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Influence of Socio-economic Characteristics on the Use of Social Media in Accessing Agricultural Information among Poultry Farmers in Rural Areas, Delta State, Nigeria

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Abstract: The influence of socio-economic characteristics on social media usage in accessing agricultural information among poultry farmers in rural areas of Delta State, Nigeria was examined. Specifically, The study aimed to identify the types of social media platforms used, assess how frequently these platforms are utilized, evaluate its effects on poultry production, and analyze how socio-economic factors influences its uses in area under study. Primary data were gathered for the research. Findings revealed farmers having mean of 8 years of practice in the industry and have ₦59,658 as average earnings on a monthly basis. The average farm size was 2,658 birds. Notably, about 71.10% of the interviewees had no contact with agricultural extension services. Additionally, 61.22% of the producers frequently access poultry-related information through social media. The most commonly used platforms included Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram. The study also found that using it had a beneficial effect on production. A multiple regression analysis, with an adjusted R^2 of 81%, indicated that factors such as education, household size, farm size, gender, farming experience, extension contact, and household income significantly affected its uses by poultry farmers. The study recommends raising awareness among farmers about the usefulness of digital platforms for agricultural information and encourages relevant government and aid agencies to integrate social media into their agricultural extension services.

Keywords: availability, digital tools, effect, impact, internet, platforms, production and usage.

INTRODUCTION

Information is considered very important in the development of agriculture because it is a tool for communication between extension staffs and farmers. It acts as 'a conduit for gaining insight into trends and influencing decision Kalusopa, (2005) cited in Obidike, N. A. (2011). Although, information had been disseminated to farmers through various communication channels such as; farm and home visits, contact farmers, mass media and so on, these traditional methods have limitations.thus there is a need for farm facts provider to explore emerging communication technology in reaching farmers (Olaniyi, 2013).

Social-media refers to the internet-based digital tools for sharing and discussing information among people. Andres and Woodard (2013) defined social media as content created by users that is shared and discussed across digital networks. Similar to other sectors, professionals and researchers in agricultural extension have increasingly turned their attention to social media, viewing it as a modern and innovative tool for facilitating knowledge sharing, coordination, communication, outreach, and education.These new tools are believed to have specific potential for the essential functions of extension services in agriculture. For example, For example, to sensitize, to disseminate information, individual and mass advisory services, technology transfer and market access facilitations Suchiradipta and Saravanan, (2015). The different platforms used include; face book, WhatsApp, twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Google, LinkedIn. etc. The mostly used social networking site and has received the most scholarly attention is facebook. Tweeten, (2014).

A major problem to agricultural advancement in Nigeria is the shortage of appropriate channels to deliver agricultural extension messages. A major task in developing agriculture is transferring information on improved technologies to the farmers. Farmers require the informational opportunities that the web and digital channels offer. Social media can enhance swapping of information between agricultural research institutions, extension agents (EAs), and farmers, leading to more effective communication and knowledge sharing. Without the web and digital network, our world is genuinely unimaginable in this present generation. As of January 2020, over 4.5 billion people were internet users, with 2.80 billion actively engaged online, indicating that nearly 60% of the world population had internet access (Kemp, 2020).

Poultry farming can be seen as the keeping of domesticated birds such as chickens, turkey, guinea fowl, pigeon and other birds Abiola & Edeoghon, (2014). In Nigeria, pigeons, ducks, ostriches, guinea fowl and turkeys are widely kept. However, chicken is in high demand. Poultry farming is an important part of life for both rural and urban middle class income earners around the

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world especially Nigeria, providing a means of income and nutrition to the population Abiola& Edeoghon, (2014).

Poultry meat accounts for approximately 33% of the total global meat production and and the primary reason for raising poultry is to supply households with animal protein in the shape of eggs and meat. It is also the most rapidly expanding agricultural enterprises in developing countries such as Nigeria FAO (2010). Nigeria farmers who engage in production of birds need to have access to details aiding them in growing their poultry enterprise hence we see social media as instrument that is important in sharing and receiving information that is essential in poultry enterprise. Although change agents in the field of agriculture have been sharing information using the Training and Visit (T&V) system through methods like farm and home visits and working with contact farmers, these approaches have limitations. Therefore, agricultural information providers are encouraged to adopt emerging communication technologies to better serve the needs of farmers (Olaniyi, 2013). Despite advancements in improved bird breeds and modern production techniques, many chicken farmers in Nigeria still lack access to this information because of the insufficient ratio of agricultural advisor to farming households (Agbamu, 2006)

Thus, this study was designed to investigate how socio-economic factors influence the use of social media for accessing agricultural information among poultry farmers in rural areas of Delta State, Nigeria..

Specifically, the study aimed to examine the socio-economic profiles of poultry farmers, identify the digital platforms they use, determine how frequently these platforms are accessed, assess the impact on production, and evaluate the role of socio-economic characteristics in its usage.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The following questions were considered as what are the socioeconomic characteristics of the poultry farmers in rural area of Delta State Nigeria? What are the types of social medial platform used by the farmers? What is the frequency of usage? What are the effects of social medial on poultry production? What influence does socio-economic characteristics of poultry farmers have on the use of social media?

Hypothesis to be tested as

Ho_1: socioeconomic characteristics of poultry farmers did not significantly influence the use of social media among poultry farmers in rural area

The research was conducted in Delta State, Nigeria, in August 2024. This state is part of the Niger Delta region, characterized by a vast coastal landscape interwoven with streams and rivulets. Delta State is divided into three agricultural zones: Delta North, Delta Central, and Delta South. The study population included both registered and unregistered poultry farmers. 20% of the local government areas (LGAs) across the three zones were selected randomly, resulting in five LGAs two from Delta North, two from Delta Central, and one from Delta South. From these LGAs, ten rural communities were chosen randomly, with two communities selected from each LGA. A list of registered poultry farmers were acquired from the delta state agricultural and rural development authority (DARDA), while unregistered farmers were identified through community key informants. Ten percent of the identified farmers were randomly selected, yielding a total of 283 poultry farmers, both registered and unregistered, for the research. Information were obtained from primary sources from the poultry farmers. through a well structured questionnaire and interviewed schedule which was administered with the help of trained enumerators that were chosen from agricultural science teachers within or close to the selected communities. Originally 283 questionnaires were administered, but 20 copies could not be retrieved, hence 263 respondents were used for the study.

The instruments for gathering data were subjected to face and content validity by experts in the department of Agricultural extension, Delta state university, Abraka. The instrument was tested for reliability using Pearson product moment correlation analysis and the reliability coefficient was r =0.814 implying that the instruments were reliable and was administered to respondents, three weeks after the first administration.

The investigation concentrated on variables such as socio-economic characteristics, types of platforms used by farmers, frequency of use, and the effect on poultry production. Some of the socioeconomic characteristics such as household size were measured by the numbers of people in the household; while educational level was measured based on years of formal schooling

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completed. The number of years corresponding to the respondent's qualification was used as numeric value for education; farm size was measured by the numbers of birds in the farm, Respondents were asked to indicate the type of social media platforms (Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Google, YouTube, Twitter and LinkedIn, Google talk,telegram,WeChat, skype, Zoom, Google meet) used by them, Frequency of usage was measured by asking respondents to indicate either very often, often, rarely and never. The effect was assessed by presenting respondents with statements rated on a 4-point Likert-type scale: Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). These responses were weighted as follows: 4 = 10, 3 = 7.5, 2 = 5, and 1 = 2.5. The total of these weights (10) was divided by 4, resulting in a cutoff point of 2.5. Therefore, any mean score equal to or above 2.5 was considered to indicate a significant effect, while a score below 2.5 was interpreted as indicating no effect.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistic such as frequency counts and percentages and means derived from a 4- point likert type scale. The objectives were met with frequency counts and percentages, and means derived from a 4 points likert-type scale. The hypothesis was tested using ordinary least square regression model using SPSS (23).

RESULTS

Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents

The findings indicated that the majority were female, accounting for 51.71%, while males made up 48.29% of the respondents (Table1), about (32.69%) were in the age bracket of 40-49 years, About (25.47%) were in the age bracket of 30-39 years, while (17.87%) were around 50-59 years. The mean age was 42 years. The result on marital status showed that (52.47%) were married, (19.39%) were single, (14.45%) were divorced while (13.68%) were widowed/widower. The data on educational attainment revealed a significant portion of poultry farmers have achieved higher education levels, with 58.56% holding a tertiary qualification,27%completing secondary education, 14.45% having a primary school certificate It was also revealed that (49.05%) of poultry farmers had 1-5 persons in their family, (41.06%) had 1-6 persons' while

(9.89%) had above 10 persons in their family. The mean household size was 6 persons. Majority (63.88%) has 1-10years farming experience, with a mean farm size of 2658 birds. Result also showed that (10.64%) had contact with extension agents occasionally, (6.46%) had contact regularly, (11.78%) rarely had contact, while (71.10%) never had extension contact. The mean income of ₦59,658 was recorded monthly.

Table1: Distribution of respondents according to their socio-economic characteristics

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Sex			
Female	136	51.71	
Male	127	48.29	
Age			
20-29	44	16.73	
30-39	67	25.48	
40-49	86	32.70	42years
50-59	47	17.87	
60 and above	19	7.22	
Marital status			
Single	51	19.39	
Married	138	52.47	
Divorce	38	14.45	
Widowed	36	13.69	
Level of education only pry school	38	14.45	
Secondary	71	26.99	
Tertiary	154	58.56	
Household size			

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1-5	129	49.05	
6-10	108	41.06	6 persons
Above 10	26	9.89	
Farm Experience			
1-10	168	63.88	
11-20	37	14.07	8 years
21-30	34	12.93	
Above 30	24	9.13	
Farm Size			
Below 1000	118	44.87	
1001-2000	77	29.28	
2001-3000	23	8.74	2658 birds
3001-4000	27	10.27	
Above 4000	18	6.84	
Monthly income			
10000-20000	55	20.91	
21000-40000	73	27.76	
41000-60000	108	41.06	₦59,658
Above 60000	27	10.27	
Extension Contact			
Regularly	17	6.46	
Occasionally	28	10.64	
Rarely	31	11.78	
Never	187	71.10	

Source: Field survey data, 2024.

Types of Social Media Platforms used By Poultry Farmers

The result revealed (70.72%) were using Facebook, about 68.06% were using WhatsApp, 66.92% used YouTube, while about 41.83% used instagram also, 36.50% uses twitter, about 33.3% used google meet while 25.09% used linkedin (Table 2).

Table 2: Types of social media platform used

Types of social media platforms	Frequency	Percentages
Facebook	186	70.72
WhatsApp	179	68.06
Instagram	110	41.83
Google meet	89	33.84
YouTube	176	66.92
LinkedIn	66	25.09
Twitter	96	36.50

Source: Field survey data, 2024.

Frequency of Usage of Social Media by Poultry Farmers

The findings indicated the frequency of usage of social media among poultry farmers in the rural areas of Delta State (Table 3). The result revealed that 61.22% of poultry farmers use social media very often, approximately 26.24% use it often, 8.36% occasionally use social media and 4.18% never used it.

Table 3: Frequency of usage of social media

Variables	Frequency	Percentages
Very often	161	61.22
Often	69	26.24
Occasionally	22	8.36

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Never	11	4.18

Source: Field survey data, 2024.

Effects of Social Media on Poultry Production

The data collected on the effects of social media on poultry production revealed that social media had effect on the farmers ability to market goods and services to a wide range of population (mean=3.27), updates with the current policies about poultry production through social media (mean=3.22), increased sales through social media (mean=3.19), ability to get current updates on disease outbreaks and management (mean=3.11),ability to improve management practices (mean=3.10), ability to get awareness and acquire quality breeds of birds through social media (mean=3.10), ability to share ideas easily with farmers (mean=3.06) and ability to communicate with extension agent (mean=3.01) (Table 4).

Table 4. Mean response of respondents on the effects of social media on poultry production

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagreed	Score	Mean	Rank
I am able to market my goods to a wide range of population	140(560)	76(228)	24(48)	23(23)	859	3.27	1st
I am updated with current policies about poultry production through social media	141(564)	63(189)	35(70)	24(24)	847	3.22	2nd
My sales have increased through social media	132(528)	71(213)	39(78)	21(21)	840	3.19	3rd
I am able to get current updates on disease outbreaks and management	110(440)	93(279)	38(76)	23(23)	818	3.11	4th
I am able to improve my management practices through social media	143(572)	42(126)	41(82)	36(36)	816	3.10	5th
I am able to get awareness and acquire improved quality breeds of birds	143(572)	42(126)	41(82)	36(36)	816	3.10	5th
I am able to share ideas easily with farmers through social media	96(384)	85(255)	65(130)	37(37)	806	3.06	6th
I am able to efficiently communicate with extension agents through social media	102(408)	88(264)	47(94)	26(26)	792	3.01	7th

Cut off score = 2.50 (≥2.50 = effects, < 2.50 = No effects) Grand mean =3.13

Source: Field survey data, 2024.

Influence of Socioeconomic Characteristics of Poultry Farmers on the Use of Social Media

The study employs the ordinary least squares (OLS) estimation techniques to determine cause and effects of the relationship of the decision variables. This was done to establish how well the resulting model reflects the system it is intended to replicate. This thus, provided the study insight into the nature of the data in terms of their stationary or otherwise. This procedure intended to help the study to take a decision whether or not the coefficients of the estimated variables are significant. Of the four functional model tried, (linear, semi-log, double-log and exponential) the ordinary linear function was preferred due to its abilities. It proved higher number of variables that were significant at 1%, 5%, and 10% levels of probabilities based on their t-test, f-ratio and R^2 coefficients and also it has higher conformity with *a priori* expectations as compared to others.

Table 5, presents the results of the ordinary least square regression in which the use of social media was set as the dependent variable and the rest of the variables were defined as the explanatory

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variables. The R^2 is the coefficient of multiple determinations which measures the extent to which the variation in the dependent variable is explained by the regressors. The F-statistics measures the joint impact of the regressors on the regress and thus testing the joint significant of the model. An evaluation of the model shows that, it performed relatively well based on the values of R^2, adjusted R^2 and F-ratio. The value of R^2 and adjusted R^2 are 0.82 (82%) and 0.81 (81%) while F ratio is 55.77. This indicates that approximately 81% of the variation in the dependent variables (use of social media) was due to the variables captured in the model. The values of R^2, adjusted R^2 and F-test thus provided reliable measures of the overall explanatory power of the regression model.

Table 5: presentation of OLS regression results on Influence of socioeconomic characteristics of poultry farmers on the use of social media.

Variables	Linear +.	Semi-log	Double-log	Exponential
Intercept	4008247.18 (9.067)^{xxx}	-16.35 (2.343)^{xx}	1.29 (.382)	3747515.55 (16.431)^{xxx}
Age	15566.68 (1.04)	0.05 (0.84)	0.36 (1.5)	17846.08 (1.10)
Education	50947.22 (1.62)^{xxx}	1.71 (3.43)^{xx}	-1.73 (2.69)^{xx}	-51311.92 (1.18)
Household size	-145026.84 (5.19)^{xxx}	4.55 (10.31)^{xxx}	3.29 (6.38)^{xxx}	-4938.96 (0.14)
Marital status	25870.041 (1.48)	-522 (1.89)^{x}	0.19 (0.81)	9331.68 (0.57)
Farm size	-72284.15 (3.66)^{xxx}	1.04 (3.35)^{xx}	1.21 (3.70)^{xxx}	-104163.38 (4.71)^{xxx}
Sex	336431.06 (2.05)^{xx}	-4.34 (1.67)^{x}	-2.72 (1.15)	206464.59 (1.28)
Farming experience	-0.82 (5.94)^{xxx}	7.67 (3.48)^{xx}	0.23 (6.21)^{xxx}	-13634.48 (5.52)^{xxx}
Extension contact	1.00 (2.40)^{xx}	-4.28 (0.65)	-0.01 (0.287)	-5899.81 (2.73)^{xx}
Income	-343828.06 (2.50)^{xx}	-2.17 (1.00)^{xx}	2.86 (1.42)	219747.65 (1.61)
R2 =	**0.82**	**0.79**	**0.80**	**0.59**
Adj. R2 =	**0.81**	**0.78**	**0.80**	**0.58**
F-ratio =	**55.77**	**132.97**	**146.33**	**51.28**
Std-error =	**1101.63**	**17.38**	**16.72**	**11298.89**

Source: computation from field survey, 2024.

Reject the null hypothesis at one percent level.
Figures in brackets are the t-values
***, **, * significant at 1%, 5% and 10% level respectively,
+ = the lead equation.

DISCUSSION

The socioeconomic characteristics based on sex revealed that (51.71%) were female. This suggests that females dominate the poultry sector (production, marketing, and distribution) in the area under studied. Implying that females are gradually taking over almost all the areas in the agricultural sectors. This result is in line with Abushe, *et al*., (2023), who reported that agricultural production is gradually taken over by the women in the State. The result also agrees with Amusan, *et al*., (2019) finding that women dominate and play a major role in the production of subsistence crops and livestock, contributing about 65% to agricultural activities in Nigeria. The mean age was 42 years. This implies that poultry farmers were in the age bracket of 40–49 years. This indicates that most of the respondents were of a youthful age and are still economically active, thus having the strength and ability to engage in poultry production. This is in line with Abiola and Edeoghon (2014), who stated that most of the poultry farmers sampled are of productive age, and this is expected to have a positive influence on their level of usage of social media as related to poultry production. The majority (52.80%) of the

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respondents on marital status were married. This implies that the majority of them had responsibilities, as they had members of their household to take care of. This will serve as a driving force to seek out more information that will enable them to increase their productivity. This agrees with Abushe, *et al*., (2023), who stated that once a person is married, he or she has a commitment to make provision for his or her households and, as such, will source for probable means of enhancing his income.

The result on level of education revealed that (68.80%) had tertiary education. This result suggests that poultry farmers were educated. This implies that poultry farmers are likely to readily adopt new technology and innovation for poultry production due to their level of education, as education helps in self-development and exposure. Education is also expected in aiding them gain awareness and access information. This is in consonance with Odebode (2018), who stated that education is an important factor for achieving desirable attitudinal change and improving the skill and knowledge levels of individuals. The mean household size was 6 people. This indicates that the household size is relatively large in the area of study, and due to the large size of their household, the respondents tend to work hard and become more involved in poultry farming, therefore seeking more information on how to improve their poultry production. Also, the large house could be due to the fact that rural households use family members as a source of labour. This finding agrees with Nwachukwu, *et al*., (2023), who reported that poultry farmers having a mean household of 6 persons shows that the household relative forms the labour force for poultry production.

The result on farming experience revealed a mean of 8 years. This implies that the majority had a considerate year of experience when it comes to poultry production, and due to their years of experience, they have acquired skills and had a proper understanding of the business, thus knowing exactly where they are lacking information and therefore seeking more information on areas where they are lacking. The years an individual spent in a business influence the skills acquired Obetta, *et al*., (2020). Thus, the poultry farmers had the required skills needed in poultry farming and were able to know the kind of information they can have accessible to on the internet.

The result on farm size revealed a mean farm size of 2,658 birds. This indicates that a lot of poultry farmers are majorly operating on a medium scale. This implies that farm size shows the economic strength of a farm; hence, farmers will put in all effort to source information that will contribute to the growth of the farm as well as income. This is in consonance with Corsi (2017), who stated that farm size indicates the economic strength of a farm; hence, they are likely to have sufficient proceeds and income from a medium-scale farm.

The result on extension contact showed that the rate of extension contact with farmers is significantly poor, which is a result of the inadequate ratio of extension agents to farm families Agbamu (2006), cited in Abushe, *et al*., (2023), states that extension services are needed in order to create awareness and share information to farmers thus, when farmers don't get this information from the extension agent, they tend to seek it from social media . This is in line with Orisakwe and Agomuo (2011), who noted that regular contact with extension agents motivates and exposes the farmers to innovations and gives information on how to use technologies. The income generated from poultry production showed that people could earn a living through poultry farming, having a mean monthly income of ₦59,658 greater than the Nigerian minimum wage of ₦30,000.

The types of social media platforms used showed that Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram were mostly used by farmers in the area of study. Usage of these platforms could have arisen from the benefits they have gotten from them. This is in line with Adeojo and Opeyemi (2019), who found that Facebook and WhatsApp were the major types of platforms used by poultry farmers in the Ogori Mangogo local government area of Kogi State, Nigeria. The popular social networking site that has received the most scholarly attention is Facebook Tweeten (2014). Obidike (2011) found that internet platforms are useful tools for food marketing and promoting social initiatives.

On the frequency of usage, the result revealed that poultry farmers were high social media users frequently using it for the production and promotion of their poultry farms, thereby

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enhancing their production and increasing profitability. This high level of usage came from the benefits derived from using the various types of social media platforms; thus, an individual will only continue and frequently use something if it is beneficial to them in one way or another. This is in line with Falola, *et al*., *(2021),* who asserted in their study that the poultry farmers were high social media users who were making great use of it for the management of their poultry farms.

Social media had an effect on the farmers ability to market goods and services to a larger of populations of people, including updates on current policies about poultry production, increased sales of poultry products, updates on disease outbreaks and management, improved management practices, awareness, and the acquisition of quality breeds of birds. This implies that an increase in the use of social media by poultry farmers enhances production and profitability and also farmers were able to learn about various disease outbreaks and make plans on how to prevent it from their farms in other to avoid loss due to diseases outbreak. It also provided an avenue for macro market opportunities where farmers can reach beyond their immediate environment in terms of sales of their products. Falola, *et al*., (2022) noted that an increase in the usage of social media in the poultry farming business increases the profitability of the venture.

On the influence of socio-economic characteristics on the use of social media, using the two-tail test at the 1% level of significance, the F-computed is 55.77 and the F-table is 2.58, since the calculated F is greater than the corresponding table value, we rejected the null hypothesis (H0, at $P<0.01$; b's = 0), which states that socioeconomic characteristics of poultry farmers did not significantly influence the use of social media among poultry farmers in rural areas, and accepted the alternative hypothesis. In the estimated regression model, an attempt was made to identify which of the coefficients of the determinants provides a statistically significant contribution to the specified model. The significance of the parameter estimate of the model was evaluated by means of a t-test at 1%, 5%, and 10% levels of significance, which are the most commonly used.

Seven of the nine parameters included in the model affected the use of social media by farmers significantly. These parameters include educational level, household size, farm size, sex, farming experience, extension contact, and income. The coefficient of farmer's education was significant at 1% and positively related to the use of social media. This implies that the higher the educational attainment of the farmers, the higher the use, and vice versa. Also, level of education significantly influenced the use of social media, implying that being educated enables poultry farmers to be exposed and seek more information and knowledge. Thus, it readily adopts technology. This result is in conformity with *a priori* expectations, which state that the more educated people are, the more likely they are to be exposed to the use of social media and other advanced technologies, since the more years spent to obtain formal education is believed to accumulate in better skills, which help them do better in their chosen business comparatively. This report is in consonance with the work done by Eyo and Enimu (2015) and Olaniyi (2013), who noted that education increases exposure to useful information, which will likely enhance the level of knowledge and adoption of improved agricultural production techniques that make production easier.

The coefficient of household size was directly related to the use of social media by farmers and was significant at the 1% probability level. The implication is that the more people there are in a household, the more the household uses social media. All things being equal, vice versa. This finding agrees with *a priori* expectations, further implying that if there are many people living under one roof, the higher the likelihood of using social media. This is in conformity with work by Adeojo and Opeyemi (2019), who state that increased household size is a positive determinant of communication as one or more members of the household may have access to social media information for improved production.

In conformity with *a priori* expectations, the coefficient of farm size was significant at the 1% probability level and positively related to the use of social media by farmers. The implication is that the larger the farm, the greater the use of social media by the farmer. Farm size helps to increase productivity and scale of operation for the farmer, thus increasing the likelihood of farmers seeking easier and more easy and efficient ways of carrying out their farm activities. The result is in line with work done by Corsi (2004), who stated that farm size indicates the economic strength of a farm; hence, they are likely to have sufficient

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proceeds and income from the medium-scale farm, thereby sourcing for more information through social media.

The coefficient of sex of household heads was significant at the 5% probability level and positively related to farmer's use of social media. This implies that as you move from male household head to female household head, the higher the number of male household heads that use social media, and vice versa. This may also be attributed to the degree of shared household responsibilities between a man and his wife or wives. The result is in line with *a priori* signs and work done by Abushe, *et al*., (2023), Abiola and Edeoghon (2014), and Nwachukwu, *et al*., (2023).

Farming experience was significant at the 1% probability level and was positively related to farmer's use of social media. The result of the study was in conformity with the *a priori* sign, which states that years of farming will lead to an increase in the production process and techniques, among which is the use of social media and other communication tools. The likelihood of using social media for improving farm practices is higher with farm experience. The study conforms to the report by Obetta, *et al*., (2020). In their studies, they reported a direct relationship between farming experience and the use of social media by commercial farmers.

Extension contacts were significant at the 5% probability level and positively related to farmers use of social media. The result is in conformity with *a priori* expectations, which implies that the fewer the number of extension agents visits to farmers, the higher the likelihood of the farmer adopting the use of social media, because the farmers need information to improve his production hence social media became an option in the absence of extension agents visits. Extension contact was found to influence use of social media positively, indicating that as the number of contacts with extension agent's reduces, the likelihood of using social media increases. This result is in contrast with the findings of Orisakwe and Agomuo (2011), who found that the greater the frequency of farmer contact with extension agents, the more productive the farmer is in terms of social media usage. This is also supported by Agbamu (2006), cited in Abushe (2023), who posits that farmers' behavior change is influenced by extension contact.

Income was significant at the 5% probability level and was positively related to farmer's use of social media. This result conforms to *a priori* expectations and implies that income affects the likelihood of usage of social media, as more available income will increase the purchasing power of the farmer, including the purchase of data bundles and social media gadgets such as smart phones in the study area. On the frequency of usage of social media, the result revealed that poultry farmers were high social media users who were frequently using social media for the production and promotion of their poultry farms, thereby enhancing their production and increasing profitability. Falola, *et al*., (2021), asserted in their study that the poultry farmers were high social media users who were making great use of it for the management of their poultry farm.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed that socioeconomic characteristics such as educational level, household size, farm size, sex, farming experience, extension contact, and income significantly influenced the use of social media among poultry farmers in the rural areas of Delta State. Social media had an effect on poultry production. Poultry farmers frequently use it, and the most commonly used among the platforms were Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter. It is recommended that more awareness about the importance and usefulness of social media as a good source of agricultural information among poultry farmers be created. Relevant government and development agencies should attempt to use platforms such as facebook, YouTube in their agricultural extension endeavors, thereby providing more information that is relevant to poultry farmers through these channels.

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