

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Social media has advanced from simply providing a platform for individuals to staying in touch with family and friends (Webster, 2020) to being a powerful medium for sales of products and services. It is a place where consumers can be aware of anything that is of interest to them and also be able to learn more about their favorite companies and the products they sell (Ardiansyah & Sarwoko (2023). The scholar noted that social media is being used as an additional means of reaching customers and offering a fresh shopping experience by marketers and retailers. Technology related advancements including the emergence of strong search engines, sophisticated mobile devices and interfaces, peer-to-peer communication tools, and online social networks have increased marketers' capacity to connect with consumers through new channels. (Shankar et al, 2021)

Social networking sites have emerged as a means for retailers to reach a larger audience with their marketing initiatives in today's technologically advanced world. Chi (2011) explains social media marketing as a personal channel and currency for user centered networking and social interaction, while offering a connection between brands and consumers Social media's rise has significantly altered the methods and instruments available for consumer communication; as a result, companies need to understand how to use social media in a way that aligns with their company strategy (Mangold & Faulds 2019). This is especially true for companies striving to gain a competitive advantage. Review from these scholars reveals that current literature focuses on a retailer's development and use of social media as an extension of their marketing strategy.

The way individuals communicate and conduct business has drastically changed during the last 40 years and this explain similar the way businesses and market run has also changed significantly since the advent of personal computers, the Internet, and e-commerce (Madeleine & Hilyer, 2020). These implies that the rapid advancement of social media technologies is likely to have a similar effect on businesses both today and in the future. According to Dwivedi (2021), the advent of new technology has greatly benefited firms that learn to use them; examples in reference to this is tech-driven businesses like Google, eBay, Amazon, and Microsoft.

In a short span of time, social media has become one of the most loved mediums for the Nigeria youths today (Mary, 2021). Social Media Marketing is the hottest new marketing concept and every business owner wants to know how social media can generate value for their business (Appel, 2020). He researcher further reveal that humans in their unique nature tends to relate with others by sharing or receiving information that is important to them.

Social Media Marketing stems from the understanding of how technology makes it easier for people to connect socially with their social networks and how your business can profit from that understanding (Chawla, 2021). Companies see reasons to use social media in every aspect of their daily life, whether for personal use, business-to-consumer or business-to-business. (Jamil, 2022). There is a common misconception that social media and social networking sites (SNS) are two synonymous terms; however, social media are tools for sharing and discussing information. (Dlamini & Siphamandla, 2020). It can be described as a kind of online media which encourages every member for feedback and contribution. It is a social instrument of two way communication facilitating the sharing of information between users within a defined network via web 2.0 (Farsi, 2021). It involves online activities in which the user contributes to content creation.

Social media has revolutionized how businesses and individuals market goods, build personal brands, and interact. With the growth of social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter, social media has become an effective marketing tool, particularly for youth (Abindin, 2016). The scholar noted that using their social media presence for marketing, content creators in particular have achieved success in a variety of fields, including but not limited to fashion, beauty, lifestyle, and fitness . It is in the light of this concern that this study examined the social media preference as a marketing tool and its perception by content creators of Thomas Adewumi university.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Similar to viruses, social media enables the rapid and transformative dissemination of information to millions of individuals (Wahyoedi et al, 2023). Although Generation Y is adept at social media usage, which is the most important channel to enhance viral marketing (Gao et al, 2020). Due to the prevalence of social media, older generations are now, unexpectedly, more active participants in social networking. In fact, women aged 55 years and older represent one of the largest demographics of Facebook users. Noting its ability to extend interactions and interpersonal connections, Oraedu et al. (2020) added that word-of-mouth communication can take place not only among acquaintances, such as family, friends and co-workers, but even among strangers. Marketers see these interactions as significant opportunities.

Despite the prevalent use of social media marketing, there is a paucity of study regarding the preferences of content creators at Nigerian colleges, such as TAU, in utilizing these platforms for marketing and their perceptions of its efficacy.

Also, research from scholars (Miller 2023, Ajaegbu et al, 2021 & Akouro 2020) had focus on social media as a tool for marketing but with fewer or none concerned in the aspect of perception of its use. Similarly, more studies in this area, had been more of international research ( Lawal, 2019. Alase, 2021 & Ajibade 2023) with little reference in Nigeria and precisely western part of the country. In area of research methodology, studies before now has been of quantitative more than qualitative, (Dehalwar & Shashikant 2023) in which findings could have been enriched better with qualitative research.

Assessing the popularity of content creators and their unique role, they tend to have played a significant role in shaping consumer behavior and marketing trends, particularly among certain demographics like female students (Moulard 2020). In addition to building relationships and promoting products, services, and personal brands, content creators especially those enrolled in universities are increasingly using social media for marketing. The dynamics of how content creators at Thomas Adewumi University (TAU) perceive and utilize social media for marketing, however, are not well understood. It is with all noted gaps observed in research previously conducted that this study examined social media preference as a marketing tool and perception of its use among female students of Thomas Adewumi University.

### **1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

1. To identify the most preferred social media platforms among student content creators at Thomas Adewumi University for marketing purposes.
2. To examine reasons for the choice preference of social media for marketing among student content creators at Thomas Adewumi University.

3. To examine the pattern of use of social media as marketing tool among student content creators at Thomas Adewumi University
4. To examine how student content creators at Thomas Adewumi University perceive the effectiveness of social media as a marketing tool for promoting products or personal brands.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION**

1. Which social media platforms do content creators at Thomas Adewumi University prefer to use for marketing purposes?
2. What are the reasons for the choice preference of social media for marketing among student content creators at Thomas Adewumi University?
3. What is the pattern of use of social media as marketing tool among student content creators at Thomas Adewumi University?
4. How do student content creators at Thomas Adewumi University perceive the effectiveness of social media as a marketing tool for promoting products or personal brands?

#### **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study is very valuable since it adds to the expanding understanding of social media's role as a powerful marketing tool. Given the growing influence of digital platforms on consumer behavior and individual decisions; and knowing how content creators use social media to offers valuable insights into the dynamic interplay between marketing tactics and students content creators, particularly at Thomas Adewumi University (TAU) and their involvement in marketing.

The Conceptual Implications of this study focused on social media and marketing. The research identified the most preferred social media platforms among content creators in TAU. By looking into the preferences and perceptions of female student influencers at (TAU), the study set to explain and give insight to a deeper understanding of the complex and different nature of social media marketing.

This study explored uses and gratifications theory, which suggest people actively choose media to fulfill specific needs and desires. It examined reasons for the choice preference of social media for marketing among student content creators in TAU. By examining the motivations and behaviors of student content creators, the study informs theoretical understandings of social media marketing.

The motivation to increase the businesses point and organizations on how to develop effective social media marketing strategies that go on line with student content creators at (TAU). The research embraced the effectiveness of social media as a marketing tool.

Finally, the study examined how students content creators at TAU perceive the effectiveness of social media as a marketing tool for promoting products or personal brands.

## **1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The study focused on undergraduate content creators of Thomas Adewumi University preference for social media use for marketing and their perceptions of its effectiveness. As a kind of marketing tool, the scope involves looking at the kinds of social media content that these most commonly read. The study investigated how these programmers affect students' perceptions and marketing skills. It will involve a sample of undergraduate student content creators at Thomas Adewumi Universities in Kwara State.

The study, which was conducted on a university campus precisely Thomas Adewumi University, provided a unique insight into the perceived use of social media by student content creators and the negative and positive effects as a marketing tool.

Data will be collected from participants within a month period as conveniently scheduled by each participant.

### **1.7 DEFINITION OF TERM**

**Preference:** It refers to the fact that you like something or someone more than another thing or person

**Social media:** social media is a way to communicate online, using websites and apps to share information, form communities, and connect with others.

**Marketing tool:** Marketing tools are techniques, strategies, or tools used to promote, develop, and improve a business's products and services.

**Content creators:** A content creator is an individual that produces content meant to entertain, inform, educate, or engage a specific audience.

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## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Conceptual Review**

This chapter presents a review of existing literature relevant to the study. It begins with a conceptual review, examining key concepts such as social media. The chapter further reviewed the concept of marketing, with a focus on social media marketing tools, and explored the role of perceived use of social media by student content creators, particularly in shaping digital engagement. It also conducted a theoretical review as well as an empirical review on the perceived use of social media by student's content creators

##### **2.1.1 Concept of Social Media**

The concept of "social media" has been widely discussed in academic literature, with literatures often arguing of no fixed universally acceptable view that defines it. Couldry and Hepp (2017), remark that I, concepts are not fixed; they evolve over time and are shaped by the contexts in which they are used. This flexibility is particularly evident in the case of social media, which has been defined in various ways depending on the disciplinary perspective and the era in which it is examined. However, before we begin, it is essential to break down the term into its constituent parts: "social" and "media." The term "social" refers to interactions between individuals or groups, often characterized by the sharing of ideas, information, and experiences (Boyd, 2019). On the other hand, "media" refers to the tools or platforms used to communicate and disseminate information, such as television, radio, and the internet (Jenkins, 2020). When combined, "social media" refers to digital platforms that enable users to create, share, and interact with content in a networked environment (van Dijck, 2019). Arguably, this perspective captures the essence of social media as a dynamic and interactive space where communication and collaboration occur.

Studies often argue that social media is not a new phenomenon but rather an evolution of earlier forms of communication. For instance, Fuchs (2021) contends that social media builds on the principles of traditional media, such as newspapers and television, but differs in its ability to facilitate user-generated content and real-time interaction (Fuchs, 2021). Similarly, Papacharissi (2019) notes that the roots of social media can be traced back to early internet forums and chat rooms, which allowed users to connect and share information. One of the key features of social media is its ability to democratize communication. Van Dijck (2019), opines that social media platforms empower individuals to become content creators rather than passive consumers of information. This shift has significant implications for how information is produced and disseminated. For example, during the Arab Spring uprisings, social media played a crucial role in mobilizing protesters and spreading information about the events in real time (Tufekci, 2021). Social media can serve as a tool for social and political change, enabling marginalized voices to be heard (Tufekci, 2021).

In addition, however, Boyd (2019) argues that social media platforms provide users with new ways to express themselves and connect with others. For instance, platforms like Instagram and TikTok allow individuals to curate their online personas through photos, videos, and captions (Boyd, 2019). This finding indicates the need for a wider understanding of social media's effects on well-being. Thus, Papacharissi (2019) acknowledged how social media blurs the boundaries between public and private life, as users often share personal information with a wide audience. However, this commercialization of social media has raised concerns about its impact on creativity and autonomy. As Fuchs (2021), assert that, the commodification of user-generated content undermines the democratic potential of social media by turning users into unpaid laborers for corporations.

However, considering further, the diversity of social media platforms, such as Instagram, Twitter now X, Facebook, and TikTok, highlights their unique roles as tools for marketing, social influence, and interaction. Instagram, for instance, has become a powerful platform for visual storytelling and brand promotion (Abidin, 2019). According to Abidin (2019), Instagram's emphasis on aesthetics and curated content allows users and businesses to create aspirational lifestyles that resonate with audiences. However, the platform's open nature also makes it susceptible to misinformation and toxic behavior, raising concerns about its societal impact (Fuchs, 2021). Facebook, on the other hand, remains one of the most widely used platforms globally, with its algorithmic feed shaping how users consume content. Van Dijck (2019) notes that Facebook's business model relies heavily on data collection and targeted advertising, which has sparked debates about privacy and ethical concerns. Despite these criticisms, Facebook's extensive user base makes it a vital tool for community building and social interaction (Van Dijck, 2019). TikTok, the newest among these platforms, has revolutionized content creation through its short-form video format. According to Jenkins (2020), TikTok's algorithm prioritizes creativity and virality, allowing users to gain massive followings quickly. This has made it a fertile ground for viral marketing campaigns and youth culture expression (Jenkins, 2020). However, scholars like Papacharissi (2019) caution that TikTok's addictive design and data practices raise questions about its long-term societal implications. Collectively, these platforms demonstrate the dual nature of social media as both empowering and exploitative, reflecting the broader tensions in digital culture (Papacharissi, 2019; Fuchs, 2021).

### **2.1.2 Concept of Marketing**

The concept of marketing, like many terms in social sciences, has been a subject of continuous debate and academic inquiry (Kotler, 2020). In Nigeria, as in other parts of the world, the meaning

and scope of marketing are still contested, with different scholars offering varied perspectives. Adebayo and Akinyele (2020) define marketing as “a dynamic organizational function that creates, communicates, and delivers customer value through targeted offerings that meet the needs of the market.” These scholars contend that marketing is not a static activity but a dynamic process where organizations constantly innovate to meet consumer needs. This aligns with Kotler and Keller’s (2016) view, which defines marketing as “the process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging products and value with others.” Both definitions underscore the central role of value creation in marketing (Kotler & Keller, 2016). This study on the preference of social media as a marketing tool and perception of its use by influencers posits that marketing today must account for digital spaces where interactions with consumers occur not just in business settings but also in online communities and platforms.

In the view of Ogunsiji (2021), marketing is seen as the process by which businesses promote and sell products or services to consumers with the aim of generating profit (Ogunsiji, 2021). This traditional definition, while clear in its purpose of generating profits, is limited when applied to contemporary marketing strategies, especially in the today's context where social media marketing has become a dominant tool. The scholar's definition provides a useful starting point by recognizing the fundamental goal of marketing as the generation of profit. Conversely, Armstrong and Kotler (2017), argue that marketing today involves much more than just transactional exchanges; it incorporates engagement, loyalty-building, and brand storytelling.

Similarly, in his study on the Nigerian retail sector, Okafor (2019) defines marketing as “the act of understanding consumer needs and preferences, and strategically positioning products in the market to meet these needs efficiently and effectively.” The author focuses on consumer-centric marketing strategies, which are particularly relevant in Nigeria’s diverse market, where consumer

preferences are not only shaped by economic factors but also by cultural and social influences (Okafor, 2019). Okafor's argument contributes to understanding how Nigerian businesses tailor their offerings to align with consumer tastes. Sheth & Uslay (2017), further enrich this perspective as he contends that understanding consumer behavior and preferences is at the heart of effective marketing strategies. The study on the preference of social media as a marketing tool and perception of its use by influencers at suggests that marketing in the Nigerian context must now include not only traditional methods of market research but also social media listening tools and influencer partnerships to better understand and engage consumers in real-time.

According to Akinyele & Owojori (2020), marketing is "the practice of managing customer relationships, building trust, and establishing long-term loyalty, while driving revenue for the organization." The importance of trust and long-term customer relationships is of paramount concern according to this literature, concepts that have been central to businesses for decades. In the context of digital marketing, Oyetunde & Bakare (2021) define marketing as "the strategic use of digital technologies, particularly social media, to create brand awareness, engage with customers, and drive sales." This definition recognizes the growing importance of digital tools, particularly social media platforms, in modern marketing strategies. It is particularly relevant in the Nigerian context, where social media usage has exploded in recent years, with platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram playing a significant role in marketing efforts. The scholars' definition is important because it acknowledges the shift from traditional marketing channels to digital platforms.

From the above literature, it becomes evident that there is no single, universally accepted way to understand marketing. Each definition captures important aspects of the concept, from value creation to customer relationships, and from the use of digital technologies to the role of

influencers. Therefore, this study asserts that marketing in the contemporary Nigerian context is an evolving process that transcends traditional business models and embraces digital and social interactions.

### **2.1.3 Social Media Marketing Tools**

In view of the previous discussions, it becomes clear that the concept of marketing can be understood differently depending on several factors such as target audience, platform, geographical location, and even the type of product or service being marketed. For instance, the marketing strategies adopted in a digital setting differ significantly from traditional methods like print media or television advertisements. As digital technology advances, marketers are increasingly leveraging social media platforms to reach their target audiences. This study considers the following as the most notable social media marketing tools:

#### **1. Facebook Ads**

Facebook Ads remain one of the most popular and effective social media marketing tools used by businesses globally. According to Olalere (2020), Facebook provides businesses with an opportunity to reach a large, diverse audience through paid advertisements that appear in users' news feeds, sidebars, and other sections of the platform.

#### **2. Instagram Marketing**

Instagram is another dominant social media marketing tool, particularly for brands that rely on visually-driven content. In the words of Ogunleye & Olamide (2021), Instagram has become the go-to platform for businesses that want to engage with a younger, trend-focused audience. This tool's adoption has been high, especially among Nigerian startups and small businesses aiming to build brand awareness with relatively low marketing budgets (Oyetunde, 2021).

### **3. X (Twitter) Ads**

Twitter, with its real-time news feed and vast user base, has proven to be an effective tool for businesses to engage with their audiences. Twitter Ads, as noted by Olowolayemo (2020), offer businesses the ability to run campaigns that target specific interests and demographics. However, a key challenge is managing the high volume of engagement on the platform, which can sometimes lead to negative publicity if not handled carefully (Akinyele & Owojori, 2020).

### **4. TikTok**

TikTok has emerged as a transformative tool for social media marketing, leveraging its unique algorithm and user engagement strategies to redefine how brands connect with audiences. According to Chen et al. (2021), TikTok's algorithm prioritizes content virality over follower count, enabling even small businesses and individual creators to achieve widespread visibility (Smith, 2020).

#### **2.1.4 Content Creators**

The concept of "content creators" lacks a single, universally accepted definition, as different scholars and industry experts have approached it from varying perspectives (Abidin, 2021). According to the Oxford Dictionary, "content" refers to "information or experiences produced for an audience," while a "creator" is "one who brings something into existence. However, the evolving nature of digital media has expanded this definition, making it more complex. In the view of Duffy (2020), a content creator is "a digital laborer who produces media for online platforms, often blurring the lines between hobbyist and professional work." Duffy's viewpoint points out to the dual nature of content creation as both a passion-driven activity and a form of employment. This perspective is critiqued by Abidin (2021), who argues that Duffy's definition overlooks the



commercial and branding aspects that many content creators engage in. Abidin contends that content creators are "entrepreneurial selves who strategically craft online personas to monetize their influence." This shift from mere production to strategic self-branding highlights how content creation has become deeply embedded in digital marketing economies (Abidin, 2021).

Building on these definitions, Marwick (2021) asserts that content creators are "micro-celebrities who leverage social media to build personal brands and cultivate fanbases." Her argument aligns with Abidin's in recognizing the commercial motivations behind content creation but adds a layer of audience interaction as a defining feature. In contrast, Senft (2020) critiques this celebrity-focused view, arguing that not all content creators seek fame some produce niche content for small, dedicated communities.

This definition acknowledges their multifaceted roles while recognizing the dynamic interplay between agency and systemic limitations in shaping their work. As social media continues to evolve, so too must our conceptualization of content creators, moving beyond narrow definitions to embrace their diverse realities.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

The Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory, developed by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch in the 1970s, is adopted as the theoretical paradigm that seeks to examine this study on social media preference as a marketing tool and its perception by content creators of Thomas Adewumi university. The theory provides a framework for understanding why individuals actively seek out specific media to fulfill particular needs and desires. The theory argues that audiences are not passive recipients of media content but rather active participants who choose media based on their personal goals, motivations, and social contexts (Katz et al., 1973). This perspective shifts the

focus from what media does to people to what people do with media, emphasizing the role of individual agency in media consumption. The theory originated as a response to the dominant effects model of media at the time, which viewed audiences as passive and easily influenced. Katz and his colleagues sought to explore how individuals use media to satisfy cognitive, affective, personal integrative, social integrative, and tension-free needs (Blumler & Katz, 1974). These assumptions form the foundation of the U&G theory, which posits that media use is goal-directed, that audiences are aware of their needs, and that media competes with other sources of need satisfaction (Ruggiero, 2000).

Applying the U&G theory to the research topic, "Social Media preference as a Marketing Tool and Perception by content creators of Thomas Adewumi University," offers valuable insights into why female student influencers choose specific social media platforms and how they perceive their utility for marketing purposes. According to the theory, individuals select media that best fulfills their needs, whether for information, entertainment, social interaction, or self-expression (Katz et al., 1973). These platforms cater to the influencers' needs for self-expression and social validation, which are central to the U&G theory's assumptions (Duffy, 2020).

The theory's emphasis on audience activity and selectivity is particularly relevant in understanding how female student influencers at Thomas Adewumi University navigate the digital landscape. Studies have shown that young women often use social media to build communities, share experiences, and gain recognition (Marwick, 2021).

Moreover, the U&G theory's focus on the social context of media use is crucial for understanding Social Media preference as a Marketing Tool and Perception by content creators of Thomas Adewumi University. In a university setting, social media often serves as a platform for peer influence and cultural exchange. Content creators may use their platforms to share academic tips,

fashion trends, or lifestyle content, thereby shaping the preferences and behaviors of their followers (Smith, 2022). This aligns with the theory's argument that media use is influenced by social and environmental factors, such as peer networks and cultural norms (Blumler & Katz, 1974). This aligns with the theory's assumption that media use is goal-directed and tailored to specific audience needs (Katz et al., 1973). Furthermore, the theory's emphasis on the active role of audiences is evident in the way followers interact with influencers' content, through likes, comments, and shares, creating a feedback loop that reinforces the influencer's motivations (Duffy, 2020).

Therefore, the Uses and Gratifications theory presents a wide and flexible framework for examining the Social Media preference as a Marketing Tool and Perception by content creators of Thomas Adewumi University. It reveals that the active role of media users and their motivations, the theory helps to explain why these content creators choose specific platforms, how they use them to fulfill personal and social needs, and how their content resonates with their audiences.

### **2.3 Empirical Review**

In recent years, social media has emerged as a dominant platform for marketing, with content creators playing a pivotal role in shaping consumer behavior. This shift has led to a growing body of academic literature examining the effectiveness of social media as a marketing tool and the public's perception of content creators-driven promotions (Hughes relevant 2019; Hu et al, 2019; Lou and Yuan, 2019; Schouten et al, 2020; and Tafesse and Wood, 2021). These studies examine various aspects of content creators marketing, from consumer engagement to the authenticity of creator endorsements.

A study by Schouten et al. (2020) identified key content creators characteristics-such as credibility, attractiveness, and relatability-that significantly affect consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. The study's meta-analysis revealed that content creators perceived as credible and relatable are more likely to drive consumer engagement and conversions. Tafesse and Wood (2021) further argued that influencer marketing effectiveness depends on the congruence between the creator's personality and the brand's image, reinforcing the idea that content creators design alignment is crucial for marketing success.

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## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the research methods used in the study. It described the research design, the population of the study, and the area where the research will take place. It also explains the sample size, the sampling techniques used, and the process of data collection. Additionally, the chapter highlights how the collected data will be analyzed and the ethical considerations that will guide the study.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

This study adopted a qualitative research design. Qualitative research is ideal for exploring the experiences, perceptions, and motivations of individuals in a detailed and contextual manner (Omenugha, Uzuegbunam, & Ndolo, 2021,) As this research sought to investigate the social media preferences and perceptions of content creators at Thomas Adewumi University, the qualitative approach is appropriate. It allows the researcher to explore how these individuals navigate social media platforms to market content or personal brands. Unlike quantitative approaches that rely on numerical analysis, qualitative research emphasizes depth, interpretation, and meaning (Omenugha, Uzuegbunam, & Ndolo, 2021). Face-to-face interviews was conducted, enabling rich discussions with participants. This method also allows for clarification of responses and observation of non-verbal cues, further enhancing the reliability and depth of the data collected (Okeke & Eze, 2019). Overall, the qualitative design is well-suited to explore how social media is preferred and perceived as a marketing tool among content creators in the university.

### **3.3 Population**

The study was conducted at Thomas Adewumi University (TAU), located in Oko-Irese, Kwara State. The university is home to a vibrant student body, many of whom are active on social media for purposes including communication, entertainment, and content creation. The target population consist student content creator individuals who produce and promote digital content on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and X (formerly Twitter) and who use these platforms for marketing or personal branding. As research shows, university students in Nigeria increasingly participate in digital content creation, with social media serving as a critical channel for brand promotion and self-marketing (Eze, Chinedu-Eze, & Bello, 2021). Notably, many of these creators operate in niches such as fashion, lifestyle, beauty, and education, areas where social media marketing thrives (Alagbe & Solomon, 2023). This setting provides a fertile ground for examining how social media preferences influence marketing practices and how these platforms are perceived by student creators at TAU.

### **3.4 Sample Size**

The population included all student content creators at Thomas Adewumi University who actively use social media platforms for marketing or promotional purposes. Given the increasing prominence of digital marketing and personal branding among Nigerian youths, this group represents a significant demographic in digital influence. In general, population of undergraduates in Thomas Adewumi is 1,328; however, since the study is on content creators only. The study therefore employed a purposive sample of twelve (12) content creators out of 50 content creators discovered. Creswell (2012), recommendation for qualitative research using interview is between 5-25 informant, therefore, 12 creators were selected based on the fast growing strength in media space, which is over two years already. This sample size also aligns with Guest, Namey, & Chen



(2020), and Vasileiou et al. (2018), which reveal a sample range of 6–20 is often sufficient to reach data saturation in qualitative inquiries. Therefore, twelve participants were allowed for diverse perspectives while ensuring depth in understanding their platform preferences, strategies, and perceptions.

### **3.5 Sampling Technique**

This research used both purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Purposive sampling involves selecting participants who meet specific criteria relevant to the study (Campbell et al., 2020). In this case, eligible participants must be active student content creators at TAU who use platforms like Instagram, TikTok, or X for content promotion and marketing. This method ensures that the data gathered is rich and relevant to the study objectives. Snowball sampling complemented this by allowing initial participants to recommend others who also meet the selection criteria (Adu, Rydberg, & Heckert, 2022). This is particularly effective for reaching content creators who may not have a public presence but are influential within the university's social media circles. As Sadler et al. (2020) highlight, snowball sampling is useful in accessing hidden populations. This combination ensures that the study captures a diverse and credible representation of content creators at TAU.

### **3.6 Data Collection Methods**

The study relied on primary data, gathered through face-to-face interviews. Primary data is essential in qualitative research as it captures firsthand insights into the lived experiences of participants. A semi-structured interview format was adopted, combining open-ended questions with the flexibility to explore emerging themes during the conversation. Participants were asked about their preferred social media platforms, reasons for their preferences, the marketing strategies

they employ, and their perceptions of platform effectiveness. Interviews will take place in quiet, private locations within TAU to foster comfort and openness. Each interview lasted approximately 10–15 minutes and was audio-recorded (with participants' consent) for accurate transcription and analysis.

### **3.7 Data Analysis Techniques**

Thematic analysis was employed to interpret the interview data. This method allows the researcher to identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) within qualitative data. Audio recordings were transcribed verbatim, and transcription was carefully reviewed. Recurring ideas were coded and organized into broader themes aligned with the study's objectives. To complement this, content description was used to summarize participants' responses in a structured and coherent manner. This combined approach ensured a thorough and nuanced understanding of how content creators at TAU engage with social media as a marketing tool.

### **3.8 Ethical Considerations**

The study adhered to ethical research standards. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to interviews. Participants were assured of confidentiality, and pseudonyms were used where necessary to protect their identities. Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were informed that they can withdraw at any time without consequence. Ethical approval was sought from the relevant authorities at Thomas Adewumi University before data collection begins.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyzes the findings gathered from the participants of this study, which focuses on the use of social media as a marketing tool and how it is perceived by content creators at Thomas Adewumi University. After collecting responses from student content creators, this chapter aims to make sense of their shared experiences, preferences, and opinions.

### 4.2 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### 4.2.1 PARTICIPANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

| PARTICIPANT    | GENDER | AGE | LEVEL | RELIGION  |
|----------------|--------|-----|-------|-----------|
| Participant 1  | Female | 20  | 400   | Christian |
| Participant 2  | Male   | 21  | 400   | Muslims   |
| Participant 3  | Male   | 20  | 300   | Christian |
| Participant 4  | Female | 19  | 300   | Christian |
| Participant 5  | Female | 18  | 200   | Christian |
| Participant 6  | Male   | 22  | 200   | Muslims   |
| Participant 7  | Female | 20  | 300   | Christian |
| Participant 8  | Male   | 21  | 100   | Christian |
| Participant 9  | Female | 19  | 400   | Muslims   |
| Participant 10 | Female | 23  | 500   | Christian |
| Participant 11 | Male   | 21  | 200   | Christian |
| Participant 12 | Female | 18  | 100   | Muslims   |

*Source: developed from the study data*

The demographic distribution in Table 1 reveals a diverse mix of student content creators at Thomas Adewumi University. The sample includes both male (5) and female (7) participants, ensuring gender balance in perspectives on social media usage as a marketing tool.

In terms of age, most participants fall within the 18–23-year-old range, aligning with the typical age bracket of undergraduate students. This suggests they are digital natives, which may influence their high engagement and comfort with social media platforms for marketing purposes.

Participants span across all academic levels from 100 to 500, providing insights from both students and those with more exposure to academic and practical content creation experiences.

Religiously, both Christian and Muslim participants are represented, showing inclusiveness across the two dominant religious groups in the region.

## 4.2.2 THEMATIC ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### 4.2.2.1 RQ1: WHICH SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS DO CONTENT CREATORS AT THOMAS ADEWUMI UNIVERSITY PREFER TO USE FOR MARKETING PURPOSES?

**Table 1: Social media platform mostly used by content creator for marketing purpose**

| Theme  | Sub theme   | Summary Insight  |
|--|---|--|
| Dominance of Instagram in Marketing                                | -Visual Appeal and Branding Control<br>-Engagement and Audience Growth<br>-Content Versatility  | Instagram offers strong visual presentation and branding consistency, making it ideal for curated, aesthetic marketing strategies.   |
| Growing Preference for TikTok                                      | -Viral Reach and Fast Growth<br>-Fun and Interactive Nature   | TikTok's algorithm enables rapid exposure and viral growth, making it especially appealing for quick audience building.  |
| Strategic Use of Both Platforms                                    | -Platform-Specific Strengths<br>-Audience Diversification   | users combine Instagram's branding and community strengths with TikTok's trend-driven reach to maximize impact.  |
| Key Features That Make a Social Media Platform Ideal for Marketing | -Engagement and Interaction Tools<br>-Multimedia and Creative Content Support<br>-Analytics and Insights<br>Viral and Trend-Friendly Environment<br>-Audience Reach and Targeting Capability<br>-Brand Building and Trust Development | Features like comments, shares, and live sessions help foster direct communication and build strong community relationships. Built-in metrics and performance tracking tools enable data-driven strategies and continuous content improvement. |

*Source: developed from the study data*



*Figure 1: Social media platform mostly used by content creators for marketing*

*Adapted from the research data*

## **Theme 1: Dominance of Instagram in Marketing Activities**

Instagram emerged as the most commonly used platform among respondents, with its dominance attributed to three key factors: visual appeal and branding control, engagement and audience growth, and content versatility. Participant 2 explained, “I mostly use Instagram... it gives me more control over how my page looks,” highlighting Instagram’s strength in visual appeal and branding control. In terms of engagement and audience growth, Participant 3 emphasized that “Instagram is where I get the most engagement,” particularly for visually appealing tech content. Participant 5 reinforced this by stating, “I’ve grown my page to over 4k followers... my posts and stories always get good reach,” indicating how Instagram’s algorithm and user behavior support ongoing follower interaction and visibility.

Respondents also valued Instagram’s content versatility. Participants 1, 2, and 7 cited the usefulness of tools like “stories, reels, and highlights” in delivering content across different formats and timeframes. These insights support existing literature suggesting that Instagram provides an effective blend of visual branding tools, diverse content formats, and engagement mechanisms, making it an ideal platform for sustained marketing campaigns (Anderson, 2023).

## **Theme 2: Growing Preference for TikTok**

While Instagram remains the dominant platform, several respondents indicated a growing preference for TikTok, largely due to its viral reach and fast growth as well as its fun and interactive nature. Participant 4 shared, “I like TikTok because it’s fun and easy to go viral,” pointing to the platform’s appeal for creators who seek rapid exposure. Participant 10 added, “It’s fast, interactive, and makes my videos go far beyond TAU,” highlighting the fun and interactive nature of TikTok. The platform’s features such as duet, stitch, and real-time

comment interaction make content creation engaging while promoting community participation and creativity.

TikTok's impact on rapid audience growth was also emphasized. Participant 12 noted, "TikTok helped me grow from 0 to 2,000+ followers in months," showcasing how creators especially newer ones can build followers much more quickly than on traditional platforms. These responses align with existing studies that highlight TikTok's strength in driving engagement and accelerating follower growth, particularly among Gen Z users and emerging content creators (Montag et al., 2022; Smith & Anderson, 2023).

### **Theme 3: Strategic Use of Both Instagram and TikTok**

Some respondents demonstrated a deliberate and strategic use of both Instagram and TikTok to optimize reach and engagement, leveraging the platform-specific strengths, while targeting diverse audience segments. Participant 1 explained, "I use Instagram and TikTok the most... they're very visual... Plus, their algorithm supports discoverability," recognizing the visual appeal and algorithm-driven content visibility that both platforms offer. Participant 6 noted, "Instagram gives me the most exposure, but I still use TikTok for certain content," suggesting an understanding of platform-specific strengths where Instagram is prioritized for broader reach and professional branding, while TikTok is reserved for trend-driven, entertaining, or informal content.

Likewise, Participant 11 stated, "I use both but lean more toward Instagram for reaching new clients," indicating a strategic balance between brand visibility and engagement experimentation across platforms. These insights align with recent literature, which underscores how multi-platform strategies allow creators to expand digital visibility, adapt to varied audience preferences, and strengthen overall brand presence (Nguyen & Tran, 2023).



By selectively utilizing Instagram and TikTok based on content type and engagement patterns, creators demonstrate a nuanced, goal-driven approach to platform use.

#### **Theme 4: Key Features That Make a Social Media Platform Ideal for Marketing**

Participants emphasized that the ideal social media platform for marketing must possess a combination of features that promote engagement, creativity, reach, and trust. These tools help create two-way communication that encourages audience loyalty and active participation.

Participant 6 also emphasized features such as DMs, resharing testimonials, and tagging, which play a key role in brand building and trust development by enabling direct communication and social proof. The participants also noted the advantage of a viral and trend-friendly environment, where platforms with strong algorithmic reach such as reels and trending hashtags offer greater chances of content visibility and rapid dissemination.

#### 4.2.2.2 RQ2: WHAT ARE THE REASONS FOR THE CHOICE PREFERENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR MARKETING AMONG STUDENTS CONTENT CREATORS AT THOMAS ADEWUMI UNIVERSITY?

**Table 2: Choice preference of social media platforms used for marketing purposes by content creators.**

| Themes                                    | Sub theme   | Summary Insight  |
|---|---|--|
| 1.Audience-Centric Decision-Making        | Demographics, Interests, Community Sensitivity          | Users prioritize content decisions based on their audience's characteristics, preferences, and community norms to ensure relevance and acceptance.       |
| 2.Content Type Suitability                | Visual, Textual, Interactive Content                    | Different content formats are chosen strategically to match the message intent and maximize engagement across diverse audience types.                    |
| 3.Platform Functionality & Features       | Engagement tools, multi-format support, Trend potential | Users leverage platform-specific tools and features such as interactive elements and trending capabilities to enhance visibility and user interaction.   |
| 4.Peer Influence & Observational Learning | Learning from others, Following platform trends         | Users observe peers and trending content to guide their own content choices, often mimicking successful strategies to stay relevant and gain traction.   |
| 5.Speed and Reach                         | Viral capabilities, Real-time dissemination             | Content decisions are influenced by the desire for rapid distribution and high visibility, favoring formats and platforms that support instant virality. |

*Source developed from the study data*



Figure 2: *Choice preference of social media platforms used for marketing purposes by content creators.*  
*Adapted from the research data*

## **Theme 1: Audience-Centric Decision-Making**

All participants highlight the importance of identifying and understanding their target audience when choosing a social media platform. Participant 6 explained that for her skincare promotions, “young women are most active on Instagram and WhatsApp.”

In addition to general audience focus, participants also emphasized demographic factors, audience interests, and community sensitivity as influential in their decision-making. For instance, Participant 4 shared that “Facebook is better when targeting older audiences or parents, while younger ones are barely there anymore.” Meanwhile, Participant 9 noted, “I switch platforms depending on what’s trending with my audience some of them care a lot about activism and safe spaces, so I avoid apps with toxic communities.”

This aligns with existing literature on digital marketing, which identifies demographic targeting, psychographics, and cultural awareness as core strategic elements (Sugiarto, 2022).

## **Theme 2: Content Type Suitability**

Content creators often matched platform choice to the format, function, and intention of their content whether visual, textual, or interactive. Participant 2 explained, “If it’s something visual or trendy, I go for Instagram or TikTok. If it’s more about opinion or awareness, I use Twitter.” This highlights how visual content, such as images, videos, and aesthetic layouts, finds a natural home on platforms like Instagram and TikTok.

Participant 8, who shares poetry and aesthetic posts, preferred “Instagram and Twitter because they help me share poetry, book reviews, and aesthetic quotes.” In this case, textual content like written reflections, poetry, and quotes is better suited for platforms that support longer captions or threaded posts.

This illustrates that the nature of content whether visual, textual, or interactive is a key determinant in platform selection. These strategic decisions reflect the understanding that alignment between content type and platform features significantly enhances audience engagement (Shen, 2023).

### **Theme 3: Platform Functionality and Features**

Several respondents pointed out that platform tools and features heavily influence their platform choices, emphasizing how engagement tools, multi-format support, and trend potential shape their strategies. Participant 2 emphasized the need for “multiple content types like videos, stories, or polls,” which he or she believes allow creators to diversify their messaging and appeal to broader audience preferences. Participant 10 favoured platforms like Instagram and TikTok as they “allow videos and daily engagement”.

These insights underscore that platform functionality particularly tools for interaction, content versatility, and trend participation is critical in content strategy formulation. This aligns with scholarly perspectives that highlight how multi-functionality and feature-rich platforms enhance campaign reach and audience engagement (De Bruyn, 2020).

### **Theme 4: Peer Influence and Observational Learning**

Peer behaviour and observed success patterns play a notable role in shaping platform decisions among content creators. Participant 4, a new creator, shared, “I ask around to know what platforms are working for others,” illustrating the theme of learning from others seeking guidance from more experienced or successful peers to reduce trial and error.

This behaviour reflects following platform trends as a form of adaptive strategy in a fast-evolving digital environment. These support existing literature that emphasizes how social influence and

peer dynamics significantly shape digital strategy and platform adoption (Indian Media Studies, 2024).

### **Theme 5: Speed and Reach**

The ability to rapidly spread messages and connect with audiences in real time emerged as a major factor in platform selection. Participants consistently highlighted the importance of real-time dissemination reaching audiences instantly and frequently. Participant 5 shared, “I go with Instagram and WhatsApp status because they hit fast and people check them often,”

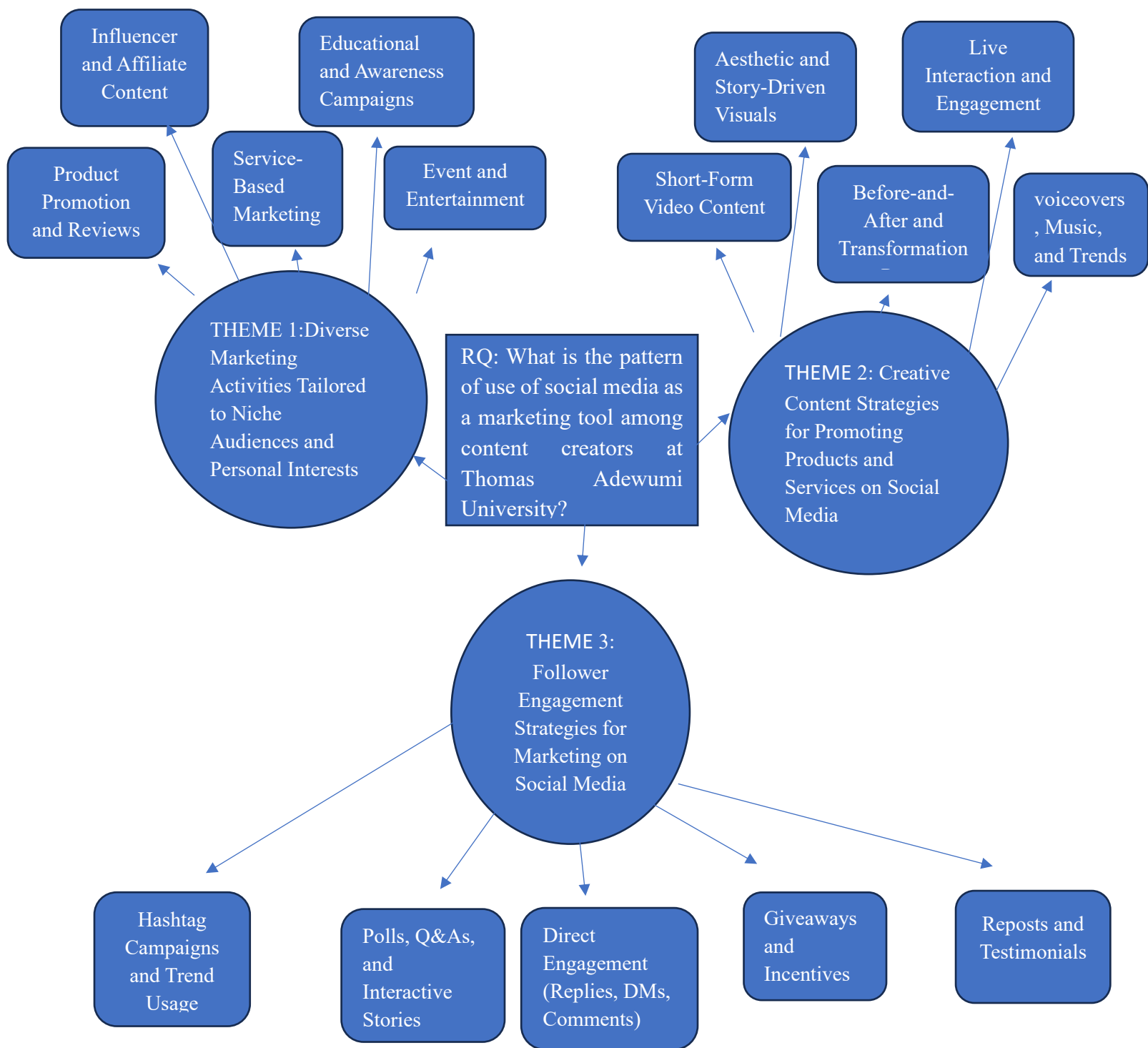
Participant 10 added that “quick motivational clips” perform best on Instagram and TikTok, reflecting a strategic alignment between short-form video content and platforms optimized for speed and mass reach. These insights align with current findings that visual-first platforms like TikTok offer high algorithmic reach, trend amplification, and real-time dissemination of content, making them attractive tools for creators seeking rapid engagement (Kietzmann et al., 2023)

#### 4.2.2.3.RQ3: WHAT IS THE PATTERN OF USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS MARKETING TOOL AMONG STUDENTS CONTENT CREATORS AT THOMAS ADEWUMI UNIVERSITY?

**Table 6: Pattern of use of social media as a marketing tool among content creators**

| Theme   | Sub-theme   | Summary Insight   |
|---|---|---|
| Diverse Marketing Activities Tailored to Niche Audiences and Personal Interests | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Product Promotion and Reviews</li> <li>-Service-Based Marketing</li> <li>-Event and Entertainment Promotion</li> <li>-Influencer and Affiliate Content</li> <li>-Educational and Awareness Campaigns</li> </ul>   | targeted product promotion and authentic reviews help engage niche audiences by addressing specific needs and preferences. service providers use tailored content to demonstrate value and build trust with their specific customer segments. |
| Creative Content Strategies for Promoting Products and Services on Social Media | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Short-Form Video Content</li> <li>- Before-and-After and Transformation Posts</li> <li>-Educational or Tutorial-Based Content</li> <li>-Aesthetic and Story-Driven Visuals</li> <li>-Live Interaction and Engagement</li> <li>-voiceovers, Music, and Trends</li> </ul> | Short videos capture attention quickly, making them ideal for product highlights and engaging storytelling. Visual transformations effectively demonstrate product or service impact, building credibility and interest.                      |
| Follower Engagement Strategies for Marketing on Social Media                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Direct Engagement (Replies, DMs, Comments)</li> <li>-Giveaways and Incentives</li> <li>-Polls, Q&amp;As, and Interactive Stories</li> <li>-Reposts and Testimonials</li> <li>-Hashtag Campaigns and Trend Usage</li> </ul>  | Personalized interactions build stronger relationships and increase follower loyalty. Offering rewards motivates participation and boosts audience growth and brand awareness.  |

*Source developed from the study data*



*Figure 3: pattern of use of social media as a marketing tool among content creators*

*Adapted from the research data*



### **Theme 1: Diverse Marketing Activities Tailored to Niche Audiences and Personal Interests**

Participants in the study engage in a wide range of marketing activities, often shaped by their personal interests, talents, and audience demographics. A significant portion focus on product promotion and reviews, particularly items relevant to student life. For instance, Participant 2 promotes “skincare brands, lip gloss, and student-friendly beauty items,” while Participant 3 creates “unboxing videos, reviews, and tutorials on apps,” combining entertainment with informative content.

Participant 12 stands out by using event and entertainment promotion, leveraging humor-driven skits to advertise local brands and small businesses in an engaging, relatable way. These diverse marketing approaches show how content creators strategically tailor their messaging and content type based on niche audiences, personal interests, and evolving digital trends aligning with Welling’s (2017) assertion that influencer marketing thrives on authenticity, specialization, and audience alignment.

### **Theme 2: Creative Content Strategies for Promoting Products and Services on Social Media**

Participants revealed a strong reliance on visually engaging and trend-aligned content strategies to promote products and services on social media. Participant 1 mentioned using “short videos (especially reels)” to showcase products, while Participant 12 creates “short and catchy skits and reaction videos,” leveraging humor and entertainment to connect with audiences. Participant 6 shared “transformation photos and client feedback,” and Participant 2 uses “before-and-after pictures and short review videos” to build authenticity and trust.

Additionally, many creators incorporate educational or tutorial-based content, guiding audiences through product use, beauty routines, or app functions, thus adding value while promoting. Some

participants also engage in live interaction and engagement, using features like Instagram Live or TikTok Live to demonstrate products in real time, answer questions, or hold giveaways creating a more personal and responsive experience.

### **Theme 3: Follower Engagement Strategies for Marketing on Social Media**

Most participants prioritize direct interaction. Participant 1 mentions using “reply to comments and DMs to build trust,” while Participant 3 engages via DMs to answer advice requests. Participant 10 uses “comment shoutouts and video replies” to keep conversations going, highlighting the importance of personalized communication.

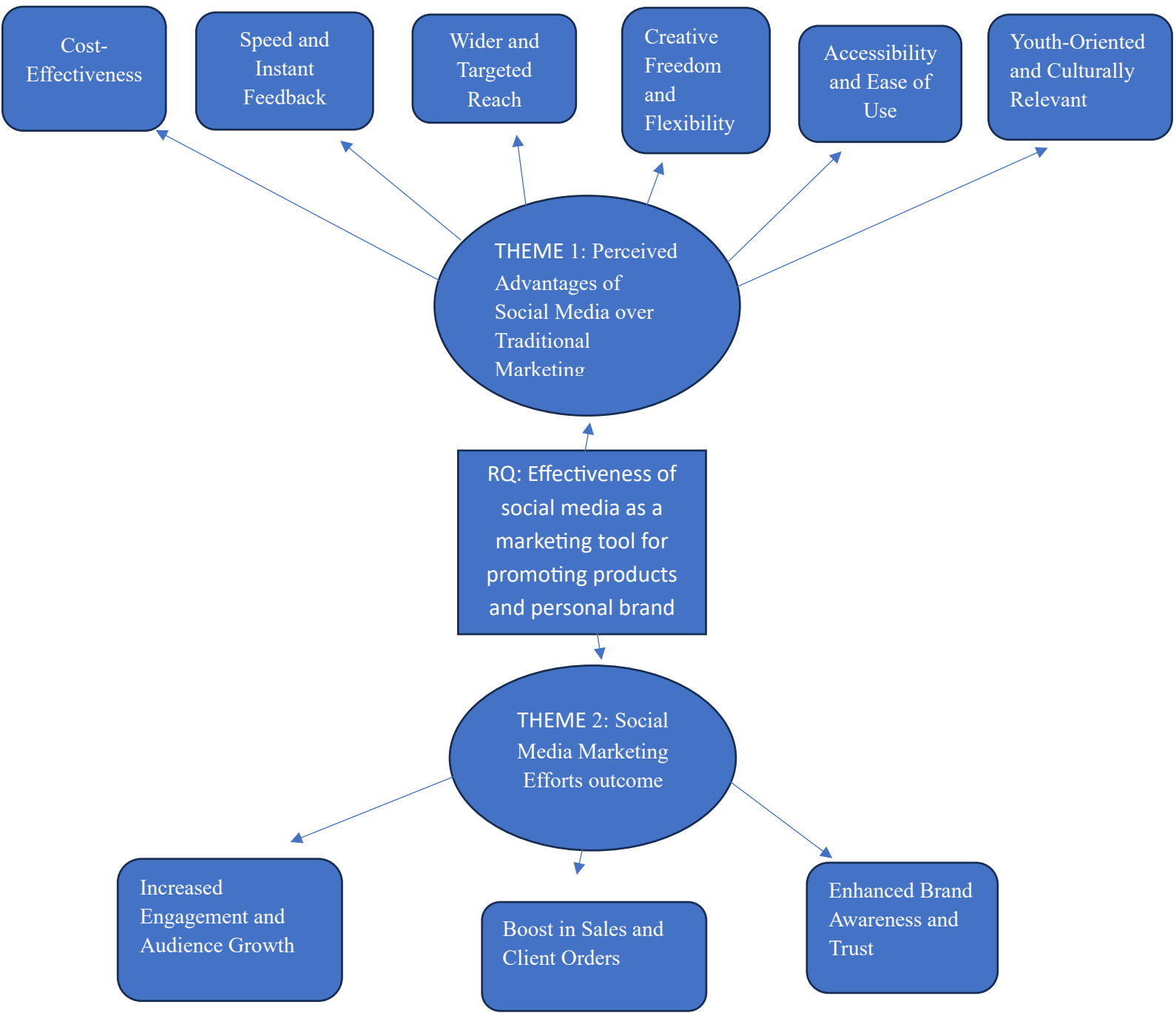
Content creators at Thomas Adewumi University employ multiple engagement tactics to maintain follower connection and interaction during marketing, including direct communication (comments and DMs), giveaways, interactive story features, reposting follower content, and strategic hashtag use. These methods foster community, trust, and ongoing audience involvement.

#### **4.2.2.4 RQ4: HOW DO STUDENT CONTENT CREATORS AT THOMAS ADEWUMI UNIVERSITY PERCEIVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS A MARKETING TOOL FOR PROMOTING PRODUCTS OR PERSONAL BRANDS?**

**Table 3: Effectiveness of social media as a marketing tool for promoting products and personal brand**

| Theme   | Sub-theme   | summary Insight   |
|---|---|---|
| Perceived Advantages of Social Media over Traditional Marketing | -Cost-Effectiveness<br>-Speed and Instant Feedback<br>-Wider and Targeted Reach<br>-Creative Freedom and Flexibility<br>-Accessibility and Ease of Use<br>-Youth-Oriented and Culturally Relevant | Social media offers affordable marketing options compared to traditional channels, making it accessible to a wide range of businesses. the immediacy of social media allows real-time responses and rapid campaign adjustments. |
| Social Media Marketing Efforts outcome                          | -Increased Engagement and Audience Growth<br>-Boost in Sales and Client Orders<br>-Enhanced Brand Awareness and Trust   | Social media marketing drives higher interaction rates and expands follower bases, enhancing community presence. Effective campaigns lead to measurable increases in product sales and service bookings.                        |

*Source developed from the study data*



*Figure 4: Effectiveness of social media as a marketing tool for promoting products and personal brand*

*Adapted from the research data*

### **Theme 1: Perceived Advantages of Social Media over Traditional Marketing**

integral role of social media in supporting the marketing objectives of student entrepreneurs and Participants perceived social media has having some notable advantage over traditional marketing. This mostly are reflected in sub themes of cost-effectiveness, speed and instant feedback, wider and targeted reach, creative freedom and flexibility, accessibility and ease of use, youth-oriented and culturally relevant. Participant 1 notes that “It’s faster, cheaper, and reaches more people instantly social media is just more accessible.” Participant 6 expresses that “social media makes small businesses feel big.

Social media offers affordable marketing options compared to traditional channels, making it accessible to a wide range of businesses. the immediacy of social media allows real-time responses and rapid campaign adjustments. (Shetty, 2024)

### **Theme 2: Social Media Marketing Effort Outcomes**

There are clear and notable outcomes participant recorded while using social media for marketing. Participant 4 shares, “My followers are growing and they interact more now.” Participant 9 notes, “Engagement is growing, especially during exam periods”. This suggests growing interaction and community connection. Participant 6 highlights, “I get daily orders now, and I’ve had repeat clients from other states.” Participant 1 also remarks, “Some brands told me their sales increased after I promoted them.”

Content creators at Thomas Adewumi University strongly perceive social media marketing efforts as effective in generating Higher engagement through comments, DMs, and community growth, Increased sales and repeat business, Stronger brand awareness and audience trust, New

professional opportunities such as paid promotions and event invitations. This highlights the tangible benefits social media brings to their marketing strategies. (Smith, Johnson & Davis (2024)

#### **4.3 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into how content creators at Thomas Adewumi University use social media platforms for marketing purposes. The study revealed that decisions regarding platform selection are primarily driven by considerations of the target audience and the nature of the content. Content creators prioritize platforms that align with the demographics, interests, and behaviors of their intended audience, ensuring that their marketing efforts are effectively targeted (Mintel, 2023). Additionally, the type of content being shared whether visual, textual, or interactive plays a significant role in influencing platform choice. Platforms such as Instagram and TikTok emerged as the most preferred due to their strong support for visually engaging and creative content, while platforms like Twitter are typically favored for more text-based and opinion driven content. (Piktochart, 2025)

Instagram remains the dominant platform among these creators because of its versatility, aesthetic appeal, and robust engagement tools such as reels, stories, and highlights (smith & Anderson, 2023). This platform affords creators greater control over branding and audience engagement. However, TikTok is rapidly gaining popularity due to its informal and interactive nature and its exceptional capacity to deliver content virally. Many participants strategically combine both platforms, using Instagram for structured branding and TikTok for rapid audience growth (Johnson, 2022)

Another key finding is that platform preference is largely influenced by opportunities for creativity and visual expression (Turner & well 2022). Content creators value platforms that provide tools

such as filters, effects, trending sounds, and other editing features that enhance the visual appeal and engagement potential of their content. Platforms that support storytelling, progress documentation, and foster emotional connections with audiences are particularly valued. Both Instagram and TikTok have been recognized for their ability to nurture creativity and allow for expressive and engaging marketing efforts (Kim & Park, 2022).

Participants reported switching from older, less effective platforms such as Facebook and Snapchat to those offering superior creative tools, greater engagement, and broader reach. These transitions were often motivated by the desire for more immediate feedback, increased visibility, and interactive features. An ideal platform for marketing, according to the participants, is characterized by features that enable engagement, multimedia creativity, data analytics, viral content potential, targeted reach, and opportunities for brand-building. (Leaver, Highfield & Abidin, 2020) Tools that facilitate direct communication and foster community engagement, such as likes, comments, direct messages, stories, reels, hashtags, and performance insights, were identified as crucial for effective marketing strategies.

The study also revealed that content creators engage in a wide range of marketing activities tailored to their personal interests and the needs of their niche audiences. These activities include product promotions, service advertisements, event publicity, influencer collaborations, and educational campaigns. (Cunningham & Craig, 2019). Whether promoting physical products like skincare and fashion, offering services such as photography and therapy, or engaging in advocacy and awareness efforts, creators leverage the flexibility and dynamic nature of social media to reach their goals.

Creative content strategies play a central role in the success of these marketing efforts. These strategies are designed to capture attention, foster engagement, and effectively showcase products or services to their audience. (Zheng, Huang, & Dou, 2021)

Follower engagement strategies are equally vital, with participants maintaining connections through direct interactions such as comments and direct messages, hosting giveaways, using interactive story features like polls and Q&As, reposting follower testimonials, and leveraging strategic hashtags (Mareick & Boyd, 2021). These methods not only strengthen community ties and build trust but also enhance visibility and encourage sustained audience participation.

Furthermore, participants expressed a clear consensus that social media offers significant advantages over traditional marketing methods. These advantages include greater cost-effectiveness, speed of dissemination, broader and more targeted audience reach, creative flexibility, ease of accessibility, and cultural relevance, particularly among younger demographics. (Turn, & Solomon, 2022) The immediate feedback mechanisms and global reach of social media platforms provide distinct benefits that traditional marketing channels are unable to match.

Finally, the outcomes reported by participants reinforce the effectiveness of social media as a marketing tool within the university context. (Wang & Huang, 2022) Content creators experienced increased engagement, audience growth, higher sales, strengthened brand awareness, and new opportunities such as collaborations and paid engagements. These tangible benefits highlight the content creators at Thomas Adewumi University.

In summary, this study demonstrates that social media is not only a central but also a highly strategic tool for marketing among content creators within this academic environment. (Tandoc & Takahashi, 2023).

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## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a summary of the key findings of the study, along with the conclusions drawn from the results. It also highlights the limitations encountered during the research process. In addition, this chapter offers recommendations based on the findings and suggests areas for future research. Overall, it provides a concise overview of the entire study.

#### **5.2 Summary of Findings**

The primary objective of this study was to examine social media preference as a marketing tool and its perception among undergraduate content creators at Thomas Adewumi University. Specifically, the study aimed to achieve the following objectives:

1. To identify the most preferred social media platforms among student content creators at Thomas Adewumi University for marketing purposes.
2. To examine reasons for the choice preference of social media for marketing among student content creators at Thomas Adewumi University.
3. To examine the pattern of use of social media as marketing tool among student content creators at Thomas Adewumi University
4. To examine how student content creators at Thomas Adewumi University perceive the effectiveness of social media as a marketing tool for promoting products or personal brands.

This study focused on uncovering the role of social media platforms in marketing activities and how these platforms are perceived by undergraduate content creators. In addition, the study examined the specific factors that motivate platform preference and switching behaviors. Data were collected through qualitative methods, involving participants who actively use social media for content creation and marketing purposes.

The following key findings emerged from the data:

Findings revealed that undergraduate content creators at Thomas Adewumi University have a strong preference for platforms that allow creativity, interaction, and visibility, such as Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp. Although, Instagram is dominantly being used, while TikTok has a viral strengthen and influence. These platforms are considered effective not only for promoting content but also for building personal brands, increasing engagement, and reaching wider audiences.

Responses to the rational for the use of social media platforms for marketing reveals that undergraduate content creators in Thomas Adewumi are influenced by specific factors such as ease of use, audience engagement, content features, and adaptability to current trends. Creators tend to switch platforms when they perceive a decline in engagement, algorithmic changes, or when newer platforms provide better opportunities for content visibility and interaction.

For pattern of use, creators focus on self marketing, products and services promotion, and follower engagement. These are achieved through strategies such as: influencer and affiliate content; educational and awareness campaign; event and entertainment; short-form video content; live interaction and engagement; hashtag campaign and trend; polls, Q &As; giveaways and incentives and reposts and testimonials.

Finally, judgment of the effectiveness of social media as a marketing tool is revealed in its strength over traditional media and marketing effect outcome. Undergraduates content creators in Thomas Adewumi sees social media marketing having an advantage of being cost effective, ensuring speed and instant feedback, wider and targeted reach and mostly youth oriented and culturally relevant as against traditional marketing. Also, in marketing effect outcome, social media use for marketing helps to boost sales and client orders, always increasing engagement and audience growth; and enhances brand awareness and trust.

Overall, the study concluded that social media remains the preferred and most impactful tool for marketing among undergraduate content creators at Thomas Adewumi University, due to its flexibility, reach, and alignment with the creators' marketing objectives and audience interaction needs.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

This study examined the preference for social media as a marketing tool and its perception among undergraduate content creators at Thomas Adewumi University. Drawing on relevant communication and marketing theories, the findings of this research provide a deeper understanding of how and why these young content creators adopt specific social media platforms for their marketing activities.

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that undergraduate content creators at Thomas Adewumi University have a strong preference for platforms that allow creativity, interaction, and visibility, such as Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp. These platforms are considered effective not only for promoting content but also for building personal brands, increasing engagement, and reaching wider audiences.

Furthermore, the findings show that the choice of social media platform is influenced by specific factors such as ease of use, audience engagement, content features, and adaptability to current trends. Creators tend to switch platforms when they perceive a decline in engagement, algorithmic changes, or when newer platforms provide better opportunities for content visibility and interaction.

Ultimately, this study concludes that social media is central to the marketing strategies of undergraduate content creators at Thomas Adewumi University. Their preferences are shaped by the opportunities these platforms offer in terms of creativity, visibility, and audience connection. Social media has become more than just a tool for communication; it is now a key driver of marketing success and self-promotion within this demographic.

#### **5.4 Limitations of the Study**

Although this study has provided useful insights into social media preference as a marketing tool and its perception among undergraduate content creators at Thomas Adewumi University, it is important to acknowledge some of the limitations that affected the research process.

Firstly, the study is limited to only one institution which is Thomas Adewumi University. This means that the findings reflect the views and experiences of undergraduate content creators within this specific environment. As such, the results cannot be generalized to students in other universities or to content creators outside of the academic setting.

Also, the study relied heavily on self-reported data through interview. This method depends on participants being honest and self-aware, but there is always the possibility that some may have answered questions in a way they believed was expected rather than how they truly felt.

Another factor to consider is the fast-changing nature of social media platforms. What is popular or effective today may not hold the same influence tomorrow. New trends, updates, and platform changes happen frequently, which might affect how relevant these findings remain over time.

Finally, this study focused specifically on the perceptions and experiences of content creators. It did not include the views of audiences or businesses who interact with these creators, which could have added a richer understanding of how social media marketing works in practice.

Despite these limitations, the study has successfully highlighted key factors influencing social media preferences and provided a foundation for future research.

## **5.5 Recommendations**

In light of the findings from this study, it is practically recommended that undergraduate content creators at Thomas Adewumi University seek continuous improvement through training and capacity-building opportunities such as workshops and seminars on digital marketing, branding, and effective content creation. This will help them make more informed and strategic use of social media platforms for marketing purposes.

Additionally, content creators are encouraged to diversify the platforms they use, rather than focusing solely on popular platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp. Exploring alternative platforms such as LinkedIn, YouTube, or even emerging apps can help broaden their audience reach and reduce dependency on specific algorithms. Furthermore, there is a need for content creators to balance creativity with strategy by setting clear marketing goals, understanding their audience, and leveraging platform-specific tools to maximize results. It is also recommended that Thomas Adewumi University should support these efforts by providing resources such as digital labs, training facilities, or collaborations with marketing experts to encourage more impactful use

of social media for marketing. Finally, future research should extend the methodological focus beyond Thomas Adewumi University content creators alone; rather, to include a wider population, and also consider the perspectives of audiences and businesses that interact with these content creators, in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the evolving role of social media in marketing.

## **5.6 Recommendations Based on Findings**

From the findings of this study, it is recommended that undergraduate content creators at Thomas Adewumi University should keep on making good use of social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp, as these platforms have been identified as effective tools for marketing, creativity, and audience engagement. However, they should not limit themselves to just these platforms alone. Expanding their presence to other platforms like YouTube and LinkedIn could help them reach different audiences and create more opportunities for growth. In addition, these content creators should be encouraged to adopt a more strategic approach by learning how to make use of platform analytics to better understand their audience, measure the success of their content, and refine their marketing efforts. Since many of them already see social media as affordable and accessible, enhancing their knowledge through training on digital marketing, branding, and content management will help them become more effective in using these platforms professionally.

Finally, it is recommended that Thomas Adewumi University should ensure more institutional support by organizing workshops and creating partnerships with digital marketing professionals to equip students with practical skills that will help them succeed in today's fast-changing digital world.

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## **APPENENDIX**

### **Request for Participation in Research Interview**

Dear Participant,

I am Akadi Victoria Toluwalase (22/15MCA014), a final-year student of Thomas Adewumi University, in the Faculty of Management and Social Sciences, Department of Mass Communication. As part of my academic requirements, I am conducting a research study titled: “Social media preference as a marketing tool and it perception by content creators of Thomas Adewumi university.”

You have been selected as a participant for this study due to your role as a female social media influencer within the university community. I kindly request your consent to participate in a face-to-face interview to share your experiences and insights on the use of social media platforms for marketing. Your responses will help in understanding social media preferences, usage patterns, and perceptions of its effectiveness as a marketing tool.

All information you provide will be strictly for academic purposes, and your responses will remain confidential. Participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Akadi Victoria Toluwalase

22/15MCA014

### **Section A**

#### **Demographic Information (Please tick [✓] where appropriate)**

1. What is your name (optional)?
2. What is your age range?
2. What is your academic level at Thomas Adewumi University?
3. How long have you been using social media as an influencer?

### **SECTION B**

#### **Preferred Social Media Platforms for Marketing**

**Q1: Which social media platforms do content creators at Thomas Adewumi University prefer to use for marketing purposes?**

1. Can you tell me about the social media platform or platforms you use the most when it comes to marketing?

2. Can you tell me why you personally prefer using that particular platform or platforms over others?
3. Can you explain to me a time when you switched from one platform to another for your marketing activities? If yes, could you tell me what made you change or what influenced that decision?
4. Kindly tell me, do you usually stick to just one platform for your marketing, or do you prefer to use more than one?

## **SECTION C**

### **Reasons for Social Media Choice in Marketing**

#### **Q2: What are the reasons for the choice preference of social media for marketing among content creators at Thomas Adewumi University?**

1. Can you tell me, from your experience as a social media influencer, what major challenges you face when trying to market products or services online?
2. Would you say platforms like Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook help you handle some of those challenges? If yes, can you explain how they help? And if not, can you describe why they fall short?
3. In your own words, can you describe the specific features or characteristics that make a social media platform ideal for marketing?
4. When you're planning to promote a product or service, can you walk me through how you decide which platform to use? What things do you usually consider before choosing?

## **SECTION D**

### **Pattern of Social Media Use in Marketing**

#### **Q3: What is the pattern of use of social media as a marketing tool among content creators at Thomas Adewumi University?**

1. Can you describe to me the kind of marketing activities you usually engage in on social media? For example, do you focus more on promoting products, advertising brands, talking about services you use, or is there something else you mainly do?
2. Can you tell me how you usually go about promoting these products or services on your social media pages? Please feel free to explain the kind of content you post whether it's pictures, short videos, live sessions, written posts, or anything else that works for you.
3. In what ways do you try to connect or interact with your followers when you're marketing something? Could you share with me how you keep them interested—maybe through comments, direct messages, giveaways, hashtags, or any other strategy you use?

4. Can you share with me which social media platform you personally prefer for marketing and why?

## **SECTION E**

### **Perception of Social Media's Effectiveness in Marketing**

**Q4. How do content creators at Thomas Adewumi University perceive the effectiveness of social media as a marketing tool for promoting products or personal brands?**

1. Can you tell me, based on your own experience, how effective social media has been for you in marketing products or promoting your personal brand?
2. Would you say, you have observed that your efforts on social media have brought about more engagement, sales, or awareness of the brand or products you promote?
3. From your point of view, what do you think are the main advantages social media marketing has compared to more traditional forms of marketing?
4. Would you personally recommend social media marketing to someone else? If yes, could you explain why? If no, kindly tell me your reasons.

### **Suggestions**

21. Do you have any suggestions on how social media marketing can be improved for influencers like you?
22. What advice would you give to new influencers trying to market on social media?

**Thank you for your time and participation!**