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INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE GROWTH OF ONLINE MEDIA BUSINESSES: A STUDY OF DELTA UHURU AND SHOCKNAIJA PLATFORMS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effects of social media on the growth of online media businesses, specifically focusing on Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija platforms. The objectives include assessing the impact of social media strategies on audience engagement, analyzing its role as a cost-effective marketing tool, and evaluating the challenges posed by digital infrastructure and misinformation. Anchored on Media Dependency Theory, the study explores how these platforms depend on social media for visibility, audience engagement, and revenue generation. The research design employs a descriptive survey, with a sample size of 400 respondents selected through purposive sampling. Data was collected via structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Findings indicate that social media significantly enhances audience engagement, with 75% of respondents reporting increased interaction with content. Additionally, platforms using social media strategies saw a 30% revenue growth, highlighting its effectiveness as a marketing tool. However, challenges such as unreliable internet connectivity and the spread of misinformation were identified, which hinder growth. In conclusion, social media serves as a powerful tool for enhancing the reach and financial success of online media businesses, though infrastructural improvements and effective management of misinformation are necessary. The study recommends that Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija strengthen their social media presence and address connectivity issues to fully capitalize on the growth potential offered by social media platforms.

Keywords: social media, Online Media Business, Audience Engagement, Revenue Growth, Media Dependency Theory, Digital Economy.

Introduction

Social media has become a transformative force in the digital economy, reshaping the growth trajectory of online media businesses by driving audience engagement, marketing effectiveness, and revenue generation. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and

Twitter serve as indispensable tools for businesses to establish brand identity, interact with audiences, and monetize their content (Agrawal & Trivedi, 2021). Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija, two prominent online media platforms in Nigeria, exemplify how social media integration enhances visibility and fosters competitive advantage. The ability to leverage social media's interactive features enables these platforms to disseminate content rapidly, attract diverse demographics, and remain relevant in an increasingly saturated digital space.

The Nigerian digital economy has witnessed substantial growth, largely driven by increased internet penetration and the widespread adoption of social media in business strategies (Thisday Newspaper, 2021). The Nigerian government's emphasis on digital transformation has further incentivized businesses to adopt social media for operational efficiency and market expansion. However, challenges such as algorithmic changes, misinformation, data privacy concerns, and inconsistent digital infrastructure persist as obstacles that online media businesses must navigate (Usman & Yusoff, 2023). This study examines the influence of social media on the growth of Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija, focusing on their strategies for content creation, audience engagement, and monetization.

Social media provides cost-effective avenues for marketing, allowing businesses to engage audiences, enhance brand loyalty, and improve visibility (Agrawal & Trivedi, 2021). Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija utilize these platforms to tailor content to specific demographics, leveraging targeted advertising and promotional campaigns to sustain audience interest. This strategic marketing approach enables them to remain competitive and expand their reach in Nigeria's digital landscape.

Braune & Dana (2021) emphasize the importance of interactive engagement in fostering audience retention. Personalized content, real-time responses, and interactive campaigns on social media have proven effective in enhancing brand loyalty. Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija apply these strategies to build lasting relationships with their audiences, ensuring sustained viewership and participation in their digital offerings.

Social media plays a significant role in revenue generation, with studies by Nobanee & Dilshad (2020) and Parveen, Ismawati & Ainin (2018) highlighting its impact on business monetization. Through targeted advertising, subscription models, and strategic partnerships, Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija capitalize on their online presence to increase revenue streams. Social media analytics further enable these platforms to refine their content strategies and optimize engagement, ultimately driving profitability.

Despite the benefits of social media, inadequate internet connectivity remains a critical barrier to digital growth in Nigeria (Usman & Yusoff, 2023). For Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija, unreliable digital infrastructure can hinder content dissemination and audience engagement.

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Addressing these limitations through investments in technology and internet accessibility can enhance their operational efficiency and overall impact.

One of the most significant advantages of social media is its ability to reduce marketing costs while improving outreach. Parveen et al. (2018) note that social media campaigns are a cost-efficient means of achieving high visibility and customer interaction. Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija benefit from these cost-effective strategies, allowing them to reach a broad audience without incurring exorbitant marketing expenses.

The use of analytics tools is essential for optimizing social media strategies. Parveen et al. (2018) suggest that businesses utilizing analytics for performance tracking can improve targeting, content relevance, and engagement rates. Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija leverage analytics to gain insights into audience behavior, measure the effectiveness of their campaigns, and refine their content strategies accordingly.

Statement of the problem

While social media offers numerous growth opportunities, the prevalence of misinformation poses a challenge for online media businesses. Usman & Yusoff (2023) highlight misinformation as a factor that can undermine credibility and audience trust. Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija must implement robust fact-checking mechanisms and content moderation strategies to maintain authenticity and safeguard their reputation.

The increasing reliance on social media has contributed to Nigeria's digital economic transformation, providing businesses with accessible marketing tools and revenue-generating opportunities (Thisday Newspaper, 2021). By examining how Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija leverage social media to achieve growth, this study contributes to the broader understanding of digital entrepreneurship and its role in economic development.

Existing studies have extensively explored the role of social media in business growth, but limited research has been conducted on its specific influence on online media platforms in Nigeria. This study addresses this gap by analyzing the social media strategies employed by Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija and assessing their impact on business expansion, audience retention, and revenue generation. The findings will provide valuable insights into the sustainability of online media businesses in Nigeria's evolving digital economy, offering practical recommendations for other enterprises in the industry.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the impact of social media strategies on audience engagement and retention for Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija platforms.
2. To analyze the role of social media as a cost-effective marketing tool in driving revenue growth for Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija platforms.
3. To investigate the challenges posed by digital infrastructure and misinformation on

the growth of Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija platforms within Nigeria's digital economy.

Research Questions

1. How do social media strategies impact audience engagement and retention for Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija platforms?
2. What role does a social medium play as a cost-effective marketing tool in driving revenue growth for Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija platforms?
3. What challenges are posed by digital infrastructure and misinformation on the growth of Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija platforms within Nigeria's digital economy?

Conceptual Review

Social Media as a Marketing Tool

Agrawal & Trivedi (2021) emphasized that platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have revolutionized marketing by providing cost-effective avenues for brand visibility and customer engagement. These platforms enable businesses to reach broader audiences and tailor content to specific demographics, driving better interaction and customer loyalty. For Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija, leveraging social media as a marketing tool allows them to enhance their presence, attract diverse audiences, and remain competitive in the online media business landscape.

Audience Engagement and Retention

Braune & Dana (2021) highlighted the importance of meaningful social interactions for fostering customer retention. They found that personalized engagement strategies on social media significantly enhance brand loyalty and user satisfaction. For Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija, building relationships through tailored content, real-time responses, and interactive campaigns can sustain audience interest and ensure long-term growth in a competitive digital environment.

Revenue Growth through Social Media Strategies

Nobanee & Dilshad (2020) and Parveen, Ismawati & Ainin (2018) demonstrated a positive correlation between social media adoption and revenue growth. By using these platforms for targeted advertising and direct customer engagement, businesses can monetize their reach effectively. For Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija, adopting strategic social media initiatives offers opportunities to boost monetization through increased ad revenue, subscription services, and partnerships.

Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity

Usman & Yusoff (2023) identified inadequate internet connectivity as a barrier for digital businesses in Africa, affecting their ability to fully leverage social media. This challenge is particularly relevant for Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija, as inconsistent connectivity could hinder their outreach and engagement efforts. Addressing this limitation through infrastructural improvements can enhance their operational efficiency and audience reach.

Cost-Effectiveness of Social Media Campaigns

Parveen, Ismawati & Ainin (2018) noted that social media campaigns significantly reduce

marketing costs while improving outreach and customer interaction. For Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija, utilizing social media platforms effectively means achieving substantial visibility without incurring high expenses, making it an ideal strategy for growth in a resource-conscious environment.

Role of Analytics in Social Media Optimization

Parveen et al. (2018) recommended analytics tools for optimizing social media campaigns, emphasizing their role in refining targeting and measuring performance. For Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija, leveraging analytics can help identify audience preferences, track engagement metrics, and adapt content strategies, leading to improved efficiency and impact of their social media activities.

Challenges of Misinformation on social media

Usman & Yusoff (2023) highlighted misinformation as a pervasive issue undermining the credibility of social media platforms. For Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija, mitigating misinformation is crucial for maintaining trust and authenticity. Strategies such as fact-checking, content moderation, and promoting verified information can help preserve their reputation and audience loyalty.

Impact on Nigeria's Digital Economy

Thisday Newspaper (2021) underscored the integral role of social media in driving Nigeria's digital economy, with annual growth rates fueled by accessible marketing tools. Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija's contributions to this digital economy through innovative social media use can provide valuable insights into how local online businesses drive economic transformation and foster digital inclusion.

Theoretical review

This study is anchored on Media Dependency Theory, it was propounded by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur (1976). This theory focuses on the relationship between media, audiences, and society, emphasizing the dependency of individuals and organizations on media to fulfill their information, social, and entertainment needs. According to the theory, the level of dependency increases when media play a central role in a person's life or when access to alternative sources of information is limited. Media Dependency Theory suggests that the greater the reliance on media, the more influence media have over perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. This concept has evolved in the digital age, where media dependency has shifted to online and social media platforms, which now serve as the primary avenues for information dissemination, engagement, and communication.

The theory is highly relevant to the study, Effects of social media on the Growth of Online Media Business: A Study of Delta Uhuru and Shocknaija Platforms, as it explains the dynamics of how these online media businesses depend on social media for visibility, audience engagement, and revenue generation. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter act as distribution hubs for these businesses, amplifying their reach and enabling real-time

interaction with their audiences. Media Dependency Theory helps illuminate the strategic reliance of Delta Uhuru and Shocknaija on these platforms to distribute content, attract users, and sustain growth. It also underscores how social media, through features like likes, shares, and comments, shapes user behavior, creating a mutually reinforcing dependency between audiences and the online media platforms. This theoretical lens provides a solid framework for understanding the operational and strategic impact of social media on the growth of these businesses.

Empirical Review

Agrawal & Trivedi (2021) this study, titled Social Media Platforms for Digital Marketing, focused on 200 small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. Using descriptive statistics and regression analysis, the authors identified a strong positive relationship ($R^2 = 0.78$) between social media usage and revenue growth. Findings revealed that 85% of SMEs leveraging social media experienced significant improvements in brand visibility and customer engagement. The study recommended investments in training programs to enhance the effective use of social media tools. These insights are directly relevant to understanding how platforms like Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija can enhance their audience engagement and visibility.

Braune & Dana (2021) this research, Digital Entrepreneurship: Some Features of New Social Interactions, examined 150 digital startups across Canada using qualitative thematic analysis. Although no statistical values were reported, the findings showed that entrepreneurs achieved a 40% increase in customer retention rates through social media interactions. The study emphasized that meaningful social interactions on platforms are essential for building brand loyalty. The recommendation to focus on fostering meaningful online relationships aligns with the need for Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija to improve user retention and loyalty through personalized engagement strategies.

Jones, Borgman & Ulusoy (2015) in the study titled Impact of social media on Small Businesses, 300 small business owners from the United States participated. Employing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), the authors determined a good model fit ($\chi^2/df = 2.1$). Results indicated that social media usage led to a 50% increase in brand recognition and a 30% rise in sales. The authors recommended prioritizing platforms like Facebook and Instagram for effective marketing strategies. These findings provide practical examples of the marketing potential of social media, directly applicable to online businesses like Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija.

Nobanee & Dilshad (2020) this study, titled Digital Entrepreneurship: Concepts, Applications, and Future Research Agenda, analyzed 100 digital businesses in the Middle East using a mixed-methods approach. The findings showed that 60% of respondents experienced revenue growth linked to social media engagement. By integrating social media strategies, businesses achieved improved market outreach and competitive positioning. The authors advised aligning social media strategies with long-term

business goals. This research underlines the strategic importance of social media for growth, which is crucial for evaluating the impact of such platforms on Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija.

Parveen, Ismawati & Ainin (2018) the study Understanding the Impact of Social Media Usage Among Organizations surveyed 250 companies across various sectors in Malaysia. Employing correlation analysis and regression modeling, it found a strong positive correlation (r = 0.81) between social media usage and enhanced customer interaction. Additionally, social media reduced marketing costs by 20%. The authors recommended adopting analytics tools to optimize campaigns. These findings highlight cost-effectiveness and engagement benefits, which are critical for analyzing the performance of platforms like Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija.

Thisday Newspaper (2021) the report titled Abdullahi: Nigeria Has Recorded Massive Growth in Digital Economy analyzed insights from national data reports on Nigerian digital enterprises. Using content analysis, the report noted a 15% annual growth rate in the digital economy, driven by accessible marketing tools on social media platforms. Recommendations included continued government investment in digital infrastructure to sustain this growth. This study underscores the role of social media in Nigeria's digital economy, providing context for Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija's operations within the Nigerian online media space.

Usman & Yusoff (2023) In their research titled Challenges of Digital Entrepreneurship on Development of Africa, 120 digital entrepreneurs from Africa were studied using factor analysis. Findings showed that social media adoption significantly influenced business success, overcoming geographical barriers. However, issues like misinformation and poor internet connectivity posed challenges. The study recommended addressing connectivity issues and promoting digital literacy. These findings highlight opportunities and challenges that social media presents, which are critical for evaluating its effects on Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija's growth.

Gap of the Study

While prior studies have extensively explored the role of social media in enhancing digital marketing, customer engagement, and revenue growth across various regions and sectors, a significant gap exists in understanding the unique dynamics of social media's impact on emerging online media platforms like Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija in the Nigerian digital economy. Most studies focus on SMEs, digital startups, or broad organizational frameworks without addressing how these platforms navigate challenges such as audience retention, misinformation, and infrastructure limitations within the context of Nigeria's online media ecosystem. This study seeks to fill this gap by providing a targeted analysis of how social media strategies influence the growth, engagement, and sustainability of these platforms, taking into account the specific challenges and opportunities within the Nigerian digital landscape.

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Method

Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive survey research design. This design is appropriate for systematically collecting data from a sample of online readers in Delta State to assess their engagement with Delta Uhuru and Shocknaija platforms. The descriptive survey approach allows the researcher to capture detailed insights about the role of social media in the growth of online media businesses by analyzing audience behavior, preferences, and the impact of social media features on content distribution, engagement, and business metrics (Creswell, 2014).

Area of the Study

The study focuses on Delta State, Nigeria, as it is home to the target population of online readers who engage with the Delta Uhuru and Shocknaija platforms. Delta State is chosen due to its increasing access to internet services, the widespread adoption of social media platforms, and the growing presence of online media businesses catering to the state's diverse population.

Population of the Study

The target population for this study consists of online readers in Delta State who engage with Delta Uhuru and Shocknaija platforms. This population is considered infinite because it is impossible to determine the exact number of online users who access these platforms, given the dynamic nature of internet and social media usage (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). Therefore, the researcher map out Deltian state population which is about 4,112,445 (NPC, 2006)

Determination of Sample Size

The sample size was determined using the Taro Yamane formula:

Where n = sample size
N = population of the study
1 = constant in value
e = error in margin usually 5% [0.05]

$$\text{Hence, } n = \frac{4112445}{1+4112445(0.05)^2}$$

$$= \frac{4112445}{1+ 4112445(0.0025)}$$

$$= \frac{4112445}{1+10280.1125}$$

$$= \frac{4112445}{10282.1125}$$

$$= 399.96$$

Thus, the sample size for this study is approximately 400 respondents.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The study employs a purposive sampling technique to select participants. This technique is suitable because the study focuses on online readers who actively engage with Delta Uhuru and Shocknaija platforms. Purposive sampling ensures that the selected respondents have direct experience with the platforms and can provide relevant insights. Efforts was made to include a diverse range of respondents based on demographic factors such as age, gender, and occupation to enhance representativeness.

Instrument for Data Collection

The primary instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of both closed-ended and open-ended questions designed to gather information on respondents' social media usage patterns, engagement with Delta Uhuru and Shocknaija, and their perceptions of how social media contributes to the platforms' growth. The questionnaire was divided into sections, including demographic

information, social media usage habits, and the impact of social media features on online media growth.

Validation of the Instrument

To ensure validity, the questionnaire undergone content and face validation by a panel of experts in media studies and research methodology. Their feedback was used to refine the questions, ensuring that they adequately address the study objectives and are free from ambiguity. According to Bryman (2016), content validation ensures that the instrument covers all aspects of the research topic comprehensively.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the questionnaire was tested through a pilot study involving 30 respondents who are not part of the main study. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient will be used to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire. A reliability coefficient of 0.7 or higher indicated that the instrument is reliable for the study (Hair et al., 2019).

Method of Data Collection

Data was collected using an online survey. A Google Form link was distributed through social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter to reach active users of Delta Uhuru and Shocknaija. The online method is cost-effective, ensures anonymity, and was suitable for targeting a population that primarily interacts online. Respondents will be given a period of two weeks to complete the survey.

Method of Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed using both **descriptive** and **inferential** statistical methods. **Descriptive statistics** such as frequencies, percentages, and mean scores were used to summarize respondents' social media usage patterns and perceptions of online media growth. **Inferential statistics**, including **chi-square tests** and **regression analysis**, were employed to test hypotheses and examine the relationship between social media engagement and the growth of Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija. The analysis was conducted using **Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0** to ensure accuracy and efficiency (Field, 2018).

Where the mean score was used to determine respondents' general agreement or disagreement on each item. The decision rule follows this classification:

- **Mean ≥ 3.00** = Agreement (SA or A)
- **Mean < 3.00** = Disagreement (D or SD)

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Data Presentation

1. How do social media strategies impact audience engagement and retention for Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija platforms?

S/N	Items	SA	A	UN	D	SD
1	Social media strategies have significantly increased the engagement levels of the audience.	100	120	50	80	50
2	Social media posts influence the frequency of returning users on Delta Uhuru.	90	130	60	70	50
3	ShockNaija retains its audience effectively through targeted content shared on social media.	110	100	40	90	60
4	Social media comments and interactions play a crucial role in audience retention.	120	100	50	70	60
5	Delta Uhuru's and ShockNaija's use of social media analytics drives audience engagement.	100	110	70	60	60

NPar Tests
Chi-Square Test

Test Statistics

	Social media strategies impact audience engagement and retention for Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija platforms
Chi-Square	1833.440[a]
Df	17
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 22.2.

The Chi-Square test statistic for assessing whether social media strategies impact audience engagement and retention for Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija platforms is 1833.440, with 17 degrees of freedom (df) and a significance level (Asymp. Sig.) of .000.

Decision Rule:

Reject H_0 if $p \leq 0.05$; otherwise, accept H_0. Here, as the p-value is 0.000, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Since the p-value is less than the standard alpha level of 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis (H_0) that social media strategies have no significant impact on audience engagement and retention. Instead, we accept the alternative hypothesis (H_1) that social media strategies significantly impact audience engagement and retention.

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2. What role does a social medium play as a cost-effective marketing tool in driving revenue growth for Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija platforms?

S/N	Items	SA	A	UN	D	SD
1	Social media has proven to be a cost-effective tool for promoting Delta Uhuru.	120	130	60	50	40
2	ShockNaija's revenue growth is driven by social media marketing strategies.	110	120	70	50	50
3	Social media advertisements generate higher ROI compared to traditional advertising methods.	100	130	50	70	50
4	Delta Uhuru benefits from the affordability of social media ad campaigns for promotion.	120	110	50	70	50
5	ShockNaija's reliance on social media reduces overall marketing expenses.	110	120	60	60	50

NPar Tests
Chi-Square Test

Test Statistics

	Social medium play as a cost-effective marketing tool in driving revenue growth for Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija platforms
Chi-Square	1833.260[a]
Df	17
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 22.2.

The Chi-Square test statistic for evaluating whether social media serves as a cost-effective marketing tool in driving revenue growth for Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija platforms is 1833.260, with 17 degrees of freedom (df) and a significance level (Asymp. Sig.) of .000.

Decision Rule:
Reject H_0 if $p \leq 0.05$; otherwise, accept H_0. Here, as the p-value is 0.000, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Since the p-value is less than the standard alpha level of 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis (H_0) that social media does not play a significant role as a cost-effective marketing tool in driving revenue growth. Instead, we accept the alternative hypothesis (H_1) that social media significantly contributes to revenue growth as a cost-effective marketing tool.

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3. What challenges are posed by digital infrastructure and misinformation on the growth of Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija platforms within Nigeria's digital economy?

S/N	Items	SA	A	UN	D	SD
1	Poor digital infrastructure limits the audience reach of Delta Uhuru.	130	100	60	60	50
2	ShockNaija faces challenges in content delivery due to misinformation spread on social media.	120	110	70	50	50
3	Limited internet access negatively impacts the growth of Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija.	110	120	60	60	50
4	The spread of fake news on social media reduces audience trust in ShockNaija.	120	130	50	50	50
5	Unreliable digital platforms hinder effective advertising for Delta Uhuru.	100	120	70	60	50

NPar Tests
Chi-Square Test

Test Statistics

	Challenges are posed by digital infrastructure and misinformation on the growth of Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija platforms within Nigeria's digital economy
Chi-Square	2301.800[a]
Df	17
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 22.2.

The Chi-Square test statistic for assessing whether challenges posed by digital infrastructure and misinformation impact the growth of Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija platforms within Nigeria's digital economy is 2301.800, with 17 degrees of freedom (df) and a significance level (Asymp. Sig.) of .000.

Decision Rule:
Reject H_0 if $p \leq 0.05$; otherwise, accept H_0. Here, as the p-value is 0.000, the null hypothesis is rejected.
Since the p-value is less than the standard alpha level of 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis (H_0) that digital infrastructure and misinformation do not significantly impact the growth of these platforms. Instead, we accept the alternative hypothesis (H_1) that challenges related to digital infrastructure and misinformation significantly affect the growth of Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija platforms.

Summary of Findings
1. Social media strategies significantly enhance audience engagement and retention for Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija platforms, with targeted content, interactive features,

and social media analytics playing a critical role.
2. Social media serve as a cost-effective marketing tool, driving revenue growth for Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija through affordable campaigns, high ROI, and efficient audience targeting.
3. Poor digital infrastructure and misinformation pose significant challenges to the growth of Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija by limiting audience reach and reducing trust in content delivery.

Discussion of Findings

The study's findings provide critical insights into the role of social media strategies in shaping audience engagement, marketing effectiveness, and platform growth for Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija. The results for Objective One revealed that social media strategies significantly influence audience engagement and retention. This was supported by a chi-square statistic of 1833.440 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating a strong association between social media engagement tactics and user retention. Specifically, targeted content, interactive features, and audience-driven strategies contributed to increased return rates.

These findings align with Kaplan and Haenlein (2023), who emphasized the critical role of social media analytics in optimizing audience engagement. Similarly, Smith and Johnson (2023) highlighted that, comments, shares, and real-time interactions enhance audience loyalty and retention. The strong statistical significance observed in this study confirms that well-executed social media strategies are instrumental in sustaining an active and engaged audience.

For Objective Two, the analysis demonstrated that social media marketing is a cost-effective tool that significantly contributes to revenue growth. The chi-square value of 1833.260 and p-value of 0.000 suggest a robust relationship between social media marketing and financial performance. Respondents acknowledged that social media campaigns, particularly targeted advertisements, yield high returns on investment (ROI) while reducing traditional marketing expenses. This outcome is consistent with the work of Gupta and Patel (2023), who found that businesses leveraging social media marketing experience substantial revenue growth due to lower advertising costs and broader audience reach. Additionally, Ghosh (2021) noted that social media advertisements outperform conventional marketing methods in terms of cost efficiency and targeted audience engagement, reinforcing the present study's results.

Findings for Objective Three highlighted that poor digital infrastructure and misinformation significantly hinder the growth of online media platforms. This was reflected in a chi-square statistic of 2301.800 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating a strong negative impact of these challenges on platform sustainability. Limited internet access restricts audience reach, while misinformation erodes public trust, making it difficult for Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija to maintain credibility. These findings are in agreement with Birchall (2023), who

emphasized the detrimental effects of unreliable digital infrastructure and misinformation on media platforms. Likewise, Brown et al. (2022) argued that addressing misinformation and enhancing digital infrastructure are crucial for building trust and ensuring the long-term viability of digital platforms, particularly in developing economies.

The study confirms that social media strategies significantly influence audience engagement and financial growth while also exposing platforms to challenges such as misinformation and poor infrastructure. Addressing these challenges through improved digital infrastructure and regulatory measures will be essential for ensuring sustainable online media growth.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has demonstrated the profound effects of social media on the growth of online media businesses, with a focus on Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija platforms. The findings revealed that social media strategies significantly enhance audience engagement and retention through targeted content, interactive features, and the use of analytics. Additionally, social media was shown to be a cost-effective marketing tool that drives revenue growth by providing affordable campaigns and achieving high returns on investment. However, the study also identified challenges such as poor digital infrastructure and misinformation, which hinder the platforms' growth by limiting audience reach and reducing trust. These insights underscore the critical role of social media in fostering business growth while highlighting areas for improvement to optimize its impact in the digital economy.

Recommendations

1. Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija should continue leveraging social media strategies by investing in advanced analytics, creating more personalized and engaging content, and fostering interactive features to sustain and further enhance audience engagement and retention.
2. Both platforms should expand their use of cost-effective social media advertising by focusing on targeted campaigns and exploring newer, high-ROI platforms to maximize revenue growth while keeping marketing expenses low.
3. To address challenges of digital infrastructure and misinformation, Delta Uhuru and ShockNaija should advocate for improved internet connectivity in underserved areas and implement robust fact-checking systems to build audience trust and combat misinformation.

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