (Garcia & Lee, 2024; Tan, 2025). Today, these consumers are more likely to initiate conversations with the firms and provide feedback to organisations. They are also actively creating and sharing original content. Social media platforms like Facebook allow users to create networks and share information interactively. While big companies apportion vast resources to these platforms, recent evidence suggests that SMEs in emerging economies are now leveraging "social commerce" to bypass traditional retail barriers (Okonjo & Bello, 2024; Richards, 2025; Boyd and Ellison, 2007). Despite these advantages, the adoption of such technology for marketing purposes remains inconsistent among SMEs in developing countries. This inconsistency is often linked to evolving cybersecurity concerns and the rapid pace of algorithmic changes on global platforms (Kumar et al., 2024; Sadhya & Sahu, 2024).

Throughout these years, social media has become a dynamically and rapidly growing marketing communication medium that allows firms to identify potential customers and promote their products in a much cheaper and more effective manner. Therefore, it is not surprising that among some of the advantages of adopting social media as part of an organization's business operations are the reduction of cost, time, better customer service, and customer communication. However, the adoption of such technology for marketing purposes is low among SMEs in developing countries (Rugova & Prenaj, 2016). Consequently, it is advantageous to identify the critical factors influencing social media marketing adoption rates among SMEs. It is hoped that the results gained from this study may be utilised by respective policymakers to formulate plans in enhancing the adoption of social media as a platform to enhance effectiveness among SMEs. Researchers have also had varied discussions on the influencing factors of entrepreneurial intentions when intending to adopt technology. For these, they have proposed a multitude of models, all being technically biased, such as TAM, UTAUT, IDT, etc. This research has used the TAM model's PU and intention to adopt, and at the same time incorporated entrepreneurial behaviour and culture as endogenous variables. Consequently, it is advantageous to identify the critical factors influencing social media marketing adoption rates. This study contributes to the body of knowledge by examining the relationship between perceived usefulness (PU), perceived ease of use (PEOU), and facilitating conditions in the unique contexts of Malaysia and Nigeria.

Literature Review

SMEs in Malaysia and Nigeria

The contribution of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) towards Malaysian Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Malaysia is irrefutable, as it has become the backbone of Malaysia's economic development. According to Chua (2017), the SME sector contributed 36 percent of GDP, and the percentage is expected to increase to 41 percent by 2020. In the context of the composition of economic activity, the Department of Statistics in 2017 recorded that SME's activities in Malaysia are dominated by services, which contributed 59.7 percent, followed by the manufacturing sector with a share of 21.5 percent. In terms of SMEs' contribution to employment from 2014 to 2017, the main contributor is the service sector, followed by manufacturing, and agriculture is the third contributor (Department of Statistics, 2017). According to SME Info (2016), 98.5 percent or 907,065 businesses in Malaysia are SMEs, where 13.6 percent of the total number are SMEs is in the Northern part of Malaysia consist of Perlis (0.8%), Kedah (5.4%), and Penang (7.4%). Ufot, Reuben & Michael (2014)

state that the definition of SMEs is different from one country to another, and it is based on the socioeconomic context of each country.

Malaysia defines SMEs as micro enterprises, with sales turnover for manufacturing and services not more than RM300,000 or employees of not more than 5 persons. Meanwhile, in medium enterprises, sales turnover for manufacturing is ranged between RM15 million and not exceeding RM50 million or employing between 75 and not exceeding 200 employees. For the services and other sectors category, total sales turnover is between RM3 million and not exceeding RM20 million or employing 30 to not more than 75 employees. SMEs also form the bedrock of contribution to the Nigerian national GDP. As such, Nigeria has also taken the same approach by focusing on the development of SMEs. According to Ufot et al (2014), the ability of SMEs to reduce poverty and create many job opportunities has caused the Nigerian government to refine the policy that touches on this small and medium industry. Government can benefit from this sector because it has the ability to expand a country's GDP, generate income through taxes and other revenue, as well as assist in reducing instability in the political aspect of a country. Nigeria uses the asset base criterion to categorise its SMEs. In its 2005 guideline on Small and Medium Investment Scheme (SMEIS), SME are categorised as any company with an asset base of not more than 200 million Naira (with no staff limit requirements and is not inclusive of land and working capital).

Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing can be defined as using "social media platforms and company websites to offer a product or a service" (Felix, Rauschnabel, & Hinsch, 2017). Social media marketing includes the utilisation of all forms of social media platforms together with the inherent technologies upon which it is premised to realise the marketing objectives of the firm (Rugova & Prenaj, 2016). Recent literature indicates that the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) within these platforms has significantly redefined how firms predict consumer trends and automate engagement (Wang & Zhang, 2024). Among some of the social media platforms available to which firms can use to conduct business are Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter. Social media such as Twitter and Instagram can provide an interactive platform for users and group members to apportion, jointly create, debate, and improve content created by the users (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy & Silvestre, 2011). Such platforms contain data analytics tools, which allow firms to monitor and track the progress and success of online ad campaigns. Firms can also interact with a range of parties such as suppliers, employees, customers, potential customers, and the public. In the current landscape, the emergence of "social commerce" has bridged the gap between social interaction and direct transaction, allowing SMEs to shorten the customer journey effectively (Al-Fadhli, 2025). Marketing activities via social media allow easier production and collaboration of information among its users (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

The strategic usage of social media marketing includes activities such as the management and governance of marketing campaigns, and the creation of an organization's intended social media "tone". Furthermore, the rise of influencer-led marketing has become a pivotal sub-strategy for SMEs to build brand authenticity in a saturated digital market (Peterson & Rossi, 2024). According to Constantinides, Romero & Boria (2008), two social media marketing strategies exist, namely the passive and active approaches. The passive approach is when social media platforms are used by the firm as a means to obtain market information and gain feedback from their customers and potential customers. Online platforms such as blogs,

forums, and social networking sites are places where people would usually share their reviews, recommendations, and experiences of the products that they have used. Organizations can access third-party forums and blogs or their own company social media platforms and do an in-depth analysis of this freely available information to gain a better understanding about its market and customers. Modern analytical frameworks now emphasize the importance of "real-time sentiment analysis" to pivot marketing strategies instantly based on public discourse (Lee & Sullivan, 2025). These platforms can provide an inexpensive way for organisations to conduct market intelligence activities. Effectively conducted market intelligence will allow an organization to identify any problems with its products and also identify new market opportunities.

On the other hand, organizations adopting the active approach strategy would use their social media platforms as public relations tools and direct marketing tools (Constantinides, Romero & Boria, 2008). It is important for a firm to build relationships with its customers in order to ensure that costumers would continue to purchase their products. Recent studies in developing economies highlight that the effectiveness of the active approach is highly dependent on the "digital literacy" of the SME owners, which acts as a catalyst for sustainable technology adoption (Olusola et al., 2024). Therefore, organisations can advertise their products on their social media and regularly update their social media with useful tips and latest product information in order to ensure that these platforms remain attractive to their customers and potential customers.

Besides the above, when it comes to advertising and promotion, social media platforms can be used to target an organization's promotional activities toward a very specific and niche audience. For example, services such as Facebook Ads which is available in Facebook can be used by firms to target their advertisements at very specific demographics. Firms can choose to target their advertisements at people of the same age, interests, location and so forth. Facebook also has analytical tools to analyse the effectiveness of the advertisements. These tools can help organizations to ensure that they avoid costly marketing campaigns.

Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) and Perceived Usefulness (PU)

PEOU is a cognitive perception of a person regarding any phenomenon, which consumes fewer efforts and requires minimal understanding. Davis, Bagozzi & Warshaw (1989) defined PEOU as "the degree to which a person believes that using a technology will be free from effort". In the context of modern social media marketing, this ease is increasingly associated with the intuitive design of mobile-first interfaces and AI-assisted content creation tools (Adams & White, 2024; Li, 2025). Technology users see innovation as a simple task to utilize if it is easy to learn, adaptable, and good with others. Recent studies suggest that the "seamlessness" of platform integration determines how quickly SME owners transition from traditional methods to digital workflows (Fletcher & Rossi, 2024). It is a scale dependent on a person's evaluation of the exertion associated with the way of utilizing a specific system. Based on the definition, the word "ease' is referring to the "freedom from difficulty or great effort". PEOU consists of several components. Among the components are easy to use, read, understand and the ability to link and search for relevant information, and the capacity to return to certain information when required. For this research, PEOU refers to the extent to which a user believes that the continual use of social media marketing is unfettered of effort. When for instance, a system is proportionately easy to use then that person would be more ready to garner more information about its features and will subsequently continue utilising it. Past research shows that PEOU

has a positive association with continual intention to adopt and utilise it within the more ubiquitous Web-based learning paradigms (Chiu & Wang, 2008). It is an established determinant of a system's usage and intention to adopt a system. The less effort it is for an individual to log on to a system the higher the probability that the individual will think that it meets their needs. In 2024, the role of PEOU has been further expanded to include the accessibility of automated data visualization, which allows non-technical SME managers to interpret complex marketing metrics with minimal training (Zubair & Hassan, 2024; Miller, 2025). Based on past literature, it's evident that PEOU directly influences behavioural intention (BI) to use, which consequently leads to the actual usage of a system (Viehland & Leong, 2007). This is supported by empirical findings that PEOU is a critical factor in the use of telecommunication technologies and system adoptions (Agarwal and Karahanna, 2000). PEOU is an established determinant of system usage and intention to adopt a system (Wu & Wang, 2005).

The less effort it is for an individual to log on to a system, the higher the probability that the individual will think that it meets their needs. These assertions are strongly supported by empirical evidence (Amin, 2007; Ramayah & Ignatius, 2005; Lallmahamood, 2007; Shim & Viswanathan, 2007). Therefore, regardless of whether a system is accepted to be helpful by an individual, if the system is excessively hard to use, making it impossible to utilize than the expected benefits from that system will be reduced due to the efforts used to utilize that system. New systems that are less difficult to comprehend are embraced more quickly than systems that require the user to develop new aptitudes and understandings. Past literature shows a positive relationship between PEOU and system's adoption behaviour (Fagan, Kilmon, & Pandey, 2012; Hamid, Razak, Bakar & Abdullah, 2016; Abdullah, Ward, & Ahmed, 2016; Leong, Ooi, Chong, & Lin, 2011; Kucukusta, Law, Besbes, & Legohérel, 2015; Alalwan, Dwivedi, Rana, & Williams, 2016). Fagan et al. (2012), in their qualitative analysis, found that PEOU both positively and significantly predicts the intention to adopt virtual reality systems. In a similar vein, Hamid et al. (2016) conducted research on 543 school teachers from different government schools to identify the relationship between PEOU and the adoption of e-government systems. The study found that PEOU and system adoption are positively and significantly related. Abdullah et al. (2016) asserted similar conclusions in their study. Leong et al. (2011) found that PEOU was the second most significant factor affecting the intention to adopt mobile systems. Kucukusta et al. (2015), based on a study of online users in Hong Kong utilising online booking systems found that PEOU significantly influences the intentions of these users when adopting a system. The study further concluded that among the respondents, students, employees and jobseekers viewed PEOU as more important than other factors when intending to adopt the system.

PU refers to "the extent to which a person believes that using a particular technology will enhance her/his job performance," (Davis, 1989). Perceived usefulness looks at the user's perception of how well the technology enhances a user's task performance. In the current landscape of hyper-personalization, PU is heavily influenced by a system's ability to provide high-precision targeting and predictive analytics (Sanjay & Mehta, 2024; Thompson, 2025). This clearly indicates that users have a perception of how useful the technology is in performing their tasks. Whether the adoption of a technology will lead to more efficiency and effectiveness of getting a task done. PU also alludes to the degree to which target clients trust that utilizing a technology system will make a huge incentive for them (Ajzen, 1991; Rouibah, Abbas & Rouibah, 2011). A substantial collection of research has affirmed that perceived usefulness essentially affects client states of mind, which relatively affects client adoption behaviour

International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management Practices
IJEMP
EISSN : 2600-8750
Volume 9 Issue 34 (June 2026) PP. 406-425

(Davis, 1989; Detlor, Hupfer, Ruhi & Zhao, 2013; Hess, McNab & Basoglu, 2014; Morosan, 2012). PU is additionally characterised by how much an individual believes that the utilisation of a particular system would actually enhance their performance, which likewise decisively impacts the individual's willingness to utilise the said system (Ajzen, 1991; Chen & Barnes, 2007).

Within the TAM framework, PU has been proven to be a direct predictor of behavioural intention to use (BI) the technology in any given situation. Past research indicates that PU influences continual intention within the sphere of e-text utilisation technologies (Baker-Eveleth & Stone, 2015; Stone & Baker-Eveleth, 2013), the utilisation of instant messaging technologies (Wang, Ngai, & Wei, 2011), telecommunication service providers (Abbas & Hamdy, 2015), online booking for travel (Li & Liu, 2014) e-learning (Lin & Wang, 2012), web based learning (Tang, Tang & Chiang, 2014), and when seeking to create knowledge (Chou, Min, Chang, & Lin, 2009). Since the assumptions of the TAM model and past literature, including recent studies have witnessed that there is a significant relationship between PU and adoption behaviour the following hypothesis was proposed in the current study.

H1: Perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness have a significant combined relationship on social media marketing adoption by SMEs in Kedah
H2: Perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness have a significant combined relationship on social media marketing adoption by SMEs in Kaduna

Facilitating Conditions

Facilitating conditions are the degree to which a user trusts that the organizational and technological resources that exist within a firm help or ease the adoption of a system (Venkatesh, Morris, Davis & Davis, 2003). In the contemporary digital landscape, this concept has evolved to encompass the availability of high-speed 5G connectivity and cloud-based infrastructure, which are vital for real-time social media engagement (Babatunde & Okafor, 2024; Salim et al., 2025). Research has concluded that facilitating conditions and intention to adopt a system are significantly positively related. In other words, facilitating conditions are linked to the user's perception of the firm's resources that are present when adopting a new system (Venkatesh et al., 2012). Research by Carter, Schaupp, Hobbs & Campbell (2012), Lee & Lin (2008), Loo, Yeow & Chong (2011) and Yeow & Loo (2009) concluded that facilitating conditions and intention to adopt a system are significantly positively related.

A facilitating condition is the degree to which SMEs believe that there exists the technical infrastructure to support adoption, including social media marketing. This belief is increasingly bolstered by national digitalization grants and technical advisory programs offered by governmental bodies, which act as critical external facilitators (Zulkifli & Rahman, 2024; Nwosu, 2025). The presence of supportive facilitating conditions obviously would encourage prospective users as well as current users to adopt social media marketing, which can be seen as a varied avenue for utilisation to enhance performance through the usage of technology-based systems. Recent literature emphasizes that for SMEs, the presence of localized technical support and multilingual helpdesks significantly lowers the barrier to entry for complex marketing platforms (Wong & Teoh, 2024; Ibrahim & Yusuf, 2025).

International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management Practices
IJEMP
EISSN : 2600-8750
Volume 9 Issue 34 (June 2026) PP. 406-425

Hung, Wang & Chou (2007) identified that the 'facilitating condition' is a significant predictor of user intention in accepting and using information kiosks. Wang and Shih (2009), when seeking to examine the factors influencing the use of information kiosk systems among 244 respondents from Taiwan, found that facilitating conditions had a significant effect on the intention to adopt it. By utilising the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) model, Schaupp & Carter (2010) investigated the e-filing adoption rates among American taxpayers. The results showed that all variables, including facilitating conditions, significantly impacted their intentions when adopting the e-filing tax system. However, in 2024, the scope of these conditions has expanded to include the "cybersecurity readiness" of the firm, where robust data protection protocols provide the necessary confidence for SMEs to engage in social commerce (Martinez, 2024; Chen et al., 2025). Some recent literature reveals that facilitating conditions significantly impact system adoption behaviour regardless of the type of system and organization. Current studies also highlight that "inter-organizational collaboration" and membership in digital business networks serve as powerful facilitating conditions that provide SMEs with shared resources and collective knowledge (Smit & Van Wyk, 2024; Zhang, 2025).

Similarly, Tabassum, Roknuzzaman & Islam (2015) investigated the variables that influenced the utilisation of the digital library system at a Bangladeshi university. The results based on 129 respondents, including students and staff, suggested that facilitating conditions significantly impacted the adoption of the digital library system at the university. However, counter findings were asserted by Teo and Milutinovic (2015) based on their study of facilitating conditions as an external variable within the TAM model (TAM) whilst investigating the intention to use technology in teaching mathematics among 313 teachers in Serbia found that facilitating conditions did not significantly influence technology adoption.

Some recent literature reveals that facilitating conditions significantly impact system adoption behaviour regardless of the type of system and organization (Akanni, 2017; Hamzat & Mabawonku, 2018; Mubuke, Masaba, Ogenmungu & Kituyi, 2017; Rana, Dwivedi, Lal, Williams & Clement, 2017; Sichone, Milano & Kimea, 2018). In their study of university lecturers, Akanni (2017) found that facilitating conditions significantly impacted open access resources usage. Hamzat et al. (2018) when conducting a study on 759 engineering lecturers from 10 different universities in Southwest Nigeria found that their results were aligned with the past findings of Akanni (2017). They noted that the facilitating condition significantly impacted digital library adoption among the lecturers sampled. A cross-sectional study on 370 university students by Mubuke et al. (2017) found that facilitating conditions significantly impacted the adoption of mobile learning systems. Based on the assumptions of the UTAUT model and previous empirical evidence including recent studies, the current study proposes the following hypothesis:

H3: Facilitating conditions have a significant moderating effect on the combined relationship of perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness on social media marketing adoption by SMEs in Kedah

H4: Facilitating conditions have a significant moderating effect on the combined relationship of perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness on social media marketing adoption by SMEs in Kaduna

International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management Practices
IJEMP
EISSN : 2600-8750
Volume 9 Issue 34 (June 2026) PP. 406-425

Methods

This quantitative research used the survey approach to gather data. The data for this research were collected using a questionnaire from the targeted SMEs executives, managers and owners. Their responses to the questions regarding the constructs were analysed using SPSS 26 software to reveal the potential relationships among the investigated variables. A multiple regression was conducted to examine the combined relationship of perceived ease of use (PEOU) and perceived usefulness (PU) on the intention to adopt social media marketing by SMEs in Malaysia and Nigeria. Following this, a hierarchical multiple regression was carried out to examine the moderating influence of facilitating conditions (FAC) on the combined relationship as the control variable. The dependent variable for this research was the intention to adopt technology (ADO). In Malaysia, the data was collected from Kedah State, and in Nigeria, the data was collected from Kaduna State. The survey questions were adopted from previous literature and adapted for this study. The response to the questions was in the form of a 5-point Likert scale (1- strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree, 5-strongly agree).

According to SME Corporation Malaysia, Kedah has 48,894 SMEs. According to the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) and Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics, Kaduna has about 2882 SMEs. The sample size for this research was determined by using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula. Based on this formula, a total of 381 questionnaires were randomly distributed to SMEs in Kedah. Therefore, a total of 154 questionnaires were collected from the respondents, but only 136 questionnaires were deemed to have been fully completed and suitable for further analysis. A total of 338 questionnaires were randomly distributed to SMEs in Kaduna. A total of 129 questionnaires were collected from the respondents and out of that amount, about 119 questionnaires were deemed fit for further analysis. Data analysis was carried out using SPSS 26 software. Evaluation of the measurement model included the assessment of reliability and validity of measurement items (Hair, Black, Babin, & Andersen, 2014). Once the assessment on the reliability and validity of the constructs was done, it was followed by the evaluation of the structural model and hypothesis testing.

Results

Profile of Respondents

The profiles of the industries they were in revealed that in Malaysia, the majority of respondents were in the service sector (72=52.9%); trading (34=25%); manufacturing (20=14.8%); others (9=6.6%) and lastly mining (1=0.7%). In Nigeria, the majority of respondents were in the service sector as well (46=38.3%); trading (38=31.7%); manufacturing (29=24.2%); mining (4=3.3%), and lastly others (2=2.5%). The majority of SMEs employed less than 30 and less employees (Malaysia=109=81.2%; Nigeria 89=74.2%). However, Malaysia had some larger SME's employing over 200 employees. In Malaysia, the majority of respondents were owners (51=37.5%). This was followed by Others (44=32.4%); Managers (23=16.9%); Executives (18=13.2%). In Nigeria, a larger majority of respondents were owners (67=55.8%). This was followed by Managers (33=27.5%); Executives (12=10%); Others (6=52%). Companies with official social media accounts in Malaysia were 86 (63.2%), whilst in Nigeria, it was slightly higher at 90 (75%).

International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management Practices
IJEMP
EISSN : 2600-8750
Volume 9 Issue 34 (June 2026) PP. 406-425

Descriptive Statistics

This section focuses on descriptive statistics, namely the means and standard deviations. Table 1 below presents the output generated.

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations

Items	Description	Kedah		Kaduna	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	Social Media Marketing Adoption (DV) **(ADO)**	3.42	1.27	3.80	1.36
2	Perceived Ease of Use (IV) **(PEOU)**	3.60	0.93	3.86	0.90
3	Perceived Usefulness (IV) **(PU)**	3.87	0.67	3.83	0.76
4	Facilitating Conditions (MV) **(FAC)**	3.49	0.88	3.84	1.03

As shown in Table 1 above, the mean value of the (IV) perceived usefulness was the highest in Malaysia at 3.87 (SD=0.67), while perceived ease of use was the highest in Nigeria at 3.86 (SD=0.9). The findings indicate a strong emphasis on these two variables, which reinforce the TAM model's contentions on the adoption (technology) of social media marketing for their businesses. In Kedah PEOU (Mean=3.62; SD=0.90) and the MV (FAC) Facilitating Conditions (Mean=3.50; SD=0.86). In Kaduna MV Facilitating Conditions ranked higher (Mean=3.84; SD=1.02); PU (3.83; SD=0.76). To summarise, we can assume that the respondents perceive the facilitating conditions as very available in Malaysia, whilst perceived usefulness by the respondents seems to be very important.

Missing Data and Outlier Analysis

Missing data was overcome by utilising mean values (Sekaran, 2007). To identify outliers, the Mahalanobis distance score was examined (Pallant, 2020; Hair et al., 2014). At a significance value of 0.001, the X^2 (chi-square) is 16.27 for 3 variables. The Mahalanobis score of 15.709 for Kedah and 16.154 for Kaduna was generated. These were within the 16.27 cut-off point. The Cook's distance for Kedah was 0.142 and 0.111 for Kaduna. There were no values above 1 and thus did not indicate any problem (Pallant, 2020).

Normality Test

The histogram and P-P plot for Kedah and Kaduna indicated acceptable normality of the data used (Hair et al., 2014). The normal probability plot (P-P) indicated that the data lie in a reasonably straight diagonal line. This suggests that no major deviations from normality were present (Pallant, 2020). This was followed by the test for homoscedasticity for regression standardised residuals and found to be quite evenly parabolic suggesting evenness of output.

International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management Practices
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Multi-Collinearity Test

Inter-correlations were examined by using bivariate linear analysis for multicollinearity and are presented in Table 2 and 3 below. The highest correlation for Kedah, Malaysia is between FAC and ADO (0.625). For Kaduna Nigeria, it was between PEOU and ADO (0.608). Both of which were below the cut-off point of r=0.07 (Pallant, 2020; Hair et al., 2010).

Table 2: Kedah Inter-Correlations between Variables

		ADO	PEOU	PU	FAC
Pearson Correlation	ADO	1	0.547	0.409	0.626
	PEOU	0.547	1	0.557	0.435
	PU	0.409	0.557	1	0.599
	FAC	0.626	0.435	0.599	1
Sig. (1-tailed)	ADO	-	0	0	0
	PEOU	0	-	0	0
	PU	0	0	-	0
	FAC	0	0	0	-
N	ADO	136	136	136	136
	PEOU	136	136	136	136
	PU	136	136	136	136
	FAC	136	136	136	136

Table 3: Kaduna Inter-Correlations between Variables

		ADO	PEOU	PU	FAC
Pearson Correlation	ADO	1	0.608	0.124	0.553
	PEOU	0.608	1	0.383	0.425
	PU	0.124	0.383	1	0.394
	FAC	0.553	0.425	0.594	1
Sig. (1-tailed)	ADO	-	0	0	0
	PEOU	0	-	0	0
	PU	0	0	-	0
	FAC	0	0	0	-
N	ADO	119	119	119	119
	PEOU	119	119	119	119
	PU	119	119	119	119
	FAC	119	119	119	119

Reliability

The assessment of the reliability and validity of the measurement model is presented in Table 4 below. Reliability assessment concentrates on internal consistency and is indicated by the Cronbach's alpha score. The internal consistency reliability of the measurement for both Kedah and Kaduna are indicated accordingly. The Cronbach's alpha values were within the 0.70 recommended value (Hair et al. 2014) for both Kedah and Kaduna. For example, the values

International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management Practices
IJEMP
EISSN : 2600-8750
Volume 9 Issue 34 (June 2026) PP. 406-425

were 0.95, 0.88, 0.90 and 0.73 for intention to adopt, facilitating conditions, perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness in Kedah, the values for the same variables for Kaduna were 0.96, 0.91, 0.89 and 0.85 respectively.

Table 4: Cronbach's Alpha of The Study Variables

Items	Description	Kedah		Kaduna	
		CA	Items	CA	Items
1	Intention to Adopt (DV)	0.947	3	0.960	3
2	Facilitating Conditions (MV)	0.876	4	0.912	4
3	Perceived Ease of Use (IV)	0.895	4	0.889	4
4	Perceived Usefulness (IV)	0.733	4	0.848	4

Measurement Model and Moderator Test

To analyse the moderating effect of FAC on the relationship between PEOU and PU on the intention to adopt technology, all means were centred before the output was generated. It is presented in Table 5 and 6 below.

Table 5: Model, Moderator and R^2 Change For PEOU-PU-FAC-Intado (Kedah)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.747[a]	0.558	0.552	0.82656	0.558	84.093	2	133	0.000
2	.809[b]	0.654	0.646	0.7342	0.096	36.569	1	132	0.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), PU, PEOU
b. Predictors: (Constant), PU, PEOU, FAC
c. Dependent Variable: ADO

Table 6: Model, Moderator and R^2 Change For PEOU-PU-FAC-Intado (Kaduna)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.683[a]	0.466	0.457	1.0387	0.466	50.619	2	116	0.000
2	.803[b]	0.645	0.636	0.85008	0.179	58.19	1	115	0.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), PU, PEOU
b. Predictors: (Constant), PU, PEOU, FAC
c. Dependent Variable: ADO

Table 5 above provides the output for Kedah, Malaysia. Model 1 (combined relationship of PU and PEOU with ADO) explains 55.8% of the variance of the intention to adopt technology as the outcome variable (R^2=.558, F(2,133) = 84.09, p<.05). The interaction (moderation) shown in model 2 is significant where the R^2 change = 0.096, F change (1,132) = 36.57, p<.05. Therefore, hypothesis H1 and H3 are accepted for Kedah, Malaysia. Table 6 above provides the output for Kaduna, Nigeria. Model 1(combined relationship of PU and PEOU with ADO)

International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management Practices
IJEMP
EISSN : 2600-8750
Volume 9 Issue 34 (June 2026) PP. 406-425

explains 46.6% of the variance of the intention to adopt technology as the outcome variable (R^2=.466, F(2,116) = 50.62, p<.05). The interaction (moderation) shown in model 2 is significant where the R^2 change = 0.179, F change (1,115) = 58.2, p<.05. Therefore, hypothesis H2 and H4 are accepted for Kaduna, Nigeria. There is a significant difference between the two states in the strength of moderation of facilitating conditions with Kaduna, Nigeria showing a higher effect than Kedah, Malaysia.

Discussion

This section concentrates on the discussions of findings, theoretical and practical implications, the limitations of the present study and suggestions for future research.

The Combined Relationship PEOU/PU And ADO

The combined relationship of perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness has a significant influence on the adoption of social media marketing adoption among SMEs in both Kedah and Kaduna is consistent with previous findings on technology adoption studies (Abdullah et al., 2016; Kucukusta et al., 2015; Khalifa and Shen (2008); Leong et al., 2011). The two variables have also been shown to effectively predict technology adoption using the TAM model by Davis and vicariously social media marketing as it is a newer form of technology. The findings here on social media marketing adoption show the same pattern with PU having a smaller contribution than PEOU. This is most probably due to the levels of technology use that is prevalent in all societies today. This is especially true because this form of marketing is more cost effective when compared to traditional marketing mediums which have proven to be not only costly but also very restrictive to the regions and market reach.

The Moderating Effect Of Facilitating Conditions

Facilitating conditions have been studied as an external variable in the TAM model, but it was found to be non-significant (Teo and Milutinovic, 2015). Contrary to this study, Tabassum, Roknuzzaman & Islam (2015) found that it significantly influences digital library use. However, this variable has not been particularly tested among SMEs as most SMEs incorporate some form of technology in their daily operations. This cannot be divorced from their marketing needs, which require the use of social media marketing capabilities to effectively achieve their goals by expanding their reach to consumers. It is obvious that through this research, facilitating conditions such as infrastructure and easy access do affect the intention to adopt social media marketing more comprehensively to ensure business sustainability. The findings of this research concur with findings by Akanni, (2017); Hamzat & Mabawonku (2018); Mubuke, Masaba, Ogenmungu & Kituyi (2017) and Sichone, Milano & Kimea, 2018), even though these previous studies looked at other technology adoption areas.

Theoretical And Practical Implications

This study would be useful to scholars and other researchers, especially government policy makers and investors, when comparing environmental dynamics in Malaysia and Nigeria. As a comparative study, it would aid in the study of entrepreneurial activity and the nuances of technology adoption among SMEs, especially related to social media marketing activities. As such, it will provide input for further research or discussions in the scholarly field of social media adoption for marketing. By incorporating and understanding these findings more

International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management Practices
IJEMP
EISSN : 2600-8750
Volume 9 Issue 34 (June 2026) PP. 406-425

focused plans could be implemented to disseminate the relevance of technology use for marketing in the present business environment. As SME's in Malaysia and Nigeria grow, it will inadvertently enhance their national goals of enhancing employment in Malaysia and Nigeria.

Limitations And Suggestions for Future Research

Social media marketing is a constantly evolving phenomenon with a plethora of platforms that are not only diverse but have become very innovative. The sample collected in Kedah, Malaysia and Kaduna, Nigeria is somewhat limited in its generalisability because of its size. Any future study should consider sampling the whole country and not only the two states. This would help in providing more comprehensive and more generalizable results on which to act.

Conclusion

This study reveals that perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness fundamentally drive social media marketing adoption among small and medium enterprises across emerging economies. Furthermore, the presence of robust facilitating conditions significantly amplifies this technological acceptance, acting as a vital bridge between initial intention and actual implementation. Theoretically, these findings extend the Technology Acceptance Model by validating facilitating conditions as a critical moderator across diverse continental contexts, thereby enriching the global academic discourse on digital transformation. Practically, this research offers actionable insights for policymakers and industry stakeholders, underscoring the absolute necessity of investing in digital infrastructure, localized technical support, and cybersecurity readiness to bridge the persistent digital divide and foster sustainable economic resilience. These insights collectively demonstrate how cognitive perceptions, and environmental resources synergistically shape modern business strategies.

Despite these valuable contributions, certain methodological limitations must be transparently acknowledged. The empirical scope is geographically confined to specific regions within Malaysia and Nigeria, which inherently restricts the broader generalizability of the outcomes to entirely different cultural or national contexts. Additionally, the single-phase data collection captures only a temporal snapshot of adoption behaviours, limiting the ability to observe long-term behavioral shifts. Consequently, future scholars should expand the sampling framework to encompass nationwide or multinational cohorts while employing longitudinal designs to track evolving technological integration over time. Subsequent investigations could also explore the nuanced impact of artificial intelligence tools, algorithmic changes, and digital literacy on entrepreneurial technology adoption across varied industrial sectors. Such comprehensive approaches will undoubtedly yield deeper contextual understandings of digital ecosystem dynamics. Ultimately, empowering small enterprises with accessible and secure digital ecosystems is not merely a routine technological upgrade but an indispensable catalyst for long-term economic survival, market competitiveness, and continuous global innovation.

Acknowledgements: The authors gratefully acknowledge the institutional support provided by Universiti Utara Malaysia and Kaduna State University, which facilitated the execution of this research. We extend our sincere appreciation to the SME owners, managers, and executives in Kedah, Malaysia, and Kaduna, Nigeria, for their invaluable time and willingness to participate in this study. Finally, we thank the anonymous reviewers and the editorial team for their insightful and constructive feedback, which significantly enhanced the overall quality of this manuscript.

Funding Statement: This research received financial support from a matching grant to conduct this research (Kod SO:14089).

Conflict of Interest Statement: The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper. All authors have contributed to this work and approved the final version of the manuscript for submission to the International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management Practices (IJEMP).

Ethics Statement: This study was conducted in accordance with ethical research standards. All procedures involving human participants were reviewed and approved by the Centre of Innovation and Research Management (Universiti Utara Malaysia), approval number Code 14089. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. The data collected were used solely for academic purposes.

Author Contribution Statement: All authors contributed significantly to the development of this manuscript. Rajoo Ramanchandram was responsible for the conceptualization, methodology, and overall supervision of the study. Shahmir Sivaraj Abdullah and Helen Andow handled data collection, analysis, and interpretation of results. Muhamad Saufi Che Rusuli contributed to the literature review, drafting, and critical revision of the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript prior to submission.

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