

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

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% 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 in order 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.

INTRODUCTION

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

The questions are can the services be purchased at any point in time? Are the services easily 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. One of such strategies is the adoption of highly modified technologies to assist in learning and other activities in private secondary schools for efficiency and effectiveness in the areas of communication, learning, interacting with students and parents and for promotional offerings. Digital marketing strategy is seen as an appropriate strategy. Digital marketing strategy is seen to include both on the internet and off the internet digital technologies and multiple channels under it (Aleksandar & Olja, 2017). Therefore, digital marketing strategies could be used interchangeably as online marketing strategy, electronic marketing strategy, internet marketing strategy, internet marketing strategy (Aleksandar & Olja

2017. The internet has become a very viable vehicle for marketing purposes and has become a front-end application of intelligence of the consumer and as well as their purchase applications (Omar, Bathgate & Nwankwo, 2011). The involvement and engagement of digital technology has enabled marketing activities to experience a tremendous increased success in today's business arena. The internet usage has greatly changed the globe in which we sell our product and services. It is not a new marketing channel; but has created a new shift for the way in which consumers come with brands and with each other in a digital world.

Digital marketing is a relatively new business channel, which entails selling and buying of goods and services using a technological platform like the worldwide Weber internet. It is an aspect of technology that is comprised of hardware, software and network equipment whereby each of the components works as a single system that brings individuals together in an online forum. The internet has made lifestyle easy, and it has also increased consumers usage online, in that they tend to shop around more because of their access to various points of online information. They apply the use of internet to research before the actual purchases and are the initial adopters of technology because they have a world view (Ugonna, Okolo, Nebo & Ojize 2017). Digital marketing strategies leverages on the principles of traditional marketing using the opportunities and challenges offered by digital medium (Sonia, 2010).

Furthermore, digital marketing according to (Kolter & Armstrong 2012; Kolter et al., 2010), is seen the measures and activities to promote products and services and build relationships with customers in an online platform. Burrett (2008) stated that digital marketing is defined as carefully targeting users and getting them to interact with you, while they are engaged with the most personal, intimate medium ever invented. Farina et al (2015), noted that digital marketing is the deployment o electronic media by marketers to prop up their offerings to the market. They further stated that digital marketing strategy cuts across internet needs the use of internet, which are search engine marketing, digital billboards, mobile phones, social media, pay per click, display advertising etc. The use of the internet has made it easier and possible for consumers not to depend on what the firm says about their products or services rather, they sort information for themselves using the various online platforms (Afrina Sadia & Kaniz, 2015).

Marketing performance is an indication of quality of the marketing activities of a firm, both in terms of effectiveness and efficiency (Clark & Ambler, 2002).

Every sales turnover of any given firm has been characterized by its marketing performance which includes profits, sales growth and market share. For effective control of organizations, marketing managers must depend on well founded and accurate measures of marketing performance.

(Barone & Decarlo, 2012), The application of different digital marketing strategies is used to ensure that a business registers positive results and improve marketing performance in the industries.

Researchers have endeavour to categorize digital marketing strategies into different groups since the invention time such as content marketing, digital affiliate marketing search engine marketing, electronic mailing (e-mail) marketing, mobile marketing, search engine optimization social media marketing, mobile marketing and banner advertising (Jarvinen, Tolliner , Karjaluo & Jayawardhena 2012; Eida & Elgoharyb, 2013, Afrina et al, 2015)

Bagorogoza and Waal (2010), 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 school in Nigeria. 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 preset study seeks to cover to examine the relationship between digital marketing strategies and marketing performance of private secondary schools in Port Harcourt.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Marketing performance is a complex and multi-faceted concept, and it is usually affected by the environment. Competition characterizes business environments and therefore appropriate marketing strategies enhance marketing performance. (Achrol & Kotler 2011). Performance measures the organization's effectiveness against its set objectives. Thus, according to Koontz & Donnell (2003), marketing performance refers to the ability of an organization to attain its goals such as high-profit margin, product/service quality, target market share, better financial results at a stipulated time and by applying the relevant strategies. Digital marketing strategy is gradually becoming the order of the day for firms and its impact on marketing performance needs to be determined.

Marketers are not only required to contribute to marketing performance through brand building and growing sales revenue, but also through customer acquisition, customer retention, customers satisfaction and overall market share, sales growth and profitability.

However, it's been observed that some private secondary schools in Port Harcourt are experiencing, below optimal level of marketing performance and this has limited their risibility and customer engagement across Port Harcourt metropolis. Specially, it was observed that they still engage in the use of traditional media such as television, handbills, billboards, radio, magazine, etc to deliver and disseminate messages and information about their schools to customers and this has affected the market share and profitability in the educational sector 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 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 in order to benefit from the positive consumer patronage which enhances marketing performance.

1.3 Aim of the Study

Hence, on this foregoing, this study seeks to examine the relationship between digital marketing strategies and marketing performance of private secondary schools in Port Harcourt.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Technology acceptance model (Davis, 1989). Technology acceptance model was expounded by Davis (1989), on how users consent and use technology. The model suggests that users of these technological method will consider the perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use in deciding how and when to use a new technology.

Perceive usefulness is defined as the extent to which an individual believed that using a particular method improves the quality of their job and output. While perceive ease of us is the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free from effort

(Davis, 1989). The theory further states that users will adopt to technology that helps them to perform their task effectively and efficiently. The short come of Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is that it does not take into consideration the issues o cost, structural imperative and environmental influence that forces users to adopt technology. Park (2009), confirm that TAM is a useful theoretical model in helping to understand and explain helping to understand and explain behavioural intentions in technological uses.

2.2 Concept of digital Marketing Strategies

The term digital marketing is derived from using an electronic device (such as, computers, smart phones tablets and game consoles) to reach out and disseminate information to customers. Furthermore, digital marketing is seen as using one or more electronic channels to promote a product or a brand. Using digital marketing strategy reduces cost and increases high brand awareness (Bharghava, 2015). Digital marketing strategies refers to the strategic process of distributing promoting, pricing products and discovering the desires and expectations of customers using digital platforms and digital platforms and digital marketing. Digital marketing goes beyond the internet and also include mobile phones, banner and digital outdoor marketing and social networks (pride & Ferrell 2012). Due to the fierce competition between firms on the web to capture the attention of potential buyers, it requires a huge marketing expenditures and efforts from digital marketers to set themselves out form competitors, get visitors to their sits and get them actually to make a purchase (Hoffman & Novak, 2000).

The benefits of using the internet for marketing are majorly for targeting, interactivity, rich media, cost reduction, efficiency and customer acquisition (Turban et al., 2010).

Gilmore, Gallagher and Henry (2007) stated that digital marketing is the process of utilizing both the internet and those technologies which are associated with internet to assist in the achievement of marketing objectives in combination with other marketing communication techniques. In other words, digital marketing is a process where companies endeavour to notify buyers communicate, promote and sell its offerings through means of the internet (Kolter & Keller, 2009). Hoge (1993) 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 enormous in that it reduces cost and enhances reaching out to both potential and actual customers. The cost of digital marketing is typically lower than other marketing platforms such as face-face marketing or sales with the help of middlemen or distributors. Geerally, the mian advantage of digital marketing is that firms get to reach many customers within a minute at a very minimal cost (Watson et al., 2002; Sheth & Sharma, 2005). Digital marketing also involves encouraging customer communications on company's own website or through its own social presence on the internet (Chaffey, 2011). Digital marketing has become the most convenient and effective marketing tool that marketers have come to realize and apply (Atshaya & Stristy, 2016). They further noted that digital marketing helps organization to keep number of all the views in a particular adverts' placement and other posts and its relative effect on company's sales as well as the overall impact of the ad on company's performance.

Dimensions of digital marketing strategies

2.2.1 Search engine Optimization

Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of improving the volume and quality of traffic to a website from search engines via "natural" (organic or algorithmic") search results. It further

means that a website is accessible to search engines, selecting key search terms to target, manipulating the site content and fulfilling other critical success factors (Helsdingen, 2007). Wicnclaw (2017), defined search engine optimization as the process of increasing the probability that a website will be listed in the results of an online search and that it will be placed prominently in the search results online. Therefore, it is important that web owners or firms needs to ensure that their website can easily be found on search engines for the products and services they offer. Curran, (2004), defined search engine optimization as the process of improving a website's position so that the web page appears higher up in the search results of the search engines. Search engine optimizations is the process making a site and its content highly visible and relevant for both the search engines and its visitors to te site. (Enge Spencer, Stricchiola & Fishkin 2012). Search Engine optimization plays a crucial role in acquisition as it ensures your organization's offering will appear in the search results, thereby allowing the firms to reach out to potential customers. It further provides an average internet user to potential customers. It further provides an average internet user with a free and easy way to find general information on the internet (Weideman & Krirzinger, 2003). Search engines are often used to locate and search information about a firm's products or services on the web, whether they are relevant or not (Alimohammadi 2003).

2.2.2 Digital Affiliate Marketing

A partner who is called an affiliate promotes products and services from another company which is called merchant (Lemmenett, 2014). An affiliate uses banners or links of a merchant's website on their own websites to acquire and attract customers (Birkner, 2012).

Digital affiliate marketing is a system of reward whereby referrers are given a finder's or every referral they give. Digital affiliate marketing is widely used to promote and enhance e-commerce website, with the referrers being rewarded for every visitor, subscriber or customer provided through their effort their efforts. It is a useful tactics that firms use to build brands and acquire customers (Rob, 2013). Affiliates are digital marketers who are paid on a performance basis. The basic aim of an affiliate is to send targeted traffic (that man's customers who are very likely to perform the desired action) to a particular merchant's website.

Affiliate marketing is also a type o marketing practice in digital marketing, where the affiliates are rewarded by the web- based merchant, through each customer that bought through the affiliate's marketing exertions (Patrutice 2016. Rob (2013), further noted that digital affiliate marketing can be used to enhance and promote any + any type of website.

2.3 Marketing Performance

Lebans Euske (2006), defined performance as comprising of monetary and non-monetary indicators which offer evidence on the extent of attainment of the firm's objective.

Marketing performance is measured using market share, total sales, customer satisfaction, and customer acquisition (Gunday, Ulusoy, Kilic & Alpan, 2012; RASHID, 2008; Sullivan & Dooley, 2009. A study by Grawe, Chen & Daugherty (2009), on the relationship between strategic orientation, innovation patterns and market performance employed. Sales volume growth, profit margin, market share and the overall competitive position as measures of marketing performance.

Lin and Peng (2008), explains that marketing performance is the result of organization operational activity, including the achievement of organization's goals either internal or external achievement. Marketing performance is the outcomes achieved in meeting internal and external goals of a firm (Lin et al; 2008). Kao (2008) noted that performance is the achievement of

business goals regarding the growth in sales, profitability and market share. Marketing performance is an indication of quality of the marketing function of a company, both in terms of effectiveness and efficiency (Clark & Ambler, 2001).

2.4 Digital Marketing Strategies and Marketing Performance

Digital marketing strategies are strategies used across the globe to enhance numerous success stories of organizations. Every sales turnover of a firm has been characterized by marketing performance which comprises profitability, market share control of organization, marketing managers must depend on well founded and accurate measures of marketing performance (Barone & Decarlo, 2012). Digital marketing has helped consumers to access information relevant to them anytime and places of their choice, it also has helped consumers not to reply on what marketers say or portray about their products and services, but to hear from the media itself, friends, associates, peers etc. Digital marketing encompasses a broad term that refers to the use of digital technologies for promotional activities that focused on consumer's reach (Afrina et al, 2015). Digital marketing is widely used to promote products or services and to reach consumers using digital channels, such as mobile phone, social media platforms, display advertising search engine marketing, many other forms, attention and advocacy from the consumer Sonia (2016), opined that marketer are experiencing new digital age. And that digital marketing drives the creation of demand using the ability of the internet and satisfies this demand in a new and innovative ways. Digital marketing can be used to enhance a firm's marketing communication with either existing or potential customers.

Further, digital marketing enables firms to interact and communicate with its customers and this can positively influence the performance of any business organization (Kariuki et al., 2014).

Kinani (2015), found out that social media influences consumer awareness, information acquisition and their purchasing behaviour thus being an effective tool to monitor firm's brand.

Stokes (2011), maintains that marketing is about conversations and the internet has become a huge hub of interactions and conversations, supporting the idea that through the interactive use of the internet, a firm can track and follow up the flow of conversations between them and their customers. Theodosiou and Katsikea (2012) found that organizations which attain higher level of electronic business performance expansively utilize the internet to complete various actions to add value to the product or service.

2.4.1 Search Engine Optimization and Marketing Performance

Search Engine Optimization is the basics of internet marketing, and the main idea is to get a good rank when the customer is searching for a specific search term for searches or products. Search Engine Optimization can lots of traffic. In otherwords, it can increase a firm's revenue (Zhang & Cabage, 2017). Search Engine Optimization is a method that uses data observation and marketing and marketing research to identify the most suitable keyword for a website (Malaga, 2010).

Kisiel, (2010), stated that for a firm to increase the volume of traffic to individual websites from search engines, search engine optimization must be invested into and be considered with utmost commitment. The ultimate goal of search engine optimization is to increase a website's ranking with search engines, thus increasing the traffic to the use website of the firm which in turn bring about increased sales volume (Lee, 2010; Lee et al, 2010, Lee et al, 2011; Lee et al, 2010, Lee et al, 2011). The process o improving website visibility is referred to as Search Engine Optimization, which involves designing or modifying website in order to improve search engine

result page ranking (Gorge, 2005). Berman & Katonay (2012), Sarneil out a study on the impact of Search Engine Optimization on the competition between advertisers for organic and sponsored search results. They found out that a positive level of Search Engine Optimization may improve the Search Engine's ranking quality and thus the overall sales performance.

In other words, increased Search Engine Optimization traffic and participation by actual and potential customer may 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.

2.4.2 Digital Affiliate Marketing and Marketing Performance

Digital affiliate marketing is a vital component of packaging digital marketing. And it refers to the process of gaining a commission by promoting a firm's product or services in a digital platform. It is also a method where two or more website owners can build relationship to increase mutual financial benefits. Digital affiliate marketing is a widely used system that marketers use to promote websites adverts, affiliates are compensated and rewarded for their effort to attract every single "visitor", subscriber, or customer. This system of reward, where compensation is basically based on referral, is called affiliate on referral is called affiliate marketing and this term is usually used to describe this type of marketing in an online environment digital affiliate marketing occurs where a third-party advertises products or services on behalf of a merchant in return for an agreed commission for a sale or lead. Under this method affiliate are seen as an extended sales force for a website. Affiliate marketing is commonly used for e-commerce websites.

Hence the following hypotheses are proposed:

HO₃: There is no significant relationship between digital affiliate 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.

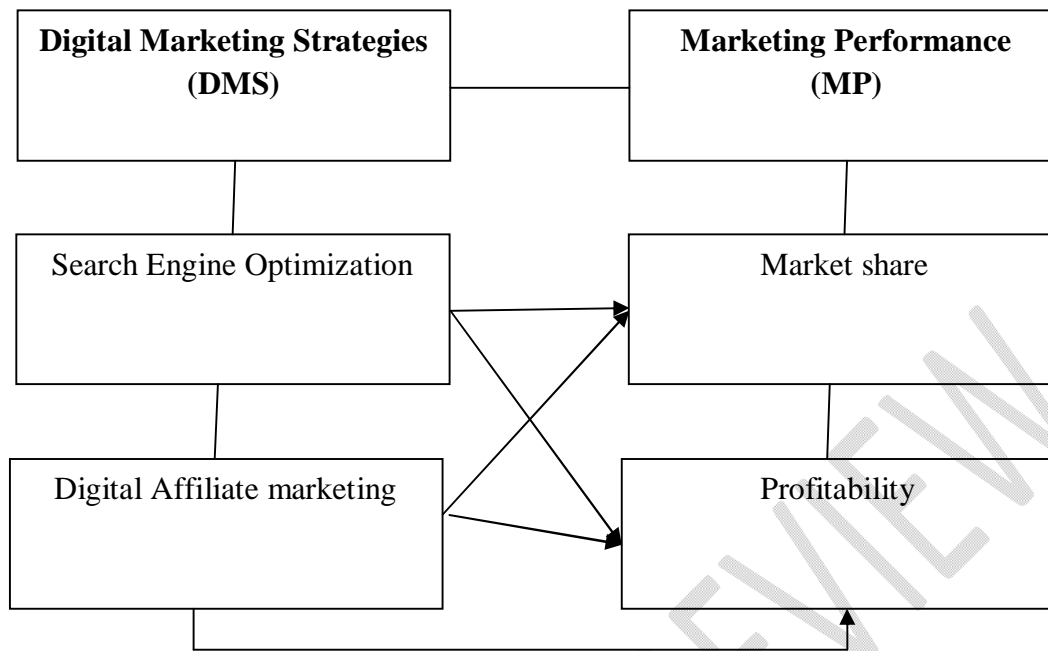


Fig 1.1: Operational framework showing the relationship digital marketing strategies and marketing performance of private secondary schools in Port Harcourt

3.0 Methodology

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design and the used questionnaire in gathering information from the field.

While the population of the study comprises of two hundred and fourteen (214) registered private secondary school in Port Harcourt, while the accessible respondent for the study includes executive directors, proprietors, proprietress, principals and teachers as at the time of the present study (Rivers State yellow page directory, 2014/2015. Considering the need for precision and elimination of unnecessary biases on simple size determination, the taro Yamen formula was used to determine elements of the population, which are one hundred and thirty-nine (139) private secondary schools in Port Harcourt. Simple random sampling techniques was adopted to select one hundred and thirty-nine (139) private secondary schools in Port Harcourt which serves as our accessible population. In testing the hypotheses, Pearson product moment correlation coefficient assisted by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0 was used to determine the magnitude of the effect of digital marketing strategies and marketing performance of private secondary schools in Port Harcourt.

4.0 Data Analysis and Results

Two copies of questionnaire were administered to each of the one hundred and thirty-nine (139) private secondary schools in Port Harcourt, summed up to two hundred and seventy-eight (278) copies of questionnaire. As a result of certain observed blank, omitted and double entries as well as incomplete filling, some of the questionnaires were considered unusable and so were not included in the study analysis. Total of two hundred and seventy-eight (278) copies of questionnaires were distributed, two hundred and fifty-nine (259) copies representing a

percentage response rate of 93.2% were retrieved and nineteen (19) which represent 6.8% were not retrieved and all were valid and reliable for further analysis.

For gender distribution, 100(38.6%) respondents were males while 159(61.4%) respondents were females. Premised on this gender distribution, one hundred and seventy-five (175) respondents corresponding to 67.6% were married; seventy (70) respondents representing 27.0% were singles, fourteen (14) respondents corresponding to 5.4% were separated/divorced. The biodata also revealed 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 specified in chapter three, the hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient

Decision Rules

Accept the null hypotheses (Ho) and reject the alternate hypotheses (Ha) if the significant probability value (PV) >0.05, that is, no significant coefficient exists. Reject the null hypotheses (Ho) and accept the alternate hypotheses (Ha) if the significant probability value (PV) <0.05, that is, a significant coefficient exists. The strength of the influence 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: 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 1 above reveals 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% meaning that, the level of significant relationship between search engine optimization and market share is positive and strong. This result indicates that there is a strong and positive significant relationship between search engine optimization and market share of private secondary schools in Port Harcourt. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis, because the PV (0.000) is less than the level of significance (0.05).

4.1.2 Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between search engine optimization and profitability of private secondary schools in Port Harcourt.

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 above reveals 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% meaning that, the level of significant relationship between search engine optimization and profitability is positive and strong. This result indicates that there is a strong and positive significant relationship between search engine optimization and

profitability of private secondary schools in Port Harcourt. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis, because the PV (0.000) is less than the level of significance (0.05).

4.1.3 Hypothesis Three

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between digital affiliate marketing and market share 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 3 above reveals 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% meaning that, the level of significant relationship between digital affiliate marketing and market share is positive and strong. This result indicates that there is a strong and positive significant relationship between digital affiliate marketing and market share of private secondary schools in Port Harcourt. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis, because the PV (0.000) is less than the level of significance (0.05).

4.1.4 Hypothesis Four

H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between digital affiliate marketing and profitability of private secondary schools in Port Harcourt.

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 above reveals 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% meaning that, the level of significant relationship between digital affiliate marketing and profitability is positive and strong. This result indicates that there is a strong and positive significant relationship between digital affiliate marketing and profitability of private secondary schools in Port Harcourt. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis, 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

The test of hypothesis one shows that there is 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 adopted in testing the hypothesis generated a score of $r = 0.951$. The Coefficient of determination i.e., $r^2 = 0.904 \times 100$ gave us 90.4%. This means that search engine optimization has 90.4% level relationship with market share. This is the explanatory power of the model used for the study. It means that only 90.4% variation can be explained by factors within the model used for the study and the remaining 9.6% can only be explained by other external quantitative and qualitative factors of the model used for the study.

The test of hypothesis two shows that there is 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 0.856×100

gave us 85.6%. This shows that search engine optimization is 85.6% in agreement with profitability. The findings from hypotheses one and two agreed with the findings of Berman & Katonay (2012) whose study revealed a strong and positive correlation between search engine optimization and marketing performance.

4.2.2 Digital Affiliate Marketing and Marketing Performance

The test of hypothesis three produced a score of 0.881 from the Pearson Product Moment of Correlation Coefficient statistical tool. This means that there is 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%) meaning 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 indicates 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 means that digital affiliate marketing has 73.1% level relationship with profitability, and it is the explanatory power of the model used for the study. It means 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 factors of the model used for the study. This result is also supported by Ugonna et al., (2017) that digital affiliate marketing has a positive relationship with firm's performance.

5.0 Conclusion

This study adds more to the knowledge and understanding on digital marketing strategies and marketing performance. Drawing from the diffusion of innovation theory and technology acceptance model, this study argues that the type and characteristics of the proprietors/proprietress included in knowledge base of a firm through its digital policy are very relevant and could enable a firm to achieve the desired set targets or goals. Adequate understanding of the digital marketing strategies that the firm can employ in their business operation, which impact on their search engine optimization and affiliate marketing, adopted by them in their business operations. The role of shareholders, consultant, management, their adaptability to the dynamic business environment and how they adopt it to build capabilities to increase market share and profitability, and their business policy in order to achieve desired firm's 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, process, brand name, top management approach to customers' interaction which then impacts the firm productivity, performance and collaborative relationship leading to increasing work done for the firm helping them to deliver on set goals and objectives.

In summary, the study concludes that as follows:

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

5.1 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 reaching the message of services to customers and promoting it by influencing them and manipulating their behaviour towards their offers.
- iii. Marketers need to implement strategies to reduce the risk in order to enhance the adoption of social network sites as a communication and marketing tools.
- iv. Private secondary schools should be more accustomed to the latest technology in the educational sector in order to be at par with international standards and to compete favourably on the international scene.

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