



Digital Marketing Strategies and Marketing Performance of Private Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt, Nigeria

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Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analysed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the relationship between digital marketing strategies and marketing performance of private secondary schools in Port Harcourt. The population of the study comprises of two hundred and fourteen (214) registered private secondary schools in Port Harcourt (Rivers State Yellow Page Directory, 2014/2015). Considering the need for precision and elimination of unnecessary biases on the sample size determination, the taro yamen formula was used to determine elements of the population, which is one hundred and thirty-nine (139) private schools in Port Harcourt. The study adopted the simple random sampling techniques, while the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (PPMCC) assisted by the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) Version 21.0 was used in testing the hypotheses. Two copies of the questionnaire were administered to each of the one hundred and thirty-nine (139), private secondary schools in Port Harcourt, totalling two hundred and seventy-eight (278) copies of questionnaire. Of the two hundred and seventy-eight (278) copies of the questionnaire that were distributed, two hundred and fifty-nine (259) copies representing 93.2% were retrieved and nineteen (19) which represents 6.8%

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were not retrieved. The study revealed that there is strong and positive relationship between digital marketing strategies and marketing performance of private secondary schools in Port Harcourt. The study further concludes that the dimensions of digital marketing strategies impacts marketing performance indicators. The study however recommends that private secondary schools in Port Harcourt should be more accustomed to the latest technology in the educational sector to be at par with international standards and to compete favourably on the international scene.

Keywords: Digital marketing; search engine optimization; digital affiliate marketing; marketing performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Private secondary schools have become so competitive in recent times in Port Harcourt. This is because of the stiff competition among the educational sector in the present-day business competitive environment.

The question here is, can the services be purchased at any point in time? Can the services easily be accessible even when it is least expected by customers? These and many other rising factors have motivated several private secondary schools to come up with better strategies to have a competitive advantage in the educational sector in Port Harcourt. One of such strategies is the adoption of highly modified technologies to assist students in learning and engage in other activities in private secondary schools for efficiency and effectiveness in the areas of communication, learning, interacting with others, parents and for promotional offerings. Digital marketing strategy is a type of marketing strategy that is usually used both on the internet and off the internet. Aleksandar & Olia [1] stated that digital marketing is usually interchangeably used as online marketing, e-marketing, or internet marketing. The internet has become a key channel in carrying out marketing activities digitally and has become a vital components of intelligence to the consumer and their purchase applications [2]. The involvement and engagement of digital technology has enabled marketing activities to experience a tremendous increased success in today's business arena. The use of the internet has created a positive impact in the way in which organization sell their products and services. Selling products and services digitally, is not a new marketing avenue to sell; but it has created a new paradigm in the way consumers perceive organizations and their brands and the way these customers interact and communicate with one another in a digital environment.

Digital marketing is an actually new marketing channel, which includes selling and buying of products and services in any of the digital platforms, like the web. It is a part of the technological components that is made up of hardware system, internet equipment and software system where each of these technological components works individually by bringing individuals together in an online site. The internet has really made life easy for the organizations and the consumers, and has also enhanced customer's internet usage, in that they tend to purchase and shop across the globe. The internet has also enabled both firms and customers to access various aspects of electronic information at the comfort of their homes or offices. Customers often engage in the use of internet to access information and make enquiries before the actual purchases are being made [3].

Digital marketing strategies also uses the principles of traditional marketing which enables firms to handle and manage the opportunities and challenges that emanates from the digital platforms (Sonia, 2010).

Furthermore, digital marketing according to [12] (Kolter et al., 2010), is defined as the attributes of marketing activities that helps in promoting products and services and creates lasting relationships between the firm and customers in an electronic platform. Afrina, et al. [5], noted that digital marketing is the allocation of digital media by marketers to advertise their products and services that are being offered to their target market. They further stated that digital marketing strategy leverages on the use of the internet, which also includes advertising and displaying products and services online, using search engine optimization marketing, electronic advertising billboards, smart phones, social media platforms, pay-per click etc. Using the internet has greatly reduced some the difficulties that customers encounter while shopping using traditional marketing strategies. Consumers no

longer depend on what the firm offers or says to them about their products or services rather, they access information about the firm by themselves using the various online platforms to get the needed information [5].

Marketing performance is defined as an indicator of the quality of products and services regarding the marketing activities of a firm, which enhances their effectiveness and efficiency (Clark & Ambler, 2002). A sales turnover of an organization has been categorized by its marketing performance which includes profitability, sales growth, and market share. Marketing performance is the ability by which an organization achieve its marketing goals and objectives. For an effective management of the organizations, marketing managers must depend on well-developed and exact measures of marketing performance.

Barone & Decarlo, [6], The application of various digital marketing strategies is usually used to ensure that an organization achieves a positive result and thereby enhance the marketing performance of the organization. Previous scholars have tried in categorizing digital marketing strategies into different distinct groups, since the introduction of internet; such as content marketing, digital billboard, digital affiliate marketing, search engine marketing, e-mail marketing, mobile marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), social media marketing, and online advertising [7,8,5].

Bagorogoza and Waal [9], highlighted market share and profitability as measures of marketing performance. None of these authors carried out studies on the combinations of these instruments on private secondary schools in Port Harcourt. And the researcher has opted for search engine optimization and affiliate marketing as the dimensions of digital marketing strategies and market share and profitability as measures of marketing performance. Based on the above, it has been observed that digital marketing has not been used alongside marketing performance of private secondary schools in Port Harcourt. These however serves as the knowledge gap which the present study seeks to investigate how digital marketing strategies can positively influence marketing performance of private secondary schools in Port Harcourt.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Marketing performance is a complex construct with so many branches, and it is usually affected

by the environment where the business is taking place. The business environment is filled with competition amongst firms and therefore accurate marketing strategies is needed to enhance marketing performance [10]. Marketing Performance to a large extent measures whether the organizations are effective in achieving its set objectives. Thus, according to Koontz & Donnell [11], marketing performance is seen as the ability of an organization to attain and achieve its marketing goals, such as high-profit margin, market share, profitability, product, and service quality, increased financial results at an expected time and by implementing the vital marketing strategies. Digital marketing strategy is gradually gaining ground in the business arena and organizations are also following the trends to remain current and up to date in the marketplace and ensures that its impact on marketing performance is fully achieved.

Organizations are not only needed to contribute to marketing performance through building their brands and increasing their sales revenue, but can also achieve that through customer acquisition, retention, loyalty and overall market share, sales volume, and profitability.

However, some private secondary schools in Port Harcourt are experiencing low patronage of students and this is affecting the level of their marketing performance, and this has also reduced their visibility across Port Harcourt metropolis. Specifically, it was observed that they still advertise and promote their schools using the traditional media in delivering their messages and disseminating information about their school to the publics in Port Harcourt. Due to the unending competition among private secondary schools, marketing practitioners have continually adopted and implemented digital marketing strategies to enhance learning and awareness creation for their offerings to customers and the entire publics. However, the study joins the discourse on marketing performance by investigating how it is influenced by digital marketing strategies.

This study is necessitated by the current trend in the usage of digital marketing strategies by the private secondary school sector in carrying out their marketing activities which underscores the need for firms to participate in the application of digital marketing strategies to benefit from the positive consumer patronage which enhances marketing performance.

1.2 Aim of the Study

Hence, this study seeks to investigate the relationship that exist between digital marketing strategies and marketing performance of private secondary schools in Port Harcourt.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Technology acceptance model [12]. Technology acceptance model was developed by Davis [12], on how individuals accept and engage in the use of the current technology. This theory further suggests that individuals using this technological system will think about the perceived usefulness and flexible ease of using this technology before deciding how and when to use a new technological platform.

Perceive usefulness is defined as the process where individuals believe that using a particular technological method may likely improve the quality of the jobs they do and enhance their outputs. While perceive ease is the extent to which an individual thinks that using a specific technological system would reduce their workload and efforts [12]. The theory further states that individual users will adjust to using technology that enables them to perform their jobs effectively and efficiently. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) also does not permit the issues of cost, structural imperative, and environmental influence that pushes individual users to consider using this new technology. Park (2009), added that, TAM is an important theoretical framework that enables individuals to comprehend and elaborate the behavioural purpose of using the new technology.

2.2 Concept of Digital Marketing Strategies

Digital marketing is an electronic platform such as (Smart Phones, tablets, computers, and game devices & consoles) that organizations use to communicate out and disseminate their marketing messages to customers. Furthermore, digital marketing is seen as using multiple electronic channels to advertise an organization's products, services, and brands. Using digital marketing strategy reduces and eliminates cost and creates a huge brand awareness [13]. Digital marketing strategies refers to the strategic process where firms distribute, promote and

price their products and services to their customers through a digital platform. Digital marketing is more than just the internet, it further includes the use of smart phones, electronic banners and online outdoor marketing and other social network sites [14]. Regarding the stiff competition among organizations online, they engage heavily in the marketplace to attract and engage the attention of potential customers, a huge marketing expenditure is needed by these organizations and enormous efforts is required from the digital marketers to showcase themselves and stand out from competitors, to get customers to visit their sites and encourage them to make an actual purchase and refer others [15].

The advantages of making use of the internet to communicate and disseminate information to customers are majorly used for targeting major customers and interacting with them. It is also used to enhance the media, reduce cost, marketing efficiency and to acquire customers [16].

Gilmore, et al. [17] stated that digital marketing is the process of exploiting both the internet and those technologies that are attached to the internet to help in attaining the overall marketing objectives in association with other marketing communication channels. In other words, digital marketing is seen as where firms employ more efforts to reach out to customers, communicate, promote, and sell their products and services using the internet [18]. Hoge [19], posited that digital marketing is the transfer of goods and services from the firm to its customers involving one or more electronic methods or media. The advantages of digital marketing are quite massive in that it brings about cost reduction and increases the number of customers to reach out to both potential and actual customers. Engaging in digital marketing is cost effective than using other marketing platforms to sell: such as direct marketing or using the services of middlemen. In other words, the benefit of digital marketing is that it helps organizations get to reach a huge number of customers within a short period of time at a very minimal cost [20,21]. Digital marketing also enhances customer communication in an organization's own website or via their own social dominance on the internet [22]. Digital marketing has become the most convenient way where firms and their customers interact and transact with one another, and it has also become a workable online marketing tool that that firms have come to discover and

strongly implement it [23]. They further noted that digital marketing helps organization to know and keep record of the number of all the customers that visited their site in a particular adverts and other related posts which enhances the organization sales as well as the overall impact on their marketing performance.

2.3 Dimensions of Digital Marketing Strategies

2.3.1 Search engine optimization

Search engine optimization (SEO) is seen as improving the volume and amount of traffic in a particular website from search engines via natural results. It further means that one can access a website through search engines, thereby choosing a particular key search terms to control the site content and satisfying other valuable success factors [24].

Wienclaw [25], defined search engine optimization as the process of raising the probability that a website will be among the results of a digital search and that it will be positioned conspicuously in the search results online. It is vital that owners of the websites or firms should ensure that their websites can easily be located on online search engines for the products and services they display. Curran, [26], defined search engine optimization as the process of raising a website to a position that the web page will display strategically on the search engines. Search engine optimizations is the process of making a site and its content seen and pertinent for both the websites and its visitors to the site. [27]. Search Engine optimization plays a vital role in acquiring customers and it ensures that the organization's offering will always display on the search results, thereby allowing the firms to get in touch with potential customers.

2.3.2 Digital affiliate marketing

A partner who helps an organization to advertise and promote their products or services is called an affiliate merchant [28]. An affiliate uses the firm's equipment's such as: banners or links owned by the merchant's website on their own websites to them acquire and attract more visitors or customers to their website [29].

Digital affiliate marketing is a process where rewards are given to referrers and are also compensated for every referral they give. Digital affiliate marketing helps firms to promote and

enhance e-marketing website, with the referrers being compensated for every visitor or customer they get via their efforts. Digital affiliate marketing is a useful strategy that firms usually implement to build their brands and create a lasting customer relationship management [30]. Affiliates are digital marketers who are paid on a performance basis.

Affiliate marketing is also a type of marketing practice in digital marketing, where the affiliates are rewarded by the web-based merchant, through each customer that are bought through the affiliate's marketing exertions [31]. Rob [30] further noted that digital affiliate marketing can be used to enhance and attract more customers to a firm's website.

2.4 Marketing Performance

Lebens & Euske [32], defined performance as the comparison between monetary and non-monetary indices which shows evidence on the extent to which an organization attains its objectives. Marketing performance can be conceptualized using market share, total sales, customer satisfaction, and customer acquisition [33,34] (Sullivan & Dooley, 2009). A study by Grawe et al. [35], on the relationship between strategic orientation, innovation patterns and market performance measured marketing performance as sales growth, profitability, market share and the overall organization's competitive position.

Lin and Peng [36,37], explains that marketing performance is the evidence of the organization operational activity, including the achievement of the firm's goals and objectives. Marketing performance is the result that is attained in meeting the internal and external goals of an organization [36,37]. Kao (2008) noted that performance is the accomplishment of marketing goals in terms of sales volume, profitability, and market share. Marketing performance is an indicator of value of the marketing activities of the organization regarding effectiveness and efficiency [38].

2.5 Digital Marketing Strategies and Marketing Performance

Digital marketing strategies are tactics used by organizations across the globe to attract customers, sell faster and attain various success stories. Every sale a firm makes increases their turnover and it's been categorized as marketing performance which comprises of profitability,

market share and major dominance by the organization. And marketing managers are expected to develop a well-founded and accurate indices of marketing performance to enable them to accomplish their goals [6]. Digital marketing is so vital that it has helped customers to access vital information that is relevant to them at any point in time and at the comfort of their homes or offices. It has also helped customers (actual and potential) not to focus only on what firm says or offers about their products and services, but access this information on their own, or from friends, family members, peers etc. Digital marketing is the use of digital platforms and technologies to promote a firm's marketing activities that concentrates on consumer's reach [5].

Furthermore, digital marketing enables firms to display its offering to customers and interact and communicate with them positively and this can positively influence the performance of any business organization [39].

Kimani [40], found out that the use of social media can influence consumer awareness, information acquisition and increase their purchasing behaviour, thus being an effective strategic tool to evaluate and sell the firm's brand. Stokes [41], maintains that marketing is all about persuading, interacting, and convincing the customers through the internet and it has become a massive hub of interacting and conserving, with customers through the interactive use of the internet, with this an organization can monitor the websites and their visitors thereby follow up the flow of conversations between them and their customers to them fully engaged.

2.5.1 Search engine optimization and marketing performance

Search Engine Optimization is the main aspect of internet marketing, and the most important idea is to get a beneficial rank when the customer is searching for a specific search term for searches or products. Search Engine Optimization brings massive traffic to the firms. In other words, it can increase a firm's profitability levels [42]. Search Engine Optimization is an approach that uses information gotten from data and marketing research to locate the most viable method for a website [43].

Kisiel, [44], stated that for an organization to enhance the amount of traffic to an individual website from search engines, search engine

optimization must be in place and be handled with utmost commitment. The objective of the search engine optimization is to increase the number of website's ranking connected to search engines, thereby increasing the traffic of using the website of the firm which in turn bring about increased sales volume [45,46]. The method of improving website visibility which is seen as Search Engine Optimization. SEO involves developing a website to enhance the search engine result page ranking [47]. Berman & Katonay [48-54], conducted a study on the influence of Search Engine Optimization on the competition that exist amongst advertisers for an organic and sponsored search results. They found out that a positive use of search engine optimization may likely increase the search engine's ranking quality and thus the overall firm's sales performance.

In other words, increased search engine optimization traffic and the participation of actual and potential customers may likely improve and enhance the marketing performance of private secondary schools in Port Harcourt.

Hence, the following hypotheses are proposed:

HO₁: There is no significant relationship between Search Engine Optimization and market share of private secondary schools in Port Harcourt.

HO₂: There is no significant relationship between Search Engine Optimization and profitability of private secondary schools in Port Harcourt.

2.5.2 Digital affiliate marketing and marketing performance

Digital affiliate marketing is an important aspect of using digital marketing. It refers to a process where an individual advertises a firm's product or services in a digital site and gets paid for it. Digital affiliate marketing is also seen as a procedure where two or more can jointly own a website together to build and develop relationships that will help them benefit financially. Digital affiliate marketing is a site that is massively used companies to promote and showcase their websites and they are further rewarded for their endeavour to attract the attention of every customer visits their sites. In digital affiliate marketing, rewards and compensations are often based on the number of

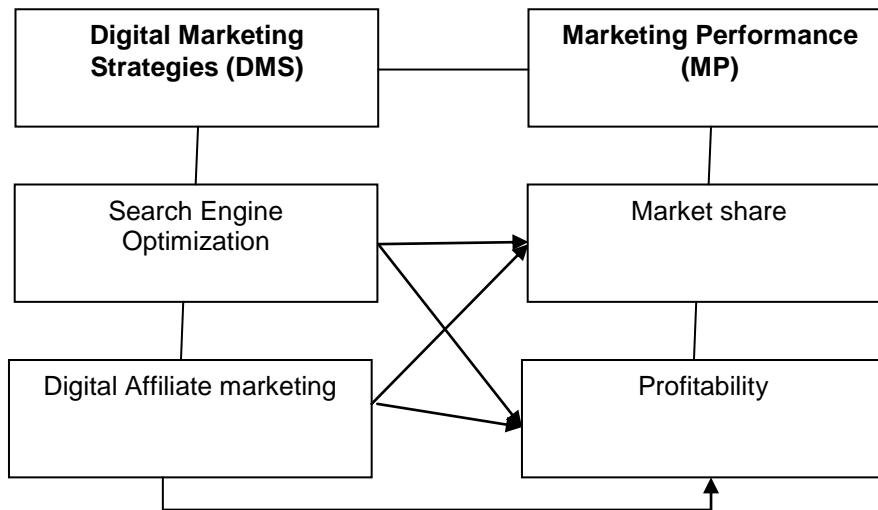


Fig. 1. Operational framework showing the relationship digital marketing strategies and marketing performance

Source: Jarvinen et al., 2012; Eida & Elgoharyb, [8]; Afrina et al., [5] (Dimensions of Digital Marketing Strategies).
 Lebens & Euske, [32]; Gunday, 2012; Grawe et al., [33]; Clark & Ambler, [38]. (Measures of Marketing Performance)

referrals an affiliate marketer has. Digital affiliate marketing is also seen as a method where a third-party showcases and refers customers to a firm's products or services on behalf of the host company in return for an agreed commission for a particular sale. Under this approach, affiliate is seen as an widen position of a firm's intermediaries for their website. Affiliate marketing is most commonly used for electronic commerce purposes in a given website.

Hence, we formulated the following hypotheses:

HO₃: There is no significant relationship between digital affiliate marketing and market share of private secondary schools in Port Harcourt

HO₄: There is no significant relationship between digital affiliate marketing and profitability of private secondary schools in Port Harcourt.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study used a cross-sectional survey research design, using a questionnaire in gathering information relating to the data needed.

The population of the study comprises of two hundred and fourteen (214) registered private secondary schools in Port Harcourt, while the respondents that is accessible to the researcher for the study are executive directors, proprietors,

principals, and teachers as at the time, the study was conducted. (Rivers State yellow page directory, 2014/2015). To enable us to arrive at a precision and remove unwanted biases on simple size determination, taro Yamen formula was used to determine the elements of the study population, which is one hundred and thirty-nine (139) private secondary schools in Port Harcourt. The study used the simple random sampling techniques to select the one hundred and thirty-nine (139) private secondary schools in Port Harcourt which comprise as our accessible population. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to analyse the data with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Two copies of questionnaire were distributed to each of the one hundred and thirty-nine (139) private secondary schools in Port Harcourt, which gave a total of two hundred and seventy-eight (278) copies of questionnaire. As a outcome of a particular viewed blank,eject and double entries as well as incomplete filling, some of the questionnaires were seen as not usable and so were not included in the study analysis. Total of two hundred and seventy-eight (278) copies of questionnaires were distributed and, two hundred and fifty-nine (259) copies covering a percentage response rate of 93.2% were returned and nineteen (19) which represent 6.8%

were not regained and all were admitted and appropriate for further analysis.

For gender distribution, 100 (38.6%) respondents were males while 159(61.4%) respondents were females. Based on gender distribution, one hundred and seventy-five (175) respondents which is equivalent to 67.6% were married; seventy (70) respondents representing 27.0% were singles, fourteen (14) respondents corresponding to 5.4% were separated/divorced. The bio-data also showed that nineteen (19) respondents representing 7.3% were O’Level Certificate (WAEC/SSCE) holders, forty-five (45) respondents which represent 17.4% were OND/HND holders, one hundred and twenty-four (124) of the total respondents with a percentage of 47.9% were B.Sc/HND holders, fifty (50) respondents with a percentage of 19.3% were M.Sc/MBA holders and 21 respondents representing 8.1% were Ph.D holders.

4.1 Testing of Hypotheses

As stated in chapter three, the hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient

Decision Rules

The decision rule stated that the null hypotheses (Ho) should be accepted, and the alternate hypotheses (Ha) be rejected, if the significant probability value (PV) is greater than 0.05, which states that no significant coefficient exists. And that the null hypotheses (Ho) should be rejected, and the alternate hypotheses (Ha) be accepted if the significant probability value (PV) is less than 0.05, that is, there exist a significant coefficient. The authenticity of the control is decided; thus, -

0.1 to -0.4(weak negative influence), -0.5 to -0.7 (moderate negative influence), -0.8 to -0.9 (strong negative influence), -1 (perfect negative influence); +0.1 to +0.4 (weak positive influence), +0.5 to +0.7 (moderate positive influence), +0.8 to +0.9 (strong positive influence), +1 (perfect positive influence).

4.1.1 Hypothesis one

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between search engine optimization and market share of private secondary schools in Port Harcourt.

Table 1 shows that a Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient of 0.951 and probability value of 0.000.

Coefficient of Determination

$$r^2 = (0.951)^2; r^2 = 0.904401 \times 100; r^2 = 90.4\%$$

The coefficient of determination (r^2) is 90.4% which mean that, the degree of significant relationship between search engine optimization and market share is positive and strong. This result shows that there is a strong and positive significant relationship between search engine optimization and market share of private secondary schools in Port Harcourt. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted, because the PV (0.000) is less than the level of significance (0.05).

4.1.2 Hypothesis two

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between search engine optimization and profitability of private secondary schools in Port Harcourt.

Table 1. Correlation analysis showing the relationship between search engine optimization and Market Share

		Correlations	
		Search Engine Optimization	Market Share
Search Engine Optimization	Pearson Correlation	1	.951**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	259	259
Market Share	Pearson Correlation	.951**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	259	259

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
Source: Field Survey Data, 2022, SPSS 23 Output

Table 2. Correlation analysis showing the relationship between search engine optimization and profitability

		Correlations	
		Search Engine Optimization	Profitability
Search Engine Optimization	Pearson Correlation	1	.925**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	259	259
Profitability	Pearson Correlation	.925**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	259	259

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field Survey Data, 2022, SPSS 23 Output

Table 2 shows a Pearson product moment correlation coefficient of 0.925 and probability value of 0.000.

Coefficient of Determination

$$r^2 = (0.925)^2: r^2 = 0.855625 \times 100: r^2 = 85.6\%$$

The coefficient of determination (r^2) is 85.6% which mean that, the degree of significant relationship between search engine optimization and profitability is positive and strong. This result shows that there exist a strong and positive significant relationship between search engine optimization and profitability of private secondary schools in Port Harcourt. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted, because the PV (0.000) is less than the level of significance (0.05).

4.1.3 Hypothesis three

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between digital affiliate marketing and market share of private secondary schools in Port Harcourt.

Table 3. shows a Pearson product moment correlation coefficient of 0.881 and probability value of 0.000.

Coefficient of Determination

$$r^2 = (0.881)^2: r^2 = 0.776161 \times 100 : r^2 = 77.6\%$$

The coefficient of determination (r^2) is 77.6% which mean that the degree of significant relationship between digital affiliate marketing and market share is positive and strong. This result therefore shows that there exist a strong and positive significant relationship between digital affiliate marketing and market share of private secondary schools in Port Harcourt. Therefore, we the null hypothesis rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted, because the PV (0.000) is less than the level of significance (0.05).

4.1.4 Hypothesis four

Ho₄: There is no significant relationship between digital affiliate marketing and profitability of private secondary schools in Port Harcourt.

Table 3. Correlation analysis showing the relationship between digital affiliate marketing and market share

		Correlations	
		Digital Affiliate Marketing	Market Share
Digital Affiliate Marketing	Pearson Correlation	1	.881**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	259	259
Market Share	Pearson Correlation	.881**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	259	259

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Source: Field Survey Data, 2022, SPSS 23 Output

Table 4. Correlation analysis showing the relationship between digital affiliate marketing and profitability

		Correlations	
		Digital Affiliate Marketing	Profitability
Digital Affiliate Marketing	Pearson Correlation	1	.855**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	259	259
Profitability	Pearson Correlation	.855**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	259	259

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Source: Field Survey Data, 2022, SPSS 23 Output

Table 4. shows a Pearson product moment correlation coefficient of 0.855 and probability value of 0.000.

Coefficient of Determination

$$r^2 = (0.855)^2 : r^2 = 0.731025 \times 100 : r^2 = 73.1\%$$

The coefficient of determination (r^2) is 73.1% which means that, the degree of significant relationship between digital affiliate marketing and profitability is positive and strong. This result also shows that there exist a strong and positive significant relationship between digital affiliate marketing and profitability of private secondary schools in Port Harcourt. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted, because the PV (0.000) is less than the level of significance (0.05).

4.2 Discussion of Findings

This section discusses the outcome of our test of hypotheses.

4.2.1 Search engine optimization and marketing performance

Hypothesis one testing reveals that there exist a strong and positive relationship between search engine optimization and market share of private secondary schools in Port Harcourt. The Pearson Product Moment of Correlation Coefficient was used to test the hypothesis created a score of $r = 0.951$. The Coefficient of determination i.e., $r^2 = 0.904 \times 100$ gave us 90.4%. This explains that search engine optimization has 90.4% level relationship with market share. This is the intended strength of the model used for the study. It means that only 90.4% variation can be illustrated by factors within the model used for the study and the remaining 9.6% can only be

detailed by other external quantitative and qualitative resource of the model used for the study.

Hypothesis two testing reveals that there exist a strong and positive relationship between search engine optimization and profitability. This can be traced to Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient in a two tailed test at 0.925. The coefficient of determination (r^2) was 0.856x100 gave us 85.6%. This shows that search engine optimization is 85.6% is in concurrence with profitability. The findings from hypotheses one and two are in agreement with the findings of Berman & Katonay [48], whose study showed a strong and positive correlation between search engine optimization and marketing performance.

4.2.2 Digital affiliate marketing and marketing performance

Hypothesis three testing gave a score of 0.881 from the Pearson Product Moment of Correlation Coefficient statistical tool. This further shows that there exist a strong and positive relationship between digital affiliate marketing and market share. The coefficient of determination (r^2) of 0.881 gave us 0.776 (ie. 77.6%) stating at 77.6% strength of the relationship between digital affiliate marketing and market share.

The test of hypothesis four at 0.05 level of significance generated a Pearson Correlation Coefficient of 0.855. This shows a strong and positive relationship between digital affiliate marketing and profitability of private secondary schools in Port Harcourt. The Coefficient of determination ie. $r^2 = 0.731 \times 100$ gave us 73.1%. This shows that digital affiliate marketing has 73.1% level relationship with profitability, and it is the explanatory control of the model used for the study. It further shows that only 73.1% variation can be explained by factors within the model

used for the study and the remaining 26.9% can only be explained by other external quantitative and qualitative resource of the model used for the study. This result is also supported by Ugonna et al. [3] that digital affiliate marketing has a positive relationship with firm's performance.

5. CONCLUSION

This study enhances the knowledge and understanding on digital marketing strategies and marketing performance.

The study is in line with the small but growing body of literature on digital marketing strategies and marketing performance and shows that the dimensions of digital marketing strategies impacts marketing performance measures through its corporate routines, approaches, management approach to customers' interaction which thereby enhances the firm's productivity and performance.

In summary, the study concludes that as follows:

- i. Search engine optimization has a positive significant with marketing performance of private secondary schools in Port Harcourt.
- ii. Digital affiliate marketing has a positive significant with marketing performance of private secondary schools in Port Harcourt.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following are recommended:

- i. The study recommended the management of private secondary schools should implement digital marketing strategies that will incorporate the well-being of the customers and the society at large.
- ii. Marketers of private secondary schools in Port Harcourt should use this medium in attracting new customers and delivering about their services to customers.
- iii. Marketers need to implement these strategies to reduce the risk to enhance the adoption of social network sites as a communication and marketing tools.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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