

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**MARKETING MICRO FASHION ENTERPRISES THROUGH SOCIAL
MEDIA: A STUDY OF TAILEX GHANA AND EXPRESS TAILOR GHANA**



2022

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**MARKETING MICRO FASHION ENTERPRISES THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA:
A STUDY OF TAILEX GHANA AND EXPRESS TAILOR GHANA**

ATO KWANSAH CRENTSIL



**A thesis in the Department of Development Communication,
School of Communication and Media Studies,
submitted to the School of Graduate Studies**

**in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Philosophy
(Development Communication)
in the University of Education, Winneba**

2022

DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, **Ato Kwansah Crentsil** declare that this dissertation, except for quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE: 

DATE:

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: DR. AKWASI BOSOMPEM BOATENG

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

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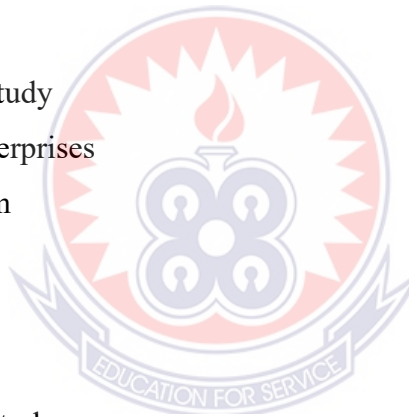
DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this research work to God Almighty, who has seen me through this phase of my academic journey.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product
ME	-	Micro Enterprises
MSME	-	Micro, Small and Medium Scaled Enterprise
NBSSI	-	National Board for Small Scale Industries,
OECD	-	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development Countries
SM	-	Social media
SMM	-	Social Media Marketing (SMM)
SMEs	-	Small and Medium Scaled Enterprises
UNDESA	-	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
TAM	-	Technology Appropriation Model
SNT	-	Social Network Theory
ILO	-	International Labour Organization
GSS	-	Ghana Statistical Service
SNS	-	Social Network Sites

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine the role social media play in facilitating the marketing and advertising activities of selected micro-fashion firms in Ghana. It is noted from literature that micro, large, medium, and small-scale fashion enterprises have embraced social media in their marketing and advertising activities. This study sought to identify the various social media platforms used by micro fashion enterprises in their business operations, how these social media platforms are utilized in marketing and advertising, and the challenges micro fashion enterprises encounter in their use of these new communication avenues. Using the qualitative approach, this study triangulated interviews and document analysis to collect data from respondents from two purposively sampled micro fashion enterprises in Ghana – *Tailex Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana*. The study is underpinned by the Technology Appropriation Model (TAM) and Social Network Theory to explain how the selected micro fashion enterprises adopt and adapt social media especially Facebook to connect with the public (audiences) to market their products and services to attract clients and customers. The study found that micro fashion enterprises use various social media platforms especially WhatsApp, Instagram and Facebook for their brand marketing and promotion activities. These social media platforms allow the micro fashion designers to create marketing, advertising, and promotional contents to promote business networks and awareness to attract many customers. However, these two micro fashion enterprises under study encounter several technological and human related challenges. Based on the findings, this study suggests that social media communication is considered by micro – fashion enterprises as critical platforms for their business and marketing of their brands, especially through advertising to attract customers and maximise sales and profits. Given this, these micro fashion designers, especially Tailex Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana must improve the use of social media platforms for marketing communication and promotion activities.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Globally, Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (Micro Small and Medium scale Enterprises) are regarded as the engine of growth of the economy in developed and developing countries (Muruthii, 2017; Okewu, 2015). This implies that Micro, Small, and medium scale enterprises play a significant role in the global economy because they promote innovation and create jobs and employment (Tsatsenko, 2020). According to the International Labour Organisation (2018), Micro, small, and medium scaled enterprises are defined primarily by the number of employees they possess. Micro-scale enterprises have fewer than ten employees; small scale enterprises possess a range of 10-100 employees; and medium-scale enterprises host between 100 to 250 employees (Tambunan, 2019). According to the Small Business Administration (SBA) in the United States, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) are businesses with fewer than five hundred employees.

In the European Union, an SME is defined as a business with fewer than 250 employees and an annual turnover of less than €50 million or a balance sheet total of less than €43 million. The Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) for example uses the number of employees to determine which enterprises are micro (one-five employees), small (six to thirty employees), medium (thirty-one to one hundred employees), and large (above one hundred employees). Okewu (2015, p. 1) asserts that Micro, small, and medium scaled enterprises cover all kinds of business activities involving “petty traders, artisans, market women, plumbers, food sellers, farmers, housewives, cattle farmers, hairdressers, tailors,

barbers, and groundnut sellers,” among others. These Micro, small, and medium scaled enterprises serve as the mainstay of economic activity in most countries that can support a country’s citizens, especially in rural communities). In Europe, 99% of companies are SMEs (of which 92% are micro-enterprises) and those companies provide more than 75 % of private-sector jobs (European Commission, 2011). According to a report by the World Bank, SMEs account for around 90% of businesses worldwide and employ more than half of the global workforce and SMEs are responsible for creating between 60% and 70% of all jobs in developing countries.

On the other hand, SMEs make up about 95 per cent of businesses throughout the Sub-Saharan region (Fjose, 2010). In Indonesia for example, micro, small, and medium scaled enterprises are economic businesses that can support the lives of over 250 million people (Suryono et al., 2020). Though micro, small, and medium scaled enterprises are important to the economic growth of many countries, several Micro, small, and medium scaled enterprises have not exploited their innovative and creative potential because of the lack and non-usage of technology. According to Nguyen et al., (2017), micro, small, and medium scaled enterprises must employ, secure, and maintain technology to stay abreast with the ever-evolving business environment and to secure a fair share of the market.

The internet is one of the most influential technologies that have transformed businesses and other activities. The internet has brought several new opportunities, such as online marketing that enables enterprises to advertise their products and services using social media, blogs, and podcasts, among others to reach their consumers (Vásquez &

Escamilla, 2014). Social media, as an online marketing tool, is the latest "buzz" in marketing (Lakshmi et al., 2017) because consumers are increasingly spending their time online using these platforms. Given this, organizations seek to engage with their audience via these online platforms especially social media, hence, organizations could establish an online presence. Apart from websites, consumers access blogs, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook pages, shopping carts and e-brochures, among others to search and decide on goods or services to purchase (Chheda, 2014). The ability of managements of Micro, Small and Medium Scaled Enterprises to choose the most suitable means to communicate with customers has a significant impact on the success of the company, products, and/or services they render (Ume-Amen, 2011).

As Yan and Musika (2018) note, Social Media Marketing (SMM) is a useful strategy which could help Micro Small and Medium Enterprises to survive in the competitive global business environment. Similarly, scholars such as Wamba and Carter (2014), and Jagonga and Kinyua (2013) concur that the adoption of social media platforms helps in business growth. Given this, organisations could use social media marketing as a way of making customers aware of products or services to encourage them to purchase. This is particularly true in the sense that, Social Media Marketing (SMM) is now an integral element of 21st-century business and marketing communication that accelerates marketing through online networking and advertising (Felix et al., 2017). Like large and other businesses, micro-enterprises especially in the fashion industry can exploit the benefits of social media to market and promote their products and services for sales and profits to sustain their operations. One of these platforms that promote social media marketing is Facebook, which is a social networking site with over 2.989 billion users as

of April 2023 (Data Reportal, 2023) that allows people to create account profiles, connect, produce, consume, share, like and comment on information across the world (Croft, 2007).

1.1.2 Micro Fashion Enterprises

Micro enterprises are businesses that are aimed at helping the poor working class, the unemployed, and people who depend on government assistance (Schreiner, 2001). Micro enterprises are the smallest forms of businesses in terms of scale, as defined by their investment, employment, or total assets, which have the flexibility to start and stop at any time (Kushnir, 2010). The International Labour Organization (ILO) asserts that micro enterprises are small businesses that have fewer than ten employees, often operated by a single owner or a family. These businesses are typically started with little capital, and they often serve a local market or provide goods or services to larger businesses. This group (microenterprises) includes most of the world's businesses. Micro-enterprises account for 92.4 per cent of the enterprises in the Eurozone, creating 29.1 per cent of jobs and adding 28.0 per cent to the European Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Alom et al., 2016). In the Eurozone, micro-enterprises have created job opportunities for over 88.8 million individuals since 2013 (Alom et al., 2016) for example, micro enterprises account for three-quarters of all businesses in Canada, which contributes significantly to job growth. On the other hand, there are 25.5 million microenterprises in the United States of America, employing thirty-one million people (Alom et al., 2016).

Micro and Small Enterprises account for 95 per cent of businesses in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development countries (OECD), which provide over 60 to

70 per cent of job possibilities (OECD, 1997). Abor and Quartey (2010) noted that people who establish and manage small and medium enterprises are known to be entrepreneurs. Many Micro and Small Enterprises in developing countries including Ghana struggle to exist or compete in the various industries due to poor management and financial challenges (Miles, 2011). The fashion industry could be one of the sectors that have many micro enterprises. In its simplest terms, fashion comprises of all forms of clothing items, textile fabrics, and their study, among others (Pearsall, 2002). Globally, the fashion industry is a multi-billion business market that generates jobs for designers, models, beauticians, textile designers, manufacturers, make-up artists, and event organizers among others (World Intellectual Property Organization, 2011). The micro and small-scale fashion industry are noted as the repository of traditional knowledge and skills, which are needed to penetrate the competitive business markets and create stable employment, as well as generate funds and income to pay individuals with various levels of education (United Nations Industrial Development Organizations Report, 2002).

The fashion industry is a dominating force of low-cost production and quick manufacturing (Moorhouse, 2020). The Ghanaian fashion (garment and textile) industry employs over 6000 individuals and exports over \$30 million worth of goods annually (Sarpong, Oforu, Botchie & Meissner, 2023). Micro fashion designing is a subset of the fashion industry, which refers to a form of garment production where parts of the process of production are operated by one person (Burch, 2022). These micro fashion enterprises are common in Ghana and contribute to the fiscal and economic development. Hence, this study chose to research micro fashion enterprises' usage of social media marketing, especially through Facebook in promoting their brands, products, and services because

they are a significant subset of the fashion industry in Ghana, which has the potential of transforming the larger industry. For micro fashion enterprises to succeed in the competitive environment, they need innovative forms of communication to network and engage multiple audiences across time and space to attract customers and generate income to sustain their operations and development.

1.2 Statement of Problem

The fashion industry contributes to the economies of countries including Ghana. The fashion industry across the globe was USD 30.58 billion in 2021, with a potential annual growth of 21.9% and expected worth of USD 39.84 billion by 2025 (Research & Market, 2021). This could be the reason for the increasing number of micro fashion designers (enterprises) in the Ghanaian fashion industry. The above statements posit micro fashion enterprises as the backbone of the fashion industry and development. In the micro fashion industry, producers look at and design fashion elements for quick and inexpensive reproduction (Burch, 2022). However, there are issues associated with these micro fashion brands which revolve around the selection of items; short turnaround time in relation to marketing and manufacturing; labour practices and quality materials (Burch, 2022), among others. These are coupled with the fact that micro and small-scale enterprises have limited financial, organizational, and technological resources and make informal and un-planned decisions (Nguyen & Waring, 2013).

These issues coupled with the huge numbers of new micro fashion enterprises springing up which showcase many different designs in Ghana, posit the need or urgency for them to seek innovative ways of communication and engagements to make their presence

active online to market and promote their brands, products and services to attract customers. For the micro scale (fashion) enterprises to grow and increase their profitability, they need to employ marketing communication strategies that can help in achieving such goals (Moghavvemi, 2015). To help micro enterprises to grow, some scholars (Cant, 2016; Cox, 2012; Wardati & ER, 2019) recommend the use of Social Media Marketing (SMM) in their promotion activities to attract customers to their designs, products, and services. Despite social media's potentials in marketing, research, and development across the globe, Amoah (2020) contests that many micro enterprises including the fashion industry in Ghana have not adequately appropriated these platforms as advertising and communication platforms to promote their businesses to maximise sales.

More so, there is little existing research on micro fashion enterprises, especially the use of social media platforms (networking) in marketing and promotion of brands, products, and services in Ghana. The few studies (for example, Mustapha, 2020; Dzisi & Ofofu, 2014; Laryea, 2019; Suryono et al., 2020) conducted on this topic have focused on the impact of social media on other sectors including microfinance, small scale mining and hairdressing, among others rather than micro fashion designers in Ghana. For example, from his research, Mustapha (2020) found that micro and small-scale hair dressing (beauticians) used social media platforms to chat with customers, friends and family to book appointments and order for products, as well as learn about new hair styles and advertising products and services to the public. Mustapha's (2020) study found that the use of social media by micro hairdressers to promote their businesses boosted sales and attracted more customers to their micro enterprises.

From another angle, Siebu (2019) examined how the use of social media by some selected micro enterprises in sectors different from the fashion industry as case studies influenced the profitability of business. The study (Siebu, 2019) found that social media platforms were used by small entities to provide information that could influence the decisions of customers towards products and services based on encounters with their messages, products, and services online. Similarly, Woka's (2014) investigation of the relevance of social media advertising to micro and small-scale enterprises in Ghana found that the selected enterprises depended on social media in advertising because of its interactivity and global reach.

Considering the above, it is evident that since some studies have been conducted on social media marketing by micro and small-scale enterprises, research regarding micro fashion enterprises is relegated to the backdrop of discussions on the topic. In other words, while social media usage by small and medium enterprises has been studied, little is known about how micro-fashion enterprises in Ghana have appropriated them to market and promote their brands, products, and services. More so, most of these studies on micro enterprises have employed quantitative approaches (Pentina & Koh, 2012; Patma et al, 2021); which have not gathered detailed insights into how social media platforms are used by these enterprises in Ghana to market and promote their business and brands. In cases where qualitative approaches were employed to study micro enterprises, such research inquired into the perceptions of social media use by consumers and customers via focus groups, rather than the perspectives of micro enterprises on how they deploy social media marketing strategies to promote their brands, products, and services.

Given this, this current study addresses the gap by employing qualitative interviews and document analysis to examine the practices in the micro fashion designers as a subset of the fashion industry by exploring how two selected micro fashion enterprises (Tailex Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana) are using social media especially Facebook as a strategy for active visibility online to market and promote their products and services. The purpose of this study is to explore the use of social media marketing in the promotion of brands, products, and services of micro fashion enterprises, and analyse how these platforms (Facebook) have been appropriated. The following objectives enable the study to realise its purpose.

1.3 Research Objectives

To be able to address research problem, the study sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. To explore how Tailex Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana use social media in marketing their products and services.
2. To discuss the social media strategies used by Tailex Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana in marketing their products and services.
3. To describe the nature of documents posted by Tailex Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana on Facebook pages to market their products and services.

1.4 Research Questions

To achieve the objectives of this research, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. How do Tailex Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana use social media in marketing their products and services?
2. What strategies do Tailex Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana use in marketing their products and services on social media?
3. What is the nature of documents posted by Tailex Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana on Facebook to market their products and services?

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study which spanned a period of one year from December 2021 to November 2022, explored the use of social media by micro-fashion enterprises in marketing their brands, products, and services. The target population of the study include all micro-fashion enterprises in the Greater Accra Region. Two micro-fashion enterprises (Tailex Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana) in Tema were sampled from among micro fashion enterprises in the Greater Accra Region to gather detailed insight regarding the social media marketing phenomenon in promoting their brands, products, and services. However, this study does not seek to generalise the findings of the qualitative case study research through interviews and document analysis.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This research is important for several reasons. First, it attempts to make an original contribution to scholarship on the use of social media in marketing and advertising in Africa and particularly Ghana. The findings of this study contribute to the knowledge and understanding of the role of social media marketing in the development and growth of micro fashion enterprises. Therefore, the study adds to the literature on the use of social

media as a marketing platform for Micro, Small, and Medium-Scale Enterprises in Ghana. The findings of this study will inform relevant authorities, including the National Board for Small Scale Industries (NBSSI), Ministry of Trade and Industry, and Ghana Export Promotion Authority, as well as micro scale enterprises of the capacity and usefulness of social media advertising in the development of micro enterprises which consequently contributes to the growth of Ghana's economy.

Given the findings of this research, this study proposes social media especially Facebook as an alternative media platform that micro fashion enterprises especially in Ghana could use in marketing their brands, products, and services to attract customers. The issues associated with the use of Social Media Marketing and nature of documents especially on Facebook by micro (fashion) enterprises are analysed in the study. Some recommendations for use have been provided to inform and encourage micro (fashion) enterprises especially in Ghana to improve their use of online and social media platforms in their marketing and promotion activities. This study will also serve as the basis and foundation for other researchers to conduct studies into social media marketing by other forms of businesses in the future.

1.7 Organisation of the Study

This study is grouped into five chapters. The *first chapter* gives an introduction and background to the study as well as the statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, scope and significance of the study, the definition of terms, and the organization of the thesis. The *second chapter* presents a review of literature on the study and outlines the theoretical framework underpinning this research. *Chapter three* presents

the methodology approach and method(s) used for the collection and analysis of data. These include the research approach, research design, population, sample size and sampling techniques, data collection instruments, techniques, and procedure in data analysis, among others. The chapter also provides details on ethical considerations in the study. The *fourth chapter* presents the data and discussion of the findings of the study. The chapter discusses findings and recurring themes from the data analysis with respect to literature and theories underpinning this study. The last (*Chapter 5*) presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations provided by the study for further studies and practice, among others. The next (chapter 2) provides review and discussion of literature related to the topic of the research.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature relevant to the topic under study. It specifically explains what the concept of social media entails, the various social media platforms, social media marketing, benefits of social media marketing, and use of social media for marketing by Small and Medium Scale Enterprises, among others. The chapter subsequently provides discussions on Micro, Small, and Medium Scale Enterprises (MSMEs) especially in the Fashion Industry. The chapter also reviews literature on the Technology Appropriation Model (TAM) and Social Network Theory which serve as the frameworks underpinning this study.

2.2 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME)

Several terminologies have been used to describe business entities that operate for profit purposes, with the word 'enterprise' being the most used. Enterprise is defined by Okewu (2015) as ventures that are started by entrepreneurs to provide goods and services to a particular market in exchange for profit. Khandker (2003) also asserts that an enterprise refers to a business or organization that engages in commercial or industrial activities with the aim of generating profit. It can refer to a wide range of entities, from small family-run businesses to large multinational corporations. One of the most cited definitions of an enterprise come from renowned economist Joseph Schumpeter. He defines enterprise as the process of "creative destruction" whereby entrepreneurs introduce new products, processes, or technologies that disrupt existing markets and create new ones (Schumpeter, 1942). Primarily, enterprises can be grouped into three

main categories, which include Public Limited Companies that allow for ownership rights or shares to be sold to the general public; and Private Limited companies, which consist of businesses that have their own legal identity and restrict public access to ownership rights (Nguyen et al., 2017). The other is partnerships, where a group of individuals shares the ownership, decision making responsibility and profits; while sole proprietorship usually identified by a single individual who is responsible for managing, making decisions and keeping the larger proportion of business profits (Nguyen et al., 2017).

Businesses that often operate under the sole proprietorship umbrella can be classified as micro-businesses, small businesses, and medium businesses (MSMEs). The role that Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises also referred to as Micro Small and Medium Scale Enterprises play in the economic growth and development of nations cannot be undermined. These enterprises are considered the bedrock of entrepreneurial skills and innovations that help in the creation of jobs especially for most developing nations (Simbulan, 2017). Microenterprises play a crucial role in many developing economies, providing income and employment opportunities to individuals who may not have access to other forms of employment. They are also an important source of innovation and competition, helping to drive economic growth and development (OECD, 2021).

In countries such as Indonesia for example, one of the strategic ways of fighting against poverty is by empowering Micro Small and Medium scale Enterprises in the country (Nursini, 2020). Similarly, a study by the ILO found that microenterprises in Ghana helped to reduce poverty by providing employment opportunities and promoting

economic growth in rural areas (ILO, 2012). The World Bank defines micro-enterprises as those enterprises with 1 to 9 employees; small enterprises as those with between 10 and 49 employees and medium enterprises as those with between 50 and 249 employees (Nguyen et al., 2017). The definition for these Micro Small and Medium scale Enterprises however differs from one country to another because some countries do not only rely on the number of employees but rather consider the assets and value of the enterprise to determine whether it qualifies as micro, small or medium. Liberto (2020) reiterates that Micro Small and Medium scale Enterprises are defined in various countries by their incomes, assets, and human resources. Amoah (2018), also content that the definition of MSMEs is challenging since it depends on contextual elements that vary depending on the nation.

The World Bank highlights that there are about 365 to 445 million Micro Small and Medium scale Enterprises in the world of which; 25 to 30 million belong to formal Small and Medium Enterprises, 55 to 70 million are from formal micro enterprises, while 285 to 345 million are informal enterprises (World Bank, 2022). However, the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) uses the firm's current employee count to define an SME in the Ghanaian context. Accordingly, the Ghana Statistical Service classifies SMEs as micro, small, medium, or large firms according to the number of employees they have: 1 to 5, 6 to 10, 30 to 100, and more than 100, respectively. Alternatively, the Ghana Statistical Service also uses the value of fixed assets of a firm as a criterion for defining SMEs. The National Board for Small Scale Industries (NBSSI) in Ghana however applies both the "fixed asset and number of employees" as a criterion for defining SMEs (Amoah, 2020).

Small and medium-sized businesses have become the foundation of Ghana's economy (Paquette, 2013; Gbadeyan & Boachie-Mensah, 2016; Rugova & Prenaj, 2016). Stressing this, Siebu (2019) posits that small and medium-sized firms are currently the cornerstone of Ghana's private sector. Approximately 90% of the business sector is categorized as SMEs, given the data from the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Presidential Special Initiative, (Hinson & Sorensen 2006). MSMEs in Ghana utilize social media platforms to promote their goods, services, and brands (Rugova & Prenaj, 2016; Seibu, 2019).

The use of social media platforms has been argued to have a positive impact on certain consumers' purchase decisions (Paquette, 2013; Gbadeyan & Boachie-Mensah, 2016) towards the organization or product and services been marketed. That is, businesses now use social media to take their products to the consumers and advertise their product on various social media platforms thus gives MSMEs the leverage to dominate the business environment in Ghana. Their activities span from serving as key provider of goods and supplier of services to individuals and large corporations thereby serving as a source of employment for almost 85% of manufacturing employment. Other studies by Ahiawodzi and Adade (2012) observed that MSMEs account for 92% of the businesses operating in Ghana and contribute to 70% of Ghana's annual GDP. A more recent report by the Ghana Statistical Service (GLSS 6) (2014) showed that about 92% of companies registered in Ghana were MSMEs and of this group 75% percent contribute to annual GDP. This clearly shows that the role of SMEs in the economic development of Ghana and Africa at large is quite significant.

Despite the significant role SMEs play in the Ghanaian economy, they are considered as weak contributors to the economy (Abor, 2004) due to financial and managerial challenges. These constraints limit the expansion efforts, sustainability, and profitability of SMEs especially in developing countries like Ghana. For developing countries like Ghana, the development of micro, small and medium scale enterprises (MSMEs) is vital to the growth of the national economy. For this reason, the government invests many resources to promote the sector for national economic growth. SMEs are a major employment source for the nation and contribute significantly to the country's productivity and job creation and the overall national domestic product. Despite all these potentials, the SME sector has failed to fully incorporate electronic marketing into its mainstream operational setup.

There are several other benefits of Small and Medium Enterprises, especially to developing countries including Ghana. For example, Pedraza (2021) highlights some advantages that Micro Small and Medium scale Enterprises have over other forms of companies such as agility in decision making and closeness to customers, among others. Decision-making is agile in Small and Medium Enterprises because they do not have large board memberships as compared to bigger companies, which require complex bureaucracy and coordination between different areas and actors of the decision-making process (Pedraza, 2021). In addition to being close to customers, Small and Medium Enterprises can better understand their client's needs, increase satisfaction, and ensure loyalty (Pedraza, 2021). Coupled with their greater flexibility and adaptability Small and Medium Enterprises can operate efficiently in the event market changes and modify their structures and processes depending on the needs of the new and competitive market.

Further, there is good relationship and healthy work environment in Micro Small and Medium scale Enterprises because each employee is fundamental to the company's existence as compared to larger companies where the worker is only a statistic with little recognition (Pedraza 2021).

The small size of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises makes it easier to develop and strengthen ties among workers (Pedraza, 2021). In other words, there is horizontal communication in Micro Small and Medium scale Enterprises because it is possible to establish direct and transversal communication between all the enterprises' workers, something that is difficult to achieve in large companies due to the hierarchical levels and the existence of many departments. These enterprises can specialize in a particular market niche and provide direct attention (Pedraza, 2021). Aside these benefits, MSMEs contributions to economies cannot be understated. According to ILO (2019), MSMEs are significant contributors to employment generation, particularly in developing countries. MSMEs account for approximately 70% of total employment in low-income countries and 45% in middle-income countries (ILO, 2019). This employment generation has a positive impact on poverty reduction and social inclusion. Also, MSMEs are responsible for a considerable proportion of innovation in developing countries (World Bank, 2018). They are often characterized by their flexibility and ability to adapt to changing market conditions. This enables them to be more innovative and creative in their business operations. This innovation contributes to the development of new products, processes, and services, leading to economic growth and competitiveness (World Bank, 2018). MSMEs are often involved in the export sector, which contributes to export diversification and reduces dependence on a sole product or market (OECD, 2018).

MSMEs are important drivers of export growth, particularly in developing countries (OECD, 2018). This export diversification leads to greater resilience to economic shocks and more sustainable economic growth.

Given the benefits from Micro Small and Medium scale Enterprises, they are seen as complementary and subsidiary units to large enterprises, which together play a significant role in the socio-economic development of developing and developed nations across the world. Therefore, ensuring the growth and sustainability of Micro Small and Medium scale Enterprises is crucial, especially for developing nations. Micro Small and Medium scale Enterprises adopt various marketing communication strategies including the use of “personal contacts, social networks, businesses and industrial networks” to spur the acceleration of growth (Gilmore et al., 2020, p. 5). It is noteworthy to indicate that the emergence of technology has necessitated the adoption of some Web 2.0 platforms such as social media by Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in marketing and communicating their products and services to their target market and consumers. This is because these online marketing systems provide various online buying and selling platforms that allow customers to order and purchase goods and services without necessarily meeting them physically in person (Hidayati & Yansi, 2020). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), also posit that social media allows MSMEs to reach a wider audience, engage with customers in real-time, and build a community around their brand. Social media can also help MSMEs to generate leads and increase sales by promoting products and services to a targeted audience. This implies that social media marketing does not require face-to-face interactions but employs the use of apps (social media platforms) in the global space to market and promote products and services. One of the components of

Micro Small and Medium scale Enterprises is micro-enterprises which characterize a sector that is attempting to explore the advantages of these online platforms to market their activities.

2.2.1 Micro Scale Enterprises (MSEs)

Micro scale enterprises are small businesses that are owned and run by poor people with the support of some sponsoring organisations (Midgley, 2008). While some scholars including Jurik (2005) suggest that micro-enterprises should have not more than five people working within them, others such as Raczyńska (2019) recommend that micro-enterprises should have less than 10 employees. The definition of micro-enterprises varies by country and by organization. For example, in the European Union, micro-enterprises are defined as businesses with fewer than ten employees and an annual turnover or balance sheet total of no more than €2 million (European Commission, 2021). In the United States, the Small Business Administration defines a micro-enterprise as a business with fewer than five employees. Development interventions have embraced micro-entrepreneurs as the key to unlocking the potential of stalled economies and increasing the standard of living for the poor, from the World Bank to the smallest local nongovernmental organizations. According to Mann (2002), micro-enterprises are supposed to generate sustainable revenues through employment.

According to Kirkpatrick and Hulme (2001), micro-enterprises are also anticipated to offer less expensive goods and services to the underprivileged. Instead of focusing on the needs of the poor, micro-enterprise concentrates on their assets shortfalls and aims to give people the tools they need to become financially independent. The aim of micro-

enterprise is to enable residents to become economically independent. Globally, the acceptance of microbusinesses has increased, and micro-enterprises are becoming increasingly well-liked as a new development agenda and approach for reducing poverty, especially in developing nations where they provide prospects for employment and income (Thapa, 2007). Ascaria and Ramawarti (2015) indicate that, as the smallest form of business, micro-enterprises have frequently non-permanent employees.

These Micro enterprises are dominant in developing nations considering their number of units, labour, and output. This dominance can be attributed to the fact that these micro enterprises do not demand many skills and capital to start or run (Nursini, 2020). Ngai et al. (2015) also asserts that the dominance of micro-enterprises in developing countries because of low start-up costs makes them accessible to a wider range of people, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds which reduce inequality and promote social inclusion. DeGraft (2021) emphasises that micro-enterprises are business entities that play a vital role in developing countries as they improve the quality of life of the people by providing them with basic and not extremely large services. As noted by Pedraza (2021), the generation of microbusinesses, better adjustment of revenues, and ability to reduce the overall cost of doing business enable micro-enterprises to add more to the economies of countries than offer forms of businesses. Despite their small size, micro-enterprises make a significant contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP) of many countries. In some countries, micro-enterprises account for up to 90% of all businesses (ILO, 2019). Pedraza (2021) adds that, “the number of micro-entrepreneurs is high because many individuals often do not find adequate training or formal jobs available to them”. Hence, many people go into Microenterprises to offer products and

services specifically for local areas. This type of business usually deals with food products, household goods, and specialised demand in repair or care services that are typical to area or regions where they are located (Pedraza, 2021).

Micro enterprises, irrespective of their smaller sizes, adopt various technological and communication innovations to increase profitability and grow their businesses (DeGraft, 2021). Raymond et al. (2005) opines that by using technologies such as websites, email and telephones and social media to communicate with customers, micro-enterprises can provide better customer service as well as expand their customer base to help reach out to both local as well as international consumers for their products. Southwood (2004) discovered that ICT investments by SMEs in South Africa resulted in profitability gains from cost savings rather than from an increase in sales. These enterprises have huge appeal to the use of social media because it enables them to have access to consumers outside their geographical location (Alacon et al., 2015). Ismagilova et al., (2019) argue that micro-enterprises that use social media as a means of competing with other businesses perform better because of the high customer satisfaction derived from their engagements and interactions to win more customers and provide their needs and requirements. Parveen (2012) argues that micro-enterprises create social media networks with their business partners and participate in public social media for purposes of marketing, customer relationship and reputation management, recruitment, and product/service innovation. Social media also allows micro-enterprises to engage with their customers on a more personal level. Meske and Stiglitz (2013) found that social media allows businesses to interact with customers, respond to queries, and build relationships that lead to loyalty and repeat business. Kamal et al. (2021) furthered that

micro-enterprises can use social media to differentiate themselves from their competitors as it enables small businesses to display their unique products and services, build a distinctive brand, and stand out in a crowded market. Like micro enterprises, small enterprises can adopt new strategies to get an edge over competitors in the online space, hence, the essence of appropriating social media to exploit their marketing and advertising potentials and benefits, among others.

2.2.2 Small Scale Enterprises

In the last decade, there has been a rapid increase in the number of small enterprises across the various economies in the world. This emphasises people's desire to operate businesses outside the confines of traditional business rules and to provide innovative solutions to various problems in society. Arenius and Minniti (2005) postulated that there is a renewed enterprising spirit which is contributing to the growth of small enterprises. More people are choosing to start their own businesses rather than work for large corporations. This trend is fuelled by the desire for financial independence, flexibility, and the potential to create wealth. Several other factors have led to this rapid growth of small businesses around the world. Paramount among them is technological advancement (Jovovic & Petrovic, 2019). Technological advancements have reduced barriers to entry into the market, lowering costs and increasing the efficiency of small businesses. Advances in information technology have made it possible for small enterprises to communicate and operate across borders with ease. Moreover, technological advancements have enabled small businesses to offer personalized and targeted services to their customers, improving their competitiveness in the market (Jovovic & Petrovic,

2019). Small businesses have been defined in several ways. According to Tambunan (2019), small businesses can be classified according to the ownership type, the number of employees they use in their business processes, as well as their earning capacity and industry. An enterprise operating in the manufacturing industry with an employee of five hundred or fewer is regarded as a small enterprise, while businesses in the extractive industry with a maximum of 1500 employees could be referred to as small enterprises (Shih-Chih & Chieh-Peng, 2019).

In the context of Great Britain, Naughton, et al. (2020) defines small enterprises as businesses that have a maximum annual turnover of €2 million and not more than two hundred paid employees. In the United States, the Small Business Administration defines a small business as one with fewer than 500 employees (OECD, 2017), while in the European Union, a small enterprise is defined as one with fewer than 50 employees and an annual turnover or balance sheet total of less than €10 million (European Commission, 2021). In many developing countries including Ghana the definition of a small enterprise is based on the number of employees, with businesses employing fewer than fifty people are considered small (IFC, 2019). The Statistical Service of Ghana (SSG) classifies small enterprises as businesses employing at most twenty-nine people in their operations. In terms of their relevance, small enterprises influence the positive distribution of income in functional and nominal terms (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010). In addition, the ability of small enterprises to be geographically flexible permits small businesses to be useful for achieving industrial dispersal and balancing economic development across various regions. This form of business is noted for its ability to bring diversity to any industry where they operate. Stressing further, Legg et al. (2015) acknowledge that such small

enterprises significantly contribute to value addition and export promotion. These abilities of small enterprises, as compared with their micro and medium counterparts make them significant contributors to the Gross Domestic Product of the economies where they function. Although the operations of small enterprises are not as technologically intense as that of large corporations, novel technologies such as social media have given these small businesses equal opportunity to position them in the market and upscale their business operations. Particularly, through social media, online marketing has allowed small enterprises to access restricted markets and provide goods and services at a cheaper cost (Berisha & Pula, 2015). In addition to the Micro and Small enterprises, medium enterprises play a significant role in the global economy.

2.2.3 Medium Scale Enterprises

Although medium enterprises are often interchanged with small businesses, the former businesses have been defined using different criteria. These criteria include the scale of operation, the number of employees, and the number of assets such enterprises hold in their portfolio. For example, Tambunan (2019) describes medium enterprises as a middle child of its industry with a large business scale that prevents them from getting the discounts and services granted to small and micro businesses, which are also too small to have the value placed on large enterprises. Berisha and Pula (2015) use the ‘number of employees’ criteria to explain medium-scale enterprises to refer to businesses in any industry that employ a maximum of 250 workers to engage in their business processes. For Ainin et al. (2015) medium enterprises usually employ between 100 - 999 employees and generate revenue between \$50 million to \$1 billion.

Medium-scale enterprises constitute a major part of businesses that operate across the world. Like the others, such medium scale businesses are known for contributing to job creation in developed and developing economies, which contribute to the developmental agenda of governments across the globe. Formal medium scale businesses in conjunction with their small-scale counterparts are responsible for 40% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of developing and emerging economies including Ghana (World Bank, 2022). According to the World Bank (2022), “Medium scale enterprises represent about 90% of businesses and offer more than 50% of employment worldwide. These numbers are significantly higher when informal Small and Medium Enterprises are included.”

As compared to their micro and small-scale counterparts, medium enterprises are more technologically inclined, with their operations relying on sophisticated technologies to deliver products and services to their clients (Tambunan, 2019). In the context of using social media marketing and advertising, Berisha and Pula (2015) posits that medium enterprises can leverage the use of social media platforms to enhance results and monitor the effectiveness of their marketing, promotion, and advertising campaigns. Social media provide this form of enterprise the opportunity to achieve higher returns on investments in marketing and advertising campaigns when compared to traditional media. Considering their economic size, Tambunan (2019) explains that medium enterprises can leverage the best technological practices to utilise social media in scaling up their businesses. This includes accessing advanced features of the various available social media platforms and engaging the best technical personnel to manage online marketing and advertising activities for these medium scale enterprises. One sector that has many Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises especially in Ghana is the fashion industry.

2.2.4 Fashion Industry in Ghana

The rate of unemployment across the world has created persistent challenges to efforts to promote opportunities for livelihood. According to Suryono et al. (2020), approximately 21.2 per cent of the world's youth population is neither gainfully employed nor engaged in education. In the context of countries like Ghana, the attempts to alleviate unemployment and its concomitant issues are very problematic. Many suggestions have been provided to address the growing unemployment situation, which includes supporting and building the capacity of micro and small enterprises to create, operate and employ labour for industries. One of these sectors is the fashion industry. These suggests that putting efforts into developing micro and small businesses in the clothing and fashion industry of Ghana could promote economic growth and create employment opportunities given the labour-intensive nature of the industry which requires a large labour force. A subset of the fashion industry is micro fashion designing (enterprise).

The micro fashion industry involves a process of design that is produced on a micro-scale, where one individual typically runs the entire production processes. The mode of micro fashion design is an emerging sect of the larger fashion industry. Micro fashion enterprises sell in small batches of products that are often made with second hand and eco-conscious materials (Burch, 2022). Given their small-scale designing practices, these micro fashion designers can develop committed and mutually beneficial relationships with consumers, as well as attract close attention to the quality of their produced materials by the personal overseeing of every aspect of the processes of production (Burch, 2022). This implies that the micro fashion enterprises are “business where creativity and entrepreneurship play a critical role” (Hakko & Nunimaki, 2018). In other

words, micro scale fashion enterprises require skills in creative design and business practice to realize their dreams with the support of marketing communication. Given the keen competition and issues regarding the sustenance of their existence, micro fashion designing enterprises must rely on non-traditional media platforms especially social networking sites including Facebook to remain in business. As Bilgin (2018) posits, the advancement of micro fashion industry is dependent on innovation and innovative technologies including communication platforms and marketable products and services.

In the current digital economy, micro fashion enterprises need to access and use information and effective clothing product development process that will help them continuously introduce new products into their target markets and ensure their survival (Suryono, Rahayu, Astuti, & Widarwati, 2020). Although micro fashion enterprises may operate in the same industry as large fashion brands, their product development processes are fundamentally different. While for the large clothing brands, production begins with trend analysis, concept development, fabrication selection, palette selection, fabric design, silhouette direction, prototype construction, and analysis, and line presentation (Sarpong, Ofori, Botchie & Meissner, 2023), most micro enterprises that provide fashion-related services begin with a basic form of trend analysis, then to the design, construction and production. This difference coupled with the ease of access to technology and resources for business processes allow large companies in the clothing industry to dominate the clothing market's larger share. Currently, emerging technologies that come at a cheaper cost such as social media are making it possible for micro fashion enterprises to access platforms to improve their efficiency and bridge the gap between them and larger firms when it comes to access to the fashion markets. Particularly for

marketing and advertising, information technologies such as social media through the support of the internet are allowing micro enterprises such micro fashion designers to diversify their business activities and reach markets that were traditionally impossible to access due to time and geographical distance or space. In other words, social media could empower micro fashion enterprises to breakthrough and promote their products and services to sustain their businesses.

2.2.5 Micro Fashion and Social Media Appropriation

A notable characteristic of the fashion industry is its fast-moving pace, which requires players in the industry to find new and innovative ways of staying ahead of current trends and competitors, predicting and engineering what is expected to dominate in future seasons, among others (Suryono, Rahayu, Astuti, & Widarwati, 2020). This places responsibility on businesses operating in the fashion industry to leverage on the power of social media to keep them connected and abreast with information on the fashion preferences of people. In the case of micro fashion enterprises, not only can they leverage on social media to spread their business activities, products, and services, but also influence how these micro-fashion enterprises conduct their businesses. Alalwan (2018) notes that a growing trend among such businesses is their adoption and use of various social media platforms to create value, establish a digital presence, have access to domestic and international markets, and boost their business activities. With the assistance of social media, micro-enterprises are now focusing on innovation and customer relationship building and allowing customers and clients to provide micro fashion enterprises with interaction and real-time feedback on the services and products they put out on the market. While most large corporations have access to diverse

marketing and advertising resources, the same cannot be said for micro fashion enterprises seeking to gain an advantage in a competitive market.

As Bilgin (2018) asserted, it is reasonable to state that conventional marketing and advertising practices often utilized by large corporations cannot be generalised for micro fashion businesses since such enterprises portray distinctive characteristics and requirements. Given this, most micro fashion enterprises are adopting social media as marketing tools and platforms since they are much affordable and provide interactivity between the market and the micro fashion enterprises. In sub-Saharan Africa and Ghana, accessing and utilizing marketing avenues have posed challenges to micro fashion firms. Ainin et al. (2015) further note that the stiff competition in business activities, marketing and advertisement in the Ghanaian fashion industry correlates with the low turnover such businesses make. With the advent of online marketing avenues through social media, micro fashion businesses are presented with a new opportunity to address their marketing and advertising challenges. These social media have assisted micro firms to reach out to customers with diverse backgrounds, provide brand information at a low cost and increase their profits, among others. In effect, the challenges of limited marketing and advertising budget, lack of information technology and industry expertise, and positioning relative to larger fashion firms are addressed by social media as new forms of communication.

2.3 Social Media Platforms

The world has transformed into a global community where people can quickly obtain information on people and other things, which has contributed to human interactions

from face-to-face to digital communication and engagements. The development of digital, mobile, and internet technologies made it simpler than ever for media consumers to engage with one another. Social media's inherent interaction and feedback (a crucial component that other media types lack) are what have made it so relevant in the world of today. The emergence of social media provides a variety of innovative technologies and interactive platforms that have changed the traditional communication landscape (Kietzmann et al 2011). Social media allows an organization and its stakeholders to actively participate rather than just disseminate messages. The use of social media by businesses to enable and improve dialogic communication with their stakeholders can be considered as being congruent with traditional marketing communication approach (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Additionally, social media gives users the option to share content across a variety of channels, expanding not only the audience for the message that was initially communicated but also the possibilities for user-generated content (e.g. Nieman-Struweg 2014). This implies that meetings and marketing activities can be conducted between people and organisation in real time. Irrespective of distance (Hayes, 2021). In other words, people now easily share their information with the world; businesses can now easily reach out to customers overseas and create appealing and catchy advertisements and other marketing information (Hashem, 2021).

The early 2000s brought into existence innovative technologies, which have played significant roles in changing the world (Lin & Rauschnabel, 2016). Social media and their related platforms have transformed impossibilities to possibilities, among others. Recent internet-enabled media that encourage interactive engagement are sometimes referred to as social media (Manning, 2014). According to Edosomwan et al. (2011),

social media are those electronic communication channels that media consumers use to build and run virtual communities to exchange knowledge, ideas, and other types of material. Social media refer to various electronic platforms that promote the sharing of ideas, thoughts, and dissemination of information through the internet, virtual networks, and communities (Dollarhide, 2021). According to Edosomwan et al. (2011) it is almost impossible to define the concept of social media without touching on the concept of social networks. Often the term Social Networking Sites (SNSS) are commonly referred to as the umbrella term for social media and computer-mediated communication (Boye, 2015; Brandtzaeg, 2012).

Social Networking Sites (SNS) are web-based services that allow individuals to construct profiles, display Social Networking Sites user connections and search and traverse within that list of connections (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Contrary to other media platforms and indeed other computer technologies developed for communication, SNS have provided virtual landscapes that mirror elements of pre-existing physical communities. Social networking sites have the capacity to link people together and create feelings of belongingness that are a replica of physical social communities (Boye, 2015). According to Shirky (2010) social networking sites have caught on well with society becoming the most preferred means of information sharing and community building due to their low costs of collaborating, sharing, and producing information. At the advent of digital technologies and the internet that facilitated the proliferation of SNSs, social media emerged as specialised social networking systems that facilitated quick online interaction (Bercovici, 2010). Social media sites include popular platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Social media according to Kaplan and Haenlin (2010)

are referred to as internet-based application which was developed based on the foundations of Web 2.0 that allow users the opportunity to create content, among others. These assertions above are similar to the postulations of Carr and Hayes (2015, p.8) that social media are internet based, dis-entrained are persistent platforms of mass personal communication that facilitate the persistence of interactions, among users to derive value from user-generated content. Inasmuch as the differences in perspectives regarding the definitions of social media indicate the lack of consensus on the definition of the concept (Carr & Hayes, 2015), various scholars have provided common types and characteristics of these platforms.

Social media make it faster and easier way to share communication content such as personal information, documents, videos, and photo, among others. Social media are made up of systems that allow users to sign up and later log in for subsequent usage. Edosomwan et al. (2011) further mention that these social media platforms form a collection of data that predict the preference of users and help business organisations to develop products and services that will sell on the market, as well as aid in their advertisement. As fast-spreading and wide-reaching platforms, social media have recorded over 4.5 billion users as of October 2021 (Dollarhide, 2021). Considering the various assertions and descriptions of social media, Hroska and Maresova (2020, p.2) assert that,

If companies and different organisations know their target customer, they can use this information to select the social networks that are likely to be most successful. This information can also help companies decide which social networks to avoid for more effective marketing, promotion, and feedback. Businesses can use this report to learn how

customers use social media and how to appeal to them through social networking.

This is similar to the argument by Polanska (2014) that social media communication enables companies and businesses to get access to new or potential customers especially because this means of communication has become rapidly popular among young people. This supports the argument of this study that business organisations, especially micro fashion enterprise can take advantage of the unique features and benefits to market their products and services, among others. Bryant (2011) and Naidoo (2011) concur that as of 2010, about five social media platforms had emerged as remarkable enforcers and promoters of social media marketing and advertising. These include popular ones such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (Bryant, 2011; Naidoo, 2011). However, Facebook ranked the highest most popular and effective social media with about 39% of social media users constantly engaged with advertisements on Facebook. Facebook's popularity as a social media marketing tool is because of its huge data base and its tendency for marketers and advertisers to have some access to personal lives of users (Bryant, 2011; Naidoo, 2011). This indicates the extent to which the platform helps advertisers to segment audience and enable them to develop the most appropriate marketing strategy for specific target groups (Bryant, 2011).

In a study by Carmichael and Cleave (2012), they investigated the role of social media in affecting overall interactivity of consumers with company products and services. The researchers (Carmichael & Cleave, 2012) placed two advertisements on Facebook and YouTube and monitored them over a period. Carmichael and Cleave (2012) found that social media advertisement could improve the visibility of small businesses and easily

direct consumer traffic to their products and services. Suprpto, Hartono and Bendjroua (2020) assert that one of social media advertising's greatest benefits is resident in its ability to affects consumer purchase intentions. The researchers (Suprpto, et al., 2020) established after studying 100 social media users, that advertising messages that were promoted on social media especially Instagram significantly influenced respondents to either purchase some products then or influenced their intentions to purchase in the future.

2.3.1 Features of Social Media

The emergence of social media as an important paradigm in communication has presented unique opportunities for marketers to take advantage of. The availability of digital multimedia information on social media continues to grow at an astonishing speed since its inception. These have fostered improved exchanges between businesses and their customers. Social media sites are popular distribution media warehouses for users to upload, browse and share images, videos, and music (Cui et al., 2010). These sites not only host vast amounts of user-contributed multimedia materials of wide diversity (Cui et al., 2010), but also serve as platforms where people express and entertain themselves and form user communities of common interests (Kent, 2010). Social media has become an integral part of people's lives, and as a result, it has revolutionized the way businesses market their products and services to consumers. According to Appel et al., (2020), the features of social media allow people to freely interact with others and offer multiple ways for marketers to reach and engage with consumers. Social media has many advantageous features over traditional media. These features and characteristics of social media technologies are many.

Social media is open and free to use because users do not need exceptional skills, or special training can easily use social media. Hence Hu and Lin (2013) referred to it as the 'least factor'. The usages of social media have become common and less complicated due to advancements in technology. Users of social media platforms do not require special skills to navigate the interfaces of these platforms, which makes it possible for such users can generate or produce and consume more content (Feicheng, 2007). The technology used in social media helps users make the least effort to get and utilize the information, which is the driver of social media. On the other hand, Hengzhen (2012) argues that the easiness of the use of social media platforms allows users to access and find information quickly that will otherwise be difficult to do using traditional media. This feature makes brand information closely available to social media users. Therefore, brands and organisations can take advantage of the easy use of social media to design strategies and messages that will best appeal to all categories of consumers.

Singh and Verma (2017) postulate that social media is characterized by several features, such as interactivity, immediacy, and user-generated content that promote consumer engagement on social media platforms. The interactive feature, for example, allows users to create and share content with thousands of others on the platform. Kozinets et al., (2010) define social media interactivity as the dynamic, two-way communication that takes place between users and the platform, as well as between users themselves, that allows for the creation, sharing, and dissemination of content in a collaborative and participatory manner. Carr and Hayes (2015) argue that individuals may perceive interactivity and social connectedness even when the other party is not responding to the individual's messages, which foster para-social interactions, messages, and relationships.

In addition, the platforms of social media afford a sense of interactivity even if there is none, as the medium itself may foster perceived interaction (Li & Li, 2014). The immediacy and timelines of social media allow brands to quickly respond to customer inquiries and concerns (Hu & Lin, 2013). Users of social media can send and receive information immediately whenever they want, which means information exchange synchronization, and users can fast access the required information.

Similarly, Alalwan et al. (2017) also identified several features of social media that influence consumer behavior, including social presence, information richness, and personalization. Social presence refers to the sense of connectedness that social media provides, allowing consumers to engage with brands and other users in a social context (Leeflang et al., 2014; Filo et al., 2015; Schulz & Peltier, 2013). According to Coulter and Roggeveen (2012), the sense of interconnectedness social media users get helps brands to develop and relationship with consumers. Engagements with consumers on social media happens in a can happen in a social context which makes consumers feel attached to the brands. Apart from a sense of social presence, social media is characterized by information richness. Users can disseminate bulky information to a larger audience at a time. Information richness refers to the potential of a communication medium to convey a wide range of cues, including verbal, nonverbal, and symbolic, that facilitate understanding and interpretation of messages (Dennis, Kinney, & Hung, 1998). According to Alalwan et al., (2017) and Kietzmann et al. (2011), social media also can tailor content to individual users based on their interests, behaviours, and preferences. For example, Facebook and Twitter feed appears on an individual's timeline based on his interest and preference and users' behaviour. These features afford organisations and

brands to target their consumers based on their strategies and messages that best describes products and services to appeal to them.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) identified six distinct types of social media platforms, each with its own unique features and characteristics. These include social networking sites (for example, Facebook), micro blogs (for example, Twitter), photo-sharing sites (for example, Instagram), video-sharing sites (for example, YouTube), blogs (for example, Word Press), and forums (for example, Reddit) (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Brands can use these platforms to target specific audiences and leverage the unique features of each platform to achieve their marketing objectives. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), these platforms offer a range of tools and features that can be used to create and share content, such as photos, videos, and live streams. This content can be used to display products and services, promote brand awareness, and engage with customers. Additionally, social media platforms offer analytics tools that allow businesses to track their performance, monitor engagement, and measure the success of their campaigns (Kwon & Wen, 2016; Sheth, 2019). Social media has become an essential tool for businesses looking to market their products and services. Its ability to facilitate engagement, target specific audiences, create, and share content, and above all its easiness to use has made it an indispensable part of any marketing strategy.

2.3.2 Types of Social Media

Globally, several social media platforms have emerged in recent years with significant impact on information sharing and networking, among users (Owuor & Hochmair, 2020). In describing social media, references are made to web-based platforms that allow their users to be consumers and publishers of content, interact with other users as well as

communicate with big and small brands and organisations in real-time with no restrictions on geographic or physical location (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). To Lin and Rauschnabel (2016) and Elena-Iulia (2018), the most relevant forms of social media platforms are social networking sites, blogs and opinion platforms, as well as content sharing platforms, such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, Tiktok, Snapchat and Word Press, among many others. These platforms can be accessed through desktop computers, laptops, smartphones, and tablets. A social network is a social structure in the online space that encompasses people who share a common goal (Elena-Iulia, 2018). Helman and Peng (2010) identify some common features of social networking sites as; having a profile that identifies a user's background information, indicating the list of friends, and providing information or updates on the network within which an individual is a member.

Similar to Lin and Rauschnal (2016), Kaplein and Haenlein (2010) project six major types of social media, which include collaborative projects, blogs, content communities, social networking sites, virtual social worlds, and virtual game worlds. Collaborative projects refer to the social media platforms that enable their users to generate content, especially within a group. These types include wikis and social bookmarking. Blogs are seen as some forms of online diary or magazine where users post detailed information about their areas of interest or lifestyle, which can be situated in the context of politics, entertainment, sports, or personal life. Content communities give vital information to their target audience. Example of such platforms is YouTube, pdfdrive.com, Flickr, and slide share (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). On the other hand, social networking sites are those platforms that give people the opportunity to be a part of online communities as

well as interact with other users. Examples of these are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp, Pinterest, and Myspace, among others.

A study conducted by Kepios (2021) highlights the most used social media platform in the world is Facebook, which has a population of 2.910 billion active users globally, followed by YouTube with over 2.562 billion active users, followed by WhatsApp with 2 billion active users, and then Instagram, WeChat, TikTok, and Facebook Messenger, among others. Index (2021) shows that people's preference for a particular social media platform is influenced by factors such as age and gender. For example, in America, young people under 30 years are more likely to prefer Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat, whereas older people would prefer Facebook and YouTube (Auxier & Anderson, 2021). Knowledge about these user preferences contributes to individuals' and companies' decisions in determining which platforms will enable them to reach their target customers or social network in marketing and advertising campaigns. According to Amoako et al. (2019), because social media are communication platforms through which ideas, thoughts, and information are shared in a virtual space, information in this regard tends to vary from social, economic, cultural, political, and environmental, among other contextual variations. In the past decade, social media have gradually evolved from a dominant space of social interaction to a virtual platform of economic significance. Amoah (2020) asserts that the term social media deviates from other significant uses of such platforms including the economic opportunities it creates. The various forms of social media can now create an avenue for individuals to present themselves and their products or service to interested persons, especially in the online space (Roberts & Kraynak, 2008).

In a study by Tumsifu et al., (2020) to examine how social identity, perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of social media influence the use of social media in Small and Medium Enterprises in relation to fashion in Kenya, it revealed that the dominant social media platforms employed by the respondents included Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, and Google+. According to Tumsifu et al., (2020), Facebook took the lead as the platform in use that dominated the study with 78% of the respondents. Instagram came second in terms of preference and use with 15.3% of the respondents.” The rest of the platforms had a representation of 3% and below. Facebook, therefore, stood out as the dominant and popular platform used by Small and Medium Enterprises for promoting their products (Tumsifu et al., 2020, p. 114). In another study to investigate Small and Medium Enterprises and the social media opportunities available to them, Scheers (2016) found that most (89.7%) of his respondents who were owners of Small and Medium Enterprises knew about LinkedIn followed by Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and YouTube. In their study to investigate the role social media played in marketing products and services of Micro Small and Medium scale Enterprises during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic. Hidayati and Yansi (2020) through a phenomenological study found that Micro Small and Medium scale Enterprises predominantly employed Tiktok, Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp applications to market and advertise their products because of how easy it was to use them, as well as how quickly they could attract more consumers to their videos and images. These highlight the significance of social media platforms, especially in small and micro enterprises such as the micro-fashion industry.

2.3.3 Social Media Significance

A study by an online advisory firm indicates that as of October 2021, there were a total number of 4.55 billion social media users globally, which has amounted to 57.6 per cent of the total population of the entire world (Kepios, 2021). These figures attest to the fact that nine out of every ten online users make use of social media every month (Kepios, 2021). Refer to Figure 2.1 for data showing 9.9% annual change in the number of social media users globally and an average of about 2 hours 27 minutes are spent daily by these users on social media.

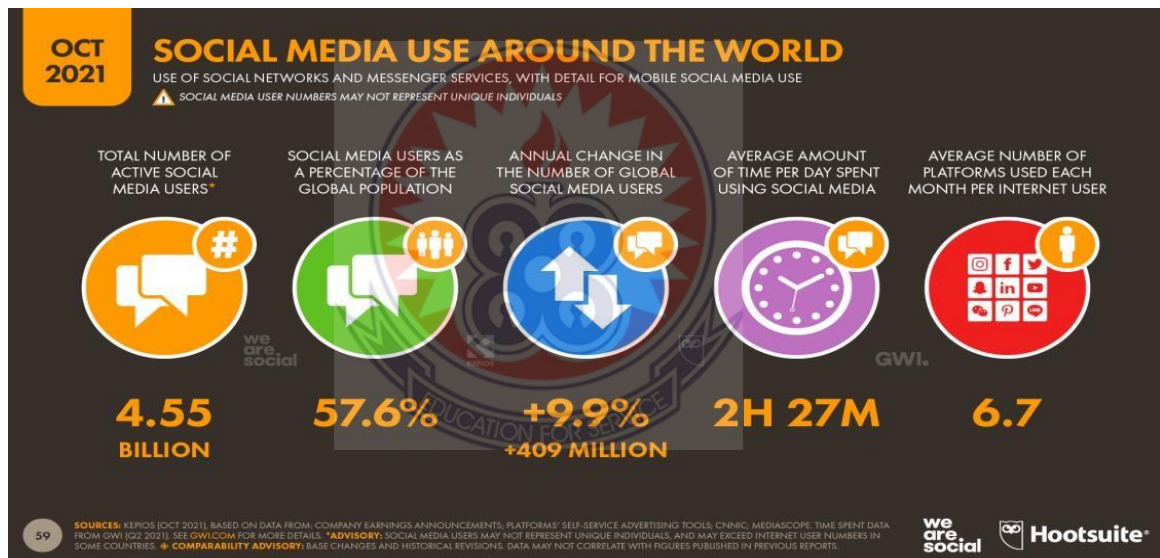


Figure 1. Data on Social Media Use around the World (Kepios, 2021)

There are several reasons why different people use social media. Some of these reasons according to Kepios (2021) include staying in touch with family members; whiling away time; reading news stories; finding humorous content; finding inspiration for what to do and buy; sharing opinions with others in a network; making new contacts; work-related networking and research; seeing the contents of favourite brands and following celebrities and brands, among others. Not only do individuals benefit from social media

but companies as well. Edosomwan et al., (2016, p. 9) identify some benefits derived from social media by businesses and corporate entities, which include:

- Promote open communication between employees and management.
- Enable employees to share project ideas and work in teams effectively, which help in sharing knowledge and experiences.
- Promotes better content, such as webcasts and videos.
- Helps to communicate collaboration between current and potential customers, in receiving feedback, product definition, product development, or any form of customer service and support.
- Encourage members, or part of the company's employees to become members of a well-recognized community, and
- Become a good venue for discussions and the classic goal of marketing and communications, which companies must ensure that employees are adhering to the rules and etiquette regarding these platforms.

Considering the discussions above, this study notes that there are many ways by which organisations and individuals could exploit social media to promote entities in the competitive business environment. A major use of these platforms is marketing, especially social media marketing (SMM). According to GlobalWebIndex's (2021) report highlights that 54% of social media users use the platforms to research products, while 71% are more likely to purchase services and products based on social media referrals, and 60% discover new products through social media. On the other hand, a Deloitte's (2021) report indicates 29% of social media platform users are more likely to purchase a

product or service on the same day of using social media, while 62% of customers share their experiences of products and services with other people on social media. More so, the Deloitte report indicates that the purchasing choices of individuals are influenced by posts made by friends and other people on social media. These signify that social media platforms provide businesses and organizations with a powerful tool to reach a vast audience, build brand awareness, and engage with their target audience. These platforms provide businesses and organizations with an uncontrolled opportunity to engage with their customers, respond to their queries, and provide timely support, among others. Such social media engagements enable brands to attract and stay connected with their customers and receive valuable feedback on products and services. In many cases, individuals and organisations can use social media as a lead-generation tool to acquire new customers and grow the business networks for products and services (HubSpot, 2018). Companies and brands could also use social media to monitor competitors and gain insights into their marketing strategies.

On the other hand, Buffer (2019) noted that 96% of businesses are actively using social media for promotional activities. Hence, these businesses can learn about their competitor's social media usage and strategies and then develop strategies to gain a comparative advantage. Similarly, Power (2020) asserts that social media platforms can be used by organizations and businesses to manage reputation. Social media can be used as platforms to manage a company's reputation, respond to negative feedback, and address customer complaints (Power, 2020). Customer care issues have found as one of the leading reasons consumers engage with businesses on social media (Power, 2020). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) furthered that social media platforms provide businesses and

organizations with valuable analytics and insights into their social media performance, audience demographics, and engagement levels. These insights can be used to optimize social media strategies and drive business growth. A popular social media (networking) site that user including micro fashion designers or enterprises could combine their features to directly market and promote their designs and production is Facebook.

2.4 Facebook as Social Media Platform

With the help of his colleagues Andrew McCollun and Eduardo Saverin, Mark Zuckerberg launched Facebook in February 2004 (Croft, 2007). The Facebook which started at Harvard University spread to other Ivy League schools including Yale and Stanford before giving access to the public in May 2007, when the platform became the “the social operating system over the internet” (Croft, 2007). Facebook would become a platform that would transform online social media interactions forever. The platform enables individuals and entities to integrate their internet activities into their Facebook profiles. Facebook has many features including marketplace, notifications, reels, live videos, following, messenger, notifications, friends, and shares, among others, which facilitate communication and interactions among people, groups, and communities. Given its unique features as a social networking site, it provides opportunities for marketing and direct advertising of brands, products, and services. This, Facebook does by giving advertisers direct access to their targeted demographic audiences and consumers (Croft, 2007).

The size of Facebook’s global advertising audience is USD 2.249 billion as of April 2023 (Data Reportal, 2023). Facebook has many advertisement and fan pages that allow

members on the platform to like brands, products, and services, as well as receive updates from these pages for branding, sales, and information and current happenings, among others. What makes the use of Facebook for marketing and promotion including advertising useful is that more than 250 000 websites have integrated with the platform with more than 550 000 active applications. This situates Facebook as a beneficial platform for social media marketing of products and services including micro fashion enterprises. Facebook allows members to accept or ignore friend requests, or perhaps defriend persons at any time. Facebook as a social media platform shares information and data with other site such as MySpace, Twitter(X) and Instagram, among others, which extends information users provides, connections, interactions, and relationships.

2.5 Marketing

Marketing Communication entails the use of not only traditional but also new forms of communication technologies and platforms including social media to send persuasive messages and information about products and services to target audiences. When marketing is infused with social media, it increases the brand's visibility and exposure by concentrating on a variety of activities including advertising and digital marketing. Scholars characterise marketing in respect of the role it plays to influence and engage potential clients and customers. The American Marketing Association (2017) refers to marketing as the process involved in creating, communicating, delivering, and trading products and services which are beneficial to customers, clientele, Business partners and society at large. On the other hand, marketing is defined as the process by which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relationships to capture value from customers in return (Armstrong & Kotler, 2015).

In other words, marketing involves understanding customer needs and wants and creating products or services that meet those needs while delivering value to the customer. It also involves promoting the products or services through various channels such as advertising, public relations, and sales promotions, and making them available for purchase through distribution channels. The goal of marketing is to build strong customer relationships that result in long-term loyalty and satisfaction, as well as increased sales and profits for the business (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Marketing involves a range of activities, including market research, product development, pricing strategies, advertising and promotion, sales, and customer service. It requires a deep understanding of consumer behaviour, market trends, and competition to develop effective strategies that meet the needs of both customers and the business. With the rise of digital marketing, marketing has also become increasingly data-driven, with companies using analytics and other tools to better understand customer behaviour and optimize their marketing efforts (Kumar & Mirchandani, 2012).

According to Kotler and Keller (2016), marketing can take different forms with accompanying advantages and disadvantages. One of the forms of marketing is advertising which involves paying for space or time on a platform, such as TV, radio, or social media, to promote a product or service (Grewal & Levy, 2022). Advertising can be expensive but can be effective in reaching a wide audience. Sales promotion is another way a business markets its products and services to customers (Kotler & Keller, 2016). According to Kotler and Armstrong (2022), sales promotion involves using short-term incentives, such as discounts, coupons, or free samples, to encourage customers to purchase a product or service. Sales promotions can be effective in generating immediate

sales but may not build long-term customer loyalty. Public relations form another way of marketing a brand or its products and services. Public relations involve managing a company's reputation and relationship with the public through various communication channels, such as press releases, media events, and community outreach (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 2021). Public relations can be effective in building trust and credibility with customers but can also be time-consuming and require significant resources. Finally, is personal selling. Personal selling involves face-to-face interactions between a salesperson and a potential customer, with the goal of persuading them to make a purchase (Spiro, Stanton, & Rich, 2021). Personal selling can be effective in building relationships and providing personalized service but can be expensive and require highly trained salespeople.

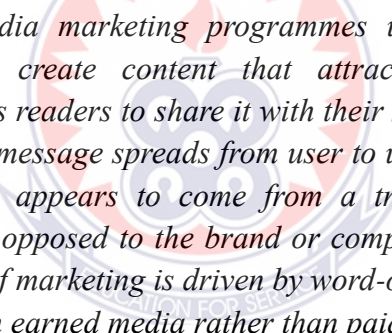
Social media communication plays a key role in how information and messages about products and services are diffused and received by target audiences. This implies that marketing goes in hand with communication. Marketing Communication offers business enterprises the opportunity to identify and engage their target audiences to improve performance (Giacomini, 2016; Hao & Song, 2016). Marketing communication entails the use of digital marketing, advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, and public relation, among others to connect with target markets by building trust to achieve the objectives of clients. In addition to the traditional methods of marketing, digital marketing has contributed to achieving these goals. Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) describe Digital Marketing as achieving marketing objectives by applying digital technologies and media. Kotler and Keller (2016, pp.125) conceptualized digital marketing as the application of marketing strategies and techniques using digital media. It

involves creating and maintaining customer relationships through online activities to facilitate the exchange of ideas, products, and services that satisfy the goals of both parties.” These are not different from the definition of digital marketing by Ryan and Jones (2012) who defines digital marketing as the process of building and maintaining customer relationships through online activities to facilitate the exchange of ideas, products, and services that satisfy the goals of both parties. The above definitions situate and emphasise the importance of how digital technologies can transform how marketing and advertising activities are conducted in real time and affordable costs to organisations and individuals. An example of digital marketing is social media marketing which has become popular among micro and small-scale businesses including the fashion industry.

2.6 Social Media Marketing (SMM)

As Nadaraja and Yazdanifard (2013) argue, the reliability, consistency and instantaneous features of social media have made the hub for online marketing activities. This form of online marketing that takes place on social media is what is referred to as Social Media Marketing (SMM). organisations both large and small are now able to reach their targeted consumers in an easy, effective, and instantaneous manner. Different scholars have various definitions of Social Media Marketing. For example, Bansal et al., (2014) view Social Media Marketing as the act of gaining traffic on one’s website or gaining traffic through social media platforms. Similarly, Jara et al., (2014) also describe Social Media Marketing as an innovative form of marketing tool which solicits higher attention and involvement from consumers through different social media platforms. Social media marketing refers to the use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn, to promote a product, service, or brand (Solomon & Tuten,

2017). This type of marketing involves creating and sharing content on social media networks, engaging with followers and customers, and using paid advertising to reach a wider audience (Solomon & Tuten, 2017). That is, Social Media Marketing is seen as the use of various social media platforms to create visibility as well as promote products and services on the internet. Taylor (2008) indicates that the primary relevance of social media to any form of communication is its potential to bring people who share a common interest. Taylor (2008) further indicated that when individuals bring people together based on a product, service, or interest, they stand a high chance of increasing their profitability upon gathering loyal consumers. According to Nadaraja and Yazdanifard (2013, p. 1),



Social Media marketing programmes usually centre on efforts to create content that attracts attention and encourages readers to share it with their social networks. A corporate message spreads from user to user and resonates because it appears to come from a trusted, third-party source, as opposed to the brand or company itself. Hence, this form of marketing is driven by word-of-mouth, meaning it results in earned media rather than paid media.

Dwivedi et al., (2017) put together various definitions for Social Media Marketing by different scholars and produced an elaborate definition of what it entails. According to Dwivedi et al., (2017), Social Media Marketing involves “a dialogue often triggered by consumers and audiences, or a business, product or service that travels in a circle among the stated parties to set in motion revealing communications regarding some promotional information, or to learn from one another’s user experiences, eventually benefitting either or all of the involved parties”. On the other hand, Nadaraja and Yazdanifard (2013) observe that some businesses are quicker to direct consumers to their social networking

pages than they do refer them to their websites. This, therefore, speaks volumes about the importance of Social Media Marketing to these businesses. In this regard, some scholars have produced some advantages of using social media for marketing purposes. Among them are Nadaraja and Yazdanifard (2013) who state that; Social Media Marketing reduces cost: The cost incurred in employing Social Media Marketing is lower as compared to other traditional means of marketing and advertisement. Social Media Marketing helps firms to reach consumers who under normal circumstances may be out of reach due to geographical boundaries.

Businesses can give limitless information to their target customers at any time without any form of human intervention. Social Media Marketing allows businesses to become ubiquitous which further makes it easy for them to interact with their customers (Bansal, 2014). Which further improves the customer service of the specific enterprise. According to Solomon and Tuten (2017), one of the advantages of social media marketing is its ability to reach a large and diverse audience. Social media platforms have millions of active users, providing businesses with the opportunity to reach potential customers from different demographics, geographic locations, and interests. Social media marketing can also be cost-effective, with many social media platforms offering free or low-cost advertising options. Another benefit of social media marketing according to Solomon and Tuten (2017) is its ability to foster engagement and build relationships with customers. By providing valuable and informative content, responding to customer inquiries and feedback, and offering promotions and discounts, businesses can create a loyal following and build a positive reputation.

Similarly, Behera and Balaji (2019) have produced some benefits derived from the use of social media for marketing and advertising purposes. According to these scholars (Behera & Balaji, 2019), if social media marketing is handled professionally and sustained, it can help to create awareness for the specific brand and assist in conducting research and brand intelligence, as well as other forms of market research. Behera and Balaji (2019) further mention two ways through which advertising can be done on social networking platforms, such as wish lists and tell-a-friend applications. This implies that, through communication on the various social media platforms, interested persons can review by rating products and services, and listen to others' experiences with products and services, which further informs their decision to also patronize specific products or not (Behera & Balaji, 2019). According to Pettey (2008) given that traffic is mostly generated by social media platforms intelligence on specific brands can be gathered from them. Pettey (2008) stresses that social media marketing used to be aimed at young consumers, however, other criteria of consumers are being targeted now. Individuals and organisations can therefore receive feedback, establish a brand presence, or even use these platforms to observe the discussions and perceptions of consumers about their goods and services (Pettey, 2008). The discussions imply that businesses can promote their products and services with their networks online at cheaper costs through social media. Despite these benefits, social media comes with their challenges.

2.6.1 Social Media Marketing Issues

Though using social media comes with its advantages, there are certain challenges that businesses/ enterprises whether small or large encounter which does not ensure the smooth running of social media for marketing and advertisement purposes. Mustapha

(2020) identified in his study that hairdressers faced some challenges in their use of social media for marketing and advertising purposes. These include expensive data bundles, poor connectivity, inability to read and write, online fraud, harassment, and time factor (Mustapha, 2020). Other disadvantages of social media marketing include: the potential for negative feedback and criticism from customers, which can damage brand reputation and decrease customer trust (Huang & Saravanakumar, 2020); difficulty in measuring return on investment, as it can be challenging to track and quantify the impact of social media activities on business outcomes (Kumar, Bhatia, & Sharma, 2019); time-consuming and require significant resources to create and manage content, respond to customers, and track metrics (Lazer & Kennedy, 2019).

Solomon and Tuten (2017) also avers that social media marketing presents challenges such as the need to constantly adapt to changing algorithms and trends, and the potential for negative feedback or criticism. Effective social media marketing requires a clear strategy, a deep understanding of the target audience, and the ability to measure and analyze the impact of social media efforts on business goals. Social media marketing can also be time-consuming and resource-intensive, as businesses need to consistently create and curate content, engage with their audience, and monitor their social media presence (Chaffey et al., 2019). Another challenge of social media marketing is the difficulty in measuring its effectiveness and Return-On-Investment (ROI). A study by Rival IQ (2021) shows that 44% of businesses surveyed cited "measuring ROI" as one of their biggest social media marketing challenges. This challenge can be attributed to the lack of standard metrics for measuring social media performance and the difficulty in attributing social media efforts to actual business outcomes. Moreover, social media marketing also

poses a risk of negative feedback and backlash from customers. A single negative comment or post on social media could quickly spread and damage a business's reputation.

Every business seeks to take the maximum advantage of marketing and social media for the achievement of their goals. For a business to do that, some strategies and approaches must be followed for the maximum utilization of social media as a marketing strategy. Blunt (2018) and Daoud (2016) highlighted the following as key considerations for effective social media marketing, which involves creating an audience persona; goal setting and objectives; budgeting; resource or team building; research; choosing your platform; producing content; and tracking analytics. The use of social media in marketing and advertising by businesses could be explained and discussed in the lens of the Technology Appropriation Model and Social Network Theory, given how these platforms provide organisations the chance to adopt and adapt social media communication to connect and network with members of a population to market and advertise their products and services.

2.7 Advertising

Although the concept of advertising has become more prevalent in today's business environment, the beginnings of the practice can be traced as far back as pre-historic Egyptian times (Frolova, 2014). Evidence of the practice is evident in the use of papyrus with some written information about an upcoming sale of slaves (Frolova, 2014). Frolova (2014) further notes that in its earliest forms, advertising was oral form of communication that was spread from person to person. Written advertisements were done

on papyrus, wax boards, on rocks along the roadside and on buildings. Traditional advertising made use of signs and symbols including colours, flags, and logos (Olatunji, 2018), among others. The concept has since seen remarkable shifts from such initial phases to what it has now come to be. With the advent of the internet, advertising has become different from what it is used to and even further ubiquitous, finding its relevance in all aspects of socio-economic life (Keller, 2019). Due to the massive industrial growth that led the world at the turn of 20th century advertising became the bane of businesses with the practice getting increasingly popular as businesses grew (Presbrey, 2000; Frolova, 2014). The rise of digital media, preceded by technological advancements that allowed for printing in multi-colour, broadcast media enhancements and expansion, has ensured that advertising has now become acknowledged as a profession that yields results for businesses and not just a mere practice of information transference (Presbrey, 2000).

According to the American Marketing Association (2017), advertising is "any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor." This definition is not too different from what was postulated by Belch and Belch (2018) that advertising is the "any form of paid, non-personal communication from an identified sponsor using mass media to persuade or influence an audience. Also, Kotler and Armstrong (2017) posit that advertising is any paid form of nonpersonal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor. In literal terms the concept of advertising can be defined as announcing that something is for sale or simply put trying to persuade customers to purchase a product or service (Durmaz, 2011). To further simplify the concept of advertising Fill, Hughes, and Francesco (2013, p. 17) assert that "advertising says to people, here is what we have got, here is what it

will do for you and here is how to get it. Regardless of how one may define advertising, however, certain critical elements capture an ideal definition of the concept. These include the fact that advertising is paid for form of communication; identifies its sponsor; is distributed through some selected media; identifies and reaches a target audience; is non-personalized communication; and is action oriented (Kotler, 2010, Frolova, 2014). These set of issues underpin the core ideas of advertising and further give some indication of the nature and functions of advertising.

The definitions provided by the various sources and scholars indicate the significance of advertising in businesses to promote products and service. Advertising is conducted by organisations to achieve various objectives, such as: to inform and educate customers about a product, service, or brand (Kotler & Armstrong, 2017); create and reinforce brand awareness and brand image (Belch & Belch, 2018; Lamb, Hair, & McDaniel, 2022; Keller, 2019); increase sales and market share by persuading customers to buy or use a product or service; differentiate a product or service from its competitors and create a unique selling proposition (Sengupta & Dahlén, 2008) and among others. Advertising also affords organizations a host of advantages. For instance, advertising help organizations reach a vast array of target audiences who might be scattered across the globe. Also, advertisements enable the establishment of long-term sustainable images for products and services. One other critical essence of advertising is that it stimulates sales and gives the marketer a good opportunity to increase revenue (Kotler, 2010). To Kotler (2010) the relevance of advertising sometimes transcends economic importance. He accounts that advertising has a social function that goes a long way to affect the image, reputation and good will of the products, services, and ideas. Advertising ensures that by

publicly displaying a company, product, or service, this tells the buyer that the product is not contrary to social norms and laws. This grants the organization some level of social legitimacy that can be evoked as a crucial tool for competitive advantage.

There are distinct types of advertising with several platforms. Some of them include television advertising (Goel & Singh 2021), Online advertising (Ellis Chadwick, 2019; Kotler & Armstrong, 2017), Print advertising (Kotler & Armstrong, 2017), and outdoor advertising (Sreenivasan, 2015). These traditional media channels used in advertising such as radio, television, print, and outdoor are commonly used in marketing products and services, especially in Ghana. However, one form of advertising that has become popular in promoting products and services is digital/online advertising. Digital advertising is any form of paid promotion of a brand, product, or service using digital channels, such as websites, social media, mobile devices, search engines, or email (Kavaliauskė & Mačiulis, 2017). From another angle Kannan et al., (2017) describes digital advertising as promoting products, services, or ideas through electronic media such as search engines, websites, social media, mobile applications, and other digital channels. The use of social media marketing and advertising by businesses could be explained and discussed in the lens of the Technology Appropriation Model and Social Network Theory, given how these platforms provide organisations the chance to adopt and adapt social media communication to connect and network with members of a population to market and advertise their products and services.

2.8 Theoretical Framework

This section of the chapter presents the theoretical framework and models that underpin the study. This study is underpinned by the Technology Appropriation Model and Social Network Theory to situate and discuss the findings that were gathered from the data collected from the two sampled cases (Tailex Ghana and Express Tailor) in the study. The technology appropriation model is complimented by the Social Network Theory to discuss and explain how these micro fashion enterprises use social media to communicate and market their brands, products, and services. Social media can be situated and understood from the perspective of social network theory in describing how these platforms could help in networking with clients and customers to promote businesses, products, and services, among others.

2.8.1 Technology Appropriation Model (TAM)

The theoretical framework underpinning this research, as mentioned early on is the Technology Appropriation Model (TAM). The Technology Appropriation Model illustrate the adoption process and the factors that influence users' assessments of technology. The Technology Appropriation model explains how people adopt, adapt, and incorporate technology into their daily work routines by illustrating how consumers change technology from what it was intended to be to what it is today (Fidock & Carroll, 2006). The Technology Appropriation Model is a general framework for embracing technology that may be tailored to certain user groups and technological advancements (Likavčan & Scholz-Wäckerle, 2018). As technology is adopted, a number of factors affect people's attitudes and behaviours toward it. The nature of the technology, the traits of the users, and the organizational and environmental setting will all affect the kinds of effects that

will occur at work or in practice. The assessments that users make at different points in the appropriation process have an impact on attitudes and behaviours in turn towards the technology (Carroll et al., 2002).

The origins of the Technology Appropriation Model can be traced to the work of Carroll et al., (2002). According to Carroll et al. (2002), appropriation describes how users adapt technology to suit their needs and usage conditions and point to elements that have an impact on their technology adoption process. These elements include a person's initial attraction to a technology and their choice to experiment with and use it (Carroll et al., 2002).

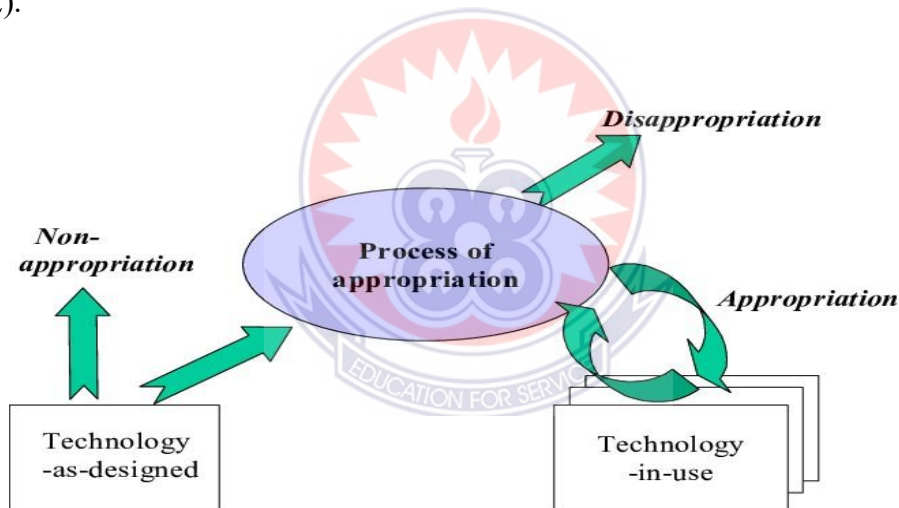


Figure 2: Technology Appropriation Model (Carroll et al. 2001)

In the postulations of the Technology Appropriation Model, users evaluate a technology on a scale of one to three, showing their level of comfort with it at various stages of appropriation (Carroll et al., 2002):

- The first level describes when a user meets new technology for the first time, such as in a store or during a training session. First assessments are made at this level

without the aid of technology for a considerable amount of time. This screening produces two outcomes: non-appropriation, where users choose not to utilise the technology, or adoption, where users do so.

- At the second level, a user will carefully explore technology through the process of appropriation if they are drawn to it. There are two options available. When users use a system's capabilities to meet their requirements, this is called appropriation. Dis-appropriation is when users decide not to use the technology at some point throughout the appropriation process.
- A technology's long-term use is described at the third level. Customers are embracing the technology and incorporating it into their daily lives. This is not a one-time occurrence; instead, changes in how users perceive the technology could lead to dis-appropriation.

Several studies have adopted the Technology Appropriation Model as a framework in their research. Many of these studies have situated technologies, especially new and social media in different context. For example, examining the pivotal role of appropriation in the implementation of health care technology, Barrett and Stephens (2017) argues that by adapting a particular technology to address their work needs, health workers perceived the implementation of health care technology to be positive and developed positive attitudes towards extensive application of the technology in various aspects of their work. Similarly, a study by Loredana and Fernández- Ardèvol (2017) on the use of technology by older people to communicate with their children and grandchildren, suggested that older people could stop using technology to communicate

with their relatives. However, once the motivation for using a technology is lost, there is the likelihood that the user would stop using it (Loredana & Fernandez-Ardevol, 2017).

Several scholars have studied technology appropriation in different context. For example, Chen and Ching (2011) applied the technology appropriation model to investigate the factors that influence consumers' adoption of mobile advertising. The authors found that perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and attitude toward mobile advertising were all significant predictors of intention to use mobile advertising. Zhang, et al. (2014) also used technology appropriation model to examine the factors that influence Chinese consumers' purchase intentions on social media. The authors found that perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and subjective norm were all significant predictors of purchase intention. Lin & Huang (2014) in their study used technology appropriation model investigate the factors that influence consumers' adoption of mobile advertising in Taiwan. The authors also found that perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and perceived credibility significantly influenced consumers' intentions to adopt mobile advertising.

On the other hand, Boateng (2019) has also studied the use of social media as examples of new media technologies for political communication in Ghana in the lens of the technology appropriation model. Given that the Technology Appropriation Model can be situated in different contexts of technology, this study found it useful for the conduct of the research. By using the Technology Appropriation Model this study can discuss how the two micro fashion enterprises (Tailex Ghana and Express Ghana) have adopted and adapted social media as new media technologies in the daily communication and

marketing activities. The integration of social media by the two sampled micro fashion enterprises illustrates the Technology Appropriation Model and provides the motivation for adoption of social media communication to market their products and services. At the first level of the model in the context of this study is when these micro fashion enterprises met social media. This followed by the second level, when the two enterprises explore social media through the process of appropriation after they were drawn to these technology platforms. And consequently, the third level where they have now embraced social media and incorporated them in their daily communication activities. These are consistent with the postulations and stages in the Technology Appropriation Model propounded by Carrol, et al..2001, 2002). The technology appropriation model provides a framework to investigate how social media as technology-as-design have become technology-in-use by Tailex and Express Ghana as micro fashion enterprises for marketing and promoting their brands, products, and services.

2.9 Summary

This chapter provided a review of studies and literature related to this study. The chapter discussed the key concepts in literature such as small, medium, and micro-enterprises, micro (fashion) enterprises, marketing, advertising, and social media features, among others. The Technology Appropriation Model (TAM) was also discussed as the theoretical framework underpinning the study in the latter sections of the chapter. The following (chapter 3) provides discussions regarding methodology and methods used for this study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided a review of the literature including the concepts and theories that underpinned this study. The literature review contextualized the concepts of social media and social media marketing as platforms for marketing communication in micro-enterprises in the fashion industry in Ghana. The chapter also excavated the theories underpinning the research and situated the Technology Appropriation Model and Social Network Theory in this current research.

Having conducted an extensive review of the literature on social media marketing especially in fashion-related micro-enterprises in the preceding chapter, this following chapter (chapter three) provides details of the methodology employed by study including the methods, approach and design, among others that were employed to collect and analyse data to produce the report from findings about the phenomena under interrogation. The research methodology consists of the methods employed in addressing a research problem scientifically (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Methodology is broad than methods in the sense that, while the research method explains the techniques used by the researcher to undertake research, the research methodology indicates the entire strategy a researcher implements in completing a study (Creswell, 2003). In other words, methodology indicates a broad concept that deals with the methods such as the procedures or techniques that are deployed to collect, analyse, and interpret data in a study or research (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In line with this, this chapter outlines the research approach, research design, sampling and sampling technique, data collection

methods and instrument, data collection procedure, method of data analysis, and ethical consideration, among others.

3.2 Research Approach

The research approach is the way by which the study conducts and collects data for analysis (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). In the view of Meadows (2003), the research approach refers to the general plan and procedure for conducting research. Creswell (2014) posits that research approaches are plans and procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The research approach can be inductive or deductive. The inductive research approach revolves around the research questions, as well as the aims and objectives that need to be accomplished in a study. On the other hand, the deductive research approach requires the initial development of hypotheses to verify or reject them during the research process (Kallet, 2004). For this study, the researcher used inductive reasoning. This is because the study began with a review of information on the subject and proceeded with the formulation of research questions. Given the qualitative nature of the investigation, inductive reasoning was used as the research methodology for this study. The inductive approach, according to Saunders et al. (2007), allows generalisations about a research subject by focusing on a single instance. This allows researchers to find patterns in previously collected data, draw conclusions from those data, and use the findings to attempt to generalise widely, contribute to broader academic discussion, and make theories easier to understand.

According to Creswell (2003), the research approach can be classified under the qualitative method, quantitative method, and mixed method. The quantitative research method relies on numerical data to make conclusions about a phenomenon (Creswell, 2003). Silvaman (2010) explains that the quantitative research method uses various statistical methods to make inferences from information about a phenomenon. In the words of Creswell and Creswell (2021), quantitative research is a method of empirical investigation based on numerical data and statistical analysis to understand, explain, and predict phenomena. Trochim and Donnelly (2022) also argue that quantitative research is a method of inquiry that involves collecting and analyzing numerical data to answer research questions or test hypotheses.

On the other hand, the qualitative method relies on non-numerical data about a phenomenon to make inferences. (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) suggest that the qualitative method allows researchers to examine the experiences of real-life social actions to gain an in-depth understanding of a particular phenomenon without subjecting it to statistical examination. Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 3) also state that qualitative research is "a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. Qualitative research turns the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). However, Morse and Field (2019, p. 1), defines qualitative research as "a process of inquiry that focuses on understanding the meaning people give to their experiences and the social contexts in which those experiences occur".

In the case of the mixed method, Silvaman (2010) opines that it combines features of both the quantitative method and the qualitative method in the analysis of information about a phenomenon to conclude. This research method allows researchers to obtain numerical data about a real-life event and the underlying reasons for the occurrence of the event (Creswell, 2003). Mixed methods research is a systematic, rigorous, and flexible approach to research that combines qualitative and quantitative methods to gain a more comprehensive understanding of a research problem (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2021). Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner (2019), also postulates that mixed methods research is a systematic approach to inquiry that combines qualitative and quantitative research methods in a single study or series of studies to address research questions or hypotheses.

This study adopted the qualitative research method, which enabled the researcher to combine document analysis and interview with personnel in selected micro fashion enterprises in Ghana concerning how they have appropriated social media platforms to marketing and promote their brands, products, and services to attract customers. As this study uses case study and thematic analysis framework to analyse data, qualitative interviews and document analysis were suitable for collecting data in detail from the experience of respondents. The use of qualitative interviews and document analysis made it possible for this study to gather responses as a form of data from Facebook as an exemplar of social media and purposively sampled personnel of Tailor Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana who are responsible for communication, marketing and promotion activities who could share their experiences in that regard to address research objectives and questions.

3.3 Research Design

The research design, which is also referred to as research strategy by Saunders et al. (2007), entails the activities that the study undertakes in the research process of collecting data to achieve the study's objectives. It is the roadmap that guides the researcher in carrying out the research. Manheim (1997) as cited in Akhtar (2016) explains that research design does not merely restrict itself to the anticipation and prediction of the various decisions that need to be made concerning collecting, processing, and analysing data, but also gives detailed reasons for decisions made. These assertions are not different from Creswell (2014), who posits research design as a specific direction taken to best achieve the research objectives. Creswell and Creswell (2021) define research design refers to the plan or blueprint for carrying out a study that specifies the procedures and techniques for collecting and analyzing the needed information.

Additionally, Kothari (2020) defines research design as "the overall plan or strategy for conducting research, which includes the broad assumptions underlying the research, the study's methods and procedures, and the intended outcomes of the research. A research design, according to Panncerselvan (2014), is a blueprint for how the study will be carried out. Creswell (2013) defined research design as the strategy for carrying out the investigation. Thus, according to Creswell (2009, p. 25), "research plans and procedures span the decisions from general assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis". Furthermore, Amoani (2005) refers to research design is a set of guidelines for efficiently gathering and analyzing study-relevant data. The design establishes the sample size, sampling method, type of data to be collected, how to collect it, and method of data analysis. The study design establishes the framework for the entire investigation

(Rajasekar, Philominaatha, & Chinnathambi 2013). Given (2008) simply puts it as the way in which a research idea is transformed into a research project or plan that can then be carried out in practice by a researcher. Carriger (2000) adds that research design is a strategy, a plan, and a structure for conducting a research project. Moreover, Yin (2009) suggests that research design is the logic that links the data to be collected (and the conclusions to be drawn) to the initial questions of the study. There are several research designs available for conducting studies, such as surveys, case study, observation, ethnography, and phenomenology, among others (Kallet, 2004).

This study employed the case study design to examine how two selected micro fashion enterprises (Tailex Ghana and Express Ghana) have used social media in communicating, marketing, and promoting their brands, products, and services. The case study research design allows for the studying of a phenomenon in its original context (Meadows, 2003). Creswell (2014) asserts that case studies use a variety of data sources to methodically explore a phenomenon with the goal of gaining a thorough knowledge. The case study design allows the use of a variety of data collection techniques to fulfil its goal of providing an in-depth description of a phenomenon. As a result, case studies enable the collection of data from various sources utilizing a variety of techniques, including interviews, in-person observations, documents, and reports (Creswell, 2013). VanWynsberghe and Khan (2007) define a case as an issue, problem, or phenomenon to be studied to grasp. The case study can be a person, a group, an event, and an organisation (VanWynsberghe & Khan, 2007). Stake (2020) also describes case study as a detailed examination of an event or phenomenon in its natural setting, with the aim of gaining insight and understanding of the complex relationships and contextual factors

that influence it. Yin (2021) adds that a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clear. Case studies are explored via any method(s) including interviews, observations, focused group discussions, and documentation. Case studies entail thorough investigations using qualitative approaches for data collection to answer research questions relating to a phenomenon under study.

Case studies can be grouped into single case studies and multiple case studies. According to Fiss, (2009), a single case study allows for a thorough assessment of patterns, trends, and relationships in a collected study data. Such information can be used to formulate, test, and add to theories. Merriam and Tisdell (2020) describe single case study as an in-depth examination of a single instance of a phenomenon or social unit, typically conducted using multiple data sources, such as interviews, observations, and documents. Flyvbjerg (2021) further explained single case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. On the other hand, the multiple case study design permits the researcher to advance theories through the identification of the differences and similarities between various cases under study. It also permits for examination of the features surrounding an argument in multiple contexts (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2020) asserts that multiple case study is an in-depth examination of multiple cases (i.e., individuals, groups, organizations, events) to explore similarities and differences, patterns and themes, and causal relationships across cases. Creswell and Creswell (2021) also contend that multiple case study is a research approach that involves the examination of multiple cases

to gain insights into a particular phenomenon or issue, using a variety of data collection and analysis techniques.

Case study is suitable for this study because the researcher wanted to examine “what”, “why” and “how” micro fashion enterprises (Tailex Ghana and Express Tailor) use social media as forms of new media communication platforms to communicate, market and advertise their products and services, especially when the study has no control over the communication activities of respondents on social media (Rowley, 2002). This study conducted a comparative case study of two micro fashion enterprise (Tailex Ghana and Express Tailor) using two data collection methods (interviews and document analysis) to examine the similarities and differences in how the two selected micro fashion enterprises market and promote their brands, products and services on social media especially Facebook to attract customers without any attempt to generalise but only make comparison of the cases under study (Burns, 1997).

3.4 Population, Sampling Technique and Sample Size

According to Bryman (2006), the target population refers to the individuals or groups that the research is centred on. It is the aggregate of all objects, subjects, or members which conforms to a set of specifications (Polit & Hungler, 1999). In other words, the population denotes the cases in a study to which the researcher to apply in its conclusion or make generalisations (Riege, 2003). The target population possesses the characteristics or observable features that the researcher aims to examine or generalize the findings to (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The target population of this study comprises all micro-enterprises in the fashion industry in Ghana as of 2022. However, the accessible

population is the communication officials of Tailor Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana were responsible for the communication and social media activities of the two enterprises. It may be argued that sampling in qualitative studies is less concerned with a broad, superficial depiction of people. The goal is to gather respondents who can combine their own experiences to demonstrate the breadth of diversity and similarity discovered by the researcher. This suggests that the researcher does not begin by establishing a predetermined sample size. The researcher continues sampling until there is a surplus of data on the phenomena being investigated (Elmusharaf, 2012).

As Saunders et al (2007) indicate the core elements of the research process are rooted in the techniques and strategies for collecting and analysing data. According to Neuman (2021), the sampling technique is the process of selecting a subset of individuals or units from a larger population to obtain data that can be used to make inferences about the population. Rosser and Rosser (2019) also assert that the sampling technique is a process for selecting a sample from a population of interest, with the aim of making generalisations about the population based on the characteristics of the sample. Sampling techniques can be probabilistic or non-probabilistic, depending on whether every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected. Congruently, Daymon and Holloway (2010) define sampling technique as the various decisions taken regarding what data to access and the specific sources to obtain the data to answer research questions.

A sample refers to a specific group from a target population from which data would be collected (Bryman, 2006). The sample possesses the distinguishing features of a study

population and is used as a representation of the entire population for data collection (Creswell, 2003). The process of choosing a sample from the study population is referred to as the sampling technique (Fiss, 2009). According to the United Nations a sample is a representative subset of a population, used to make statistical inferences about the whole population (United Nations Glossary of Statistical Terms, 2021). The European Commission's Eurostat provides a similar definition, stating that a sample is a subset of units of a population, selected in such a way that its characteristics are expected to be representative of those of the population (Eurostat, 2019).

Selecting a sample for qualitative research is important because it is impracticable for an entire population to be used for the study since it does not aim to generalise (Daymon & Holloway, 2010). Hence, this research sampled two (Tailex Ghana and Express Tailors) from population of micro-fashion enterprises in Greater Accra region of Ghana to examine their appropriation of social media communication for the marketing and promotion of their brands, products, and services. This study uses non-probability sampling in choosing participants for the study, which Creswell (2003) refers to as a sampling method where all members of a study population are not guaranteed an equal chance in participating in a study. This sampling technique allows the researcher to select research samples based on the discretion of the researcher rather than random selection (Bryman, 2006). Non-probability sampling is based on the expertise of the researcher and is widely used for qualitative studies, which makes it suitable for this study to purposively select respondent who are responsible for communication, social media marketing and advertising in the two micro-fashion enterprises that were studied. Non-probability sampling can be in the form of convenience sampling where samples are

selected primarily based on their availability; snowballing where a researcher employs a referral approach to identify a difficult-to-locate small; purposive sampling where the researcher selects participants because they fit into criteria to participate in the study; and Quota sampling that is where the researcher divides a large population into groups to study their characteristics and make the inference. The purposive sampling technique was employed by this study as a form of non-probability sampling to allow the researcher to select a subset of the study population who have some distinct features, background, skills, and experience relating to the use of social media for marketing and advertising activities (Meadows, 2003).

This study focused on Tailex Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana as cases for the research and analysis because the researcher observed that since these two selected registered micro-fashion enterprises have been in existence for a long time and use social media platforms with many friends and followers/followings, they could be utilising these platforms for different communication, marketing and promotion activities that are interesting to study. Two respondents were purposively selected from each of the two selected micro fashion enterprises (Tailex Ghana and Express Ghana) to answer the research questions that were contained in the interview guide for the study. These selected respondents are responsible for social media marketing and promotion activities in their respective micro fashion enterprises with not less than the three years of experience in their roles at Tailex Ghana and Express Ghana.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

The goal of data collection is to gain rich data that suits the research (Kumar, 2014). Elmusharaf (2012) asserts that data collection methods enable researchers to gather data for their studies in a more systematic manner. Data collecting comprises more than just the actual sorts of data and processes; it also entails getting approvals, getting a good sample size, documenting materials, and planning for any ethical dilemmas (Creswell, 2013). Elmusharaf (2012) contests that the collection of data in a haphazard manner could make it difficult to answer research questions in a study. Data collection is not just about gathering the data, but also “gaining permissions, conducting a good qualitative sampling strategy, developing means for recording information both digitally and on paper, storing the data and anticipating ethical issues that may arise” (Creswell, 2014, p. 145). Data collection methods such as documentation, archival records, interviews, participatory and direct observation, and physical artefacts can be used in qualitative studies (Yin, 2009). Regarding the research questions of the study, the researcher used interviews and document analysis as appropriate data collection methods in investigating the phenomenon of social media marketing and promotion of products and services among micro fashion enterprises to elicit data from respondents under major themes to answer research questions.

Interview in research entails a conversation process where an interviewer asks an interviewee question and records the responses (Bryman, 2006). It is a two-way conversation that permits a researcher to increase knowledge on a particular subject (Meadows, 2003). According to Creswell and Creswell (2021), there types of interviews and how they are used is dependent on the research methodology and choice

of the researcher. The first type are structured interviews: these interviews are highly standardized and structured, with a set of pre-determined questions that are asked in a specific order. This approach is often used in quantitative research studies to ensure consistency across participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2021). There are also semi-structured interviews: these interviews involve a pre-determined set of questions or topics, but the interviewer is allowed some flexibility in the order and wording of questions and can follow-up on responses with additional probes or questions. This approach allows for some exploration and depth in participants' responses (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

Lastly, there are unstructured interviews: these interviews involve a general topic or area of interest, but there is no set list of questions or structure. The interviewer has the freedom to explore the participant's experiences and perspectives in-depth, allowing for rich and detailed data (Tuckett, 2019). This study however used structured interviews in the data collection process, which afforded the researcher the flexibility to ask the interviewees follow up questions and get in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. The interviews in this study were conducted with the help of an interview guide to collect information about the nature of social media marketing in Tailor Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana, paying particular attention to what platforms are used, how they are used, and the nature of documents they post to market and promote their brands, products and services on Facebook.

In addition, document analysis was conducted to complement interviews with respondents from the two micro fashion enterprises in Ghana selected for this study, as it

is applied to qualitative case studies. Document analysis entails the systematic procedure for evaluating or reviewing both printed and electronic (that is, computer-based and internet transmitted) documents or materials (Bowen, 2009, p. 29). This means that data needs to be examined and interpreted to elicit meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strass, 2008; Rapley, 2007). Such documents contain texts or words and images which have been recorded without the intervention of the researcher (Bowen, 2009). According to Bowen (2009, p.29), the documents that may be systematically evaluated as part of research include advertisements; attendance register; agenda; minutes of meetings; manuals; diaries; letters and memoranda; press releases; radio and television programme scripts; photo albums and various public records including posts on online and social media platforms, among others.

In line with this, this study analysed documents, such as advertisements and other marketing materials that were posted by two selected micro fashion enterprises (Taillex Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana) on Facebook during the period of this study. The posts by the two micro fashion enterprises from November 2021 to January 2022 were captured through screen shots on their Facebook pages for analysis to complement interviews with respondents responsible for social media marketing and communication activities. The study found, selected, appraised, and synthesized data contained in the documents posted on Facebook by Taillex Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana, from which some excerpts and quotations from the case examples were organized and discussed under the major themes that recurred and applied to interview data. By analysing data collected from two different sources, this study was able to corroborate findings across datasets, which reduces any potential bias that may exist in a single method. In other

words, the triangulation of methods enabled the study to provide a “confluences that promote credibility of data (Eisner, 1991, p.110).

3.6 Data Collection Instruments and Procedure

As mentioned above, this study collected data from qualitative interviews with respondents in the two cases examined in the research. In line with the ethical consideration in research, the study sought gatekeeper permission from Tailor Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana to conduct a study of their social media communication, marketing, and advertising activities. The study examined the communication structure of the two selected micro fashion enterprises and identified employees that were responsible for the daily communication and media activities. This was done to ensure that respondents were suitable persons to collect data from based on their knowledge, experiences and activities regarding social media marketing and advertising. The research recruited four employees of each of the two enterprises (Tailor Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana) using purposive sampling. These eight provided detailed and rich experiences and information about social media usage in marketing and advertising in the fashion industry, especially in their respective micro fashion enterprise.

The interviews were conducted at the offices of the selected micro fashion enterprises in Greater Accra, Ghana. The interviews were conducted in December 2022 with the help of an interview guide. An interview guide according to Tuckett (2019), is a tool that provides a structure for conducting a semi-structured interview, including a list of questions or topics to be covered and prompts for follow-up questions. The questions in the interview guide were posed to respondents to solicit their responses and opinions on the subject under study. Through the face-to-face exchange, follow-up questions that

were not captured in the interview guide were also asked to gain in-depth understanding of their responses. Each interview lasted between 30 to 40 minutes. A digital audio recorder was used in recording the interactions during the interviews. Having recorded and saved the interview sessions, the audios of the questions and responses from the four respondents in the two micro fashion enterprises (Tailex Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana) were transcribed using Microsoft Word. The transcription was done to help the researcher to read over the interview responses to address grammatical and pronunciation errors, group responses with respect to the research questions and objectives, as well as identify recurring themes in the responses of interviewees for further analysis and discussions. The document analytic procedure in this study involved finding, selecting, appraising, and synthesizing data contained in documents (materials) (Bowen, 2009). The data from document analysis is produced in the form of excerpts, quotations, or passages, which were organized into major themes and categories from case examples applied to interview data (Labuschagne, 2003).

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

Data analysis involves systematically applying logical techniques to evaluate, condense, and recap raw data (Creswell, 2003). It entails inspecting, cleaning, transforming, and modelling data to discover relevant information for concluding (Creswell, 2014). The data collected in this study will be thematically analysed. Thematic analysis involves examining information to identify common concepts, ideas, topics, and patterns of meaning that are repeated in a set of data (Kumar, 2014). Thematic analysis is usually used for non-numeric data or text (Creswell, 2003). Thematic analysis, as Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 79) refer to, is a method of identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns

(themes) within data". On the other hand, Nowell et al., (2017, p. 2) also defined thematic analysis as "a method of analysis that involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data that are relevant to the research questions being addressed". Thematic analysis involves a step-by-step process in triangulating and analysing the data. Nowell et al (2017) devised a framework for ethical and trustworthy thematic analysis. The framework consists of six rigorous steps. The first step in thematic analysis involves the researchers familiarising themselves with the collected data by noting initial analysis thoughts, interpretations, and questions (Tuckett, 2005). Regardless of who collected the data, it is important that researchers immerse themselves with the data to familiarize themselves with the depth and breadth of the content (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The second process is the generation of initial codes by the researcher. The initial codes allow the researcher to simplify and focus on specific characteristics of the data (Nowell et al., 2017) affording the researcher to move from unstructured data to development of ideas about the data (Morse & Richards, 2002). Consequently, the researcher then searches for themes in the coded data. According to Braun and Clarke (2016), this phase involves sorting and collating all the potentially relevant coded data extracts into themes. A theme is an abstract entity that brings meaning and identity to a recurrent experience and its variant manifestations.

In other words, a theme captures and unifies the nature or basis of the experience into a meaningful whole" (DeSantis & Ugarriza, 2000, p. 362). Once identified, themes are significant concepts that link substantial portions of the data together. The next step in thematic analysis involves a review of identified themes. During this phase, researchers

review the coded data extracts for each theme to consider whether they form a coherent pattern (Nowell et al., 2017). The validity of individual themes will be considered to determine whether the themes accurately reflect the meanings evident in the data set as a whole (Braun & Clarke, 2006). After reviewing the themes, the researcher proceeds to describe and define the themes. In this phase, the researcher determines what aspect of the data each theme captures and identify what is of interest about them and why (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For each individual theme, researchers need to conduct and write a detailed analysis, identifying the story that each theme tells. Lastly, the researcher concludes the thematic analysis by writing a report on the generated themes. The final report must contain a concise, coherent, logical, nonrepetitive, and interesting account of the data within and across themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and direct quotes from participants (King, 2004).

In this study, the recorded data (interviews) was manually transcribed by the researcher. After the initial transcript was developed, the researcher ran through the data using text editing software – Grammarly – to remove inconsistencies and grammatical errors. The “clean” transcript will then be coded; responses that bear a high level of significance or saliency based on the research objectives will be identified and highlighted. Subsequently, the coded information was put together under specific themes, depending on what ideas they convey. The themes were interpreted to generate the study’s findings and discussions.

3.8 Trustworthiness

Nowell et al., (2017) argue that researchers are only able to convince themselves and their readers of the relevance of their study when they engage in specific practices relating to trustworthiness. Instead of transferring the idea of validity and reliability from quantitative research into qualitative study, Anney (2014) recommends the use of Lincoln and Guba's (2000) dependability, credibility, confirm-ability, and transferability as the criteria of trustworthiness. For this study, the researcher adopted credibility, transferability, and confirmability to ensure trustworthiness in the research.

In their study, Tobin, and Begley (2004) as cited in Nowell et al., (2017) defined credibility as the balance between the views of the respondents and the interpretation given to these views by the researcher. Lincoln and Guba (1985) as cited in Nowell et al., (2017) further outline the techniques and activities that will help researchers to achieve this fit as mentioned above. That is, prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, researcher triangulation, peer debriefing and member checking. For this current study, the researcher engaged with respondents and analysis of data from December 2021 to March 2022. The researcher played the audio recordings of the interviews severally with the transcribed data to ensure that what are in the recordings are as exactly as what have been written.

With transferability, researchers are expected to provide rich thick descriptions to ensure that, though not aimed at generalisation, other micro enterprises that wish to transfer the findings to their own case can transfer the study. It refers to the extent to which the findings of a study can be applied to other contexts or settings beyond the specific sample or population studied. It is the degree to which the findings can be transferred to other

situations or contexts. According to Guba and Lincoln (1985), transferability is achieved when the researcher provides enough information about the research context, participants, and methods used to allow readers to assess the applicability of the findings to their own situations. For this reason, this study used vivid and descriptive language in presenting the findings of the data.

Finally, the researcher engaged in confirm-ability by ensuring that the findings and interpretations made by the researcher are derived from the data and not from the researcher's own conjecture. Confirm-ability refers to the degree to which the research findings are shaped by the data rather than the biases or values of the researcher. It is the degree to which the findings are free from researcher bias or influence. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), confirm-ability is achieved when the researcher documents the steps taken to ensure objectivity and to minimize the impact of their own biases on the research findings. Thus, the researcher ensured confirmability when the researcher discussed the data and findings in respect of literature, theories and models underpinning this study led to credibility and transferability of the study as proposed by Tobin and Begley (2004).

3.9 Ethical Consideration

Ethics in research regard norms of conduct distinguishing between what is right and what is wrong in research. Informed consent was sought from all participants before the commencement of data collection specifically interviews. The purpose of the study was explained to the study respondents to ensure that they willingly participate and answer research questions. Also, consent of the respondents was sought before the recording of

the interviews. It was only after permission was given by participants that this study conducted the interviews. The study also sought Gatekeeper. Permission from the selected micro fashion enterprises (Tailex and Express Tailor) for this research to be conducted on their social media communication for marketing and advertising activities. The researcher ensured anonymity and confidentiality by not revealing any personal details of the participants. This study used pseudonyms to represent the names of the participants when the findings were presented and discussed from the data in the study.

3. 10 Summary

Chapter three of this study outlined the methodological processes that were adopted by the researcher in investigating the phenomenon of social media marketing among micro fashion enterprises in Ghana. The chapter began with the discussion of the research approach, which was qualitative in nature, followed by case study research design, purposive sampling technique, and sample size of eight personnel of the two selected micro fashion enterprises (Tailex and Express Tailor) in Accra, Ghana who were responsible for social media communication, marketing and advertising. The data collection methods that were adopted include qualitative interviews and document analysis. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the collected data and ethical considerations in relation to anonymity and confidentiality were also ensured. To ensure trustworthiness, the research engaged in credibility, and transferability, which led to the conformability of the findings that were derived from the analysed data. The next chapter presents the discussion and analysis of the findings in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

The third chapter discussed the methodology including methods and techniques used for data collection and analysis. In this fourth chapter, the findings from the cases (Tailex Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana) studied are discussed and analysed in respect of literature, theoretical framework, and research question. As mentioned in the method chapter, this study used thematic analysis in analysing data. As highlighted in the first chapter, this study attempted to address the gap in research by investigating how micro fashion enterprises in Ghana are using social media in marketing and advertising their products and services.

This study adopted a qualitative approach by conducting interviews and document analysis to collect data to be able to discuss the findings. The findings in the proceeding sections were gathered from the cases of two micro fashion enterprises (Tailex and Express Tailor) in Ghana. This study is underpinned by the Technology Appropriation Model and Social Network theory to explain and discuss the social media use for marketing activities by the sampled micro fashion enterprises. The theories underpin the discussions to report how Tailex Ghana and Express Tailor use social media as new forms of communication branding and marketing their products and services.

The major themes and other sub-themes are presented to discuss the findings of this study. The themes are in relation to: the understanding of social media and choice of social media; understanding and use of social media for marketing; social media marketing strategies employed; and nature of Facebook posts in marketing. These themes

and their sub themes which emanated from analysing the collected data from Facebook pages and officials at the two (Tailex Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana) selected micro fashion enterprises who are responsible for communication and marketing activities especially social media communication, which were recruited as respondents to participate in this study. For the purposes of confidentiality, pseudonyms have been used to protect the identities of respondents. This is in line with prior agreement between the researcher and respondents, as well as ethical requirements of researchers.

Therefore, the interviewees have been referred to as Respondent 1, Respondent 2, Respondent 3, and Respondent 4. These purposively sampled respondents were selected based on their roles in marketing and communication activities in the two sampled micro fashion enterprises for this study. Their experiences with regard to the usage of social media in communication and marketing their enterprises, products and services could provide the study detailed insights into how Tailex Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana use social media to market and advertise their brands, with their large followings and connections on social media platforms, especially Facebook. Respondents from Tailex Ghana include Respondents 1 and 2, while respondents from Express Tailor Ghana include respondent 3 and 4.

4.1 How do Tailex Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana use social media in marketing their products and services?

4.1.1 Social Media Usage

The respondents attempted to provide their perspectives on the use of social media by differentiating them from other traditional media such as television, newspapers, and

radio. This is because unlike other forms of communication, social media are new forms of communication that are cost effective and interactive, which provide wider reach and audiences. For example, Respondent 2 explained that: “When we talk of social media, we are talking about platforms that allow for sharing creative information and networking. For us, social media are easily accessible applications for communicating and marketing our growing brand.” Adding to his colleague, Respondent 1 also narrated that:

There are so many social media platforms but then one would like to focus on the ones that are efficient and effective that is user friendly and has an interactive interface that you can get feedback from comments, among others. We think we do have a twitter account, but the interface is quite bulky, so we do not really engage there. We use twitter for more professional activities. The same applies to LinkedIn which is also for more professional activities. Professional in the sense that, it is not as interactive as these other social media platforms. The social media platforms we use are user friendly and we can comment and give feedback to customers easily but maybe because we have not really taken time to use LinkedIn and twitter for marketing purposes, we feel inferior using them. We are not familiar with them so we will talk about the ones that we know and we think that, so far, the social media platforms that we are on are effective and efficient for us but if we learn other social media platforms that are currently selling, we may also use them. We know that Tik-Tok is now really booming so maybe it is something that we will try but then when you are on so many social media platforms, you are unable to focus on your market niche. Focusing is important in business. If you can focus, you know that this is what you are giving your attention to, so you invest a lot of time, energy, resources among others in ensuring that it works at the end. When it is successful on one platform, then you can try out another. But when there are so many, you are not able to focus and the others as effective as the few. These are some of our reasons for

sticking and focusing on certain social media platforms to market and advertise our products and services.

This emphasizes the interactivity, affordance, instantaneous and other unique features that social media have, which are not possessed by the old forms of media. This implies that users need to have some knowledge and skills to be able to make use of social media. Also, participant four described social media as “virtual platforms for interacting with people all over the world.” For participant three, social media refers to “novel websites created for interactive purposes.” This explanation is similar to what respondent 2 said that social media are “web-based applications that used for interacting, through the creation and sharing of information on social platforms”. The focus of understanding social media by respondents at Express Tailor Ghana and Tailex Ghana has been on their newness and ability to transform business and communication through feedback and engagement. This situates these platforms as communication media to promote and market about their products and services. The various understandings and meanings provided by the respondents from the two micro fashion enterprises are consistent with the various meanings espoused by Kaplan and Haenlin (2010) and Carr and Hayes (2015), which posited social media in the context of uncontrolled content creation, interaction, and networking. Given the lack of consensus on the definition of social media, the understandings and meanings provided for social media fits into the characteristics provided by scholars including Appel et al. (2020) and Verma (2017).

4.1.2 Social Media Features

Evidence from employees responsible for social media communication of the two selected micro fashion enterprise indicated that they understood what makes social media

different from other forms of communication. Respondents enumerated several characteristics. For example, Respondent 1 highlighted that social media have several features such as the simple interface and content creator buttons. These features promote the sending and exchange of persuasive messages which is an objective of marketing and advertising. In such attempts, social media could help portray attractive messages about a brand, product, or service to persuade audiences to patronize. In other words, Respondent 3 enumerated options for paid ads, content editing and instant sharing features as some of the characteristics of social media:

For our fashion designing enterprise, platforms such as Facebook and Instagram have been so helpful. We get a lot of orders from these platforms. We have a direct link in our bio into our WhatsApp, so we get a lot of people sending us messages and saying they got our contact from Facebook and Instagram. We make bridal designs, gowns including traditional gowns and accessories. We also get orders through recommendations from others but so far, Instagram has been helpful. When we post on our on our social media platforms including WhatsApp, we get a people interested but Facebook and Instagram are the secret. Most often in trying to sell our products, people ask whether we Facebook or Instagram handle. It looks like they are places where people go to check for authenticity. So, we utilize these social media platforms most of the time because of their content editor, sponsors and ad features that helps us to get our products and services out there.

From another perspective, participant 2 situated the use in the characteristics of social media particularly in their abilities, such as “instantaneous, affordable and allow a wide coverage” (Kaplan & Haenlin, 2010). According to respondent 4, “There are many examples of social media platforms, which include Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Tiktok,

Instagram, among others” that they use for business and marketing. In addition to these, Respondent 1 indicated other platforms such as LinkedIn, Academia and, ResearchGate, among others. The diverse examples of social media provided by the various respondents buttress the point that there are many social platforms which could be used by individuals and organizations in communicating and marketing their brands in the competitive business environment. Regarding the platforms and how they are used by the selected micro fashion enterprises, the respondents indicated which social media platforms they use to communicate about their brands to their audiences and public about their products and services to attract customers. Respondent 2 said, “The characteristics of social media and what you seek to achieve with your message will influence which platform(s) and strategies we use for our commercial marketing and promoting our brand and activities”. Participants 3 stressed that Tailor Ghana uses multiple strategies and platforms in marketing and advertising its products and services.

Respondent 2 emphasized, “For example, we use Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter (x) as our social media platforms, but we are more particular about activities on Facebook and Instagram, especially advertising. These assertions are consistent with the response from Respondent 4 who also indicated that Express Tailor Ghana use different social media platforms to reach and market its products and services to its diverse audiences and the public. “However, we are more particular about our communication activities on Facebook and Twitter,” respondent 4 stressed. This is like Respondent 3 at Express Tailor who stressed that their enterprise focused on the two social media to be able to get to as many people as possible”. “We do not concentrate on others like LinkedIn, Academia, Pinterest because opportunities to market, advertise and interact are less on these

platforms,” Respondent 3 reported. It can be suggested from the responses that these two selected micro fashion enterprises are taking advantage of the popularity, various features, and substantial number of users on Facebook and Twitter, among other platforms to market and promote their brands, products, and services. Given the responses from the interviewees, it is evident that social media have become an important part of the communication activities of the micro fashion enterprises particularly Express Tailor Ghana and Tailex Ghana. This is consistent with the suggestion by Felix et al. (2017) that for businesses to compete and succeed in the 21st Century they must adopt social media to market and accelerate their activities via online networking and advertising.

4.1.3 Motivation for Social Media Use

There were several reasons that influenced the two micro fashion enterprises to use social media for marketing. Respondents from the two selected micro fashion enterprises provided rationale for their decisions to use social media to market and advertise their products and services. For example, Respondent 2 reiterated:

As mentioned early on, our decision to use social media platforms especially Facebook and Instagram for our marketing communication activities is informed by our desire to get our products and services to as many people as possible, which can help us to persuade them to patronize our brand. You know as a micro fashion designing enterprise, we do not have adequate resources to market our products and services on traditional media such as radio, television and newspapers, so we need to take advantage of the cost effectiveness and unique features of social media platforms to spread our information about our brand faster. This is coupled with the simple ways of

operating them to market and promote our products and services, as well as their ability to influence the brand choices of audiences and customers.

The assertions above validate the postulation of the technology appropriation model that the easy use of media technologies could influence the motivation for individuals and organisations to adopt and adapt use new communication innovation to promote their activities.

Stressing further on this, Respondent 1 indicated that:

Taillex Ghana's decision to communicate through social media was also informed by the popularity of social media platforms. Social media is currently the order of the day, and it is easier to get people to appreciate your products more especially people who are not close to you. Initially, marketing was very restrictive so if you had a business, it was difficult to advertise. Those days you needed billboards, so only people within your catchment area would be able to access your product but with social media, you are able to sell or put out your products for people to appreciate it, even when they are not in a close proximity so you can just put out your products there and people in America, UK, people all over the world will be able to see, appreciate and order your products when they need them. This is all thanks to globalisation which has made the world one global village and has given us reasons to use these social media platforms. For example, Facebook allows us to have quite a large number of followers which we call "friends" and with time, after networking, one is able to get a large number of friends. People send in friend requests and all and this increases your number of friends to even over 3000 friends or followers. So, whenever we post, it reaches a wide number of people who may be interested in our work or may recommend us to other people. Instagram is quite inspiring, since many quickly blow up on Instagram, once we know what marketing

strategies to use and what works for the people following us. People are interested in our contents, so once we are able to put out contents there, people will follow us for that content. That in itself sells our product because we have people who are interested in our products, coming directly after us. Through WhatsApp, we can post our products on our status where people will watch and get to know what we are into. And these are people who know us. In addition to that, anybody who is on our contact will be able to access it. There are some of the social media platforms that are familiarity based. People we know and have served are able to refer us to others and due to their willingness to recommend us, we widen our customers. For social media handles like Facebook and Instagram, we do not really have to know everybody or all customers but for WhatsApp, because we need the person's contact, it is a bit restricted. These platforms allow us to communicate to a wide number of people with different interest and makes it easy to market the products," Respondent 2 also noted.

From the perspective of Express Tailor Ghana, Respondent 4 highlighted that the enterprise's decision to use social media was informed by its quest to globalise.

Respondent 4 said:

At a point, we wanted our products and services to be known worldwide, therefore we had to resort to social media, especially Facebook, to market our brand and activities. With this, we are not really able to follow the trends and take advantage of these modern forms of communication. It is not enough to be good at what we do especially when it comes to fashion. We must be able to get out there, to show people what we have got and that is what would add value to our products and help us sell. The entire essence of business is to get people to buy our product, so wherever we are going to get these people, which is what is important. So, it depends on how we can market our enterprise and how we are able to get people interested in it. There are so many people doing the same as

we are doing but, the question is, what makes us stand out? That is what informed our choice of social media platform. Instagram especially has really gotten a lot of people interested in certain products depending on how we sell it though. Depending on your content and how people imbibe it. Instagram was a done deal. Usually, it is not easy when we start a new platform especially when we are managing it ourselves. We must think through comments, captions, and all that, but now, there are many people who have employed managers to oversee their business accounts. Social media marketing helps us to focus on the business whiles someone else (employed as manager) handles the social media platforms. The Facebook app, like I said has a wide reach so people like, comment and share and that is how you are able to sell as these platforms have been helping so far. Instagram and Facebook especially are exquisite for fashion. WhatsApp, although limited, we are often able to get people within our contacts to patronize our goods and services.

The assertion of the various respondents show that these selected micro fashion enterprises selected for this study have decided to use our social media platform for their advantages of reaching out to many people their world with their products and services. Tailor Ghana and Express Tailor have also decided to settle on social media because they intended to follow the global bandwagon. With regard to how social media platforms influence their brand, the respondents concurred that these platforms positively influenced the brands in several ways. Both Respondents 1 and 2 said that social media especially Facebook influence how their brands are perceived, sales and engagement with potent customers and the public. Respondent 1 added, “how we craft and present our products and services on social media easily persuade people to call our contact numbers to make orders and purchases”. On the other hand, Respondents 3 and 4 indicated that, “Social media have helped to imprint Express Tailor Ghana’s name and brand well in the

minds of customers, which has contributed to the development of our brand in the micro fashion industry”. These responses attest to how social media could influence people through information provided on platforms to promote and convince audiences of messages as suggested by Siebu (2019) that social media can influence brand profitability and sales. The responses from the respondents are consistent with the suggestions by Woka (2014) that organization rely on social media because of their reach and interactivity, as well as their ability to influence the preference and choices of products and services.

The interviews provided the study considerable understanding regarding the use of social media by micro fashion enterprises, which could inform the use of the platforms for communication and marketing their products and service. The respondents gave similar definitions of social media which centred on their features or characteristics. There was consensus from their responses that social media are affordable and interactive means through which micro fashion enterprises can brand, market and advertise their products and services, among others for the purpose of promoting sales. The explanations given to the concept by the respondents in this study are consistent with the definitions of Dollarhide (2021) and Polanska (2014) that social comprises the various electronic platforms that promote the sharing of ideas, thoughts, and dissemination of information through virtual networks and communities and allows organizations and businesses to get access to new or potential customers especially, due to the popularity of this means of communication. Given this, personnel who are responsible for the social media communication should be able to distinguish between the characteristics of the various forms to be able to choose which ones are suitable for marketing the products and service

of micro fashion enterprises in Ghana. This is especially true given Hroska and Maresova (2020) indicates that the object of the communication and message influences the social media platform(s) to be used in marketing. In this regard, several characteristics of social media were highlighted by respondents through their discussions in terms of the interactivity, cost effectiveness and global reach. The characteristics mentioned by the respondents were consistent with (Dwivedi, Kapoor, & Chen, 2015) and Alalwan (2018) who enumerated several social media features from their studies including interactivity, easy access to local and international markets.

4.3 What strategies do Tailor Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana use in marketing their products and services on social media?

The section provides findings regarding social media strategies employed in marketing and promoting the selected micro fashion enterprises and their brands, products, and services. To provide evidence, respondents discussed their strategies and platforms; how they are used; who is responsible; and how they promote their brands, products, and services.

4.3.1 Social Media Advertising

Tailor and Express Tailor Ghana have employed various strategies to market, promote and advertise their products and services to attract customers and sales. These were revealed by respondents who acknowledged their appropriation of these strategic platforms in advertising their micro fashion enterprises and products. The two selected micro fashion enterprises under study use Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok, Twitter and YouTube, among others, which they use strategically to undertake their marketing and

advertising activities for their products and services. Express Tailor and Taillex Ghana have active presence on Facebook with many followers, likes and comments as compared to other platforms. This provides reason for this study's focus on Facebook as an exemplar for document analysis.

Table 1: Social Media Platforms Used by the Micro Fashion Enterprises

Social Media Platform	Number of Followers	
	<i>Express Tailor Ghana</i>	<i>Taillex Ghana</i>
Facebook	21 000	2 400
Twitter (X)	15	0
Instagram	76	6 471
TikTok	236	15

The two micro fashion enterprises sample in this study use various strategies for diverse social media marketing and advertising activities based on the objective and response they want to receive on particular social media platforms. Highlighting this, Respondent 1 said: “as a strategy, we have established our presence on many social media platforms as possible by creating different accounts and profiles on them to promote and advertise our products and services as quality brand. This is because we do not want to rely on only one or two platforms because we need to take advantage of all available new media to advertise our brand. Stressing further this assertion, Respondent 2 stated:

Some of the advertising activities we conduct on social media include creating marketing content and awareness about our products and services and sharing them on our different platforms to attract potential customers. This means that we have digitally advertised everywhere

because the more we post, the more people are attracted to your pages, and they find out what you do or have for them. If they are interested in them; they follow them while we also continuously update them; they will like, comment, and share what we post to encourage people to engage. The more visibility you have, the more people interact with your contents of your pages. So, it is important that we post interesting designs and attractive fashionable styles to attract many customers. Again, one needs to caption posts well to easily attract viewers. This is because sometimes, you may good contents but if your captions are not really catchy, they may destroy the whole thing or not attract people. Timing is important in advertising through these social platforms coupled with interactive persuasion especially via posting, commenting, and having catchy captions as well as responses to comments.

Respondent 1 furthered that, “We have relied on social media to advertise and create awareness of our brand and products to carve a niche in the micro fashion industry”. Respondent 2 confirmed how the platforms especially Facebook assist their micro fashion enterprise to get its products and services to their target markets online; how it provides details about our prices and promotions; and how potential buyers can get our services and products to buy if they are interested. “We shoot photos of our items and use Facebook and other platforms to post a lot of our pictures, videos, and texts there since social media are convenient for pictures and running advertising promotions. If our clients prefer any of our styles or items, they see in the pictures (adverts) we post, they get to know the price attached to the picture and can proceed to order and purchase them,” Respondent 1 reported.

These revelations are not too different from what was gathered from respondents at Express Tailor. Respondent 2 revealed that social media plays a critical role in the

marketing and advertising activities in their micro fashion enterprise, “We rely on all the platforms to advertise our latest designs of clothes and also especially at special occasions such as Christmas, Easter, Ramadan among others to promote sales on our social media platforms”. Respondent 2 elaborated that as part of its social media marketing strategies that Express Tailor Ghana has created different profile accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tiktok and Youtube, among others to reach out to many people and promote their products and services to a global audience to attract as many customer as possible for our brands, products and services in the competitive market.

On the other hand, Respondent 3 from Taillex Ghana reported that as part of their micro fashion enterprise’s marketing activities, they use social media as key strategy to identify potential customers which enables them craft and present specific outfits to different people based on their statuses. Respondent 3 said, “These messages about our products are packaged and directly sent to them privately into their inbox and emails to create awareness and stimulate sales”. These are consistent with the notion of Keller (2019) that with advent of the internet, social media play a critical role in marketing and advertising products and services of organisations to promote them to attract potential and existing customers.

For his part, respondent 4 enumerated a number of social media activities that Express Tailor Ghana undertakes which include creating promotional content and running paid advertisements to engage prospective clients. The evidence from the responses above shows the opportunities and benefits of using social media. It is evident that the micro fashion enterprises, especially in Ghana given the modest cost involved, as compared to

other media platforms are following the global trends in the competitive fashion industry, where giant and growing fashion brands are deploying strategic efforts to take advantage of the benefits and potentials of new media including Facebook to promote and situate their brands in the minds of audiences and customers. With regards to who is responsible for social media, marketing activities, the selected micro fashion enterprises, Respondent 3 stated, “You may see we are a small organisation, and so we do not have an outfit that takes charge of marketing and advertising on social media. However, we have two persons at Express Tailor Ghana who have been assigned the responsibility of marketing, advertising, and engaging with customers and potential customers about our products on social media especially Facebook and Twitter(X).” On the other hand, Respondent 2 noted that despite the size of Tailor Ghana, it still takes social media marketing seriously. Respondent 2 indicated, “There are three employees who are tasked with the activities of marketing and advertising on social media, who update our platforms with our latest products for the public”. From the evidence, it could be figured by the study that even though these selected micro fashion enterprises were committed to using social media especially for marketing and advertising, individuals responsible for such activities do not have training, qualification and skill to effectively use these new communication platforms to maximise the patronage and sales in the competitive fashion industry. However, assigning of particular personnel to social media communication is an indication of how serious Tailor and Express as micro fashion enterprises have taken social media marketing and advertising.

4.3.2 Social Media Engagement

The respondents in the two micro fashion enterprises (Tailex Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana) acknowledged that there were many benefits of using social media in the marketing and sales of their products and services. These were clear in the evidence from the interviews. For example, Respondent 2 from Tailex Ghana said, “I will not be able to tell you all the benefits we have accrued from using social media platforms to promote our brand, sales, and customer satisfaction. However, given that we have been able to attract so many customers through our social media platforms is an indication of how well these platforms have contributed to our sales.” Respondent 1 also indicated, “In addition to posting our products, we provide our contact details which make it easy for new and old customers to make orders and payments for delivery to them to close sales”.

Further, Respondent 1 noted that: “Our social media allows us to observe the profiles and pages of individuals who could be interested in our products and services and then we send more information about the product to them through direct messages and mails”. On the other hand, respondents at Express Tailor Ghana had these to share with the study.

Respondent 2 said,

Yes, there is no doubt that social media contributes to our sales and allows us to engage with our potential and existing customers to address their needs and requirements. The platforms give us the chance to send and exchange messages with our clients and customers to be able to know what they are looking for, and we try our best to give them exactly what they want.

Respondents 4 concluded that.

Many of our sales and promotion activities, and customer relation activities are executed using social media. For example, we have several platforms dedicated to customers where they can send, exchange, and chat with us about our products and services and give more information to them to promote sales. All these enhance engagements and customer satisfaction to retain them and attract other potential clients, among others.

Given the responses, the two micro fashion enterprises have not only used social media platforms to sell their products and services, but also build networks of followers and followings as well as thousands of friends online who receive messages and information about their brands instantaneously as soon as they put them out there. This practice does not only situate into the postulations of Boyd and Ellison (2007) that social media particularly social networking sites such as Facebook allow individuals and organizations to create profile and connect with other users to establish relationship in promoting products and services. The creation of accounts and profiles by Tailor and Express Ghana; making of regular posts; and connecting with others to promote their brands reflect the social network theory, which propounds that social media are able to promote social network and engagements in marketing and advertising (Horak et al, 2019; Bailey et al, 2018).

4.3.3 Issues Regarding Social Media Usage

Despite the many benefits that are associated with the use of social media by micro fashion enterprise, several issues challenge their appropriation in marketing the brands and products of Tailor Ghana and Express Tailor. Respondent 1 from Tailor Ghana said,

“For us as a micro fashion enterprise, we need to remain constantly active on our social media platforms to be able to market our brand, products, and services. And as you know this comes with cost.” Respondent 2 added that,

This means that we need to have consistent access to data and the internet to market our micro enterprise and its products and market ware through advertising on social media. Therefore, anytime we do not have the internet or data, it makes it difficult to communicate and market our products and services using these platforms.

These challenges are not very much different from what respondents at Express Tailor Ghana enumerated. In addition to what other respondents revealed, respondent 1 indicated that fake news dis/misinformation were challenges to their organisation’s social media marketing. Respondent 1, explained, “As you know some people may be willing to engage with you on social media, or perhaps do not believe posts and information on online platform because some of them could be fake or untrue”. Similarly, Respondent 3 emphasized, “The lack of confidence in social media by some potential and existing customers makes it very difficult for us sometimes to persuade them on these platforms until they come to see our products and services physically”.

The evidence from the two micro fashion enterprises indicates that they acknowledge that the challenges indicate above could affect their social media marketing activities. For example, Respondent 2 stated that,

You know Tailex Ghana is a small growing business, and we do not have adequate resources like other firms that have funds to market their brands and products on traditional media including radio and television. Therefore, when we face challenges to use social media platforms, it affects us negatively because it becomes difficult to attract

many more customers to our products and services a growing micro fashion enterprise in a competitive industry.

For Express Tailor Ghana, Respondent 4 noted;

Yes, the challenges to our social media usage affects our marketing and advertising activities as a micro enterprise. In addition to the fact that we cannot to use other channels of media to communicate, sell or advertise, we are not able to constantly engage, promote and address the problems and requirements of our current and potential customers without our social media platforms.

The issues with regards to social media use in marketing and advertising as provided by respondents at Tailex Ghana and Express Ghana are not too different from the impediments to social media marketing that are situated in literature by scholars such as Mustapha (2020), Solomon and Tuten (2017), Lazer and Kennedy (2019), and Huang and Saravanakumar (2020), among others. To be able to address the problems highlighted, the respondents in the two micro fashion enterprises suggested that their organisations give more attention and support to social media marketing and communication for effectiveness and results. These include the provision of budget and equipping personnel who conduct activities on the platforms with some skills and knowledge of how social media could be used beneficially to maximise their growth and establish their brands in the fashion industry.

The responses provided in this study indicate that social media are used to connect, communicate, and engage with potential and current customers or clients. The responses show the significance of social media in communicating and marketing micro fashion brands by pointing out how they do several activities such as posting their products, engaging in negotiations about prices and other information using texts, pictures, videos,

and audios, among others. However, given their varied brands and target audiences of the two micro fashion enterprises information sent to the public fairly differed. This study can say that social media phenomenon has broadened the micro fashion enterprises horizon of communication by giving them possibilities for diverse engagement, networking, and marketing.

These notions agree with the opinion of Alalwan (2018). According to Alalwan (2018), the purpose of any business advertising medium, be it digital or print should be able to generate and sustain interest that would translate into more sales. If the additional functionalities of social media can allow unskilled persons to access creation and editing tools that can be used in crafting digital media capable of generating a lot of attraction to their social media accounts, it is likely to result in more sales and profits for them.

The respondents were aware of the role of social media which influenced their appropriation for their branding and marketing activities of their respective micro fashion enterprises. Respondents provided examples of social media including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube, among others, which are similar to what scholars including Lin and Rauschnabel (2016) and ElenaIulia (2018) have provided in their studies. Respondents acknowledged that the opportunities offered by the types of social media informed their choices of platform to resort to in marketing their brands and products. These findings confirm the assertion of Behera and Balaji (2019) and Yazdanifard (2013) that social media provide many opportunities that allow them to package their brands, and market them to the public and target audiences.

Usage of social media for marketing social media communication has become an integral part of micro fashion enterprises. Respondents gave backgrounds to their use of social media marketing activities and their motivation for appropriation. Respondents reported that they were motivated to use social media for their activities especially branding, marketing, and advertising because it has become a new trend for engaging their target audiences at cheaper cost. These platforms provide the avenue to showcase their brands, which makes it possible for the micro fashion enterprise to create messages and post their products, designs, pictures, videos, audios, among others to market themselves to a wider public. In the context of the Technology Appropriation Model, it can be deduced that the selected micro fashion firms perceive social media as particularly useful to their marketing and advertising activities and can easily use it to achieve their marketing and sales targets.

This aligns with the studies of Behera and Balaji (2019) and Pettey, (2008) on social media marketing, which noted the need for businesses including small enterprises to extend their brand and market to them to attract many through social media platforms. These platforms provide micro fashion enterprises the chance to engage and receive feedback quickly to meet customer requirements and address their challenges. Consistent with Taylor (2008), the usefulness of social media is thought to promote brands and products in unique ways. Further agreeing with the opinions of Bailey, et al., (2018) and Horak, et al. (2019) on the Social Network Theory, by having access to the number of engagements and being able to examine what's popular to social media users when it comes to fashion, the micro fashion enterprises can utilize social media to expand their

business into local and international territories which traditional marketing and advertising may not be able to allow them to due to the cost involved.

Respondents acknowledged how social media enable them to create networks which consequently promote relationship and sales of products of micro fashion enterprise. The respondents established that because social media give them control over messages they post, the micro fashion enterprises can craft content about their products and brand them in ways that could easily attract them in their advertisements. These acknowledgements by the respondents are consistent with previous studies conducted by Taylor (2008) and Jara et al., (2014), who indicate that social media provide opportunities through uncontrolled and unrestricted messages that could influence and persuade recipients to patronise brands and products through marketing. It can also be inferred from the above that, the selected micro fashion firms can leverage the competent talent when it comes to designing and implementing social media marketing campaigns. Also, with such personalities assisting them, these firms can employ simplified user interfaces coupled with complex functionalities to roll out marketing and advertising campaigns that result in growth in clients and sales made by the micro fashion firms.

4.3 What is the nature of documents posted by Tailor Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana on Facebook to market their products and services?

4.3.1 Nature of Posts on Facebook

Like other organisation in other industries that communicate and market their products through social media, Tailor Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana make different forms of post and information on their social media forms. The messages of social media communication and advertisement revolved around their enterprises and products of their

respective brand. According to respondent 1, “Information that are posted on social media platforms are mostly product messages, news and contacts about different styles and designs, among others”. Respondent 3 stated, “We do not only post text but also pictures and videos and these are especially done when we have new things to show the general public, which is current and potential customers”. The other respondent 2 elaborated that apart from using videos and pictures, Tailor Ghana post audios, slogans and jingles about their enterprise and its products to advertise on social media platforms. Respondent 2 concluded that “This allowed the public and target audiences to listen and watch information about our brand in the fashion industry”.

These responses are similar to what respondents at Express Tailor Ghana provided. According to the respondents, Express Tailor Ghana also makes posts that contain videos, audios, and pictures, among others on their social media platforms. For example, Respondent 5 indicated, “We post news and information about our products on our social media platforms, particularly Facebook. We post whatever we do including our successes and achievements as an emerging micro fashion enterprise in the industry.” This is not different from what Respondents 6 also said, “We try as much as possible to post everything about us, that is, pictures, videos, audios, jingles and songs, among others as a way of marketing and advertising our products and services to our target audiences and the public”. These are in line with the findings of Behera and Balaji (2019) that in the efforts of organization to market their brands through social, the post various contents of different nature to attract attention as many people as possible to their products and services for patronage and sale.

The two micro fashion enterprises (Taillex Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana) have used Facebook for marketing and promoting their micro fashion brands. These two micro fashion enterprises sampled for this study have active presence on Facebook and promote the marketing and advertising of their products and services through their posts. For example, Express Tailor Ghana made posts such as *“1000 cedis on promotion now with quality fabrics,” “outfit by express Ghana limited,” “grab one at an affordable price with quality fabrics”* and *“600 cedis cash on delivery@0242201301,”* among others to market and promote their designs and products to attract existing and potential customers to their fashion enterprise. Refer to Figures 2 and 3 below in the text.



 1 Nov · 🌐

1000 CEDIS on Promo now with Quality Fabrics 📞
024 220 1301 📍 Accra Ashaley Botwe HQ and
Kumasi Ahodwo Branch



63 1 Comment • 16 shares

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

Figure 3: Sample Facebook Marketing Post by Express Tailor

Express Tailor GHANA 8 Sep · 🌐

600 CEDIS CASH on DELIVERY 📞 024 220 1301
📍 ACCRA ASHALEY BOTWE

WhatsApp
Contact Express Tailor GHANA WhatsApp

👍 474 58 comments · 139 shares

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

Figure 4. Sample Facebook Advertising Post by Express Tailor

On the other hand, Tailex Ghana also made different posts on social media to market and promote their brands, products, and services. Express Ghana used Facebook to post social media marketing and promotional messages such as “*your premium tailoring experience,*” “*this is a suit week,*” “*our Fragga outfit comes in different colours, wine you sad?*” and “*our army green zip lock is fast selling, DM to place your order,*” among others to attract customers. Refer to figures 4 and 5 in the text below.



Figure 5. Sample Facebook Marketing Post by Tailex



Figure 6. Sample Facebook Advertising Post by Tailex

Tailex Ghana and express Ghana posted different formats of documents that include audios, videos, images, and words (texts) that attract attention and many reactions, views, likes, comments and shares by audiences and consumers of information that could transform into engagements and relationships. This gives credence to Boateng's (2020, 2021) studies that highlighted those reactions, likes, comments and shares, among other

characteristics related to documents posted by the two selected micro fashion enterprises on social media especially Facebook demonstrates engagements with content by audiences. This rationalizes the motivations for Express Tailor Ghana and Taillex Ghana to appropriate and use social media platforms including Facebook to market the unique selling propositions of their brands, products, and services to attract and convert many of their friends and followers to their micro fashion enterprises.

Contrary, it is evident that the two micro fashion enterprises have not maximize the use of social media platforms especially Facebook for engagements and interactions, which limits the appropriation and utility of the platform for social media marketing. The two micro fashion enterprises transmit adverts to global audiences through documents such as images, pictures, texts, and banners, among others to market and promote their brands, products, and services. Refer to figures 4 and 5. This contradicts the suggestions provided by Kwon and Wen (2016) and Sheth (2019) that organizations and individuals must take advantage of social media to promote conversations and establish relationships to address issues relating to audiences through social networking.

Since the two sampled micro fashion enterprises created accounts (profiles) on Facebook years ago on 4th November 2019 and 30th April 2019, respectively, Taillex Ghana has attracted over 2 400 followers and 2000 likes to their platform, while Express Tailor Ghana also has over 21 000 followers and 17 000 likes to their activities and posts to promote their brands, products and services on the platform. These two micro fashion enterprises have uploaded different messages and information about location, services, contact details, new fashion trends and styles, among others to influence audiences to attract them to patronize their services and products. The significance of social media

particularly Facebook to Taillex Ghana and express tailor cannot be underestimated because these platforms have contributed to the marketing and promotion of their brands, products, and services. In other words, Facebook helps the micro fashion enterprises in Ghana to attract many new customers. Highlighting the impact, Respondent 1 from Taillex Ghana noted that:

The use of Facebook and other social media for marketing and promotion helps our numbers of customers to keep growing over time because samples of designs and products could be easily viewed by many global audiences to attract them to make orders, use, or recommend others to purchase our products and services as an emerging competitive brand in Ghana.

On the other hand, respondent 3 from express tailor Ghana attested to the significance of Facebook by reporting these:

We are able to attract so many people and attend to their special needs and requirements to satisfy our customers and potential clients. This could not have been possible without Facebook and other digital and social media platforms because our messages and information may not have gone far or received across the world. This means people could not have seen our products and services widely to make any requests or purchase or recommend what we have in stock for the public.

The responses demonstrate how Facebook can transform marketing and promotion through engagements and widespread of brand messages about their products and services. This gives credence to the notion of Morrison (2015) that social media platforms like Facebook could help enterprises to combine their (profiles) to directly and advertise their designs, productions, and process of manufacturing. It is important for this

study to highlight that while social media platforms provide micro fashion enterprises opportunities to market their brands, there are also several challenges to their appropriation by the micro enterprises. Respondents provided different perspectives on what hinders the efforts to take advantage of the potentials of social media. Some of the challenges provided by respondents include inadequate resources, access to internet and data and social media communication skills, among others. There is the suggestion that social media platforms cannot only transform but improve marketing and promotion of sales if these micro fashion enterprises are able to address the challenges highlighted by respondents in the study.

In appropriating social media for marketing, micro fashion enterprises encountered several challenges regarding these platforms. Respondents seem to not only recognise the value of these social media but also aware of the problems that are associated with the usage for communication and marketing. Some of the issues enumerated by respondents include unstable of the internet, fake news, dis/misinformation, lack of data and adequate social media communication skills and financial constraints, among others. These challenges to social media activities in micro fashion enterprises are not different from the impediments to social media use highlighted by scholars such as Mustapha (2020), such as resource constraints, online fraud and phishing, expensive internet packages, connectivity and limited technical knowledge of how to operate social media platforms optimally, among others. These require innovative ways to address the challenges that impede social media marketing by micro fashion enterprises.

This study found evidence from the findings that are consistent with the Technology Appropriation Model in the investigation of social media marketing activities of Tailex

Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana. The essential elements of the technology appropriation model that is technology-as-designed and technology in-use (Carroll, 2004, 2001) characterise social media activities as technology for networking and promotion. In context of this study, social media as platforms demonstrate the representation and artefacts as technology as design. That is social media have several communication features, which entails the ability to post, comment, share, like and follow, among others that attract the micro fashion enterprises to make use of these new platforms to brand and market their products and services. These characteristics of social media as technological design attract micro fashion enterprises to adapt and adopt these platforms for marketing and consequently transforming social media into technology -in-use as the micro fashion enterprises continue to use these platforms for their marketing and communication needs (Carrol, 2001, 2004).

Social networking through platforms like Facebook could promote how micro fashion enterprises take advantage of social media by allowing them to use the platforms to connect with many people and communicate their brands and products to promote patronage and sales. The creation of accounts on various social media is an indication of the willingness of micro fashion enterprises to connect to expand their reach. The readiness of these fashion of these fashion enterprises to give and receive feedback on their marketing and advertising information about their products and service to address issues raised by the by the potential and current customers and clients on the platforms exemplifies the use of social media as network technologies to promote brands. By extending networks on these platforms, micro fashion enterprises can use and inform their target audiences and the public about their activities and products they have to offer.

4.6 Summary

This chapter of the study presented discussions of findings in respect of literature, theories, and research questions. The next chapter (Chapter 5) concludes the study and provides a summary of the findings by the research in its investigation of the use of social media in the communication and marketing activities of Tailex Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana to promote their brands, products, and services.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0 Introduction

The previous chapter provided analysis and discussions of the findings from the collected data. This chapter presents the summary of findings from the data analysis based on the study objectives. Also, this chapter provides the conclusions, theoretical and practical implications, as well as recommendations of the study. The study sought to shed light on the debate on social media influence on marketing and advertising by exploring how these new communication platforms are appropriated by micro fashion enterprises in Ghana to communicate and market their products and services, among others.

5.1 Summary Study Findings

To be able to do this, the study sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. To explore how Taillex Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana use social media in marketing their products and services.
2. To discuss the social media strategies used by Taillex Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana in marketing their products and services.
3. To describe the nature of documents posted by Taillex Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana on Facebook pages to market their products and services.

5.1.2 The first objective of the study was to explore how Taillex Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana use social media in marketing their products and services.

The study discovered that the selected micro fashion enterprises have diverse ways and uses of social media platforms, for example, WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram, among others for their businesses, marketing, and advertising activities. The use of

platforms for marketing and advertising by the selected micro fashion enterprises was informed by their popularity among their customers and target market, the ease of managing these platforms, and how well they fit into the advertising and marketing activities of the micro fashion firms. They post diverse documents, videos, pictures, audios, and text from time to time to display their outfits and expertise to attract clients and customers. The understandings of social media provided by the personnel at the two selected micro fashion designers or enterprises enabled them to appropriate platforms that could help them to network and promote their designs and clothes, among others. The uses of social media and their features provided by the respondents address the first research question of this study.

5.1.3 The second objective was to discuss the strategies used by Tailor Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana in marketing their products and services.

In addressing the second objective and question two regarding how micro fashion enterprises use social media, this study discovered that micro fashion enterprises were able to use the unique features and potentials embedded in the social media platforms to promote marketing and advertising of products and services, as well as create awareness of their business activities and attract prospective customers. Also, the study identified from respondents that it costs low to use social media platforms for marketing, especially advertising as compared to traditional advertising. By so doing, these micro fashion enterprises could divert the extra resources into their production process. In addition, the study found that the micro fashion enterprises utilise social media to spread their business across local and international markets. Further, these technologies provided the micro fashion enterprises with engagements, interactions, feedback and other analytical tools

that help them to measure the performance of their online business transactions, to determine how well their marketing and advertising efforts are doing, and the extent to which their market reach has been developed or expanded. Among the numerous social media platforms, Facebook was the most popular among micro fashion enterprises for marketing and advertising their products and services due to its wide coverage. Despite that, respondents concurred that Instagram facilitated purchases and customer engagements in simple ways because it has more elite class audiences or customers.

5.1.4 The third objective attempted to describe the nature of documents posted by Taillex Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana on Facebook pages to market their products and services.

In addressing the third objective and research question of this study, the various documents that the selected micro fashion enterprises posted on social media platforms for marketing and advertising were found on their Facebook pages. The documents on Facebook include videos, texts and especially pictures. These documents contained promotional information and messages that sought to attract their audience to purchase their respective brands. These advertisements were captioned in diverse ways with contact of the designers/enterprises to make negotiations and transactions easier through social media. The analysis also revealed that micro fashion enterprises are appropriating social media, especially Facebook using different formats and contents in documents to achieve their marketing goals.

5.2 Conclusion

This concluding section restates the objectives of this study and draws conclusions of this research, as well as discusses its recommendations and suggestions for further studies. This sought to shed insights on social media marketing by exploring how two micro fashion enterprises in Ghana have appropriated social media communicating to promote and advertise their products and services. This study excavated existing literature and research on social media and marketing to provide insights into the cases of micro fashion enterprises in Ghana.

From the data collected and literature, it is evident that social media marketing and promotion is important to the activities of small and medium scale enterprises particularly micro fashion designers who use several media platforms (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter), among others to advertise and attract new and existing clients, showcase their brands, products, services and prices to public. The micro fashion enterprises post pictures, designs, locations, and telephone numbers, among other details about their designs, products, and services in their (digital) marketing activities on social media platforms.

The study also found that because these micro fashion enterprises blended different strategies and social media platforms, they encountered various challenges in their usage of social media marketing and promotion activities. Some of the challenges revealed by respondents include Cyber fraud, lack of access to the internet and data, unstable connections, fake information, and other poor-on-net human related issues. Despite these, this study concludes that social media are useful platforms for business marketing and

promotion such as micro fashion enterprises/designers especially in Ghana to advertise their brands, products, and services to target markets and audiences to attract customers.

5.3 Recommendations

Inasmuch as some efforts have been put in place in terms of social media appropriation by the micro fashion enterprises in Ghana for marketing and promotion of their products and services, there is still more to be done to maximise the utility of their unique features and potentials. This is because the two (Tailex Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana) have not professionalised their marketing communication especially social media usage. Given this, the micro fashion enterprises have not been able to adequately harness the networking potential and applied tact to promote their brands, products, and services on social media platforms through engagements and interactions. This was evident in the lack of response to comments and enquiries from audiences of their Facebook platforms. Therefore, the micro fashion enterprises must be more enlightened to improve their usage of social media platforms in marketing and advertising.

Micro fashion designers/enterprises including Tailex Ghana and Express Tailor Ghana could take advantage of opportunities provided for the advancement of their business promotion through social media marketing, connection, and networking to satisfy the information needs and product/service requirements of clients and customers. More so, personnel responsible for social media communication and platforms of micro fashion enterprises need to be trained and oriented to appreciate the workings of digital and social media and tap the opportunities and address issues regarding appropriation in digital fashion marketing. This will improve the online marketing of the products and services of

micro fashion enterprises to attract many customers in the competitive fashion industry in Ghana.

5.4 Limitations/Suggestion for Future Studies

Considering the above, this study recommends other researchers explore the use of social media by consumers to engage with fashion enterprises through the lens of a quantitative approach as compared to this qualitative study. As indicated, this study focused on qualitative interviews and document analysis; hence a study through a quantitative approach for example survey of audiences could be interesting for future studies. As this study concentrated on micro fashion designers, other studies could also investigate how medium and larger scale fashion enterprises in Ghana are also taking advantage of social media platforms to market and promote their brands via engagements and relationship building, among others. The findings could be useful to industry players in the fashion industry, which could support them to integrate these new forms of media technology in their business practices and communication with multiple stakeholder audiences, among others. This study sampled only two micro fashion enterprises and Facebook as case study. Further studies can be conducted to include more micro fashion enterprises as well as other social media platforms other than Facebook to analyse content and frequency of marketing and promotion of brands, products, and services on the platforms.

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