

DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES AND THE SALES PERFORMANCE OF SELECTED MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED ENTERPRISES IN KADUNA METROPOLIS

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ABSTRACT

Despite the growing adoption of digital tools among Nigerian businesses, there remains some challenges and problems adopting digital marketing strategies to enhance sales performance in terms of market penetration and return on investment amongst the selected MSMEs in Kaduna metropolis. The study anchored on Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), employed descriptive survey research design with targeted population size of 133 of MSMEs owners/managers with sample size of 98 respondents from distributed structured google-based questionnaire on a five-point Likert scale for collecting primary data. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics analysis (mean, mode, median and percentage) and Pearson correlation analysis. The result revealed distinct patterns in digital marketing effectiveness. Online advertising demonstrated the strongest positive correlation with business performance ($r = .675, p < .05$), highlighting its role in driving measurable outcomes. Social media marketing showed widespread adoption but only a weak, non-significant relationship with performance ($r = .073, p < .05$), suggesting implementation gaps. Surprisingly, email marketing exhibited negative correlations with both online advertising ($r = -.507, p < .05$) and business performance ($r = -.325, p = .05$), indicating potential challenges in execution or contextual mismatches. The findings bring to the fore the need for MSMEs owners/managers to strategically implement digital marketing, particularly prioritizing online advertising while addressing skill gaps in social media and email marketing execution. The study recommends that MSMEs owners or managers develop and implement comprehensive digital marketing strategies to enhance competitiveness and sales growth.

Keywords: Digital Marketing Strategies, Social media marketing, online marketing, email marketing, MSMEs performance

INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a pivotal role in growing Nigeria's economy through job creation, contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and poverty alleviation. To ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment report (2019) the country had over 37.07 million MSMEs contributing about 84% of job creation, 48.5% to GDP and accounting for over 7.27%t exported goods and services. The growing of internet infrastructure has enhanced the adoption of digital marketing strategies proven to be key to the success to most MSMEs in competitive global markets.

In the developed economies like USA, UK, France, Canada, Australia, the digital marketing strategies began with the introduction of the internet from web 1.0 to web 2.0 which allowed users to access information for digital marketing participation, enabling: interaction between users and businesses to market their products and grow globally, prompting the need for innovation branding strategies.

In the Asian continent, countries like China, India, Indonesia, and Bangladesh digital marketing has grown rapidly driven by increasing internet and mobile usage and has played a pivotal role in the successful development of e-commerce in the continent, building brand awareness and driving sales.

In African continent, countries like South Africa, Ghana, Kenya digital marketing have become a booming strategy driven by high internet and mobile penetration. Key digital marketing platforms in these countries include social media marketing, Email marketing, content marketing, search engine optimization, influencer marketing, google ads, website design and develop, squad digital.

In Nigeria, digital marketing has become a strong strategic tool in driving MSMEs growth in the business environment driven by high internet and mobile penetration. The MSMEs leverage strategies like social media marketing, Email marketing, online ads, search engine optimization, influencer marketing, content marketing. The growth in MSMEs through digital marketing strategies across many commercial cities in Nigeria have been very tremendous, especially in mobile and video advertising, which offer great opportunities for MSMEs to network and expand their reach and skilled digital marketers to build their careers.

In Kaduna, business enterprises are yet to experience any substantive digital transformation leveraging social media marketing, email marketing, online ads, to grow their businesses. This has called for concern when compared to other commercial cities across the country. This study lies in understanding how digital marketing strategies have enhanced the sales growth of selected micro, small and medium scale enterprises in Kaduna metropolis the opportunities to compete favorably with the larger enterprises.

Research Objectives

The main objective of the study is effect digital marketing strategies on the sales performance of selected micro, small and medium enterprises in Kaduna metropolis. Specific objectives are, to: Evaluate the effect of social media marketing platforms on the sales performance of selected MSMEs in Kaduna metropolis; examine the effect of Email marketing on the sales performance of selected MSMEs in Kaduna Metropolis, and determine the effect of Online advertising on the sales performance of selected MSMEs in Kaduna Metropolis

Theoretical Review

Technology Acceptance Model

This theory was propounded by Fred Davis in 1986 revised by Venkatesh & Davis in 1989 & 2000, states that acceptance of technology is predicated on two major factors which are; 1. perceived usefulness and 2. Perceived ease of use. The model assumptions are that use of a particular technology or information Systems by individuals is predicted by the users' behavioral intention, which in turn, is determined by the perception of technology usefulness to perform the task and perceived ease of use. Therefore, the use of digital marketing strategies is predicted on the perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use by individuals or group of individuals do give them immediate and long-term benefits such as improved sales performance, financial and time efficiency and convenience in this context

Diffusion Innovation Theory

The theory of innovation diffusion was propounded by Everett Rogers in 1962 in his book titled "Diffusion Innovations". The theory sees the spreading of innovations more widely as "an idea, practice or object perceived as new by an individual or organizations for adoption. The assumptions of this theory are that, the adoption of any innovation follows a sequences of stages, the spread of the innovation depends on interpersonal communication, social network. Therefore, the adoption of digital marketing strategies in this context by MSMES owners and customers as a new idea, practice and object in promoting their businesses depends on individual differences and readiness in Kaduna metropolis.

Theoretical Framework

This study is underpinned by Technology Advance Model (TAM) propounded by Fred Davis in 1986, revised in 1989, and 2000. The theory was based on two factors: theory of reasoned action (TRA) and theory of planned behavior (TPB) to explain individual acceptance behavior of new technology. The perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use in digital marketing strategies. According to Davis, 1986 in first edition of his study, perceived usefulness in adopting new technology in a specific application system will enhance his or her job or life performance. Perceived ease of use refers to the degree to which the prospective user expects the target system to be free of effort. Perceived usefulness and Perceived ease of use are influenced by social factors, political factors, and cultural factors regarded as External factors (variables).

Methodology

The study adopts a descriptive research design to address the research objective of the study and a quantitative approach to collect primary data through a structured google-based questionnaire distributed to selected Micro, Small and Medium-scaled Enterprises (MSMEs) owners/managers in Kaduna Metropolis. The quantitative approach allows for the measurement of relationship between digital marketing strategies such as social media marketing, email marketing, online advertising, and performance of selected MSMEs in terms of sales performance.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The study aimed to examine the influence of Digital Marketing Strategies and sales Performance of 133 Selected Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Kaduna Metropolis. The analysis was performed on survey responses collected from 98 respondents across diverse business and demographic segments.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

These business and demographic patterns carry important implications for digital marketing strategy implementation in Kaduna's MSMEs sector. The findings suggest the need for age-specific and sector-specific approaches, with particular attention to training for older entrepreneurs and tailored solutions for underrepresented industries like hospitality. To enhance the study's applicability, future research could benefit from stratified analysis by age and business category, along with targeted efforts to include more startups and older business owners in the sample. The current demographic distribution provides a solid foundation for understanding digital marketing adoption patterns while highlighting areas where additional insights may be needed.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

What is your Gender?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	48	49.0	49.0	.0
	Female	50	51.0	51.0	0.0
	Total	98	100.0	100.0	
What category does your business fall under					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Business& Event Centers	22	14.3	14.3	
	Pharmaceutical & Patent Medicine	27	22.4	22.4	
	Hotels& Restaurants	68	52.0	52.0	

	Estates& Shopping mall	16	11.2	11.2	
	Total	98	100.0	100.0	
Year of Business Operation					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1-5 years	10	11.2	11.2	
	6-10 years	68	68.4	68.4	
	Above 10 years	20	20.4	20.4	
	Total	98	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Data, 2025.

The gender distribution shows a nearly balanced sample with 48 males (49%) and 50 females (51%) out of 98 total respondents. This equitable gender representation suggests no significant bias, strengthening the study's generalizability across genders. Business categories reveal that Hotels and Restaurants constitute the largest group at 52.0%, possibly reflecting sector growth or sampling bias in Kaduna's business landscape. Pharmaceutical and patent Medicine followed at 22.4%, with Business and Event centers comprising 14.3% of respondents. Estates and shopping malls represent the smallest segment at just 11.2%, which may limit insights specific to the Estate and Shopping mall sector. The years of operation data shows most businesses (68.4%) have been operating for 6-10 years, indicating a sample dominated by established MSMEs that may be facing growth challenges. Startups (1-5 years) account for 11.2%, while mature businesses (10+ years) make up 20.4% of respondents.

4.3 Descriptive Statistics Analysis of Digital Marketing Strategies Components and Performance of Selected Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Kaduna Metropolis

The analysis of the three key variables reveals important patterns in digital marketing adoption and business performance among Kaduna's MSMEs. Social media marketing demonstrates the strongest and most consistent results, with a mean score of 19.89 and median of 20.00, showing nearly identical values that indicate a symmetric distribution. The relatively small standard deviation of 2.04 and range of 15-24 points to clustered responses with generally positive perceptions. Email marketing presents more varied outcomes, with a mean of 16.87 slightly exceeding the median of 16.50, suggesting mild positive skewness. Its larger standard deviation of 3.28 - the highest among all variables - coupled with a 13-22 range, reflects substantial differences in effectiveness across businesses.

Online advertising occupies a middle ground between social media and email marketing, with a mean score of 17.96 above its median of 17.00, indicating some positive skewness. The moderate standard deviation of 2.68 and 15-24 range shows more variation than social media but less than email marketing. MSME performance records the lowest average scores among all variables, with a mean of

16.04 and median of 15.00, along with a moderate standard deviation of 2.81 and 13-22 range. These performance metrics suggest either modest actual improvements, conservative self-assessment by owners, or a potential time lag between digital strategy implementation and measurable business outcomes.

The comparative assessment establishes a clear effectiveness hierarchy among digital marketing strategies, with social media emerging as the most consistently impactful, followed by online advertising, then email marketing. This ranking holds for both perceived effectiveness and response consistency. The findings suggest different focus areas for strategy optimization - maintaining social media's strong performance, improving the consistency of online advertising results, and addressing the greater variability in email marketing effectiveness through better segmentation or content strategies. The relatively lower performance scores compared to marketing strategy scores highlight potential gaps in translating digital efforts into measurable business outcomes, possibly due to metric misalignment, implementation time lags, or the need for complementary operational improvements.

Further investigation should explore these patterns more deeply through demographic cross-tabulations to identify which business types and age groups benefit most from each strategy. Correlation analysis could reveal relationships between specific strategies and performance outcomes, while qualitative research might uncover the reasons behind email marketing's variability and barriers to stronger performance impacts. These findings collectively suggest that while Kaduna's MSMEs generally view digital marketing positively, the translation of these strategies into tangible business performance improvements remains an area requiring additional attention and potential strategy refinement to maximize impact.

Descriptive Statistics Analysis of Digital Marketing Strategies Components and Performance of Selected Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Kaduna Metropolis

Descriptive Statistics					
		Social_Media_Marketing	Email_Marketing	Online_Advertising	MSME_Performance
N	Valid	98	98	98	98
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		19.8878	16.8673	17.9592	16.0408

Median	20.0000	16.5000	17.0000	15.0000
Std. Deviation	2.04023	3.27955	2.68220	2.81351
Minimum	15.00	13.00	15.00	13.00
Maximum	24.00	22.00	24.00	22.00

Source: Field Data, 2025.

Pearson Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis reveals several important patterns in how different digital marketing strategies relate to each other and to business performance among selected Kaduna's MSMEs. Social media marketing shows moderate positive correlations with both email marketing ($r=0.312$) and online advertising ($r=0.397$), indicating that businesses using social media tend to adopt these other digital tools as well. However, its lack of significant correlation with MSME performance ($r=0.073$) suggests that while widely adopted, social media may contribute more to brand awareness or customer engagement than directly measurable business outcomes.

Email marketing presents a paradox in the results. While it correlates positively with social media use, it shows a strong negative relationship with online advertising ($r=-0.507$) and a moderate negative correlation with business performance ($r=-0.325$). This unexpected pattern implies that current email marketing strategies may be ineffective or even counterproductive, possibly due to poor execution, spam-like approaches, or customer resistance to unsolicited emails. Alternatively, businesses relying heavily on email marketing may be neglecting more effective strategies like online ads.

Online advertising stands out as the strongest driver of MSME performance ($r=0.675$), suggesting that paid digital ads whether through search engines, social media, or display networks, deliver more immediate and measurable returns. Its negative association with email marketing hints at a possible trade-off, where businesses focus on one strategy at the expense of the other rather than integrating both effectively. Meanwhile, its positive link with social media indicates some complementary use, possibly in the form of social media ads.

The performance correlations highlight that online advertising is the only digital strategy with a strong positive impact, while email marketing's negative link raises concern about its current implementation. Social media's non-significant performance correlation suggests its value may lie in indirect benefits like brand building rather than short-term sales growth. Key takeaways point to online advertising as the most performance-critical strategy, while email marketing may require significant reevaluation. The findings also suggest that businesses are not yet effectively combining email and online ads, possibly due to budget constraints, skill gaps, or misaligned strategies.

Recommendations include prioritizing online advertising optimization, investigating why email marketing underperforms, and exploring how social media contributes to non-financial outcomes like customer loyalty. Further research should examine why email and online advertising appear mutually exclusive in practice and whether better integration could enhance results. Overall, the results

demonstrate that not all digital marketing strategies are equally effective, and their combinations may yield unexpected outcomes in this specific business context.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Analysis (N=980)

Correlations					
		Social_Media_Marketing	Email Marketing	Online Advertising	MSME_Performance
Social_Media_Marketing	Pearson Correlation	1	.312**	.397**	0.073
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.002	0.000	0.477
	N	980	980	980	980
Email Marketing	Pearson Correlation	.312**	1	-.507**	-.325**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.002		0.000	0.001
	N	98	98	98	98
Online Advertising	Pearson Correlation	.397**	-.507**	1	.675**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000		0.000
	N	98	98	98	98
MSME_Performance	Pearson Correlation	0.073	-.325**	.675**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.477	0.001	0.000	
	N	98	98	98	98

Source: Field Data, 2025.

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Discussion of Findings

The study's examination of digital marketing adoption among selected MSMEs in Kaduna Metropolis reveals critical insights into the varying effectiveness of different digital strategies in the state's business environment compared to cities in the south-west, Nigeria, for instance. Social media marketing emerged as the most widely adopted approach among surveyed businesses, reflecting global trends where small enterprises favor accessible digital platforms, that aligns with the findings of Lateefat Lawal & Joshua Adewale Adejuwon, 2024.

However, the minimal correlation ($r = 0.073$) between social media usage and business performance indicators suggests that many of the state MSMEs may be struggling to translate basic social media

presence into a robust results like obtainable in the south west, Nigeria, supporting Lawal & Adejuwon (2024) findings about skill gaps in strategic digital implementation among Nigerian small businesses. A particularly noteworthy finding was the negative relationship between email marketing and both online advertising ($r = -0.507$) and business performance ($r = -0.325$), which contrasts with established research from developed economies (Chaffey, 2023) but aligns with emerging LDCs digital marketing literature (Eze et al., 2022).

Such unexpected result may stem from multiple factors including suboptimal execution practices, customer resistance to commercial emails in the Nigerian context, or technical limitations of email platforms in the state. Adepoju and Samuel's (2023) observations about the challenges resource-constrained MSMEs face in executing sophisticated email campaigns appear particularly relevant to these findings.

Conversely, online advertising demonstrated the strongest positive correlation with business performance ($r = 0.675$), validating recent Nigerian research on the effectiveness of targeted digital ads (Bello et al., 2023) and supporting Adeleke and Suraju's (2022) arguments about the growing significance of paid digital promotions. The inverse relationship between online advertising and email marketing usage suggests that many of these selected MSMEs operators in Kaduna metropolis view these as competing rather than complementary strategies, potentially missing opportunities for integrated digital marketing approaches.

The study's measurement scale showed acceptable reliability ($\alpha = 0.779$), supporting its use for assessing digital marketing adoption while also highlighting the need to examine individual components separately given their differential impacts. This finding reinforces contemporary conceptualizations of digital marketing as a complex, multidimensional construct (Kumar & Sharma, 2023) and underscores the importance of context-specific implementation frameworks (Oyewobi et al., 2023).

Practical implications emerge for multiple stakeholders: MSMEs need to shift from basic digital presence to strategic implementation, policymakers should prioritize targeted digital skills development, and platform providers must develop more localized solutions for local markets. While the study's geographic focus and reliance on self-reported data present limitations, the findings make valuable contributions to understanding digital transformation in emerging digital economies and highlight the critical role of contextual factors in technology adoption (Adeyeye et al., 2023). Future research incorporating objective performance metrics and examining additional moderating variables could build on these insights to provide more balanced understanding of digital marketing effectiveness.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study's findings revealed that social marketing strategy and online ads contribute significantly and positively to the sales performance of MSMEs in Kaduna metropolis unlike email marketing strategy which has no positive effect on the businesses. These findings align with emerging African digital

marketing literature (Eze et al., 2022) that emphasizes the importance of contextual factors in technology adoption.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations emerged for the stakeholders; MSMEs' owners/ managers selected for the study; MSMEs owners/Managers should Prioritize online advertising due to its strong positive correlation with performance, Digital platforms developers to invest more on digital skill acquisition by MSMEs owners in Kaduna metropolis. and Academics and scholars to carry out further studies to contribute more to the existing knowledge gap in digital marketing strategies on MSMEs sales performance focusing on Kaduna metropolis.

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