



The Role of Digital Advertising Strategies on Rabbit Farming Growth and Market Access in Ilorin, Kwara State

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Abstract

This paper examines the role of digital advertising strategies on the growth and market accessibility of rabbit farming in Ilorin, Kwara State. This policy syndrome explains how, despite global expansion of digital marketing, most rabbit farmers in Ilorin still rely on conventional modes, hindering their market reach and profitability. Adopting the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as a framework, the paper examines the level of awareness, adoption, and effectiveness of digital advertising platforms, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram in addressing marketing problems. A descriptive survey of 50 rabbit farmers revealed that only 25% actively utilize digital platforms, with Facebook being the most popular. Regression analysis demonstrated a significant positive relationship between the use of digital advertising and both market accessibility ($R^2 = 0.65$, $p < 0.05$) and profitability ($R^2 = 0.62$, $p < 0.05$). While these values show the percentage of variation in market accessibility and profitability explained by the adoption of digital advertising, they do not demonstrate a direct causal effect. However, the results accentuate the innovative ability of digital platforms in improving visibility and customer engagement for smallholder farming. To optimize these benefits, the paper proposes offering financial backing, employing skill development programs focused on digital adoption, and investing in dependable internet setups. By tackling the aforementioned, this research intends to contribute to the existing literature by reducing the gap between digital marketing practices and their application in suburban farming context, eventually fostering growth in the cuniculture sector.

Keywords: Cuniculture, Digital Advertising, Market Accessibility, Profitability, Rabbit Farming

Introduction

Farming has been a major occupation in Africa, especially Nigeria, providing jobs for most Nigerians within the respective chains in the sector. It has been a major source of government revenue before the discovery of oil, and a vital sector that subsequent

governments have been focusing on. Most especially to reduce the burden of mono-economy that dependence on oil had left the country. Cultivation of land and crop production is however not the only aspect in agriculture, livestock farming is becoming a cash cow within the sector. Among livestock farming, rabbit farming also known as cuniculture, is gaining recognition as an alternative source of income and protein-rich food. The rapid rate of reproduction, low capital requirements, and the increasing demand for rabbit meat and its by-products makes rabbit farming alluring (Akinmutimi & Ocheja, 2020). It is greatly valued for its superior nutritional composition, lean quality, and mild flavour, making it a favorite choice among health-conscious consumers. These qualities contribute to its appeal as one of the healthiest and required meat choices (Etukudo, Ekerette, Johnson, & Okon, 2024). In Ilorin, Kwara State, cuniculture has a lot of challenges, including limited market access, poor awareness, and inefficient marketing strategies.

The introduction of the internet, basically transformed marketing communications. Prior to the introduction, marketing communication were basically done through platforms such as radio, television, magazines and other conventional platforms. Internet introduction, led to social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Google Ads. These platforms demonstrate effective and efficient ways of reaching target audiences in an optimal way (Chaffey, 2022). Irrespective of the means used, either traditional or digital, the primary goal of marketing communication, is to deliver appropriate messages to the right audience in the most efficient ways.

One primary benefit of utilizing digital marketing strategy is the ability to interact, enhancing mutual communication, which allows almost immediate feedback. This interactivity coupled with diverse platforms and digital plan allows a seamless and personalized connections (Rizvanović, Zutshi, Grilo, & Nodehi, 2023). Information and communication are basic agricultural inputs that can stimulates increased outputs (Peter, Ogara, & Mugumbate, 2023). For small-scale rabbit farmers, these platforms would increase visibility, create good relationship and lead to increased market share, which would invariably lead to competitive advantage (Adeyemi & Ojo, 2021).

Notwithstanding the benefits of utilizing digital marketing strategies, many farmers in Ilorin still make use of conventional marketing methods such as word-of-mouth and local market sales. These often reduce their marketing coverage and ability to effectively compete in the livestock agricultural sub-sector. The inadequacy in technical knowledge, inadequate capital, and poor infrastructure network, also pose additional challenges to the adoption of digital marketing communication. Ease customers outreach, high connectivity and ability to interact almost immediately are end results of digital marketing (Kumar & Sharma, 2022).it is no doubt that the adoption of digital marketing

communication would open better growth prospects and reduce challenges faced by rabbit farmers. If well utilized, it could also lead to borderless marketing.

Most researches on digital marketing strategies have basically concentrated on other areas of livestock and larger scale farming, creating an obvious gap to its importance to rabbit farming (Eze & Nwankwo, 2019). Large scale farming usually has better access to infrastructure and access to digital tools, compared to rabbit farming which is usually a small-scale farming, with series of associated problems. These problems like limited access to internet, low level of digital literacy and low awareness level of digital marketing communication platforms. All these have led to low level of usage of digital marketing platforms, especially in the area of study.

Cuniculture is a special farming within the agricultural sector, that needs creative methods to market, especially, since it is seen as a game meat. Different from other livestock that is seen as regular and frequently purchased. It is thus imperative to look for ways to create more marketing potentials for it. Therefore, adopting digital advertising strategies in this regard is necessary. Understanding how platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram can improve the reach and profitability of rabbit farming enterprises in a semi-urban context like Ilorin and offer valuable understandings. This exploration could bridge the gap between digital marketing theory and its practical applications in smaller agricultural enterprises, promoting inclusivity and sustainable growth in the sector. The research employed a descriptive survey methodology, using purposive sampling to 50 rabbit farmers in Ilorin. Data were gathered through structured questionnaires and analysed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis to examine the adoption of digital advertising and its effects on market access and profitability.

Statement of Problem

Rabbit farming is becoming a profitable niche in livestock sector in Nigeria, specifically in Ilorin, Kwara State, yet it still encounters various marketing challenge. Although rabbit meat offers significant nutritional and economic benefits, it is still under-commercialized. This is basically due to restricted market access, a lack of consumer awareness, and the prevalence of conventional marketing approaches. The conventional approaches limit the scale and competitiveness of rabbit farming businesses, leading to low profitability and growth.

Conversely, digital advertising platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram provide creative and cost-effective means to connect with wider audiences, increase visibility, and improve farmer-to-consumer engagement. However, the adoption of such tools among small-scale rabbit farmers is still minimal, primarily due to limited digital literacy, poor infrastructure, and inadequate exposure to modern marketing techniques.

Although numerous studies have investigated digital marketing within wider agricultural frameworks, there remains a distinct lack of empirical evidence focused on rabbit farming, especially in semi-urban regions such as Ilorin. This study aims to fill that gap by exploring the impact of digital advertising strategies on the growth, market accessibility, and profitability of rabbit farming enterprises. Grasping this relationship is essential for enabling farmers and guiding focused interventions designed to foster inclusive growth and innovation in the livestock sector.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to examine the roles of digital advertising strategies on rabbit farming growth and market accessibility in Ilorin, Kwara State. The specific objectives are to:

- i. evaluate the level of awareness and adoption of digital advertising among rabbit farmers in Ilorin.
- ii. ascertain the relationship between digital advertising efforts and the profitability of rabbit farming.

Literature Review

Digital marketing communication is the application of platforms that make use of software and tools to reach target audiences, usually via internet connection. Farmers could make use of these platforms to advertise their rabbits and its by-products. Platforms such as Telegram, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and other available digital and electronic media. These tools are very effective and reliable in getting marketing messages to the intended audiences at an almost immediate speed (Chaffey, 2022). Another advantage is the ability for visuals on most of these platforms, making marketing an interaction, where both buyer and seller can visualize the product and negotiate.

Within the context of rabbit farming, digital marketing could be used in assisting in creating markets for the numerous products from rabbit farming. These products could include the meat, fur, urine, and other related products and services within the chain of the farming. Stakeholders within the sub-sector, could be feed producers, hoteliers, bars. An effective digital marketing strategies would be needed to harness the wide opportunities that abound within the sector. When strategically planned, appropriate messages can go viral and lead to sales. This will definitely widen the market coverage of such farmers that utilize these digital platforms.

Rabbit farming is known to be highly beneficial, especially since it requires low capital startups, rapid reproduction, minimal space requirement and healthy meat (Akinmutimi & Ocheja, 2020). Notwithstanding the aforementioned benefits, rabbit farming faces some problems like low consumer awareness, low sales and too much reliance on

conventional marketing efforts. These have greatly affected most farmers from tapping from the abundant wealth that abound from this farming.

In Ilorin, Kwara State, these challenges are exacerbated by infrastructural limitations and a lack of integration with modern marketing channels. This study conceptualizes digital advertising as a transformative tool to address these barriers. Which also can help in the market expansion, awareness creation and lead to growth in the sub-sector. An effective, monitored advertisement through digital platforms can improve the attractiveness of rabbit farming and reposition it into an attractive venture.

The study is anchored on the **Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)**, which posits that the adoption of new technologies, such as digital advertising platforms, is influenced by two key factors: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Davis, 1989). In the context of rabbit farming, farmers are more likely to adopt digital advertising if they perceive it as beneficial for increasing market accessibility and profitability, and if they find the platforms easy to use. The TAM provides a theoretical lens to examine how rabbit farmers' attitudes and perceptions influence their adoption of digital advertising strategies.

Rameshkumar (2022) carried out a study on the impact of digital marketing in agricultural sector in India, with a specific interest on farmers' perception, awareness and impact of digital marketing in agricultural sector during Covid-19 pandemic. The study collected primary data from 120 respondents, and the data were analysed using percentages, frequencies and Chi-square tests. Findings indicated that digital marketing plays a vital role during the pandemic by aiding farmers to secure better prices for their products and reduce costs, invariably enhancing their economic resilience during the period.

Ebarefimia, Ajose, Aliu, and Moyosore (2024) examined the impact of digital marketing on agricultural product sales with specific reference to smallholder farmers in Nigeria. The research gathered responses from 100 respondents from Ogun State, Nigeria. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, skewness and Kurtosis. Findings revealed that despite the potential of digital marketing to boost income and improve sales of farmers in Nigeria, no significant impact on sales was seen. It also revealed that the farmers lack required expertise to utilize digital marketing strategies.

Akinmutimi and Ocheja (2020) carried out a study to examine the challenges faced by rabbit farmers in Nigeria, specifically in relation to market access and marketing strategies. The objective was to examine the effectiveness of existing marketing methods and explore improvements. Using a qualitative approach, the study gathered data from rabbit farmers through interviews and observational methods. The findings revealed that

farmers primarily relied on conventional marketing techniques such as local market sales and word-of-mouth, which limited their market reach and growth potential. The researchers recommended the usage of innovative marketing strategies, especially digital platforms, to enhance visibility and access to wider markets.

Despite these insights, there is limited research specifically addressing the use of digital advertising in rabbit farming. This study aims to fill this gap by examining how digital advertising strategies can enhance the growth and market accessibility of rabbit farming enterprises in Ilorin, Kwara State. The findings will contribute to the literature by providing actionable recommendations for leveraging digital tools to overcome marketing challenges in semi-urban agricultural settings.

Methodology

This paper utilized descriptive survey research design to examine the role of digital advertising strategies on rabbit farming growth and market access in Ilorin, Kwara State. The targeted population consisted of approximately 150 registered rabbit farmers in region as identified by Kwara State Rabbit Association. Based on farmers who are engaged in marketing activities, a purposive sampling technique was used to select 50 rabbit farmers. This method was considered appropriate to ensure that only those with relevant experience in digital advertising were considered, which would enhance the validity of this study's results. Data were gathered through administering of structured questionnaires, which included respondents' demographics, awareness and use of digital advertising platforms. The gathered data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize patterns of digital advertising adoption, and regression analysis to examine the relationship between digital marketing strategies and business outcomes—specifically market accessibility and profitability. Regression analysis was justified as it enables the researcher to measure the strength and direction of association between independent variables (e.g., digital advertising practices) and dependent variables (market-related outcomes), while also controlling for other influencing factors. Statistical significance was tested at the 5% level ($p < 0.05$).

Model Specification:

The regression model used is specified as:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \epsilon$$

Where:

- Y = Outcome variable (e.g., market accessibility or profitability)
- X_1 = Awareness of digital advertising platforms

- X_2 = Frequency of digital advertising usage
- β_0 = Constant (intercept)
- β_1, β_2 = Coefficients of independent variables
- ε = Error term

Result Presentation

Descriptive Statistics

Response Rate

Out of the total number of administered questionnaires, 50 were completed and returned, resulting in a 100% response rate.

Table 1 Demographic Profile of respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Percentage	Frequency
Gender	Male	60%	30
	Female	40%	20
Age	30-50years	70%	35
	29 below	30%	15
Educational level	B.Sc. & above	65%	33
	Below B.Sc.	35%	17
Farming Experience	3years and above	80%	40
	Less than 3years	20%	10

Source: Authors' computation (2025)

Regression Analysis Results

The regression analysis examined the relationship between digital advertising strategies (independent variable) and two dependent variables: market accessibility and profitability of rabbit farming enterprises. The results are summarized in the tables below:

Table 2: Regression Analysis for Market Accessibility

Predictor Variable	Coefficient (β)	Standard Error (SE)	t-Value	p-Value	R-Squared
Constant	1.25	0.30	4.17	0.000	
Use of Digital Platforms	0.45	0.10	4.50	0.001	0.65

Author's Computation, 2025

Table 3: Regression Analysis for Profitability

Predictor Variable	Coefficient (β)	Standard Error (SE)	t-Value	p-Value	R-Squared
Constant	0.85	0.20	4.25	0.000	
Use of Digital Platforms	0.50	0.12	4.17	0.002	0.65

Author's Computation, 2025.

The result indicate that digital marketing strategies significantly contribute to market accessibility, as evidenced by a high R value of .65

The R-squared value of 0.62 for profitability indicates that 62% of the variation in profitability can be attributed to digital efforts.

Both regression models show a significant positive relationship between the use of digital platforms and the dependent variables ($p < 0.05$).

Discussion of Results

Results indicate a strong and statistically significant association between digital advertising and the growth of rabbit farming in terms of market accessibility and profitability. Farmers using digital marketing communication informed that they could reach more customers and recorded more sales than those using only conventional marketing communication. The results are in line with the work of Adeyemi and Ojo (2021), who emphasized the role of digital tools in enhancing the visibility of small-scale agricultural ventures.

Table 2, indicates that the use of digital platforms has a positive and statistically significant correlation with market accessibility. The coefficient ($\beta = 0.45$) indicates that a one-unit rise in digital advertising correlates with a 0.45 unit increase in market accessibility. The relationship is statistically significant at $p = 0.001$, well below the 5% threshold, indicating the strength of the impact. The model explains 65% of the variation ($R^2 = 0.65$) in market accessibility, indicating a strong goodness-of-fit. This suggests that digital platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram play a critical role in expanding the customer base for rabbit farmers in the study area.

Similarly, Table 3 shows that the use of digital platforms is also a significant predictor of profitability, with a coefficient value ($\beta = 0.50$) and a p-value of 0.002, which is also statistically significant at the 5% level. This indicates that an increase in digital advertising efforts results in a 0.50 unit increase in profitability among the farmers surveyed.

The R-squared value of 0.65 again suggests that the model explains 65% of the variation in profitability, confirming the robustness of digital marketing as a strategic tool for improving business outcomes.

These results suggest that digital advertising strategies enhance both market accessibility and profitability in small-scale rabbit farming. Farmers who use digital platforms report better market outreach and increased sales than those relying on traditional marketing approaches.

This aligns with the study of Adeyemi and Ojo (2021), who emphasized the role of digital tools in boosting visibility and profitability for small-scale agricultural ventures. The results underscore the potential of digital marketing to bridge market gaps, reduce barriers to entry, and promote inclusive growth in the agricultural sector.

Conclusion

This paper aimed to examine the roles of digital advertising strategies on rabbit farming growth, market access in Ilorin, Kwara State. The paper utilized a descriptive survey designed and employed purposive sampling to select 50 active rabbit farmers engaged in marketing activities. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics (regression analysis). Findings revealed that the adoption of digital platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram had a positive impact on both market accessibility and profitability of rabbit farming. Regression results revealed that a unit increase in digital advertising led to significant increase in market reach and profitability. Based on these findings, the paper concludes that digital advertising strategies are important tools for enhancing the performance of small-scale rabbit farmers.

Recommendations

1. **Digital Marketing Training for Farmers:** Government and agricultural extension services should organize training programs to enhance farmers' digital literacy and marketing skills. These trainings should focus on how to effectively utilize platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram to promote product outreach
2. **Infrastructure and Financial Support:** Government and financial institutions should provide access to reachable internet services, smartphones and other digital tools, as well as offer schemes to ease adoption of digital strategies.
3. **Integration of Digital Strategies into Agricultural Policy:** Policy makers should proactively incorporate digital initiatives into agricultural development plans, specifically for smallholder and niche like rabbit farming.

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