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THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZE ENTERPRISES

A comparative analysis of Cameroon and Finland

Thesis
CENTRIA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES
Business Management
November 2018
The thesis was set out to assess the role of the Social Media on the growth of Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs) in Cameroon while trying to do a comparative analysis with the case of Finland. In addition, it was to analyze and establish if there is a positive link between social media and the growth of Small and medium size enterprises.

Descriptive survey design was used; a sample of 25 SMEs were sampled from Cameroon and 25 from Finland as well. Primary data was collected using questionnaires. Analysis was done using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Study findings indicated that the Social Media were highly instrumental in the growth of SMEs in Cameroon and Finland. Additionally, adoption of social media tools like Facebook, twitter, Whatsapp, Blogs were important in reaching out to potential customers of SMEs in Cameroon related to growth of SMEs.

Therefore, findings indicated that high growth of SMEs was mostly associated with usage of social media. The study recommended that SMEs should consider using the Internet through software solutions, meet increasing use and for research to be conducted to identify additional challenges that will enable SMEs operations to be efficient, ensure growth and sustainability.

Key words
Doing business in Cameroon, Entrepreneurship, E-commerce, Small and medium size enterprises, Social media enterprise,
Social media: Social Media is the collection of tools and online spaces (WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, twitter, etc.) available to help individuals and businesses to accelerate their information and communication needs. (Kaur 2015, 143.) It is also a category of sites that is based on user participation and user-generated content. They include social network sites like LinkedIn, Facebook, or my space, social bookmarking sites like Del.icio.us, social news sites like Digg or Simpy, and other sites that are centered on user interaction. (Kaur 2015, 143.) With respect to this study we investigate how these channels/tools can help the growth of businesses in this 21st century

SMEs: Scott & Bruce (1987) in their work titled “five stages of growth in small business” proposed a definition of an SME. In their opinion, an SME is a business entity that has the following characteristics: management is independent, and often, the owner is the manager, the capital is offer and the ownership is kept by one or a small group. There is mainly a local area of operation. The owners and workers are usually from the same community. (Musabayana 2012, 21).
ABSTRACT

CONCEPT DEFINITION

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1 INTRODUCTION

Cognizance of the inevitable role of social media in our 21st century world, technology and digital innovation has become the order of the day as every economy, organization, institution, company and even Small and Medium Size Enterprises are all going digital. Social Media has grown both in depth and scope and this explains why one can hardly find a unique or singular definition for it in the bulk of empirical literature recently developed around this novelty. Social media platforms which are technological innovation systems are developed by software engineers and function interactively with Information and Communication Technology (ICT) gadgets like phones, tablets, computers, etc.

The social media platforms existing are so many and differ in their uses. Though there exist different social media platforms across different states and exploited differently by different individuals, some States have affix huge regulations on the usage of these platforms. Worthy of note is the fact that since the advent of the social media one can observe and state without any iota of doubt that among the user-friendly social media platforms like Whatsapp, Instagram, Skype, Facebook, tweeter, Snap-chat, YouTube, etc. Facebook remains one of the most prominent social media platforms with a multitude of users. The stakeholders/actors involve in the development, diffusion and exploitation of these platforms are but not limited to; Software engineers, hardware engineers, states, International Organizations, big companies, Small and medium size Enterprises, Entrepreneurs, individuals, etc. For the sake of this study we will focus on Small and medium size enterprise, entrepreneurs and individuals as active users of these platforms.

It is without mincing words that we will reiterate that, uses of social media platforms are very varied and to a larger extent depend on who is using them, where, when and for what purpose. But from the appellation social media one should have a clue that irrespective of the diverse uses of social media one use is certain which is that of bringing and connecting people from all spheres of life and geo-graphical zones of the world. It is this primordial use and function of social media that businesses, small and medium size enterprises have capitalize on this novelty to exploit it for their benefits. Given the additional advantage that social media is more or less like a free market with low penetration cost, entrepreneurs turn to use it as a cost effective medium for their small and medium size enterprises so as to create awareness, build interest and provoke the purchase of their products and services. Irrespective of whatever you are producing or whatever services you are offering, social media could be a window to exploit and make potential customers know directly or indirectly about your value propositions. This is because,
the power of social media lies on the network it can create around a product and service while acknowledging the noisy nature of these platforms from a communication perspective.

Since, entrepreneurs are known to be the brain behind micro start-ups as well as small and medium size enterprises their creative and innovative ability makes them to outsmart large companies and exploit the niche market which is found on the social media. As earlier stipulated social media is appreciated differently by different stakeholders/actors/users in different states, regions and sectors as well as differently by developed and developing countries. It is to this effect that this study seeks to assess the role of social media in the growth of Small and Medium Size Enterprises, while trying to do a comparative analysis of the impact of using social media in a developed and a developing country that is Finland and Cameroon respectively.
2 BACKGROUND STUDY

This chapter is based on bringing out the background to the social media, subject of this thesis. To do this, the mobile application business will be studied, consumer preference on social media, revenue generation of social media, the role of network providers and a theoretical framework.

2.1 Mobile application business

The growth in mobile apps has shown no signs of slowing, with as many as 15,000 new apps being released each week as percept’s (Rakestraw, Eunni, & Kasuganti, 2013). The unique aspects of the mobile phone industry are discussed in terms of how they have encouraged the widespread popularity of smart phones and other mobile devices and have transformed electronic gaming, internet retailing, and social networking. These so-called “smart phones” and their associated mobile software “applications” or “apps” are becoming increasingly ever-present in our daily life. (Rakestraw, Eunni & Kasuganti 2013).

Evidence also suggests that these mobile devices are becoming more and more important in people’s lives. The proliferation of apps being developed can only be expected to continue as Smartphone us-age grows globally (Rakestraw et al. 2015). There is clearly a great move by small and medium enterprises to take advantage in the development mobile phone applications. It is common practice to find start-ups having Facebook pages, create blogs and or have twitter accounts through which they advertise and sell their products. There is clearly a shift in usage from computers to mobile devices. These social media platforms provide a visual marketing milieu where products are advertised to a wider audience with necessary having to meet them. There are also visual payment systems like PayPal’s.

2.2 Consumer preferences in social media

By the year 2010, the social media became increasingly saturated as new competitors entered the market flooding it with numerous varieties of utilitarian as well as lifestyle apps. In social networking, Facebook is by far the most popular app, with MySpace trailing behind in part due to its continuing popularity with teenagers. LinkedIn also attracted a large number of users in the age group of 25 to 44 The news and
weather application category were dominated by The Weather Channel, which was downloaded by 58% of the users surveyed. Amazon and eBay led the shopping category with 57% and 41% respectively. Finally, the music category was fiercely competitive with iTunes, Pandora, Sirius-XM, and Yahoo! Music all competing for the #1 position (Rakestraw et al. 2015.)

Data collected by Flurry in 2011 also revealed that games and social networking apps, led by Face-book, continued to be the most popular app categories among users. Flurry also discovered that users not only accessed game and social networking apps more frequently but also for longer periods of time per session. Many users were apparently accessing Facebook in order to play games available on that platform points to the overwhelming dominance of this category of Smartphone apps (Newark-French, 2011). In 2010, the most acknowledged choice for app publishers was the iPhone’s iOS operating system. However, other operating systems such as Android, iPad, Windows Mobile and Symbian also enjoyed large spikes in usage as the devices associated with them became more popular and developers attempted to diversify their products accordingly. (Rakestraw, Eunni, & Kasuganti, 2013)

In 2011, the emerging operating systems, especially Android and Microsoft’s Windows Phone 7, were expected to gain in usage (Newark-French 2011.). Microsoft has attempted to stimulate developer interest in its platform by offering incentives to programmers to create pre-release applications. Microsoft has also invested considerable resources in marketing its new product, especially by encouraging favorable reports by technology reviewers. A breakdown of the projected app developer support for 2011 as discussed in State of the app industry 2010 report. Finally, a chart showing publishers’ expectations of revenue increases for the mobile app industry between 2010 and 2011 is presented in Table 8. Noticeably, most publishers were highly optimistic about the industry; with 31% believing revenues would be more than double, and 17% predicting revenues would increase at least by 50 per-cent.

### 2.3 Revenue generation from social media

There are various ways through which SMEs can make huge revenue from social media. One common practice is to release an app for free and generate revenues by placing advertisements throughout the app's user interface. When a user clicks an ad, revenue is instantly generated for the app's publisher. The advantage of this approach is that ads placement is easy to set up and it allows the app access to a wider audience because it does not cost the user any money. However, the amount of revenue generated per click is typically very low. Moreover, users may refrain from using an app if the advertisements are too
intrusive (Hermansson 2013). Developers may also sell their apps for a predetermined price in an online marketplace. In such cases, the platform owner, Apple or Google, charge a 30% royalty fee for each app sold while the remainder goes to the developer. No fees are however charged by the platform owner for the free apps. Some marketplaces also charge developers a one-time fee to establish a publisher account. Android's publisher accounts, for example, currently cost a one-time fee of $20. This revenue generation method is straightforward and requires minimal effort to set up. It is asserted that with so many apps available in the marketplace, competition is intense. Acquiring enough customers to create a significant revenue flow could be difficult if the app is not original, useful, or marketed creatively (Rakestraw et al. 2015).

2.4 Role of network providers

A network provider is a host that allocates resources for developers to create new applications. In Cameroon today, there are four different service providers; CAMTEL, MTN Cameroon (by the close of 2016 could boost of more than 5 million subscribers), ORANGE Cameroon and NEXTTEL. According to 2006 statistics from the GSM Association by the end of the second quarter of the year 2006, the number of mobile subscriptions worldwide was 2.4 billion. The subscription of mobile phones by February 2013 stood at 6.9 billion, with 1.6 billion in the developed world and 5.3 billion in the developing world according to ITU statistics. This trend in present times has service provider’s talk of 3 & 4G network provisions. There are two major methods by which a network provider can monetize assets. First, these providers can add value by granting app developers access to their application programming interfaces (APIs). The second method involves making investments in the network capabilities that have the most potential to create value. In the end, no one business model will work for every developer or every application. The best business model is determined by the network provider's business goals, competition, compensation policies and a host of other factors. Sometimes, a mix of different business models might be necessary to maximize revenue. (Rakestraw et al. 2015.)

2.5 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this study is made up of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). This is based on the acceptance by societies of Technology and related information systems and a Diffusion of Innovation theory and Technology Acceptance Mode
2.5.1 Technological acceptance model

Although much research supports the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), as an excellent model to explain the acceptance of information systems (IS) and information technology (IT), it is never-the-less questionable whether the model can be applied to analyze every instance of IS & IT adoption and implementation. (Lee, Hsieh, & and Hsu 2011.) Many empirical studies recommend integrating TAM with other theories like the: diffusion of innovation theory to cope with rapid changes in IS/IT, and such to improve specificity and explanatory power (Carter & Be’langer, 2005). The TAM has been widely used as the theoretical basis for many empirical studies of user technology acceptance and has partially contributed to understanding users’ acceptance of information systems (IS)/information technology (IT) (Taylor & Todd 1995).

As social media users in Cameroon are increasingly being exposed to e-commerce, their acceptance of this new concept is also increasingly regarded as a critical factor (Amberg, Hirschmeier & Wehrmann 2004; Heinonen & Strandvik 2003). Although academic research on consumer acceptance of mobile advertising is relatively new and thus still scarce, several studies have been conducted in this field. Researchers and practitioners alike strive to find answers to the problem of consumer acceptance of new technological concepts by investigating individuals’ decisions on whether to adopt an advertising application system that appear to promise substantial benefits. To this end it was argued that studies of user perceptions and of understanding factors involved in promoting effective use of these systems (Mun & Hwang 2003). It was however discussed in Lee, Hsieh and Hsu, (2011) well known model that studies on TAM have become increasingly essential to improve understanding and prediction of acceptance and utilization (Lau & Woods, 2008). Some of previous empirical works sought to explicate the determinants and mechanisms of users’ adoption decisions based on the technology acceptance model (TAM) (Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw 1989). It was revealed, convention that the adoption process influences successful use of technology systems is more often teneable (Karahanna, Straub, & Chervany 1999). More explicitly, the present study tries to observe the role of social media in the growth of SMEs in Cameroon as stated earlier in the introductory section.

This theory explains the level of adoption of a new product in one’s immediate society. It looks at the various stages of growth of a product or an idea. An innovation is “an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or another unit of adoption” (Rogers 1995, 11). Diffusion, on the other hand, is “the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time
among the members of a social system” (Rogers 1995, 5). It was further asserted that diffusion of innovation theory stressed that “potential users make decisions to adopt or reject an innovation based on beliefs that they form about the innovation” (Agarwal & Prasad 1999). It shows how it starts from the innovation, to growth, stage of maturity and then it declines. It equally gives us the stage of adoption of the product from the innovators to the early adopters, the early and late majority and finally the laggards. This theory has four main elements which are innovation, communication channel, the time and social system.

In this study, the purpose is to find out the rate of adoption and use of products advertised by SMEs in different groups of people in the Cameroon society. This includes their various reasons and how fast or slow the product has been adopted since 2012. Equally, the population under study belongs to the innovators, the early adopters, the early and late majorities and the laggards. It is worth noting that the time frame taken by people to adopt digital mobile advertising as an advertising mode is very important.

2.5.2 Diffusion of innovation theory and technology acceptance model

An integrated theoretical framework, which blends Technology Acceptance Model and Diffusion of Innovation Theory, will help to give the purpose for which persons adopt and use digital mobile advertising products. Theoretically, the diffusion of an innovation perspective does not have any explicit relation with the TAM, but both share some key constructs. It has been noticed that the concept of relative advantage in the diffusion of innovation theory is similar to the notion of the perceived use (PU) in TAM, and the complexity construct in diffusion of innovation captures the perceived ease of use (PEU) in the technology acceptance model, although the sign is the opposite (Moore & Benbasat, 1991). Based on complexity construct perspective, Lee et al. [2011] in their investigation TAM and diffusion of innovation propose that the formation of users’ intention is partially determined by how difficult the innovation is understood and used (Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw 1989).

In other words, the less complex something is to use, the more likely an individual is to accept it. Compatibility is associated with the fit of a technology with prior experiences, while the ability to try and observe are associated with the availability of opportunities for relevant experiences. These constructs relate to prior technology experience or opportunities for experiencing the technology under consideration. Compatibility and the ability to try and observe that can be treated as external variables, which directly affect the constructs in the technology acceptance model. After the initial adoption, the effects
of these three constructs could be diminished with continuous experience and reduced over time (Karahanna, Straub, & Chervany 1999).

FIGURE 1. Adding innovation diffusion theory to the technology acceptance model. (Adapted from Lee, Hsieh & Hsu 2011, 124-137)

2.6 Social medial and entrepreneurship

Social media enables targeted marketing responses at individual touch points along the consumer decision journey (Divol, Edelman & Serrazin 2012). The growth of certain applications and influence they have on businesses is massive as some applications such as Facebook alone constitute more than a country on the growth of businesses, it would be the world’s third largest, behind China and India. Many internet users can even claim to know what makes social media so potent: its ability to amplify word-of-mouth effects. Yet, vast majority of these people have no idea how to harness social media’s power. Companies diligently establish Twitter feeds and branded Facebook pages, but few have a deep understanding of exactly how social media interacts with consumers to expand product and brand recognition, drive sales and profitability, and engender loyalty.
Two connected reasons explain why social media a mystery to most people in the business world is still. The first is its seemingly obscure nature. It’s no secret that consumers increasingly go online to discuss products and brands, seek advice, and offer guidance. Yet it is usually difficult to point out where and how to influence these conversations, which take place across an ever-growing variety of platforms, among diverse and dispersed communities, and may occur either with lightning speed or over the course of months. Second, there’s no single measure of social media’s financial impact, and many companies find that it’s difficult to justify devoting significant resources—financial or human—to an activity whose precise effect remains unclear (Divol, Edelman, & Sarrazin 2012).

Four factors have been identified by Divol et al. (2012), to help companies establish a strong social media engagement in the present market situation. These are; to monitor, respond, amplify, and lead consumer behavior. The process links them to the journey consumers undertake when making purchasing decisions. It is important to identify exactly how, when, and where social media influences consumers. This helps entrepreneurs craft marketing strategies that take advantage of social media’s unique ability to engage with customers. It should also help leaders develop, launch, and demonstrate the financial impact of social-media campaigns.

In short, today’s entrepreneurs can no longer treat social media as a side activity run solely by marketing or public relations. It’s much more than simply another form of paid marketing and it demands more too: a clear framework to help CEOs and other top executives evaluate investments in it, a plan for building support infrastructure, and performance-management systems to help leaders smartly scale their social presence. Companies that have these three elements in place can create critical new brand assets (such as content from customers or insights from their feedback), open new channels for interactions (Twitter-based customer service, Facebook news feeds), and completely reposition a brand through the way its employees interact with customers or other parties. Observably, carrying out a study on the topic demystifying social media brought forth the concept of the social consumer decision journey more explicit. Here the social journey of consumer is taken to monitor the market and or establish what is good for a product in the market. (Divol et al 2012).
### 2.6.1 Creating a buzz

Businesses monitor user preferences on social media to understand customer’s online behavior and in effect, understand the chances of a product to flourish in the market. Most companies use cookies to keep track of what people do online, hence collecting data on whom they are and what they like. This helps them know what to sell and to whom (Finger & Dutta 2014.) Eighteen months before Ford re-entered the US subcompact-car market with its Fiesta model; it began a broad marketing campaign called the Fiesta Movement. A major element involved giving 100 social-media influencers a European model of the car, having them complete “missions,” and asking them to document their experiences on various social channels. Videos related to the Fiesta campaign generated 6.5 million views on YouTube, and Ford received 50,000 requests for information about the vehicle, primarily from non-Ford drivers. When it finally became available to the public, in late 2010, some 10,000 cars sold in the first six days. (Singh, 2012.)

### 2.6.2 Targeting customers

Levi Strauss has used social media to offer location-specific deals. In one instance, direct interactions with just 400 consumers led 1,600 people to turn up at the company’s stores, an example of social media’s word-of-mouth effect. Yet countless others have failed to match these successes: knowing that something works and understanding how it works are very different things. As the number of companies with Facebook pages, Twitter feeds, or online communities continues to grow, we think it’s time for leaders to remind themselves how social media connects with an organization’s broader marketing mission. Marketing’s primary goal is to reach consumers at the moments, or touch points, that influence their purchasing behavior. Almost three years ago, our colleagues proposed a frame-work the “consumer decision journey” for understanding how consumers interact with companies during purchase decisions. Expressing consumer behavior as a winding journey with multiple feed-back loops, this new framework was different from the traditional description of consumer purchasing behavior as a linear march through a funnel. Social media is a unique component of the consumer decision journey: it’s the only form of marketing that can touch consumers at each and every stage, from when they’re pondering brands and products right through the period after a purchase, as their experience influences the brands they prefer and their potential advocacy influences others (Divol, Edelman & Sarrazin 2012.)
The fact that social media can influence customers at every stage of the journey does not mean that it should. Depending on the company and industry, some touch points are more important to competitive advantage than others. What is more, our work with dozens of companies adapting to the new marketing environment strongly suggests that the most powerful social-media strategies focus on a limited number of marketing responses closely related to individual touch points along the consumer decision journey. The ten most important responses range from providing customer service to fostering online communities (exhibit). One of those ten monitoring what people say about your brand is so important that we see it as a core function of social media, relevant across the entire consumer decision journey. The remaining nine responses, organized in three clusters in the exhibit, underpin efforts to use social media to respond to consumer comments, to amplify positive sentiment and activity, and to lead changes in the behavior and mind-sets of consumers. To greater extent, demystifying social media, gave number of tips to entrepreneurs on how to use social media (Divol, Edelman & Sarrazin 2012).

Monitoring customers involves using social media tools to know what is said across the internet. This goes beyond relying on traditional publishers. It also entails monitoring thousands of social sites. These tools navigate sites continuously, some of which are crawled in real time like Twitter while others are crawled less often. They index these sites to find the use of phrases or words related to a brand or business. The data collected by these tools can be used for research, reporting or decision making. Brands however have varying ways of analyzing social media data depending on their use case. (Juame 2013).

Such brand monitoring simply knowing what’s said online about your products and services should be a default social-media function, taking place constantly. Even without engaging consumers directly, companies can glean insights from an effective monitoring program that informs everything from product design to marketing and provides advance warning of potentially negative publicity. It’s also critical to communicate such feedback within the business quickly: whoever is charged with brand monitoring must ensure that information reaches relevant functions, such as communications, design, marketing, public relations, or risk. (Divol, Edelman, & Sarrazin 2012).

This is to learn how you are doing in the market and know areas that need to be adjusted; broad and passive monitoring is only a start. Spotting conversations for responding at a personal level is another way of engaging in social media. This form of response can likely be positive if the aim is to provide customer service or to find sales leads. In most cases, responding is a part of crisis management. For example, a hoax photograph posted online claimed that McDonald’s was charging African-Americans an extra service fee. The hoax first appeared on Twitter, where the image quickly went viral within
a short period of time and was retweeted with the hashtag #seriouslymcdonalds. It turned out to be a busy period for the McDonald’s social-media team. The company's director of social media eventually released a statement on Twitter, declaring the photograph to be a hoax and asking key influencers to “please let your followers know.” The company continued to reinforce that message throughout the weekend, even responding personally to concerned Tweeters. By Sunday, the number of people who believed the image to be authentic had dwindled, and McDonald’s stock price rose 5 percent the following day. Responding in order to counter negative comments and reinforce positive ones will only increase in importance. The responsibility for taking action may fall on functions outside marketing, and the message will differ depending on the situation. No response can be quick enough, and the ability to act rapidly requires the constant, proactive monitoring of social media on weekends too. By responding rapidly, transparently, and honestly, companies can positively influence consumer sentiment and behavior. (Divol, Edelman & Sarrazin 2012).

Amplification involves designing your marketing activities to have an inherently social motivator that spurs broader engagement and sharing. This approach means more than merely reaching the end of planning a marketing campaign and then thinking that “we should do something social” say, up-loading a television commercial to YouTube. It means that the core concepts for campaigns must invite customers into an experience that they can choose to extend by joining a conversation with the brand, product, fellow users, and other enthusiasts. It means having ongoing programs that share new content with customers and provide opportunities for sharing back. It means offering experiences that customers will feel great about sharing, because they gain a badge of honor by publicizing content that piques the interest of others. (Divol, Edelman & Sarrazin 2012).

In the initial phases of the consumer decision journey, when consumers sift through brands and products to determine their preferred options, referrals and recommendations are powerful social media tools. A simple example is the way online deal sites such as Groupon and Gilt Group provide consumers with credit for each first-time purchaser they refer. Our research shows that such direct recommendations from peers generate engagement rates some 30 times higher than traditional online advertising does. Once a consumer has decided which product to buy and makes a purchase, companies can use social media to amplify their engagement and foster loyalty. When Starbucks wanted to increase awareness of its brand, for example, it launched a competition challenging user to be the first to tweet a photograph of one of the new advertising posters that the company had placed in six major US cities, providing winners with a $20 gift card. This social-media brand advocacy effort delivered a marketing punch that
significantly outweighed its budget. Starbucks said that the effort was “the difference between launching with millions of dollars versus millions of fans. (Miller 2009).

Marketers also can foster communities around their brands and products, both to reinforce the belief of consumers that they made a smart decision and to provide guidance for getting the most from a purchase. Software Company Intuit, for example, launched customer service forums for its Quicken and Quick-Books personal-finance software so users could help one another with product issues. Users rather than Intuit employees answer about 80 percent of the questions, and the company has employed user comments to make dozens of significant changes to its software. (Divol, Edelman & Sarrazin 2012).

Social media can be used most proactively to lead consumers toward long-term behavioral changes. In the early stages of the consumer decision journey, this may involve boosting brand awareness by driving Web traffic to content about existing products and services. When grooming product group Old Spice introduced its Old Spice Man character to viewers, during the US National Football League’s 2010 Super Bowl, for example, the company’s ambition was to increase its reach and relevance to both men and women. The commercial became a phenomenon: starring former player Isaiah Mustafa, it got more than 19 million hits across all platforms, and year-on-year sales for the company’s products jumped by 27 percent within six months. Marketers also can use social media to generate buzz through product launches, as Ford did in launching its Fiesta vehicle in the United States. For example, social media played an integral role in the success of “Small Business Saturday,” the US shopping promotion created by American Express for the weekend immediately following Thanksgiving (for American Express CMO John Hayes’s perspective on that launch, see “How we see it: Three senior executives on the future of marketing”. (Divol, Edelman & Sarrazin 2012).

In addition, when consumers are ready to buy, companies can promote time-sensitive targeted deals and offers through social media to generate traffic and sales. Online menswear company Bonobos, for example, provided an incentive for its Twitter followers by unlocking a discount code after its messages were resent a certain number of times. As a result, almost 100 consumers bought products from the site for the first time. The campaign delivered a 1,200 percent return on investment in just 24 hours. Finally, social media can solicit consumer input after the purchase. This ability to gain product-development insights from customers in a relatively inexpensive way is emerging as one of social media’s most significant advantages. Intuit, for example, has its community forums. Starbucks uses MyStarbucksIdea.com to collect its customers’ views about improving the company’s products and services and then aggregate submitted ideas and prominently displays them on a dedicated Web site. That site
groups ideas by product, experience, and involvement; ranks user participation; and shows ideas actively under consideration by the company and those that have been implemented. (Divol, Edelman & Sarrazin 2012).

Despite offering numerous opportunities to influence consumers, social media still accounts for less than 1 percent of an average marketing budget, in our experience. Many chief marketing officers say that they want to increase that share to 5 percent. One problem is that a lot of senior executives know little about social media. But the main obstacle is the perception that the return on investment (ROI) from such initiatives is uncertain. Without a clear sense of the value social media creates, it’s perhaps not surprising that so many CEOs and other senior executives don’t feel comfortable when their companies go beyond mere “experiments” with social-media strategy. Yet we can measure the impact of social media well beyond straight volume and consumer-sentiment metrics; in fact, we can precisely determine the buzz surrounding a product or brand and then calculate how social media drives purchasing behavior. To do so and then ensure that social media complements broader marketing strategies companies must obviously coordinate data, tools, technology, and talent across multiple functions. In many cases, senior business leaders must open up their agendas and recognize the importance of supporting and even undertaking initiatives that may traditionally have been left to the chief marketing officer. As our colleagues noted last year, “we’re all marketers now”. (French, LaBerge & Magill 2011.) Consider the experience of a telecommunications company that proactively adopted social media but had no idea if its efforts were working. The company had launched Twitter-based customer service capabilities, several promotional campaigns built around social contests, a fan page with discounts and tech tips, and an active response program to engage with people speaking about the brand. In social media terms, the investment was relatively large, and the company’s senior executives wanted more than anecdotal evidence that the strategy was paying off. As a starting point, to ensure that the company was doing a quality job designing and executing its social presence, it benchmarked its efforts against approaches used by other companies known to be successful in social media. It then advanced the following hypotheses:

First, if all of these social-media activities improve general service perceptions about the brand, that improvement should be reflected in a higher volume of positive online posts. Second, if social sharing is effective, added clicks and traffic should result in higher search placements. And third, if both of these assumptions hold true, social-media activity should help drive sales ideally, at a rate even higher than the company could achieve with its average gross rating point (GRP) of advertising expenditures. (Divol, Edelman & Sarrazin 2012).
The company then tested its options. At various times, it spent less money on conventional advertising, especially as social-media activity ramped up, and it modeled the rising positive sentiment and higher search positions just as it would use traditional metrics. The company concluded that social-media activity not only boosted sales but also had higher ROIs than traditional marketing did. Thus, while the company took a risk by shifting emphasis toward social-media efforts before it had data confirming that this was the correct course, the bet paid off. What’s more, the analytic baseline now in place has given the company confidence to continue exploring a growing role for social media. (Divol, Edelman & Sarrazin 2012).

In other cases, social media may have a more specific role, such as helping to launch a new product or to mitigate negative word of mouth. Similar types of analyses can focus on mixing the impact of buzz, search, and traffic; correlating that with sales or renewals (or whatever the key metric may be); and then gauging the result against total costs. This approach can give executives the confidence and focus they need to invest more money, time, and resources in social media. As these social-media activities gain scale, the challenges center less around justifying funding and more around organizational issues such as developing the right processes and governance structure, identifying clear roles for all involved in social-media strategy, from marketing to customer service to product development and bolstering the talent base, and improving performance standards. New capabilities abound, and social-media best practices are barely starting to emerge. We do know this: because social-media influences every element of the consumer decision journey, communication must take place between as well as within functions. That complicates lines of reporting and decision-making authority. (Divol, Edelman & Sarrazin 2012.)

If insights from monitoring social media are relevant to non-marketing functions such as product development, for instance, how will you identify and disseminate that information efficiently and effectively and then ensure that it gets used? If you spot an opportunity to have a meaningful conversation with a key influencer, how will you quickly engage the right senior executive to follow through? If you recognize a fast-moving service concern, how will you respond rapidly and openly and when should you do so outside the traditional service organization? Senior executives across the company must recognize and begin to answer such questions. (Divol et al 2012).

Social media is extending the disruptive impact of the digital era across a broad range of functions. Meanwhile, the perceived lack of metrics, the fear, and the limited sense of what’s possible are eroding. Executives can identify the functions, touch points, and goals of social-media activities, as well as craft
approaches to measure their impact and manage their risks. The time is ripe for executive-suite discussions on how to lead and to learn from people within your company, marketers outside it, and, most of all, your customers. (Divol et al 2012).
3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Every scientific method has a systematic application. Methodology involves the methods and techniques in a research process (Kothari 2006.) Methodology is literally defined as a set of methods and principles used to perform particular activity. The process of getting results may therefore rely on secondary or primary data. However, the nature of the social phenomena plays a major role in determining what method a researcher can apply to his/her study. (Madanipour 2013.)

3.1 Research Design

A research design is a blueprint for conducting a study with maximum control over factors that may interfere with the validity of the findings (Burns & Grove 2003.) In scientific investigations, there are three basic designs for data collection. These include survey research, content analysis and experimental design. The descriptive survey research design is used in this study because of the perceptive nature of the topic, which requires the research to go close to the respondents for justifiable data collection. (Bailey 1978.) Descriptive research involves gathering data that describe events and then organizes, tabulates, depicts, and describes the data collection (Glass & Hopkins 1984). It often uses visual aids such as graphs and charts to aid the reader in understanding the data distribution and therefore offer a better clarification on location and size of Billboard advertising, and ultimately gives a clear picture on the effectiveness of the media in creating brand awareness.

Survey research is the acquisition of data from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions (Schutt R. K. 2012). It is carrying out a study on people’s opinions on an idea which is usually done by asking questions. Survey is both an art and a science which exercises knowledge, behavior and awareness. It describes what, how and why some-thing is happening. The researcher expects to define clearly what he/she wanted to measure and must find adequate methods for measuring it (Singleton & Straits 2009).
3.2 Instrumentation and measurement

The appearance of the instrument is very important to the overall success of the study. The instrument to them should be attractive and not too long and the questions should be easy to answer. The questionnaire with several variables aimed at examining research objectives, questions and hypothesis, to have a better understanding and comprehension of the study proper by bringing out empirical evidence. Section A seeks to understand knowledge and use of social media. Section B reviews information about social media use by SME. The questionnaire also seeks to find out information about the demographic representation of respondents from gender, age, level of education etc (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000; Pindexter & McCombs 2000).

3.3 Sample and sampling procedure

This study is a quantitative survey; it therefore means numerical values are used in relation to variables. Most survey studies unavoidably use quantitative values and that is why about 25 questionnaires were administered through random sampling of the SME’s under study in both countries. The sample is a simple random sampling because there are many small and medium enterprises in Cameroon, with a major portion of the population under age gap of 20-60 years; who are highly exposed and use the social media.

3.4 Data collection

The study applied both nominal and ordinal scale to measure a range of factors determining the role of the social media in the growth of SMES in order to help in the interpretation of data into intelligible and interpretable form. It was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS), which provides Univariate and Multivariate this entails interpreting the research questions, hypotheses and revealing the major findings of the research. The data was then coded according to the responses, while relationships between responses assessed and presented using tables and graphs and simple percentages (Yoo & Gretzel 2014).
3.5 Study and validation reliability

Validity looks at the extent to which a study if carried out once more, can obtain the same results. The instrument used which was a questionnaire can be tested again to obtain similar results. This is so because the sample population represented the population of people who use the social media in their SMEs. Reliability on its part is the extent to which if the study is carried out again, it can come out with the findings. This study gives other researchers the leeway to carry a reliability test to confirm the results. Hence, the questionnaire stands the chance of measuring constructs over a given time frame and obtaining exact or similar findings. Reliability can be ensured by minimizing sources of measurement error like data collector bias.
4 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Data analysis is the interpretation of the raw data into intelligible and understanding form with the use of a specialized statistical package for social scientist (SPSS). This chapter is one of the most important in a research piece. At this stage, emphasis will be laid on Univariate and multivariate analysis with the use of percentages, charts and tables.

GRAPH 1. Background of Respondents

4.1 Gender Distribution of Respondents in Cameroon

The above chart indicates that there are more males (60%) than females (40%) in the population. The literature indicates that there are gender differences within the demographic groups in terms of social media use which vary also between the two genders. The implication of this is that as per the study more
males use the social media than females in their businesses in a bid to enhance the growth of the enterprise. It is equally important to note that the representation of both genders in the study is purposely to avoid bias in research and give everyone equal opportunity to be part of the study population.

TABLE 1. Respondents’ distribution by age (n=25)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cameroon</th>
<th></th>
<th>Finland</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-37</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38-49</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-61</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 61</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above findings reveal that 14 respondents sampled in the study representing 56% are between 50-61 years, 14% within the ages of 41-45 years, while 5 of the respondents’ representing 20% are between 38-49 years. Additionally, 3 of them making 12% are within the ages of 26-37, another 2 in 25% above 60 years while 1 in 4% is between 14-25 years. Meanwhile in Finland 25 respondents sampled are all below 40 years that is those between 12-25 years are 10 making 40%, while those between 26-37 years are 15 making up 60%. We can therefore conclude most persons running small and medium size enterprises in Finland are made up of the youthful population while in Cameroon it spans across all age groups.

TABLE 2. Marital status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cameroon</th>
<th></th>
<th>Finland</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohabitation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In relation to the respondents’ marital status, the findings indicated that 10 respondents making up 40% of the population are single while 9 respondents representing 36% are married, with 1 respondent making up 4% separated from his partner. Furthermore, 2 in 8% have divorced cases with 3 in 12% cohabiting. Meanwhile in Finland 12 respondents making up 48% of the sampled population is single with 7 respondents making 28% of the sampled married and 6 respondents making up 24% of the sampled population cohabiting. The findings support the fact that respondents’ gender and marital status were taken into consideration when carrying out the work.

**TABLE 3. Level of Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cameroon</th>
<th></th>
<th>Finland</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Level</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of the 25 respondents sampled for Cameroon, 32% are master degree holders, and 6 in 24% are bachelor’s degree holders while 1 making up 4% is a PhD holder. Meanwhile out of the 25 respondents
sampled for Finland 19 in 76% are bachelor degree holders while 6 in 26% are master’s degree holders. It is an indication that majority of small and medium size owners have attended University education for both countries. However, 4 respondents making up 16% are holders of a Diploma; meanwhile 6 are holders of Advanced Level Certificate. These findings therefore point out that majority of the respondents is highly educated and will better fit within the framework of employing social media in their daily business activities.

TABLE 4. The extent to which social media helps SMEs growth in Cameroon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terms</th>
<th>Cameroon</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Finland</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to better understand this research question, out of a total of 25 SME owners sampled, 7 of them under study making up 28% agree that social media help SMEs growth in Cameroon, meanwhile 5 respondents represented by 20% strongly agree. However, on a neutral platform, 4 respondents in 16% neither agree nor disagree. On the contrary, 3 respondents who answered the question under study in 13% disagree that social media help SMEs growth in Cameroon. Similarly, 6 respondents making up 2% strongly disagree that social media help SMEs growth in Cameroon. In comparison, findings from respondents in Finland show that 25 of those sampled are neutral as to whether the social media enhances the growth of SMEs in Cameroon, which is understandable as they don’t know the Cameroon SMEs Market. Therefore, the above go a long way to affirm the hypothesis as true and can be concluded that the Social media helps the growth of SMEs in Cameroon.
TABLE 5. Importance of social media to the growth of SMEs in Cameroon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cameroon</th>
<th></th>
<th>Finland</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly important</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somehow important</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all important</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100,0%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To have a better comprehension of the second research question, total SME owners were sampled in Cameroon. Findings reveal 32% consider the social media important in the growth of SME, followed by another 24% who consider it very important. In another perspective, 20% and another 20% consider the social media slightly important and somehow important in the growth of SMEs in Cameroon, meanwhile just 41% hold that it is not at all important. Interestingly, 25 respondents sampled from Finland hold unanimously that the social media is important in the growth of SMEs. To a greater extent the research question has been answered and the hypothesis that the growth of the social media is not important in Cameroon negated as false.
TABLE 6. Illustrating how Social media is instrumental in the growth of SMEs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terms</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100,0%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a bid to determine whether the Social media stimulates the growth of SMEs in Finland than Cameroon, 14 respondents making up 56% agreed, followed by 5 in 20% who strongly agreed. On a neutral mode 3 in 12% neither agree nor disagree if the social media is instrumental in Finland than Cameroon. Notwithstanding they are a population of 3 respondents who form part of the study target who disagree amounting to 8% while just 1 in 4% strongly disagree respectively that the social media is not instrumental in the growth of SME in Finland than Cameroon. The findings further support the views from those 25 sampled SME owners in Finland that the social media is instrumental in the growth of the sector in Finland than Cameroon as 18 in 72% while 7 in 28% remained neutral. Therefore, it can be concluded based on the findings without fear of contradiction that the social media is more instrumental in Finland than in Cameroon thereby affirming the hypothesis as true.

TABLE 7. Examining Social Media adoption and management rate by SMEs in Cameroon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cameroon Respondents</th>
<th>Finland Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In order to find out the level of social media penetration, respondents gave diverse views that have been highlighted above. 36% of respondents from both samples hold that social media penetration and adoption in Cameroon is very good. 24% consider social media penetration and adoption as good even though 64% of the Finland sampled population that penetration and adoption of social media is good. Meanwhile 4% in Cameroon consider its penetration and adoption as excellent. However, 20% believe that social media penetration and adoption by SMEs in Cameroon is poor. This view is shared by another 16%. Thus, based on the statistics, it is crystal clear that SME owners in Cameroon adopt and manage the social media due to its penetration in their enterprises.

**TABLE 8. Understanding Social media’s impact on SMEs in Cameroon**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terms</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boasted interest</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of daily contacts and commands</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase sales.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100,0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to better understand this section, respondents were asked to determine how social Media have impacted your business since its creation. Out of a total of 25 respondents, 11 of them under study making up 44% opine that the social media has boosted their business interest, meanwhile another 6 respondents represented by 24% have it that the social media has helped in increasing the number of daily contacts and commands. Additionally, 5 respondents in 20% hold that it has created awareness in their businesses while 3 in 12% have it that that the social media has impacted their businesses by the increase in sales. The above table is focused on respondent’s in Cameroon as only they can give a better view of the situation on ground.
Having a better comprehension of the challenges SME owners faces in Cameroon when engaging in business via social media is imperative. Going by the findings, 8 respondents amounting to 32% hold that inadequate surfing skills of the social media is a major challenge, followed by 24% who claim that high cost of social media use is a challenge they face in their SME businesses. Another challenge as identified by 20% of the respondents is that of slow internet connection in Cameroon and lack of qualified personnel, meanwhile just 1 person considered Quality and reliability of information as a challenge in using the social media for business. Meanwhile in Finland 72% says quality and reliability of information is their greatest challenge and 28% hold that lack of qualified personnel’s is also another challenge in the social media era.
TABLE 10. Understanding the persuasive effect of social media on consumers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cameroon</th>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Finland</th>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share and or comment</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find more about it</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Order the product</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read and ignore</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is vital to find out about the reactions of consumers when you come across persuasive SME adverts online. From the table, 12 of consumers share and or comment on goods advertised in their social media platform, while 7 of them say they find more about the product when it is advertised online. In another perspective, 4 of the respondents opine that they order the product; meanwhile 2 of them read and ignore the advertisement. Meanwhile in Finland 18 make sure they find out more about the product and 7 opine that they read and ignore. Looking at the above you will agree that in Finland when one sees a persuasive advert online about a product, the next thing they do is find out more and see if its real before even thinking of purchase contrary to 16% of the sampled population in Cameroon who will just go straight to order the product.
### TABLE 11. Assessing the frequency of Social media use by owners of SMEs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cameroon</th>
<th></th>
<th>Finland</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facebook</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WhatsApp</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Twitter</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Websites</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instagram</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Blogs</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A closer look at the table above reveal that 8 respondents in (32%) say they Facebook daily more than other social media platforms, while another 8 respondents (32%) say they use WhatsApp most. Additionally, 3(12%) say they use twitter more than any other social media platform, while another 3 of the respondents (12%) say they use websites most compared to other social media tools. Out of the 25 respondents, 2 in (8%) say they use Instagram more, meanwhile 1 of them in (4%) hold that he uses blogs more than any other social media tool. Meanwhile out of the 25 sampled SME owners in Finland, 7 in 28% say they make use of Facebook for their business on daily bases, while 12 in 48% make use of websites and 6 in 24% make use of the Instagram.

### TABLE 12. General Frequency of social Media usage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cameroon</th>
<th></th>
<th>Finland</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>thrice a week</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44.0%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occasionally</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
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</table>
In other to understand their social media frequency, 11 respondents out of the total 25 persons amounting to (44%) say they use the social media thrice a week, 11people in (44%) equally say they use the social media occasionally on a weekly basis. This is followed by a minority of the respondents; 3 in (12%) who have it that they use the Internet trice a week. Meanwhile in Finland 18 respondents out of the 25 persons amounting to 72% say they use the social media thrice a week while 7 respondents in (28%) make use of social twice a week making us to understand the usage rate of social media by Finland SME owners is higher than in Cameroon.

TABLE 13. Understanding Respondents time spent on the Social Media daily

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>twice a week</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100,0%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
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</table>

From the table above, findings reveal that 10 persons (40%) of the respondents agreed spend less than an hour daily on the social media. This is followed by 7 persons in (28%) who say they spend 2-3 hours on the social media daily. Furthermore, 6 in(24%) of respondents say they spend 4-5 hours while another 2 respondents making up (8%) say they spend above 5 hours daily on the social media. Meanwhile in
Finland 12 persons (48%) of the respondents agreed they spend less than an hour on social media, followed 7 persons (28%) of respondent who say they spend 2-3 hours on social media daily and another 6 person (24%) who also spend 4-5 hours. These figures give us the impression that in Finland and Cameroon almost the same amount of time is spend on social media daily by SME owners but for the 2 persons (8%) in Cameroon who spend above 5hours on social media daily.

4.2 Social Media impact on SMEs in Finland

The primary aim of any research whatsoever is to come up with valid and reliable knowledge considering ethical issues (Bryman & Bell 2015, 210). The idea suggest that authors should at all time consider among others validity, reliability and ethics while collecting, analyzing and interpreting the research data. According to Herbst & Coldwell (2004, 17) statements about the studied phenomena must be both valid and reliable. Usually, reliability and validity of a research is measured in two ways. First, given research methodology ought to be appropriate answering the research questions. Secondly, the conclusions and results of the research ought to be considered from validity and reliability point of view (Herbst & Coldwell 2004, 18). In contrast, it was otherwise stated that reliability is much related to issues of consistency of the data collected during the research, while validity on the other hand measures how appropriate the design of the study is to conclusions drawn for the selected population. (Trochim, Donnely & Arora 2015, 67.)

Based on the literature viewpoint, the scope of this thesis is to find out the level of impact of social media on SMEs. It therefore follows by highlighting how improvement and awareness can be introduced when necessary in either of country under investigation. But more particularly in Cameroon because it is evident to somewhat degree that most of developing nations are yet to be on same page as developed nations as far as social media is concerned. Unlike Finland where tremendous has been recorded over the years in Information technology. In order to achieve this goal, investigation was carried out by conducting two interviews. The first interview was conducted with one of the staff of Freska Oy-one of Finnish leading cleaning company specialized in Home cleaning. The second interview was carried out with one certified specialist in Social Media Marketing from Finland. Though, the latter does not want his name published. He only claims anonymity for some reason known to him. But was able to give useful information which are consider vital for the purpose of this study.

Freska Oy staff enumerated counts of benefit and role social media is playing by propelling and reshaping how business is carried out. Most particular, the cleaning business being one of most competitive
service industries in Finland. He started by saying their company deployed social media as marketing tools as it has been identify as demystifying the business conduct in recent times. He further stated that they channel their focus mainly on their business niche where big players in the industry for certain reason does not exploit. With aid of apps on androids and Apple phones where clients can enjoys hitch free services. Customers becomes more relax, responsive, and trusting the company effectiveness. Hence, they are able to order service with ease. He further stated that issues of service ordering are not only taken care of with aid of social media tools. But, the payment and invoicing are also well catered for through the medium thereby creating more easier and effective business transaction.

Similarly, countless benefits or if you like role of social media were stated by the said interviewee who is a specialist in social media. He explained how both small and medium scale businesses in Finland have been thriving by leveraging on socia media. He discussed that ways of doing are gradually becoming outdated and may longer be use in very few years to come. He revealed social media as a tool has been a catalyst in business in recent times. By this he meant most firms have to adjust manner at which they conduct business as well as customer relation in attempt to provides more pro active and efficient services. He further listed number of companies that have adopted the medium as a tool. Nordea bank, Posti Oy, Kotipizza among others were mentioned. Though there are many other companies identified. He however stated that almost all Finnish companies rely on social media one way or the other for business strategy. He emphasized that it is gradually becoming very vital for companies to adopt social media. He however stressed failure to key into this change may spell doom for business. Because social media has proved to be a very strong tool in marketing, customer relation, ordering and invoicing to mention but few.
5 CONCLUSION

This chapter involves coming out with conclusions to the study, recommendations and some limitations that were encountered during the research. Tabulation and simple percentage were employed in analyzing data, summarized and interpreted accordingly. In this chapter, the researcher aims at concluding by answering the research objectives.

The growth of a Small and Medium Size Enterprise in today’s contemporary society highly depends on the efficiency of the social media tools employed. These tools when widely adopted can increase sales, raise awareness, boost business and interaction with customers and eventually customer loyalty. By adopting the social media, SMEs would be able to exceed their customers’ expectations in providing timely inquiries, as well as elaborate after sales services. These attributes are particularly significant in increasing sales volumes that directly facilitates the growth of the various enterprises both small and large. The social media system in SMEs also facilitated the flow of information between all business functions within an organization and external stakeholders thereby providing better management of the firms. It is evident that the social media helps the growth of SMEs by improving in the level of risk management with these technologies. It is therefore essential to assert in the study that Social media and its accompanying tools have contributed immensely to the growth of SMEs in Cameroon.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the social media is instrumental in the growth of the SME sector in Finland than Cameroon. This has been through effective use of platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, blogs; websites etc to develop enable strategic interaction with target markets to showcase the products and services offered. Therefore, findings indicated that high growth SMEs were mostly associated with usage of social media.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made, that: To increase sales and improve customer loyalty, social media tools such as Facebook, WhatsApp, twitter, blogs and other new communication technologies should be adopted. The growth of any business entity is highly dependent on the customer base. While management of both actual and potential customers poises a major challenge, the extensive use of the Internet should be adopted to provide an integrated platform for customer profiling, feedback collection and customer communication interfaces.
For SMEs to grow, ICT solutions including the hardware, software and personnel should be upgraded to allow for wide flexible solutions of social media platforms to meet increasing use for better sustainability. This is because due to the low staff complement, and inadequate specialized skills like in ICT, SMEs must consider outsourcing these tasks to specialized third party organizations. As an area for Further Research the SME business sector development in Cameroon has been identified as one of the key areas of growth in the Country’s economy and has become an issue of priority even though many SME(s) are struggling with establishment and doing business. Further research should be conducted to identify challenges to SMEs in financing and application of the social media and to recommend value adding activities that would enable the SMEs operation more efficiently and cost-effectively. These would ensure their growth and their sustainability.
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