

Leveraging on Social Media and Digital Marketing to Enhance Youth Entrepreneurship Success

Jidere Ann¹, Egbe Tooche Paul², Nlemadim Anuli³, Onyike Gerald Obinna⁴, Onyemehara Idong-esit Comfort⁵, Ozioma Okoro M⁶

^{1,2,3,4,5}Department of Computer Science Federal Polytechnic Nekede, Owerri Nigeria.

⁶English language department, Imo State Secondary Education Management Board, Owerri Nigeria.

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.905000306>

Received: 31 May 2025; Accepted: 05 June 2025; Published: 12 June 2025

ABSTRACT

Youth entrepreneurship has emerged as a vital component of economic development, job creation, and innovation. However, young entrepreneurs face numerous challenges, including limited access to resources, markets, and networks. The rapid growth of social media and digital marketing has transformed the business landscape, offering new opportunities for entrepreneurs to reach customers, promote their products, and build their brands. This study aims to explore the role of social media and digital marketing in supporting young entrepreneurs, identify the challenges faced by young entrepreneurs in using these tools, and provide insights on how young entrepreneurs can effectively leverage social media and digital marketing to achieve business success. A quantitative research methodology was adopted, and data was collected from 1440 registered young entrepreneurs in Tetlow Electronics shops and Plazas in Owerri, Nigeria. The results show that the majority of young entrepreneurs use social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp, and digital marketing channels, such as content marketing, video marketing, email marketing, and influencer marketing, to promote their businesses and establish global contacts. The study highlights the need for training and support programs that equip young entrepreneurs with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively leverage social media and digital marketing. The findings of this study provide valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and practitioners seeking to support the growth and development of youth entrepreneurship. By implementing the recommendations of this study, young entrepreneurs can be better equipped to leverage social media and digital marketing to achieve business success, contributing to economic growth, job creation, and innovation.

Keywords: Youth Entrepreneurship, Social Media, Digital Marketing.

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of youth entrepreneurship has been hailed as a vital component of economic development, job creation, and innovation (Mwania et al., 2022). Young entrepreneurs, characterized by their creativity, resilience, and adaptability, are increasingly recognized as key drivers of economic growth and development (Ghobakhloo et al., 2020). However, despite their potential, young entrepreneurs face numerous challenges, including limited access to resources, markets, and networks. The rapid growth of social media and digital marketing has transformed the business landscape, offering new opportunities for entrepreneurs to reach customers, promote their products, and build their brands. Social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, have become essential tools for businesses to engage with customers, share information, and build brand awareness. Digital marketing strategies, including search engine optimization (SEO), pay-per-click (PPC) advertising, and content marketing, have also become critical components of business success. Despite the potential benefits of social media and digital marketing, many young entrepreneurs struggle to effectively leverage these tools to achieve business success. This is often due to limited knowledge, skills, and experience in using these tools. Furthermore, the fast-paced and constantly evolving nature of social media and digital marketing makes it challenging young entrepreneurs to keep up with the latest trends and best practices. To address these challenges, it is essential to investigate how social

media and digital marketing can be effectively leveraged to enhance youth entrepreneurship success. This study aims to explore the role of social media and digital marketing in supporting young entrepreneurs, identify the challenges faced by young entrepreneurs in using these tools, and provide insights on how young entrepreneurs can effectively leverage social media and digital marketing to achieve business success. By examining the intersection of youth entrepreneurship, social media, and digital marketing, this study contributes to the existing literature on entrepreneurship, marketing, and youth development. The findings of this study will provide valuable insights for young entrepreneurs, policymakers, educators, and practitioners seeking to support the growth and development of youth entrepreneurship.

Role of Social Media in Modern Entrepreneurship

Social media now plays a major role in shaping the way entrepreneurs begin, run and expand their businesses. For young entrepreneurs, social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, LinkedIn and TikTok help them reach a broad audience, communicate with their customers, promote their brands and increase their business without high expenses (Ghazwani & Alzahrani, 2024). What makes social media intriguing for young entrepreneurs is that it allows them to connect with many people for free or at a low cost. As cited by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), social media allows businesses to interact with customers in real-time and both-ways, so start-ups can quickly get feedback, respond to customer issues and increase customer satisfaction. When businesses communicate well with their customers and make them feel valued, it increases their brand loyalty and trust, which are needed for success in the digital world (Jeswani, 2023). In addition, social media makes your music more easily accessible to others. Things like hashtags, location tags, sponsored content and collaborating with influencers assist youth-led businesses in getting attention beyond their usual audience (Koç, 2023). In Nigeria, digital ads are important because traditional ads are often too costly for small businesses. Social media supports the growth and creativity of business owners. Often, young entrepreneurs make use of these platforms not only for promotion but to follow trends, observe rivals and gather knowledge from the entire world. Free resources about marketing, branding and digital skills on YouTube and LinkedIn Learning can support youth entrepreneurs with less formal training in business (ibid). Still, despite all the good things social media offers, it also has some issues like people getting tired of seeing a lot of content, spreading misinformation, much-changing platform algorithms and handling online reputation issues. To continue succeeding, youth entrepreneurs should carefully plan, post regularly and remain true to themselves on social media. Social media has opened up new opportunities for entrepreneurs by connecting with audiences in real time, making markets more accessible and lowering requirements for beginning entrepreneurs. If used effectively, a strategic asset helps companies expand, create new things and operate sustainably for the future.

Digital Marketing Strategies and Their Impact on Start-up Growth

Digital marketing plays a vital role for entrepreneurs today, especially for young startup companies seeking to succeed in increasingly online markets (Bizhanova et al., 2019). It consists of a variety of online methods meant to find the right audience, draw in visitors and turn leads into repeat customers. Young entrepreneurs with few resources can use digital marketing because it is both budget-friendly and efficient. Key digital marketing strategies include:

- a. **Search Engine Optimization (SEO):** This requires improving the way your business appears in Google results and similar places. Companies that focus on SEO can gain more organic website visitors, be seen by more people and rely less on paid ads.
- b. **Social Media Marketing (SMM):** While social media is sometimes viewed as a single resource, it actually has an important strategy on digital marketing. Junior entrepreneurs can use scheduled content, sponsored advertisements and collaborating with popular users to reach more customers.
- c. **Email Marketing:** It makes it possible for companies to keep in direct touch with leads and customers using newsletters, special offers and updates tailored for them. Compared to other digital tools, it helps businesses gain the most value for their money.

- d. **Content Marketing:** By producing informative or entertaining content (e.g., blog posts, videos, infographics), young entrepreneurs can attract and educate potential customers while establishing credibility and authority in their niche.
- e. **Pay-Per-Click Advertising (PPC):** Platforms like Google Ads and Facebook Ads allow start-ups to pay only when their ad is clicked. This form of marketing gives youth entrepreneurs more control over their budget and audience targeting.
- f. **Affiliate and Influencer Marketing:** Collaborating with influencers or affiliate partners who already have an established audience allows young businesses to grow faster through third-party endorsements and social proof.

These strategies have a major effect on how quickly a start-up grows. Studies prove digital marketing greatly helps companies gain more customers, increase the number of people who recognize their brand and makes it easier to sell goods or services. Besides, digital marketing lets young entrepreneurs view reports and statistics, which allows them to understand how well they are doing, and guide future changes. Changing quickly is very important in today's entrepreneurial world. For youth in Nigeria, facing complex unemployment and underemployment, digital marketing helps them begin and expand their businesses with easily available resources. Young Nigerian entrepreneurs now use Instagram Business, WhatsApp for Business and Google My Business to run their marketing operations from their mobile phones (Nwankwor, Odanwu, Osarosee & Arumede, 2024). Nevertheless, strategies for online sales may be less effective due to people having difficulty using the internet, poor internet access and not trusting online businesses for their payments. Despite these challenges, training and backing up youth entrepreneurs allows them to use digital marketing to continue creating their businesses.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

In this work, quantitative research methodology was adopted in collecting numerical data. The data was collected from Tetlow Electronics shops and Plazas. These shops are located along Tetlow Road Owerri Imo state Nigeria and predominantly run youths and young adults. There are total of one thousand four hundred and forty (**1440**) registered business owners. They repair and sale assorted electronic devices such as phones, phone accessories, computers and other electronic devices. These young entrepreneurs deploy digital marketing and social strategies, which has enhanced their entrepreneurship success over the years.

Table1. Some of the Social Media Platforms Used by these Youths. The number of subscribers, the percentage rate of each platform and the engagement rate for 1440 registered business owners

Platform	No Of Subscribers	Percentage Rate to Business Owners	World Population Of Users	Global Percentage Impact
Facebook	850	59 %	2.9 Billion	35%
Twitter	130	9 %	245 Million	3%
Instagram	562	39 %	2 Billion	24%
Linkedin	418	29 %	706 Million	9%
Youtube	605	42 %	2.49 Billion	30%
Whatsapp	562	39 %	2.89billion	35%

Note: No of subscribers are the no of youths who use one Platform of social media or the other

$$\text{Percentage rate of subscribers} = \frac{\text{No of subscribers} \times 100}{\text{Total no of registered business owner}}$$

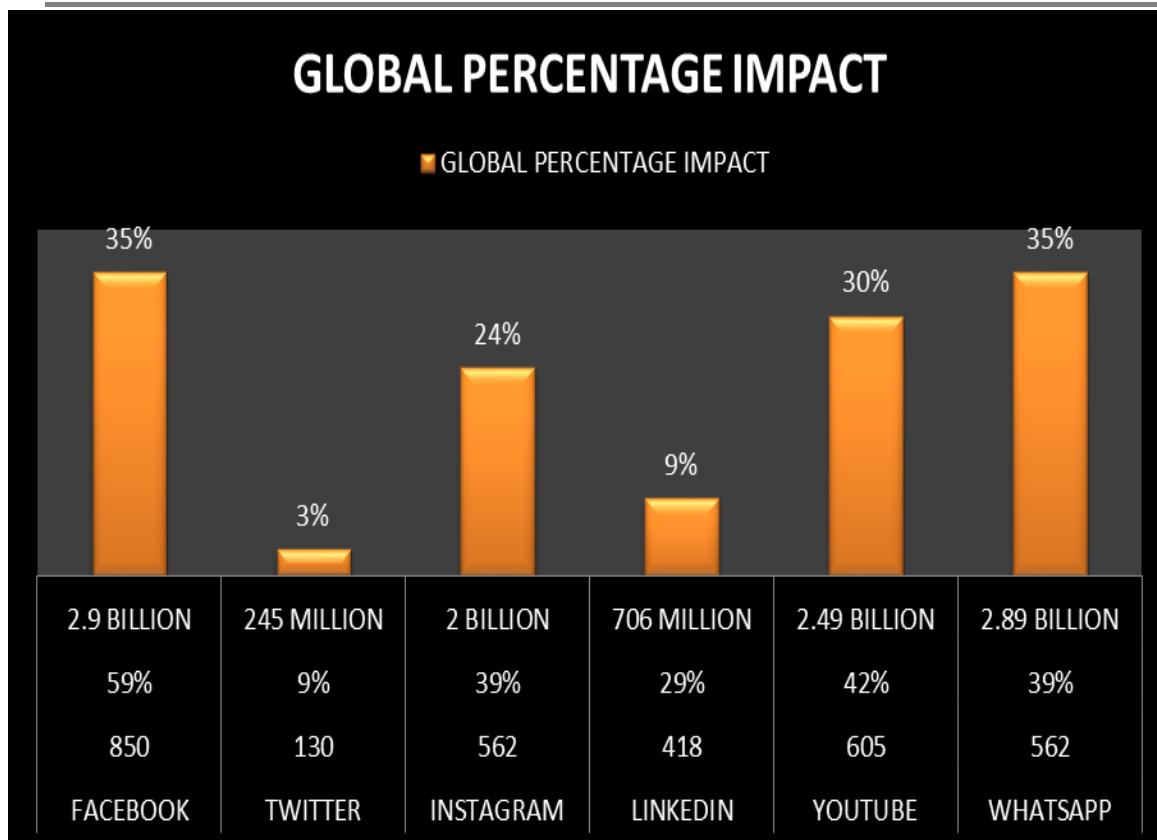


Figure 1 is a histogram that relates the social media platforms, no of subscriber and the global impact in percentage

Table 2: Some of the Digital Marketing channels Used by these Youths. The number of subscribers, the percentage rate of each platform and the engagement rate for the 1440 registered business owners

CHANNELS	SUBSCRIBERS	PERCENTAGE RATE	WORLD POPULATION OF USERS	GLOBAL PERCENTAGE IMPACT
CONTENT MARKETING	1267	88%	5.35 BILLION	65%
INFLUENCER MARKETING	850	59%	3.5 BILLION	43%
AFFILIATE MARKETING	130	9%	1.9 BILLION	23%
VIDEO MARKETING	1310	91%	7.3 BILLION	89%
PODCAST MARKETING	360	25%	1.4 BILLION	17%
EMAIL MARKETING	1253	87%	4.3 BILLION	52%

Note: No of subscribers are the no of youths who use one Platform of social media / digital marketing or the other.

Percentage rate of subscribers = $\frac{\text{No of subscribers} \times 100}{\text{Total no of registered business owner}}$

Total no of registered business owner

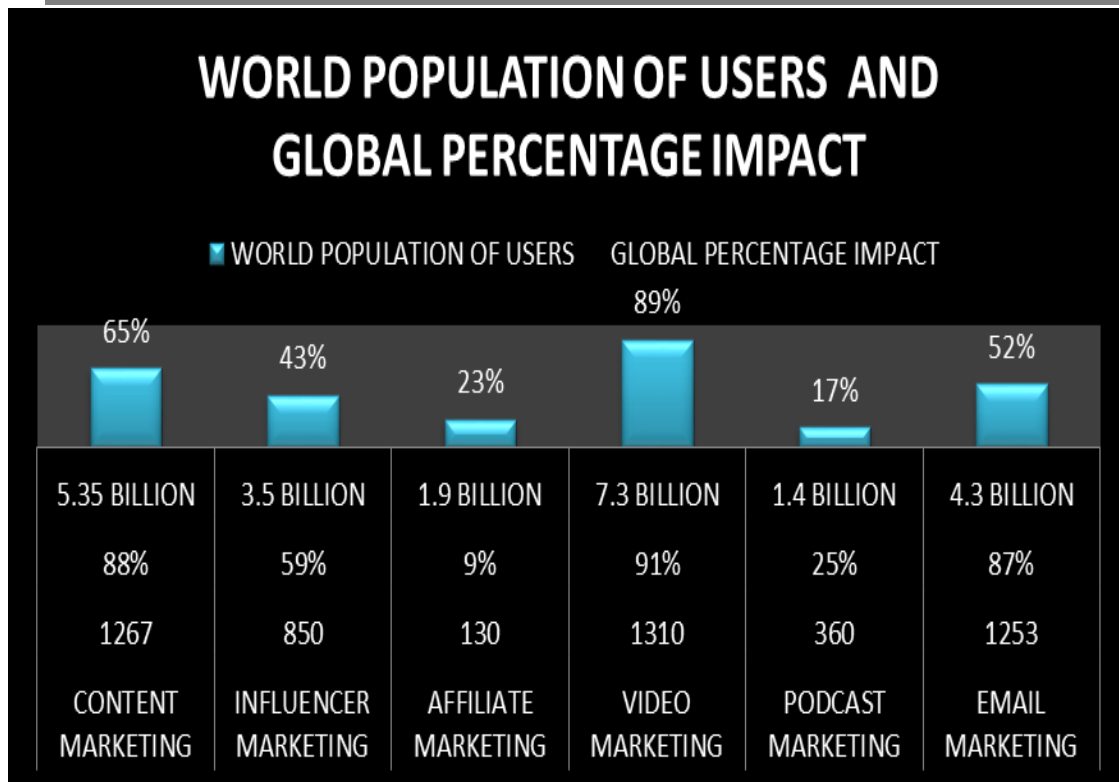


Figure 2 is a histogram that relates Digital marketing channels, number subscriber and the global impact in percentage

On the other hand, at EKE UKWU Market in Owerri, just meters away from Tetlow Plaza. We have a group of young people who are doing business without using social media platform or digital marketing channels. Their data was captured below based on the information supplied by the market authority

Table 3

Traditional Marketing Method	Nature of Business/Business Type	Number of Customers Per Day	Global Market Impact
Word-of-mouth referrals	Fruit Vending	62	0%
Print advertising	Handmaid Craft	45	0.01 %
Radio and TV advertising:	Tailoring and Fashion Design	30	8%
Networking events	Local Event Planning	2	3%
Direct Networking events mail	Shoe Repair and Manufacturing	25	2%
Local Advertising methods	Street Food Vending	85	0%

These examples demonstrate that, even in the digital era, many young entrepreneurs are building and running business without relying on social media and digital marketing. Actually such businesses may be successfully within the locality but with little or no global impact and presence

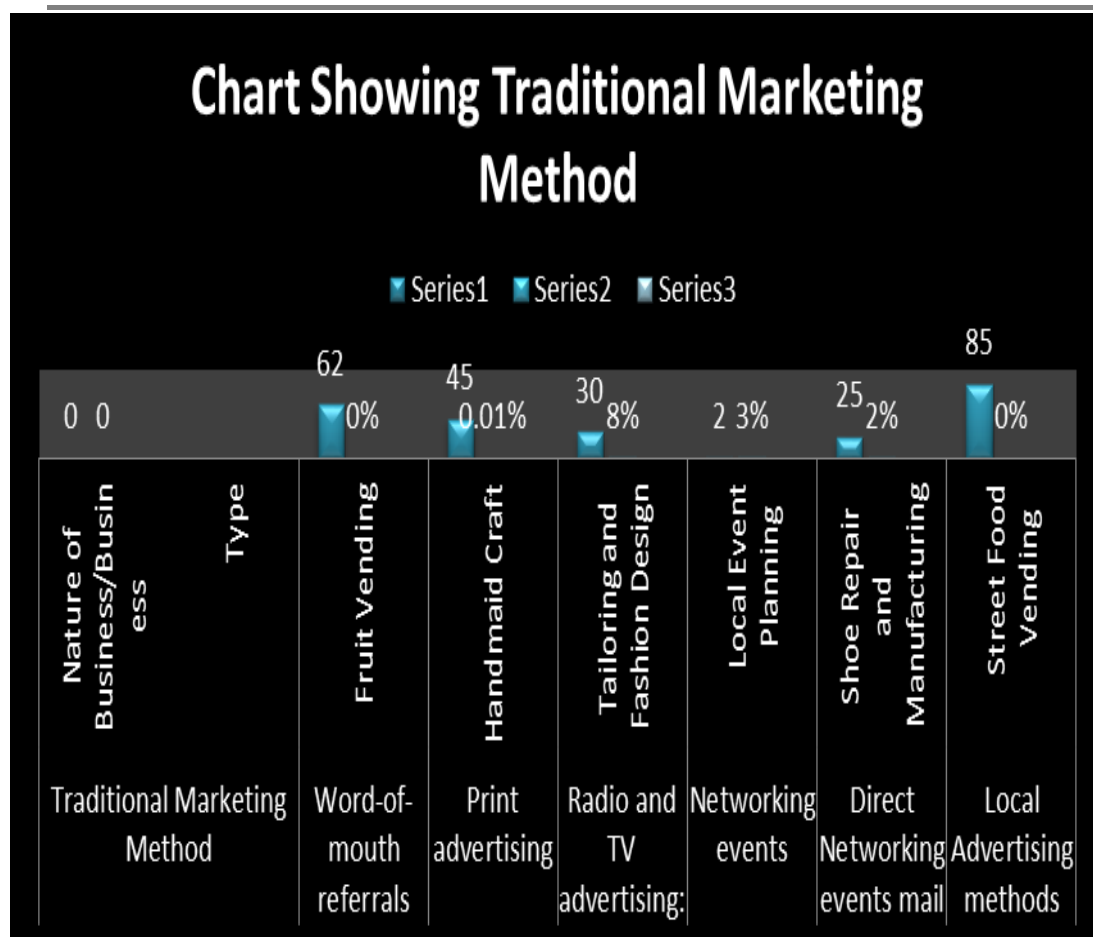


Figure 3 is a chart that depicts the little impact of doing business using Traditional marketing Method

RESULTS

The result show that the majority of young entrepreneurs use one platform of social media or the other in their businesses.59% use Facebook, followed by Instagram (39%), YouTube (42%), and WhatsApp (39%).Which has enhanced their entrepreneurship success. Similarly result also show that using one digital marketing channel or the other has also helped young entrepreneurs to grow their business and establish global contacts. The study revealed that the most popular digital marketing channels used by young entrepreneurs are content marketing (88%), video marketing (91%), email marketing (87%), and influencer marketing (59%). This is entirely different from what is obtainable in EKE UKWU market where a group of young people is using a traditional marketing method in running their business. The growth of such businesses will be stunted due to lack of global visibility and poor contact network.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study align with existing literature on the importance of social media and digital marketing for entrepreneurs, particularly young entrepreneurs. Below are some key interpretations:

Social Media Usage:

1. The high usage of social media platforms, such as Facebook (59%), Instagram (39%), YouTube (42%), and WhatsApp (39%), among young entrepreneurs is consistent with existing literature on the importance of social media for businesses (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).
2. The findings suggest that young entrepreneurs recognize the value of social media in promoting their businesses, engaging with customers, and building their brands.

Digital Marketing Channels:

1. The dominance of content marketing (88%), video marketing (91%), email marketing (87%), and influencer marketing (59%) among young entrepreneurs is consistent with existing literature on the effectiveness of these digital marketing channels (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2012).
2. The findings suggest that young entrepreneurs are leveraging these digital marketing channels to reach their target audience, promote their products, and build their brands.

Traditional Marketing Methods:

1. The findings from **EKE UKWU** market, where young entrepreneurs are using traditional marketing methods, such as word-of-mouth referrals, print advertising, and local advertising methods, highlight the limitations of these methods in reaching a wider audience and achieving global visibility.
2. The findings suggest that young entrepreneurs who rely solely on traditional marketing methods may face challenges in growing their businesses and establishing global contacts.

Implications:

1. The findings of this study have implications for policymakers, educators, and practitioners seeking to support the growth and development of youth entrepreneurship.
2. The study highlights the need for training and support programs that equip young entrepreneurs with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively leverage social media and digital marketing.
3. The findings also underscore the importance of promoting digital literacy and entrepreneurship education among young entrepreneurs.

In overall, the findings of this study contribute to the existing literature on the importance of social media and digital marketing for entrepreneurs, particularly young entrepreneurs. The study highlights the need for support programs that equip young entrepreneurs with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively leverage these tools and achieve business success.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore the role of social media and digital marketing in supporting young entrepreneurs, identify the challenges faced by young entrepreneurs in using these tools, and provide insights on how young entrepreneurs can effectively leverage social media and digital marketing to achieve business success. The findings of this study reveal that social media and digital marketing are essential tools for young entrepreneurs to promote their businesses, engage with customers, and build their brands. However, many young entrepreneurs face challenges in using these tools effectively due to limited knowledge, skills, and experience. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. **Training and Support Programs:** Policymakers, educators, and practitioners should provide training and support programs that equip young entrepreneurs with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively leverage social media and digital marketing
2. **Digital Literacy and Entrepreneurship Education:** Promoting digital literacy and entrepreneurship education among young entrepreneurs is crucial to help them understand the importance of social media and digital marketing in business success.
3. **Access to Resources:** Young entrepreneurs should be provided with access to resources, such as funding, mentorship, and networking opportunities, to help them overcome the challenges they face in using social media and digital marketing.

4. **Research and Development:** Further research is needed to explore the impact of social media and digital marketing on youth entrepreneurship success and to identify best practices for supporting young entrepreneurs in leveraging these tools.
5. **Collaboration and Partnerships:** Collaboration and partnerships between policymakers, educators, practitioners, and young entrepreneurs are essential to provide a supportive ecosystem for youth entrepreneurship development.

REFERENCES

1. Alarcón, D. M., & González, J. M. (2022). The impact of social media on entrepreneurship: A systematic review. *Journal of Business Research*, 145, 532-544.
2. Bizhanova, K., Mamyrbekov, A., Umarov, I., Orazymbetova, A., & Khairullaeva, A. (2019). Impact of Digital Marketing Development on Entrepreneurship. *E3S Web of Conferences*, 135, 04023. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1051/e3sconf/201913504023>.
3. Bosma, N., Sanders, M., & Stam, E. (2022). Institutions, entrepreneurship, and economic growth: An overview. *Small Business Economics*, 58(3), 1041-1064.
4. Chandra, Y., & Chao, C. N. (2022). Digital entrepreneurship and the impact of digital technologies on entrepreneurial opportunities. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 37(4), 106784.
5. Ghazwani, S. S., & Alzahrani, S. (2024). The Use of Social Media Platforms for Competitive Information and Knowledge Sharing and Its Effect on SMEs' Profitability and Growth through Innovation. *Sustainability*, 16(1), 106. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.3390/su16010106>.
6. Ghobakhloo, M., Iranmanesh, M., & Alizadeh, M. (2020). The impact of digital transformation on entrepreneurship: A systematic literature review. *Journal of Business Research*, 112, 231-244.
7. Jeswani, R. (2023). The Role and Importance of Social Media Marketing in Brand Building. *Irish Interdisciplinary Journal of Science & Research*, 7, 1-9. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.46759/IJISR.2023.7401>.
8. Koç, B. (2023). The Role of User Interactions in Social Media on Recommendation Algorithms: Evaluation of TikTok's Personalization Practices from User's Perspective. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.34692.71040>.
9. Kumar, V., Mirchandani, R., & Shah, D. (2020). Measuring the effectiveness of digital marketing campaigns. *Journal of Marketing*, 84(4), 114-136.
10. Li, F., & Du, T. C. (2022). Understanding the role of social media in entrepreneurship: A systematic review and future research directions. *International Journal of Information Management*, 63, 102491.
11. Mwanja, M. A., Gitau, M. W., & Nyaribo, S. M. (2022). The role of social media in promoting youth entrepreneurship: A systematic review. *Journal of Entrepreneurship Education*, 25(2), 1-15.
12. Nguyen, T. T. M., & Nguyen, T. D. (2022). The impact of digital marketing on small business performance: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Business Research*, 145, 545-557.
13. Nwankwor, P., Odanwu, A., Osarosee, E., & Arumede, M. (2024). Social Media Entrepreneurship and Youth Unemployment Reduction in Nigeria. *International Journal of Research and Scientific Innovation*, XI, 899-914. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2024.1109076>.
14. Opute, A. P., & Nwaizugbo, I. C. (2022). Digital entrepreneurship and economic growth in Africa: A systematic review. *Journal of Small Business & Entrepreneurship*, 34(1), 1-22.
15. Shahzady, R. (2024). The Role of Social-Media for Micro-Entrepreneurship of Young Startups. *International Journal of Law and Policy*, 2, 10-22. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.59022/ijlp.194>.
16. Soto-Acosta, P., & Cismaru, D. M. (2022). The role of digital entrepreneurship in the digital economy: A systematic literature review. *Journal of Business Research*, 145, 558-571.
17. Wan, Y. (2023). Investigating the Impact and Effectiveness of Digital Marketing on Brand Awareness, Sales, and Customer Engagement. *Advances in Economics, Management and Political Sciences*, 51, 146-152. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.54254/2754-1169/51/20230651>.