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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

The advent of the Internet, particularly social media platforms, has caused a significant revolution in commercial entities' operational, inter-organizational, and consumer-facing aspects¹. Social media platforms exert a substantial impact on market trends and consumer behavior, as these platforms can gather and organize various content, goods, and endorsements from peers in a single, user-friendly place². The widespread adoption of "influencer culture," when specific individuals amass an excessive number of followers and have a significant influence on public sentiment, has transformed social media into a potent marketing instrument.

Consequently, the influence of sponsored content and endorsements by powerful individuals has a cascading impact on consumer purchasing patterns, thus shaping fashion trends and preferences³. Moreover, the convenience and rapidity with which reviews and comments may be disseminated on these platforms also exert a substantial influence on consumers' perception of brands and their propensity to engage in a transaction⁴. By analyzing the data derived from social media interactions, businesses may more effectively customize their products and advertising strategies to align with the changing demands of their customers. Consequently, this data offers significant perspectives on customer preferences.

Similarly, the advent of social media has profoundly transformed human interaction and communication, surpassing the realm of personal interactions⁵. These platforms let businesses and individuals to quickly and effectively reach large audiences by facilitating fast sharing of content. Moreover, they enable interactive communication between brands and their target consumers. Due to this ease of access, businesses can readily interact with consumers, collect

feedback, and monitor market trends in real-time⁶. Furthermore, the widespread use of social media has facilitated the amplification of individuals' viewpoints, potentially serving as a significant catalyst for global movements and trends. The effortless transmission of information gives rise to significant privacy problems, and companies aiming to succeed in this era of uninterrupted connectivity must adjust to the always changing algorithms and trends.

Twitter, currently referred to as 'X', is a prominent social media platform that has gained immense popularity as a business communication channel. It enables the efficient distribution of information about their products and services and facilitates communication with clients⁷. *Twitter's* immediacy, wide accessibility, and user-friendly interface have made it an indispensable tool for online businesses seeking to establish a customer base and engage with their target audience on a personal level⁸.

Twitter is a widely used social media tool for businesses in Nigeria. It functions as a crucial channel for customer interaction, advertising, and brand establishment⁹. The *Twitter* ban, enforced in Nigeria from June 2021 to January 2022, had a significant influence on the country's digital landscape, notably in terms of its effects on online businesses¹⁰. Due to this uncommon restriction, Nigeria, renowned for its quickly advancing digital economy and strong engagement on social media, experienced a significant transformation in the way enterprises carried out their online activities.

Before the prohibition, *Twitter* served as a vital platform for Nigerian businesses to engage with their intended audience, promote their offerings, engage in customer assistance, and enhance brand visibility¹¹. Similarly, *Twitter*, with its vast user base, provides organizations with a direct and effective platform to engage with diverse client segments, both domestically and globally¹².

Due to its interactive nature, it facilitated real-time contact, hence fostering consumer engagement and enabling rapid information dissemination.

In the same vein, *Twitter* has significantly contributed to the advancement of the e-commerce sector and the expansion of pioneering entrepreneurial endeavors in Nigeria. The availability of *Twitter* as a social media platform has enhanced business operations and its level of accessibility has facilitated the expansion of organizations' customer base across all continents¹³. In addition, Nigerian e-commerce enterprises have employed *Twitter* as a medium to promote their merchandise, engage with customers on a more intimate basis, and collaborate with influential thinkers and endorsers to attract a larger client base¹⁴. Because of this, the digital economy in Nigeria is consistently thriving, leading to the advancement of economic growth and the emergence of remote and online job possibilities that allow individuals to have greater control over their professional pursuits.

However, the Nigerian government's decision to suspend *Twitter* resulted in a substantial disturbance to this ecosystem. The ban was issued due to concerns about the platform being used for activities that allegedly undermined the country's unity and security¹⁵. Due to this constraint, businesses were unable to utilize the platform for marketing, customer engagement, and brand development, resulting in a sudden halt to their operating capabilities¹⁶.

Consequently, the online commerce industry faced significant challenges as a result. Initially, businesses faced the difficulty of losing direct contact with their existing customer base as well as potential clients. When businesses faced the inability to utilize a platform that had been crucial for their marketing endeavors, they were obliged to explore alternative means of engaging with their intended audience, often with less favorable outcomes.

The limitation posed difficulties in both its technological and operational dimensions. Businesses heavily dependent on *Twitter* for customer feedback, market research, and trend analysis encountered significant hurdles. These organizations faced challenges in collecting up-to-date data and obtaining valuable insights. Marketing tactics that depended on social media analytics to enhance their processes and product development experienced a notable decline in efficacy¹⁷. Enterprises also faced economic consequences due to the restriction. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) saw a decrease in their reach and revenues as a result of their heavy dependence on social media platforms like *Twitter* for affordable advertising¹⁸.

Major corporations had challenges in sustaining their digital footprint and nurturing client connections, impacting their revenue generation capabilities and growth projections. Moreover, the prohibition has exposed broader issues of digital rights, freedom of speech, and the government's involvement in overseeing internet platforms. Discussions were initiated addressing the optimal equilibrium to be achieved between considerations of national security and the fundamental rights of individuals, as well as the consequences that such limitations would have on the digital economy of the nation and its global reputation.

At first, the implementation of limitations has resulted in the disruption of the interpersonal connection between online merchants and their customer base. *Twitter* has facilitated the establishment of connections between businesses' emerging digital platforms and their desired audience, enabling them to address inquiries, offer assistance, and foster brand loyalty and dedication. Consequently, businesses are unable to establish effective communication channels with their consumers, resulting in customer dissatisfaction, diminished trust, and a decline in client loyalty and retention. Moreover, the imposition of a limitation on *Twitter* resulted in a significant disturbance to the advertising strategies employed by the majority of online firms

operating in Nigeria. *Twitter* enables commercial organizations to effectively disseminate promotional information about their products and services to a wide audience, with little budget allocation. Without the *Twitter* platform, commercial organizations had to reconsider their marketing strategy and develop other channels and tactics to sustain their company's reach to the target audience and generate revenue.

Also, companies that relied heavily on *Twitter* for marketing and customer involvement experienced a significant decline in income due to the ban. Despite utilizing social media for cost-effective advertising and customer interaction, small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) experienced a significant decrease in both audience size and income. These organizations needed to promptly modify their marketing plans, frequently allocating additional funds, to make up for lost time and continue operating when a vital customer communication channel was abruptly closed.

Prominent Nigerian enterprises faced challenges in maintaining a reliable internet presence and meeting client expectations. The cessation of current communication channels and marketing funnels resulting from *Twitter's* withdrawal has a significant effect on the ability to generate income and expectations for growth. This led to a decrease in profit margins and a rise in operating expenses as money was redirected towards less efficient advertising methods.

Both individual enterprises and the whole digital economy were adversely affected by the recession. The restriction on digital platforms in Nigeria resulted in a significant deceleration of digital growth, which is unexpected considering the country's renowned status for its continuously increasing online ecosystem and strong engagement in social media. The country's digital economy was hindered from reaching its full potential during this era because online

firms faced limitations in their ability to actively participate and promote themselves on a globally recognised platform such as *Twitter*.

The restriction had wide-ranging consequences in several sectors, affecting both the economic climate and employment availability. Those affected by job loss or schedule changes included individuals in the fields of digital marketing, social media management, and online customer support. The limitation hindered the establishment of new digital firms by limiting investment and innovation in the digital ecosystem, hence diminishing the entrepreneurial drive.

Between June 2021 and January 2022, online businesses in Nigeria faced considerable challenges due to the Twitter ban, which had a substantial effect on their performance. Twitter's deletion of a message made by Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari resulted in the ban cutting off an essential means of communication for numerous companies. These companies heavily rely on Twitter to engage with people, promote their products, and build a reputation. As a result, it was challenging to promptly handle client inquiries and complaints, customer outreach was unsuccessful, and marketing initiatives faced disruptions. The interruption in communication channels had a catastrophic impact on the visibility, engagement, and revenue of numerous companies, particularly those operating online.

Several online firms promptly adjusted by redirecting their resources towards email marketing, alternative social media platforms, and other digital channels, notwithstanding the damage caused by Twitter's prohibition. Companies who have expanded their online presence outside Twitter, utilizing sites such as Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and e-commerce platforms, experienced more favorable outcomes during the ban. To alleviate the consequences of the Twitter ban and uphold their online presence and consumer engagement, they employed these supplementary channels. Enterprises heavily reliant on Twitter for marketing and communication

experienced a reduction in website traffic, a loss in sales conversions, and encountered difficulties in adapting to and navigating through a period of uncertainty. The prohibition was a profoundly painful event for them.

In the same vein, the imposed ban on *Twitter*, led to debates on digital rights, freedom of speech, and government control over online platforms, while also raising intricate legal and regulatory concerns. This intervention disrupted the day-to-day functioning of both companies and also impacted broader discussions on how to find a compromise between national security and individual rights in the digital realm. The restriction prompted officials to reassess the existing legislation governing internet communication and social media while it highlighted the significance of implementing legislative frameworks that are more open and capable of addressing issues related to social media, while also safeguarding fundamental rights such as freedom of expression and access to information.

Furthermore, the restriction raised significant questions regarding the degree of governmental control and regulation over internet networks. The issue sparked discussions over the appropriate government regulation of the internet to avoid suppressing freedom of speech or impeding the growth of the digital economy. There has been a need for a more transparent and cooperative approach to making regulatory decisions that impact the digital domain.

The lack of clarity in the law on the ban posed significant challenges for businesses operating in Nigeria. Companies faced uncertainty in strategic planning and investment decision-making owing to the lack of clarity on the duration, scope, and potential penalties of the ban. In order to mitigate the probability of facing legal consequences resulting from their online activities during the period of prohibition, firms had to reconsider their strategies for managing risks and ensuring compliance.

The restriction further highlighted the interconnectedness between national legislation and transnational online platforms. To cultivate a conducive environment for digital innovation and trade, while upholding local laws and social values, it emphasized the importance of aligning national regulatory frameworks with international standards. Legal experts, civil society leaders, and corporate sector representatives were among the respondents who initiated discussions and lobbying efforts in response to the prohibition, aiming to address the regulatory and legal challenges it posed. The primary objective of these discussions was to engage in a collaborative and creative process to generate alternative frameworks that might safeguard both national interests and internet freedoms.

Meanwhile, notwithstanding these challenges, the embargo also stimulated companies to develop and adjust to novel circumstances. Amidst the *Twitter* ban, certain businesses opted to broaden their online presence, by exploring alternative social media platforms or enhancing their websites and other digital marketing strategies. Conversely, others focused on bolstering offline marketing channels and customer service to mitigate the ban's effects.

However, to fully understand the intricate consequences of the *Twitter* ban on internet businesses in Nigeria from June 2021 to January 2022, a comprehensive examination of the socio-economic, technological, and regulatory factors at play is imperative. The objective of this study is to examine how businesses managed to cope with, adjust to, and generate new ideas throughout the duration of the ban. Furthermore, the study aims to provide valuable insights into the ability of the Nigerian corporate environment to effectively handle unforeseen disruptions in the digital market, showcasing its resilience and adaptability.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

For Nigerian e-commerce companies to thrive, they must have unrestricted access to *Twitter* and other social media platforms. This would enable effective client involvement and allow them to reach a wide audience. The situation took a turn for the worse when the Nigerian government imposed a ban on *Twitter*, which lasted from June 2021 to January 2022. Thus, the imposition of the ban was a significant obstacle since *Twitter* served as a vital instrument for the marketing strategy, customer support, and brand awareness of online enterprises. Enterprises are facing unusual challenges as they strive to sustain their online presence and customer relationships amidst the unanticipated shift in the digital economy. During the period of the ban in Nigeria, *Twitter* was unavailable, hence online business engaged in various trials and adopted alternative platforms to compensate for the inability to use *Twitter* in Nigeria. Implying that online businesses may have experienced various adverse effects due to the limitations created by *Twitter* ban, such as a reduced consumer base, limited advertising prospects, and significant fiscal repercussions. However, the effectiveness and durability of these endeavors remain uncertain. Although there are anecdotal reports indicating negative consequences of the *Twitter* ban, but it is perceived that there is a significant lack of empirical data from extensive research on the precise impacts, adaptive measures used by businesses and the overall efficacy of these efforts during the period of *Twitter* ban in Nigeria. Therefore, this research endeavors to fill this gap by conducting a comprehensive study on *Twitter* ban and online businesses performance in Nigeria. Hence, this research investigates the influence of *Twitter* ban on the performance of online businesses in Nigeria.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to investigate the influence of the *Twitter* ban on online businesses performance in Nigeria between June 2021 and January 2022. The objectives of the study are to;

- i. classify online businesses of *Twitter* users in Nigeria between June, 2021 and January, 2022.
- ii. assess the quality of service provided by *Twitter* users engaged in online businesses to their customers between June, 2021 and January, 2022.
- iii. identify the strategies adopted by online business owners to achieve service delivery to their customers during the period of *Twitter* ban.
- iv. ascertain the effect of *Twitter* ban in Nigeria on service delivery among online business owners between June, 2021 and January, 2022.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions guides this study:

- i. What are the online businesses engaged in by Twitter Users in Nigeria between June 2021 and January 2022?
- ii. What is the quality of services provided by *Twitter* Users engaged in Online Businesses to the Customer between June 2021 and January 2022?
- iii. What are the strategies adopted by Online Business Owners to achieve Service Delivery to their customers during the period of Twitter ban in Nigeria?
- iv. What is the effect of *Twitter* ban in Nigeria on service delivery among online business owners between June, 2021 and January, 2022?

1.5 Hypotheses

H₀: The *Twitter* ban in Nigeria had no significant influence on online businesses performance during the specified period.

H₁: The *Twitter* ban in Nigeria positively influenced online businesses performance during the specified period.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its ability to gather data on the influence of the *Twitter* ban on online business performance in Nigeria between June 2021 and January 2022. The research holds significant value across multiple domains, facilitated by the exploration of challenges, ramifications, and potential consequences faced by online businesses in Nigeria. The findings of this study will be highly advantageous to digital economy, policymakers and governmental regulators seeking to formulate regulations and policies regarding the utilization of social media for information sharing and promotion of the digital economy. A comprehensive understanding of the influence of the *Twitter* ban on online business performance will assist policymakers to effectively balance national security interests with the growth and development of the digital economy.

The aforementioned issues have resultant effects on a plethora of challenges and concerns for online small-scale enterprises necessitating a more rigorous examination for documentation. Also, outcome of the study may guide future programmes and policies of the government in Nigeria and in the other parts of the world.

The study shall furnish valuable data sets that could assist online business owners in Nigeria to surmount challenges and sustaining their business activities. Based on the findings of this study,

it is perceived that business entrepreneurs may consider adapting alternative marketing strategies by exploring viable alternatives and discovering unexplored avenues for their business growth.

The findings will facilitate comprehension of the challenges and opportunities presented by the digital economy in Nigeria, given the government's regulation of social media.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The online business landscape encompasses various components such as e-commerce, digital marketing, content production, and influencer marketing. The scope of this study relate to the analysis that pertains to the period commencing from the announcement of the *Twitter* ban in Nigeria and extending through its immediate aftermath. By utilizing this chronology, it is possible to analyze the prompt consequences and responses of electronic commerce about prohibition. It is important to acknowledge that the study did not incorporate any prospective enduring effects that could emerge as the situation progresses.

The scope of the study is limited to the geographical boundaries of Nigeria. This facilitates a more intricate examination of the influence of the *Twitter* ban on the digital economy of Nigeria.

Although the report focuses on the influence of the *Twitter* ban on online businesses, it acknowledges the possibility of other contributing factors. Various factors such as global economic conditions, industry-specific challenges, and advancements in technology are significant contributors. The study acknowledges the presence of potential confounding variables but does not delve into a thorough investigation of them.

1.8 Limitation of the Study

The limitations of this study include:

Time: Since the research was carried out at an postgraduate level, the researcher have to allocate time such that the demand for conducting the research will have to be met. It was the intention of the researcher to gather all the responses of the online questionnaire but various activities of the researcher which border on both academic and work schedules has become relatively impossible.

Finance: Due to the economic hardship that is faced by people, including the researcher, the possibility of a larger sample size which may have helped the work cover many areas has become impossible. Hence, this work was limited to only online business owners. However, all these challenges did not affect the quality and trustworthiness of the data collected

1.9 Operational Definition of Terms

The study employs the following terminology to enhance communication and comprehension:

Digital Economy: The sum of economic activities conducted through digital platforms, including online businesses, digital marketing, e-commerce, and other digitally enabled transactions.

Influence: This refers to the measurable and observable changes experienced by online businesses as an outcome of the *Twitter* ban, including but not limited to income, profitability, customer reach, marketing strategies, and communication channels.

Online Businesses: This refers to businesses that predominantly engage in commercial operations via the digital channels, such as e-commerce websites, social media platforms and online marketplaces.

Online Marketing: The practice of promoting products or services using digital channels and platforms.

Perception: This refers to the process by which individuals interpret and make sense of sensory information from their environment.

Performance: performance as used in the study relates to the quality-of-service delivery or provided by online businesses to their online customers during the period of *Twitter* ban in Nigeria.

Profitability: The ability of online businesses to generate profits after deducting expenses and costs associated with operations.

Revenue: The total income accrued by online businesses from sales, advertisements, or other revenue streams.

Twitter Ban: The official embargo placed by the Nigerian government on the operations and accessibility of the Twitter platform within Nigeria.

Twitter: A free social networking site where users broadcast short posts known as tweets. These tweets can contain texts, videos, photos and links

Endnotes

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Chapter Two

Literature Review

This chapter presents the literature reviewed under these subheadings; conceptual review, theoretical frameworks and empirical review.

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Concept of Social Media

The rise of the internet and technological advancements has revolutionized the way individuals interact and communicate¹. A major significant development in the digital era is the emergence of social media platforms, which have become integral to the lives of billions of people worldwide². Social media has transformed the way we connect, share information, and conduct business.

Social media refers to a collection of internet-based platforms and tools that enable users to create, share, and exchange content with others³. These platforms facilitate user-generated content, allowing individuals to publish and interact with information in a highly accessible and participatory manner. Key characteristics of social media include user profiles, the ability to connect and network with others, and the availability of interactive features such as comments, likes, and sharing functionalities⁴.

It is a group of Internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content. Furthermore, social media depend on mobile and web based technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss, and

modify user-generated content. They introduce substantial and pervasive changes to communication between organizations, communities, and individuals. Social media differ from traditional or industrial media in many ways, including quality, reach, frequency, usability, immediacy, and permanence. They described it as five distinct things which include: strategic tool for uncovering business insights, managing the influencers who are driving the conversation around your brand, marketing that provides value and turns customers into evangelists, critical component customer care, transforming your organization to meet the transparency and humanity customers now expect of brands¹. Social Media and Small Businesses The traditional techniques of marketing using print and electronic media along with Internet marketing and lead generation were used to drive traffic to a business and its website. As search engine algorithms evolve, website owners have to stay on their toes to make sure their website is constantly updated with relevant and current information to prevent being devalued in search results. Social media allows businesses to crowdsource ideas and after seeing their ideas becoming a reality, business has more than likely just increased their customer base. Social media allows to keep an eye on competition. Businesses are changing marketing strategies based on information they find in social media feeds from their competitors. Social Media Allows Business to Be More Transparent. The process of taking a prospect to the point of becoming a customer has slowed down somewhat due to consumer's awareness².

Social media encompasses a vast array of internet-based platforms and tools that facilitate creating, sharing, and exchanging user-generated content⁵. These social media platforms such as *Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Thread*, etc enable individuals to connect and interact with others, fostering virtual communities and facilitating the dissemination of information.

In recent years, social media has been very useful to most people regardless of age. With most people using the platforms to create awareness for small businesses, while some have depended on the contents to help with boredom. Social media platforms provide a means for individuals to stay connected with friends, family, and acquaintances regardless of geographical distances, they offer features like messaging, video calls, and group chats, enabling real-time communication and fostering virtual communities⁶. Social media has transformed the way news and information are disseminated and consumed. Users can share articles, news updates, and personal opinions, contributing to the rapid spread of information. Social media platforms also serve as a source of news, allowing users to discover and stay informed about current events⁷. Social media platforms empower individuals to create and share their content, whether it's in the form of written posts, images, videos, or podcasts⁸.

Furthermore, users can express their creativity, showcase their talents, and share their experiences with others. Social media has revolutionized the marketing landscape, providing businesses with powerful tools to reach and engage their target audience. Companies can create brand profiles, share product information, run advertising campaigns, and interact directly with customers, enhancing brand awareness and customer loyalty. Social media platforms have played a crucial role in raising awareness about social issues and promoting activism as users can share stories, campaigns, and petitions, facilitating grassroots movements and creating a platform for marginalized voices to be heard⁹.

In the same vein, Social media is having a profound impact on the business landscape, offering numerous opportunities for growth and success. It has transformed marketing and advertising strategies, allowing businesses to reach a wider audience and target specific demographics with

precision¹⁰. Social media platforms provide cost-effective advertising options, enabling businesses of all sizes to compete in the digital realm.

Moreover, social media serves as a valuable tool for brand building and customer engagement¹¹. Businesses can establish an online presence, interact directly with customers, and build brand loyalty through regular updates and engagement. Social media platforms also facilitate customer feedback, which helps businesses improve their products and services.

2.1.2 The Concept of Digital Economy

The digital economy refers to an economic system where digital technologies play a central role in creating, distributing, and consuming goods and services¹². It encompasses all economic activities that are enabled by digital technologies, including online businesses, digital platforms, e-commerce, digital payments, and the exchange of digital information.

In the digital economy, traditional barriers such as geographical distance and physical infrastructure are overcome through the use of digital technologies¹³. This allows for the rapid transfer of information, the seamless integration of global markets, and the creation of new business models that were previously inconceivable. The widespread adoption of the internet, mobile devices, and other digital tools has been a driving force behind the growth and transformation of the digital economy¹⁴.

One of the key characteristics of the digital economy is its ability to generate vast amounts of data. Every interaction, transaction, and communication that takes place in the digital realm generates data, which can be analyzed and leveraged for insights, personalization, and decision-making. This data-driven nature of the digital economy presents significant opportunities for

businesses to understand customer behavior, tailor their offerings, and improve operational efficiency.

Furthermore, the digital economy also fosters innovation and entrepreneurship¹⁵. With low entry barriers and the ability to reach a global audience, digital platforms have empowered individuals and small businesses to create and market their products and services on a scale previously unimaginable¹⁶. The rise of the gig economy, fueled by platforms like Uber and Airbnb, exemplifies how digital technologies have transformed traditional industries and provided new avenues for earning income.

Moreover, the digital economy has fundamentally changed the way businesses interact with customers. Social media platforms, such as *Twitter*, Facebook, and Instagram, have revolutionized the way businesses interact with their customers¹⁷. These platforms have become essential channels for customer engagement, marketing, and brand building. Through social media, businesses can directly connect and communicate with their target audience, allowing for a more personalized and interactive experience.

A key advantage of use of social media for businesses is the ability to reach a wide audience, because the platforms have millions, if not billions, of active users, providing businesses with an unprecedented opportunity to expand their reach and engage with potential customers¹⁸. By creating and maintaining a strong presence on social media, businesses can increase brand visibility, attract new customers, and build a loyal following.

Again, Social media platforms enable businesses to engage in two-way communication with their customers¹⁹. Unlike traditional advertising channels, social media allows for real-time

interactions, where customers can provide feedback, ask questions, and voice their opinions directly to businesses. This direct line of communication helps build trust, foster customer loyalty, and create a sense of community around a brand or product.

Through social media, businesses can also gather valuable insights about their target audience²⁰. By monitoring conversations, analyzing engagement metrics, and studying customer behaviour on these platforms, businesses can gain a deeper understanding of their customer's preferences²¹, interests, and needs. This data-driven approach allows businesses to tailor their marketing strategies, develop targeted advertising campaigns, and refine their products or services to better meet customer demands.

Another significant aspect of social media is the ability to create online communities around a brand or product. Businesses can foster engagement and interaction among customers by creating groups, hosting live events, or initiating discussions on social media platforms. These communities provide a space for customers to connect with like-minded individuals, share experiences, and offer support and advice related to the brand or product. By nurturing these communities, businesses can cultivate a loyal customer base that becomes advocates for their brand, driving word-of-mouth marketing and customer acquisition.

Furthermore, social media platforms offer various advertising and promotional opportunities for businesses²². With advanced targeting capabilities, businesses can reach their ideal audience based on demographics, interests, and behaviour. Social media advertising allows for highly specific and personalized campaigns, maximizing the chances of attracting relevant customers²³. Additionally, social media influencers have emerged as a powerful marketing tool, as businesses

can collaborate with influential individuals who have a large following and can promote their products or services to their audience.

2.1.3 Social Media and Digital Economy

However, the digital economy, while offering numerous opportunities, also brings forth a set of challenges and concerns that need to be addressed for the benefits of the digital economy to be accessible to all²⁴. Some of these include; privacy and data security. The digital economy relies heavily on the collection, storage, and analysis of vast amounts of data. This raises concerns about privacy and data security. As businesses gather and utilize customer data, it becomes crucial to ensure the protection of personal information and maintain robust security measures to prevent data breaches and unauthorized access. Striking a balance between utilizing data for personalized experiences and safeguarding privacy rights remains a significant challenge.

Also, the digital divide in the digital economy has the potential to exacerbate existing social and economic inequalities, creating a digital divide. Access to digital technologies, reliable internet connectivity, and digital literacy are essential for individuals and businesses to participate fully in the digital economy. However, disparities in access and skills can exclude certain populations, such as those in rural or economically disadvantaged areas, from reaping the benefits. Bridging the digital divide through infrastructure development, affordable access, and digital literacy initiatives is crucial for an inclusive digital economy.

Furthermore, technological advancements and a competent workforce with digital skills are another challenge, the rapid pace of technological advancements in the digital economy necessitates continuous learning and upskilling to remain relevant in the workforce²⁵. Automation and artificial intelligence have the potential to disrupt traditional job roles and

industries, leading to concerns about job displacement. To address this, individuals and organizations must embrace lifelong learning and develop digital skills that align with the evolving demands of the digital economy. Upskilling initiatives, educational programs, and policies supporting reskilling and reemployment are vital to ensure a smooth transition for the workforce.

Another disturbing challenge that needs to be disclosed is the ethical and regulatory considerations. The digital economy raises ethical and regulatory challenges that require careful attention. Issues such as online fraud, cybercrime, intellectual property rights, algorithmic bias, and the responsible use of emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and automation need to be addressed. Creating a regulatory framework that fosters innovation while protecting consumer rights, ensuring fair competition, and upholding ethical standards is essential to maintain trust and integrity in the digital economy²⁶. Similarly, digital dependency and disruption risks also constitute a major challenge as the digital economy's reliance on digital infrastructure and technologies introduces risks associated with dependency and disruption. Cybersecurity threats, technological failures, and system vulnerabilities can have far-reaching consequences for businesses and individuals. It is crucial to develop robust cybersecurity measures, disaster recovery plans, and regulatory frameworks to mitigate risks and ensure the resilience of the digital economy.

Also, limited access to global markets is another significant implication of the ban of *Twitter* on online businesses. The digital economy has enabled businesses in Nigeria to access global markets and expand their customer base beyond geographical boundaries. *Twitter*, with its global user base, provides a platform for Nigerian businesses to reach international audiences, establish

partnerships, and explore export opportunities. The ban restricts this access, limiting the growth potential of Nigerian businesses and impeding their ability to compete in the global digital marketplace.

Hence, the *Twitter* ban in Nigeria has significant implications for online businesses, entrepreneurship, innovation, and the overall economic landscape, highlighting the interplay between government actions, digital platforms, and the digital economy²⁷. One of which is the disruption of online businesses.

Similarly, entrepreneurship and innovation constraints also constitute a part of the significant impact of the *Twitter* ban. The digital economy has facilitated the rise of entrepreneurial ventures and innovation ecosystems in Nigeria. Online platforms like *Twitter* have served as catalysts for innovation, enabling startups and small businesses to showcase their products or services, connect with investors, and collaborate with like-minded entrepreneurs. The ban hampers these entrepreneurial opportunities, stifling innovation and hindering the growth of the digital entrepreneurship ecosystem in Nigeria.

In the same vein, economic implications are results of the *Twitter* ban as the digital economy contributes significantly to the economic growth of other nations, by creating job opportunities, attracting investments, and fostering economic diversification. The *Twitter* ban has the potential to hamper these positive economic impacts by hindering the growth of online businesses and limiting their ability to contribute to job creation and economic development. Moreover, it sends a negative signal to potential investors about the regulatory environment and digital freedoms in Nigeria, which can deter foreign direct investment in the digital sector.

Additionally, the ban on *Twitter* raises concerns about freedom of expression and digital rights. The digital economy thrives on open communication, free expression of ideas, and the ability of individuals to access and share information. Restrictions on digital platforms like *Twitter* can undermine these principles, limiting the free flow of information, stifling public discourse, and impeding citizens' ability to exercise their digital rights.

2.1.4 Online Business Performance

Online business, also known as digital marketing or internet marketing, refers to the practice of promoting products, services, or brands through various online channels and platforms²⁸. It encompasses a wide range of strategies and techniques that aim to reach and engage with a target audience on the internet. The advent of the internet and the rapid growth of technology have revolutionized the way businesses connect with their customers. Online marketing leverages the vast reach and accessibility of the internet to create awareness, generate leads, drive sales, and build customer relationships²⁹. It provides businesses with an opportunity to connect with a global audience, regardless of their physical location.

Online business has emerged to be one of the most imperative innovations in the contemporary environment. Businesses all around the world functioning in varied industries have inclined towards the usage of E-commerce to optimise the opportunities and enhance its overall performance. Ecommerce and business performance could be considered associated with each other in different ways. Giving high significance to training and development has to be a part of the organizational culture in order to make sure that every employee is provided the right set of training and their skills to get more improved. While this may take up certain resources of the business initially, the results attained from this would become far more superior in the long run. Online business further has led to an increase in the efficiency of production and operations

management. With an online presence, it has become more feasible for firms to take up orders from the customers, get them produced and delivered in an effective way. Businesses working upon the E-commerce models have been given the opportunity to get the products delivered to customers within no time frame. The processing time has been lowered due to the integration of several departments of the company such as finance, marketing, and much more. Using E-commerce, businesses have been given the opportunity to enter new markets and lead towards internationalisation. With the use of online platforms organisations have been given the opportunity to reach out to customers all over the world. It has been assessed by firms that to grow and expand their operations it is necessary that the demand of their products and services is found in varied countries and societies. Today, as competition has gotten fiercer and complexities have risen, firms have led to incline more towards internationalisation and global operations⁹. Many at times, when businesses are unable to find enough demand locally, they tend to enter into different markets where they can find ample demand for their offerings. This market development becomes easier and more feasible with the use of E-commerce where the presence of the company is not physically situated at any place. The target of firms in E-commerce is to identify demand for their products and services all over the world and then develop ways through which the demand could be fulfilled. Even though effective supply chain management is required for this, many firms have been able to successfully implement the strategies and ensure good performance.

The significance of online business has augmented over the years and it has been identified that in the year 2018 e-commerce represented 18% of the total sales in EU countries. Further, it has been found that one out of five firms in EU countries use E-commerce in the year 2017. Also, businesses that implemented Ecommerce have further been able to increase their sales by 7%

during the years of 2008 to 2018. Also, the need for human capital has also decreased significantly due to E-commerce and this further saves ample cost overall. Online business relies highly on the aspect of efficiency and effectiveness which focuses on optimisation of every function and operation. The fact that physical stores do not have to be operated online, a huge amount of liabilities related to administration costs, operational costs, human resource costs, and much more are set aside¹¹. Cost-saving has been identified to be one of the major advantages for companies in online business. Most of the functions through E-commerce are carried out at lesser expenses due to the model and its implementation. The work operations have completely changed in online businesses have been keen towards establishing a greater understanding of how the benefits could be maximised. A considerable number of businesses in E-commerce have streamlined their work activities. In many cases, businesses ship their products directly from the wholesaler, and the need to develop a store is lowered down. For physical stores, having a warehouse is important and while this has its own benefits, the costs for such businesses are much higher in terms of salaries, administration costs, operational costs, and much more. Warehouse management is a complex activity and E-commerce has allowed organisations to operate without even having a warehouse or storage place. Many times, the orders are placed directly to the wholesalers, and third party logistics are used to deliver the goods to the customers directly. While this reduces costs, it also allows firms to save ample time and effort involved in transportation and handling of products. One of the other benefits of E-commerce is mass customisation. The aspect and element of customisation have emerged to be very useful and significant for companies. Through this, businesses provide an opportunity to the customers in which they can choose and customise according to their requirements. E-commerce has completely changed and revolutionised the way consumers buy products and services¹². Every

individual is given an opportunity to communicate and specify what exactly they desire and then goods are developed specially in accordance with the preferences of customers. For instance, earlier customers only had the choice to choose the colour of the car.

Lower telecommunication cost is considered another major benefit for businesses in Online business. Businesses all around the globe previously used telephones for the purpose of sales and marketing. Now, with the prevalence of the internet, organisations have been given the opportunity to carry out most of their work activities using it. Internet is much cheaper than the value-added networks and this allows businesses to save ample costs. Another element related to this is the factor of time, as using the internet is much faster and effective in terms of reaching out to customers and sending any sort of information. The business model significantly supports innovation and using the internet for communication is one of the major advantages taken by E-businesses. While several different benefits have been associated with E-commerce, no time constraint is one of the most evident advantages experienced by businesses. Operating on an online business model, organisations are given an opportunity to always function without having any time limitations of opening or closing the stores. Many online businesses are operational 24/7 to enhance their sales and revenue streams, catering to different sorts of customers and their requirements. Even today, businesses functioning through a brick-and-mortar model have to remain operational only during working hours and this restricts such firms to optimise their sales to a certain extent. The fact that online businesses need comparatively much lesser employees, managing a double shift to the extent the work timings remain feasible. With minimum fixed costs, online businesses can cater to the demands of customers at any time of the day and process their orders immediately without any delays. One of the other benefits related to E-commerce for businesses is that they are given an international marketplace to function. Traditionally firms

were bound to operate within a geographical boundary and cater to only a limited number of customers that it could reach out to. Organisations through Ecommerce can approach a wide range of customers globally and meet their needs and demands. Firms using the internet become available to individuals located in different parts of the world. Customers have to use the internet to reach out to the website of the brand and look for the products they require.

Online business has made it easier for companies to set-up their presence and start their businesses due to lesser investment requirements and easier operations. With E-commerce, organisations have been able to start their projects and start functioning at a small scale. Due to no need of developing a physical presence, lesser initial capital and investment is required and this promotes business start-ups. With a higher number of E-commerce businesses taking place, more jobs are created in the economy and better employment rates are established. Customers on the other hand are given a good purchase experience through which they can easily go through a huge variety of products and chose their required goods and services without any hassle or wastage of time. Online business has changed the way businesses used to carry out their operational and functional activities, allowing organisations to optimise on various opportunities. Going global, a huge number of businesses have been able to enter new markets and make use of higher outreach overall. Further, internet technology for businesses allows them to improve their communication and allow doing business more easily. Earlier, it was highly challenging for customers to interact or communicate with companies or present their concerns. Reaching out to businesses and forwarding the concerns to the right authorities was considered daunting for consumers and this often led to dissatisfaction between individuals. Also, the whole process of communication was very time taking and lengthy which restricted consumers from presenting their queries to the firms or give their feedback for improvements. E-commerce has made it

much easier and feasible for consumers to interact with the companies and put forward their concerns regarding the products and services. Using the internet, customers can easily communicate with the concerned authorities and attain prompt responses from the brand. This has allowed businesses to achieve high customer satisfaction and retain consumers for a longer period. Considering that customer retention is difficult in the contemporary environment, effective communication results in adding value to this aspect.

One of the key advantages of online marketing is its ability to target specific audiences. Through various online channels, such as search engines, social media platforms, email marketing, content marketing, and display advertising, businesses can tailor their marketing efforts to reach individuals who are most likely to be interested in their products or services³⁰. This targeted approach enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of marketing campaigns, leading to higher conversion rates and Return on Investment (ROI). Online marketing offers a diverse range of strategies that can be employed based on specific goals and target audience characteristics. Some common online marketing techniques include³¹:

Search Engine Optimization (SEO). This technique focuses on improving a website's visibility in search engine results by optimizing its content, structure, and technical aspects. The goal is to increase organic (non-paid) traffic to the website. Also, Pay-per-Click Advertising (PPC) technique is a model that allows businesses to pay a fee each time their advertisement is clicked. PPC ads appear on search engine results pages or other websites, targeting keywords or specific audience demographics.

Similarly, social media marketing technique involves leveraging social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, *Twitter*, LinkedIn, and YouTube to connect with a target audience, build

brand awareness, and engage with customers through content sharing, interactions, and advertising. Furthermore, content marketing is another strategy that involves creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content, such as blog posts, articles, videos, and infographics, to attract and engage a target audience. The aim is to establish the business as a thought leader and build trust with potential customers.

Also, the concept of email marketing involves sending targeted messages or newsletters via email to a subscriber list. Email marketing can be used to nurture leads, build customer relationships, promote products or services, and drive conversions. The affiliate marketing technique involves collaborating with affiliates who promote a business's products or services on their platforms. Affiliates earn a commission for each sale or lead they generate.

The concept of online business is directly linked to the effects of the *Twitter* ban on online business in Nigeria. The *Twitter* ban in Nigeria had a significant impact on online businesses that relied on the platform as a crucial channel for marketing and customer engagement³². Some of these include the Disruption of Social Media Marketing as *Twitter* is a popular social media platform utilized by businesses for brand promotion, customer engagement, and content distribution. With the ban in place, businesses in Nigeria lost access to a key channel for social media marketing. This directly affected their ability to reach their target audience, share updates, and communicate with customers, leading to a decline in online visibility and potential sales.

Also, impacted influencer marketing is a widely adopted strategy in online marketing, and many Nigerian businesses collaborated with *Twitter* influencers to promote their products or services. The ban on *Twitter* limited the reach and impact of these influencer campaigns, as businesses lost the ability to leverage the influential voices on the platform to endorse their offerings and attract

customers. Similarly, the reduction in online reach and engagement is another direct impact on online businesses. Online marketing aims to create brand awareness, drive traffic, and engage with customers. The *Twitter* ban hindered businesses' ability to connect with their target audience, respond to inquiries, and provide customer support on the platform. As a result, businesses experienced a decline in online reach, customer engagement, and overall brand visibility, leading to a potential loss of customers and revenue.

Again, the *Twitter* ban forced Nigerian businesses to adapt their marketing strategies and seek alternative channels to maintain their online presence. They had to explore other social media platforms, such as *Facebook*, *Instagram*, or *LinkedIn*, to continue their online marketing efforts. This shift required businesses to reevaluate their target audience demographics and adjust their messaging and content to fit the new platforms, which resulted in additional costs and efforts. Additionally, the effects of the *Twitter* ban highlighted the importance of diversifying online marketing channels. Businesses heavily reliant on a single platform faced significant setbacks due to the ban. This emphasizes the need for businesses to have a well-rounded online marketing strategy that includes multiple channels and platforms to mitigate the impact of potential disruptions.

The technological infrastructure forms the backbone of online business performance. Nigeria, like many other developing economies, has witnessed a surge in digital adoption in recent years. The proliferation of smartphones and the expansion of internet accessibility have played pivotal roles in shaping the online business landscape. Consequently, a robust technological foundation is pivotal for the seamless operation of e-commerce platforms and the delivery of digital services.

Linking to the technological aspect is the examination of current e-commerce trends. In Nigeria, the e-commerce sector has undergone rapid transformation, with a notable shift towards mobile commerce (m-commerce). This shift is driven by factors such as convenience, accessibility, and the proliferation of mobile payment solutions. Analyzing these trends provides insights into the evolving consumer behavior and expectations, which, in turn, influences the strategies adopted by online businesses to stay competitive and relevant in the market.

However, the success of online businesses in Nigeria is intricately linked to the regulatory environment. A comprehensive conceptual review must address the regulatory frameworks governing e-commerce activities. Clarity in policies, consumer protection measures, and mechanisms for dispute resolution contribute to a conducive business environment. Conversely, ambiguous or restrictive regulations can pose challenges and hinder the growth potential of online enterprises.

Socio-economic factors also play a pivotal role in shaping online business performance. Nigeria's diverse socio-economic landscape, characterized by varying levels of income, education, and urbanization, influences consumer behavior and market dynamics. Understanding these socio-economic nuances is essential for businesses to tailor their strategies, marketing approaches, and product offerings to cater to the diverse needs of the population.

Conversely, a nuanced conceptual review of online business performance in Nigeria necessitates an exploration of technological infrastructure, e-commerce trends, regulatory frameworks, and socio-economic factors. Each of these components interconnects to shape the overall landscape for digital enterprises. As Nigeria continues its trajectory towards increased digitalization,

continuous examination and adaptation of these factors will be crucial for sustaining and enhancing online business performance in the country.

2.1.5 Overview of *Twitter* and Online Businesses

In recent years, social media platforms have emerged as powerful tools for communication, information sharing, and networking³³. *Twitter*, in particular, has become a prominent platform that facilitates real-time conversations and interactions among individuals, businesses, and organizations across the globe³⁴. With its user-friendly interface and succinct nature of posts (limited to 280 characters), *Twitter* has revolutionized the way people connect and engage online.

Twitter has evolved into a valuable marketing tool for businesses, offering a unique opportunity to reach a vast audience and promote products or services. The platform allows businesses to create an online presence, build brand awareness, and engage with potential customers. With millions of active users worldwide, businesses can leverage *Twitter's* features such as hashtags, retweets, and trending topics to expand their reach and increase visibility³⁵. Additionally, *Twitter* provides advertising options, including Promoted Tweets and *Twitter* Ads, which enable businesses to target specific demographics and interests, thereby enhancing their marketing strategies.

One of *Twitter's* significant advantages for online businesses is its ability to foster customer engagement and facilitate relationship building³⁶. By actively participating in conversations, responding to customer inquiries, and addressing concerns, businesses can establish a rapport with their audience and gain valuable insights. The platform's interactive nature allows businesses to listen to customer feedback, receive suggestions, and implement improvements, thereby enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty. Furthermore, *Twitter* provides a platform

for businesses to showcase their expertise, share industry news, and offer valuable insights, positioning themselves as thought leaders in their respective domains³⁷.

Twitter's real-time nature makes it a valuable source of information and market intelligence for online businesses³⁸. By monitoring trending topics, hashtags, and conversations relevant to their industry, businesses can gain insights into current trends, consumer preferences, and market dynamics. This information can guide businesses in making data-driven decisions, developing relevant content, and adapting their strategies to stay competitive in the rapidly evolving online landscape. Moreover, *Twitter's* data analytics tools allow businesses to track their performance, measure the impact of their campaigns, and refine their marketing efforts based on real-time feedback³⁹.

Twitter has emerged as a versatile platform for online businesses, offering numerous benefits for marketing, customer engagement, and real-time information. Its widespread popularity and extensive reach make it an ideal platform for businesses to establish their online presence, connect with their target audience, and promote their products or services. However, it is essential to acknowledge that the effects of the *Twitter* ban on online businesses in Nigeria may have altered the landscape to some extent. Nevertheless, *Twitter's* fundamental attributes and potential benefits as a marketing and customer engagement tool remain relevant, and businesses can explore alternative platforms or strategies to compensate for the ban.

2.1.6 Ethical and Legal Considerations in the Digital Media Era

In the modern era, digital media platforms have become an integral part of our daily lives, influencing how we communicate, gather information, and conduct business. As the digital landscape continues to evolve, it is crucial to address the ethical and legal considerations that

arise with the use of digital media. In the digital age, privacy and data protection have become paramount concerns for individuals and businesses alike⁴⁰. With the rise of online businesses, the collection and processing of user data have become integral to their operations. However, ethical and legal considerations must be taken into account to ensure the responsible handling of personal information.

Ethically, online businesses should prioritize the protection of user privacy. This involves being transparent about the types of data collected, the purposes for which it will be used, and obtaining explicit consent from users. Transparency builds trust and allows individuals to make informed decisions about sharing their personal information. Legally, online businesses must adhere to relevant data protection laws and regulations. In Nigeria, for example, the Nigeria Data Protection Regulation (NDPR) sets out guidelines for the lawful collection, processing, and storage of personal data⁴¹.

Online businesses need to familiarize themselves with these regulations, implement appropriate security measures to safeguard user data, and ensure that they have mechanisms in place to respond to data breaches or unauthorized access. To uphold privacy and data protection, online businesses should consider implementing privacy policies and terms of service that clearly outline how user data will be handled⁴². They should adopt secure data storage practices, such as encryption and regular backups, and regularly review and update their security measures to stay ahead of evolving threats.

Furthermore, online businesses should be mindful of third-party data-sharing practices. When partnering with external service providers or using third-party tools, it is essential to assess their privacy and data protection policies to ensure they align with ethical and legal standards. By

prioritizing privacy and data protection, online businesses not only demonstrate their commitment to ethical practices but also build customer trust and loyalty⁴³. Respecting user privacy rights and ensuring data security are essential foundations for the sustainable growth of online businesses in Nigeria and elsewhere.

Respecting intellectual property rights is an ethical responsibility that online businesses must uphold. Copyright laws exist to protect original creative works, including text, images, videos, and music⁴⁴. Online businesses need to be aware of these laws and ensure that they do not infringe upon the rights of others. When creating and sharing content, online businesses should strive to produce original and unique material or obtain proper licenses or permissions for the use of copyrighted materials. Plagiarism and unauthorized use of copyrighted content can lead to legal consequences and damage a business's reputation.

In addition, to respecting copyright laws, online businesses should also consider ethical considerations related to attribution and giving credit to the original creators. Properly acknowledging and attributing sources not only demonstrates integrity but also fosters a culture of respect within the digital media community. Online businesses should establish clear guidelines and policies regarding intellectual property rights. These guidelines can include procedures for obtaining permissions, handling copyright infringement claims, and training employees or content creators on the importance of respecting intellectual property⁴⁵.

Furthermore, online businesses should be vigilant in monitoring and addressing any infringement issues that may arise within their digital platforms. This includes promptly responding to copyright infringement claims and taking appropriate action, such as removing infringing content or disabling access to it. To protect their intellectual property, online businesses should consider

registering trademarks or patents if applicable to their products or services. This can help safeguard their unique brand identity and prevent others from misusing or profiting from their intellectual creations.

By upholding ethical standards and respecting intellectual property rights, online businesses contribute to a fair and vibrant digital ecosystem. Respecting the creative works of others not only fosters a sense of fairness but also promotes innovation and originality within the online business community⁴⁶. Ethically, online businesses should establish clear guidelines and codes of conduct that explicitly prohibit and condemn any form of harassment or cyberbullying. These guidelines should be communicated to all users and employees, emphasizing the importance of respectful and responsible online behaviour. By fostering a culture of respect and inclusivity, businesses can contribute to a positive and supportive digital community.

The digital era has ushered in unprecedented opportunities and challenges for individuals, societies, and the media. Digital globalization, driven by technology, has transformed the way we access and share information, transcending geographical boundaries. While this transformation has brought many benefits, it has also given rise to complex ethical dilemmas. Media ethics, particularly in the age of digital communication, have become a central concern. The Social Responsibility Theory underscores the importance of responsible and ethical media that serve the public interest. However, the rapid dissemination of information through social media has introduced new challenges, including the spread of false information, misuse of personal data, and the need for legislation to ensure responsible online behavior.

In addition to ethical considerations, there are legal implications regarding online harassment and cyberbullying. Many jurisdictions have laws in place that prohibit and penalize such behaviour.

Online businesses should familiarize themselves with these laws to ensure compliance and take appropriate action when incidents occur. This may involve implementing reporting mechanisms, investigating complaints, and taking disciplinary measures against individuals who engage in harassment or cyberbullying. To address the issue effectively, online businesses should also invest in moderation and content filtering mechanisms. Implementing artificial intelligence-based systems can help identify and flag potentially harmful content, including hate speech, threats, or abusive behaviour. Timely intervention and removal of such content can help mitigate the negative impact on victims and create a safer online space.

Education and awareness campaigns are vital in combating online harassment and cyberbullying. Online businesses can play a role in promoting digital literacy and responsible online behaviour through educational initiatives, workshops, or collaborations with relevant organizations. By raising awareness about the consequences of online harassment and cyberbullying, businesses can contribute to a more empathetic and compassionate online community. Collaboration with law enforcement agencies and relevant authorities is essential in addressing severe cases of online harassment and cyberbullying. Businesses should cooperate fully with investigations and provide necessary information or evidence to support legal actions against perpetrators. This collaboration strengthens the legal framework and reinforces the message that online harassment will not be tolerated.

Ethical considerations related to freedom of expression involve striking a balance between allowing diverse perspectives and combating harmful or misleading content. Online businesses should foster an environment that promotes open dialogue and the free exchange of ideas while also taking measures to address issues such as hate speech, misinformation, and disinformation.

Online businesses need to develop clear policies that define acceptable content and behaviour on their platforms. These policies should be based on principles of respect, tolerance, and non-discrimination. By establishing guidelines and enforcing them consistently, online businesses can create an inclusive digital space that encourages meaningful engagement while discouraging harmful or offensive content.

Legally, online businesses should adhere to relevant laws and regulations governing freedom of expression in their respective jurisdictions. They should be familiar with any restrictions or limitations imposed by authorities and work within those boundaries while advocating for a balanced and fair approach to content moderation. In cases where governments impose restrictions on digital media platforms, such as the *Twitter* ban in Nigeria, online businesses face complex ethical and legal challenges. They must consider the impact on freedom of expression, the rights of their users, and their obligations to comply with local laws. Ethical responses may include engaging in dialogues with authorities to find alternative solutions that preserve freedom of expression while addressing legitimate concerns.

Transparency is another important aspect to consider. Online businesses should be transparent about their content moderation practices, including how decisions are made regarding the removal or restriction of content⁴⁷. Clear communication with users about the reasons for content removal and providing avenues for appeal or redress can help maintain trust and accountability. Collaboration among online businesses, civil society organizations, and government bodies can foster dialogue and understanding, facilitating the development of guidelines and policies that balance freedom of expression with the need to address harmful content. Participating in multi-

stakeholder discussions and industry initiatives can contribute to shaping responsible and inclusive digital media practices.

The use of algorithms in digital media platforms has revolutionized content delivery, recommendations, and user experiences. However, it has also introduced ethical concerns related to algorithmic bias and the need for transparency in decision-making processes. Algorithmic bias refers to the potential for algorithms to favour or discriminate against certain individuals or groups based on characteristics such as race, gender, or socioeconomic status. Online businesses have an ethical responsibility to ensure that their algorithms are fair and unbiased, treating all users equally and providing equal opportunities for engagement and success.

To address algorithmic bias, online businesses should invest in algorithmic audits and assessments. These audits involve examining the data inputs, algorithms, and outcomes to identify any biases or discriminatory patterns. By identifying and rectifying biases, businesses can ensure that their algorithms are inclusive and unbiased, promoting equal access and representation for all users. Transparency in algorithmic decision-making is crucial for ethical considerations. Online businesses should strive to be transparent about how their algorithms function, the factors they consider, and the potential impact on users' experiences. This transparency builds trust and allows users to understand the basis of content recommendations or decisions made by the platform.

Providing users with control and customization options can also mitigate concerns regarding algorithmic bias. By allowing users to adjust their preferences or settings, online businesses empower individuals to shape their own digital experiences and reduce the potential impact of biased algorithms. In addition to ethical considerations, transparency in algorithmic decision-

making is increasingly demanded by legal and regulatory frameworks. Data protection and privacy regulations, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), require businesses to provide clear information on how user data is processed and used, including any algorithmic decision-making involved.

Online businesses should document their algorithmic processes, including data collection, processing, and the factors considered in making recommendations or decisions. They should communicate these practices to users through accessible privacy policies and terms of service. Additionally, businesses should be responsive to user feedback and provide avenues for reporting concerns or requesting explanations regarding algorithmic outcomes. Engaging in open dialogue with users, researchers, and stakeholders is essential for understanding and addressing concerns related to algorithmic bias. Participating in industry collaborations, academic research, and regulatory discussions can contribute to the development of best practices and guidelines for ethical algorithmic decision-making.

As digital media continues to shape the online landscape, ethical and legal considerations play a vital role in maintaining trust, fairness, and accountability. Businesses operating in the digital realm must navigate the complexities of privacy, intellectual property, harassment, freedom of expression, and algorithmic transparency. By addressing these considerations, online businesses can strive to create an environment that promotes responsible digital media practices and supports the growth and success of online enterprises in Nigeria and beyond.

2.1.7 Impact of *Twitter* Ban on Online Businesses in Nigeria

The *Twitter* ban in Nigeria had far-reaching implications for online businesses, causing significant disruptions in their marketing and promotional strategies. *Twitter* had become an

integral part of many businesses' digital marketing efforts, providing a platform for reaching a wide audience, driving traffic to their websites, and increasing brand visibility⁴⁸. The ban abruptly cut off businesses from their established *Twitter* followers and restricted their ability to effectively promote their products and services. Hence, one of the key impacts of the ban was the hampering of customer engagement and relationship building.

Again, *Twitter* had facilitated direct and real-time communication between businesses and their customers, allowing for immediate responses to inquiries, addressing concerns, and providing personalized support⁴⁹. With the ban in place, businesses lost a crucial avenue for engaging with their audience, leading to a decline in customer satisfaction and the deterioration of existing customer relationships. This communication breakdown had the potential to erode trust and loyalty, affecting long-term customer retention and the overall reputation of businesses.

The economic consequences of the *Twitter* ban were detrimental to online businesses and the broader digital economy in Nigeria. Online businesses heavily relied on social media platforms like *Twitter* to drive sales, generate leads, and expand their customer base⁵⁰. Consequently, the *Twitter* ban disrupted revenue streams for online businesses. Sales and conversions plummeted as businesses struggled to connect with their target audience and maintain a consistent online presence. The ban hindered growth opportunities, as businesses were unable to capitalize on the extensive reach and engagement potential that *Twitter* offered. This not only impacted the immediate profitability of online businesses but also hindered their long-term prospects for expansion and market penetration.

Moreover, the negative economic consequences extended beyond individual businesses to the broader digital economy in Nigeria. The digital sector had been a significant driver of economic

growth, job creation, and innovation. However, the *Twitter* ban undermined the progress and potential of this sector. Online businesses, being an integral part of the digital economy, faced significant setbacks in terms of revenue, profitability, and overall contribution to economic growth⁵¹. The decline in sales and the potential for job losses within the online business sector had implications for employment opportunities and economic stability in the country.

The economic consequences of the *Twitter* ban highlighted the vulnerability and fragility of businesses operating in the digital space. It underscored the importance of diverse marketing channels, the need for robust digital strategies, and the significance of leveraging multiple platforms to mitigate risks associated with platform-specific disruptions. The ban served as a wake-up call for businesses to reevaluate their reliance on a single platform and develop a more diversified online presence to minimize the impact of unforeseen events such as platform bans or suspensions.

In response to the ban, businesses sought alternative social media platforms to maintain their online presence and connect with their target audience. Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Telegram were among the platforms that businesses turned to during the ban. However, it is important to note that these platforms have different user demographics, engagement dynamics, and advertising capabilities compared to *Twitter*. This necessitated adjustments in marketing strategies and content to align with the specific characteristics of each platform. While businesses made efforts to leverage alternative platforms, replicating the reach and impact they had on *Twitter* proved to be a challenge⁵².

Despite their best efforts, businesses faced limitations when transitioning to alternative platforms. The reach and engagement levels on these platforms might not have matched the previous levels

achieved on *Twitter*. Moreover, building a new following and establishing a strong presence on these platforms required time and resources. Businesses had to navigate the unique features, algorithms, and user behaviours of each platform to effectively engage with their target audience⁵³. Such endeavors further highlighted the value that *Twitter* had provided in terms of its broad user base, real-time interactions, and viral potential.

Specific Economic Implications of Twitter Ban in Nigeria

Implication on Tax Income

However, *Twitter* is a global digital communication and content platform, it is a veritable tool to diversify our economy and provide the youth a future to build their lives in a productive manner. It is evident that the longer the suspension continues the more the government of Nigeria will lose potential tax income²⁵. *Twitter* has created jobs for a huge number of people and revenue in the form of taxes for the government and when this revenue generation avenue is closed, government will definitely incur great loss²⁷.

Implication on Investment:

The suspension of *Twitter*, a leading micro-blogging platform, has begun to take its toll on struggling Nigeria's economy, leading to a loss of N7.5 billion in the past three days. Nigeria's decision to suspend *Twitter*, at first indefinitely and later temporarily, could backfire for the government and cost the country economically in terms of new investment into its technology sector. The ban may threaten Nigeria's status as one of the best-performing African countries in attracting investment for technology start-up businesses³¹.

Besides the financial lost, Bala Zaka, an investment expert, said the signal ban of *Twitter* has sent to international investment should be more worrisome to the government, who he said should have engaged *Twitter* diplomatically²⁵.

Financial experts posit affirmed that the decision, which has put the country in the spotlight globally, would increase the investment hostility profile of the country. In the same vein, The United States, Canada, European Union, United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland in a joint statement condemned Nigeria's government for the ban, warning that it would complicate the economic hardship caused by the pandemic²⁷.

Implication on Influencers:

Twitter is the primary business space for most of Influencers. Since the advent of *Twitter*, the influencer marketing space in Nigeria has grown so much that almost anyone with dedicated followers could snag deals with organizations looking to extend their reach. While the organizations that work with Influencers can easily use other platforms for their marketing activities, it could be harder for them to do the same. Moreover, while they may be able to afford VPN services, their followers who keep them in business may find it difficult or reluctant to do so³³.

Implication on Freelancing:

The Internet revolution has brought significant increase in the number of people making a living off the Internet, specifically social media. From social media managers to content creators and

product photographers, thousands of Nigerians have created careers off these platforms. Nigerians are now using *Twitter* to get jobs, investors, and fill vacancies. These are few of the activities that a *Twitter* ban would hinder³².

Implication on Startups:

It was also identified that Nigeria's startup space has experienced tremendous growth in a short time, with \$3,77.4 million raised in 2019, although that figure declined to \$120.6 million in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic. This has created jobs for a huge number of people and revenue in the form of taxes for the government. However, this *Twitter* ban puts a threat to all those activities. For most startups, their businesses depend, in some part, on social media.

Implication on Small and Medium Enterprises:

With consideration on small and medium enterprise (SMEs) as vital to the growth of any economy, frequently providing as much as 60-70% of the economy with jobs. Numbering about 117.4 million, SMEs in Nigeria contribute 48% of national GDP, account for 96% of businesses, and 84% of employment. Many SMEs have leveraged on the Internet, especially social media, for business activities such as marketing and customer service. The number of vendors on *Twitter* and *Instagram* is a testament to this. While these businesses could move to other platforms, their posts might not gain as much engagement as Twitter provides³¹.

Implications on Human Rights:

Social media platform like Twitter, is one of the best technological innovations that have made information sharing, marketing information and collaboration easier. It was acknowledged that

Millions of people across Nigeria, especially youth, rely on social media to engage in discourse and to share and access information (Anyim, 2020). As a matter of fact, Nigeria's constitution and international human rights law, as set out in the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa, protect the right to free expression and access to information and provide that any restriction to this right must be justifiable in a democratic society²².

Nigeria is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which in Article 19 obligates States to guarantee the right to freedom of expression, encompassing the right to hold opinions without interference, and the freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas of all kinds through any medium regardless of frontiers²⁸.

The African Commission Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa (Principle 38 (1) & Principle 37 (1)), prohibits States from interfering with the right of individuals to seek, receive and impart information through any means of communication and digital technologies, through measures such as the removal, blocking or filtering of content, unless such interference is justifiable and compatible with international human rights law and standards.

Regardless of these limitations, during the *Twitter* ban in Nigeria, businesses sought alternative social media platforms to maintain their online presence and continue engaging with their target audience. A comparative analysis of these alternative platforms provides valuable insights into their effectiveness as substitutes for *Twitter* and the strategies employed by businesses to navigate the ban. This includes use of the following platforms:

- i. *Instagram*: The platform emerged as a popular alternative platform for businesses during the ban. With its visual focus, Instagram offered businesses an opportunity to showcase

their products and services through images and videos. Businesses leveraged the platform's visual appeal to create visually appealing content, showcase their brand identity, and engage with their followers. Features such as Instagram Stories, IGTV, and Reels provided additional avenues for businesses to share updates, behind-the-scenes content, and promotional offers. Instagram's robust influencer marketing ecosystem also allowed businesses to collaborate with popular influencers to reach a wider audience and enhance brand visibility.

- ii. *Facebook*: The platform being one of the largest social media platforms globally, was another alternative used by businesses during the *Twitter* ban. The platform provided businesses with various features to maintain their online presence and engage with customers. Pages and groups allowed businesses to build communities, share updates, and interact with their audience. Additionally, Facebook's targeted advertising capabilities enabled businesses to reach specific demographics and interests, ensuring their marketing efforts were directed towards their ideal customer base. Businesses also leveraged Facebook Live to host virtual events, product launches, and Q&A sessions, fostering real-time engagement with their audience.
- iii. *LinkedIn*: This is known as a professional networking platform, offered businesses an avenue to connect with industry professionals, share industry-related content, and establish thought leadership. Businesses utilized LinkedIn's company pages to share updates, industry insights, and job opportunities. The platform's networking capabilities allowed businesses to build valuable connections, engage in industry-specific discussions, and tap into potential business partnerships. Additionally, LinkedIn's advertising features

enabled businesses to target professionals based on their job titles, skills, and industry, ensuring their content reached a relevant and professional audience.

- iv. *Telegram*: The platform is a messaging app, served as an alternative platform for businesses to maintain communication with their audience during the *Twitter* ban. Businesses utilized Telegram channels to share updates, and promotional offers, and engage in direct conversations with their followers. The platform's privacy-focused features and encrypted messaging provided a sense of security for businesses and users. Telegram's channel-based structure allowed businesses to create dedicated channels for different topics or product lines, enabling efficient communication and content distribution.

2.1.8 *Twitter* and Effects of its Ban in Nigeria

Before the ban, *Twitter* had become a vital platform for Nigerians to express their opinions, engage in public discourse, and mobilize social and political movements⁵⁴. It provided a space for citizens to voice their concerns, hold public officials accountable, and advocate for social change. This increased the influence and impact of social media in shaping public opinion and facilitating civic engagement. The *tweet* from President Muhammadu Buhari's account, which triggered *Twitter*'s action, raised concerns about the potential for incitement to violence and the spread of misinformation. While some argued that the tweet was a legitimate expression of the government's position, others perceived it as a threat and expressed concerns about its potential to exacerbate tensions in a country already grappling with social, economic, and security challenges.

In response, *Twitter's* decision to delete the tweet drew criticism from the Nigerian government, which viewed it as an infringement on its sovereignty and interference in domestic affairs. The government accused *Twitter* of bias, alleging that the platform had been used to promote divisive narratives and support secessionist movements in the country. This prompted the government to take drastic action by suspending *Twitter's* operations in Nigeria. From the government's perspective, the *Twitter* ban was seen as a necessary step to assert control over the platform and prevent its misuse for activities deemed harmful to national unity and security.

The government argued that the ban was meant to send a strong message to social media platforms that they must operate within the bounds of Nigerian laws and regulations. The ban also reflected broader concerns around the regulation of social media platforms in Nigeria. The government had been considering the introduction of a social media bill aimed at regulating online platforms and curbing the spread of false information. The *Twitter* ban can be seen as a response to these ongoing discussions about the role and responsibilities of social media platforms in Nigerian society⁵⁵.

However, critics of the ban argued that it was a disproportionate response to the issue at hand. They contended that rather than banning the entire platform, the government could have explored more targeted measures, such as engaging in dialogue with *Twitter* to address concerns and finding mutually agreeable solutions. The ban's abrupt implementation without prior notice also raised concerns about transparency and due process. The *Twitter* ban in Nigeria highlighted the complex interplay between freedom of expression, national security, and digital governance⁵⁶. It ignited debates about the appropriate balance between government control and individual rights in the digital age. The ban's impact on online businesses, digital rights, and Nigeria's

international reputation further underscored the need for thoughtful and inclusive approaches to digital regulation that safeguard citizens' rights while addressing legitimate concerns.

Meanwhile, from a legal and regulatory standpoint, the Nigerian government justified the *Twitter* ban by citing concerns over the "persistent use of the platform for activities that are capable of undermining Nigeria's corporate existence⁵⁷." The ban was implemented under the provision of the National Broadcasting Commission Act, which grants regulatory powers over broadcasting in Nigeria. However, applying the ban to *Twitter*, a social media platform raised questions about the legal basis for the government's action. Critics of the ban argue that it infringes upon the right to freedom of expression, a fundamental human right protected by Nigeria's Constitution and international conventions. Freedom of expression is recognized as a crucial pillar of democracy, enabling individuals to voice their opinions, participate in public discourse, and hold those in power accountable⁵⁸. Social media platforms like *Twitter* have played a significant role in amplifying citizens' voices and facilitating public engagement.

By imposing the ban, the government's critics assert that democratic principles are undermined, and dissenting voices are stifled. They argue that the *Twitter* ban hinders the free flow of information, restricts access to diverse viewpoints, and curtails citizens' ability to express their opinions and engage in public debates. In a democratic society, the existence of multiple perspectives and the right to express them is vital for fostering informed discussions and robust democratic governance. The ban has also drawn attention to potential inconsistencies in Nigeria's legal framework regarding the regulation of social media platforms⁵⁹. The National Broadcasting Commission Act, under which the ban was implemented, primarily focuses on broadcasting regulations rather than explicitly addressing online platforms and social media. This has led to

questions regarding the legal basis for extending broadcasting regulations to social media platforms like *Twitter*.

Furthermore, critics argue that the government's actions have broader implications for digital rights and the digital economy in Nigeria. Social media platforms have become integral tools for online businesses, entrepreneurs, and content creators, providing opportunities for economic growth and innovation⁶⁰. The ban disrupts the operations of online businesses and limits their ability to reach their target audience, engage with customers, and promote their products and services. This, in turn, can have negative economic consequences and hinder the growth of Nigeria's digital economy. The *Twitter* ban in Nigeria drew significant international attention and generated widespread condemnation from various governments, human rights organizations, and tech companies. The ban's implications for freedom of expression, access to information, and digital rights were at the forefront of these concerns.

The suspension of *Twitter*, a leading micro-blogging platform, has begun to take its toll on struggling Nigeria's economy, leading to a loss of N7.5 billion in the past three days. Nigeria's decision to suspend *Twitter*, at first indefinitely and later temporarily, could backfire for the government and cost the country economically in terms of new investment into its technology sector. The ban may threaten Nigeria's status as one of the best-performing African countries in attracting investment for technology startup businesses. It is evident that the longer the suspension continues the more the government of Nigeria will lose potential tax income. *Twitter* has created jobs for a huge number of people and revenue in the form of taxes for the government and when this revenue generation avenue is closed, government will definitely incur great loss. *Twitter* is the primary business space for most of Influencers. Since the advent of *Twitter*, the influencer marketing space in Nigeria has grown so much that almost anyone with

dedicated followers could snag deals with organizations looking to extend their reach. While the organizations that work with Influencers can easily use other platforms for their marketing activities, it could be harder for them to do the same. Moreover, while they may be able to afford VPN services, their followers who keep them in business may find it difficult or reluctant to do so. The Internet revolution has brought significant increase in the number of people making a living off the Internet, specifically social media. From social media managers to content creators and product photographers, thousands of Nigerians have created careers off these platforms. Nigerians are now using Twitter to get jobs, investors, and fill vacancies.

It was also identified that Nigeria's startup space has experienced tremendous growth in a short time, with \$3,77.4 million raised in 2019, although that figure declined to \$120.6 million in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic. This has created jobs for a huge number of people and revenue in the form of taxes for the government. However, this Twitter ban puts a threat to all those activities. For most startups, their businesses depend, in some part, on social media. Without access to social media to run marketing campaigns or build relationships with their customers, business would take a hit.

Numerous international organizations, including the United Nations, expressed disapproval of the ban and called for the restoration of access to *Twitter*⁶¹. They emphasized the importance of upholding freedom of expression as a cornerstone of any vibrant democracy. The ban raised questions about Nigeria's commitment to democratic values and its willingness to protect citizens' rights to express themselves and access information through online platforms. The impact of the *Twitter* ban on online businesses in Nigeria cannot be underestimated. Many businesses heavily relied on *Twitter* as a vital marketing and customer engagement platform. The sudden removal of this channel disrupted their operations, hindering their ability to reach their

target audience, engage with customers, and promote their products and services effectively⁶². The ban had negative economic implications, affecting the revenue and growth of online businesses and impacting the broader digital economy in Nigeria.

Moreover, the *Twitter* ban highlighted the importance of digital rights and the urgent need for clear and balanced regulations that safeguard citizens' rights while addressing legitimate concerns related to national security and online behaviour. The ban triggered discussions about the necessity for comprehensive and transparent regulatory frameworks that promote responsible digital citizenship, protect freedom of expression, and provide effective mechanisms for addressing online abuses. The international outcry and condemnation of the *Twitter* ban underscored the significance of digital rights as human rights in the modern era. Governments around the world are increasingly grappling with the challenges posed by the intersection of technology, freedom of expression, and national security. Balancing these concerns requires thoughtful and inclusive approaches to digital governance that protect individual rights while addressing legitimate national interests⁶³.

The *Twitter* ban in Nigeria served as a wake-up call, prompting discussions on the need to strike a balance between regulating social media platforms and protecting fundamental rights. It highlighted the importance of transparent and participatory processes in developing regulations that safeguard freedom of expression, privacy, and access to information. A robust regulatory framework that supports responsible digital citizenship can foster a vibrant online ecosystem while addressing concerns related to national security and the misuse of online platforms.

Consequently, the *Twitter* ban in Nigeria generated widespread condemnation and sparked discussions about freedom of expression, access to information, and digital rights. The ban's

impact on online businesses and the broader digital economy underscored the need for clear and balanced regulations. The incident emphasized the significance of comprehensive and transparent regulatory frameworks that protect citizens' rights while addressing legitimate concerns, contributing to the development of responsible digital citizenship and a thriving online environment.

Digital media like *Twitter* are essential for information exchange, marketing customer services and remote work, especially during public health and safety emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic. The suspension can slow commerce, cut productivity and ultimately cost jobs⁶⁴.

Nigerians in Diaspora Movement (NDM) stressed that banning *Twitter* in Nigeria was an act of insensitivity considering the fact many Nigerians make a living through the site. NDM recollected that social media like *Twitter* have been proven to lift people, especially the youth, out of poverty through the acquisition and exchange of value adding ideas. To this effect, NDM hereby, unequivocally, calls upon the Nigerian government to reconsider the ban on *Twitter* without further delay⁶⁵.

Valentine Ozigbo, the immediate past President and Group CEO of Transcorp PLC in a statement acknowledged that *Twitter* is a platform that drives business and creates jobs for millions of Nigerians, especially the youth. “As a business leader and investor in technology and communications, I appreciate the role of social networking platforms like *Twitter*, Instagram, and Facebook in driving business and the economy. This suspension will have untold negative consequences to our economy, or image as a democracy and the youth who use *Twitter* as a platform to advance their career⁶⁶.

According to NetBlocks, a watchdog organization that monitors cyber-security and governance of the Internet, each hour of the social media gagging costs Nigeria about \$250,000 (N102.5 million), bringing the daily loss to N2.5 billion. It means the economy would have lost approximately 7.5 billion in the past three days (4th June, 2021). The suspension has already created a market access gap for millions of small business and medium scale enterprises that use the platform to reach their customers. This could potentially complicate the challenges COVID-19 and other structural defects had imposed on businesses. Also affected is the e-commerce market in the country, estimated at \$12 billion⁶⁷.

The chairman, Mobile Software Solution, Nigeria, Chris Uwaje, opines that the ban would bring a monumental economic disfunction, with the capability to fuel more unemployment, whose disaster recovery damages will cost a long time to amend. He identifies the following as among the possible consequences of shutting down Twitter: massive damage to consumer, delay development of Nigeria's digital ecosystem, massive cyber-attack on Nigeria etc⁶⁸.

Most Information and Communication Technologies professionals described government ban on Twitter as a decision made without knowledge of technology's dynamism. They argue that the decision could undermine the economic boost technology gives the country by way of consistently strengthening the Gross Domestic Product (GDP)⁶⁹.

In a report to Al Jazeera, Gbenga Sesan, executive director of the Paradigm Initiative, a pan-African social enterprise working on digital inclusion and rights, opines that this ban will force investors out of Nigeria and also that global tech companies that want to investment in Africa are likely to consider a place like Ghana rather than Nigeria⁷⁰.

Sesan also added that the suspension of Twitter sends the wrong signal to foreign investors; meanwhile, small businesses using Twitter as a source of livelihood in Nigeria will be affected due to the fact that businesses in Nigeria use digital media to reach customers, expose their brands and communicate with various stakeholders. That will definitely be affected by this erratic decision⁷¹.

The President, Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN), Steve Babaeko, observed that significant population of Nigerian youth earn their livelihood through Twitter, “some simply by being attack dogs or mouthpiece for politicians and the government” which by implication, income for those youths will be lost to the ban. On the other hand, unemployment among the youth segment currently stands at about 35%, depending on which state of the Federation one is looking at; with Twitter ban, the unemployment rate will worsen⁷².

2.1.9 Government Regulations and Censorship of Social Media

Government regulations and censorship play a significant role in shaping the landscape of social media platforms and online businesses. In the context of Nigeria, the regulatory framework governing digital platforms has been a topic of intense debate. The government's decision to ban *Twitter* in June 2021 raised questions about the extent of regulatory power and its implications for online-related businesses⁷³.

Several scholars have analyzed the legal aspects of this ban over the years. For instance, the Nigerian government's action was rooted in concerns about national security and public order. It was a manifestation of the Nigerian government's attempt to assert control over digital communication channels in the face of political dissent and social unrest. This move highlighted the delicate balance between freedom of expression and state control in the digital age. It

highlighted the legal ambiguities surrounding social media platforms' responsibilities in moderating content and ensuring user safety⁷⁴.

Moreover, the ban raised questions about international norms and standards, with the need for transnational dialogues to address cross-border implications of such regulatory actions being emphasized. In addition to legal analyses, the ban's economic ramifications cannot be overlooked. Delving into the economic consequences, exploring how the ban disrupted the revenue streams of online businesses, particularly small and medium enterprises (SMEs). It was revealed that businesses reliant on Twitter for marketing and customer engagement faced significant setbacks, leading to financial losses and, in some cases, closures. The ban's impact on SMEs, in particular, was profound. These businesses, often operating on thin profit margins, found it challenging to pivot swiftly to alternative marketing strategies. The abrupt disruption in their online presence led to a decline in customer reach, hampering sales and revenue. Many SMEs lacked the resources to invest in expensive marketing campaigns on other platforms, exacerbating their financial woes⁷⁵.

Furthermore, the ban hindered the growth of digital entrepreneurship in Nigeria. Emerging startups and online ventures faced hurdles in attracting investors, as the ban raised concerns about the stability of the digital market. Investors, both domestic and international, became cautious, leading to a decline in funding for innovative digital initiatives. This stagnation stifled the potential economic growth that could have been generated by a vibrant digital entrepreneurial ecosystem. The ban's effects rippled through various sectors of the economy, impacting not only businesses but also the workforce. Job losses were reported across digital marketing agencies, content creation firms, and e-commerce platforms. The sudden contraction in these sectors

contributed to rising unemployment rates, adding to the broader socio-economic challenges faced by the country.

2.1.10 User Behavior and Attitudes Towards the Ban of *Twitter* in Nigeria

The period of the *Twitter* ban in Nigeria witnessed a diverse array of user responses and behaviors, shedding light on the resilience of digital communities and online businesses within the period of the ban.

According to an in-depth study that examined user migration patterns, a surge in the usage of alternative social media platforms such as Signal and Telegram was revealed. This migration highlighted users' adaptability and determination to sustain their online presence and social connections, even in the face of regulatory challenges⁶⁴.

Concurrently, a qualitative research conducted at some point during within the timeframe of the ban explored the multifaceted attitudes among Nigerian internet users. While some users expressed frustration over the limitations imposed by the ban, others welcomed it as a means to curb misinformation and hate speech. This divergence in perspectives underscored the complexities faced by online businesses, needing to cater to a diverse user base with varying sentiments and preferences.

Furthermore, the ban's impact on digital activism and civic engagement cannot be ignored as civil society organizations and activists adapted their strategies, utilizing alternative platforms and offline methods to mobilize public opinion and advocate for their causes. This shift showcased the innovative approaches adopted by users and activists to navigate restrictions, thereby shaping the landscape of digital advocacy in Nigeria.

Nigeria's decision to suspend Twitter indefinitely could backfire for the government and cost the country economically in terms of new investments into its technology sector. The Nigerian government [suspended](#) Twitter on June 4. The official [press release](#) gave only a vague justification, citing threats to "Nigeria's corporate existence".

While only a minority of Nigerians use Twitter, they form part of the most vocal and politically active segment of the population. Many young people have used Twitter and other social media recently to organise anti-government protests. And [Nigeria](#) has been among the best-performing African countries in attracting investments for technology start-up business. The ban could threaten that status.

The government made little effort to hide the likely main reason for the ban: the social media giant's [decision](#) to delete a tweet by President Muhammadu Buhari just days before. In the tweet, Buhari seemed to threaten violent retaliation against a southeastern secessionist group's [alleged recent attacks](#) on government facilities and personnel. Twitter claimed the message had violated its rules against "[abusive behaviour](#)".

The move angered many in the Nigerian government. Information and Culture Minister Lai Mohammed criticised "[double standards](#)" and [complained](#) that Twitter had not deleted missives from a separatist leader. He also alleged that it supported the [2020 #EndSARS](#) movement against police brutality. The potential that social media could help mobilise such a large, [youth-driven protest movement](#) sent shudders throughout the ruling establishment. Officials might hope a ban squelches a [growing protest movement](#) against rising insecurity.

The deletion of Buhari's tweet also came on the heels of Twitter's [April 2021 announcement](#) that it would be setting up its first African office in Accra, not Lagos. In its [justification](#), Twitter cited Ghana's support for "free speech, online freedom, and the open internet".

Nigeria's move is part of a [worrying trend](#) of governments in Africa throttling the use of social media. So far this year [Niger](#), [the Republic of the Congo](#) and [Uganda](#) have limited digital media around elections. [Senegal](#) also did so around anti-government protests.

These shutdowns are typically justified as necessary to ensure national security around sensitive periods. But they transparently serve incumbent interests, by [limiting democratic freedoms](#) around information, expression and assembly.

With its ban, the Buhari government has escalated a spat into something much more serious. The damage to [economic](#) and [democratic development](#) from shutdowns can be significant, even with short blockages. Lost productivity and commerce threaten Nigeria's economic recovery, and the reputational harm to its ability to attract investment to its digital economy could be long lasting.

On the political side, the government risks angering the most vocal and engaged segment of the population, with the likelihood that even most non-users will oppose the ban.

2.1.11 Conceptualizing the Mass Media

Mass media plays a pivotal role in shaping societal perceptions, disseminating information, and influencing public opinion. It encompasses various forms of communication channels that reach a large audience simultaneously. The evolution of mass media has been dynamic, witnessing significant transformations over time. This conceptual review aims to delve into the multifaceted

aspects of mass media, exploring its definition, historical development, functions, and impact on society⁶⁵.

Mass media refers to a diverse range of communication tools, including newspapers, television, radio, and the internet, designed to reach a vast audience. Its primary purpose is to convey information, entertain, and educate the public. Mass media acts as a bridge between individuals and the world, offering a shared experience and creating a sense of connectivity among diverse populations⁶⁶.

The history of mass media dates back centuries, with each era witnessing the emergence of new technologies that revolutionized communication. From the printing press in the 15th century to the digital age in the 21st century, mass media has continually adapted to technological advancements. The evolution of mass media reflects societal changes, political developments, and cultural shifts, making it a mirror of the times.

Mass media serves various essential functions in society. Firstly, it acts as an information disseminator, providing news, current affairs, and updates to the public. Secondly, it functions as a watchdog by monitoring government activities and holding institutions accountable. Additionally, mass media serves an educational role, offering insights into diverse subjects and fostering a learning culture. Moreover, it plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and influencing attitudes on social, political, and cultural issues.

The impact of mass media on society is profound and multifaceted. It shapes public discourse, influencing opinions, beliefs, and behaviors. Mass media has the power to construct and reinforce societal norms and values, contributing to the formation of collective identity. However, it also faces criticism for potential biases, sensationalism, and the ability to manipulate public

perception. The relationship between mass media and society is complex, with both influencing and being influenced by each other.

The advent of the internet has brought about a paradigm shift in mass media. Digital platforms, social media, and online news sources have democratized information access, allowing for user-generated content and real-time communication. While this has expanded the reach of mass media, it has also raised concerns about misinformation, privacy, and the erosion of traditional journalistic standards²³.

Despite its significance, mass media faces several challenges, including the rise of misinformation, declining trust in traditional journalism, and the need to adapt to rapidly changing technologies. The future of mass media will likely be shaped by innovations in artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and personalized content delivery. Navigating these challenges will require a careful balance between technological advancements, ethical considerations, and the preservation of the media's essential societal functions²¹.

In conclusion, mass media is a dynamic and influential force that shapes and reflects societal dynamics. Its historical evolution, diverse functions, and impact on society underscore its crucial role in the modern world. As technology continues to advance, mass media must adapt to maintain its relevance while addressing emerging challenges to fulfill its role as a responsible disseminator of information and catalyst for societal progress.

2.2 Theoretical Review

The theoretical review focuses on relevant two distinct theories, that is; Authoritarian Media Theory and Technological Determinism Theory. By applying these theories, the study provides valuable insights into the consequences of the *Twitter* ban and its influence on online businesses in Nigeria.

2.2.1 Authoritarian Media Theory

In examining the influence of the Twitter ban on online business performance in Nigeria between June 2021 and January 2022, the application of the Authoritarian Media Theory can provide valuable insights into the role of governmental control and censorship in shaping media narratives and communication channels. This theory, which emphasizes the dominance of authoritative entities in controlling media content and dissemination, is particularly relevant in the context of the Nigerian government's decision to ban Twitter during the specified period⁶⁷.

The history of the Authoritarian Media Theory is a journey through the evolution of media theories, contextualized within political environments characterized by authoritative control and censorship. Rooted in the mid-20th century, this theory emerged as a response to the changing dynamics of media landscapes in regions where authoritarian regimes sought to wield influence over information dissemination.

The origins of the Authoritarian Media Theory can be traced back to the mid-20th century, a period marked by the rise of authoritarian regimes across different parts of the world. Scholars and theorists, observing the patterns of media control and censorship in countries led by authoritarian leaders, began to articulate the principles that would later be encapsulated in this theory. The mid-20th century saw the establishment of media systems in authoritarian states that

were tightly controlled by governments. These states utilized media as a tool for propaganda, manipulation of public opinion, and suppression of dissenting voices. As scholars and observers studied these phenomena, the Authoritarian Media Theory began to take shape, emphasizing the symbiotic relationship between authoritarian governments and media institutions⁶⁸.

The theory gained prominence during the Cold War era, as the media landscape became a battleground for ideological supremacy between democratic and authoritarian regimes. The controlled dissemination of information in authoritarian states was seen as a means to consolidate power, maintain social order, and shape a narrative that aligned with the ruling elite's interests. Throughout the latter half of the 20th century, the Authoritarian Media Theory evolved in response to technological advancements and shifts in global politics. The advent of television and, later, the internet, provided new avenues for authoritarian regimes to exert control over information flows. This evolution allowed for a more nuanced understanding of how authoritarianism adapted to changing media landscapes.

The theory also expanded to encompass not only traditional media outlets but also digital platforms and social media, recognizing the adaptability of authoritarian regimes in controlling the narrative in the contemporary era. The intersection of technology, politics, and media became a focal point for scholars examining how authoritarianism persisted and adapted in the face of evolving communication technologies. In the 21st century, the Authoritarian Media Theory continues to be relevant as scholars explore the impact of digital authoritarianism, internet censorship, and surveillance on media landscapes. The theory's historical roots provide a foundation for understanding the enduring challenges posed by authoritarian control over media and information in various parts of the world.

The Authoritarian Media Theory posits that in authoritarian regimes, the government exerts significant control over media outlets, shaping the narrative to align with its interests and suppressing dissenting voices. Applying this theory to the Twitter ban in Nigeria, one can explore how the government's actions influenced the media landscape and subsequently impacted online-related businesses. The study delves into how the Authoritarian Media Theory played out concerning the ban, scrutinizing the government's influence on traditional and digital media platforms. Analyzing the messages disseminated by state-controlled media and the extent to which alternative viewpoints were stifled can reveal the depth of authoritarian control in shaping public perceptions and influencing the online business environment⁶⁸.

Moreover, the theory can be employed to investigate the implications of media authoritarianism on freedom of expression, a fundamental aspect for online-related businesses that rely on open communication channels. Examining how the government's actions affected the ability of businesses to express themselves and connect with their audiences can provide a nuanced understanding of the challenges faced during the ban. Additionally, the Authoritarian Media Theory can shed light on the broader political context surrounding the *Twitter* ban. Analyzing how the government's control over media intersected with political motivations and economic interests can unveil the underlying power dynamics that influenced the online business landscape.

Consequently, incorporating the Authoritarian Media Theory into the study enhances its analytical framework by providing a focused exploration of the government's role in shaping media narratives and controlling communication channels during the *Twitter* ban. This approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of the authoritarian influences on online-related

businesses in Nigeria between June 2021 and January 2022, contributing to a nuanced academic discourse on the intersection of media, politics, and business in the digital age⁶⁹.

2.2.1.1 Relevance of the Theory to the Study

The relevance of the Authoritarian Media Theory to the influence of the *Twitter* ban on online businesses performance in Nigeria between June 2021 and January 2022 is profound, as the theory provides a conceptual framework for understanding the dynamics of media control and censorship within an authoritarian political context. This period saw the Nigerian government taking authoritative measures to suspend *Twitter* operations, which aligns with the principles and manifestations of the Authoritarian Media Theory⁷⁶.

Firstly, the theory sheds light on the government's role in shaping media narratives during the *Twitter* ban. The Nigerian government's decision to suspend *Twitter* operations was a clear demonstration of its authority in controlling information dissemination. By inhibiting access to a prominent social media platform, the government sought to influence and control the narrative surrounding political events, public discourse, and the activities of online-related businesses. The Authoritarian Media Theory also provides insights into how the ban impacted freedom of expression, a critical aspect for online businesses reliant on open communication channels. The restrictions imposed on *Twitter* were part of a broader effort to control the flow of information, suppressing dissenting voices and limiting the space for public discourse. This aligns with the theory's emphasis on authoritarian regimes curbing freedom of expression to maintain political stability and control public opinion.

Furthermore, the theory's relevance extends to the government's utilization of alternative media channels during the ban. In the face of restrictions on *Twitter*, government officials turned to

state-controlled media and other platforms to disseminate information. This strategic use of alternative channels aligns with the Authoritarian Media Theory, which recognizes the adaptability of authoritarian regimes in maintaining control over media narratives even in the face of technological disruptions⁷⁷. The Authoritarian Media Theory's historical context, rooted in the mid-20th century, provides a backdrop for understanding the enduring challenges associated with media control in authoritarian regimes. In the case of the *Twitter* ban in Nigeria, the theory allows for an analysis of how the government's actions fit into a broader historical pattern of authoritarian control over media and information.

Moreover, the theory helps elucidate the intersection of political interests, economic considerations, and media control during the ban. By examining the government's motivations behind the *Twitter* suspension and its impact on online-related businesses, one can gain a nuanced understanding of how authoritarianism influences the economic and communicative landscape.

In conclusion, the Authoritarian Media Theory significantly enriches the analysis of the influence of the *Twitter* ban on online businesses performance in Nigeria between June 2021 and January 2022. It provides a theoretical lens to comprehend the government's role in shaping media narratives, suppressing dissent, and adapting to technological disruptions, offering a comprehensive framework for understanding the dynamics at play in an authoritarian context.

2.2.2 Technological Determinism Theory

The study aimed to explore the influence of the *Twitter* ban on online business performance within the Nigerian context. This theoretical review will analyze the impact using the Technological Determinism Theory.

Technological Determinism Theory is a perspective that suggests technology has an autonomous and deterministic influence on societal changes. It posits that technological advancements shape human behavior, social structures, and cultural values. According to this theory, technology is seen as an independent force that drives societal transformations rather than being merely shaped by social, political, or economic factors⁷⁸.

The origins of Technological Determinism Theory can be traced back to the early 20th century, with roots in the works of several scholars. However, it gained significant prominence in the 1950s and 1960s with the writings of Marshall McLuhan, a Canadian communication theorist. McLuhan's book "Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man," published in 1964, is considered one of the most influential works that presented technological determinism as a central concept.

McLuhan argued that the medium itself, rather than the content transmitted through it, had a profound impact on society and human behavior⁷⁹. He famously coined the phrase "the medium is the message," emphasizing that the medium or technology used for communication shapes our perception, cognition, and social organization. McLuhan's ideas sparked a broader discussion on the influence of technology on society and set the stage for the development of Technological Determinism Theory.

It is important to note that while McLuhan made significant contributions to the understanding of technological determinism, the theory itself has evolved and been further developed by subsequent scholars. Other notable contributors to the theory include Walter Benjamin, Harold Innis, and Neil Postman, who expanded upon the concept and explored various aspects of technological determinism in their respective works.

Technological Determinism Theory posits that technology has an autonomous and deterministic influence on societal changes. It suggests that technological advancements shape human behavior and social structures. Applied to the Twitter ban in Nigeria, this theory emphasizes the transformative power of technology and its potential to disrupt online businesses⁸⁰.

Expanding on the analysis of the Twitter ban in Nigeria from the perspective of Technological Determinism Theory, the following aspects highlight the transformative power of technology and its influence on social change, technological impact, and structural shifts within the context of online businesses:

a) Social Change: The Twitter ban imposed by the Nigerian government can be seen as a deliberate effort to control and regulate online discourse. This action has significant implications for online businesses, as Twitter was a popular and widely used platform for communication, marketing, and customer engagement. The ban disrupts the existing social media landscape by limiting the freedom of expression and hindering the flow of information between businesses and their target audience. Consequently, online businesses face challenges in maintaining their online presence and engaging with their customers effectively.

b) Technological Impact: The ban restricts access to and usage of *Twitter*, thereby impacting online businesses that heavily relied on the platform as a marketing and communication channel. With a significant portion of their customer base on *Twitter*, businesses face a decline in reach, visibility, and the overall effectiveness of their marketing efforts. Online businesses accustomed to utilizing *Twitter's* features, such as targeted advertising, real-time customer interaction, and content sharing, now have to find alternative methods to reach their audience. This sudden

disruption can lead to a loss of customers, decreased revenue, and a need for businesses to adapt quickly to mitigate the negative consequences.

c) Structural Shifts: The *Twitter* ban has prompted online businesses in Nigeria to explore alternative platforms and strategies to maintain their digital presence. This shift may result in changes to the overall structure of the Nigerian online business ecosystem. Businesses may seek out alternative social media platforms, such as Instagram, Facebook, or local platforms, to reach their target audience. They may also invest more heavily in search engine optimization (SEO), email marketing, or influencer collaborations to compensate for the loss of Twitter as a promotional channel. These adjustments could lead to a redistribution of resources, changes in marketing strategies, and the emergence of new platforms or communication channels as the online business landscape evolves.

Technological Determinism and Media

New media are not only an addition to existing media, they are also new technologies and therefore do have a deterministic factor as well. Marshall McLuhan made a famous statement that “the medium is the message.” This means that the medium used to communicate influences the mind of the receiver. The introduction of news print, television and the internet have all shown how technological advances have an impact on the society in which we live in.

2.2.2.1 Relevance of the Theory to the Study

The theoretical framework of technological determinism, which posits that technology plays a decisive role in shaping societal structures, behaviors, and outcomes. This theory suggests that technological advancements drive social change, often in predictable and deterministic ways,

impacting various aspects of human life, including economic activities and communication patterns⁷⁵.

Firstly, in the context of the Twitter ban in Nigeria, technological determinism theory helps to elucidate how the decision to suspend Twitter's operations in the country could have significant ramifications for online businesses. The ban, which was imposed by the Nigerian government in response to perceived threats to national security and the regulation of social media platforms, exemplifies the notion that technological developments can exert considerable influence on socio-political dynamics. By disrupting access to a popular social media platform like Twitter, the ban may have disrupted established communication channels and marketing strategies employed by online businesses, thereby potentially affecting their performance and profitability.

Moreover, technological determinism theory highlights the interconnectedness between technology, society, and economic systems, underscoring how changes in one domain can reverberate across others. In the case of the Twitter ban, the enforced absence of a prominent online platform for communication and commerce could have ripple effects on the digital economy in Nigeria. Online businesses reliant on Twitter for customer engagement, advertising, and brand promotion may have experienced disruptions in their operations, leading to fluctuations in sales, customer acquisition, and overall business performance. Thus, the theory offers a lens through which to understand the complex interplay between technological interventions and economic outcomes.

Furthermore, the temporal scope of the research, spanning from June 2021 to January 2022, allows for an examination of the evolving impact of the Twitter ban on online businesses over time. Technological determinism theory suggests that the effects of such policy interventions

may unfold gradually, as individuals and businesses adapt to new technological landscapes or circumvent regulatory constraints through innovation. Therefore, analyzing the longitudinal data within the framework of technological determinism can provide insights into how online businesses navigated and responded to the challenges posed by the Twitter ban, elucidating patterns of resilience, adaptation, or vulnerability within the digital marketplace.

Additionally, technological determinism theory prompts consideration of the broader societal implications of the Twitter ban beyond its immediate economic repercussions. By disrupting online communication channels and stifling freedom of expression, the ban may have contributed to a broader erosion of digital rights and democratic values in Nigeria. This aspect is particularly relevant given the increasing reliance on social media platforms for civic engagement, political discourse, and the exercise of fundamental rights. Thus, the research could explore not only the economic impact on online businesses but also the sociopolitical consequences of restricting access to digital platforms, aligning with the broader theoretical framework of technological determinism.

Moreover, the theoretical lens of technological determinism invites reflection on the agency of actors within the socio-technological landscape. While the theory acknowledges the deterministic influence of technology on society, it also recognizes the capacity of individuals and organizations to shape and negotiate technological outcomes. In the context of the Twitter ban, this perspective prompts inquiries into how online businesses adapted their strategies, leveraged alternative platforms, or advocated for policy changes in response to the regulatory measures. By considering the agency of stakeholders alongside the deterministic effects of

technology, the research can offer a nuanced understanding of the dynamics at play in the digital ecosystem.

Furthermore, technological determinism theory encourages an examination of the underlying assumptions and ideologies that inform policy decisions regarding technology regulation. The Twitter ban in Nigeria reflects broader debates about digital governance, national sovereignty, and the balance between security imperatives and individual freedoms. By situating the research within this theoretical framework, scholars can interrogate the ideological underpinnings of the ban and its implications for democratic governance and human rights. This critical perspective enriches the analysis by contextualizing technological interventions within broader discourses of power, control, and resistance.

Additionally, the research on the influence of the Twitter ban on online businesses in Nigeria can contribute to theoretical debates within the field of technological determinism. Scholars have long debated the extent to which technology determines social outcomes versus the role of social, cultural, and economic factors in shaping technological trajectories. By empirically examining how the Twitter ban intersects with online business performance, researchers can offer insights into the nuanced interplay between technological determinism and contextual factors within specific socio-political contexts. This empirical grounding strengthens the theoretical foundations of technological determinism and enriches scholarly understandings of technology-society relationships.

Furthermore, the research could explore comparative case studies or cross-national analyses to elucidate how similar policy interventions impact online businesses and digital economies in different socio-political contexts. By adopting a comparative perspective, scholars can identify

common patterns, divergent outcomes, and contextual factors that mediate the influence of technological determinism on economic activities. This approach facilitates theoretical generalization and contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics of technological change within a globalized digital landscape⁷⁵.

In conclusion, the research on the influence of the Twitter ban on online business performance in Nigeria between June 2021 and January 2022 offers a rich empirical context for examining the relevance of technological determinism theory. By analyzing the economic, political, and societal implications of the ban within a theoretical framework that emphasizes the deterministic influence of technology on social structures and behaviors, scholars can deepen their understanding of the complex interplay between technology, business, and governance in the digital age.

2.3 Review of Empirical Studies

Numerous studies have emphasized the pivotal role of social media platforms in promoting online businesses. Social media platforms, such as *Twitter*, have facilitated direct communication between businesses and their customers, allowing for enhanced customer engagement and relationship building⁸⁰. Businesses utilizing social media platforms experience higher customer loyalty and increased brand recognition, which can contribute to improved sales and revenue growth⁸¹.

In a qualitative study on “The effect of *Twitter* ban on online businesses in Nigeria” conducted qualitative interviews with 50 online business owners in Nigeria to explore the effects of the Twitter ban on their businesses. The findings revealed a significant decline in customer engagement reduced sales and decreased brand visibility for these businesses⁸².

Also, on Impact of *Twitter* ban on E-commerce in Nigeria, employed a survey design to examine the impact of the *Twitter* ban on e-commerce businesses in Nigeria. The results indicated a substantial decrease in website traffic customer trust and online transactions leading to financial losses for e-commerce businesses⁸³.

Additionally, in the study conducted on social media regulation and online business: The Case of *Twitter* ban in Nigeria” the researchers analyzed the *Twitter* ban's impact on online businesses through a quantitative survey of 300 online business owners. The findings revealed a significant decline in social media-driven sales reduced customer reach and negative brand perceptions⁸⁴.

Another study on “*Twitter* ban and its effect on digital marketing in Nigeria” focused on the effects of the *Twitter* ban on digital marketing activities in Nigeria. Through interviews with 30 digital marketers, the study found that the ban resulted in reduced audience reach limited customer engagement and hindered advertising campaigns⁷⁸.

Furthermore, a study on “The economic impact of *Twitter* ban on startups in Nigeria”, examined the economic impact of the *Twitter* ban on startups in Nigeria. The researchers conducted in-depth interviews with 25 startup owners revealing a decline in investor confidence limited access to market opportunities and hindered growth prospects⁷⁹.

Similarly, another study on “*Twitter* ban and online job opportunities in Nigeria”, explored the impact of the *Twitter* ban on online job opportunities in Nigeria. Through a mixed-method approach including surveys and interviews the study found a decrease in job postings limited freelance opportunities and reduced income sources for online workers⁸⁰.

Another study on effects of the *Twitter* ban on social media influencers in Nigeria. The researchers conducted focus group discussions with 40 influencers revealing a decline in brand collaborations reduced income and increased uncertainty in their profession⁸¹.

Also, another study focused on the political communication aspects of the *Twitter* ban in Nigeria. Through content analysis of political discourse on social media platforms the study highlighted the limited public engagement reduced civic participation and suppressed freedom of expression⁸².

Another study relating to “*Twitter* ban and media freedom in Nigeria” analyzed the implications of the *Twitter* ban on media freedom in Nigeria. Through interviews with journalists and media professionals the research identified restricted access to information reduced news dissemination and limited press freedom as significant consequences of the ban⁸³.

Finally, another study examined the psychological effects of the *Twitter* ban on Nigerian internet users. Through a survey-based approach the study revealed increased social isolation diminished sense of online community and heightened anxiety among internet users in Nigeria⁸⁴.

In conclusion, the empirical studies as discussed provide a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted impact of the *Twitter* ban on various aspects of online businesses and digital interactions in Nigeria. The findings across these studies consistently highlight the detrimental consequences on customer engagement, sales, brand visibility, and overall economic well-being for businesses operating in the online sphere.

The first reviewed study underscores the direct correlation between the *Twitter* ban and the decline in customer engagement, sales, and brand visibility⁸⁵. This aligns with the results from

the study on the effect of *Twitter* ban on e-commerce in Nigeria, published in the International Journal of E-Commerce and Marketing Strategy, which further emphasizes the substantial decrease in website traffic, customer trust, and online transactions for e-commerce businesses.

The impact on social media-driven sales, customer reach, and brand perceptions is corroborated by the study “social media regulation and online business: The Case of *Twitter* ban in Nigeria,” Moreover, the study on the Economic Impact of Twitter Ban on Startups in Nigeria delves into the consequences for startups, revealing a decline in investor confidence, limited access to market opportunities, and hindered growth prospects⁸⁶.

The empirical evidence extends beyond business implications, addressing the effects on employment opportunities, political communication, media freedom, and the psychological well-being of Nigerian internet users. The decline in online job opportunities, limited freelance opportunities, and reduced income sources highlighted in the study on Twitter Ban and Online Job Opportunities in Nigeria raises concerns about the broader societal impact of the ban on livelihoods⁸⁷.

Furthermore, the study on political communication and the *Twitter* ban in Nigeria emphasizes the restrictive impact on public engagement, civic participation, and freedom of expression, revealing the profound political ramifications of the ban. Similarly, the study on Twitter Ban and Media Freedom in Nigeria sheds light on the implications for journalists and media professionals, identifying restricted access to information, reduced news dissemination, and limited press freedom as significant consequences⁸⁸.

Lastly, the study on the psychological effects of *Twitter* ban on Nigerian Internet Users provides insights into the emotional toll the ban has taken on the populace, revealing increased social isolation, a diminished sense of online community, and heightened anxiety among internet users in Nigeria.

In light of these empirical findings, it is evident that the Twitter ban in Nigeria has far-reaching consequences, affecting not only businesses but also the social, political, and psychological fabric of the nation. The holistic consideration of these studies underscores the need for a nuanced and comprehensive approach to address the challenges posed by such regulatory actions, ensuring a balance between regulatory measures and the preservation of a vibrant and inclusive online environment.

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2.4 Conceptual Model

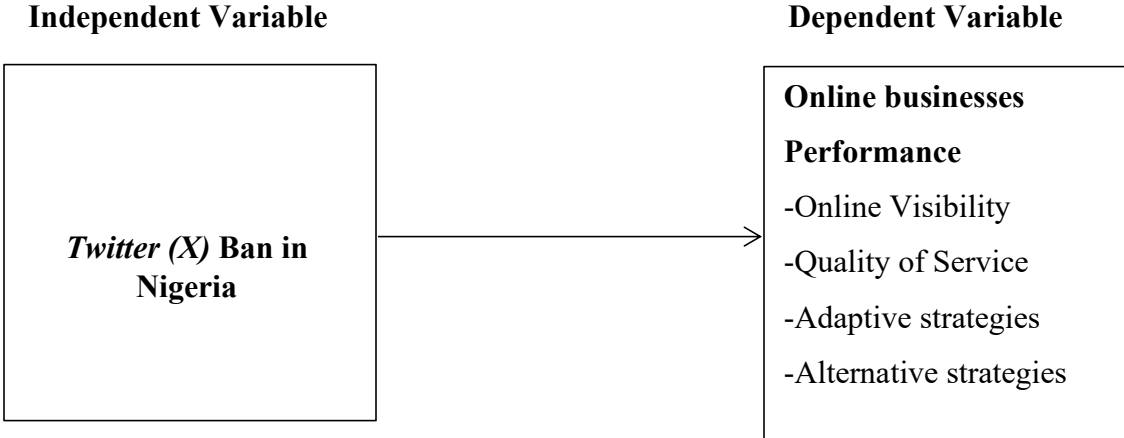


Fig. 2.1 Conceptual Model for the Study

Source; Author's Field Work, 2024

The independent variable in this study is the *Twitter* ban imposed in Nigeria. The *Twitter* ban was implemented by the Nigerian government on the 5th of June, 2021. Initially, the ban involved the complete blocking of access to *Twitter*'s website and mobile app within the country. However, subsequent developments and changes have seen the ban evolve in terms of its enforcement and restrictions⁸⁹. The Nigerian government justified the *Twitter* ban by citing concerns over national security, the spread of fake news, and the need to regulate social media platforms. These reasons highlight the government's intention to address issues related to the dissemination of misleading information and the potential threats to the country's stability. The nature and scope of the *Twitter* ban encompass various measures to restrict access and control the platform's usage. These measures include blocking access to the *Twitter* website and app, implementing technical mechanisms to prevent circumvention of the ban, and imposing penalties on individuals or entities found to violate the ban.

Expected Impact of the Ban on Nigerian Users: The *Twitter* ban is expected to have significant consequences for Nigerian users. First, it poses limitations on freedom of speech and expression, restricting individuals' ability to voice their opinions, engage in political discourse, and participate in online activism. This curtailment of free expression could hinder democratic processes and public dialogue within the country. Furthermore, the ban results in reduced access to information and news for Nigerian users. *Twitter* serves as a prominent platform for news dissemination, and its restriction deprives users of timely and diverse sources of information. This limitation can impede individuals' ability to stay informed, engage in informed discussions, and access a variety of viewpoints.

Changes in communication patterns and social interactions are also anticipated. Nigerian users heavily rely on *Twitter* for communication, networking, and engagement with communities of interest. With the ban in place, users may face challenges in maintaining connections, reaching out to new audiences, and participating in online conversations, thus impacting their social relationships and network dynamics. The ban's implications for online activism and political discourse are noteworthy. *Twitter* has played a crucial role in mobilizing social and political movements in Nigeria, serving as a platform for advocacy, organizing protests, and amplifying marginalized voices. The ban may disrupt these activities and potentially alter the landscape of online activism in the country.

The dependent variable in this study focuses on Nigerian users and their online businesses. Nigerian users represent a diverse population engaging with social media platforms, including *Twitter*. They encompass various demographics, including age, gender, education level, and

geographic location. Nigerian users exhibit distinctive online behaviors, such as content creation, information sharing, networking, and participation in online communities.

Online businesses are of significant importance to the Nigerian economy. They comprise a wide range of enterprises, including e-commerce stores, social media influencers, content creators, and digital marketing agencies. These businesses contribute to revenue generation, employment opportunities, and economic growth within the country.

Nigerian users and their online businesses are closely interconnected. *Twitter* serves as a platform for online businesses to market their products or services, engage with customers, and build brand visibility. The ban's impact on Nigerian users directly affects the operations, visibility, and profitability of online businesses.

The *Twitter* ban has the potential to disrupt the operations of Nigerian online businesses. With reduced customer reach and engagement, businesses may experience a decline in sales, limited exposure to potential customers, and challenges in maintaining customer relationships. Communication with customers may also be disrupted, affecting customer service and support.

However, the interconnection between Nigerian users and their online businesses also presents opportunities for adaptation and alternative strategies. Online businesses may explore other social media platforms or digital marketing channels to mitigate the ban's impact. This adaptation could involve leveraging existing customer networks, utilizing alternative communication channels, or exploring collaborations with other online platforms.

Overall, understanding the interplay between the *Twitter* ban, Nigerian users, and their online businesses will provide insights into the challenges faced by online businesses and the potential

for resilience and adaptation in response to the ban. Also, the study provided a comprehensive overview of the ethical and legal considerations surrounding digital media in the modern era. It covers various aspects, including privacy and data protection, intellectual property rights, online harassment and cyberbullying, freedom of expression, and algorithmic transparency. The discussion on privacy and data protection emphasized the importance of transparency, explicit consent, and adherence to relevant data protection laws. It highlighted the responsibility of online businesses to safeguard user data and respond to data breaches appropriately.

Regarding intellectual property rights, the study emphasized the ethical responsibility of businesses to respect copyright laws, create original content, and properly attribute sources. It also advocates for the implementation of guidelines and procedures to handle copyright infringement claims. The review on online harassment and cyberbullying emphasized the ethical responsibility of online businesses to create a safe and inclusive environment for users. It discussed the importance of clear guidelines, content moderation mechanisms, and collaboration with law enforcement to address such issues effectively.

The discussion on freedom of expression acknowledged the delicate balance between allowing diverse perspectives and combating harmful content. It highlighted the need for clear policies and transparent decision-making processes to maintain fairness and inclusivity. The section on algorithmic transparency addressed the ethical concerns related to algorithmic bias and the need for fairness and user control. It emphasized the importance of algorithmic audits, transparency in decision-making, and user customization options.

2.5 Summary of Gap in Literature Reviewed

The study reviewed relevant and related literature on previous works related to the subject matter of the effects of the *Twitter* ban on online businesses in Nigeria.

The review provided a detailed overview of the concept of social media, covering its definition, key characteristics, examples of popular platforms, and its impact on various aspects of life and business. Also, the inclusion of specific social media platforms (*Facebook, Twitter, Tik Tok, Instagram, LinkedIn, Thread*) added clarity to the text and helps readers relate to the topic. Furthermore, the review provided a thorough explanation of the digital economy and its various components, including online businesses, e-commerce, digital payments, social media platforms, and data-driven decision-making. It also covered the benefits and challenges of the digital economy, such as privacy concerns, the digital divide, workforce skills, ethical considerations, and cyber security risks.

Additionally, the inclusion of the *Twitter* ban in Nigeria as an example highlighted the practical implications of government actions on digital platforms and the digital economy. It illustrated how decisions by governments can disrupt online businesses, limit access to global markets, and raise concerns about freedom of expression and digital rights. The study effectively connected the concepts of the digital economy, social media, and the *Twitter* ban, demonstrating how they are intertwined and influence each other. This connection adds depth to the appraisal, showcasing the real-world impact of government actions on digital platforms and the businesses relying on them.

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Chapter Three

Methodology

This chapter focuses on the methodology that was adopted for this study, which includes; the research design, the population of the study, sampling and sampling technique, research instruments, description of the validity of the research instrument, reliability of the research instrument and the method of data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

Descriptive survey research design was adopted in which quantitative method was employed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. Therefore, these research designs allowed the researcher to collate data from *Twitter* users' comments and assess its effect on online businesses performances in Nigeria between June 2021 and January 2022.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population of this study considered active *Twitter* users who are also online business owners in Nigeria. Between the period of the Ban (June 2021 to January 2022), all *Twitter* users in Nigeria were estimated to be 4.95 million according to *Twitter*'s advertising resources. This estimation include all twitter users in Nigeria, including those involved in non-business usage. Thus, the target population in this study are business owners engaged in online businesses who are mostly operating in small scale with an estimation of five to six thousands.

3.3 Sampling and Sampling Technique

To determine the sample size for the population, Taro Yamane's formula was applied. Since it is impossible to research the total population of 4.95 million people, the Taro Yamane formula was

used to calculate and get a subset the researcher can work on that can be generalized for the population since it is scientifically and methodically determined.

Using Taro Yamane's formula,

$$n = \frac{N}{(1+N[e]^2)}$$

$$\frac{6,000,000}{(1 + 6,000,000[0.05]^2)}$$

$$\frac{6,000,000}{1 + 6,000,000(0.0025)}$$

$$\frac{6,000,000}{1 + 12,375}$$

$$\frac{6,000,000}{12,376}$$

$$n = 399.9$$

The sample size was estimated at 400 when taken to the nearest hundred for easy and precise calculation.

Purposive sampling technique was adopted in the study. This type of sampling technique is usually employed when the researcher seeks to include participants or cases that are most relevant to the research objectives. Therefore, purposive sampling technique was helpful for this research focus because it helps the researcher to select the participants who were directly affected by the *Twitter* ban.

3.4 Description of the Research Instrument

One research instrument was used for data collection which is a self-developed research instrument named Online Businesses *Twitter* Users Questionnaire (OBTUQ).

The questionnaire was used to gather data from active users of *Twitter* who were engaged in online businesses before and during the period of the *Twitter* ban in Nigeria.

The instrument has four sections, namely;

3.4.1 Section A; was used to gather data on the demographic information of online *Twitter* users.

3.4.2 Section B; was used to gather data on online businesses types engaged in by *Twitter* users between June, 2021 and January, 2022.

3.4.3 Section C; was used to gather data on the quality of service provided by *Twitter* users between June, 2021 and January, 2022.

3.4.4 Section D; was used to gather data on the strategies adopted by online business owners to achieve service delivery during the period of *Twitter* ban.

3.4.5 Section E; was used to gather data on the influence of *Twitter* ban on online businesses and quality of service in Nigeria between June, 2021 and January, 2022.

3.5 Validity of the Research Instrument

To validate the research instrument, two steps were taken; firstly, the instrument was submitted to the supervisor for scrutiny, corrections and approval after ensuring that the objectives and research questions have been captured. Secondly, the instrument was corrected based on the supervisor's guidance and was also validated for face and construct validity.

3.6 Reliability of the Research Instrument

The reliability of the instrument named (Online Business *Twitter* Users Questionnaire (OBTUQ)) was determined through the conduct of a pilot study with a small group of participants outside the targeted sample and the feedback was analyzed and necessary adjustment was made to the quality of the questionnaire.

However, Cronbach Alpha results

Table 3.1: Reliability Coefficient

	Metrics and sub variables of the Study	Cronbach's Alpha
Section B	Online Business Engagement on <i>Twitter</i>	.799
Section C	Quality of Service	.788
Section D	Strategies	.793
Section E	<i>Twitter</i> Ban Influence	.801

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 3.3 shows reliability coefficients of the instruments used for data collection. All sections have high reliability, with scores close to or above 0.79: Online Business Engagement (.799), Quality of Service (.788), Strategies for Quality of Service (.793), and Twitter Ban Influence (.801). The overall reliability coefficient is strong at .798, indicating consistent responses across metrics.

3.7 Method of Data Collection

With the use of an Online Survey, the structured questionnaire was administered via *Google* form through the link: <https://forms.gle/dAdoDEothgcH4hqi6>

[The responses was collated online by *Google* form and harvested through the linked email of the researcher.](#)

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

The data collected from the questionnaire was coded, tabulated, and analyzed using IBM SPSS 29. Descriptive statistics, specifically percentages, were used to present the distribution of demographic variables and to address all the research questions.

Chapter Four

Results and Discussion of Findings

This chapter presents the results and discussion of findings which was based on the data collection and analysis with respect to the research questions and hypotheses of the study.

4.1 Demographic Data Analysis

Table 4.1 Demographic Information of Respondents by Gender, Age, Online Involvement, Subscription to Twitter (N = 400)

Metric	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	258	64.5
	Female	142	35.5
Age	16-20	8	2.0
	21-25	121	30.3
	26-30	129	32.3
	31+	142	35.5
Online Involvement	Online Business Owner	288	72.0
	Online Vendor/Others	112	28.0
Occupation	Online Business Owner	288	72.0
	Civil Servant	112	28.0
Years of Twitter Subscription	One	22	5.5
	Two	65	16.3
	Three	115	28.7
	Four	75	18.8
	Five+	123	30.8
Other Social Media Platforms Used	Facebook	176	23.7
	WhatsApp	224	30.1

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

The Table 4.1 above indicates distribution of demographic data. The gender distribution reveals that out of the total respondents, 258 (64.5%) are male, while 142 (35.5%) are female. This indicates a predominance of male participants in the study, suggesting that males may be more involved in online business activities within this sample.

In terms of age distribution, the largest group is between 26-30 years, comprising 129 (32.3%) of respondents, followed closely by those aged 31 and above at 142 (35.5%). The 21-25 age group includes 121 (30.3%) of respondents, while those aged 16-20 represent the smallest group at 8 (2.0%). This indicates that young to middle-aged adults make up the majority of the online business community in the study.

Regarding online involvement, 288 (72.0%) of respondents are classified as online business owners, whereas 112 (28.0%) are online vendors or fall into other categories. This suggests a strong representation of individuals directly involved in managing or owning online businesses.

The occupation data shows a similar pattern to online involvement, with 288 (72.0%) of respondents identifying as online business owners and 112 (28.0%) as civil servants. This emphasizes the high proportion of respondents who rely on online platforms as a primary occupational activity.

The majority of respondents have significant experience using Twitter, with 123 (30.8%) having been subscribed for five or more years, followed by 115 (28.7%) with three years of use. Other groups include those with four years (75, or 18.8%), two years (65, or 16.3%), and one year (22, or 5.5%). This distribution highlights that most respondents are seasoned Twitter users,

indicating a stable user base for business-related activities. Thus, all 400 respondents have been on *Twitter* for at least one year.

The data shows that among the respondents, 176 (23.7%) reported using Facebook, while a larger group of 224 (30.1%) indicated using WhatsApp. These responses are part of a total of 743 entries across all social media platforms listed in the survey, representing 100% of platform usage.

This indicates that WhatsApp is the more popular platform compared to Facebook among the respondents, suggesting its importance as a communication or business tool alongside other platforms.

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4.2 Presentation of Data

Research Question One: What are the Online businesses engaged in by Twitter Users in Nigeria between June 2021 and January 2022?

Table 4.2 Distribution of Online Business based on Types (N = 400)

Types of Online Business	Responses	Percent (%)	Remarks
Affiliate Marketing	21	5.3%	8 th
Freelance Writing	46	11.5%	4 th
Virtual Teaching	14	3.5%	10 th
Virtual Assistance	20	5.0%	9 th
Web Designing	30	7.5%	6 th
Social Media Management	21	5.3%	8 th
Content Creating	37	9.3%	5 th
Nail Fixing	62	15.5%	2 nd
Makeup	52	13.0%	3 rd
Fashion Boutique	68	17.0%	1 st
Real Estate Agency	29	7.3%	7 th

Source: Survey, 2024.

Table 4.2 presents the finding of research question one on online businesses conducted on *Twitter* before and after the ban on Twitter in Nigeria between June 2021 and January 2022. The table illustrates a wide range of online businesses, including social media influencing, affiliate marketing, video editing, freelance writing, online teaching, customer service representation, virtual assistance, web designing, social media management, content creation, nail fixing, makeup, online fashion boutique, personal shopping, data analysis, project management, online tutoring, real estate agency, and online shops for fragrance.

The *table* notes that the total number of responses is 706, indicating the total numbers of selections. However, it's crucial to consider that the percentages add up to 176.5%, indicating that some respondents may have selected multiple types of online businesses, hence the total exceeds 100%.

Interpreting the data, the most prevalent category among the identified types of online businesses is "Online Fashion Boutique," accounting for 73 responses, constituting approximately 10.3% of the total cases. This indicates a significant presence of fashion-related enterprises utilizing Twitter as a platform for their online operations. Following closely behind is the category of "Make-up," with 68 responses, comprising approximately 9.6% of the total cases. This suggests a substantial presence of cosmetics and beauty-related businesses engaging in online commerce via *Twitter*.

Another noteworthy category is "Nail Fixing," with 70 responses, making up around 9.9% of the total cases. This indicates a considerable presence of nail salons or individuals offering nail care services through Twitter. Additionally, other notable categories include "Freelance Writing" (61 responses, 8.6%), "Content Creating" (47 responses, 6.7%), and "Online Shop for Fragrance" (52

responses, 7.4%). These findings suggest a diverse array of online entrepreneurial activities encompassing content creation, freelance services, and niche product sales via Twitter.

However, it's important to acknowledge that certain categories, such as "Data Analysis" and "Project Management," have relatively lower frequencies, each accounting for only 1.7% of the total cases. This indicates a lesser prevalence of these specialized online business domains on Twitter during the specified period.

The data illustrates the varied landscape of online businesses conducted on Twitter in Nigeria and the prevalence of fashion, beauty, freelance services, and niche product sales underscores the diverse entrepreneurial opportunities available on the platform.

The distribution of online businesses among the 400 respondents is as follows: Online Fashion Boutique 68 (17.0%), Nail Fixing 62 (15.5%), Makeup 52 (13.0%), Freelance Writing 46 (11.5%), Content Creating 37 (9.3%), Web Designing 30 (7.5%), Real Estate Agency 29 (7.3%), Virtual Assistance 20 (5.0%), Affiliate Marketing 21 (5.3%), and Social Media Management 21 (5.3%). Online Teaching had the lowest representation with 14 (3.5%).

In summary, finding on research question one revealed prominent online businesses preference for businesses related to fashion boutique, make up, nail fixing and freelance writing, while other sectors, such as online education and virtual assistance, are less represented in this sample.

Research Question Two: What is the Quality of Services provided by *Twitter* Users engaged in Online Businesses to the Customer between June 2021 and January 2022?

Table 4.3 The Quality of Service Provided by *Twitter* Users Engaging in Online Business

Aspect	Very High N (%)	High N (%)	Neutral N (%)	Very Low	Low
Business Transactions	153 (38.3%)	124 (31.0%)	114 (28.5%)	2 (0.5%)	7 (1.8%)
Global Market Contacts	140 (35.0%)	126 (31.5%)	126 (31.5%)	2 (0.5%)	6 (1.5%)
Communication with Business Contacts	140 (35.0%)	126 (31.5%)	125 (31.3%)	3 (0.8%)	6 (1.5%)
Promotion of Products/Services	140 (35.0%)	118 (29.5%)	135 (33.8%)	3 (0.8%)	4 (1.0%)
Online Business Delivery	138 (34.5%)	112 (28.0%)	142 (35.5%)	3 (0.8%)	5 (1.3%)
Online Customer Engagement	140 (35.0%)	117 (29.3%)	136 (34.0%)	1 (0.3%)	6 (1.5%)
Certainty on Business Transactions	140 (35.0%)	127 (31.8%)	129 (32.3%)	1 (0.3%)	3 (0.8%)
Online Business Monitoring	134 (33.5%)	134 (33.5%)	124 (31.0%)	7 (1.8%)	1 (0.3%)
Maintenance of Business Transactions	142 (35.5%)	129 (32.3%)	125 (31.3%)	2 (0.5%)	2 (0.5%)

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Table 4.3 on the Quality of Service Provided by *Twitter* Users Engaging in Online Business" presents the distribution of responses across various aspects of online business activities. The quality of service provided by Twitter users engaging in online business is reflected in various aspects of their business activities. When examining business transactions, the majority of respondents (153, 38.3%) rated the service as Very High, with another 124 (31.0%) considering it High. A smaller portion, 114 (28.5%), gave a Neutral rating, indicating that while most are satisfied with the quality of service, a notable number remain indifferent. A minimal percentage rated it as Very Low (2, 0.5%) and Low (7, 1.8%), signaling that dissatisfaction is quite rare.

In terms of global market contacts, 140 (35.0%) of respondents rated the service as Very High, while 126 (31.5%) rated it as High, reflecting a generally positive perception of the service. However, another 126 (31.5%) were Neutral, suggesting that a large number of users have a mixed or uncertain view. A very small percentage, 2 (0.5%), marked it as Very Low, and 6 (1.5%) rated it as Low, pointing to minimal dissatisfaction with this aspect of service.

Looking at communication with business contacts, the majority once again rated the service positively, with 140 (35.0%) choosing Very High and 126 (31.5%) selecting High. A close number, 125 (31.3%), were Neutral, indicating that some users might not have a strong opinion on this area. Only 3 (0.8%) of respondents rated the service as Very Low, and 6 (1.5%) rated it as Low, reinforcing the idea that most are satisfied with how communication occurs in online business, with only a few expressing dissatisfactions.

For the promotion of products/services, 140 (35.0%) rated the service as Very High, while 118 (29.5%) rated it as High, showcasing that the majority of users find the quality of service in this area to be favorable. However, a large portion, 135 (33.8%), provided a Neutral response, which suggests that while many appreciate the service, there is a sizable group that feels neutral. A small fraction rated it as Very Low (3, 0.8%) or Low (4, 1.0%), pointing to some dissatisfaction with the service's effectiveness in promoting products or services.

Regarding online business delivery, 138 (34.5%) rated it as Very High, and 112 (28.0%) rated it as High, indicating that the majority of respondents are pleased with how online business delivery is managed. However, a significant 142 (35.5%) were Neutral, suggesting that a large group of users is uncertain or has mixed feelings about the service. A very small percentage, 3 (0.8%), rated it as Very Low, and 5 (1.3%) rated it as Low, showing that dissatisfaction is rare but still present.

For online customer engagement, 140 (35.0%) rated it as Very High, and 117 (29.3%) rated it as High, which demonstrates that a large proportion of users perceive customer engagement positively. Another 136 (34.0%) were Neutral, meaning there is some ambivalence or lack of strong opinion about the service in this area. Only 1 (0.3%) rated it as Very Low, and 6 (1.5%) rated it as Low, highlighting that very few users are dissatisfied with online customer engagement.

In terms of certainty about business transactions, 140 (35.0%) rated it as Very High, and 127 (31.8%) rated it as High, which suggests a high degree of confidence among users regarding the reliability of their business transactions. Another 129 (32.3%) were Neutral, and only 1 (0.3%)

rated it as Very Low, while 3 (0.8%) rated it as Low, pointing to the fact that while the service is generally regarded positively, some users may feel uncertain or have no strong opinion.

When considering online business monitoring, 134 (33.5%) rated it as Very High, and the same number (134, 33.5%) rated it as High, indicating that a significant number of users find online business monitoring services effective. A portion, 124 (31.0%), were Neutral, and only 7 (1.8%) rated it as Very Low, with 1 (0.3%) rating it as Low, suggesting that the service is generally viewed favorably but with some users expressing reservations or indifference.

Finally, in terms of maintenance of business transactions, 142 (35.5%) rated the service as Very High, and 129 (32.3%) rated it as High, showing strong satisfaction with the service. Another 125 (31.3%) were Neutral, and only a very small percentage (2, 0.5%) rated it as Very Low or Low, indicating that while the service is largely viewed positively, there is a small group of users who may be indifferent or dissatisfied with the maintenance of their business transactions. Findings from the table 4.3 reflects a generally positive perception of the quality of service across most areas, with many respondents rating aspects like Business Transactions, Global Market Contacts, and Communication with Business Contacts as Very High or High.

In summary, the findings on research question two revealed that quality of service provided by *Twitter* users to the customers during the period of ban in Nigeria is satisfactory with the overall high service quality. However, some aspects, such as Online Business Delivery and Online Customer Engagement, received a higher percentage of Neutral responses, indicating that while service quality is largely seen as positive, there is a segment of users who feel indifferent or uncertain about the effectiveness of these services.

Research Question Three: What are the strategies adopted by Online Business Owners to Achieve Service Delivery to their customers during the period of *Twitter* ban in Nigeria?

Table 4.4 Strategies Adopted by Online Business Owners to Achieve Service Delivery During *Twitter* Ban

Statement/Adoption Measure	Fully Adopted	Partially Adopted	Not Adopted	Remark
Reliance on Virtual Private Networks to bypass the ban (VPN usage)	173 (43.3%)	179 (44.8%)	48 (12.0%)	6 th
Decreased social media usage for businesses	164 (41.0%)	141 (35.3%)	95 (23.8%)	8 th
Utilization of offline channels to stay informed about business opportunities	246 (61.5%)	131 (32.8%)	23 (5.8%)	4 th
Engaged in activism or advocacy to lift the ban	163 (40.8%)	168 (42.0%)	69 (17.3%)	9 th
Strengthened search engine optimization (SEO) efforts for increased website presence	210 (52.5%)	169 (42.3%)	21 (5.3%)	5 th
Increased investment in paid advertising on alternative platforms	267 (66.8%)	122 (30.5%)	11 (2.8%)	3 rd
Created user-generated content on other platforms to maintain community engagement	285 (71.3%)	101 (25.3%)	14 (3.5%)	2 nd
Promoted user-generated content on other platforms to maintain community engagement	293 (73.3%)	97 (24.3%)	10 (2.5%)	1 st
Implemented targeted email marketing campaigns	172 (43.0%)	186 (46.5%)	42 (10.5%)	7 th

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Table 4.4 presents strategies adopted by online business owners to maintain service delivery during the Twitter ban. The table is divided into columns indicating the degree to which each strategy was adopted: fully adopted, partially adopted, and not adopted. For many online business owners, the use of Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) was a crucial strategy to bypass the Twitter ban. A significant portion, 173 (43.3%), fully adopted VPNs to maintain access to the platform, ensuring that their businesses could continue operations despite the restriction. Additionally, 179 (44.8%) partially adopted VPNs, indicating that even more than half of the respondents found VPNs useful, though perhaps not universally or continuously. On the other hand, 48 (12.0%) did not adopt VPN usage at all, possibly due to technical challenges, security concerns, or opting for alternative strategies.

In response to the Twitter ban, 164 (41.0%) of business owners fully decreased their social media usage for business activities, reflecting a conscious effort to scale back or shift their digital marketing strategies. Another 141 (35.3%) partially reduced their social media usage, showing that many business owners adjusted their approach without completely disengaging from the platform. However, 95 (23.8%) did not reduce their social media activity, indicating that some businesses either found it less impactful to scale back or chose to engage on other platforms.

A strong 246 (61.5%) business owners fully adopted offline channels to stay informed about business opportunities, indicating a reliance on traditional communication methods such as word of mouth, networking, and direct contact. Meanwhile, 131 (32.8%) partially used offline channels, showing that many still preferred a combination of online and offline methods to stay updated. Only 23 (5.8%) of the respondents did not adopt this strategy, suggesting that offline channels were a widely accepted alternative during the restriction period.

Engagement in activism or advocacy to lift the ban was another strategy, with 163 (40.8%) fully adopting this approach to influence the policy decision. Additionally, 168 (42.0%) of respondents partially engaged in advocacy efforts, reflecting a significant level of frustration and proactive involvement. However, 69 (17.3%) did not engage in activism, possibly due to doubts about the effectiveness of such efforts or a preference for alternative solutions.

Search engine optimization (SEO) became a key strategy for 210 (52.5%) business owners, who fully strengthened their SEO efforts to maintain visibility and accessibility of their websites. A further 169 (42.3%) partially adopted SEO strategies, indicating its importance but not always fully implemented. Only 21 (5.3%) of respondents did not focus on SEO, possibly due to a lack of resources or expertise.

With the loss of Twitter, a clear shift towards other platforms was observed. 267 (66.8%) business owners fully increased their investment in paid advertising on alternative platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Google Ads. Another 122 (30.5%) partially invested in paid advertising, suggesting that many businesses diversified their marketing budget. Only 11 (2.8%) did not invest in alternative advertising, highlighting the essential role of paid ads in maintaining visibility during the ban.

Creating user-generated content on other platforms to maintain community engagement was fully adopted by 285 (71.3%) of business owners, emphasizing the importance of customer-driven content in maintaining a brand's presence. A smaller 101 (25.3%) partially adopted this strategy, while 14 (3.5%) did not pursue it, suggesting the strategy was widely considered effective but may have faced implementation challenges for some businesses.

Promoting user-generated content on other platforms to sustain engagement was also a widely adopted strategy, with 293 (73.3%) fully embracing it. This highlights its crucial role in maintaining visibility and interaction with customers. 97 (24.3%) partially promoted user-generated content, while only 10 (2.5%) did not pursue this method, suggesting that promoting user content was both popular and effective in maintaining community engagement.

Finally, 172 (43.0%) of business owners fully implemented targeted email marketing campaigns, providing a reliable way to maintain communication with customers during the Twitter ban. 186 (46.5%) partially adopted email campaigns, reflecting that email marketing was a significant tool for staying in touch. However, 42 (10.5%) did not utilize email marketing, possibly due to lack of resources or a preference for other methods.

In summary, the findings on research question three revealed that the strategies implemented by online business owners during the Twitter ban show a wide range of approaches to maintain operations. The most widely adopted methods involved leveraging alternative platforms, creating or promoting user-generated content, and utilizing VPNs, offline channels, SEO, and paid advertising to keep businesses visible and engaged with their audience.

Research Question Four: What is the effect of *Twitter* ban in Nigeria on service delivery among online business owners between June, 2021 and January, 2022?

Table 4.5 Effect of Twitter Ban in Nigeria on Service Delivery among Online Business Owners

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
My online business experienced decline in website traffic	8 (2.0%)	64 (16.0%)	132 (33.0%)	51 (12.8%)	145 (36.3%)
My online business experienced a decline in app traffic	5 (1.3%)	58 (14.5%)	126 (31.5%)	71 (17.8%)	140 (35.0%)
There was a decline in my online sales	8 (2.0%)	68 (17.0%)	121 (30.3%)	64 (16.0%)	139 (34.8%)
Customer engagement interactions	6 (1.5%)	62 (15.5%)	126 (31.5%)	55 (13.8%)	151 (37.8%)
Challenges in brand marketing promotion	9 (2.3%)	57 (14.2%)	132 (33.0%)	60 (15.0%)	142 (35.5%)
My online business explored other marketing channels	6 (1.5%)	65 (16.3%)	116 (29.0%)	64 (16.0%)	149 (37.3%)
My online business was suspended temporarily	82 (20.5%)	70 (17.5%)	140 (35.0%)	52 (13.0%)	56 (14.0%)
My online business encountered difficulty in reaching target audience	4 (1.0%)	54 (13.5%)	124 (31.0%)	64 (16.0%)	154 (38.5%)
Customer enquiries and support services declined due to the ban	3 (0.8%)	62 (15.5%)	120 (30.0%)	68 (17.0%)	147 (36.8%)
Decline in online visibility and brand recognition	8 (2.0%)	77 (19.3%)	117 (29.3%)	57 (14.2%)	141 (35.3%)

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

The responses in Table 4.5 provide a comprehensive insight into how the Twitter ban impacted online businesses and service delivery in Nigeria. A substantial number of respondents, 145 (36.3%), strongly agreed that their online business experienced a decline in website traffic. Additionally, 132 (33.0%) were neutral, while 64 (16.0%) disagreed. This shows that a significant portion of businesses saw reduced visibility and engagement due to the Twitter ban, which had a direct impact on their online presence.

Similarly, the decline in app traffic mirrored the trend seen with website traffic. A notable 140 (35.0%) businesses strongly agreed that app traffic had decreased, while 126 (31.5%) remained neutral, and 58 (14.5%) disagreed. The results indicate that the ban negatively affected not just website traffic, but also app usage, compounding the challenges faced by businesses reliant on digital platforms for customer engagement.

The impact on online sales was also evident, as 139 (34.8%) respondents strongly agreed that there was a decline in their sales. An additional 121 (30.3%) were neutral, while 68 (17.0%) disagreed. This suggests that the decline in traffic and engagement translated into reduced sales for many businesses, highlighting the financial strain caused by the restrictions on social media platforms like Twitter.

When it comes to customer engagement, 151 (37.8%) respondents strongly agreed that their interactions with customers had declined, with 126 (31.5%) remaining neutral and only 62 (15.5%) disagreeing. This emphasizes that the Twitter ban severely hampered businesses' ability to maintain strong customer relations, making it harder to sustain communication with their audience.

Marketing efforts were also significantly affected, with 142 (35.5%) respondents strongly agreeing that brand marketing promotion had become more difficult due to the ban. An additional 132 (33.0%) were neutral, while 57 (14.2%) disagreed. This highlights the challenges businesses faced in promoting their brands on a major social media platform like Twitter, which many had relied on for advertising and outreach.

In response to these challenges, 149 (37.3%) respondents strongly agreed that they explored other marketing channels, with 116 (29.0%) being neutral. This suggests that while the Twitter ban disrupted their marketing strategies, many businesses sought alternative platforms or methods to continue their promotional efforts.

Interestingly, while 82 (20.5%) businesses strongly disagreed that their operations were suspended, 140 (35.0%) were neutral on this issue, indicating that suspension was not a widespread challenge for all businesses. The variation in responses suggests that while some businesses were forced to pause operations, others were able to continue despite the restrictions.

The difficulty in reaching their target audience was another significant issue for many businesses, with 154 (38.5%) respondents strongly agreeing that they encountered this challenge, while 124 (31.0%) remained neutral. This points to the broader impact of the Twitter ban on businesses' ability to connect with their intended customers, further compounding the difficulties faced by online businesses in the country.

Lastly, the decline in customer inquiries and support services was another major consequence, with 147 (36.8%) businesses strongly agreeing that this aspect of their operations suffered due to the ban. An additional 120 (30.0%) were neutral on the matter. The ban evidently affected

businesses' ability to respond to customer needs and provide timely support, which could have long-lasting effects on customer satisfaction and loyalty.

In summary, findings on research question four revealed the influence of *Twitter* ban had on online businesses in Nigeria. From declines in website and app traffic to challenges in sales, marketing, and customer engagement, businesses faced significant disruptions. While some adapted by exploring alternative marketing channels, the overall impact of the ban was a significant hindrance to their operations and service delivery.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

In summary, The findings on research question one regarding the online businesses engagement by *Twitter* Users in Nigeria between June 2021 and January 2022 highlight a predominant preference for business sectors such as fashion, beauty, and freelance writing, with comparatively lower representation in areas like online education and virtual assistance.

The findings also revealed that quality of service provided by *Twitter* users to the customers during the period of ban in Nigeria is satisfied with the overall service quality. However, some aspects, such as Online Business Delivery and Online Customer Engagement, received a higher percentage of Neutral responses, indicating that while service quality is largely seen as positive, there is a segment of users who feel indifferent or uncertain about the effectiveness of these services. Furthermore, the findings showed that the strategies implemented by online business owners during the *Twitter* ban show a wide range of approaches to maintain operations. The most widely adopted methods involved leveraging alternative platforms, creating or promoting user-generated content, and utilizing VPNs, offline channels, SEO, and paid advertising to keep businesses visible and engaged with their audience. In summary, findings on research question

four reveals the influence of *Twitter* ban had on online businesses in Nigeria. From declines in website and app traffic to challenges in sales, marketing, and customer engagement, businesses faced significant disruptions. While some adapted by exploring alternative marketing channels, the overall impact of the ban was a significant hindrance to their operations and service delivery. Finding on research question one regarding the online businesses engagement by *Twitter* Users in Nigeria between June 2021 and January 2022?

The findings on research question one regarding the online businesses engagement by *Twitter* Users in Nigeria between June 2021 and January 2022 highlight a predominant preference for business sectors such as fashion, beauty, and freelance writing, with comparatively lower representation in areas like online education and virtual assistance. This trend aligns with the observations in of a study, which suggests that customer engagement through social media is highly dynamic and sector-specific¹. Industries like fashion and beauty tend to leverage visual and interactive content on platforms like *Twitter*, which enhances consumer engagement and drives higher interest compared to sectors that are less visually focused, such as online education. Marc and Rasul note that sectors emphasizing immediate visual appeal and personal interaction often experience more success on social media due to their ability to attract and retain customer interest in real-time digital spaces.

Summarily, the findings of online business classifications on *Twitter* between June 2021 and January 2022 reveals a diverse landscape encompassing fashion, beauty, freelance services, content creation, and niche product sales. These findings underscore the varied entrepreneurial opportunities available on the platform, catering to a wide range of consumer interests and market demands. This corroborates the study that indicated that, with low entry barriers and the

ability to reach a global audience, digital platforms have empowered individuals and small businesses to create and market their products and services on a scale previously unimaginable².

Further supporting this, the role of social media in enabling businesses to develop a digital presence that resonates with their target audiences. Their findings emphasize how industries that can visually showcase products or services (e.g., fashion) benefit significantly from social media's reach and interactivity, allowing these sectors to flourish online. The limited representation of virtual assistance and online education could be attributed to the comparatively low visual appeal and immediate engagement these sectors typically present on platforms like Twitter, making them less suited to the interactive, visual content that drives consumer interest on social media³.

The success of social media marketing is largely dependent on industry type, with sectors that can provide visually engaging content generally performing better in terms of audience reach and customer engagement⁴. Their study found that industries offering relatable, visually stimulating content on social platforms often attract a larger following, suggesting why fashion, beauty, and freelance work thrive in social media environments. Conversely, sectors with content less suited to the medium, such as virtual assistance, may find it challenging to capture attention, leading to lower representation and engagement in these spaces.

Finally, digital content marketing's effectiveness in fostering consumer engagement is tightly linked to trust, perceived value, and the alignment of content with consumer expectations. Fashion and beauty sectors naturally align with these expectations, delivering content that is visually appealing and easily relatable. This alignment fosters stronger engagement and loyalty

among consumers, which could explain why these industries have a more prominent presence in the current sample compared to other sectors⁵.

Finding on research question two regarding quality of services provided by *Twitter* Users engaged in Online Businesses to the Customer between June 2021 and January 2022?

The findings on research question two which measured the quality of service provided by *Twitter* users to the customers during the period of ban in Nigeria is satisfied with the overall service quality. However, some aspects, such as Online Business Delivery and Online Customer Engagement, received a higher percentage of Neutral responses, indicating that while service quality is largely seen as positive, there is a segment of users who feel indifferent or uncertain about the effectiveness of these services.

The findings generated from the study reveals a picture of robust and active online business performance during the specified period. The majority of respondents across different dimensions reported either high or very high levels of engagement, indicating a thriving business environment. Regarding transaction levels during the specified period, findings revealed that a significant proportion of respondents reported very high or high levels of business transactions, suggesting a substantial volume of commercial activities. This underscores the strong will of the business owners to keep thriving during the period of the ban on *Twitter*. Also, in terms of global market engagement, a considerable portion of respondents reported actively making contacts with the global market, reflecting a proactive approach towards international networking and outreach⁶.

Furthermore, communication with business contacts was characterized by frequent and regular interaction, indicating a strong dedication to maintaining professional relationships and networking during the period of the ban on *Twitter*. Additionally, the performances of the

businesses in the promotion of products and services was marked by an active and intensive promotional strategy, with a significant portion of respondents demonstrating a proactive approach towards leveraging other platforms for promotional activities.

Moreover, the performances of the businesses in the category of online business delivery and customer engagement were perceived positively by the majority of respondents, indicating efficient delivery performance and meaningful interactions with customers during the period of the ban. Furthermore, there was a notable level of certainty in business transactions, with a significant proportion of respondents expressing confidence and assurance in the reliability of their business dealings on other platforms during the period of the ban.

Additionally, online business monitoring and maintenance of business transactions were approached diligently by a considerable portion of respondents, demonstrating a proactive stance towards managing and overseeing business operations in their businesses during the period of the ban. Moreover, provision of business innovations and creation of business content were emphasized by a majority of respondents, indicating a strong commitment to introducing novel ideas and generating valuable content to support business objectives during the period of *Twitter* ban. Furthermore, bookings for goods and services and tracking of deliveries were facilitated actively by a significant portion of respondents, highlighting a focus on streamlining business processes and ensuring efficient service delivery on the platform.

Overall, the findings suggest that online businesses on *Twitter* exhibited high levels of performance and activity between June 2021 and January 2022, encompassing various aspects of business operations and indicating a dynamic and thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem during the period of the ban. The findings of this study corroborates the study that highlighted that the *Twitter* ban in Nigeria had a significant impact on online businesses that relied on the platform as

a crucial channel for marketing and customer engagement⁶. However, the findings rejects the assertion that the ban disrupted the operations of online businesses and limits their ability to reach their target audience, engage with customers, and promote their products and services⁷. This implies that regardless of the constraints on businesses caused by the ban on Twitter, the study suggests that some businesses might have found alternative strategies or platforms to mitigate the impact of the ban.

The importance of consumer trust and perceived value in digital content marketing, emphasizing that in periods of limited access to platforms like Twitter, businesses must work harder to maintain these elements⁸. The neutral responses in areas such as Online Business Delivery and Customer Engagement may indicate a gap in maintaining consistent engagement and satisfaction when traditional channels are disrupted. A study suggested that the interruption of familiar social media channels can affect customer perception and, by extension, the trust they place in a business's service reliability⁹.

Additional insight, noting that during disruptive events (such as the COVID-19 pandemic), the use of social media and online communication plays a crucial role in keeping businesses connected with their customers¹⁰. Although the Twitter ban was a different type of disruption, it similarly forced businesses and consumers to adapt. The relatively positive overall satisfaction with service quality could stem from these adaptive measures, though the neutral responses indicate that the substitute methods might not have fully met customers' expectations for seamless engagement.

Finding on research question three regarding strategies adopted by Online Business Owners to achieve Service Delivery to their customers during the period of *Twitter* ban in Nigeria?

The findings on research question regarding strategies adopted by Online Business Owners to achieve Service Delivery to their customers during the period of *Twitter* ban in Nigeria, implemented a range of strategies to maintain operations during the *Twitter* ban. The most commonly adopted methods included leveraging alternative platforms, creating or promoting user-generated content, and utilizing tools like VPNs, offline channels, SEO, and paid advertising. These strategies reflect the adaptability and resilience of businesses in response to the ban and align with previous research on digital marketing and consumer engagement.

In line with this study findings a study on social media marketing elements significantly influence consumer-brand engagement and brand knowledge¹¹. In the context of the *Twitter* ban, businesses had to find new ways to maintain this engagement. Alternative platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, were leveraged to engage with customers and continue brand-building activities. The promotion of user-generated content allowed businesses to tap into their audiences' creativity, enhancing customer engagement even without *Twitter's* immediacy.

The role of *Twitter* in business communication, highlighting its utility for real-time interaction and customer relationship management¹². The *Twitter* ban disrupted these functions, forcing businesses to find alternative ways to maintain visibility and engagement. While businesses turned to alternative platforms, the challenge of replicating *Twitter's* engagement potential was significant. Using VPNs to access *Twitter* or to maintain access to other digital tools demonstrates the lengths businesses were willing to go to stay connected with their audiences. However, this also points to the limitations of relying on alternative strategies, especially when the core platform is deeply integrated into a business's operational model.

The psychological effects of the *Twitter* ban on Nigerian internet users, noting that the ban not only disrupted businesses but also affected user behavior and sentiment¹³. The response of

business owners to the ban, including the use of VPNs and offline channels, suggests an understanding of the broader emotional and behavioral shifts in the consumer base. While VPNs and SEO strategies helped businesses maintain their online presence, the psychological impact of the ban on users could have influenced how they interacted with brands and the types of content they engaged with. The adaptation strategies adopted by businesses, therefore, were not solely focused on maintaining visibility but also on managing customer sentiment and ensuring that their brand remained relevant in a rapidly shifting digital landscape.

The findings generated by the study revealed that various coping mechanisms were adopted by businesses in response to the ban, encompassing both digital and offline strategies. These strategies can be categorized into alternative social media platform adoption, VPN usage, decreased social media usage for businesses, offline channels utilization, engagement in activism or advocacy, strengthened SEO efforts, increased investment in paid advertising on alternative platforms, creation and promotion of user-generated content, and targeted email marketing campaigns.

Firstly, the data revealed a notable shift towards the adoption of alternative social media platforms as a primary coping mechanism among surveyed respondents.

In terms of digital strategies, businesses demonstrated a strong commitment to enhancing their online presence through strengthened SEO efforts, increased investment in paid advertising on alternative platforms, and the creation and promotion of user-generated content. These strategies reflect a multi-faceted approach to maintaining visibility and community engagement in the absence of Twitter.

The findings elucidate a diverse array of strategies employed by online businesses in Nigeria to sustain performance during the period of the *Twitter* ban. From embracing alternative platforms

and VPN usage to leveraging offline channels and engaging in advocacy efforts, businesses showcased resilience and adaptability in navigating regulatory challenges and maintaining their online presence. These findings offer valuable insights for businesses and policymakers alike in understanding the dynamics of digital resilience and regulatory compliance in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

Findings on research question four regarding the influence of *Twitter* ban in Nigeria on Online Businesses and Quality of Service Delivery to Customers between June 2021 and January 2022?

The findings on research question four reveal that the *Twitter* ban in Nigeria had a significant impact on online businesses, leading to declines in website and app traffic, as well as disruptions in sales, marketing, and customer engagement. Despite efforts to explore alternative marketing channels, the overall influence of the ban was detrimental to many businesses, hindering both operations and service delivery.

The economic impact of the *Twitter* ban on startups in Nigeria, noting that the suspension of *Twitter* exacerbated the challenges faced by small businesses, particularly those relying on the platform for customer engagement and marketing¹⁴. *Twitter*'s role as a key communication tool for businesses to interact with their audience and promote products or services meant that the ban disrupted their core operations. For many startups, *Twitter* was an affordable and accessible way to market and communicate, and the ban forced them to seek alternative, often more expensive and less effective, channels. This decline in engagement and visibility reflects the findings from Adebayo and Adekoya, who argue that such regulatory actions disproportionately affect smaller businesses that have fewer resources to pivot to other platforms.

For businesses, the loss of direct engagement with their customers on *Twitter* resulted in frustration, as they were unable to maintain the same level of personalized interactions.

Consumers, on the other hand, experienced a sense of disconnection from the brands they followed, which could have led to reduced brand loyalty and trust¹⁵. These psychological effects underscore the importance of maintaining consistent communication with customers, especially in times of disruption, and how a loss of that communication can negatively affect both business operations and customer perception.

The impact of the Twitter suspension on social media influencers in Nigeria, who are key partners for many online businesses in their marketing strategies¹⁶. The suspension of Twitter not only affected businesses' ability to advertise but also disrupted the influencer marketing ecosystem. With Twitter being a primary platform for influencer collaborations, businesses that relied on influencer-driven promotions saw a significant drop in the effectiveness of their marketing campaigns. This disruption highlighted the vulnerabilities of online businesses that depend heavily on social media influencers and emphasized the need for diversifying marketing strategies across multiple platforms to mitigate risks associated with such platform-specific disruptions.

The impact of the Twitter ban on e-commerce in Nigeria¹⁷. They argue that the ban created a barrier to reaching potential customers, particularly for e-commerce businesses that rely on social media platforms for advertising and driving traffic to their websites. As these businesses experienced a drop in website traffic and a reduction in sales, they were forced to invest more in paid advertising on alternative platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram, to compensate for the loss of Twitter's user base. However, the effectiveness of these alternative channels was often less immediate, leading to slower business growth and higher marketing costs.

Lastly, a study analyze the broader implications of social media regulation on online businesses, emphasizing that the suspension of platforms like Twitter has far-reaching consequences for

digital entrepreneurship¹⁸. Their study suggests that social media regulation should consider the economic impact on businesses, as arbitrary bans can cause long-term damage to industries reliant on digital marketing and communication. The findings highlight the need for more stable and predictable policies to ensure that online businesses can plan and execute their strategies without the fear of sudden disruptions.

These findings shed light on various aspects such as website traffic, app usage, online sales, customer engagement interactions, brand marketing promotion challenges, exploration of alternative marketing channels, temporary suspension of online businesses, difficulty in reaching target audiences, decline in customer enquiries and support services, online visibility and brand recognition, adaptation of content strategy, decline in online patronages, and decline in brand recognition.

The findings suggest that the Twitter ban had a multifaceted impact on online business performance in Nigeria, including decreased website and app traffic, challenges in sales and customer engagement, marketing promotion difficulties, exploration of alternative channels, temporary disruptions, audience outreach challenges, decline in customer support and brand recognition, the need for content strategy adaptation, and reduced online patronages and brand visibility¹⁹. These findings corroborate with the assertion that the ban hindered growth opportunities, as businesses were unable to capitalize on the extensive reach and engagement potential that *Twitter* offered. This not only impacted the immediate profitability of online businesses but also hindered their long-term prospects for expansion and market penetration.

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Chapter Five

Conclusion

The study focuses on the influence of the *twitter* ban on online business performance in Nigeria between June 2021 and January 2022. A survey method was used and questionnaires were distributed among online business owners in Nigeria and data was gathered from 400 respondents.

5.1 Summary of the Findings

The following were the findings from the study:

The finding on research question one reveals that a significant higher preference for businesses related to fashion, beauty, and freelance work, while other sectors, such as online education and virtual assistance, are less represented in this sample.

The findings on research question two revealed that quality of service provided by *Twitter* users to the customers during the period of ban in Nigeria is satisfied with the overall service quality. However, some aspects, such as Online Business Delivery and Online Customer Engagement, received a higher percentage of Neutral responses, indicating that while service quality is largely seen as positive, there is a segment of users who feel indifferent or uncertain about the effectiveness of these services.

The findings on research question three reveals that the strategies implemented by online business owners during the Twitter ban show a wide range of approaches to maintain operations. The most widely adopted methods involved leveraging alternative platforms, creating or promoting user-generated content, and utilizing VPNs, offline channels, SEO, and paid advertising to keep businesses visible and engaged with their audience.

The findings on research question four reveals the influence of Twitter ban had on online businesses in Nigeria. From declines in website and app traffic to challenges in sales, marketing, and customer engagement, businesses faced significant disruptions. While some adapted by exploring alternative marketing channels, the overall impact of the ban was a significant hindrance to their operations and service delivery.

5.2 Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the *Twitter* ban had a profound impact on online business performances in Nigeria between June 2021 and January 2022. This study reveals the profound reliance of Nigeria's online business sector on social media platforms like *Twitter* for operations, marketing, and customer engagement. The *Twitter* ban imposed significant challenges, disrupting traffic, sales, and service delivery across various industries. While some businesses adapted by exploring alternative channels, the ban underscored both the digital vulnerability and resilience of online enterprises in Nigeria. These findings highlight the essential role of unrestricted social media access for sustaining business visibility and customer interactions, prompting businesses to adopt innovative strategies and resilience measures to navigate the challenges posed by the ban. This emphasizes the need for adaptive strategies and policies that support the digital economy's growth and stability in the face of potential platform restrictions.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. To reduce reliance on fashion, beauty, and freelance work, support growth in underrepresented sectors like online education through targeted incentives and training.

2. Enhance customer engagement and delivery by adopting diverse communication channels and training to maintain satisfaction, even when main platforms are restricted.
3. Provide training in alternative digital strategies like SEO and multi-platform content to help businesses maintain visibility and resilience during platform disruptions.
4. Engage policymakers to ensure stable access to essential social platforms, highlighting the economic risks posed by future restrictions.

5.4 Contribution to Knowledge

The study makes significant contributions to the field by offering empirical insights, a validated measurement instrument, and theoretical advancements in understanding the impact of social media restrictions on online business operations.

First, the unique dataset gathered in this study provides an empirical basis for examining the effects of social media bans on Nigerian online businesses across various sectors. Highlighting specific disruptions in areas such as website and app traffic, customer engagement, and sales, this data gives a detailed view of the challenges faced by digital-dependent enterprises in an emerging economy. This dataset not only enriches the current understanding of platform dependency but also sets a foundation for future research on digital business resilience under restrictive policies.

Additionally, the study contributes a self-designed and rigorously validated instrument specifically tailored to assess the influence of social media restrictions on business operations. This tool's reliability and adaptability make it valuable for similar research in other regions experiencing similar regulatory pressures. The instrument provides a standardized way to measure and analyze social media impact, offering a practical addition to the methodological resources available in the field.

Lastly, the conceptual model designed for the study is another contribution to knowledge as it can be adopted for further research.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

The study suggests as follows:

- i. Conducting further study on the long-term effects of social media bans in relation to the sustainability, growth, and resilience of online businesses in Nigeria.
- ii. Examining trends over an extended period of the ban that can help researchers provide deeper insights into how businesses evolve, innovate, and adapt to regulatory challenges.
- iii. Informing policymakers and stakeholders about effective strategies to support a thriving digital economy amidst regulatory uncertainties.

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Appendix I

**Department of Mass Communication and Media Technology,
Faculty of Communication and Information Science
Lead City University, Ibadan.**

Dear Respondent,

I am an M.Sc. student in the Department of Mass Communication and Media Technology, Lead City University, Ibadan. I am carrying out a study which aims at fulfilling my M.Sc. requirements. You have met certain selection criteria to participate in this study. Your cooperation in completing this questionnaire is central to the success of this research work. The questionnaire has been designed for data collection on Influence of *Twitter* Ban on Online Businesses Performance in Nigeria between June, 2021 and January, 2022. This should enable you to complete it in the shortest possible time. Every information you provide will be treated with confidentiality. I would appreciate it if you returned this questionnaire fully complete.

Thank you for your cooperation and anticipated quick response.

Section A: Demographic Information

Please read the questions carefully, and indicate your choice by ticking (✓)

1. Gender a) Male () b) Female ()
2. Age range (a) 16 - 20 () (b) 21 - 25 () (c) 26 - 30 () (d) 31 and above ()
3. Online Involvement a) Online Business Owner () b) Online Vendor () c) Others (specify) _____
4. Occupation (a) Online Business Owner () (b) Civil Servant () (c) Unemployed ()
5. Do you have an active account on *Twitter* before the Nigerian Government ban? (a) Yes () (b) No ()
6. Length of years of subscription on *Twitter* (X) before the ban (a) 1 year () (b) 2 years () (c) 3 years () (d) 4 years () (e) 5 years and above ()
7. Other active social media platforms used for online business (a) Facebook () (b) Instagram () (c) WhatsApp () (d) Telegram () (e) others ()

Section B: Types of Online Business Engagement on Twitter

Instruction: Please tick (✓) the type of online business you are engaged in on Twitter before the ban by the Nigerian Government. Fully Engaged (FE); Partially Engaged (PE)

	Type of Online Business	Fully Engaged	Partially Engaged
1.	Social media influencing		
2.	Affiliate marketing		
3.	Video Editing		
4.	Freelance writing / Content writing		
5.	Online teaching/Tutorial training		
6.	Customer service representation		
7.	Virtual Assistance		
8.	Web designing		
9.	Social media management		
10.	Content writing		
11.	Nail fixing / technique		
12.	Make up		
13.	Online fashion boutique / Design (dress, shoes, accessories)		
14.	Personal shopping		
15.	Data analysis		
16.	Project management		
17.	Online tutoring		
18.	Real estate agency		
19.	Online shop for sale of fragrance		

Others please state

Section C: Quality of services provided by *Twitter* users between June, 2021 and January 2022.

Instruction: Please tick (√) the extent of provision of quality service via Twitter during the period of the ban. Very High (VH): High (H); Low (L)

	Quality of Services Provided	Very High	High	Low
1.	Making business transaction			
2.	Making contact with global markets			
3.	Communication with business contacts			
4.	Promotion of products and services			
5.	Online business behaviour			
6.	Online customers engagements			
7.	Certainty on business transaction			
8.	Online business monitoring			
9.	Maintenance of business transactions			
10.	Provision of business innovation			
11.	Making bookings for goods and services			
12.	More business creativity			
13.	Creation of business contents			
14.	Tracking deliveries			

Section D: Strategies adopted by Online Business Owners to achieve service delivery during the period of *Twitter* ban

Instruction: Please tick (√) the strategies adopted to achieve service delivery during the period of Twitter ban. Highly Adopted (HA): Partially Adopted (PA); Not Adopted at all (NA)

	Strategies Adopted	Highly Adopted	Partially Adopted	Not Adopted at all
1.	Increased Usage of alternative social media platforms			
2.	Reliance on virtual private networks (VPNs) to bypass the ban.			
3.	Decreased social media usage for businesses			
4.	Utilization of offline channels to stay informed on business opportunities			
5.	Engaged in activism or advocacy to lift the ban			
6.	Strengthened search engine optimization (SEO) efforts for increased website visibilities			
7.	Increased investment in paid advertising on alternative platforms			
8.	Creation of user-generated contents on other platforms to maintain community engagement			
9.	Promotion of user-generated content to maintain community engagement			
10.	Implemented targeted email marketing campaigns			

Section E: Influence of *Twitter* ban on Online Businesses and Quality of Service Delivery to Customers between June 2021 and January 2022

Instruction: Please tick (√) how the Twitter ban influenced your online business and quality of services. Strongly Agree (SA): Agree (A); Neutral (N); Strongly Disagree (SD); Disagree (D)

	Strategies Adopted	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
1.	My online business experienced a decline in website traffic					
2.	My online business experienced a decline in app traffic					
3.	There was a decline in my online sales					
4.	It affected my customers engagement and interactions					
5.	My online businesses faced challenges in brand marketing promotion					
6.	The <i>Twitter</i> ban prompted my online business to explore other marketing channels					
7.	My online business was suspended temporarily					
8.	My online business encountered difficulty in reaching the target audience					
9.	My customer inquiries and support services declined due to the <i>Twitter</i> ban					
10.	The <i>Twitter</i> ban led to decline on my online visibility and brand recognition					
11.	My online business had to adapt my content strategy to fit other platforms					
12.	There was a decline in my online patronages					

13.	<i>Twitter</i> ban led to brand recognition decline					
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Bio-data

A. Personal Data

Name: Tolulope Mariam OMOTOSHO

Address: No 11, Olulonge street, Salami Estate, Bodija, Ibadan.

E-mail Address: tolulopemariamtosho6@gmail.com

Phone No: 07065267526

Date and Place of Birth: 20-01-1997. Osogbo Osun State

Nationality: Nigerian

Name and Address of Next of Kin: Mrs B.A Omotoso. No 1, off Abimbola street, Otaefun, Osogbo. Osun State.

B. Educational Background

Educational Institutions Attended with Dates and Qualifications:

2020: Bachelor of Arts (B.A) in English and International Studies
Osun State University , Osogbo, Osun State.

2014: West African Examination Council
Federal Government Girls College, Ipetumodu, Osun State.

2008: First School Leaving Certificate
Opeyemi Nursery and Primary School, Osogbo, Osun State.

C. Work Experience with Dates

2021: Nigeria Immigration Service, Ibadan, Oyo State Command,
Comptroller's Office

2022: Front Desk Officer, Total Healthcare Laboratory, Ibadan, Oyo State.

D. Awards and Fellowship (if any)

E. Publications: Nil

F. Major Conferences/ Workshops Attended with Dates

2022: Hybrid H•S•E Award in Health and Safety in Work place.

G. References

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The University Compliance Certification

This is to certify that this thesis by **Mariam Tolulope OMOTOSHO** with Matriculation No: **LCU/PG/002945** in the Department of Mass Communication & Media Technology, Faculty of Communication & Information Science, Lead City University, Ibadan is in full compliance with the approved University format and style.

Signature

Date

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