

Awareness and Adoption of Social Media Marketing Tools among Estate Surveying and Valuation Firms in Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study is borne out of the sole objective of investigating the awareness, adoption, and influencing factors related to the use of social media marketing tools among estate surveying and valuation firms in Lagos State. Over time, the increasing use of social media has raised concerns while also contributing significantly to the nation's economy. Despite these concerns, social media marketing has proven to be of immense benefit in today's world. This study focuses on its impact on estate surveying and valuation firms in Lagos State, Nigeria. A survey was conducted among eighty-three (83) estate surveying and valuation firms in the state, with data analyzed using simple percentages and presented in tabular form. The findings revealed that all the firms and their clients actively use social media, with Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter being the most popular platforms among the firms. The study concluded by highlighting the growing role of social media in property marketing by estate firms in Lagos State, emphasizing its effectiveness in boosting visibility, sales, and customer loyalty. It also calls for updated practice codes to address challenges posed by unlicensed practitioners and promote sustainable growth in the digital era.

Keywords: Social media, Marketing tools, Valuation firms, Lagos State, Awareness

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly evolving landscape of the global economy, digital transformation has become a critical factor for businesses across various sectors. Among these transformations, the adoption of social media marketing tools has emerged as a pivotal strategy for companies to enhance their visibility, engage with customers, and drive business growth (Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). This trend is particularly relevant in industries that traditionally relied on more conventional methods of marketing, such as the real estate sector (Ayodele et al., 2015). Estate surveying and valuation firms, which play a crucial role in the real estate industry, are increasingly recognizing the need to adopt digital tools, including social media platforms, to remain competitive. However, the extent of awareness and adoption of these tools within the industry, particularly in regions like Lagos State, Nigeria, remains a subject of inquiry.

The real estate industry in Nigeria is a vital contributor to the country's economy, with Lagos State serving as the commercial hub and a key center for real estate activities. Estate surveying and valuation firms in Lagos play a crucial role in providing essential services, including property valuation, management, and advisory. These services are indispensable for the efficient functioning of the real estate market (Egbu et al., 2008). Traditionally, such firms have relied on word-of-mouth, referrals, and print media to market their services. However, with the advent of digital marketing, particularly through social media, the marketing landscape has undergone significant changes (Bala & Verma, 2018).

Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter have emerged as powerful tools for businesses to connect with broader audiences. These platforms provide unique advantages such as targeted advertising, real-time customer engagement, and opportunities for businesses to establish and maintain brand presence at a relatively low cost (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Furthermore, global connections and participation in virtual realities are becoming critical aspects that firms can leverage to fully harness the potential of social media (Kietzmann et al., 2011). Social media has become deeply embedded in all aspects of public life, making it an essential marketing tool for businesses, including estate surveying and valuation firms (Dijck & Poell, 2013). By adopting these tools, such firms in Lagos have the opportunity to significantly expand their market reach, attract new clients, and strengthen relationships with existing ones. Nonetheless, the extent to which these firms are aware of and have integrated social media marketing into their operations remains inadequately explored.

Therefore, the primary objective of this study is to examine the awareness, adoption, influencing factors and barriers related to the use of social media marketing tools among estate surveying and valuation firms in Lagos State. While there is growing recognition of the importance of digital marketing across various industries, quite a number of real estate surveying and valuation firms in the study area are still lagging behind. For example, the work by Babatunde et al. (2016) opined that real estate firms still encounter limitations in the usage of social media marketing. Ayodele et al. (2015) study also opined that the Nigerian Institution of Estate Surveyors and Valuers (NIESV) and Estate Surveyors Registration Board of Nigeria (ESVARBON) should review various practice codes to accommodate the current realities in order to upgrade the real estate practice in the country. This submission is in line with Eze et al. (2021) study that some enterprise owners are still yet to implement social media marketing into their advertising plans. Furthermore, Mathias, Ayodeji and Olamilekan (2024) put forward that real estate firms in the study area should be more strategic in their content towards real estate promotions rather than concentrate alone on humor.

Although previous studies have highlighted the limitations in the use of social media marketing by real estate firms and the need for regulatory bodies such as NIESV and ESVARBON to revise professional practice codes, there remains insufficient empirical investigation into the current level of adoption of social media marketing among real estate practitioners. While earlier research has emphasized strategic content development and general underutilization, they have not sufficiently explored how widely and effectively these tools are presently being adopted within the industry. This study, therefore, seeks to fill this gap by providing a current, location-specific assessment of social media marketing adoption among real estate practitioners in the study area, thereby offering insights that reflect present realities and differentiate it from prior works on the subject matter. This gap is concerning given the competitive nature of the real estate market, where firms must continuously innovate to stay relevant.

■2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media marketing tools are defined as sets of web-based applications, technologies, and communication and marketing methods practiced in social networks for promoting business, products or services (Akeju et al., 2021). These tools perform many tasks including the creation, storage, dissemination and analysis of content. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and You Tube are examples of social media networks while Hootsuite, Google Analytics, Canva and Ad Manager are examples of tools that can be used in social media marketing. To estate surveying and valuation firms, the social media channel has proved to be a relevant form of marketing where potential clients, property portals, service advertising, and the overall development of an organization's reputation can be found (Ayodele et al., 2015). These tools also assist firms in measuring the effectiveness of their marketing strategies, the number of users they reached, or the number of people who clicked on the link. If used wisely, these channels will enhance the visibility of firms within the market, increase client confidence, and increase competitiveness within an ever-changing real estate market. Different marketing tools are now considered useful resources in the face of a highly competitive market such as estate surveying and valuation firms.

This study on the awareness and adoption of social media marketing tools among estate surveying and valuation firms in Lagos State, Nigeria, is underpinned by two key theoretical frameworks: The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) Theory are prominent frameworks. TAM, introduced by Davis in 1989 (Ahmad, 2018), serves as a foundational model for understanding technology adoption. According to TAM, two primary factors determine whether a new technology will be adopted; external variables namely perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Ahmad et al., 2020). When used in the context of this particular study, perceived usefulness is a measure of how estate surveying and valuation firms in Lagos perceive social media marketing tools to positively impact their business.

If these firms observe differential and substantial benefits in relation to marketing effectiveness, a wider pool of clients, and visibility in a competitive real estate market, the probability of adopting such tools increases. On the other hand, perceived ease of use focuses on how easy these firms consider social media tools to be to use (Kamal et al., 2020). If such tools are perceived to have little or no learning curves and little or no technical difficulties, firms are more likely to adapt them into their promotional mix. Consequently, TAM can be used to predict the likelihood and barriers the above-mentioned firms would encounter when deciding on whether to use SMM tools; as affected by perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Usman et al., 2022).

The second is the Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) Theory, which was proposed by Everett Rogers in 1962 looks at how innovations progress through a given social system over time (Mori & Mlambiti, 2020). Some trends determine the rate of assimilation of new technologies, shown below, which are applicable to this research. Relative advantage for instance concerns the perceived benefits of using social media marketing tools versus traditional marketing (Okour et al., 2021). When firms that operate within the estate industry in Lagos perceive that social media has more benefits than traditional media, they will embrace the tools, perhaps due to other benefits like the cost of advertising, or even directly reaching out to the audiences/ clients (Abbas et al., 2019). The other factor is compatibility which defines how relevant the social media tools are to the current business structures and beliefs of the firms in question (Mori & Mlambiti, 2020). The likelihood of adopting these tools increases where they are aligned with adopted marketing strategies.

Moreover, they can fail because firms might be unwilling to adopt them if they are viewed as being hard to handle due to the complexity of the tools used to apply them. Trial-ability is also another influential factor, where most social media tools require little commitment in order to be tested to the full invaluable (Rahi & Abd. Ghani, 2018). The last dimension is the use of observe-ability which identifies the extent to which the outcomes of employing social media tools are easily seen by other stakeholder groups (Alam et al., 2018). The theory suggests that 'If firms see their competitors successfully using these tools, they will be pressured to do it as well'. It is through applying DOI that this study aims to identify the processes through which social media marketing tools are adopted within the context of estate surveying and valuation firms in Lagos, with a view to identifying the facilitating and restraining factors. The theory also assists in determining the position of these firms within the adoption scale, if they are innovators or laggards and what properties affect their choice to adopt these tools.

2.1 Estate Surveying and Valuation Firms (ESV)

Estate surveying and valuation firms are business entities that deal with the administration, reporting and advisory responsibilities of various real estate assets (Oluwunmi & Agara, 2023). Their services include property valuation, land and building surveying, estate management, consultancy to property developers, investors and government institutions (Oluwunmi et al., 2022). As it is well shown that real estate is a growing market in Lagos State, these firms equally have a close role to play in the development of property market (Babatunde & Ajayi, 2018). It has been seen that many of the estate surveying and valuation firms have limited markets or clients hence to progress they have to market themselves probably with the help of electronic as well as social media marketing tools. Since these firms are engaged in high value that necessitates trust and professionalism, a powerful tool of social media can be involved for the promotion of the services in addition to passing simple advertisements but also in extending their reach of expertise and passing on as the industry leaders in the real estate market. The increased use of social media marketing tools could radically alter the way these firms carry out their business as it will make it easier to locate potential clients, sell their services more supportively and effectively engage with a rapidly becoming dominant, online customer base (Ayedun et al., 2014). Therefore, the level of awareness of social media marketing tools among the estate surveying and valuation firms is important as this informs significantly their marketing strategy and plan for implementation.

2.2 Level of Awareness of Social Media Marketing Tools among ESV Firms

An understanding of the extent to which firms of estate surveying and valuation in Lagos State are aware of the social media marketing tools is relevant to the way the firms market themselves. Youths frequently use Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter as tools for brand promotion, clients' communication and market positioning (Oluwunmi & Agara, 2023). However, the level of awareness is important and this can depend on the size of the firm, on its access to digital resources and on the nature of the personnel (Khan et al., 2019). The largest-sized firms may exhibit higher levels of awareness because they can afford larger marketing expenditures which may be channelled towards brand awareness (Shakede & Osasumwen, 2016). On the other hand, big organizations may know but small firms or more conventional kinds may not or do not need them much (Oyedeji & Akindele, 2017). In general, awareness is improving because of enhanced digital presence and competitive demand for wider outreach, yet, very often; it remains a problem, especially for older or traditionally-oriented companies. Social media platforms should therefore be adopted because through the various platforms, firms can interact with potential clients, increase coverage and popularity of their brands.

2.3 Adoption of Social Media Marketing Tools among Estate Surveying Firms

Acceptance and implementation of social media marketing tools in these firms depend on their appreciation of the value proposition associated with the strategy, which includes the ability to reach out to more clients, improve market coverage and build a good brand image (Bamidele et al., 2018). Companies that implement these tools usually apply them for launching property offers, informing about activity in the market, publishing success stories and communicating with potential clients. Adoption is more prevalent in firms that have prior exposure to online marketing techniques and have material resources for the frequent production of content (Ayedun et al., 2014). These strategies are most likely to be led by fresh talents and tech-savvy middle-aged personnel within these firms as they push their organizations to go digital. Nonetheless, a section of firms still lag behind on social media marketing, because of efficiency loss, lack of resources, or failure to note significant profits of investment. In the light of this, there is a need to elaborate on factors that affect the adoption of social media marketing tools among estate surveying and valuation firms in Lagos State.

2.4 Factors Influencing the Adoption of Social Media Marketing Tools

Many factors can affect the use of social media marketing tools by the firms of estate surveying and valuation. Market competition is one of the causes because firms must look for ways on how to stand out in the market and establish links with patrons (Eze et al., 2020, 2021). The other factor is the awareness of the possible value added by the use of the social media tools such as visibility and clients (Nwali & Ntegeeh, 2022). The nature of the firm's organizational culture and leadership attitude towards innovation is also a factor since innovative leadership is more likely to foster new marketing approaches. Also, the availability of personnel with skills that can handle the firms' social media accounts and develop content has a role to play in the adoption rates (Gwadabe, 2021). Another factor is there is meaningful access to affordable internet services as well as the burgeoning tech infrastructure in Lagos contributing to this (Akeju et al., 2021). Nevertheless, there are still some barriers to the use of social media marketing tools, especially to firms that do not have the internal skills or capital to devote constant and dynamic attention to their social media page.

2.5 Review of Related Empirical Studies

Ogunowo et al. (2021) explored the use of property valuation software among Estate Surveyors and Valuers (ESVs) operating in Lagos Metropolis. The study sampled 151 Estate Surveying and Valuation (ESV) firms, analyzing the data through descriptive statistics and frequency counts using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Findings indicated that nearly 70% of ESV firms rarely utilize property valuation software, even when aware of its existence. The research advocates for ESVs to adopt such software to streamline their operations. It highlights the need for further investigation into factors influencing software adoption, such as cost, technical proficiency, perceived benefits, and resistance to organizational change. Additionally, the study does not examine the long-term implications of non-adoption on the firms' efficiency and competitiveness.

Akeju et al. (2021) examined the awareness and adoption of mobile technology among real estate firms in the Ikeja area of Lagos State, Nigeria. The study aimed to provide insights that could enhance awareness and encourage the integration of mobile technology in real estate practice. A total of 78 Estate Surveying and Valuation (ESV) firms participated in the study through questionnaires. Data analysis, conducted using descriptive statistics, revealed that while awareness of mobile technology was relatively high (mean=3.77 on a 5-point scale), adoption was limited to a few applications like social media platforms, email, Google Earth, and Google Maps. More advanced tools, such as Sitegeist, Vert, and Argus Valuation, were scarcely used. The limited adoption of mobile technology poses potential risks to the future service delivery of real estate firms, where such technology may become essential.

Akinola et al. (2021) evaluated the role of ICT in enhancing estate surveying and valuation practices on Lagos Island, Nigeria, highlighting its significance in improving service delivery efficiency. Participating registered estate firms demonstrated a high level of ICT adoption, with findings showing a strong positive correlation between ICT usage and improved surveying processes. The study revealed that while familiarity with real estate software was notably widespread, the use of Artificial Intelligence tools remained limited. Despite this progress, challenges still hinder the full integration of ICT in the sector. The research emphasizes the importance of embedding ICT training into the curriculum for estate surveyors and valuers to better equip them for industry demands. However, while recognizing the critical role of ICT in advancing real estate services, the literature inadequately addresses the specific difficulties practitioners face in implementing these technologies.

Eze et.al. (2021) study employed a questionnaire-based approach to gather data from small business owners and managers operating in Lagos Island, specifically those in the retail, hospitality, and clothing sectors. A sample of 371 businesses was initially targeted, but 195 valid responses were obtained. The study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of social media marketing in promoting business development. Even though the findings reported that 86.7% of respondents indicated they use social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) for advertising their business, the study sample does not include real estate firms in the study area and so, the finding of the study cannot be generalized for real estate practitioners.

Odebode et al. (2024) investigated the effects of technological disruption on Lagos's real estate sector, emphasizing the adoption of property management software by start-ups. Employing an exploratory research design and comprehensive coverage of real estate firms, the study revealed widespread awareness of such software, particularly tools for tenant verification. Factors influencing adoption included staff expertise, software usability, ease of operation, data security, financial capacity, technological advancements, internet access, and perceived advantages. Initial difficulties in obtaining prompt responses from participants were resolved by explaining the study's significance. The research seeks to guide real estate professionals and inform academic programs by underscoring the role of software technology in enhancing operational effectiveness within Nigeria's property market. However, the study does not address strategies for start-ups to overcome adoption barriers or explore how the industry could foster broader software usage.

Mathias et al. (2024) examines the role of social media platforms (Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube) in transforming real estate business practices in Lagos State. The study employed a cross-sectional survey design targeting members of the Real Estate Developers Association of Nigeria, Lagos Chapter. Using the Taro Yamane sample size formula, the authors selected 179 respondents from a population of 325. Data collection was conducted via structured questionnaires, and regression analysis was used to test the formulated hypotheses. The findings revealed that predictive variables Facebook, WhatsApp and YouTube all have a positive effect on real estate marketing in Lagos with a coefficient Beta value of (0.315,0.429,0.209) respectively. However, the study was conducted amongst real estate developers, and not estate surveying and valuation firms in the study area.

■3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a questionnaire survey to achieve the purpose of determining awareness and adoption of social media marketing tools among estate surveying and valuation firms in Lagos State, Nigeria. Questionnaire has been adjudged to be widely used for social research (Blaxter et al., 2001). The reason being that it is simple to use and it can cover a large audience in a shorter period (Tan, 2011). The target population for this study was Estate Surveying and Valuation Firms in Lagos, Nigeria. According to the 2021 directory of the Nigerian Institute of Estate Surveyors and Valuers (NIESV), Nigeria has 1,131 estate surveying and valuation firms, with 467 of these based in Lagos State. One-fourth of the total firms' number (116) was selected randomly, covering both Lagos Island and Mainland respectively. This approach had been used in the literature in the work of Komolafe and Oyewole (2018). Out of the 116 questionnaires administered, 83 were properly retrieved representing 71.5%, and were used for the study. Information obtained were analyzed using descriptive analytical means.

■4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Profile of the Respondents

This section presents key background information on the profile of the respondents that participated in the study. It provides insights into their gender, age (in years), their position in the firm, years of work experience, size of their firms, level of education, and their professional qualifications. Understanding the profile of these respondents is essential for contextualizing their adoption of social media marketing strategies and interpreting the relevance and applicability of their responses within the broader real estate industry.

Table 1 Demographic variables and business information of respondents

Variables	Frequency (83)	Percentage (%)	Mean±SD
Gender			
Female	23	27.7	
Male	60	72.3	
Age (In Years)			
18-25	6	7.2	
26-35	40	48.2	27.45±6.753
36-45	32	38.6	
46-55	4	4.8	
56 and above	1	1.2	
Position in the firm			
Intern	7	8.4	
Junior Surveyor/Valuer	16	19.3	
Senior Surveyor/Valuer	36	43.4	
Manager	23	27.7	
Partner/Owner	1	1.2	
Years of Work experience			
Less than 1 year	3	3.6	
1-3 years	22	26.5	
4-6 years	42	50.6	4.90±0.864
7-10 years	12	14.5	
More than 10 years	4	4.8	
Size of the firm			
Small-1-10 employees	7	8.4	
Medium- 11-50 employees	66	79.5	
Large- 51 and above employees	10	12	
Level of Education			
Not educated	0	0	
Primary	0	0	
Secondary	3	3.6	
ND/NCE	13	15.7	
BSc/HND	54	65.1	
Postgraduate	13	15.7	
Professional Qualification			
ANIVS	48	57.8	
Probationer	26	31.3	
None	9	10.8	

(Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2024)

Table 1 shows that the majority of the respondents are male about 72.3% of the respondents, only 27.7% are female. From the above table, it can be seen that out of the 83 respondents, about 7.2% of the respondents are between 18-25 years, respondents between 26-35 of age made up for about 48.2% of the respondents, 38.6% of the respondents are between the age of 36-45, 4.8% of the respondents are between the age of 46-55 while 1.2% are 56 years and above. This result is consistent with Tochukwu's (2009) finding, which emphasizes that individuals within the age ranges of 26–35 and 36–45 are generally regarded by society as mature, capable of critical thinking, and able to offer well-reasoned perspectives. These age groups typically represent individuals who are actively engaged in professional life and decision-making roles. The consistency lies in the fact that the majority of respondents in the current study fall within these age brackets, indicating that their responses are likely to be thoughtful and informed. This supports the reliability of the data collected, as it reflects insights from participants who not only have relevant industry experience but also the cognitive maturity to engage with the subject matter. Consequently, the study's objectives; particularly those requiring reflective judgment and professional insight; can be effectively addressed through their input.

8.4% of the respondents are intern, 19.3% are junior surveyor/valuer, 43.4% are senior surveyor/valuer, and 27.7% are manager while 1.2% of the respondents are partner/owner of the firm. 3.6% of respondents have within less than 1 year experience in the surveying and valuation industry, 26.5% have 1-3 years of experience. The majority of the respondents (50.6%) have within 4-6 years of experience, 14.5% have within 7-10 years of experience while 4.8% have 10 and above years of experience. Experience as is often said "is the best teacher" Hence, people with longer working/professional experience often perform better professionally when engaged in similar task than people with little experience.

8.4% of the respondents work in a small size firm with 1-10 employees, more respondents (79.5%) work in a medium size firm with 11-50 employees while 12% work in relatively large firms with 51 and above employees. 3.6% of the respondents are secondary school certificate holder, majority of the respondents 65.1% are BSc holder, 15.7% of the respondents have an ND/NCE while 15.7% of the respondents have postgraduate certification. Hence from our analysis, none of the respondents are uneducated and none have only primary school certifications. This demonstrates that the respondents were of a highly educated class; this also supports some reviewed literature which posit that the higher the educational qualification of employees, the better the performance of the business (Safko and Brake, 2009).

As regards the professional qualification of the respondents, more respondents have the ANIVS certification, 31.3% have the probationer certificate while 10.8% have no professional qualification. The implication of this is that the majority of the respondents are professionally qualified to practice the profession in the country, and as such, their opinions on any topic affecting the profession in the country can be taken seriously.

4.2 Level of Awareness and Adoption of Social Media Marketing

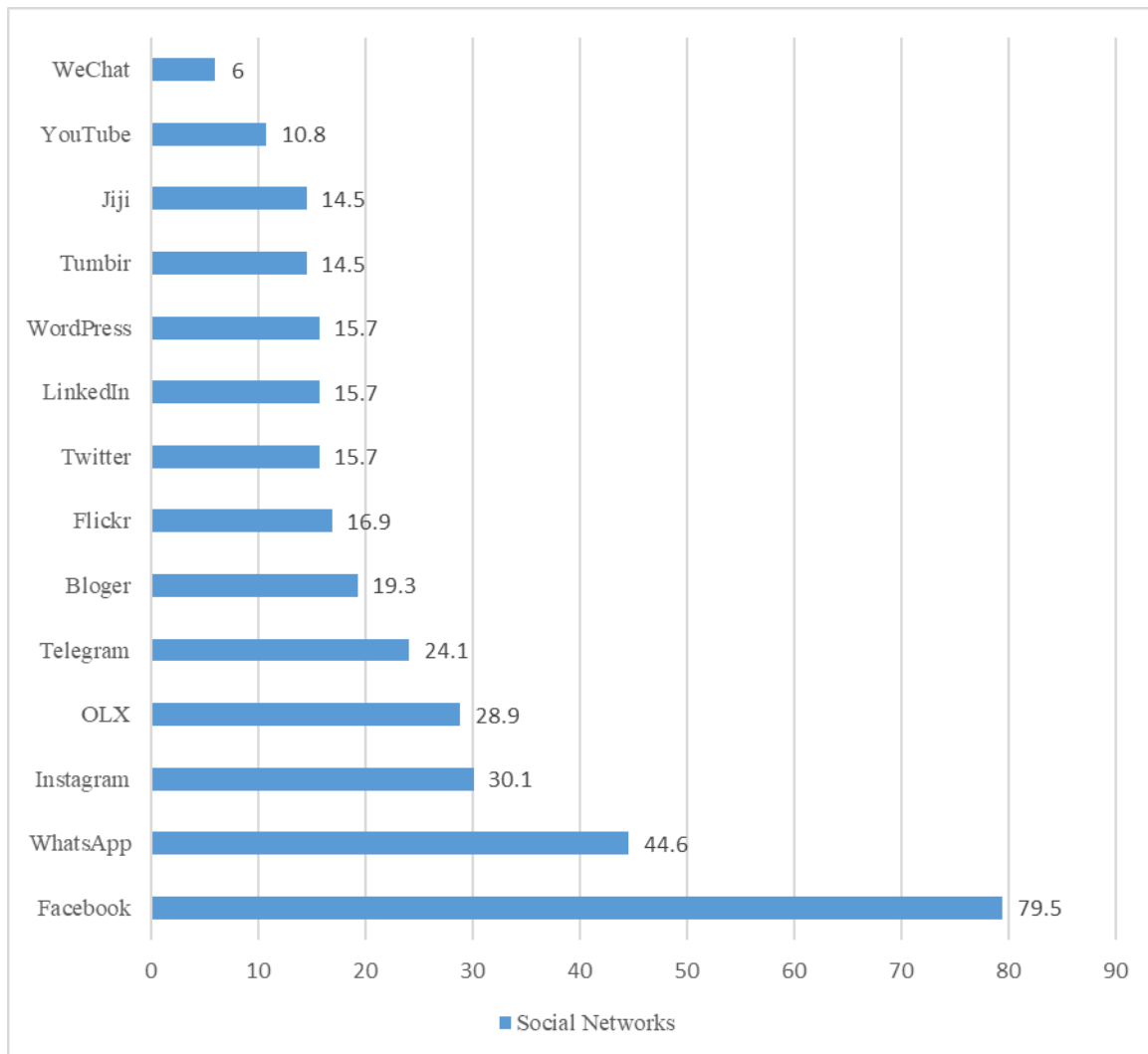


Figure 1 Various types and examples of social media networks utilized by estate surveying and valuation firms

Figure 1 reveals the usage of social media network utilized by the respondents surveying and valuation firms. Facebook, Whatsapp, instagram and OLX are the highest used social networking for marketing by estate surveying and valuation firms with 79.5%, 44.6%, 30.1% and 28.9% respectively. Telegram, Blogger and Flickr follows respectively each with 24.1%, 19.3%, 16.9% and 15.7%. Only 15.7% each of the respondents firm use Twitter, LinkedIn and Wordpress respectively. Tumblr and Jiji respectively are used by just 14.5% of the respondents firm while Youtube and Wechat are used by 10.8% and 6% respectively. Our findings suggest that platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram offer greater flexibility and acceptance for presenting the visual profiles of surveying and valuation firms compared to other social networks. Additionally, these results align with recent research by Harris and Rae (2019), which highlights that platforms such as WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook are increasingly popular and transforming users' online behaviors. Instead of merely downloading static data, users are now actively uploading and sharing content, contributing to the rapid expansion of social networks and user-generated content sites.

Table 2 Measurement of the level of awareness and adoption of social media marketing

Variables	Frequency (83)	Percentage (%)
Familiarity with social media marketing		
Not familiar	0	0.0
Slightly familiar	7	8.4
Moderately familiar	17	20.5
Very familiar	52	62.7
Extremely familiar	7	8.4
Your firm use social media for marketing purposes		
Yes	76	91.6
No	7	8.7
Frequency of social media platforms usage		
Seldom	10	12
Sometimes	41	49.4
Always	32	38.6
Frequency of posting on social media platforms		
Daily	23	27.7
Weekly	32	38.6
Monthly	12	14.5
Occasionally	11	13.3
Rarely/Never	5	6
Importance of social media marketing		
Not important	4	4.8
Slightly important	8	9.6
Moderately important	34	41
Very important	34	41
Extremely important	3	3.6
Management of the firm's social media accounts		
In-house team	4	4.8
Outsourced to a marketing agency	44	53
Individual employee (not dedicated)	26	31.3
No dedicated manager	9	10.8

(Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2024)

The data in Table 2 above discloses a generally high level of familiarity with social media marketing among respondents, indicating that virtually all are conversant with its application in their surveying and valuation practices. A strong majority of firms actively use social media for marketing purposes, highlighting its growing relevance in the real estate sector. However, the frequency of use varies; while many respondents use social media regularly, usage patterns range from daily to occasional engagement, suggesting differing levels of commitment and strategy among firms. In terms of posting frequency, most respondents maintain a consistent presence, with weekly and daily updates being the most common. This reflects a moderate to high level of activity but also underscores that a segment of firms remains less engaged, posting only occasionally or rarely. Regarding the perceived importance of social media marketing, opinions vary, though a significant number of respondents regard it as moderately to very important. This suggests a growing recognition of its strategic value, albeit not uniformly across the board. Management of social media accounts also reflects a mix of approaches. While over half of the firms outsource this function to marketing agencies, others rely on internal teams or assign the responsibility to non-dedicated staff. A notable minority lack any dedicated social media management, pointing to potential gaps in strategy or resource allocation. Overall, the findings demonstrate that while social media marketing is widely acknowledged and utilized within the industry, the depth and consistency of its adoption differ significantly across firms.

4.3 Measurement of The Factors That Influence The Adoption of Social Media Marketing Strategies

This section examines the key factors that influence the adoption of social media marketing strategies among estate surveying and valuation firms. Understanding these factors is crucial for evaluating the extent and effectiveness of digital engagement within the real estate sector.

Table 3 Factors that influence the adoption of social media marketing strategies

Factors influencing the adoption of social media marketing strategies	SD Freq (%)	D Freq (%)	N Freq (%)	A Freq (%)	SA Freq (%)	Mean±SD	Rank
Ease of use	1 (1.20)	5 (6.00)	16 (19.3)	49 (59.0)	12 (14.5)	4.25±0.922	1st
Expected return on investment (ROI)	0 (0.00)	6 (7.20)	47 (56.6)	26 (31.3)	4 (4.80)	3.80±0.808	2nd
Market Dynamics and Platform Evolution	1 (1.20)	1 (1.20)	35 (42.2)	31 (37.3)	15 (18.1)	3.78±0.842	3rd
Generating efficient and quality Lead Generation	1 (1.20)	3 (3.60)	25 (30.1)	38 (45.8)	16 (19.3)	3.70±0.822	4th
Uncertainties about the effectiveness of social media marketing for the industry	0 (0.00)	5 (6.00)	33 (39.8)	36 (43.4)	9 (10.8)	3.65±0.903	5th
Generating efficient and quality Lead Generation	1 (1.20)	3 (3.60)	25 (30.1)	38 (45.8)	16 (19.3)	3.64±0.864	6th
Cost of implementation	3 (3.60)	0 (0.00)	9 (10.8)	32 (38.6)	39 (47.0)	3.61±0.908	7th
Technical Infrastructure	1 (1.20)	4 (4.80)	33 (39.8)	31 (37.3)	14 (16.9)	3.61±0.659	8th
Content quality	2 (2.40)	8 (9.60)	26 (31.3)	35 (42.2)	12 (14.5)	3.59±1.048	9th
Investing in social media advertising	3 (3.60)	9 (10.8)	29 (34.9)	28 (33.7)	14 (16.9)	3.59±1.013	10th
Internal Culture	0 (0.00)	2 (2.40)	34 (41.0)	41 (49.4)	6 (7.20)	3.59±0.766	11th
Improving engagement strategies	2 (2.40)	9 (10.8)	27 (32.5)	28 (33.7)	17 (20.5)	3.58±1.001	12th
Expanding to new platforms	2 (2.40)	10 (12.0)	24 (28.9)	32 (38.6)	15 (18.1)	3.57±0.940	13th
Perceived benefits outweigh the costs	3 (3.60)	11 (13.3)	18 (21.7)	36 (43.4)	15 (18.1)	3.54±1.063	14th
Pressure from competitors who are using social media	4 (4.80)	11 (13.3)	26 (31.3)	28 (33.7)	14 (16.9)	3.53±0.992	15th
Concerns about the time commitment required for social media marketing	0 (0.00)	10 (12.0)	23 (27.7)	36 (43.4)	14 (16.9)	3.52±0.955	16th
Lack of internal resources or expertise to manage social media effectively	4 (4.80)	5 (6.00)	28 (33.7)	36 (43.4)	10 (12.0)	3.51±0.942	17th
Potential to reach a wider audience	3 (3.60)	11 (13.3)	32 (38.6)	26 (31.3)	11 (13.3)	3.49±1.017	18th
Availability of skilled personnel	2 (2.40)	14 (16.9)	28 (33.7)	26 (31.3)	13 (15.7)	3.49±0.980	19th
Previous success stories or case studies	1 (1.20)	12 (14.5)	28 (33.7)	35 (42.2)	7 (8.40)	3.47±0.902	20th
Perception of social media as unprofessional for the estate surveying industry	1 (1.20)	13 (15.7)	22 (26.5)	37 (44.6)	10 (12.0)	3.45±1.074	21st
Ability to target specific demographics	5 (6.00)	13 (15.7)	24 (28.9)	26 (31.3)	15 (18.1)	3.42±1.049	22nd
Availability of financial resources	4 (4.80)	8 (9.60)	26 (31.3)	29 (34.9)	16 (19.3)	3.42±0.885	23rd
Increased engagement with potential clients	3 (3.60)	7 (8.40)	30 (36.1)	29 (34.9)	14 (16.9)	3.41±1.137	24th
Technological infrastructure	2 (2.40)	13 (15.7)	29 (34.9)	32 (38.6)	7 (8.40)	3.41±1.025	25th
Improved brand awareness and reputation	6 (7.20)	11 (13.3)	23 (27.7)	29 (34.9)	14 (16.9)	3.40±1.136	26th
Cost-effectiveness compared to traditional marketing methods	3 (3.60)	13 (15.7)	26 (31.3)	28 (33.7)	13 (15.7)	3.37±0.996	27th
Management support	2 (2.40)	11 (13.3)	26 (31.3)	32 (38.6)	12 (14.5)	3.37±0.946	28th
Regulatory and compliance requirements	2 (2.40)	7 (8.40)	34 (41.0)	30 (36.1)	10 (12.0)	3.35±0.930	29th
Target audience presence on social media	0 (0.00)	16 (19.3)	36 (43.4)	27 (32.5)	4 (4.80)	3.34±0.686	30th
Competitive pressure	2 (2.40)	10 (12.0)	37 (44.6)	23 (27.7)	11 (13.3)	3.23±0.816	31st

(Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2024)

The findings from Table 3 show that a range of factors influence the adoption of social media marketing strategies among real estate firms, with cost, ease of use, and resource availability emerging as prominent drivers. Many respondents agree that the cost of implementation significantly affects adoption decisions, suggesting that affordability remains a critical enabler in leveraging digital tools. Similarly, ease of use is generally acknowledged as a facilitating factor, though a smaller proportion of respondents expressed reservations or neutrality; pointing to a possible variation in digital literacy or platform preferences across firms. Perceptions of return on investment (ROI) and the presence of target audiences on social media platforms show more mixed responses, with a notable share of respondents remaining neutral. This indicates some uncertainty or limited data on measurable outcomes from past campaigns. Competitive pressure, management support, and the availability of skilled personnel also yielded varied responses, reflecting that not all firms are equally influenced by internal capacity or external market forces when deciding to adopt social media strategies.

Infrastructure and regulatory concerns presented moderate influence, with many respondents expressing neutral positions. This could signal that while such factors are relevant, they are not perceived as immediate barriers or strong motivators for adoption. Interestingly, prior success stories and case studies were more positively received, suggesting that firms may be encouraged by tangible examples of effectiveness within the industry. Strategic factors such as financial capacity, perceived benefits over cost, and content quality were generally regarded as important, reinforcing the idea that firms are motivated when the return justifies the investment. Furthermore, aspects related to platform expansion, advertising, demographic targeting, and enhanced engagement were acknowledged by respondents as influential, though a recurring neutral stance hints at differing levels of sophistication in firms' social media strategies. Reputational concerns, pressure from competitors, and perceived professionalism also shaped adoption behavior. A significant number of respondents

agreed that the perception of social media as unprofessional for estate surveying may act as a barrier, reflecting a tension between traditional practice norms and evolving digital marketing approaches.

Operational barriers such as lack of internal expertise, time commitment, and uncertainties about effectiveness were highlighted as notable constraints. These findings suggest that while interest in social media marketing exists, many firms remain cautious due to perceived risks and limited in-house capacity. Cultural and technical dimensions, including internal organizational attitudes and infrastructure readiness, were acknowledged by some as influencing adoption, with many expressing neutrality. However, factors such as the ability to generate quality leads and adapt to evolving market dynamics received strong support, underscoring a growing recognition of social media's potential for targeted engagement and sustained relevance in a competitive market landscape.

■5.0 DISCUSSION

This study aimed to investigate the impact of social media marketing on estate surveying and valuation firms in Lagos State, Nigeria. The findings presented in Figure 1 show that Facebook (79.5%), WhatsApp (44.6%), Instagram (30.1%), and OLX (28.9%) are the most commonly used social media platforms by estate surveying and valuation firms. This aligns with the research by Harris and Rae (2009), which noted the increasing popularity of platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, OLX, YouTube, and Facebook, particularly within the surveying and valuation industry.

These results are consistent with existing research and publications, which emphasize that Facebook has the largest user base among social media platforms (Stelzner, 2013; Stelzner, 2014). Many surveying firms have reported benefits from utilizing social media marketing, and as more businesses adopt social networks for marketing purposes, the practice has become widely recognized. This is in line with the study by Neti (2011), which concluded that as social media becomes an integral part of the internet landscape, both individuals and valuation firms find it increasingly difficult to avoid using these platforms.

Many estate surveying and valuation firms in Nigeria now integrate social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Google+, and OLX into their websites, where they display information about properties for sale or rent. Additionally, surveyors and other employees frequently share information on these social media platforms to engage their friends and colleagues. More than half of the respondents who have been using social media for some time reported that it has significantly improved their sales, generated more revenue, enhanced customer engagement, increased the firm's visibility, and provided exposure to new partnerships. They also noted benefits such as reduced marketing expenses, valuable marketplace insights, improved engagement with existing clients, and the ability to build a loyal fan base. These findings align with a study by Oluwunmi et al., (2019), which suggests that the real estate industry positively influences revenue generation in any economy.

It is noteworthy that all the professionals surveyed acknowledged the effectiveness of social media in marketing their services. Our findings also suggest that estate surveyors and valuers in Lagos face various factors influencing their adoption of social media marketing, including implementation costs, ease of use, competitive pressure, management support, technological infrastructure, network issues, potential abuse, lack of proficiency in using the platforms, and data costs. This observation is consistent with the research by Babatunde et al. (2016).

This research provides valuable baseline information for estate surveying and valuation firms, policymakers, researchers, and both national and international agencies, helping them to understand similar situations in a broader context and adopt necessary interventions.

■6.0 CONCLUSION

This study has shed light on the extent to which social media platforms are being adopted by estate surveying and valuation firms in Lagos State. Social media is increasingly becoming a prevalent marketing tool for connecting surveyors and valuers with their clients. Although professional codes of conduct traditionally prohibit the advertisement of services, the rise of unlicensed practitioners in the field has changed the marketing landscape. These pseudo-professionals have been promoting land and property sales and leases through various channels, including print and mass media, flyers, blotters, calendars, and diaries. Unfortunately, these tactics have allowed unqualified individuals to gain significant clientele, making it difficult for the public to distinguish between them and licensed professionals. To address this issue and enhance real estate practices in the country, it is crucial for the Estate Surveyors and Registration Board of Nigeria (ESVARBON) and the Nigerian Institution of Estate Surveyors and Valuers (NIESV) to review their existing practice codes in light of current trends.

The study has also underscored the importance and relevance of social media marketing. It has proven effective in boosting sales, increasing business visibility and exposure, forming new partnerships, reducing marketing expenses, providing market insights, and building a loyal customer base. To capitalize on these benefits, businesses could display social media icons on their primary websites or offer exclusive discounts to clients who follow or connect with them on social platforms. Today, the primary objectives of property marketing are to build relationships and trust through effective two-way communication by engaging with topics that interest consumers and to develop products that address customer needs. Therefore, any content posted on a firm's social media should be relevant and relatable to customers, fostering engagement and a strong connection with the firm or brand.

However, for small estate surveying and valuation firms with limited digital capacity, the following recommendations, we believe, would help them in scaling up their social media marketing presence:

1. Small firms with limited resources can begin by focusing on one or two accessible social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, which are widely used and require minimal technical expertise. These platforms allow for organic reach without the immediate need for paid advertising.

2. Develop a weekly or bi-weekly content schedule to maintain an active presence. Content can include photos of properties, testimonials, short educational posts (e.g., “Tips for First-time Buyers”), or brief updates on market trends. Consistency builds familiarity and trust, even with a modest following.
3. Encourage existing clients and professional contacts to follow the firm’s social media pages. A simple call-to-action, such as a follow-up message or email inviting them to connect; can help build an initial audience base.
4. Small firms can collaborate with NIESV and ESVARBON to push for an update of practice codes that reflect current realities. They should also advocate for industry-supported training programs focused on digital marketing skills, which can help level the playing field for smaller practices.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors hereby declare unequivocally, that there is no conflict of interest whatsoever regarding the writing and publication of this paper.

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