



Do Digital Marketing Impact Business Performance? Emerging Views from Managers and Owners of Micro, Small and Medium Scales Enterprises in Nigeria

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Abstract

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are engaged in recreation and economic wellbeing of a nation. They generate diversified sources of national income, improve a country's competitive advantage and support economic development leading to suppleness of the economies. This study examines the influence of digital marketing on MSMEs performance in Plateau State, survey research design was used, data were obtained from 130 MSMEs in Plateau State through self – administered questionnaires and the study instruments were adapted from previous studies. The study instruments were subjected to determine the validity and reliability of the research instrument and subsequently to determine the hypothesized direct relationships among the variables through multiple regression analysis method. The findings revealed that social media marketing, e – mail marketing, internet marketing, and mobile marketing, are positive related to the performance scale of micro and medium scale enterprises in plateau state, while search engine marketing has no relationship with firm performance. The implication to the study is that digital marketing has a potential as marketing strategy to influence performance of small firms, the study will be of great importance to scholars because it a new subject to explore as a marketing strategy for MSMEs in competitive environment characterized rapid change in technology.

Keywords: Digital marketing, Micro small and medium scale enterprises, Firm performance,

1. Introduction

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are engaged in recreation and economic wellbeing of a nation (Shigehiro & Nagraj, 2021). They generate diversified sources of national income, improve a country's competitive advantage and support economic development leading to suppleness of the economies (Gontur, Emmanuel & Davirengs, 2018). Furthermore, MSMEs play an essential role in improving social sectors from side to side motivating big size employment,



growth of home-grown skills and knowledge, encouraging free enterprise and innovation and building a manufacturing base at different scales.

In Nigeria at least 39,654,385 MSMEs operated in Nigeria as of December 2020 as against 41,543,028 million that were in existence in 2017, indicating a decrease of 4.5 percent. (SMEDAN\NBS, 2020). A breakdown of the figures showed that micro enterprises (MEs) accounted for 38,413,420 million, while the total number of SMEs stood at 1,240,965 million representing 3.1 percent. According to the report, MSMEs in Nigeria contributed 46.31 percent to the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and accounted for 96.7 percent of businesses and they also account for about 85 percent of the total industrial employment in Nigeria (National Bureau of Statistics, x). Similarly, a report revealed that MSMEs accounted for 6.21 percent of gross exports during the year under review. (SMEDAN\NBS, 2020)

In spite of this, it is critical for MSMEs in Nigeria to improve their performance and survival rate due to persistent organizational and environmental challenges like lack of access to adequate and affordable finance, poor infrastructure, lack of basic business knowledge, skills and attitude; high operating costs, poor attitude to marketing activities, government policy, and above all, lack of digital tools in marketing product and services of MSMEs (Arisi-Nwugballa et al., 2016). Similarly, the recent development of the global business environment has led to tight competition for MSMEs and this has become unavoidable for them, despite their operations and sizes (Aroyeun et al., 2019)

In today's world the internet presents consumers the propensity to connect with each other and share information about everything. The functionality of business and how they promote their products and services has greatly been influenced by the introduction of information communication technology using the internet (Gontur, Hassan & Arin, 2017). The widespread improvement of digital technology, such as wireless, internet, smart phone, web apps, mobile apps, and social media, has been stimulating an inclusive in digital business. In other words, the presence of digital technology gives easy access not only for a well-developed corporation, but also for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) to improve their business performance (Abu & Sheng, 2020). At this moment, digital technology provides a valuable space for MSMEs to enhance their competitive advantage in the highly competitive industry atmosphere.

Digital marketing can be considered as the best strategies for marketing products and services of MSMEs. In the current times, the conventional methods of marketing seem to have gone beyond the MSMEs. Therefore, the latest option is digital marketing which has been suggested as practical options for several MSMEs (Hassan, 2019). This will enable MSMEs to get to a wider market and great awareness of their products. Equally, it is significant for micro, small scale enterprises to know whether digital marketing will contribute to improvement of sales of their products in the competitive environment. It is important for them to know whether digital marketing can impact their business through promotion of goods and increasing sales (Hassan, 2019).

Studies carried recently by Abubakar, Faruk, and Tijjani (2020) revealed the performance of MSMEs in both industrialized and emerging nations like Nigeria could be traced to the effective adoption to digital technology. Although MSMEs sector in developing countries is relatively associated with failure due to the inability to withstand environmental challenges.



As a result of increasing market competition, several marketing strategies are devised to retain after attraction of customers with a view to raising the sales level and thereby remaining on profitable path (Hassan, 2019). Improving sales however depends on marketing skills of business organizations. Hence, the idea of marketing idea rests on the notion that the application aids in boosting the performance of businesses (Gontur et al, 2016). In addition, marketing is measured to be a business test to establish the consequence its uses exerts on vital business indices such as market share and sales improvement.

Prior studies have found shred of empirical evidence on the role of digital marketing on sales performance of firms (Fauzi, & Sheng, 2020; Jung & Shegal, 2023; Berthon, Pitt, Plangger, & Shapiro, 2012). Contextually, there are limited researches that focused exclusively on the effect of digital marketing on MSMEs performance in Nigeria. The few studies conducted in the context of Nigeria, looked at the impact of digital marketing on sales performance (Hassan, 2019; Eze, Chinedu-Eze, Bello, Inegbedion, Nwanji, & Asamu, 2019). Most of studies conducted in Nigeria in this sub sector have focus on politics, banking and the educational sector (Gontur 2020; Dungse, Makinde & Chidozie, 2018, Gontur, Hassan, & Arin, 2017, and Gontur, Odewumi & Dashe, 2018). Interestingly, a search reveals a dearth of literature on the effect of digital marketing and MSMEs performance. In addition, limited studies have been conducted on this important discourse from emerging countries perspective; hence this study is timely and relevant.

The paper is organized into seven sections. The next section contains a review of the necessary literature and hypotheses testing. The third section discusses the methodology used in the study, while four sections dwell on the findings, while section five indicates the results and discussions of the findings. Section five focuses on the conclusion drawn from the study, and section six concentrates on possible policy recommendations. Lastly, section seven identifies the limitations to the study and areas for future studies.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Concept of Digital Marketing

Bressolles et al, (2016, p.127) defined digital marketing as the process of planning and implementing the development, pricing, communication and distribution of an idea, product or service to create exchange in whole or in part using digital technologies that are inconsistent with individual and organizational objectives. The implementation of digital marketing methods is intended at acquiring new clients or improving the management of relationship with existing customers (Bressoles et al, 2016). Digital marketing is of course integrated with traditional marketing tools in a multi-channel, cross channel and marketing strategy. From these explanation ns we can therefore deduce that digital marketing is all the marketing activities of a firm carried out through digital channels. The increase of digital marketing in recent years has been stimulated by the abundance of information, communication, and technology (ICT). Digital marketing is a promotion approach that uses technology-based resources including the internet email, search engines, and electronic commerce, mobile phones, and social media) to promote a product or service.



2.2 Concept of Performance

Performance has been widely debated over the past decades as one of the important dependent variables in business research and central to firm's continuity and expansion (Chahal et al., 2016). This puts the performance as one of the central issues of SMEs (Akyuz, et al, 2020). Performance is a concept that is subjected to open and extensive volatility of connotations as it is moderately a vague word when it roles as a place holder in research (Ion- Elena & Criveanu, 2016). Performance is defined as the outcomes of work and it provides the strongest linkage to the strategic goals of an organization, customer satisfaction and economic contributions (Salem, 2003). Performance can be classified as either financial or non-performance. Financial performance is at the core of the organizational effectiveness domain and accounting based standards such as return on assets (ROA), return on sales (ROS) and return on equity (ROE). On the other hand, business performance measures market-related items such as market share and customer base growth, number of employees, diversification, and product development (Mbugua, Mbugua, Wangoi, Ogada & Kariuki, 2013).

2.3 Empirical Review and Hypotheses Development

In keeping with the motivation of this research, the investigators created a conceptual framework which seeks to explain the direct relationship among social media marketing, email marketing, internet marketing, mobile marketing, and search engine marketing on firm performance. Based on documented evidence, the study conceptualized that digital marketing dimensions relate directly with SMEs performance. In advancing this argument, a conceptual framework for this study is presented in figure 1, followed by the debate on empirical evidence that sustain the rationale for these associations.

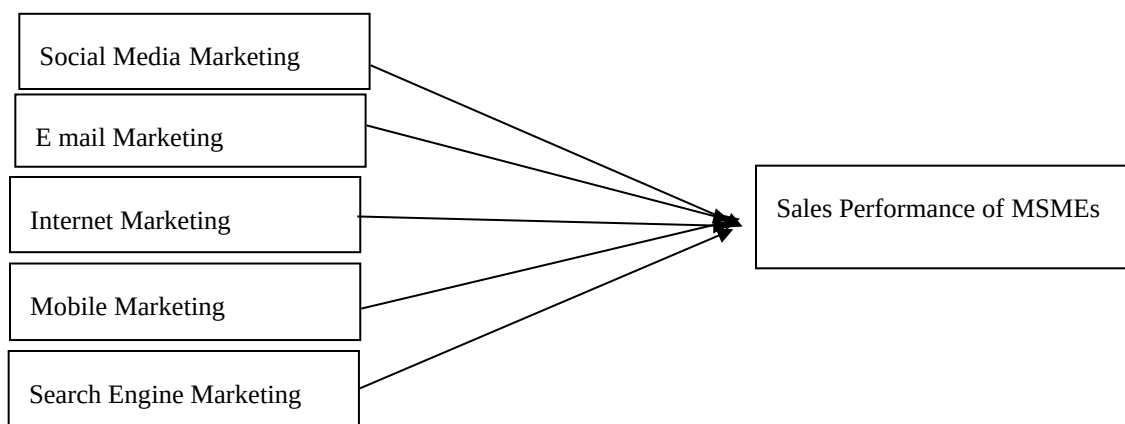


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

2.3.1. Social media marketing and MSMEs performance

Social media marketing has developed greatly over the last fifteen years; it emerged with the introduction of Web 2.0 technology in participatory platforms (Harrison and Barthel, 2009,



Gontur, 2020). Kaplan and Haenlin (2010) defined social media as the sets of internets based applications that enlarge the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow formations and exchange of users- generated content.. Social media also allows organizations to increase sales, deliver customer services, conduct marketing activities, and create new products (Piller et al, 2012; Teh, Kee, Munazza & Gadi, 2020)

Jara, Parra & Skarmeta (2014) described social media marketing as a new generation marketing tool encouraging higher attention and participation from the consumers through the use of social networks. With instant call and delivery capabilities of social media marketing has turn out to be a business essential for enterprise (Hanna et al., 2011). Social media marketing stands for the technique of receiving traffic from the social web (Das, 2021). It permits media practitioners, especially advertisers and marketers to point out that social media marketing research are antecedents of different outcomes, voter patronage (Gontur, 2020); trust (Dabula et al., 2017, Gontur, 2020), and innovative performance, (Teh et al, 2020).

Subjective evidence from preceding marketing text presents that firms use social media marketing to support their product online, maintain an open debate with their discontented customers, react to client observations and inquiries, enhance website traffic, promote their goods, produce novel business opportunities, contribute to career information, and create communities (Kumar & Mirchandani, 2012; Ihl, Strunk, & Fiedler, 2020)

A number of researchers have investigated the outcomes of social media marketing, Wibowo, Chen, Wiangin, Ma and Ruangkanjanases (2020) as well as Li, Kim, and Choi (2019) showed that social marketing enhances performance of MSMEs. Studies by Eid, Abdelmoety and Agag (2020) as well as Piller, Vosseini, and Ihi, (2012) also acknowledged a positive link between social media marketing and firm performance. Dolega, Rowe and Branagan (2021) discovered that social media marketing allows firms to increase sales, conducting marketing activities and create new products. Discussing on the findings outlined above, this research hypothesize that

H1. Social media marketing is positively related to MSMEs performance

2.3.2. E-mail marketing and msme performance

E- Mail marketing and MSMEs performance relationship has received unexpected consideration from previous studies (Njau & Karugu, 2014; Nuseira & Aljumohlo, 2020; Martinez – Caro, Cegarra – Nararro, Alfonso – Ruiz, 2020). Most of these studies support a positive relationship between E- mail marketing and performance (Akyuz, Isaac, & Abdullahi, 2020; Martinez – Caro, Cegarra – Nararro, Alfonso – Ruiz, 2020). The underlying principle behind is that e mail marketing is a tool for educating customers about the firm's product and services. This indicates that the channels that employ digital marketing must depend on information communication technology and data science. This means that the adoption of digital technology in marketing will help smaller business owners to attract new customers and build customer loyalty which will eventually increase the sales volumes of the enterprise (Gontur, Hassan & Arik, 2017, Kumar, Syed, & Panday, 2021). Therefore, we posit the following

H2. E – Mail Marketing is positively related to MSMEs performance

2.3.3. Internet marketing



Internet marketing is an enterprise effort to inform, converse, promote and sell products and services over the internet (Njau & Karugu, 2014). Internet marketing has been discovered to have a favourable impact on the performance of SMEs in previous research. For instance, a study by Kithinji (2014) examined internet marketing and performance of small and medium enterprises in Nairobi County. The study established that internet marketing has a positive impact on the performance of SMEs since it increased their profitability, market share, enhanced firm's image, increased competitive advantage, loyalty and access to new markets. The research by Kumar, Syed, and Pandey (2021) discovered that online resources have an important impact on a firm performance. El- Hachami, Ait- Lhassan and Belamhitou (2021) maintained that digital marketing especially internet marketing boosts the efficacy and competence of conventional marketing, bringing out novel business models that will convey more value to consumers and it permits firms to gain superior performance. Furthermore, Hajoliakbari and Shadi (2018) discovered that internet marketing has a direct positive and significant effect through the variables of access to information and infrastructure of the firm's technology and customer orientation on the performance of the export of SMEs. While Gontur et al (2017) found that internet devices are crucial in determining customer loyalty and performance. Additionally, internet marketing has been found to positively impact SMEs performance, the study concluded that a business strategy that uses a combination of internet marketing aspects and Islamic perspectives can have a superior performance over firms that used traditional marketing technique. Firms who adopt digital marketing tools especially internet are likely to experience greater marketing capabilities, reduce cost of marketing and customer service, improved information accessibility, compatibility, cost effectiveness and interactivity were identified as factors that influence internet usage among MSMEs (Jean & Kim ,2020; Ainin, Paeveen, Moghawemi, Jaafaru & Moh'd – Shuib, 2015). Thus it is hypothesized that:

H3: Internet Marketing is positively related to MSMEs Performance.

2.3.4. Mobile marketing

Mobile Marketing Association (2015) defines mobile marketing (MM) as the use of wireless media as integrated content delivery and direct response vehicle within a cross media marketing communication programmed. Mobile marketing is also viewed as a marketing communication programmed sending and receiving direct response through wireless media (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016). In this study, the researcher (s) adopted the definition of Smith (2019), also defined MM as interactive marketing tool used in the promotion activities of goods and services or ideas through mobile phones in a manner that benefits the business and all of its stakeholders. According to the definition provided by the Mobile Marketing Association in 2015, mobile marketing has developed into a crucial tool for connecting businesses with their ideal clients. Many academics concurred that mobile marketing initiatives can reach their target market even more quickly than traditional advertising. In comparison to traditional marketing channels, mobile marketing is found to be much more effective in terms of target group reach, cost, and customization. Similar to this, Kannan (2017) clarified that in recent years, sales through internet-based mobile marketing have increased. About 22% to 27% of online sales are made up of it. It is the fastest-emerging advertising setup, and in the coming years, it is projected to approach \$82.8 billion. With time, mobile marketing vehicles have developed into essential tools for communication and advertising.



It enables advertisers to get in touch with consumers at any time or place (Iovino & Migliaccio, 2020). When companies employ mobile technology to streamline their operations and launch interactive engagement with their target market through the usage of mobile marketing, significant competitive advantage is explored. According to a number of empirical research, mobile marketing is related to consumer values, sales success, and other outcomes (Waheed & Yang, 2018).

For instance, Ali, Nawaz, Tara, and Rafi (2021) showed that mobile marketing's primary positive results included customer consent, brand acceptability, communication through applications, and control over the timing and frequency of messages. Due to their capacity to facilitate communication and encourage the sales of businesses' goods and services, mobile media are persuading in the direct for marketers and advertising (Tong, Luo, & Xu, 2020).

Thus, the study hypothesized that:

H4: Mobile Marketing is positively related to MSMEs Performance

2.3.5. Search engine marketing and MSMEs performance

Search engine marketing, according to Sen. (2015), is a strategy used in business marketing by using paid adverts that display on search engine results pages, with its main components of measurements being keywords, meta-tags, backlinks and content. Search Engine Marketing (SEM) main aim is to enhance brand visibility in search engines by bidding on keywords in Pay-Per-Click (PPC) advertising or by increasing organic visitors through Search Engine Optimization (SEO) by defining a website's meta-tags and quality backlinks and content marketing. Jansen, Zhang and Schultz (2017) observe that search engine marketing is the process of increasing the prominence of a company on search engines at an event whereby users are looking for related information about the company. Companies that use search engine marketing for the purpose of generating unique leads, product sale, brand awareness, do change traffic from their competitors hence concentrate on putting additional traffic to the segments of their website they are targeting so as to learn more knowledge in using the search engine marketing. As a result, SEM is a feasible digital marketing technique that provides a company with a lot of freedom.

Search Engine Marketing (SEM) is an internet marketing method that is extensively used technique for enhancing the quantity and quality of client traffic to a firm website via search engines, numerous organizations are paying colossal sum of money to search engines The internet search engines are finest method to ascertain the information about the user activities of interest as it reveals millions of outcome for a word or bunch of words. Successful SEM can be achieved either by building a website more pertinent for customers or by spending in methods that only have an effect on the website's placing devoid of providing superior-quality content. Yang and Wang (2015) investigated whether search engine marketing and financing ability have a measurable impact on MSMEs performance. They concluded that search engine marketing to Business to Commerce (B2C) in China has a strong positive relation with firm performance. Aliu and Agbetokun (2018) added that SEM as a technique of digital marketing found that search engine advertising is a crucial determinant on the growth of SMEs, pointing out that SEM help in promoting a website by increasing sales. On the foundation of these results, it can be disputed that a positive influence of search engine marketing is needed to filters for the wealth of information available on the internet. They allow users to quickly and easily find information that is of genuine



interest or value, without the need to wade through numerous irrelevant web pages. Thus the study hypothesizes that:

H5. Search Engine Marketing has a positive effect on the performance of MSMEs.

3. Research Method

3.1 Research Design, Population and Sample

In this study, a quantitative methodology was employed. The population of MSMEs in Plateau State, is 815, 430 (SMEDAN, 2019), the sample size of the study is determined using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table is 382. The respondents to the survey provided information via a questionnaire. As samples, the managers of MSMEs in Plateau State were chosen. The study also concentrated on MSMEs with a minimum three-year history of operation. The primary cause is that many MSMEs in Nigeria consistently failed within the first three years of existence (Ishola, Zekera & Ibrahim, 2020). Since MSMEs must be flexible, the current research only included SMEs that have been in operation for at least three years. This study also takes into account the deciding factor, which is the utilization of digital marketing in a firm. Because of this, the inclusion criteria for this study are: (1) managers from MSMEs; (2) the company has been in operation for at least three years; and (3) the company currently uses digital marketing platforms like social media marketing, email, the internet, and search engines to promote its goods and services.

3.2 Data Collection

A survey was used in this study to gather data. This is so that the respondents to the online survey can only submit their questionnaires if they have completely answered all of the questions. The online survey can include a set of response validation to ensure respondents answer all of the questions. Therefore, using an online survey can help you prevent having missing data. First, the MSME list was provided by the SMEDAN-NBS survey, 2017 in Nigeria, to the researchers of the current study. Owners of the MSMEs chosen for the SMEDAN (2017) study provided the necessary information, such as the business name, phone number, and email address.

Next, an email attached with links of questionnaires was sent to SME managers based on the E-mail address collected and the researchers also use what's up to send the questionnaire to the entrepreneurs from the what's up and email collected from the respondents, after completing the questionnaires were sent to the researchers email or what's up was 130 respondents representing 34 % response rate which is in line with assertion of Daikeler Silbar, and Bosnjak (2021) that response rate of online research in developing countries is very low.

3.3 Measurement

The 7-item scale developed by Cheng and Shiu (2019) was used to quantify social media and represent the level to which SMEs use social media marketing. The next five components were measured using a Likert scale with five points, ranging from 1 (to a limited extent) to 5. (To a very great extent). Gontur, Hassan, and Arin's work on internet and mobile marketing was modified (2016). E-mail marketing was modified from Gontur's work, and this study's dependent variable was the performance of SMEs.



4. Results and Discussion

A total of 130 usable responses were collected from the managers of MSMEs in Plateau State. The descriptive statistics showed that 59.23% were male and 40.77% were female, in terms of owners age 39.23% falls within the age bracket of 20- 30 years, 30.77% falls within the age bracket of 31- 40 years, while the remaining 30% is shared between the ages of 41-50 and above 50 years. 55.38% of the enterprises are micro enterprise, 30 % and 13.85 % are small and medium scale enterprises respectively.

Table 1. Demographic Profile

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	77	59.23
	Female	53	40.77
Age of owners	20 – 30 years	51	39.23
	31 – 40 years	40	30.77
	41 – 50 years	22	16.92
	Above 50 years	17	13.08
Size of the Enterprise	Micro	72	55.38
	Small	40	30.77
	Medium	18	13.85
Digital Marketing Platforms	Social media marketing	51	39.23
	E – mail marketing	29	22.30
	Internet marketing	21	16.15
	Mobile marketing	20	15.39
	Search engine marketing	9	6.93

Based on Table 2, the variables' Cronbach's Alpha values demonstrate strong reliability; since these values are higher than the cutoff of 0.70, the instrument has outstanding internal consistency dependability. The final questionnaire and scale have a high reliability since the items that had a lower reliability score during the pilot test were changed or replaced with others that had high internal consistency.

Table 2. Reliability Test

Variables	Numbers of Items	Cronbach's Alpha N =	Cronbach Alpha Pilot study N = 30
Social media marketing	7	.874	.710
E- mail marketing	7	.750	.691
Internet marketing	7	.745	.689
Mobile marketing	6	.701	.575
Search engine marketing	6	.820	.743



4.1. Descriptive Statistics

The mean statistics of social media marketing are the greatest among the five digital marketing components to MSMEs performance ($M=5.4460$, $STD=1.0801$), showing that most business owners believe this to be the most frequent aspect of digital marketing in a company. E-marketing came in second with a mean value of ($M= 4.8800$, $STD=0.8406$), followed by mobile marketing with a mean value of ($M= 3.7437$, $STD=0.6116$), both of which are often used by small businesses to boost performance. The average score for internet marketing and search engine marketing was 3.6957, with a standard deviation of .5751 and 3.6184, with a standard deviation of .8066, respectively suggesting that out of the five digital marketing platforms employed in this study, which is the least effective. Additionally, overall data distribution is legitimate and typical.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Mean	Std deviation
Social media marketing	5.4460	1.0801
E- marketing	4.8800	.8406
Internet marketing	3.6957	.5751
Mobile marketing	3.7437	.6116
Search engine marketing	3.6184	.8066
SMEs performance	4.3511	.7237

Referring to Table 4, the independent variables are social media marketing, e-marketing, internet marketing, online marketing, and search engine marketing, and the dependent variable is MSMEs Performance (MSMEP). According to the table forecasting the performance of SMEs, social media marketing, e-marketing, internet marketing, online marketing, and search engine marketing can predict 49.7% of the variation of SMEs performance. The values of R is .716, R square. 512, and adjusted R - square.497. But as a general guideline, a decent fit is thought to be able to predict at least 60% of the fluctuation of the dependent variable (Zygamont & Smith, 2014).

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std error of estimate	Sig	Durbin Watson
1	.716	.512	.497	.5134	.000	1.631

@ Predictor

Table 5: Anova

Model	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
Regression	34.8718	4	8.718	33.069	.000
Residual	33.2170	126	.264		
Total	68.088	130			

@ Dependent variable: performance



(b) Predictors (constant) social media marketing, e- mail marketing, internet marketing, marketing, and search engine marketing.

Table 6 and 7 results demonstrate that four aspects of digital marketing significantly and favorably affect the performance of SMEs, with social media marketing (0.029, $p=0.002$), e -marketing (0.524, $p=0.000$), internet marketing ($p=.414$, $p=.0.000$), and mobile marketing (0.371, $p=0.000$) outperforming search engine marketing (.820, $p=0.704$). The acceptable values of tolerance value is 0.10, the values of tolerance in this study are more than 0.10 Since VIF values are low, multi collinearity does not this result demonstrate that multi collinearity is not a concern in this study? Additionally, each independent variable is highly

Table 6: Multiple Regressions

Model	coefficient ^b		Standardized coefficient			
	Unstandardized coef.					
S/N	Construct	B	Std Error	B	T	Sig
	Constant	.858	.400	-	2.143	.034
1	Social media marketing	.029	.057	.192	3.013	.003
2	E- marketing	.524	.064	.610	8.231	.000
3	Internet marketing	.414	.073	.330	5.666	.000
4	Mobile marketing	.371	.043	.554	8.668	.000
5	Search engine marketing	.820	.076	.034	.381	.704

Table 7: Hypotheses Interpretation

Hypotheses	Beta coefficient	Sig ($p<0.05$)	Decision
Social media marketing ---> firm performance	.029	.003	Supported
E- marketing -----> firm performance	.524	.000	Supported
Internet marketing -----> firm performance	.371	.000	Supported
Mobile marketing ----- > firm performance	.414	.000	Supported
Search engine marketing ----->firm performance	.820	.704	Not Supported

4.2. Discussion of Findings

As a result of testing hypothesis 1, it was shown that the performance of MSMEs is favorably connected with social media marketing. Social media marketing helps to support products online, promote the sale of goods and services, develop communities that improve business performance, create new business opportunities, and more (Teh et al, 2021). The findings of Dolega, Rowe and Branagan (2021) that social media marketing has a considerable beneficial impact on marketing performance are in line with the results of this study. As an upshot, it would boost business



profitability, market share, and client retention. Additionally, it can help business owners appreciate the use of technical tools to improve small business survival and expansion. Previous studies have found that social media marketing is a reliable indicator of how well MSMEs succeed (Wibowo et al, 2020; Eid, Abdelmoety & Agag, 2020; Ihl, Strunk, & Fiedler, 2020).

The results in hypothesis two revealed that e – mail marketing had a significant positive effects on the performance of MSMEs in the new - normal era, the study recommended that SMEs should adopt social media platforms to promote their products and services in order to enhance sales and marketing performance (Gontur, Hassan & Arik, 2017, Kumar, Syed, & Panday, 2021). The outcome agrees with an earlier study by Akyu et al ., (2020) where it was established that the effect of electronic mail marketing on firm performance was significant and relate positively associated with performance of small and medium scale enterprises. Similarly, (Denga 2023) revealed that e – marketing and virtual marketing are used by SMEs to improve the firm’s overall performance, e mail in new era are perhaps the most trendy digital platform used by managers and owners of MSMEs advertise their products and services to the consuming market.

The third hypothesis's findings show how internet marketing has an effect on the performance of SMEs. The argument for the link was that email marketing serves as a tool for informing customers about the company's goods and services, which is a core belief in internet marketing. The results of this study are in line with those of earlier studies such as Hajoliakbari and Shadi (2018); found that internet marketing is a crucial digital marketing tool for young people who are self-employed in order to foster economic growth, firm success, and performance of SMEs. Consequently, it can be said that wherever a business enterprise placed emphasis on digital marketing tools, whether internet e-mail marketing and mobile advertising, they would help to attract, inspire, and keep committed customers of the firm from changing loyalty if they are satisfied with their goods or services, which helped them in keeping the best customers. The primary goal of marketing is to establish long-lasting relationships with consumers. Branding, packaging, product promotion, and providing discounts are just a few of the strategies used to keep customers loyal. It also in line the findings of Jean and (Kim, 2020; Ainin, Paeveen, Moghawemi, Jaafaru and Moh’d – Shuib, 2015)

Findings in hypothesis four show that there is a significant relationship between mobile marketing and MSMEs performance. For example Ali, Nawaz, Tara and Rafi, (2021) found that permission of client, brand acceptance, communication through application and determined time and frequency of messages were identified as key positive outcomes of mobile marketing. This is in diadem with the study of Tong, Luo and Xu, (2020) they found that mobile media are persuasive straight for marketers and advertisers due to their potential to support communicating and promote the sales of firms’ products and services

The findings of hypothesis number five showed that the performance of SMEs was not significantly impacted by search engine marketing. The findings are in line with a previous study by Khraim (2015) who found that the outcomes exhibit that search engine marketing (SEM) does not have any association with performance of a company.. However, this contradicts the findings of Ndung’ u and Mutinda (2022), and Tomasiki (2015), and Aliu and Agbetokun (2018) found that a well-designed SEO strategy combined with social media advertising, can effectively increase



a website's visibility and coverage. Such a marketing strategy will ultimately significantly boost traffic and improve user communication

5. Conclusion

Both scholars and managers are always paying attention to the topic of digital marketing. Nearly majority of them continue to operate under the assumption that digital marketing is a comprehensive idea that can be applied to quickly boost firm's income. Sales volume will increase, which will undoubtedly improve business performance. The rapid advancement of technology across all fields has also aided in the development of the digital marketing concept, which has elevated electronic marketing to the forefront of marketing while retaining traditional marketing concepts but modernizing them with internet technology. Customers from various organizations or locations can work together virtually as a team to develop, produce, market, and maintain the products or services thanks to digital marketing's support for global communication and collaboration among managers, customers, suppliers, and other business partners. The use of social networking sites and other digital platforms for product marketing is only one example of how a firm can use digital marketing. It can also be used for online meetings, planning sessions, and dialog with customers. Customers might therefore be encouraged to actively participate in the creation, growth, promotion, and sale of a product.

Additionally, digital marketing platforms help connect small businesses with clients. By utilizing these contemporary technologies, micro, small, and medium-sized businesses can learn about the needs of their clients as well as identify the strengths and weaknesses of their products through feedback from customers (Berthon, Pitt, Plangger, & Shapiro, 2012). Many companies utilize digital marketing tools to develop client relationships, provide information on the types and benefits of digital marketing tools for helping micro and small businesses increase their sales success, and employ them as part of their marketing strategies. This turns out to be a firm's influence in determining customers' first preference for using a certain electronic gadget to purchase goods or services in marketing.

Using the results of the SPSS testing, this study found some evidence of data analysis. The findings of this study suggest a number of policy implications, with a focus on providing information to MSMEs' actors. Here are some suggested strategy alternatives: First, micro and small business owners today are not only need to combine marketing tactics, whether conventional or online (e-marketing mix). To increase the performance and profitability of MSMEs, micro and small-scale business owners and entrepreneurs must accept the use of technological devices in marketing their products online using various digital marketing platforms, such as social media marketing, mobile marketing, internet marketing, and search engine marketing. The 21st century is a time of "digital revolution," with a sharp rise in the number and appearance of various technical platforms that business owners can use to market and grow their enterprises. In contrast to mass marketing, which is wasteful, digital advertising nowadays is designed to develop close relationships with consumers. This is consistent with the difficulties MSMEs in Nigeria encounter.

Second, SMEs with strong digital marketing development skills may build strong relationships with their clients. It can be accomplished by enhancing the website's presentation, the information



supplied, the accessibility, and the provision of a forum for two-way communication between the MSME and its clients.

Third, micro, small and medium-sized businesses (MSMEs) have been recognized as a vehicle for economic growth. This vehicle for the economy should continue to exist in its basic form as a type of innovative, proactive, and risk-taking business, encouraging ongoing innovation on goods and services to achieve excellence in performance. Customers today are becoming more sophisticated in their ability to fulfill their desires, and they have an increasing desire to be involved in the business process, making it possible for SMEs to implement those strategies through effective customer knowledge sharing capabilities with their customers.

The first limitation is that the sample size is very small, which is one of the drawbacks of this study. The study's findings cannot therefore be generalized to the entire community, and in order to confirm the digital model's external validity, it should be compared to comparable service-dormant enterprises. However, this study offers some early insights into the connections between search engine marketing, social media marketing, email marketing, internet marketing, and mobile marketing. In addition, future studies should expand on this model and provide additional information about the nature of these linkages in diverse contexts and industries. Additionally, qualitative method of data analysis should be employed and data gathered using a longitudinal study design may be used in future studies.

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