

## Innovative Social Media Marketing Elements and Consumer Cooperative Member Engagement in Enugu State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

Social media's introduction has revolutionized marketing strategies around the world by giving organizations as well as cooperatives new ways of communicating with customers- user. In Enugu State, Nigeria, this study examines how consumer cooperative member engagement (CCME) is impacted by innovative social media marketing elements (ISMME), particularly content quality, exposure frequency, and platform usage. The study employed quantitative method, using survey design, using 392 as sample size which was determined using Yamene formula. A conceptual framework for the research was drawn. Findings of this research showed that the regression analysis revealed that these three factors, content quality, exposure frequency, and platform usage, all together accounted for more than half of the variation in engagement levels and significantly predict member engagement (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.551$ ,  $F = 157.698$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Content quality and the best posting schedules were observed to be crucial for maintaining visibility and trust. Content quality had the biggest impact, followed by exposure frequency and platform usage. The findings show that using digital platforms strategically and according to member preferences increases participation both online and offline. The study concludes that deliberate investment in the creation of high-quality content, the frequency of posts, and the choice of platforms can strengthen collaborative communication, increase member engagement, and promote long-term sustainability.

**Keywords:** Consumer Cooperatives, Engagements, Innovation, Marketing Elements, Social Media.

### Introduction

Social media's introduction has revolutionized marketing strategies around the world by giving companies new ways to communicate with customers, affect their purchasing decisions, and foster brand loyalty. The ability of social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly known as Twitter) to enable direct customer communication, personalize marketing campaigns, and effectively reach a large audience has made them essential components of marketing strategies (1).

Social media's explosive growth in Africa offers both opportunities and difficulties for connecting with the continent's connected and tech-savvy populace. Increases in internet penetration and mobile technology use, particularly among young people, have made Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp effective tools for influencing consumer behavior across industries (2). Previously unattainable through conventional media like

flyers and direct mail, these platforms give businesses a direct and customized communication channel (3). Mobile and social technologies have become crucial tools in economies like Nigeria, where traditional marketing is hindered by infrastructural barriers (2). Nowadays, social media can reach far-flung places, enabling real-time customer engagement and market growth. This digital revolution necessitates timely, personalized content. Community-based tactics have long been used by member-owned, democratically governed consumer cooperatives (3). Nonetheless, a lot of people deal with issues like low participation, poor engagement, and underuse of social media. It has been observed in previous studies that cooperatives frequently experience difficulty remaining relevant in the digital age, thereby necessitating flexibility, appeal, and a clear sense of purpose (4).

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It has been reported that traditional cooperative domains have increasingly been encroached upon by non-cooperative actors due to this gap (4, 5). Cooperatives' declining relevance and member engagement are also highlighted by the International Cooperative Alliance (6).

Although cooperatives generally aim to enhance member involvement and a sense of ownership, persistent engagement deficiencies, including poor communication and low participation, have been reported (6, 7). Internally, marketing limitations have been identified as constraints on cooperative competitiveness and their contribution to sustainable development (8). Limited marketing efforts are a serious weakness, especially in Nigeria (9). With many cooperatives finding it difficult to draw in younger populations, youth engagement is still a major concern (6, 10). Existing studies have addressed cooperative marketing and engagement but not from the angle of social media use by consumer cooperatives. General engagement plans have been discussed in earlier studies, with limited attention given to digital marketing, while greater emphasis has been placed on governance rather than consumer cooperative engagement (4, 7). Again, scholars have studied Lagos cooperative marketing without focusing on social media or Enugu State (8). Youth cooperatives have been examined broadly in prior institutional analyses, with limited focus on innovative marketing elements (6). This study fills these gaps by examining how innovative social media marketing elements influence consumer cooperative member engagement in Enugu State. Specifically, it assesses the effects of content quality, exposure frequency, and platform usage on engagement levels.

To establish scope for the study and guide the conduct of the study, the study put forth the following hypotheses in the null form. The first; Content quality has no significant influence on consumer cooperative member engagement in the study area. Second, Frequency of exposure has no significant influence on consumer cooperative member engagement in the study area. Third, Social media platform usage has no significant influence on consumer cooperative member engagement in the study area. Figurative illustrated by the conceptual framework in figure 1, showing the links between the study variables. The results will help researchers and practitioners

understand how social media influences cooperative member engagement. They will inform strategies for boosting consumer cooperative participation through digital marketing tools and add to existing literature.

## Theoretical Foundation

This research is based on Customer Engagement Theory, which defines engagement as a multidimensional condition resulting from interactive and value-generating experiences between an organization and its stakeholders (11). The theory elucidates the mechanisms by which significant digital interactions, such as access to high-quality content, regular visibility, and contextually appropriate communication, enhance cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement. In consumer cooperatives, social media functions as a relational interface enabling members to assess relevance, trust, and opportunities for participation. The theory provides a systematic framework for examining the influence of content quality, exposure frequency, and platform usage on cooperative member engagement.

**Evolution of Social Media Marketing Strategies:** Over the past two decades, social media marketing has developed concurrently with the swift expansion of social networking platforms. Businesses quickly realized its advantages for direct and interactive communication with large crowds after initially using it for personal networking (3). In the early 2000s, websites like MySpace and LinkedIn were made possible by the early computer-mediated communication tools like email, bulletin boards, and online communities. The introduction of advanced targeting and analytics capabilities in 2004 significantly transformed contemporary marketing practices. Subsequent platforms enabled the expansion of influencer relationships, content marketing, and real-time interaction within digital environments (12). Social media marketing has been transformed recently by the combination of AI and data analytics, which enables more personalized content, proactive predictive insights, and enhanced customer experiences. With platforms increasingly integrating e-commerce, interactive service, and community-building functionalities, chatbots and recommendation systems can improve targeting capabilities. Due to these advancements, social media has evolved from simple channels for

promotion into intricate systems that foster brand loyalty and are essential for modern marketing (13).

The Web 2.0 framework serves as the foundation for internet-based social media platforms, which facilitate the collaborative creation and dissemination of user-generated content (3). Its role in promoting online communities and facilitating interaction, production, and exchange across digital channels has been documented in earlier studies (12). Attention has also been directed toward the role of social media in content creation, networking within digital communities, and the formation and maintenance of social relationships (14, 15). Social media has been shown to support communication, collaboration, and influence while addressing both personal and professional objectives (10, 16). Definitions proposed in earlier studies remain comprehensive, encompassing Web 2.0 dynamics, user participation, and emerging applications related to social media marketing and customer interaction.

**Social Media Marketing:** Creating and disseminating content through social media platforms in order to achieve particular branding and marketing goals is known as social media marketing (SMM). This includes connecting with an audience, establishing brand awareness, increasing website traffic, and boosting sales through the use of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, X (formerly known as Twitter), and others. Social media marketing has been defined as the use of social media platforms to interact with audiences, enhance brand awareness, increase website traffic, and generate revenue (12). This definition emphasizes social media marketing's many goals, which include direct conversion, traffic generation, and engagement. From another perspective, social media marketing has been described as a subset of online marketing that focuses on creating and sharing content on social media platforms to promote brands, goods, or services (3). To interact with a target audience, this strategy makes use of a variety of content types, including text, photos, videos, and interactive posts. Businesses seek to accomplish particular marketing goals by disseminating interesting and engaging content on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn. These goals include increasing brand recognition, boosting customer

engagement, and increasing website traffic, all of which contribute to increased sales and better customer loyalty. This submission highlights the importance of social media content sharing while expanding the scope to include different marketing objectives.

A more technical perspective has defined social media marketing as the use of social media and online channels to advertise products or services. Other scholars concentrated primarily on the promotional aspect, highlighting the transactional nature of social media marketing (17). In contrast, earlier studies emphasized broader marketing objectives such as brand awareness and sales conversion, while greater emphasis was placed on content creation and sharing in other works (1, 3, 12). However, a more limited perspective focusing primarily on promotional activities has also been identified in earlier studies (12, 18, 19). In terms of strategy and tactically viewing social media marketing (12), researchers have described social media marketing as a strategic endeavor aimed at achieving various marketing goals. In contrast, some have presented it more as a tactical tool for immediate promotion presented (18, 19). With respect to engagement and relationship building, emphasis has been placed on consumer participation in some studies, while a more transactional and promotional orientation has been observed in others (1, 18). The key elements of social media marketing include content creation, community management, social advertising, and analytics to measure performance (1, 16, 20).

There are several elements of social media marketing; entertainment, customization, interactivity, electronic word-of-mouth (EWOM), trendiness, content quality, frequency of exposure, platform usage, and social media influencer endorsement (21).

**Entertainment:** As a component of social media marketing, entertainment arises when marketers design experiences that consumers find enjoyable and engaging while using social media platforms. Activities like games, video sharing, and participation in contests can enhance consumers' enjoyment of social media, thereby encouraging their involvement in brand communities on these. Entertainment fosters a closer connection between consumers and the brand, potentially increasing their intent to purchase (12, 22, 23). Thus, in the context of social media, entertainment reflects the

degree to which platforms provide content that is interesting, exciting, and amusing to users. Marketers leverage social media to entertain consumers and fulfill their desire for enjoyment by sharing product-related photos and news, such as through Facebook brand pages featuring video clips, images, and stories, which can effectively capture consumers' attention platforms (9, 24, 25). Customization: Customization refers to the degree to which services, marketing strategies, and messages are tailored to meet individual consumer preferences. Customization makes services and information searches more user-friendly, creating value for specific consumers or consumer groups (26). Also, it improves purchase intentions, fosters consumer trust, and more efficiently reaches the target audience. Allowing customers of luxury brands to create their own products or utilizing social media platforms to provide individualized information and prompt answers to consumer questions are two examples of customization that can boost customer satisfaction and retention (27, 28).

Interaction: The degree to which social media platforms facilitate two-way opinions and information exchanges is referred to as interaction. Because social media is frequently more effective than traditional media like print, TV, and radio, this feature enables customers to discuss ideas about particular products or brands with like-minded people (25, 29). Customers are encouraged to produce user-generated content by the opportunity to engage with brands, which can improve their perceptions of them and increase their propensity to buy. Posting content that complements the profiles of the targeted social media users promotes conversations and improves the bonds between customers and brands. This explains why marketers encourage users to participate in social media conversations (24, 28, 30).

Electronic Word-of-Mouth (EWOM): It has been reported that customer reviews shared on social media platforms demonstrate the extent to which consumers disseminate information about goods, brands, and businesses through electronic word-of-mouth mechanisms (31). Brand content distribution, blog posting, and opinion sharing with coworkers are among the activities (21, 31, 32). Electronic word-of-mouth (EWOM) has been regarded as highly credible and has been shown to

exert a strong influence on consumer brand perceptions. Negative EWOM has been associated with reduced trust, weaker brand attitudes, and diminished brand equity, whereas positive EWOM has been linked to increased purchase intentions (32).

**Content Quality:** The usefulness, correctness, and relevance of the information shared through posts, videos, and images are all considered aspects of content quality in social media marketing. Effective marketing depends on producing high-quality content that meets consumer expectations in order to foster trust, engagement, and loyalty (21). It has been consistently shown in previous studies that high-quality content strengthens consumer-brand relationships by establishing credibility, encouraging interaction, and promoting information sharing. Due to limited resources, time constraints, funding challenges, and shortages of qualified personnel, the production of high-quality content is often particularly difficult for cooperatives. The process becomes more complex when content is produced for diverse audiences, as frequent and carefully planned posts may lead to audience fatigue and reduced engagement (14, 15). Despite these challenges, high-quality content has been shown to strengthen cooperatives' positioning as credible entities, thereby increasing member engagement, trust, and loyalty. To enhance relevance and effectiveness, segmented strategies incorporating analytics, diversified content formats, regular updates, influencer collaboration, and member feedback have been recommended in previous studies (15). Hence, the need to test this study's hypothesis, so as to ascertain the current position in the study area;

**H1: Content quality has no significant influence on consumer cooperative member engagement in the study area**

**Frequency of Exposure:** In social media marketing, frequency of exposure describes how frequently a target audience encounters a brand's content over a predetermined time frame. This component is essential since consistent exposure can improve brand recognition, recall, and the general efficacy of marketing campaigns. Higher exposure frequency has been found to be associated with increased consumer engagement and purchase intentions. Frequent exposure to social media content has been shown to significantly influence customer attitudes and brand awareness (26). It

has also been emphasized that optimal exposure frequency balances visibility and consumer fatigue, ensuring sustained audience interest without overload (26). Cooperatives must maintain posts at optimal levels in order to sustain member interest. Posting too often, has been found to cause user fatigue, while that of posting infrequently reduces visibility, especially for smaller cooperatives with fewer staff and resources (13, 14). If a message doesn't generate enough engagement, algorithmic filters may limit its visibility, making frequency alone less effective (15). Consistent posting, despite operational challenges, has been associated with increased visibility, loyalty, and participation, while timely updates help preserve content relevance (14, 15). Cooperatives should use automation to maintain consistency, diversify post types which can always help to avoid fatigue, use analytics to identify the best schedules, and integrate feedback for realignment. During events, temporary post-activity can keep up its speed before settling back to its usual pace. Hence, the need to test this study's hypothesis, so as ascertain the current position in the study area;

H2: Frequency of exposure has no significant influence on consumer cooperative member engagement in the study area

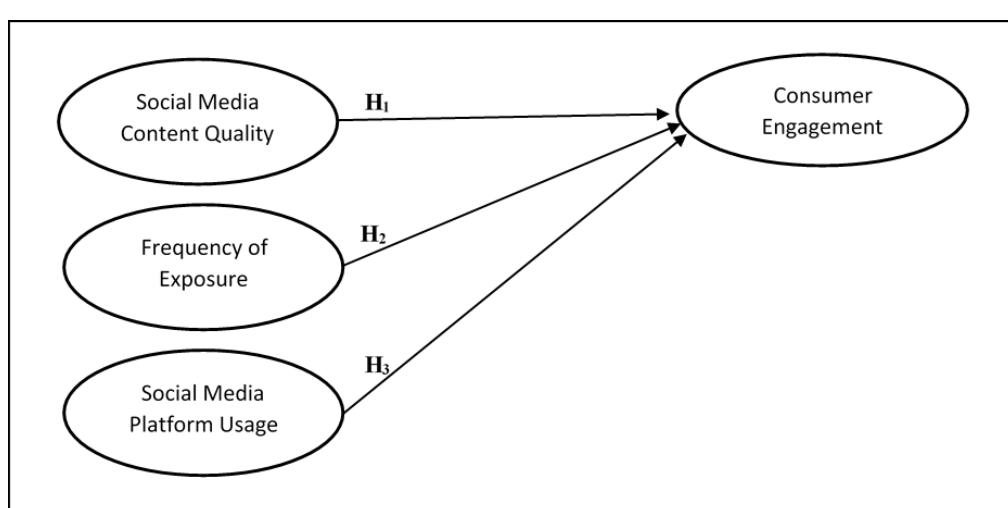
Platform Usage and Entertainment: Social media brand involvement includes their target audience engagement strategies on sites like Facebook, Instagram, X (Twitter), LinkedIn, and TikTok, each of which has its own user demographics and ways of interacting with users. Creating content like games, contests, memes, and videos attracts viewers, builds emotional bonds, and encourages

sharing, some studies (21, 24, 33, 34) have stated that experiences within brand communities lead to higher engagement and long-term success, with visually appealing and entertaining content meeting users' needs for enjoyment and increasing purchase intentions (9, 25, 35). For cooperatives, social media offers both advantages and disadvantages. It takes a lot of resources to manage many accounts, especially for smaller teams, and outreach efforts are limited by demographic mismatches if team members are not active on certain platforms (14, 15). Stricter regulations, algorithmic filtering, and frequent platform changes reduce organic reach and increase the need for paid advertising. However, social media sites like Facebook and WhatsApp allow for more focused messaging, increased visibility, and prompt updates that foster loyalty. The analysis of member demographics, the use of automation to enhance productivity, platform-specific content tailoring, and the application of analytics to refine communication strategies have been recommended in previous studies (14, 15). These actions enhance communication quality, participation, and trust. Hence, the need to test this study's hypothesis, so as ascertain the current position in the study area;

H3: Social media platform usage has no significant influence on consumer cooperative member engagement in the study area

### Conceptual Framework

This framework in figure 1, is a figurative illustration, showing the links between the study variables.



**Figure 1:** Framework for the Study

## Methodology

In order to test hypotheses quantitatively, this study uses a survey method with respondents, specifically consumer cooperative members-users. The gathered primary data will then be processed in order to evaluate the hypothesis which is in line with the relationship between innovative social media marketing elements and member engagement among consumer cooperatives in Enugu State, Nigeria.

## Population and Sample

Members of Enugu State's 4,026 registered consumer cooperatives, which have an estimated 18,426 members overall, made up the study population (Enugu State Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Cooperatives, 2024). A sample size of 392 respondents was established using Yamane's 1967 formula at a 5% precision level. The sample size 392 was determined for finite populations at a 5% level of precision. To enhance representation, an additional 10% was added to account for non-response.

Multistage sampling technique was used to distribute the calculated sample size. In the first stage, three cooperative zones (Enugu, Nsukka, and Oji River) were purposively selected due to their active cooperative presence. In the second stage, a random selection of registered consumer cooperatives was made from each zone. In the final stage, proportionate sampling was used to select individual members from the chosen cooperatives.

## Method of Data Collection

Primary data were obtained using a structured questionnaire administered to members of selected consumer cooperatives. The instrument was divided into sections covering; demographic characteristics of respondents, innovative social media marketing elements (content creativity, platform interactivity, influencer collaboration, digital storytelling, and customer feedback

integration), member engagement dimensions (cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement). Data collection was supported by cooperative officers who assisted in coordinating member participation.

## Instrument Validation and Reliability

The questionnaire was validated by three experts in cooperative management and marketing from recognized Nigerian universities to ensure content and construct validity. A pilot test was conducted among 30 cooperative members outside the main sample. Cronbach's alpha was used to evaluate reliability; coefficients greater than 0.70 were deemed appropriate for internal consistency.

## Data Analysis

Multiple regression analysis and Pearson correlation were used to analyze the data in order to determine the predictive impact of creative social media marketing dimensions on overall member engagement as well as to investigate the relationships between social media marketing components and member engagement.

## Results

### Respondent Characteristics

According to the demographic data, which demonstrates balanced gender representation, males (55.1%) slightly outnumber females (44.9%), as shown in Table 1. Those between the ages of 26 and 45 who were economically active made up the majority of responders (62.2%). More than two-thirds (67.3%) had at least a tertiary qualification (OND or higher), suggesting a cooperative membership base that is relatively educated. The occupational distribution shows that the majority of members are civil servants (31.6%) and entrepreneurs (26.0%), which is consistent with the cooperative movement's emphasis on economic participation and self-employment.

**Table 1:** Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 392)

Demography	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male.	216.	55.1.
	Female.	176.	44.9.
Age (Years)	18-25.	54.	13.8.
	26-35.	126.	32.1.
	36-45.	118.	30.1.
	46-55.	64.	16.3.
	56 and above.	30.	7.7.
Educational Qualification	Primary/Secondary	32.	8.2.
	OND/NCE.	96.	24.5.
	Bachelor's Degree.	176.	44.9.
	Postgraduate Degree.	88.	22.4.

Occupation	Trader/Entrepreneur.	102.	26.0.
	Civil Servant.	124.	31.6.
	Cooperative Employee.	68.	17.3.
	Student.	42.	10.7.
	Artisan/Technician.	56.	14.3.
Total		392.	100.0.

**Table 2:** Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max
Content Quality (CQ)	392	4.12	0.63	2.20	5.00
Exposure Frequency (EF)	392	3.85	0.71	2.00	5.00
Platform Usage (PU)	392	3.78	0.69	1.80	5.00
Consumer Cooperative Member Engagement (CCME)	392	4.21	0.61	2.50	5.00

Table 2 summarizes the central tendencies and dispersion of the study variables based on responses from 392 cooperative members. The mean values for all variables are greater than 3.50, indicating that respondents generally agree on the statements measuring the constructs. The majority of members believe they are actively involved in cooperative activities, as evidenced by the highest mean for Consumer Cooperative Member Engagement ( $M = 4.21$ ,  $SD = 0.61$ ). Furthermore, respondents gave high marks to content quality ( $M = 4.12$ ,  $SD = 0.63$ ), indicating that they found social media posts from cooperatives to be engaging,

intelligible, and relevant. However, there is moderate variation in the frequency of exposure to and use of cooperative social media platforms, as evidenced by exposure frequency ( $M = 3.85$ ,  $SD = 0.71$ ) and platform usage ( $M = 3.78$ ,  $SD = 0.69$ ), both of which are still above the neutral midpoint of 3.0. The relatively low standard deviations (0.61–0.71) indicated that responses were consistent, with little variation around the mean.

### Reliability Test

The Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for all constructs exceeded the 0.70 threshold, indicating internal consistency reliability.

**Table 3:** Reliability Statistics

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Content Quality	5	0.84
Exposure Frequency	4	0.81
Platform Usage	4	0.79
CC Member Engagement	5	0.88

Table 3 displays the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients for the study constructs. The alpha values for every variable were higher than the 0.70 threshold recommended by Nunnally (1978), indicating satisfactory internal consistency. The measurement items for Consumer Cooperative Member Engagement ( $\alpha = 0.88$ ), in particular,

showed the highest reliability due to their high correlation and consistency. Strong reliability was also demonstrated by Content Quality ( $\alpha = 0.84$ ) and Exposure Frequency ( $\alpha = 0.81$ ), while Platform Usage ( $\alpha = 0.79$ ), though slightly lower, remained within the acceptable range.

**Table 4:** Correlation Matrix

Variables	1	2	3	4
Content Quality	1			
Exposure Frequency	0.612**	1		
Platform Usage	0.537**	0.589**	1	
CC Member Engagement	0.643**	0.601**	0.564**	1

Note:  $p < 0.01$

### Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to examine relationships among variables.

The Pearson correlation coefficients illustrating the connections between the research variables are displayed in Table 4. All correlations are positive and statistically significant at the 0.01

level, indicating strong relationships between member engagement and creative social media marketing components. Higher-quality social media content was strongly associated with higher member engagement, as evidenced by the strongest correlation found between Content Quality and Consumer Cooperative Member Engagement ( $r = 0.643$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Additionally,

significant positive correlations were discovered between platform usage ( $r = 0.564$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and member engagement and exposure frequency ( $r = 0.601$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

### Multiple Regression Analysis

Dependent Variable: Consumer Cooperative Member Engagement (CCME) Independent Variables: Content Quality (CQ), Exposure Frequency (EF), Platform Usage (PU)

Table 5 reveals, member engagement and the predictors have a strong correlation, according to the regression model ( $R = 0.745$ ). The fact that

Content Quality, Exposure Frequency, and Platform Usage collectively explain approximately 55.5% of the variance in Consumer Cooperative Member Engagement ( $R^2 = 0.555$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.551$ ) suggests a well-fitting model.

Table 6 shows that the model's statistical significance ( $F = 157.698$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) suggests that engagement is influenced by all of the predictors combined. Every coefficient is positive and significant ( $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that improving each element of creative social media marketing raises member engagement.

**Table 5:** Model Summary

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of Estimate
1	0.745	0.555	0.551	0.408

**Table 6:** ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	78.642	3	26.214	157.698	.000
Residual	63.258	388	0.163		
Total	141.900	391			

**Table 7:** Coefficients

Predictor	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.025	0.147		6.961	.000
Content Quality	0.372	0.054	0.401	6.889	.000
Exposure Frequency	0.281	0.048	0.317	5.854	.000
Platform Usage	0.209	0.045	0.248	4.647	.000

Table 7 shows the coefficients obtained. Content Quality has the biggest effect ( $\beta = 0.372$ ,  $t = 6.889$ ), followed by Exposure Frequency ( $\beta = 0.281$ ,  $t = 5.854$ ) and Platform Usage ( $\beta = 0.209$ ,  $t = 4.647$ ). All things considered, enhancing these aspects of digital marketing can promote sustained engagement and strengthen bonds between cooperative members.

### Discussion

Regression analysis indicates that consumer cooperative member engagement is significantly predicted by platform usage, exposure frequency, and content quality (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.551$ ,  $F = 157.698$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This finding highlights the importance of digital communication quality and visibility in collaborative settings, as these three social media marketing components explain over half of the variation in member engagement. The results are consistent with evidence reported in previous studies, indicating that content quality exerts the strongest influence on member engagement ( $\beta = 0.401$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) (21). High-quality, relevant, and trustworthy content undoubtedly promotes stronger identification and an emotional

connection with the collaborative brand, which in turn promotes engagement and loyalty. Similar patterns have been documented in earlier research, where authenticity and accuracy in online communication were associated with increased participation and trust within virtual communities (28). The implication is that strategic investments in content creation may yield disproportionate benefits for cooperatives, which are often resource-constrained, in terms of member trust and participation. The results demonstrate associations, rather than causal relationships, among content quality, exposure frequency, platform usage, and member engagement. The regression coefficients indicate that increased scores on these social media elements are associated with elevated engagement levels, as evidenced by the significant positive relationships identified in the model (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.551$ ). The statistical patterns indicate that cooperatives exhibiting more consistent and relevant digital communication generally report higher engagement levels; however, the cross-sectional design precludes causal inferences. Consequently, the interpretations are based on

empirical evidence, while recognizing that additional unmeasured factors may influence engagement patterns.

In interpreting the observed associations, it is important to recognise that several relevant factors not included in the model may also shape member engagement. Elements such as cooperative governance practices, transparency in decision-making, leadership quality, and the strength of internal communication systems are known to influence members' willingness to participate and respond to organisational initiatives. These organisational characteristics could partly explain variations in engagement that are not captured by social media elements alone. Because the present study did not measure these factors, they remain alternative explanations for some of the patterns observed, and future research should incorporate governance style, leadership competence, and internal participation structures to provide a more comprehensive model of engagement dynamics.

Exposure frequency was also identified as a significant predictor of engagement ( $\beta = 0.317$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), with repeated exposure being associated with improved attitudes and recall in prior research (26). Timely updates can boost cooperative visibility and act as a reminder of ongoing activities, provided that content saturation and fatigue are managed. Maintaining participation without overwhelming members is ensured by choosing the optimal posting schedule for cooperative societies, which is neither too frequent nor too infrequent. Platform usage was also found to significantly increase engagement ( $\beta = 0.248$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), consistent with earlier findings linking platform diversity and interactivity to increased brand participation (24, 25). The implication is that cooperatives benefit when they carefully select and utilize the platforms that their member demographic uses the most, as opposed to distributing effort across too many channels. For instance, using Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp strategically can increase reach among Nigerian consumer cooperative members.

The study further revealed significant correlations between social media marketing elements and member engagement; however, it was conducted in a context marked by infrastructural challenges, including unstable electricity supply, inconsistent internet connectivity, and uneven smartphone

access among cooperative members. The constraints may have influenced the frequency of members' exposure to social media content and the accuracy of self-reported engagement levels. The study did not quantify the infrastructural constraints due to the unavailability of reliable secondary data and cooperative-level records; thus, these limitations are recognized as factors that may have affected the strength of the observed associations. Future research should include quantifiable indicators, such as internet reliability scores, device ownership statistics, and cooperative-level ICT infrastructure assessments, to more accurately capture the impacts of infrastructure. Also, the study's cross-sectional design limits the ability to infer temporal dynamics or directional relationships, as all variables were measured at a single point in time. In addition, reliance on self-reported data introduces the possibility of measurement bias, including recall errors and social desirability tendencies that may have influenced how members assessed their engagement and social media exposure. Platform differences also present an important nuance: applications such as WhatsApp, which dominate communication in many Nigerian communities, operate very differently from more public and algorithm-driven platforms like Facebook or TikTok, potentially shaping engagement patterns in ways not fully captured in the current measures. Furthermore, disparities between rural and urban cooperative members, in terms of device access, data affordability, and digital literacy (International Telecommunication Union, 2021), may have contributed to uneven participation that the study design could not fully account for. These limitations suggest caution when generalising the findings and point to the need for longitudinal, multi-platform, and mixed-method approaches in future research.

In all, the results show that cooperative member engagement is driven by both visibility and the quality of digital interactions. These findings align with theoretical positions previously advanced, which suggest that interactive, relevant, and consistent social media communication fosters user commitment and trust (5, 35, 36). Crucially, the observed relationships imply that incorporating such complementary elements could enhance engagement outcomes (7, 15, 17, 37), even though social media entertainment,

customization, and influencer endorsement were not empirically tested here in this study. Notably, social media initiatives in cooperatives can reinforce or challenge fundamental cooperative values. Social media, when employed to enhance transparency, facilitate member dialogue, promote shared learning, and support participatory decision-making, aligns with principles including democratic member control, openness, and education. These projects may contradict cooperative principles when communication is one-directional, excessively promotional, or controlled by a limited leadership group, which can undermine inclusiveness and shared ownership. Disparities in digital access among members can exacerbate participation gaps, undermining the cooperative's commitment to equity. The identified tensions indicate that social media strategies should be deliberately crafted to promote cooperative identity, avoiding the replication of hierarchical or exclusionary communication patterns.

Practically speaking, the study highlights the necessity of collaborative digital strategies that prioritize appropriate platform selection, scheduling discipline, and message quality. To maintain interaction, cooperative societies should allocate specialized social media staff, use analytics to customize communication frequency, and invest in member-responsive content creation. By combining digital marketing strategies with collaborative values of openness and involvement, these organizations can increase member loyalty both online and offline. The cooperative's sustainability will be strengthened as a result (7, 12, 17, 28, 35, 38, 39). This practicality, can be observed in the participation of members of cooperatives in Enugu State as shaped by the long-established Igbo values of mutual aid, group unity, and shared accountability, which are closely aligned with the principles of cooperatives. It has been observed that member participation within Nigerian cooperatives is enhanced when organisational practices align with prevailing communal customs and shared identity frameworks (6, 7, 10). Cooperative principles are supported by these cultural patterns, which promote trust and reinforce the expectation of shared contribution. These traditions interact unevenly with the introduction of digital communication technologies. Social media can

enhance communal practices by enabling quick information exchange and mobilising group action (1, 13) but it may also decrease face-to-face interactions that traditionally maintained cooperative unity. Technology adoption across different generations influences engagement (2), as younger members more easily incorporate digital communication, whereas older members rely more heavily on traditional social networks for their participation. It implies that digital strategies will be most effective when they augment, rather than supersede, the communal practices that continue to form the foundation of cooperative life in Igbo communities.

## Conclusion

This study examined the effects of innovative social media marketing elements, including platform usage, exposure frequency, and content quality, on member engagement among consumer cooperatives in Enugu State, Nigeria. The findings demonstrated that although engagement is significantly and favorably impacted by all three components, content quality has the largest effect. These findings emphasize the importance of creating high-quality, relevant, and engaging content, posting at the right frequency, and strategically utilizing a range of platforms in order to enhance cooperative-member relationships. Research on social media marketing in consumer cooperatives is still lacking in Nigeria, though. Future studies should look at other facets of digital engagement, such as electronic word-of-mouth and interaction, and evaluate how they affect cooperatives' long-term viability and growth.

## Recommendations

The results suggest that prioritization of high-quality, engaging, and educational social media content may enhance member participation and trust within consumer cooperatives. In addition to using analytics to identify the optimal posting frequency that sustains engagement without causing fatigue. Variation in platform usage based on member demographics and communication preferences has been identified as a potentially effective approach. Cooperative leaders should also invest in training staff members in digital marketing and social media management to enhance their capacity for strategic communication. To support cooperatives' online presence and member outreach, the Cooperative

Federation of Nigeria and the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Cooperatives in Enugu State should develop policy-level digital engagement frameworks and capacity-building programs. Researchers should look into more complex social media elements like influencer marketing, electronic word-of-mouth, and interactivity to evaluate their long-term effects on collaborative sustainability and digital transformation.

## Abbreviations

None.

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## Author Contributions

The authors were responsible for the study design, data collection, conceptualization, methodology, manuscript drafting, data analysis, and presentation of results.

## Conflict of Interest

The authors confirm that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this work.

## Declaration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Assistance

The authors affirm that AI tools, including ChatGPT from OpenAI, were used solely for language editing and to enhance the clarity of expression within the manuscript.

## Ethics Approval

Ethical approval was not required for this study, as it involved analysis of employee performance data without personal identifiers or sensitive information. All data were handled confidentially, adhering to established ethical standards for organizational research.

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