

## **Social Media Use, Marketing Capabilities and Marketing Performance of Small and Medium Tourism Enterprises in Tanzania**

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### **Abstract**

This study assesses the influence of cognitive, social, and hedonic use within the moderating role of enterprises marketing capabilities on the relationship between social media use and marketing performance. The data was collected using a cross-sectional survey of 346 small and medium tourism enterprises; and was subjected to analysis with the aid of Smart-PLS, a structural equation modelling for both the structural and measurement models. The results show that the three dimensions of social media—i.e., cognitive, social, and hedonic use—have a positive and significant impact on the marketing performance of small and medium tourism enterprises. Moreover, marketing capabilities positively and significantly moderate the relationship between social and cognitive use of social media, but with no such moderating effect on the relationship between hedonic use and marketing performance. Based on the resource-based view and theory of the uses gratification, we suggest that all the three dimensions are relevant and deserve consideration when using social media in the tourism industry. A further competitive advantage emerges when companies have marketing capabilities that promote social use and cognitive use. In fact, the right mix of marketing capabilities, social use and cognitive use support both theories, and hence extends to the decree that an inside-out and outside-in perspective should be for the competitive advantage to materialise, and for better sustainable performance. As such, capabilities are indispensable and transform social media from a general factor of production to a valuable resource for the better marketing performance of small and medium tourism enterprises. These findings are important for policy makers and practitioners to create an enabling environment for the development of an infrastructure that supports the smooth use of social media by SMEs. Knowledge and skills in social media use for marketing should be nurtured and developed in SMEs for better marketing performance.

**Keywords:** *social media, marketing capabilities, marketing performance, cognitive use, social use, hedonic use*

### **Introduction**

The proliferation of social media (SM) and its use for marketing activities and customer engagement (Acikdilli, Mintu-Wimsatt, Kara, & Spillan, 2020; Canovi & Pucciarelli, 2019; Cheung, Pires, Philip, Leung, & Ting, 2021) has led to a growing interest among academics, researchers, and practitioners. Research on the use of social media in tourism marketing has focused more on conceptualizing the

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characteristics of SM and their impact on organizational performance, particularly on destination image formation (Frösén, Tikkanen, Jaakkola, & Vassinen, 2013); destination choice, and booking of accommodation and transport (Govindan, Mina & Alavi, 2020); its use for customer engagement. However, the limited studies conducted in developing contexts have neither provided extensive insights on how SM-use influences the market performance (MP) of small and medium tourism enterprises (SMTEs), nor have they captured the aspect of marketing capabilities (MCs) (Kazungu et al., 2017; Masele & Rwehikiza, 2021; Mhilu & Lyimo, 2019; Mutarubukwa & Mazana, 2020; Namusomba, 2020; Ndekwa & Katunzi, 2016).

Consistent with the strategic literature, we consider social media (SM) marketing capabilities as a firm's ability to integrate SM with its marketing strategies (Liang et al., 2020). Over time, capabilities have gained notoriety as core elements in asset deployment (Acikdilli et al., 2020; Ariffin, 2021); and have been reported to elicit positive results on the relationship between assets and MP. Baia, Ferreira and Rodrigues (2020) posit that capabilities are mandatory for integrating assets for value-creation. Also, scholars associate SM-use with MP (Adeola, Hinson, & Evans, 2020; Arasli, Abdullahi & Gunay, 2021), and that MCs influence MP (Ariffin, 2021). Despite this, however, to date a research model explaining the relationship between these concepts in the context of SMTEs is largely missing, creating a need for the current study to fill such a gap. Clearly, the ever-increasing use of SM suggests that the traditional marketing model may no longer be viable, and that companies need to fundamentally rethink their marketing practices as brands are now co-created with customers online. Again, previous researchers have been silent on the enactments that explain this changing business milieu.

We argue that the SM platform alone is not an end in itself, as it is not a plug-and-play tool that can meet customer expectations. Previous studies have shown that the relationship between information technology use and firm marketing performance depends not only on resources (in this case internet connectivity and access to social media), but also on other organisation-specific factors that influence how resources are ultimately used (Elly & Boter, 2016). It is, therefore, common knowledge that relevant background factors influence the use of information systems and their services. The characteristics of small and medium tourism enterprises need to be explored to better understand how best to use SM (Dwivedi, Ismagilova, Rana, & Raman, 2021; Fraccastoro et al., 2021), as firms in a similar context show performance differences in the use of SM. Due to the different methodological, geographical, cultural and developmental contexts in which studies are conducted, and the different technological advances, views on how SM ultimately contributes to firm marketing performance are conflicting and require further research (Cheng & Cho, 2021; Dwivedi et al., 2021). The existing literature offers little in the way of a holistic empirical perspective on the systematic application of SM as a strategic marketing platform (Adeola, Hinson, & Evans, 2020; Arasli, Abdullahi, & Gunay, 2021). According to Adeola et al. (2020), most companies struggle to effectively use SM for strategic marketing purposes. This

could be due to a lack of specific SM knowledge, as there is little information in the existing literature that addresses the strategic perspective (Arasli et al., 2021) to explain a company's required marketing actions, which are mainly in the rubrics of a company's marketing capabilities.

Hitherto, previous studies have examined the implementation of SM based on different approaches (Chris White, Conant, & Echambadi, 2003; Malshe, Hughes, Good, & Friend, 2022); e.g., growth in demand, number of employees, employees performance, financial performance, growth in income and capital. Others have looked at SM-user's behaviour and information needs (Thomas & Kanje, 2020); customer engagement in social media (ibid.); social identity, and the usability and usefulness of SM (Gekombe, 2019; Tumsifu, Dev & Gekombe, 2020). Little attention has been paid to the functional use of SM (Fan et al., 2021; Tarsakoo & Charoensukmongkol, 2019; Garrido-Moreno, García-Morales, King & Lockett, 2020), and the capabilities required by an organization to deploy SM. Tarsakoo and Charoensukmongkol (2019) point out that numerous tourism organizations still fail to recognize the marketing potentials of social media. This inability highlights the issues related to an organization's marketing capabilities, which are considered in this paper as a moderator of the use of SM; and an organisation's marketing performance. Siti-Nabiha, Nordin and Poh (2021) also argue that research is needed to address the fragmented theory on the various factors that influence and shape the actual use of SM.

Furthermore, studies on the use of SM for business activities in tourism mainly refer to the uses and gratification theory (UGT) by Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1973). In doing so, its proponents have identified three main functional uses that correspond to the dimensions of SM-use: social use (SU), cognitive use (CU), and hedonic use (HU) (Ali-Hassan, Nevo & Wade, 2015; Kamboj, Kumar & Rahman, 2017). Results from the majority of previous studies do not only contradict, but also offer differences in performance among firms (Cheng, 2019; Cheng & Cho, 2021; Christou & Chatzigeorgiou, 2020; Dwivedi et al., 2021). However, based on the resource-based view (RBV), assets and capabilities are interrelated; and capabilities transform assets into productive resources (Gueler & Schneider, 2021). Since asset accumulation does not guarantee better performance, we suggests that assets and capabilities must well match to reinforce firm performance (Oyewobi, Adedayo, Olorunyomi & Jimoh, 2021; Tumsifu et al., 2020). Therefore, it is additionally necessary to assess SM-use in businesses not only from generic capabilities considered as inside-out (RBV), but also on those specific to SM-use (outside-in perspective) to better understand the differences in performance among firms (Tarsakoo & Charoensukmongkol, 2019).

This paper, therefore, proposes a framework that relates the three uses of SM to the marketing performance of SMTEs. In addition, the study considered the moderating variable relevant to the use of SM. We hypothesize that MC, as a moderator, could explain why previous studies have taken a contrarian position on the value and importance of SM among companies in general, and SMTEs in

particular. The assumption is that companies with better capabilities and more digital experience tend to place higher importance on the use of SM, and eventually stand out from others. Otherwise, companies with lower capabilities will not use SM; or will use it only to a limited extent. Thus, marketing capabilities (MCs) moderate the relationship between the use of SM and SMTE's marketing performance. Given the contrasting positions in previous studies, this article will contribute to the literature by analysing the relationships between hedonic, social, and cognitive use of SM and SMTEs' performance; and also the role of MCs on the nexus between the three concepts of SM-use and the MP of SMTEs.

### **Resource-Based View**

Barney's (1991) resource-based view (RBV) may provide a theoretical basis for explaining the role of a firm's SM-utilisation capabilities on the MP among SMTEs. The RBV hinges on the idiosyncratic characteristics of a firm as sources of economic rents that influence competitive advantage and performance (Maclaren, 2020) Idiosyncrasy, however, is a function of specific capabilities of a firm, which we consider in this study as SM-marketing capabilities relevant to a firm's efforts to leverage SM for better performance.

According to Tarsakoo and Charoensukmongkol (2019), asset ownership does not necessarily lead to competitive advantage, but rather the ability to integrate and deploy assets into productive resources. Therefore, firms that possess such capabilities, in conjunction with available assets, are likely to create value more effectively compared to their competitors. Combined SM and marketing capabilities are useful for businesses operating in volatile environments as they can help add, develop, integrate, and release other resources over time (Ton, Gaillard, Adamson & Akgungor, 2021); leading to better marketing performance. Tarsakoo and Charoensukmongkol (2019) argue that with the use of SM, technologies available on the Internet are assets that can be easily acquired by competitors; so simply owning such technologies does not guarantee better performance. We assume that the use of SM can provide a better MP when unique capabilities are in place. Such explicit marketing capabilities are unique features that cannot be easily be transferred to, or imitated by, competitors (Gueler & Schneider, 2021).

In this sense, firms that have such capabilities can use SM better for their marketing activities than their competitors, and are therefore likely to achieve a better MP. Notwithstanding contradictory results, the RBV focuses on the capabilities of a firm in general, and on its SM marketing capabilities in particular. The importance of MC lies in the use gratification as derived from the SM platform. RBV alone is an inside-out perspective that pays little attention to market needs, and focuses solely on the acquisition and development of assets, capabilities and internal competencies. With the employment of the uses and gratification theory (UGT), we are able to articulate the interests of the users of the SM platform from both the inside-out and outside-in perspectives. This type of framework has been lacking in the SM literature, and so this study attempts to fill this gap.

### **Uses and Gratification Theory**

According to the uses and gratification theory (UGT), media use is selective and motivated by individual awareness that it will satisfy own needs (Ruggiero, 2000). The literature on social media shows that people have varied incentives to join and use the platform. For example, people use SM to satisfy their needs related to identifying with groups or symbols they want to be associated with (Christou & Chatzigeorgiou, 2020; Fraccastoro et al., 2021; Ghorbanzadeh, Khoruzhy, Safonova & Morozov, 2021; Kazungu, Matto & Massawe, 2017). Here, the important psychological need is to feel socially connected (Krajčovič & Čábyová, 2020); hence, participating in social media and connecting with others fulfil the need for belonging (Li & Leonidou, 2021; Mbura & Kagoya, 2020). Other desires for social interaction include the motivation to create content (Bai & Yan, 2020; Hosen et al., 2021), shop, research, and entertain (Dzogbenuku, Doe & Amoako, 2021). Although some researchers have shown that the lack of proximity and physical presence in social media leads to weak relationships (Aydin, 2020; Benda, Lindblom & Olsson, 2019), others have found that such relationships can bring people together and encourage members to engage deeply in society (Yost, Zhang & Qi, 2021). Thus, the use of SM depends on users' values, which influence their views on what kind of purpose, features and functions are important to them in a particular usage situation and context (Yamagishi et al., 2021). Therefore, companies using the SM platform need to design it in a way that enables active use, and ensures that it leads to gratification.

The edicts of the UGT are appropriate for understanding the motives for SM-use, and its effects on performance as it relates to decisions and outcomes (Katz et al., 1973). Most previous studies on the UGT have considered three main needs that can be satisfied through media: cognitive use (CU), hedonic use (HU), and social use (SU) (Ali-Hassan et al., 2015; Kamboj et al., 2017). In this study, the three needs are matched with different categories of SM usage, namely SU, HU, and CU; and their relationship with the MP of SMTEs. Based on SU, individuals use SM to establish and maintain social relations such as staying and getting in touch with others (Appel, Grewal, Hadi & Stephen, 2020).

Cognitively, social media can provide people with information, knowledge and understanding (Arasli et al., 2021). Hedonic use (HU) provides benefits such as pleasure and emotional experiences. However, these hedonic benefits can be used as entertaining activities that create joy, pleasure, and relaxing moments between participants. In some studies, these activities are used during leisure time or breaks at work to satisfy individual needs (Kamboj et al., 2017). Previous studies support the fact that the three need categories of the UGT are similar to the use dimensions of SM (Ali-Hassan et al., 2015). Considering RBV and the UGT theory, we hypothesise that marketing capabilities could moderate the use of SM and MP, which explains why previous studies have taken a contrarian position on the value-creation and importance of SM as an asset among firms in general, and in SMTEs in particular (Kamboj et al., 2017).

***Social Use and the Marketing Performance***

The social use of SM has been explained based on individuals using SM to build and maintain social relations with others, including getting in touch with new customers and staying in touch with previous ones (Ali-Hassan et al., 2015; Kamboj et al., 2017). Also, social media for social chats, familiarisation with other people, participating in entertainment, conversations, and organizing events account for the social uses of SM as a pulling factor for retaining customers on a firm's SM platforms that facilitates the discovery of the customers' interests, in addition to cultivating relationships among parties (Kamboj et al., 2017). This usage can also help companies connect and stay connected with customers with similar interests (Furman, Diamant & Kristal, 2021). Therefore, SM-social events and conversations have been identified as important practices that can provide businesses with useful customer insights (Kim & Hall, 2019).

Social media serves as a multifaceted tool for firms, facilitating customer familiarization, establishing initial contact, and maintaining ongoing connections (Kamboj et al., 2017). It not only provides a platform for customers to get acquainted with a company's offerings but also enables seamless communication, allowing firms to stay in touch with their audience (Ali-Hassan et al., 2015). Beyond mere transactions, social media becomes a virtual space to coordinate social events and foster meaningful conversations, creating a dynamic and interactive environment that goes beyond traditional customer-company interactions (Wang and Liu, 2021). Since, the content of SM in the tourism industry is mainly user-generated, platforms that support activities such as sharing photos, videos, and comments with other readers could improve performance. Wang and Liu (2021) have shown that social media is useful for managing customer relationships by attracting, engaging, and retaining customers. This type of interaction improves product awareness and customer satisfaction, impacts sales, and could eventually increase profitability (Gidebo, 2021; Rosli & Nayan, 2020). With this in mind, we hypothesize the following:

*H1: SM-social usage positively influences the MP of SMTEs.*

***Hedonic Use and the Marketing Performance***

Hedonic use of SM is based on the view that individuals use SM to perform and enjoy entertaining activities (Ali-Hassan et al., 2015; Zollo, Filieri, Rialti & Yoon, 2020). Events that provide relaxing moments, happiness, and entertainment are created and shared to be used during leisure time or work breaks (Ebrahim, 2020; Zollo et al., 2020). Scholarly works across business contexts show that the hedonic use of SM influences MP as it can remind customers of things, offer ideas or clarify issues (Ebrahim, 2020). In addition, hedonic activities can encourage customers to visit SM platforms regularly, which introduces new offerings, which in turn increases product awareness, demand, sales, and profitability (Castillo, Benitez, Llorens & Luo, 2021).

Based on the perspective of SM-use for hedonic purposes, companies that can provide a platform that gives users access to fun, pleasure, sensory stimulation, entertainment, fantasy, surprises, and more (Kim & Choi, 2021) could attract more

visitors and perhaps customers. Studies in this area have mainly used technological factors and theories to assess the acceptance, usability, and intention to use such platforms among tourists. It is not uncommon for studies on technological acceptance models, technology task fit, and those related in the field of tourism SM-use. However, these studies have not addressed factors within the businesses themselves that would accelerate or hinder the use of such platforms. Therefore, a comprehensive approach is needed to analyse both the use of SM and the ability of a business to facilitate such SM-use to achieve better marketing performance. Based on the above, we hypothesize the following:

*H2: Hedonistic use of SM positively influences the MP of SMTEs.*

### ***Cognitive Use and the Marketing Performance***

SM-cognitive use focuses on the use of SM to create and share information, while also accessing information created by others (Ali-Hassan et al., 2015; Kamboj et al., 2017). Social media may be used to create, distribute, and access information that is useful in marketing, and the development of a business (Yamagishi et al., 2021). As SM users seek self-efficacy leading to decision-making and action needed to manage their touristic activities, then SM-use could create possibilities for self-directed connectivity, allowing for individual empowerment (Kemp, Porter III, Anaza & Min, 2021) in information-sharing be more desirable. According to Mbise, Ranke, and Røskafth (2021), such active participation in a travel online community has a positive impact on the sense of belonging, which may result in increased knowledge sharing and enhanced capacities to choose causes of action.

Accordingly, SM platforms that support a person's cognition through supporting customers' decision-making and action needed to manage future situations tend to be more appropriate. Such capabilities to design and uphold visitors' expectations are born in a firm. Customer information that is shared in SM provides useful insights to a firm that helps in branding and improving its offerings, following customer interests; and thus resulting in more customer satisfaction (Hamzah & Shamsudin, 2020). Although SM-use benefits are many, the theoretical framework underpinning and predicting the use of SM among tourism firms remains understudied (Cheng, 2019; Salam, Imtiaz & Burhan, 2021), such that it is not clear which cognitive factors determine the use of SM platforms.

A satisfied customer will not only make a repeat purchase, but will also recommend firm offerings to family members and friends (Adusei & Tweneboah-Koduah, 2019; Hamzah & Shamsudin, 2020). It is also argued that SM is a good source of supplier information, such that businesses—including those in the tourism sector—may acquire information on the costs of flights, attractions, accommodation, and the like on time (Matikiti et al., 2018). Since tourism businesses are information-centred, their growth and development depend heavily on the availability of information (Kyara, Rahman & Khanam, 2021). We then hypothesize that:

*H3. The cognitive use of SM positively influences the MP of SMTEs.*

***Marketing Capabilities and the Marketing Performance***

Marketing capabilities (MCs) consist of the skills, expertise, and knowledge accumulated in an organization that employees use in creating customer value that can lead to customer satisfaction, or meet customer expectations (Fan et al., 2021; Garrido-Moreno et al., 2020; Tarsakoo & Charoensukmongkol, 2019). These are recurring patterns of business practices that are customer-focused (Acquaah & Agyapong, 2015). These capabilities facilitate the deployment of resources to achieve targeted marketing objectives (Baia, Ferreira & Rodrigues, 2020). MCs can thus be seen as a company's ability to identify customer needs and understand the unique characteristics that influence consumer behaviour. It is also based on understanding and predicting customer interests and matching customer expectations with a company's products and services to increase customer satisfaction (Soltanpour, Mesbah & Habibian, 2020), formally or informally obtained.

Based on RBV, a firm's competitive advantage is achieved through the possession of uniquely developed assets and capabilities that are heterogeneous and partly intangible (Barney, 1991). This theory states that capabilities are key elements owned by individuals that help firms coordinate their activities, leverage assets, and add value to their goods and services. This paper looks at these capabilities from the point of view of a firm's ability to leverage SM, and ultimately influence performance. Agyapong and Acquaah (2021) argue that the capabilities to leverage SM has been conceptualized based on the ability of businesses to integrate SM channels into their business activities that help them interact with consumers, and ultimately create value. In the tourism industry, owners and managers can use SM to create conversations between businesses and customers, spread electronic word of mouth, and build an online community. The use of SM by small and medium-sized tourism enterprises will benefit those businesses that have limited financial resources, and therefore cannot develop and acquire expensive marketing channels (Christou & Chatzigeorgiou, 2020). Considering that SM does not require a high investment compared to traditional channels (Appel et al., 2020), it represents an opportunity for SMTEs as they will be able to reach a wide audience with a limited budget provided they use it well.

Previous studies indicate that MC is a multidimensional concept that encompasses various aspects related to a company's ability to use resources (Shen, Sha & Wu, 2020). The concept of marketing capability was used in an earlier work by Kotabe, Srinivasan and Aulakh (2002), who examined the moderating role of marketing capability on firm performance. Acquaah and Agyapong (2015) also suggest that MCs moderate the relationship between resource use and micro and small enterprise resource-use, and therefore performance. Day (1994) conceptualized MC as an overarching capability that integrates the outside-in and inside-out perspectives, and encompasses six aspects: plan development, meeting customer needs, product development, pricing, customer service delivery, and purchasing. Similar to spanning capabilities, Morgan, Vorhies and Mason (2009) also propose six elements: product development, service development, pricing, communication, planning, and implementation. Building on the arguments of previous scholars



such as Morgan et al. (2009) in measuring business capabilities, the current study uses five elements to assess the impact of MCs on performance. These five capabilities or items are: pricing, product development, communication, planning, and implementation. Based on previous studies, MCs are considered important tools for value-creation among services and product providers. They also influence customers' purchasing decisions and affect firm sales and profitability (Stoldt, Wellman, Ekdale & Tully, 2019). We hypothesize the following:

*H4: MC positively moderates the relationship between SM-use and the MP of SMTEs.*

### **Methodology**

This is an explanatory study that is based on a cross-sectional survey, where data was collected through a self-administered questionnaire. The focus was on areas with the highest number of SMTEs and tourist attractions in four regions in Tanzania and Zanzibar, namely Unguja, Dar es Salaam, Arusha, and Kilimanjaro (MNRT, 2019). SMTEs were the best unit of analysis because of their role in pricing tourist attractions, their control over distribution channels, and their knowledge of attractions, which give them the power to influence tourists' purchasing decisions (Anderson & Sanga, 2019). Owners or managers of these businesses were the respondents as most of these businesses are either run by the owner as a manager, or by a manager who is not necessarily the owner (Matikiti et al., 2018). According to Farida, Naryoso and Yuniawan (2017) and Matikiti et al. (2018), managers control the functions of a company; and have information on customers, marketing activities, and strategies, among other things.

A list of licensed tourism businesses served as the sampling frame for this study. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), with a total population of 3484 (Sanga 2020), a sample of 346 was considered to be appropriate. However, in this study, 10 responses were dropped due to incomplete information, so the sample size was effectively 336 (Table 1). Since the focus was on SMTEs, it was important to select enterprises that met the criteria of SMEs. We considered the MNRT (2018) licensing structure for tourism enterprises as a proxy for the classification of a SMET in Tanzania (URT, 2003). This classifies tourism enterprises based on the number of vehicles they own. According to MNRT (2018), enterprises with 1 to 3 vehicles are small, and those with 4 to 10 vehicles are medium; while those with more than 10 vehicles are classified as large enterprises. The study only considered data from registered and licensed tourism businesses with 1 to 10 vehicles; and that have been in operation for three or more years (Elly & Boter, 2016).

Initially, the regions or strata (Table 1) were selected based on their tourism potential (Anderson, 2017) and the number of tourism businesses located in these regions, where 80% of tourism activities take place in the named four regions. Then, the individual SMTEs from the selected regions were randomly selected from each stratum. A stratified random method was used to select the unit of analysis to ensure a fair representation from each region (strata); with only one respondent selected from each unit, the SMTE.

**Table 1: Study Regions and their Stratified Sample Sizes**

| <b>Study Regions (Strata)</b> | <b>No. of SMTEs</b> | <b>Proportion</b> | <b>Stratified Sample Size (n)</b> |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Dar es Salaam                 | 806                 | 23%               | 80.04477612                       |
| Kilimanjaro                   | 866                 | 25%               | 86.00344432                       |
| Arusha                        | 1027                | 29%               | 101.9925373                       |
| Zanzibar                      | 785                 | 23%               | 77.95924225                       |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>3484</b>         |                   | <b>346</b>                        |

Source: Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT, 2019) and Ministry of Information, Tourism, and Archives in Zanzibar (2019)

**Operationalization of Constructs and Measurements**

As indicated in Table 2, the constructs of the study were operationalized; and the measurements are as summarised in the table. The items of the questionnaire were measured using a 7-point Likert scale questionnaire.

**Table 2: Constructs and Measurements**

| <b>Concepts</b>            | <b>Measurements</b>  | <b>Source</b>   |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| Cognitive use (CU)         | CU1 – Learning competitor’s contents<br>CU2 – Sharing content with the customers<br>CU3 – Accessing suppliers’ contents<br>CU4 – Disseminate contents<br>CU5 – Create marketing content<br>CU6 – Create content in collaboration with supplier | Nevo, Nevo & Kim (2012)<br>Kamboj et al. (2017)<br>Krajčovič & Čábyová (2020)<br>Ali-Hassan et al. (2015) |
| Social use (SU)            | SU1 – Familiarize with colleagues<br>SU2 – Getting in touch with a new customer<br>SU3 – Staying in touch with the previous customer<br>SU4 – Coordinate social events<br>SU5 – Discovering customer’s interest<br>SU6 – Creating new relation | Nevo et al. (2012)<br>Kamboj et al. (2017)<br>Krajčovič and Čábyová (2020)                                |
| Hedonic use (HU)           | HU1 – Entertaining contents<br>HU2 – Relaxing contents<br>HU3 – Enjoyment contents<br>HU4 – Happiness contents<br>HU5 – Free time contents<br>HU6 – Contents for break time  | Nevo et al. (2012)<br>Kamboj et al. (2017)<br>Ali-Hassan et al. (2015)                                    |
| Marketing Capability (MC)  | MC1 – Pricing Capability<br>MC2 – Product development capability<br>MC3 – Communication capability,<br>MC4 – SM-planning capability<br>MC5 – SM-implementation capability  | Acquaah and Agyapong (2015), Tarsakoo, (2019)<br>Morgan et al. (2009)                                     |
| Marketing Performance (MP) | MP1 – Growth in customers<br>MP2 – Growth in demand<br>MP3 – Growth in profit<br>MP4 – Growth in sales<br>MP5 – Customer retention   | Kamboj et al. (2017)<br>Kazungu et al. (2017)<br>Kumar and Singh (2020)<br>Matikiti et al. (2018)         |

**Data Analysis**

Based on Hair, Howard, and Nitzl (2020) the data were analysed using the partial least square structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM), which enables researchers to construct and analyse complicated cause-and-effect models that include both

latent variables and observed variables. The PLS-SEM estimates the relationships and strengths between latent variables; and assesses how effectively the model explains the target constructs of interest. The structural model was used to assess the hypotheses, and thus answer the research questions based on the path coefficients. This study hypothesized a five-construct model. The models constitute cognitive use (CU), social use (SU), hedonic use (HU), marketing capability (MC), and marketing performance (MP). The first four factors are exogenous equivalent to the independent factors, and the latter is an endogenous factor of the model similar to the dependent variable. According to Kamboj et al. (2017), model specification is an important procedure in data analysis technique. Table 2 expounds on the measurement used to assess the constructs in question.

**Findings**

*Sample Characteristics*

As shown in Table 3, most of the respondents were owners of SMTEs (71.13%), while managers accounted for 28.87%. The majority of the SMTEs had an experience of 6–10 years in the tourism business, followed by those who had been in business for 3–5 years. There were few respondents in the other two groups with 11–15, and over 16, years of experience. The proportion of small tourism enterprises was over 57%, while the proportion of medium enterprises was 42%. Regarding the education of the respondents, those with an advanced level of education dominated, followed by those with a basic secondary education. Also, there were a few graduates.

**Table 3: Respondents Distributed by Experience License Category and Level of Education**

| Respondents Profile    |                      | Frequency  | Percentage |
|------------------------|----------------------|------------|------------|
| Job Title              | Owners-manager       | 239        | 71.13      |
|                        | Managers             | 97         | 28.87      |
| <b>Total</b>           |                      | <b>336</b> | <b>100</b> |
| Experiences in Tourism | 3 to 5yrs            | 107        | 31.85      |
|                        | 6 to 10yrs           | 148        | 44.05      |
|                        | 11 to 15yrs          | 35         | 10.42      |
|                        | 16 and above         | 46         | 13.69      |
| License Category       | 1 to 3 cars          | 193        | 57.44      |
|                        | 4 to 10 cars         | 143        | 42.56      |
| <b>Total</b>           |                      | <b>336</b> | <b>100</b> |
| Education Level        | Secondary School     | 88         | 26.19      |
|                        | Advanced Sec. School | 184        | 54.76      |
|                        | Degree and above     | 64         | 19.04      |
| <b>Total</b>           |                      | <b>336</b> | <b>100</b> |

Source: Field Data (2021)

**Assessment of the Measurement Model**

This is an assessment of the relationship between items and their constructs, to see if the data matches the applied theory (Chierici, Garcia-Perez & Vrontis, 2019). Since PLS-SEM aims to maximize the explained variance R<sup>2</sup>, the evaluation of

indices that explain the predictive power is crucial (Tehseen, Qureshi, Johara & Ramayah, 2020). Reliability and validity of the instrument are the two criteria used to assess measurement model quality. For reliability, indicator reliability was confirmed with loadings > 0.5; while internal consistency was confirmed based on composite reliability and Cronbach values that were all > 0.7. Also, Rho\_A values were <CR, but >α. The model validity was assessed based on convergent validity, where all values for AVE were > 0.5; but also HTMT values were < 0.85. The summary of the measurement models indicating metrics obtained from Smart-PLS is provided in a snapshot format in Table 4 to confirm if all-important criteria are in line with the threshold that supports the quality of the measurement model through the validity and reliability of the instrument used.

**Table 4: Measurement Model Summary (Reliability and Validity)**

| Constructs | Indicators | RELIABILITY           |                                  |         |                    | VALIDITY            |                            |
|------------|------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|---------|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
|            |            | Indicator Reliability | Internal Consistency Reliability |         |                    | Convergent Validity | Discriminant Validity      |
|            |            | Loadings > 0.5        | CR > 0.7                         | α > 0.7 | Rho_A < CR but > α | AVE > 0.5           | HTMT < 0.85                |
| CU         | CU1        | <b>0.895</b>          | 0.902                            | 0.873   | 0.891              | 0.652               | The highest value is 0.492 |
|            | CU2        | <b>0.784</b>          |                                  |         |                    |                     |                            |
|            | CU3        | <b>0.853</b>          |                                  |         |                    |                     |                            |
|            | CU4        | <b>0.881</b>          |                                  |         |                    |                     |                            |
|            | CU6        | <b>0.581</b>          |                                  |         |                    |                     |                            |
| SU         | SU1        | <b>0.863</b>          |                                  |         |                    | 0.707               |                            |
|            | SU2        | <b>0.836</b>          |                                  |         | 0.828              |                     |                            |
|            | SU5        | <b>0.822</b>          | 0.878                            | 0.797   |                    |                     |                            |
| HU         | HU1        | <b>0.845</b>          | 0.870                            | 0.802   | 0.817              | 0.626               |                            |
|            | HU2        | <b>0.731</b>          |                                  |         |                    |                     |                            |
|            | HU3        | <b>0.795</b>          |                                  |         |                    |                     |                            |
|            | HU4        | <b>0.791</b>          |                                  |         |                    |                     |                            |
| MP         | MP1        | <b>0.806</b>          | 0.818                            | 0.709   | 0.722              | 0.530               |                            |
|            | MP2        | <b>0.682</b>          |                                  |         |                    |                     |                            |
|            | MP3        | <b>0.726</b>          |                                  |         |                    |                     |                            |
|            | MP1        | <b>0.806</b>          |                                  |         |                    |                     |                            |

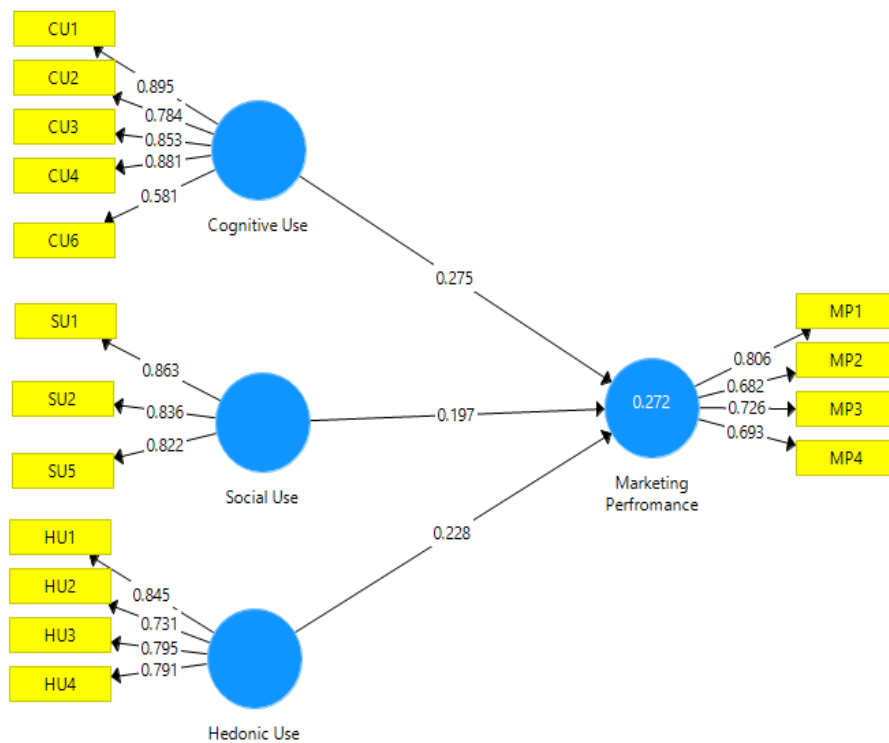
**Note:** Reliability (indicator loadings > 0.5; Internal consistency - CR & α>0.7, Rho\_A<CR but >α), Validity (Convergent - AVE > 0.5, and Discriminant validity- HTMT < 0.85).

**Source:** Field data extracted from Smart-PLS3 (2022).

**Structural Model Evaluation in Smart-PLS(Model Fit Measures)**

The structural model evaluation is concerned with assessing the four measures of the model fit, which are: explained variance, effect size or strength, predictive relevance, and path ecoefficiency (Hair et al., 2020). According to Hamid, Sami and Sidek (2017), when measuring the explained variance (R<sup>2</sup>), small R<sup>2</sup> values should be expected for studies with a complex model, but also for those in infant stages such as SM and tourism. According to Hamid et al. (2017), R<sup>2</sup> values should range from 0 to 1; whereby higher-level implies high predictive power. Cohen (1988) recommends that R<sup>2</sup> values are assessed based on the ranges: 0.26 (substantial), 0.13 (moderate),

and 0.02 (weak). The first criterion used was the explained variance ( $R^2$ ) that was found to be 0.272, which is greater than  $R^2$  from previous related studies. For instance, Benitez et al. (2020) reported an  $R^2$  of 0.267, while Nasihatkon et al. (2016) had an  $R^2$  of 0.235. Thus, the  $R^2$  of 0.272 in our findings is satisfactory to explain the predictive power of CU, HU & SU on the MP of SMTEs.



**Figure 1: Direct Relationship**

The second criterion was the effect size and strength of the relationship ( $f^2$ ). The findings of the current study produced an  $f^2$  of 0.049 for SU, 0.056 for HU, and 0.07 for CU. These values are above the threshold of a small effect of 0.02 as suggested by Hair et al. (2020), and thus confirm that SM-use is not only significant but also relevant to the MP of SMTEs. The third criterion that was used to assess the structural model in our study was predictive relevance  $Q^2$ . The results from the blindfolding procedure indicate a value of 0.130, which is greater than zero; hence concluding that independent variables can adequately explain dependent variables, suggesting that the path model has a predictive relevance. Finally, the use of path coefficient helped in assessing the strength of the relationship based on p-values of the independent variables, where all values were  $< 0.05$ ; but also based on t-values which were all  $> 1.65$  at 5% significant level, one-tail test, confirming the statistical significance level of the hypothesized relations.

Based on the effect size and strength of the relationship ( $f^2$ ), the findings of the current study produced an  $f^2$  of 0.049 for SU, 0.056 for HU, and 0.07 for CU. These values are above the threshold of a small effect of 0.02 advanced by Hair et al. (2020); thus confirming that social media use is not only significant but also relevant to the MP of SMTEs. The third criterion used to assess the structural model in our study was predictive relevance  $Q^2$ , where results from the blindfolding procedure indicate a value of 0.130, which is greater than zero, and therefore concludes that independent variables can adequately explain dependent variables, suggesting that the path model has a predictive relevance. Finally, the use of path coefficient helped in assessing the strength of the relationship based on p-values of the independent variables, whereby all values were  $< 0.05$ ; but also based on t-values which were all  $> 1.65$  at 5% significant level, one-tail test, confirming the statistical significance level of the hypothesized relations.

### **Moderation Analysis**

Before moderating analysis, indicator reliability and validity were assessed, i.e., the relationship between indicators and their underlying construct (MC); and all indicators had loadings greater than 0.5. This means that all items provide a reliable and valid contribution to the influence of MC on the relationship between SM and MP of SMTEs. For internal consistency, indices for composite reliability and Cronbach alpha were greater than 0.7, while Rho-A values were less than composite reliability but greater than Cronbach alpha. The validity of the moderator indicators was attained by assessing convergent validity through average variance extracted, where all values were  $> 0.5$ . Additionally, discriminant validity was ensured based on HTMT values that were found to be less than 0.85. These indices confirm that MC as a variable with five indicators was robust enough to reinforce the relationship between SM-use and the MP of SMTEs.

However, for Memon et al. (2021) changes in  $R^2$  between the main effect model and interaction model provide an understanding of the influence of the interaction terms on the relationship. Since the assumption of the moderation in this study is based on the continuous moderation effect on two-stage analysis, an evaluation of an  $R^2$  was considered crucial. In our case, an increase of  $R^2$  indicates the statistical power of MCs on the relationship between SM-use and the MP of SMTEs. In our case,  $R^2$  increased by 0.005, which is 0.5%. The model with an interaction term (MCs) has an  $R^2$  of 0.277, equal to 27.7%, which is an increase of 0.005 or 0.5% from the main effect model that had an  $R^2$  of 0.272. Based on the  $R^2$  cutoff points by Cohen (1988) (values  $\geq 0.26$  (substantial), 0.13 (moderate), and 0.02 (weak)); and Hossein et al. (2020), (0.67 (strong), 0.33 (adequate), or 0.19 (weak)), and also the assumption that SM studies are in their infant stage with a new model, the moderating  $R^2$  in our study of 0.277 is substantial, sufficient and robust to explain the relationship between the MCs, SM-use and MP (See Figure 2).

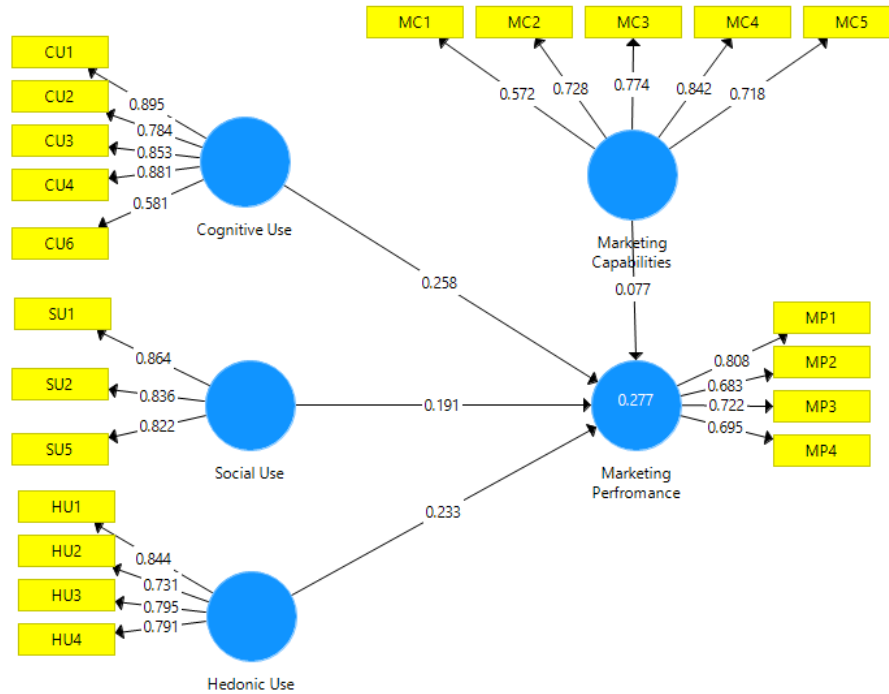


Figure 2: Moderation Effect

Regarding the moderating effect on the relationship between the three dimensions of SM-use and the MP, we found that MCs positively and significantly moderate the relationship between CU\*MC -> MP ( $\beta=0.164, p = 0.009, t = 2.542$ ; and that SU\*MC ->MP has values  $\beta = 0.125, p = 0.022, t = 1.892$ . Hitherto, MCs do not moderate HU\*MC ->MP, evidenced by the values of  $\beta = -0.034, p = 0.303, \text{ and } t = 0.516$ ; indicating that there is no significant relationship (see Table 5).

Table5: The Results of Moderation Analysis

| Relationships | Original Sample (O) | Sample Mean (M) | Standard Deviation (STDEV) | T Statistics | P Values | 95% Confidence Interval | 5.00% Effects |
|---------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|--------------|----------|-------------------------|---------------|
| CU*MC -> MP   | 0.164               | 0.161           | 0.064                      | 2.542        | 0.006    | 0.272                   | 0.064 ***     |
| HU*MC -> MP   | -0.034              | -0.041          | 0.066                      | 0.516        | 0.303    | 0.071                   | -0.146 Ns     |
| SU*MC -> MP   | 0.125               | 0.116           | 0.066                      | 1.892        | 0.029    | 0.238                   | 0.022 ***     |

Notes: \*\*\* indicates significance, and Ns = non-significant at a 5% level of significance.

Source: Field data (2021)

### Collinearity Assessment

To address the issue of collinearity, variance inflation factor (VIF) values were used (Hair et al., 2020). The rule of thumb for the collinearity aspect is that VIF values below 4 represent a non-collinearity problem. Based on the inner and outer values

of VIF in Table 6, the extracted values are all >4, indicating the absence of multicollinearity issues. Therefore, the model is free from multicollinearity intrusions (Hair & Ringle, 2019).

**Table 6. Structural Model Assessment – VIF Values**

| Relationships | Items | VIF-Values |       | Decision              |
|---------------|-------|------------|-------|-----------------------|
|               |       | Inner      | Outer |                       |
| CU -> MP      | CU2   | 3.314      |       | No Collinearity Issue |
|               | CU3   | 2.180      |       |                       |
|               | CU4   | 2.088      | 1.329 |                       |
|               | CU5   | 3.090      |       |                       |
|               | CU6   | 1.761      |       |                       |
|               | HU2   | 2.043      |       |                       |
| HU -> MP      | HU3   | 1.424      |       | No Collinearity Issue |
|               | HU4   | 1.486      |       |                       |
|               | HU5   | 1.938      |       |                       |
|               | HU6   | 1.500      | 1.010 |                       |
|               | MP2   | 1.439      |       |                       |
|               | MP3   | 1.351      |       |                       |
| SU-> MP       | MP4   | 1.525      |       | No Collinearity Issue |
|               | SU1   | 1.566      |       |                       |
|               | SU2   | 1.923      | 1.091 |                       |
|               | SU5   | 1.737      |       |                       |
|               |       |            |       |                       |

### Discussion of the Findings

This study attempts to examine the impact of SM-use (cognitive use, social use and hedonic use) on the marketing performance of small and medium tourism enterprises (SMTEs) and the moderating role of social media MCs. The three aspects of SM usage influence the MP of SMTEs, while MCs positively and significantly influence or moderate the relationship between cognitive usage (CU) and social usage (SU) in the sought relationship. These results can be explained as follows. First, the influence of CU, as shown in Figure 2, is greater than the influence of SU and HU. This is due to the fact that using SM as a resource for learning competitors' content, sharing content with customers, accessing content from suppliers, creating marketing content, and creating content in collaboration with suppliers and sharing the SM contents is mainly considered more relevant to co-creations and innovations that are dynamic and meet the changing needs of online customers. Secondly, the influence of HU follows CU. Thus, when SMTEs use SM, hedonic attributes such as entertainment, relaxation, enjoyment, happiness, leisure and content for break-time attract a greater number of customers to a firm's SM platform, which in turn influence the MP of a firm.

Moreover, the use of SM for social purposes was found to be the third option with a positive and significant influence on the MP of SMTEs. This means that SM associated with social aspects—such as familiarity with colleagues, getting and staying in touch with customers—can improve MP. In addition, by coordinating



social events, discovering customer interests and creating new relationships, users can get instant gratification and enjoyable experiences that satisfy their marketing needs. Also, holding social events strengthens social relationships between firms and customers, which facilitates the acquisition of customer knowledge that can be used to improve products and services offered in the market, thereby improving a firm's MP (Mahar & Ghumro, 2020).

Although all three aspects of SM-use have a positive impact on MP, better marketing performance is achieved when a company has marketing capabilities that more strongly emphasise this value through social and cognitive use of SM. These capabilities help such firms configure their platforms to capture information about customers and improve their SM marketing strategies based on information from competitors and suppliers. On a social level, MCs enable the creation of SM content that leads to entertainment, relaxation, pleasure and happiness, attracting customers in their leisure time and facilitating the bond between a company and its customers, which in turn creates marketing value for a company (Castillo et al., 2021). These findings show that MP improves significantly when companies have marketing-specific capabilities (the moderation effect), and focus on using SM for social and cognitive purposes. This has far-reaching implications for companies using SM for MP. It also implies that SMTEs could differentiate themselves from other firms in a similar market by improving their social media marketing capabilities that reflects to superior performance.

The primacy of SM-MCs is founded in the ability of a firm to chart out SM-specific operational capabilities in line with a firm's marketing strategies. Thus, MC attributes such as pricing, product development, communication, planning and implementation are essential for better use of SM. Our findings are consistent with those of Munir, Maming, Kadir and Sobarsyah (2021), and (Cheng & Cho, 2021), whose results suggest that social media MCs are key factors that influence the relationship between two aspects of SM usage and a company's MP. Our results suggest that firms' social media MCs moderate the relationship between the two aspects of SM usage (CU and SU), and the MP of SMTEs. Although these findings are consistent with those of some other researchers (Acikdilli et al., 2020; Tarsakoo & Charoensukmongkol, 2019), HU was not moderated in our studies. The reason for this might be in line with Cheng and Cho (2021), who argued that SM-hedonic content is available on all social media platforms; and thus, it is merely for entertainment, pleasure, relaxation and happiness, and does not require specific marketing capabilities among tourism businesses.

### **Recommendations**

Our findings provide SMTE owners and managers with empirical evidence on how marketing performance can be improved through the use of SM in general, and on which areas higher-performing SMTEs place more emphasis when developing appropriate MCs (Effiom & Edet, 2020; Kamboj et al., 2017; Kazungu et al., 2017). Our findings shed light on the relevant skills, knowledge and experiences that need

to be developed and utilised for a better use of SM. Based on RBV and UGT, we believe that all three dimensions as derived from UGT are relevant and should be considered when using SM in the tourism industry. However, a sustainable and better performance is achieved when companies have marketing capabilities that promote SM-social use and SM-cognitive use. The right mix of MCs and SM—social and SM-cognitive use—leans on both theories; and thus extends to the decree that an inside-out and outside-in perspective should be in order if competitive advantage—and thus better marketing performance—is to be realised and sustained. We therefore conclude that this combination of MC capabilities and SM-resource utilisation is rare and takes time to develop, making it indispensable and helping to transform SM from a generic production factor to a valuable resource for sustained performance. These findings are important for an enabling environment for the development of an infrastructure that supports the smooth use of social media by small and medium enterprises. In addition, small and medium enterprises' knowledge and skills in social media use for marketing should be nurtured and developed for better marketing performance.

#### **Areas for further research**

This study is based on small and medium enterprises in the tourism sector, which may not give a clear picture of the impact of the use of SM on the MP of larger tourism enterprises, and therefore the results are only indicative when dealing with large tourism enterprises. Hence, it is necessary that future research examines the use of SM and MP using large tourism enterprises, or a full spectrum of tourism enterprises to determine the impact of enterprise size and SM-MP relationship.

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