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Original article

Social media marketing and sales growth of motor vehicle businesses in Nakawa Division, Kampala, Uganda. A cross-sectional study.

Oscar Obel*, Moses Muhwezi, Edmand Bakashaba
School of Graduate Studies and Research, Team University

Abstract

Background:

This study examines the relationship between social media marketing and sales growth of motor vehicle businesses in Nakawa Division, Kampala, Uganda.

Methodology:

A correlational design with a mixed-methods approach was used. The population was 280 respondents from motor vehicle selling firms (20 managers/owners and 260 employees. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire (five-point Likert scale), semi-structured interviews, and document review, and analysed with SPSS v26 (descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation), thematic analysis, and content analysis.

Results:

The response rate was 92.6% (140 of 150 employees and 10 of 12 managers/owners). Of the 140 employees, 54.3% were female, 66.4% were aged 35 years or below, 37.1% were marketing personnel, 34.3% were vehicle brokers, and 28.6% were sales agents; 50.7% had worked in motor vehicle sales for more than three years, and Facebook was the main digital channel for 22.9%. Social media marketing ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 0.97$) and sales growth ($M = 2.74$, $SD = 0.94$) were both moderate. The relationship between social media marketing and sales growth was negligible, negative, and not significant ($r = -.091$, $p = .284$), and social media marketing was not significantly related to monthly vehicles sold ($r = .005$), monthly qualified inquiries ($r = -.021$), or the lead-to-sale rate ($r = -.042$).

Conclusion:

Social media marketing was practiced to a moderate extent but was not significantly related to the sales growth of motor vehicle businesses in Nakawa Division, and firms could not show which inquiries became sales.

Recommendation:

Owners and managers should keep an inquiry register recording the channel, follow-up, and outcome of each inquiry so that sales can be linked to the practice that produced them, plan the content they publish, and update vehicle listings when vehicles are sold.

Keywords: *Social Media Marketing, Sales Growth, Motor Vehicle Businesses, Nakawa Division.*
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Corresponding Author: *Oscar Obel*
School of graduate studies and research, Team University

Background

Social media marketing has emerged as a critical digital marketing practice that enables businesses to create awareness, engage customers, build relationships, and influence purchasing decisions. It refers to the use of social networking platforms and online communities to communicate with target audiences, promote products and services, and achieve marketing objectives (Tuten & Solomon, 2023). Unlike traditional marketing channels, social media platforms provide interactive communication through which businesses receive immediate feedback, respond to customer inquiries, and develop personalised relationships with consumers.

The relationship between social media marketing and sales growth is explained by the ability of social media platforms to enhance customer awareness and influence buying behaviour. According to Kotler et al. (2022), customers increasingly rely on digital platforms to search for information, evaluate alternatives and make purchasing decisions. In the motor vehicle sector, where customers need detailed information before high-value purchases, vehicle images, videos, specifications, customer reviews and demonstrations can reduce information uncertainty and increase purchase confidence. Social media also allows motor vehicle businesses to showcase inventories, share product information, advertise promotions, and reach potential buyers beyond geographical limitations (Chaffey

& Ellis-Chadwick, 2022). Businesses that maintain an active and engaging presence are therefore likely to attract more potential customers, generate sales leads and improve conversion rates.

Social media marketing also contributes to sales growth through customer engagement and relationship development. Mangold and Faulds (2023) argue that it has transformed marketing communication by allowing customers and businesses to participate in two-way interactions rather than one-way promotional messages. For motor vehicle dealers, platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and WhatsApp Business enable direct communication with prospective buyers, allowing dealers to respond quickly to inquiries, provide quotations, schedule appointments and maintain relationships with existing customers. These interactions can increase customer trust and loyalty, which influence repeat purchases and referrals. Social media also enables targeted advertising: businesses can use customer demographic information, online behaviours and interests to reach market segments more likely to be interested in their products (Dwivedi et al., 2021), such as individuals searching for specific vehicle models, price ranges or financing options.

Empirical studies have demonstrated a positive association between social media marketing and business performance. Felix et al. (2020) found that strategic use of social media marketing improves brand awareness, customer engagement, and organisational performance. Godey et al. (2021) established that social media marketing activities positively influence brand equity and customer responses, which indirectly support sales growth. In the automotive sector, Makgopa (2021) found that car dealerships increasingly use social media platforms to improve communication with customers and enhance marketing effectiveness.

However, the effectiveness of social media marketing depends on the quality, consistency, and strategic management of online activities. Merisavo (2024) notes that merely having a social media presence does not guarantee improved business performance unless organisations actively engage customers and provide relevant content. Motor vehicle businesses that fail to regularly update vehicle listings, respond to customer inquiries, or create appealing content may not fully benefit, and small and medium-sized businesses may face limited digital skills, inadequate marketing budgets, and poor understanding of social media analytics.

In Uganda and other developing economies, increasing internet access and widespread smartphone usage present significant opportunities for motor vehicle businesses to use social media to overcome geographical limitations, increase market visibility and compete with larger dealers, including in commercial areas such as Nakawa Division. Yet association records reviewed for this study show average monthly sales in the division falling from 35 vehicles in 2022 to 25 in 2024, and the average stock-holding period rising from 45 days to about 75 days (UMVTA, 2025); limited empirical evidence exists on the extent to which social media marketing contributes to the sales growth of motor vehicle businesses in Uganda. This study therefore examined the relationship between social media marketing and sales growth of motor vehicle businesses in Nakawa Division, focusing on sales revenue, sales volume, customer base, and market share.

Methodology.

Research Design

The study adopted a correlational research design and a mixed-methods approach. The correlational design enabled the researcher to determine whether variations in the use of social media marketing were associated with sales growth among motor vehicle businesses without manipulating the study variables (Saunders et al., 2019). The quantitative approach involved collecting numerical data from employees (brokers, sales agents and marketing personnel) through structured questionnaires, which allowed statistical measurement of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The qualitative approach involved collecting in-depth information from selected key informants through interviews to explain how social media marketing was adopted, implemented, and perceived to influence sales performance (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Study Population

The population comprised 280 respondents from selected motor vehicle selling firms in Nakawa Division, Kampala: 20 managers/owners and 260 employees (vehicle brokers, sales agents and marketing personnel) involved in the daily marketing and sales activities of the businesses. The figures were obtained from the membership register of the Nakawa Motor Vehicle Traders Association (2025), which lists the registered motor vehicle selling firms in the division together with their managers/owners and attached staff, and were confirmed against the staff lists of the selected firms before sampling. These categories of respondents were selected because they have relevant knowledge and practical experience of social media marketing and its contribution to sales growth in the sector.

Table 1: Study population

Category of respondents	Target population	Percentage (%)
Managers/owners of motor vehicle selling firms	20	7.1
Brokers/agents/marketing personnel	260	92.9
Total	280	100

Source: Nakawa Motor Vehicle Traders Association (2025), membership register.

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The sample size was determined from the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table, which gives a statistically acceptable sample at a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error; for a population of 280, the sample was 162. It was distributed proportionately among the categories of respondents.

Purposive sampling was used to select managers and owners because they hold strategic knowledge of business operations, marketing decisions, investment in digital technologies, and overall sales performance; it allows researchers to deliberately select respondents with information relevant to the study objectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Simple random sampling was used to select employees, giving each eligible employee an equal chance of selection, which reduced selection bias and improved representativeness. Employees were suitable because they are directly involved in marketing activities, customer interactions, vehicle promotion, and sales.

Table 2: Sample size distribution

Category of respondents	Target population	Sample size	Sampling technique
Managers/owners of motor vehicle selling firms	20	12	Purposive sampling
Brokers/agents/marketing personnel	260	150	Simple random sampling
Total	280	162	

Source: Krejcie and Morgan (1970); Nakawa Motor Vehicle Traders Association (2025).

Data Collection Methods and Instruments

Questionnaire survey. A structured questionnaire with closed-ended questions was used to collect quantitative data from employees. It allowed standardised information to be collected from a relatively large number of respondents within a limited period and facilitated statistical analysis and measurement of relationships among variables (Saunders et al., 2019). Section A captured demographic information; the other sections measured social media marketing and sales growth indicators (sales revenue, sales volume, customer base and market share). Responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.

Interviews. Semi-structured interviews with managers and owners collected detailed information on managerial experiences, perceptions, challenges, and opportunities associated with social media marketing, including how it influenced customer attraction, sales performance, and business competitiveness. Interviews allowed the researcher to explore issues the questionnaires might not have captured, and a semi-structured guide obtained detailed explanations while keeping consistency across participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

Document review. A checklist was used to review secondary information from sales records, marketing reports, digital campaign reports, online business profiles, customer engagement records, industry reports, and publications of government agencies and business associations. Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing and evaluating documents to extract information relevant to a research problem (Bowen, 2023). Document review helped validate the primary data and, together with the questionnaires and interviews, enhanced reliability through triangulation.

Validity and Reliability of Instruments

Validity is the extent to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). It was established through expert judgment and the Content Validity Index (CVI). The instruments were submitted to research experts, including supervisors and specialists in business management and marketing research, who assessed the relevance, clarity, appropriateness, and adequacy of the items; ambiguous, irrelevant, or repetitive items were modified or removed. An instrument was considered valid if the CVI was 0.70 or above (Amin, 2005).

Reliability is the extent to which an instrument produces consistent results under similar conditions (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). A pilot study was conducted among motor vehicle businesses outside the study area with similar characteristics to the target population to identify unclear questions and assess the consistency of responses. Internal consistency was determined using Cronbach's alpha (Sekaran & Bougie, 2019), calculated for each construct,

with 0.70 or above regarded as acceptable (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Reliability of the interview guide and document review checklist was enhanced through questions based on the study objective, consistency in the interview process, and systematic recording and interpretation of responses.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher obtained an introductory letter from the School of Graduate Studies and Research of Team University and presented it to the management of selected motor vehicle businesses in Nakawa Division to seek permission. The researcher explained the purpose of the study, its academic significance and the procedures involved, and informed respondents that participation was voluntary and that their information would be treated confidentially. Questionnaires were distributed physically and, where necessary, electronically, and respondents were given adequate time to complete them. Semi-structured interviews were scheduled at convenient times and, with consent, responses were recorded through written notes or audio recording. Documents were reviewed using the checklist. Completed questionnaires, interview responses and reviewed documents were then organised, coded and prepared for analysis.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were edited, coded, entered and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS v26). Frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations were used to summarise respondents' demographic characteristics and describe the extent of social media marketing and the status of sales growth indicators. Means were interpreted as 1.00–1.80 very low, 1.81–2.60 low, 2.61–3.40 moderate, 3.41–4.20 high, and 4.21–5.00 very high. Frequencies and percentages were also used to establish which social media platforms (Facebook, WhatsApp Business, Instagram, TikTok, X and YouTube) attracted the most customers, based on Section A of the questionnaire.

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between social media marketing and sales growth. Strength was described using Cohen (1988): below .10 negligible, .10 to .29 small, .30 to .49 medium and .50 or above large. All tests were two-tailed at the 5% level of significance. Interview data were analysed thematically: responses were transcribed, coded, categorised and organised into themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Document review data were analysed through content analysis, with information from sales records, marketing reports and digital performance records organised and compared with the questionnaire and interview findings to enhance interpretation through triangulation.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher obtained informed consent from all participants, who were told the purpose of the study and the procedures involved, that participation was voluntary and that they could decline or withdraw at any stage without negative consequences. Information was treated confidentially and used only for academic purposes; names and private business details were not disclosed, and data were securely stored and accessed only by the researcher and authorised academic supervisors. The researcher avoided coercion, conducted questionnaires and interviews at convenient times to minimise disruption of business activities, acknowledged all sources and presented findings accurately without alteration. An introductory letter and ethical approval were obtained from Team University, and permission was sought from the motor vehicle businesses in Nakawa Division.

Results

Response Rate

Table 3: Response rate

Category of respondents	Sample size	Responses	Response rate (%)	Main data source
Managers/owners of motor vehicle selling firms	12	10	83.3	Semi-structured interviews
Brokers, sales agents and marketing personnel	150	140	93.3	Questionnaire survey
Total	162	150	92.6	140 questionnaires and 10 interviews

Source: Primary data (2026); sample sizes from Table 2.

Of the 150 sampled employees, 140 returned usable questionnaires (93.3%), and 10 of the 12 sampled managers and owners were interviewed (83.3%), giving an overall response rate of 92.6%. A response rate of 70% or more is generally considered adequate for survey research (Sekaran & Bougie, 2019). The 140 employees came from 20 firms, with seven respondents from each firm, and the ten interviews were held with managers or owners of ten of

these firms. The 20 documents were reviewed. The two managers who were not interviewed were not available during data collection, so the managers' views should be read as those of half of the 20 firms.

Background Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 4: Background characteristics of the employees (n = 140)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Position in the business	Marketing personnel	52	37.1
	Vehicle broker	48	34.3
	Sales agent	40	28.6
Gender	Female	76	54.3
	Male	64	45.7
Age group	18–25	33	23.6
	26–35	60	42.9
	36–45	37	26.4
	46+	10	7.1
Years in motor vehicle sales	Under 1 year	22	15.7
	1–3 years	47	33.6
	4–6 years	42	30.0
	Over 6 years	29	20.7
Total		140	100.0

Source: Primary data (2026).

Marketing personnel were the largest group (37.1%), followed by vehicle brokers (34.3%) and sales agents (28.6%). Females were slightly more numerous than males (54.3% against 45.7%). Most respondents were aged 35 years or below (66.4%), and 50.7% had worked in motor vehicle sales for more than three years. The respondents were therefore mostly young and fairly experienced employees who handled the daily marketing and selling of vehicles, so they were suitable informants on the practices of their firms.

Table 5: Main digital channel of the business (n = 140)

Main digital channel of the business	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Facebook	32	22.9
Instagram	23	16.4
WhatsApp Business	22	15.7
Online marketplace	22	15.7
Business website	21	15.0
TikTok	20	14.3

Source: Primary data (2026).

Facebook was the main digital channel for 32 employees (22.9%), followed by Instagram (16.4%) and WhatsApp Business and online marketplaces (15.7% each). No single channel dominated, which agrees with the managers, who said that they used Facebook and WhatsApp to post vehicles, together with marketplaces and referrals.

Reliability and Validity of the Instruments

Table 6: Reliability of the questionnaire scales (n = 140)

Scale	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha	Decision ($\alpha \geq 0.70$)
Social media marketing	6	0.78	Reliable
Sales growth	8	0.84	Reliable

Source: Primary data (2026).

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The CVI of the instruments was 0.85, against the minimum of 0.70. Cronbach's alpha was 0.78 for social media marketing and 0.84 for sales growth, both above the 0.70 required (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Sales Growth of Motor Vehicle Businesses in Nakawa Division

Sales growth is the dependent variable, so it is described first. It was measured by employees' ratings of eight statements on revenue, sales volume, customer base, and market share; by three figures that each employee reported for the firm; and by the views of managers and the documents reviewed.

Employees' Ratings of Sales Growth

Table 7: Employees' ratings of sales growth (n = 140)

No.	Statement	Agree (%)	Not sure (%)	Disagree (%)	Mean	SD	Level
SG1	The sales revenue of my business has increased over the last three years.	23.6	44.3	32.1	2.87	0.90	Moderate
SG2	Revenue from vehicle sales has grown steadily each year.	27.9	44.3	27.9	2.97	0.95	Moderate
SG3	The number of vehicles sold by my business has increased over the last three years.	20.7	36.4	42.9	2.71	0.94	Moderate
SG4	We now sell more vehicles per month than we did three years ago.	17.9	45.0	37.1	2.74	0.91	Moderate
SG5	The number of customers buying from my business has increased over the last three years.	16.4	31.4	52.1	2.56	0.98	Low
SG6	The business attracts many new customers each month.	15.7	47.1	37.1	2.73	0.97	Moderate
SG7	My business's share of the motor vehicle market in Nakawa Division has increased over the last three years.	21.4	42.9	35.7	2.73	0.99	Moderate
SG8	My business is more competitive than most similar businesses in Nakawa Division.	13.6	42.9	43.6	2.63	0.86	Moderate
	Overall mean	19.6	41.8	38.6	2.74	0.94	Moderate

Source: Primary data (2026). Agree includes strongly agree; disagree includes strongly disagree.

The overall mean rating of sales growth was 2.74 (SD = 0.94), which is moderate; only 19.6% of the responses agreed or strongly agreed with the statements, while 38.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed. The highest rating was for revenue from vehicle sales having grown each year steadily (SG2, M = 2.97), and the lowest was for the number of customers buying from the business having increased (SG5, M = 2.56). No statement reached the high band, so employees did not report clear growth in any of the four dimensions. This is consistent with the documentary evidence of falling sales.

Reported Monthly Sales, Inquiries and Lead-to-Sale Rate

Table 8: Reported monthly sales, inquiries and lead-to-sale rate (n = 140)

Figure reported by the employee for the firm	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Vehicles sold per month, 2024	24.6	6.4	10.0	41.0
Qualified inquiries per month	38.5	14.4	3.0	78.0
Lead-to-sale rate (%)	15.1	5.2	4.7	27.7

Source: Primary data (2026).

Employees reported an average of 24.6 vehicles sold per month in 2024, 38.5 qualified inquiries per month, and a lead-to-sale rate of 15.1%. The reported monthly sales agree with the documents, which showed an average of 25 vehicles per month for 2024 (D01), and the reported lead-to-sale rate agrees with the document showing a conversion rate of about 15% (D03). The employees' reports therefore matched the association records closely.

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Views of Managers and Owners on Sales Growth

The managers described sales that were uneven, with competition and long stock-holding periods. MGR02 said, "Our sales have been uneven; some months we sell several vehicles and other months we hold stock longer," and MGR07 said that stock could stay for weeks if the price was high or buyers could not arrange financing. MGR04 observed that buyers compared many dealers before deciding, and MGR08 said that digital marketing could not solve problems such as import costs or customers' purchasing power. Several managers said that they could not link sales to the channel that produced them: MGR03 had no record linking each inquiry to a sale, MGR06 did not always calculate market share or conversion rate, and MGR10 said that the firm needed to know which channels led to actual purchases. Two managers pointed to positive factors, namely quick response and follow-up after the first inquiry (MGR05) and repeat customers and referrals, helped by online communication (MGR09). The themes recorded from the interviews that relate to this study were social reach and inquiries, weak tracking of lead conversion, and high competition and stock holding.

Documentary Evidence on Sales Growth

The documents agree with the managers that sales were under pressure. The association sales summary (D01; UMVTA, 2025) showed average monthly sales falling from 35 vehicles in 2022 to 28 in 2023 and 25 in 2024, a fall of 10 vehicles per month or about 28.6%, and the stock report (D02) showed the average stock-holding period rising from 45 days to about 75 days. The customer lead and conversion report (D03) showed the conversion rate declining from about 22% to 15%. Customs records (D07; URA, 2024) showed that vehicle import registrations stayed relatively stable while the conversion of imported vehicles into final purchases fell, and Kampala Capital City Authority reports (D08; KCCA, 2024) described Nakawa as a major commercial hub with competitive pressure, changing consumer preferences and slower turnover among some businesses. The sales ledgers (D09), stock registers (D15) and annual performance summaries (D20) of the selected firms were reviewed, but the records supplied described what each document contained and gave no firm-level figures, so firm-level trends could not be reported; D20 had no findings recorded.

Social Media Marketing and Sales Growth

Employees' Ratings of Social Media Marketing

Table 9: Employees' ratings of social media marketing (n = 140)

No.	Statement	Agree (%)	Not sure (%)	Disagree (%)	Mean	SD	Level
SMM1	My business actively uses social media platforms to promote vehicles.	50.0	32.9	17.1	3.44	1.00	High
SMM2	My business posts vehicle photos, videos, and prices on social media regularly.	45.0	37.1	17.9	3.36	0.93	Moderate
SMM3	My business responds quickly to customer enquiries received through social media.	36.4	41.4	22.1	3.21	0.99	Moderate
SMM4	My business uses paid social media advertising to reach potential buyers.	35.0	45.0	20.0	3.17	0.90	Moderate
SMM5	Social media is used to run promotions, offers, and vehicle campaigns.	45.0	35.7	19.3	3.36	0.96	Moderate
SMM6	My business interacts with followers through comments, live sessions, and messages.	28.6	39.3	32.1	2.93	0.99	Moderate
	Overall mean	40.0	38.6	21.4	3.25	0.97	Moderate

Source: Primary data (2026). Agree includes strongly agree; disagree includes strongly disagree.

Social media marketing had an overall mean of 3.25 (SD = 0.97), which is moderate, and 40.0% of the responses agreed or strongly agreed. The most highly rated statement was that the business actively used social media to promote vehicles (SMM1, M = 3.44, high), followed by promotions and campaigns (SMM5, M = 3.36) and regular posting of photos, videos, and prices (SMM2, M = 3.36). The lowest rating was for interacting with followers through comments, live sessions and messages (SMM6, M = 2.93). The firms therefore used social media to advertise vehicles but were less active in two-way interaction with followers, and paid advertising (SMM4, M = 3.17) was rated slightly lower than organic posting.

Views of Managers and Owners on Social Media Marketing

Table 10: Views of managers and owners on social media marketing

Informant	Firm	What the manager said about social media marketing
MGR01	Dealer 01	"We post vehicles on Facebook and WhatsApp because customers can see the photos and ask questions before visiting."
MGR02	Dealer 03	"Social media brings inquiries, but not every person who messages us has money ready to buy."
MGR03	Dealer 05	"When we post clear pictures, the price and mileage, people respond better than when we post only one photo."
MGR04	Dealer 07	"We use social media almost every day, although we do not always track which post resulted in a sale."
MGR05	Dealer 09	"A promoted post can reach more people, but the cost is difficult to maintain when sales are slow."
MGR06	Dealer 11	"Customers share vehicle posts with friends, and sometimes that brings a buyer we had not expected."
MGR07	Dealer 13	"We have a page, but keeping it active depends on whether someone has time to take photos and reply."
MGR08	Dealer 15	"Online comments and messages help us answer questions quickly and keep the customer interested."
MGR09	Dealer 17	"We sometimes receive inquiries from outside Kampala, but arranging inspection and trust can take time."
MGR10	Dealer 19	"Digital promotion helps people know our stock, but we still need physical inspection before most deals close."

Source: Interview data (2026).

The managers said that social media brought inquiries and wider reach but did not guarantee sales. MGR01 posted vehicles on Facebook and WhatsApp so that customers could see photos and ask questions before visiting; MGR03 found that clear pictures with the price and mileage drew better responses; MGR04 used social media almost daily; and MGR06 said that customers shared posts and sometimes brought unexpected buyers. At the same time, MGR02 said that not everyone who messages has money ready to buy; MGR05 said that promoted posts were difficult to sustain when sales were slow; MGR07 said that the page stayed active only when someone had time to take photos and reply; MGR09 said that inquiries from outside Kampala took time to turn into sales because of inspection and trust, and MGR10 said that most deals still needed physical inspection. MGR04 admitted that the firm did not always track which post resulted in a sale. Social media was therefore a useful source of inquiries, but the managers could not show its link with sales.

Documentary Evidence on Social Media Marketing

The documents were consistent with this picture. The association's digital marketing adoption survey (D04; UMVTA, 2025) found that about 60% of small and medium-sized motor vehicle dealers in Nakawa used social media platforms for advertising. The campaign analytics (D10), social media business pages (D11), and customer inquiry registers (D14) of the selected firms were reviewed for spend, reach, clicks, messages, posting frequency, response times, follow-up, and inspections booked, but the records supplied described what each contained and gave no firm-level figures, so the effect of campaigns on sales could not be calculated from them.

Relationship between Social Media Marketing and Sales Growth

Table 11: Correlation between social media marketing and sales growth

Measure of sales growth	n	r	95% CI	p	Strength
Employees' sales growth score (Likert items)	140	−.091	−.25 to .08	.284	Negligible
Reported monthly vehicle sales, 2024	140	.005	−.16 to .17	.951	Negligible
Reported monthly qualified inquiries	140	−.021	−.19 to .15	.806	Negligible
Reported lead-to-sale rate (%)	140	−.042	−.21 to .13	.624	Negligible
Sales growth score: marketing personnel only	52	−.038	−.31 to .24	.789	Negligible
Sales growth score: vehicle brokers only	48	−.171	−.43 to .12	.245	Small

Sales growth score: sales agents only	40	−.068	−.37 to .25	.679	Negligible

Source: Primary data (2026).

The correlation between social media marketing and the employees' rating of sales growth was −.091 (p = .284, 95% CI −.25 to .08), which is negligible, negative, and not statistically significant, so social media marketing explained only 0.8% of the variation in the rating. The Spearman coefficient (−.124, p = .145) and the bootstrap confidence interval (−.24 to .05) gave the same result. The practice was also not significantly related to monthly vehicles sold (r = .005, p = .951), monthly qualified inquiries (r = −.021, p = .806), or the lead-to-sale rate (r = −.042, p = .624), and the coefficient was not significant in any of the three groups of employees. When the scores were averaged by firm (n = 20), the correlation was r = .144 (p = .545), which was also not significant. The finding does not support the expectation that firms that use social media more would record higher sales growth. The managers gave a likely reason: social media produced inquiries, but conversion depended on price, vehicle condition, financing, and trust, and the firms did not track which inquiries became sales. With 140 respondents, a correlation of about .23 or more in absolute value could have been detected with 80% power, so a relationship of medium size is unlikely, but a small one cannot be ruled out.

Discussion

Social media marketing was practiced to a moderate extent (M = 3.25). Firms promoted vehicles actively and posted photos, videos, and prices, but interacted less with followers. The managers said that social media brought inquiries and reach, and the documents showed that about 60% of dealers used it. The correlation with sales growth was −.091 (p = .284), so no significant relationship was found.

The finding that social media marketing was widely used but was not related to sales growth differs from the expectation in the literature that social media increases customer engagement and sales (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2022; Chen et al., 2025). This is consistent with Merisavo (2024), who noted that having a social media presence does not improve business performance unless organisations actively engage customers and provide relevant content. In this study, the item on interaction with followers had the lowest rating among the social media items, and the managers said that pages stayed active only when someone had time to post and reply. The managers' view that most deals still needed physical inspection, and that price, vehicle condition, and financing decided the sale, also explains why activity on social media did not appear in sales. Makgopa (2021) found that dealerships used social media as a marketing communication tool, and the present study agrees on use but cannot confirm an effect on sales. In terms of the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989), the firms had accepted and used the platform, since it was seen as useful for reaching customers, but acceptance did not translate into measurable sales growth in this data set.

Conclusion

Social media marketing was practised to a moderate extent but was not significantly related to the sales growth of motor vehicle businesses in Nakawa Division, and firms could not show which inquiries became sales.

Limitations

First, some respondents may have been reluctant to give accurate information on their social media marketing and sales performance because it may be commercially sensitive; the researcher assured them that information would be treated confidentially and used only for academic purposes. Second, there was non-response among busy managers, owners, brokers, sales agents, and marketing personnel (140 of 150 employees and 10 of 12 managers responded), which reduced the usable data; the researcher allowed adequate time and made follow-ups. Third, access to business records was limited because some businesses were unwilling to share sales records, marketing reports, and campaign performance reports for confidentiality reasons; the researcher requested permission from management and used document review alongside questionnaires and interviews for triangulation. Fourth, time and financial constraints limited the number of businesses reached and the time for interviews and document review. Fifth, the study used a cross-sectional design and perceptual ratings, so it could not show cause and effect, and employees' ratings of sales growth did not agree with each other within firms. Sixth, the data came from 20 firms in one division of Kampala, from 140 employees, and from the managers of only ten firms, so the findings may not be directly generalisable to motor vehicle businesses in other divisions or districts with different market conditions. Seventh, the records reviewed described their contents and gave few firm-level figures, so the documents could not be used to test the relationship statistically. Finally, the interview data were short responses to four questions, and the managers' answers were recorded as summaries.

Recommendation

Owners and managers of motor vehicle businesses should keep a simple inquiry register that records the channel of each inquiry, the follow-up made, and the outcome, so that sales can be linked to the practice that produced them. They should also plan the content they publish, update vehicle listings when vehicles are sold, and assign a named person to reply to messages quickly.

List of abbreviations

KCCA: Kampala Capital City Authority
UMVTA: Uganda Motor Vehicle Traders Association
URA: Uganda Revenue Authority
α: Cronbach's alpha
CI: Confidence Interval
CVI: Content Validity Index
M: Mean
n: Sample size
p: Probability (significance) value
r: Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient
SD: Standard Deviation
SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

Informed Consent.

Written informed consent was obtained from all participants before their inclusion in the study. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, procedures involved, potential risks and benefits, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty.

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Conflict of interest.

There is no conflict of interest.

Availability of data.

Data used in this study are available upon request from the corresponding author.

Authors contribution.

OO conceptualized the study, developed the methodology, carried out the investigation, and wrote the original draft.
JA: Supervision, validation, writing- review and editing
MM: Supervision, validation, writing- review and editing.
All authors approved the final version of the manuscript and agreed to be accountable for the work.

Authors biography

Oscar Obel is a researcher at the School of Graduate Studies and Research, Team University.
Janice Alinda is a researcher at the School of Graduate Studies and Research, Team University
Moses Muhwezi is a research supervisor at the School of Graduate Studies and Research, Team University.

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