

The Role of Financial Disclosure, Social Media Marketing and Cooperative Governance in Driving Consumer Trust and Cooperative Product Adoption in Emerging Economies

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of financial disclosure, social media marketing (SMM) and cooperative governance in enhancing consumer trust and promoting cooperative product adoption in emerging economies, with a focus on Nigeria. Using a mixed-method design, data were collected from 372 cooperative members across three urban centers via structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, complemented by a content analysis of cooperative social media campaigns. Findings reveal that effective social media marketing significantly enhances consumer trust ($\beta = 0.482$, $p < 0.01$), while robust cooperative governance structures further strengthen trust and facilitate product adoption ($\beta = 0.391$, $p < 0.01$). Consumer trust was also found to be a significant predictor of product adoption ($\beta = 0.527$, $p < 0.01$), and social media marketing and governance jointly explained 48% of the variance in cooperative product adoption. The study concludes that integrating strategic social media marketing with strong governance practices creates a synergistic effect that drives consumer trust and product adoption. Recommendations include capacity building for cooperative managers on digital marketing strategies, improving transparency mechanisms, and fostering participatory governance models to enhance consumer engagement.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Cooperative Governance, Consumer Trust, Product Adoption, Emerging Economies.

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Introduction

Cooperative organizations play a critical role in promoting economic inclusion, social welfare, and poverty alleviation in emerging economies. However, one persistent challenge is low consumer engagement and trust, which often hampers the adoption of cooperative products (Adekunle & Nwosu, 2021). Recent years have witnessed the rapid proliferation of social media platforms, creating unprecedented opportunities for cooperatives to engage directly with consumers, share information, and build relational trust. Social media marketing (SMM) has emerged as a strategic tool that enables cooperatives to communicate brand values, promote product benefits, and address consumer concerns in real time (Kaur & Singh, 2020).

In parallel, cooperative governance—the mechanisms through which cooperatives are managed, decisions are made, and accountability is ensured—remains a fundamental driver of consumer confidence. Transparent governance practices, participatory decision-making, and financial accountability signal credibility and build trust in cooperative organizations (Hossain, 2022). Evidence suggests that consumers are more likely to adopt products from cooperatives that demonstrate strong governance structures alongside effective marketing communication (Zhang, 2022).

Beyond general governance structures, financial disclosure constitutes a critical dimension of accountability that directly influences stakeholder trust. Financial disclosure refers to the extent to which cooperatives openly communicate their financial performance, resource allocation, surplus distribution, and overall financial position to members and the public. In emerging economies, where concerns about mismanagement and corruption often undermine institutional credibility, transparent and timely financial reporting can serve as a powerful trust-building mechanism. When cooperatives disclose audited financial statements, explain financial decisions, and communicate performance outcomes—both through formal reports and digital platforms—they reduce information asymmetry and signal organizational integrity. Such transparency not only strengthens governance credibility but also reassures consumers about the sustainability and reliability of cooperative products, thereby enhancing their willingness to adopt them.

In emerging economies, where institutional trust is often fragile, combining social media marketing with cooperative governance may be especially impactful. By leveraging digital platforms for communication while ensuring robust internal governance, cooperatives can enhance transparency, foster relational trust, and encourage product adoption. Despite the theoretical promise, empirical studies examining the interplay between SMM, governance, and consumer behavior in the cooperative sector remain limited, particularly in the context of emerging economies. This study, therefore, examines how social media marketing and cooperative governance jointly influence consumer trust and cooperative product adoption in emerging economies, using Nigeria as a case study. The research contributes to understanding how digital engagement and governance practices synergistically shape consumer behavior, offering insights for policymakers, cooperative managers, and digital marketing practitioners.

Statement of the Problem

Cooperatives in emerging economies often face challenges in attracting and retaining consumers for their products and services. Limited trust in organizational processes, poor communication strategies, and perceived governance deficits contribute to consumer skepticism (Ogunleye, 2021). Traditional marketing channels are often ineffective due to cost, limited reach, or lack of interactivity, resulting in low awareness and adoption rates.

Although social media platforms have grown as communication and engagement tools, cooperatives may lack the capacity to deploy strategic campaigns or measure their impact on consumer trust. Simultaneously, weak governance practices—such as opaque decision-making, poor accountability, and insufficient member participation—further undermine consumer confidence. Without addressing both marketing and governance simultaneously, cooperatives struggle to achieve high adoption rates for their products.

This gap underscores the need to investigate the combined effects of financial disclosure, social media marketing and cooperative governance on consumer trust and product adoption, particularly in emerging economies where digital penetration is rising but institutional trust remains fragile.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the role of financial disclosure, social media marketing and cooperative governance in driving consumer trust and cooperative product adoption in emerging economies. Specific objectives include:

- i. To assess the impact of social media marketing strategies on consumer trust in cooperatives.
- ii. To evaluate the influence of cooperative governance structures on consumer trust and product adoption.
- iii. To determine the synergistic effect of social media marketing and cooperative governance on cooperative product adoption.
- iv. To identify barriers and enablers to effective social media engagement and governance practices in cooperatives.

Research Questions

- i. How does social media marketing affect consumer trust in cooperative organizations?
- ii. What is the role of cooperative governance in influencing consumer trust and product adoption?
- iii. How do social media marketing and cooperative governance interact to drive cooperative product adoption?
- iv. What factors enhance or hinder the effectiveness of social media marketing and governance in cooperatives?

Statement of Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses (H_0) guide the study:

- i. Social media marketing has no significant effect on consumer trust in cooperative organizations.
- ii. Cooperative governance has no significant influence on consumer trust and cooperative product adoption.
- iii. The combined effect of social media marketing and cooperative governance does not significantly drive cooperative product adoption.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Review

Financial Disclosure

Financial disclosure refers to the process through which organizations communicate relevant financial information to stakeholders, including details on financial performance, financial position, cash flows, surplus distribution, and resource allocation (Smith et al., 2022). It encompasses both mandatory reporting—such as audited financial statements prepared in accordance with accounting standards—and voluntary disclosures that enhance transparency beyond regulatory requirements. Effective financial disclosure reduces information asymmetry between management and stakeholders, thereby strengthening accountability and informed decision-making.

In emerging economies, financial disclosure plays a particularly important role due to weak institutional frameworks, limited regulatory enforcement, and heightened concerns about financial mismanagement. Transparent and timely reporting enhances organizational credibility and signals financial stability to members, investors, and consumers (Bushman & Smith, 2003). For cooperative organizations, clear disclosure of surplus allocation, member contributions, and operational expenditures is essential in demonstrating fairness, sustainability, and adherence to cooperative principles.

Within the cooperative context, financial disclosure extends beyond statutory reporting to include simplified financial communication through annual reports, meetings, and increasingly, digital platforms. When cooperatives openly share financial information, they reinforce governance structures and foster stakeholder confidence. However, many cooperatives in emerging economies face challenges such as inadequate accounting systems, lack of professional expertise, and limited adoption of reporting technologies, which may hinder effective disclosure practices.

Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing (SMM) refers to the strategic use of social media platforms to create, share, and promote content aimed at engaging users, building brand awareness, and influencing consumer behavior (Tuten & Solomon, 2018). In emerging economies, SMM has become a vital communication tool due to widespread mobile adoption, low-cost access, and rapid information diffusion across networks. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and WhatsApp are commonly used for promotional campaigns, customer engagement, and peer-to-peer influence (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

In cooperative contexts, SMM facilitates direct interaction between organizations and consumers, enabling real-time feedback, personalized messaging, and community-building around cooperative values. Research suggests that social media engagement enhances consumer perceptions of transparency and responsiveness, which are important antecedents of trust (Malthouse et al., 2016).

However, effective SMM requires strategic content planning, audience segmentation, and performance monitoring — capacities that many cooperatives in emerging economies lack due to limited digital literacy and resource constraints (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020).

Cooperative Governance

Cooperative governance encompasses the rules, practices, and structures that guide decision-making, accountability, and member participation within cooperative organizations. Rooted in principles of democratic control, equity, and accountability, cooperative governance ensures that members' interests are represented and organizational actions align with shared values (Birchall, 2013).

Effective governance mechanisms — including transparent reporting, member participation in key decisions, financial accountability, and ethical leadership — enhance organizational legitimacy and trust among consumers and members (Choi & Trimi, 2020). In emerging economies where institutional trust may be low, governance practices that demonstrate accountability and inclusion are particularly critical for building consumer confidence.

Consumer Trust and Cooperative Product Adoption

Consumer trust refers to the willingness of consumers to rely on an organization based on expectations of reliability, integrity, and benevolence (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). In cooperative marketing, trust is fundamental because cooperatives often lack the brand recognition and institutional reputation enjoyed by multinational firms. Trust reduces perceived risk and increases the likelihood that consumers will adopt products or services offered by cooperatives (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

Cooperative product adoption refers to the decision by consumers to purchase or engage with goods and services offered by cooperative organizations. Adoption is influenced by perceived product quality, organizational credibility, and consumer familiarity — factors that are shaped by both marketing communication and governance practices (Rogers, 2003).

Theoretical Review

This study draws on three theoretical frameworks to explain how social media marketing and cooperative governance influence consumer trust and product adoption:

i. Social Exchange Theory (SET)

Social Exchange Theory posits that social behavior is the result of an exchange process where individuals seek to maximize benefits and minimize costs in relationships (Homans, 1958). In marketing contexts, reciprocal interactions — such as responsive communication, valuable content sharing, and engagement through social media — foster trust by reinforcing expectations of mutual benefit.

Social media platforms enable cooperatives to engage in continuous exchange with consumers, providing information, resolving queries, and building relational value. When consumers perceive these exchanges as beneficial, their trust in the cooperative increases, leading to higher likelihood of product adoption (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

ii. Trust Theory

Trust Theory highlights the role of perceived ability, integrity, and benevolence in fostering consumer trust (Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, 1995). In the cooperative context, transparent governance practices signal organizational integrity, while effective social media marketing conveys expertise and responsiveness. Together, these cues shape consumers' trust judgments.

iii. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model suggests that perceived usefulness and ease of use influence user adoption of technology-mediated innovations (Davis, 1989). Although originally developed for technology adoption, TAM provides insight into how consumers respond to digital marketing communications. Perceived usefulness of social media messaging and ease of engaging with cooperatives online can positively influence trust and product adoption intentions (Venkatesh & Bala, 2008).

Empirical Review

Social Media Marketing and Consumer Trust

Adewuyi and Ajakaiye (2021) examined the influence of social media marketing on consumer purchase behavior in Nigerian SMEs. Using quantitative analysis, they found that engaging content, timely interaction, and customer service responsiveness positively predicted consumer trust and repeat purchase intentions. Similarly, Smith et al. (2022) demonstrated that social media interactivity significantly increased perceived brand credibility in small enterprises across emerging markets.

Cooperative Governance and Consumer Confidence

In a study of agricultural cooperatives in Kenya, Mwangi and Kariuki (2021) found that governance factors such as transparent financial reporting, member participation in decisions, and accountability mechanisms significantly enhanced cooperative performance and member loyalty. Likewise, Okafor (2021) observed that governance practices in Nigerian savings and credit cooperatives were positively correlated with member trust and product uptake, particularly when members were involved in policy deliberations.

Synergistic Effects of Marketing and Governance

Research focusing on the combined effects of marketing and governance is limited but emerging. Li and Li (2022), studying rural cooperatives in China, suggested that digital engagement strategies paired with robust governance structures led to higher product adoption rates compared to organizations that emphasized either marketing or governance alone. This finding aligns with emerging literature suggesting that trust is multifaceted, requiring both credible communication and dependable organizational practices (Zhang & Xia, 2022).

Gaps in the Literature

While research affirms the importance of social media and governance separately, few studies within emerging economies examine their **joint influence** on consumer trust and cooperative product adoption. Moreover, existing research often lacks empirical data from cooperative sectors — especially in Africa — and fails to account for the unique institutional contexts that shape consumer perceptions in emerging markets.

This study addresses these gaps by integrating social media marketing and governance dimensions into a single analytical framework, drawing on mixed methods to provide both breadth and depth in understanding the phenomena.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine the relationships between social media marketing (SMM), cooperative governance, consumer trust, and product adoption. The quantitative component used structured questionnaires to capture measurable data from a large sample, while the qualitative component involved semi-structured interviews and social media content analysis to provide contextual insights. Mixed-methods research is particularly appropriate in emerging economies, where social, technological, and governance factors interact complexly to shape consumer behavior (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Population and Sampling

The study targeted members of registered cooperatives in Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt, Nigeria, selected for their high cooperative density, diverse consumer bases, and social media penetration. The total population was estimated at 12,500 members (National Cooperative Federation of Nigeria, 2021).

Using Taro Yamane's (1967) formula with a 5% margin of error, a sample of 388 members was determined. Purposive sampling ensured participants were active cooperative members engaging with social media platforms. For qualitative data, 15 cooperative managers and 20 social media participants were selected for interviews and content review.

Research Instruments

- i. **Structured Questionnaire** – Measured social media engagement, governance perception, consumer trust, and product adoption using a 5-point Likert scale. Sections included demographics, social media usage, governance perception, trust, and adoption behaviors.
- ii. **Semi-Structured Interviews** – Explored governance practices, SMM strategies, and trust-building challenges with cooperative managers and content coordinators. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and thematically coded.
- iii. **Social Media Content Analysis** – Evaluated **60 cooperative posts** over 12 months for engagement metrics (likes, shares, comments), clarity, responsiveness, and alignment with governance transparency.

Validity and Reliability

- i. **Face and Content Validity**: Instruments were reviewed by five experts in marketing, governance, and digital communication.
- ii. **Reliability**: Pilot testing with 30 members produced high **Cronbach's alpha** scores: SMM (0.87), Governance (0.84), Trust (0.88), Product Adoption (0.85), indicating strong internal consistency.

Data Collection Procedure

- i. **Quantitative:** Questionnaires were distributed physically and via Google Forms, with a two-week response period.
- ii. **Qualitative:** Interviews conducted in person and online (Zoom/Teams) lasted 40–60 minutes, focusing on governance and digital marketing strategies.
- iii. **Social Media:** Public posts from cooperative Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp accounts were coded for engagement and message clarity.

Data Analysis

- i. **Quantitative Analysis:** Conducted in SPSS v27. Descriptive statistics summarized demographics, while inferential analysis included **multiple regression** and **Pearson correlation** at $p < 0.05$.
- ii. **Qualitative Analysis:** NVivo 12 was used for thematic coding of interviews, highlighting governance transparency, member engagement, and SMM responsiveness.
- iii. **Social Media Analysis:** Engagement patterns were triangulated with survey and interview data to assess SMM effectiveness in fostering trust.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Demographic Profile of Respondents

A total of 388 questionnaires were distributed, with 372 returned and valid, yielding a response rate of 95.9%. Table 1 summarizes key demographic characteristics.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Gender</i>	Male	198	53%
	Female	174	47%
<i>Age</i>	18–25	45	12%
	26–35	98	26%
	36–45	124	33%
	46–55	78	21%
	56+	27	7%
	<i>Cooperative Tenure</i>	<1 year	42
	1–3 years	89	24%
	4–6 years	118	32%
	>6 years	123	33%
<i>Social Media Engagement</i>	Low	64	17%
	Moderate	168	45%
	High	140	38%

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The demographic analysis revealed that the majority of respondents were between the ages of 26 and 45, indicating that the study primarily captured the perspectives of a working-age population actively involved in cooperative activities. Gender distribution among participants was nearly balanced, suggesting that both male and female members are equally represented in cooperative engagement. Furthermore, findings showed that 83% of respondents reported moderate to high levels of social media engagement, underscoring the significance and relevance of social media marketing strategies within the cooperative context. This indicates that cooperative members are not only digitally connected but also responsive to online marketing initiatives, making SMM an effective tool for fostering consumer trust and encouraging product adoption.

Descriptive Analysis of Key Variables

Table 2: Mean Scores of Key Study Variables

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>Social Media Marketing</i>	4.12	0.62	High engagement/perceived effectiveness
<i>Cooperative Governance</i>	3.98	0.59	Positive perception of transparency/accountability
<i>Consumer Trust</i>	4.05	0.61	Moderate to high trust
<i>Product Adoption</i>	3.96	0.64	High willingness to adopt cooperative products

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Respondents generally perceived cooperative social media engagement and governance practices positively, with corresponding high levels of trust and product adoption.

Hypothesis Testing

H₀₁: Social media marketing has no significant effect on consumer trust in cooperative products.

Multiple Regression Analysis

<i>Predictor</i>	<i>β</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>
<i>Social Media Marketing</i>	0.482	8.36	0.000***

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The multiple regression analysis indicates that social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on consumer trust in cooperative products. Specifically, the beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.482$) suggests that as engagement with social media marketing increases, consumer trust in cooperative products also rises. The associated p-value ($p = 0.000$) is well below the 0.05 significance threshold, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_{01}) that social media marketing has no effect. These results demonstrate that social media marketing plays a critical role in enhancing consumer trust, highlighting its effectiveness as a strategic tool for cooperatives to build credibility, foster member confidence, and promote product adoption.

H₀₂: Cooperative governance has no significant effect on consumer trust in cooperative products.

<i>Predictor</i>	<i>β</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>
<i>Cooperative Governance</i>	0.391	6.95	0.000***

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The regression results show that cooperative governance has a positive and significant effect on consumer trust in cooperative products. The beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.391$) indicates that improvements in governance practices—such as transparency, accountability, and member participation—are associated with higher levels of consumer trust. With a p-value of 0.000, which is well below the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) that cooperative governance has no effect is rejected. These findings suggest that strong governance practices play a crucial role in reinforcing member confidence, ensuring that cooperative operations are perceived as reliable and trustworthy, thereby supporting product adoption and sustained engagement.

H₀₃: Consumer trust does not significantly influence cooperative product adoption.

Predictor	β	t-value	p-value
Consumer Trust	0.527	9.21	0.000***

Interpretation:

- High consumer trust significantly predicts product adoption.
- Consumers who perceive cooperatives as trustworthy are more likely to adopt their products.

H₀₄: Social media marketing and cooperative governance jointly have no significant effect on cooperative product adoption.

Multiple Regression (Joint Effect)

Predictor	β	t-value	p-value
Social Media Marketing	0.305	5.42	0.000***
Cooperative Governance	0.276	4.87	0.000***
$R^2 = 0.48$	F = 69.52	p = 0.000***	

The analysis indicates that consumer trust has a positive and significant influence on cooperative product adoption. The beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.527$) demonstrates that higher levels of trust are associated with greater likelihood of adopting cooperative products. The p-value ($p = 0.000$) is well below the 0.05 threshold, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_{03}) that consumer trust has no effect. These findings suggest that trust is a key driver of product adoption, as consumers who perceive cooperatives as reliable, transparent, and benevolent are more inclined to engage with and purchase their products, reinforcing the importance of trust-building strategies in cooperative marketing efforts.

Qualitative Findings and Discussion

The qualitative analysis highlighted key factors influencing consumer trust and cooperative product adoption. Transparency and member participation were emphasized by managers as essential for trust-building, with clear financial reporting and inclusive decision-making encouraging members' confidence in cooperatives. As one manager noted, "Members are more willing to buy our products when they see exactly how profits are used and have a say in decisions." Additionally, social media responsiveness emerged as a critical driver of engagement. Cooperatives that promptly addressed member inquiries and shared interactive content experienced higher interest and loyalty, as reflected in the observation, "Customers often comment on our posts; our replies make them feel

valued, which builds loyalty.” Challenges such as limited resources and low digital literacy, particularly among rural members, were identified as constraints on consistent digital engagement.

Social media content analysis corroborated these insights, showing that posts emphasizing governance transparency, success stories, and product quality generated the highest engagement. Campaigns combining educational content with promotions were particularly effective in driving consumer interaction and interest. Collectively, these findings demonstrate that social media marketing significantly influences consumer trust and product adoption, consistent with Dwivedi et al. (2021) and Smith et al. (2022), while cooperative governance reinforces trust, supporting prior work by Mwangi & Kariuki (2021) and Okafor (2021).

Importantly, the results indicate that consumer trust acts as a key mediator between governance, social media engagement, and product adoption, aligning with the commitment-trust theory (Morgan & Hunt, 1994) and Mayer et al.’s (1995) trust framework. The integrated effect of transparent governance and active social media marketing suggests that neither factor alone is sufficient; rather, their synergy maximizes member confidence and adoption rates. These insights highlight the strategic importance of combining robust governance with interactive digital engagement to strengthen cooperative performance and consumer loyalty.

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary of Findings

The findings of this study are presented as follows:

- i. The study established that social media marketing strategies have a significant and positive effect on consumer trust in cooperatives. The regression analysis revealed that social media engagement significantly predicts consumer trust ($\beta = 0.482$, $p < 0.05$). Interactive communication, timely responsiveness, and transparent digital content were found to strengthen members’ confidence in cooperative products. Social media posts emphasizing governance transparency, product quality, and member benefits generated higher engagement levels, confirming that well-structured digital strategies enhance credibility and trust formation among cooperative members.
- ii. The findings further demonstrate that cooperative governance structures significantly influence consumer trust and product adoption. Governance transparency, accountability, and participatory decision-making were positively associated with trust ($\beta = 0.391$, $p < 0.05$). Effective governance mechanisms enhance the perceived legitimacy and reliability of cooperative operations, thereby encouraging members to adopt cooperative products. Additionally, consumer trust was found to significantly predict product adoption ($\beta = 0.527$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that governance indirectly influences adoption through trust-building.
- iii. The study revealed a strong joint effect of social media marketing and cooperative governance on cooperative product adoption. Together, these variables explained approximately 48% of the variance in adoption behavior. The results indicate that neither governance structures nor marketing strategies alone are sufficient to maximize product uptake; rather, their integration produces a reinforcing effect that

strengthens consumer confidence and increases loyalty. This synergy underscores the importance of aligning transparent governance practices with strategic digital communication.

- iv. Qualitative findings identified both enabling and constraining factors affecting implementation. Transparency, inclusive participation, and responsive digital communication emerged as key enablers of trust and engagement. However, challenges such as limited digital literacy, inadequate technological resources, and inconsistent access to social media platforms—particularly among rural members—were identified as barriers that may limit the effectiveness of governance communication and digital marketing strategies.

Conclusion

This study concludes that social media marketing represents a strategic and powerful instrument for building consumer trust in cooperative products, particularly within emerging economies where conventional marketing channels may be constrained by infrastructural and financial limitations. The empirical evidence demonstrates that interactive, transparent, and responsive digital engagement significantly enhances consumer confidence, thereby strengthening the relationship between cooperatives and their members. As digital platforms continue to shape consumer behavior, cooperatives that leverage structured and consistent social media strategies are better positioned to influence perceptions and encourage product uptake.

The findings further affirm that effective cooperative governance is fundamental to sustaining consumer trust and driving product adoption. Transparency in financial reporting, accountability in leadership practices, and inclusive member participation directly reinforce the legitimacy and credibility of cooperative institutions. Governance structures that promote openness and fairness cultivate confidence among members, making them more inclined to support and adopt cooperative products. Thus, governance is not merely an administrative function but a strategic trust-building mechanism that underpins cooperative sustainability.

Importantly, the study establishes consumer trust as a critical mediating variable in the relationship between social media marketing, governance practices, and product adoption. Without trust, even well-designed marketing campaigns or sound governance frameworks may not translate into meaningful adoption outcomes. Trust functions as the psychological bridge that converts positive perceptions into actual purchasing behavior, loyalty, and advocacy.

Therefore, the study concludes that integrated strategies combining robust governance practices with proactive digital marketing efforts are most effective in stimulating consumer engagement, strengthening trust, and enhancing product adoption. Cooperatives seeking long-term competitiveness and sustainability in emerging economies must therefore invest simultaneously in digital capacity development and governance reforms. Such a dual approach ensures not only increased visibility and engagement but also enduring credibility and member loyalty, which are essential for cooperative growth and resilience in dynamic market environments.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i. Given the significant impact of social media marketing on consumer trust, cooperatives should institutionalize structured and consistent digital engagement strategies. This includes maintaining regular, interactive, and transparent content across relevant social media platforms. Posts should emphasize product quality, member benefits, governance transparency, and success stories to reinforce credibility and stimulate engagement. Additionally, cooperatives should adopt data-driven approaches by monitoring engagement metrics to continuously refine content strategies and improve marketing effectiveness.
- ii. Considering the strong influence of governance practices on consumer trust and product adoption, cooperatives should deepen transparency and accountability mechanisms. Regular disclosure of financial reports, operational decisions, and profit allocation should be made accessible to members through both physical meetings and digital platforms. Furthermore, participatory decision-making should be strengthened through consultative forums, digital polls, feedback systems, and inclusive governance frameworks that ensure members feel represented and valued. Such measures will reinforce institutional legitimacy and sustain consumer confidence.
- iii. As the study demonstrates the synergistic effect of social media marketing and governance on product adoption, cooperatives should adopt integrated strategies that align digital communication with governance practices. Governance transparency should be actively communicated through social media channels, while marketing campaigns should reflect the cooperative's ethical standards and accountability structures. Establishing cross-functional coordination between governance committees and marketing teams will ensure message consistency and enhance the credibility of promotional efforts.
- iv. To overcome identified barriers such as limited digital literacy and access constraints, cooperatives should implement continuous training programs to improve members' digital competencies. Investment in digital infrastructure, especially for rural members, such as shared digital hubs or subsidized access initiatives, will broaden participation. Furthermore, cooperatives should deliberately leverage trust as a strategic asset by highlighting testimonials, transparent processes, and measurable trust indicators as part of performance evaluation frameworks. Strengthening digital capacity while embedding trust-focused communication will enhance long-term sustainability and member loyalty.

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