



Digital Business And Performance Of Small And Medium Enterprises In Anambra State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the digital business strategy and performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria. The study investigated the effect of affiliate business strategy on sales performance; influence of e-mail business strategy on financial performance and the influence mobile business strategy on marketing performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State Nigeria. Relevant literature was reviewed. The study adopted the Survey research design strategy. The study was anchored on Cue Utilization. The survey instrument used in this study was structured questionnaire with 5 Likert scale response. The population of this study comprises 2093 registered SMEs in Anambra. The statistical formula by Borg and Gall was employed to determine the sample size of 404. The instruments were subjected to face and content validity. The reliability of the questionnaire was established through the test-retest and Cronbach's Alpha. Simple percentage analysis was used in the analyzing research question. Hypotheses for the study were tested using Simple regression analysis. The findings of the study are summarized as follows: Affiliate business strategy has a significant positive effect on sales performance of SMEs ($t = 22.665, p < 0.05$), e-mail business strategy has significant positive effect on financial performance of SMEs ($t = 28.90, p < 0.05$), and mobile business strategy has a significant positive effect on marketing performance of SMEs in Anambra State, Nigeria ($t = 23.361, p < 0.05$). The study concluded that that digital business strategy had a. The study also recommended that small and medium enterprises should seek collaboration with technology firms that can help in designing business tools and undertake affiliate business strategy, which can drive web traffic and ranking of the small and medium enterprises website in other to improve sales performance. This study contributed to existing literature that relates to the effect of digital business strategy on the performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria by updating the conceptual and empirical literature.

Keywords: Affiliate Business Strategy, E-Mail Business Strategy, Mobile Business Strategy and Performance of SMEs

INTRODUCTION

Small and medium enterprises performance can be understood from a quantitative perspective: efficiency, financial results, level of production, number of customers (Anggadwita & Mustafid, 2014), market share, profitability, productivity, dynamics of revenues, costs and liquidity (Zimon, 2018), and also from a qualitative perspective: goals achievement, leadership style, employee behaviour customer satisfaction (Alpkan, Yilmaz, & Kaya, 2017), product and process innovation, organisational and marketing innovation (Gupta & Batra, 2016). Gopang, Nebhwani, Khatri, and Marri (2017), in their work, considered a series of indicators to describe Small and medium enterprises performance: reputation, productivity, employee satisfaction, profits, sales, prompt order delivery, sufficient working capital, effectiveness in operations of production, product quality, achievement of targets, number of clients, easiness in supervision, reduction in product cost and product diversification. It is not only the study of performance features that is important, it is also relevant to mention that focused on the factors that influence the performance of Small and medium enterprises through digital transformation.

Measuring the Small and medium enterprises performance is an important activity that underpins the strength of Small and medium enterprises business. The performance of Small and medium enterprises business is usually evaluated from different points of view. In literature financial and non-financial measures are the most mentioned ones. In order to make efficient strategic decisions for enterprises and ensure long-term success both of these meters are used at the same time. In order to accomplish organizational goals, the performance measurement system is the tool to provide the enterprise with the necessary information to plan and direct its processes. There are several performance measurement systems and a wide range of financial and non-financial factors (Maisel & Cokins, 2013; Al-Hakim & Lu, 2017). In terms of financial success, performance measures can be based on return on profits, investment, turnover or number of customers (Wood, 2016). Performance has usually been measured from a financial perspective. The most frequent measures that are applied are efficiency, growth and profit. This approach is considered relatively subjective due to its short-term nature and in compliance with the strategy (Reijonen and Komppula, 2017).

The potential of digital transformation to drive trade and economic growth, and bridge inequalities between African nations and the rest of the world, is widely recognized (Department of International Relations and Cooperation, 2019). Digital transformation entails the deployment of new technologies to change an organisation's processes, products, services and even their underpinning business model. Simply put, digital transformation is "the use of technology to radically improve performance or reach of enterprises" (Westerman et al., 2014). In Nigeria, the adoption of mobile phones, social media and internet technologies has reached new levels in recent years, with internet penetration increasing at about 10% every year, and active GSM subscriber lines growing from 145 million in 2017 to 184 million at the end of 2019 (Nigerian Communications Commission, 2020). This increased adoption of digital technologies for personal use has engendered a growing demand for digital services and products in the commercial arena. The adoption of digital transformation initiatives by Nigerian businesses, however, is generally still in the early stages, with financial institutions, start-ups and small businesses leading the search for creative and innovative approaches to deliver digital products and services to customers. The global business world is faced with increasing competitive pressures; therefore, business skills and expert knowledge have become highly valued (West, Ford, & Ibrahim, 2015). For long periods, business activities were neglected and handled by only a small department within a big organization, but due to the changes in the international and local business environment, today for most organizations, business, and promotional strategies are at the frontline for businesses and the core of the organizational actions (Wyatt, 2015).

Digital business strategy is a result of digitalization and refers to how the deployment of digital technologies can lead to new, disruptive business and value creation models (Bharadwaj, El Sawy, Pavlou & Venkatraman 2013). Riedl, Benlian, Hess, Stelzer and Sikora (2017) see digitalization as the process of introducing digital technologies and Koch, Ahlemann and Urbach (2016) note that these technologies do not have to be new - rather the newness is created in the context of business and value creation models. However, simply digitizing services through technology alone does not transform an organization, but rather a balanced interplay of technology, people, and process change is usually required; and Singh and Hess (2017) highlight the need for a digital transformation strategy to guide a company through this change process. In the context of Nigerian Small and medium enterprises, digital technologies encompass not only the much heralded disruptive technologies such as cloud computing, internet of things and big data/analytics, but also the more widely deployed technologies such as basic internet access, business information systems, and e-business technologies. Digital transformation is thus viewed as the deployment of a wide range of technologies and systems to significantly improve business processes and operations.

Kim, Shin and Lee (2019) report that various digital business strategies exist, these include: social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter, Search Engine Optimization (SEO), email business, blogs and websites, and business products and services through Digital personalities and social media influencers; companies can also use other digital business strategies such as video advertisements, sponsoring content on more popular websites and carrying out on-line sales such as flash sales. The current research focused on five broad digital business strategies; social media business, search engine

optimization, and email business, which are the most widely adopted by business organization (Nanga, 2015).

Arnold and Jeffery (2016) note that digital disruption has presented SMEs with various channels for promoting their products and services through the introduction of technological tools and innovative payment and business strategies. Among the variety of promotional methods of business tools, digital business strategies are widely used by Small and medium enterprises in the world (Nanga, 2015). Jalang'o, (2015) notes that search engine optimization (SEO) is conceptualized as the ranking of an institution's website on search engines through organic search results based on website visitors, keywords and search queries. Search engine optimization is key to increasing the visibility of the firm on the search engine as well as spread their brand to many people. Moreover, they can provide chances for companies to introduce new products and services to make sales and finally bring profit (Amerland, 2013). Berman and Katona, (2016) opine that a positive level of search engine optimization may enhance the search engine ranking quality and thus the satisfactory level of its visitors. Wanjuki (2014) noted that leading banks in Kenya rely on SEO, Website design/development for organizations, and Email business as a digital business strategy that fosters their customer service capabilities.

E-mail is one of the new, innovative strategies facilitating interactive business (Wandaka, 2019). E-mail business is the act of conveying business communication to recipients who primarily request for it (Arnold, 2017 in Wandaka, 2019), while Ellis-Chadwick and Doherty (2016 in Wandaka, 2019) define email business as information focussed interpersonal business practice that takes place in a context of accountability for the privacy of the customers. Email Business involves transmitting product information via email to existing and potential customers (Adejoke & Adekemi, 2016). Email business is considered the cost-effective favourite method of communication for many people and can be customized for each recipient (El-Gohary, 2017). Al-Rfou (2013) examined internet banking in Jordan commercial banks and notes that increase usage of E-mail business has enhanced customer service and satisfaction within the banks. Mobile revolution in the last decade has re-created a new era of an always-connected society which has reshaped the retail industry, including the SMEs sector, in a major way (Euromonitor, 2013). Mobile devices becoming more powerful with their own operating systems, has given rise to a new business strategy enabling companies to connect to their consumers on the go and on a 24-hour basis (Emarketer, 2013). This new phenomenon has impacted on the purchasing behaviour of consumers in the SMEs sector as well, who are increasingly adopting this new shopping medium. This emerging trend has resulted in all major clothing retailers working to gain online presence with a view to achieving a stronger customer relationship and sustaining a strong presence in the clothing industry which is becoming highly competitive (Keynote, 2019). With the rise of more sophisticated mobile devices, namely smartphones, this new convergence has resulted in powerful consumers who now have their stores in their hands (Abrams, 2013). The purchasing habits of consumers have undergone a drastic shift from traditional physical high Street shopping to home shopping (Keynote, 2013; Ozuem, Howell & Lancaster 2008). The role of salesmen and shopping displays has now been eclipsed with modern ways of shopping using technology. Research by Euromonitor (2013) identified consumers who increasingly favour seeking shopping information on their smartphones rather than consulting a salesperson or relying on adverts. The use of smartphones is thus not limited to buying online but rather it is that device which accompanies the consumers in their shopping experience such as browsing for product information, product reviews, price comparisons, consulting friends and families prior to shopping, or simply buying online. This unique ability has transformed the social and spatial aspects of shopping for many consumers" (Brown *et al.*, 2013). In fact, the ongoing connectivity and exposure to shopping information are resulting in an 'always shopping' state of mind (Babbitts, 2013). If the art of mobile marketing is effectively and efficiently mastered by retailers, this can lead to strong positioning in their respective market.

Affiliate business strategy has become a very profitable online business tool for many companies. As explained by Prussakov (2007), the affiliate programs are a new type of marketing strategy in which the partners or affiliates advertise products of the company. It has also been explained that this type of business is performance based, as the compensation is based on the amount of clicks. Gallagher *et al.* (2017) explains that these affiliate programs provide a site operator (who is the affiliate) with a commission which he would get if any of the products of the partner site (merchant) is bought by

customers. The affiliate marketing program was seen to be more effective as compared to the traditional online ads. Fiore & Collins (2017) have explained that simple banner ads, which just try and build a brand image, will turn out to be very expensive. Also their effectiveness was decreasing over the years. Prussakov (2017) also has a view that an affiliate program could benefit e-commerce a lot more in increasing sales. T

The concept of digital business has gained prominence since the advent of the information and communication technology (ICT). According to Rowley (2017), the term business refers to the management process which identifies, anticipates, and supplies customer requirements efficiently and profitably. While digital business on the other hand refers to the promotion of products or brands via one or more forms of Digital media. For example, advertising mediums that might be used as part of the digital business strategy of a business or organization could include promotional efforts made via the Internet, social media, mobile phones and Digital billboards, as well as via digital and television and radio channels (businessdictionary.com, 2016). Digital business strategies grant information and knowledge of products and services to customers in a comprehensive term that describes all the processes and interactions that result in promotion and sales of different information products and services for the strategies and information firm using digital technologies.

Business enterprises desire sales improvement in order to expand their assets and market size. As a result of increasing market competition, several strategies are devised to retain after attraction of customers with a view to raising the sales level and thereby remaining on profitable path. Improving sales however depends on business skills of business organizations. Thus, it is important for Small and Medium Scale businesses to improve for the purpose of ensuring market survival and to remain relevant in the competing market. Across the World, Small and medium enterprises has been found to contribute not less than 60 percent of employment in the business sectors. Consequently, the progress of Small and medium enterprises in any nation is crucial as it indicates economic growth and economic growth is the one of the aim of the governments (Ugurlu, 2019).

Consequently, digital business has been discovered to provide fast, far reaching and affordable for most businesses. Although a number of findings suggests that size of firms may likely affect applicability of digital channels, with Small and medium enterprises being the lowest in the adoption cycle (Bordanaba-Juste, Lucia & Polo, 2016). In the current times, the traditional methods of business seem to have gone beyond the brick and mortar method. Therefore, a trending alternative which is digital business has largely been suggested as viable options for several Small and medium enterprises. This will enable them to reach out to wider market environment for broad awareness of their goods and services. However, it is important for small businesses to know whether digital business will contribute to improvement of sales of their products in the competitive environment. It is important for them to know whether digital business can impact their business performance of Small and medium enterprises through digital business strategies. It against the background this study investigated the effect of digital business strategy on the performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

It is considered that most business owners and executives in Nigeria do not have a clear understanding of digital business for their products sales, marketing, financial and environmental performance. Digital businesses today face the daunting challenge of competing competitors. Some organizations are expanding their digital market services to gain a larger share of consumers in Nigeria. Therefore, it has become imperative for digital businesses to adopt digital business strategies especially in the use of social media, affiliate business and email business strategy to gain competitive advantage over competitors to improve customers' patronage. Small and Medium Scale Enterprises are seen to be affected by some existential problems. This economic sector face problems ranging from insufficient capital, lack of efficient manpower, inefficient management, fraud, inability to analyse and capture market opportunities. Other problems also include, marketing problems, research inefficiencies and production problems such as poor standardization and low quality products to mention but a few (Adegbuyi & Akinyele, 2015). Some previous studies have shown that most of these problems are as a result of the fact that most of the managers of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises are less knowledgeable about the principles and modern practice of marketing and also that the low level

usage of digital business strategies emphasize and over stretch customer loyalty without initiating have deprived the SMEs the access to engaging in a regional and global economic business.

In today's media-driven environment, it is essential that small firms understand the various social media handles such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc., and the strategies behind using social media for growing their business. Unfortunately, many small firms do not have a social media strategy (Adegbuyi & Akinyele, 2015). Moreover, one of the most salient areas in which SMEs have challenges is in digital business strategies the inability to carry out effective marketing activities for the firms. Social media has significantly changed the relationships between customers and firms by creating and allowing two-way communication. Social media tools assist companies in communicating with individual consumers, which are, in turn, help, establish long-term relationships. Social media tools such as forums, blogs, or chat rooms create an interactive dialogue for firms to interact with consumers. However, consumers can produce information about an organization and educate other consumers about products, brands, services, and more (Cox, 2012).

Digital business strategies emphasize and over stretch customer loyalty without initiating customer retention and customer referrals will not be sustainable. Digital business strategies need to create a win-win situation with customers in order to achieve organizational goals. This study focuses on the effect of digital business strategy on performance small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria. Empirically, there is a conflict findings on the result of digital business strategy and performance of retail Small and medium enterprises based on lack of consensus on the dimensions of digital business perceptions among researchers. There is no general agreement as to whether there are five to eight dimension of digital business strategy. Base on this, the present study is set to fill this gap.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study is to examine the effect of digital business strategy on the performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria: specific objectives are to:

1. Examine the effect of affiliate business strategy on sales performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria
2. Ascertain the influence of e-mail business strategy on financial performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria
3. Investigate the influence mobile business strategy on marketing performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State

Research Questions

The research raised the following questions in line with the objectives to guide this study:

1. Does affiliate business strategy affect the sales performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria ?
2. Does e-mail business strategy affect the financial performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria?
3. Does mobile business strategy affect marketing performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are formulated to give direction to this study:

H₀₁: Affiliate business strategy has no positive significant effect on sales performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria

H₀₂: E-mail business strategy has no positive significant effect on financial performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State

H₀₃: Mobile business strategy has no positive significant effect on marketing performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Conceptual Review

Digital Business Strategy

Digital business strategy is an all-encompassing all the digital channels, such as content business, search engine optimization, email business, social media business, mobile business to creating innovative strategies for accessing and connect with prospective and existing customers (Deshpande,

2020). Digital Business strategy is a new business phenomenon and philosophy that is rapidly growing in a very dynamic way. In the era of globalization and technology, the way of communicating among people has changed (Alt & Klein, 2017). Elisabeta (2014) used the term e-business rather than digital business and characterized that it is the use of both web and intuitive innovations to create a connection amongst firms and its clients. In addition, Elisabeta (2014) opined that e-business especially concentrates on giving information technology empowered or interactive affiliation with clients. Füsün (2015) noted that digital business or digital business is the exchange of both products and services through digital devices and process from seller to buyer.

Digital business strategy is a plan that helps a business achieve its digital goals through carefully selected digital business channels such as earned, paid, and owned media (Hudson, 2020). Digital business strategy are those strategies management adopts for digital competition. In order for digital business strategies to contribute significantly to achieving a company's goal, it is necessary to look at certain factors in its implementation (Onobrakpeya & Mac-Attama, 2017). Good internet connectivity facilities have to be on ground. The concept of digital business in this study was decomposed into social media business strategy, email business strategy and affiliate business strategy. According to Nizam (2015), digital business is the business of goods and services by means of the internet. Recently, the trend is that customer prefers using the internet in their purchase decision for purchasing their products and services. Rajarajan (2016) referred to it as digital business and defined digital business as a set of powerful tools and methodologies used for promoting products and services through the Internet. Because of the multitude of business channels online, digital business employs a wider range of business elements unlike the traditional business. Digital business is also referred to as Internet business (i-business), online business or web business. As with conventional business, Menberu (2017) contended that digital business is creating a strategy that helps businesses deliver the right messages and product/services to the right audience. From the few definitions of the concept of digital business adumbrated above, one can deduce that there is consensus on the meaning of the concept of electronic business as the process of promoting goods and services using all the instruments of electronic technologies digital business, as an innovative technology-based activity, has been considered as one of the main aspects of business practice that involves using the internet and other interactive technologies to create and mediate dialogue between the firm and its customers. Business is an essential quest for the survival and success of an entity. Today digital businesses have more business opportunities than ever (Bresciani & Eppler, 2019). Digital business serves as means to help the a business achieve their short and long term goals, balance their operations, fulfill their obligations to various relevant parties and also ultimately stay ahead in the business environment. Digital business is the most primary element with which a business uses to reach its target customers. Digitalization of business is a new approach to business, not just traditional business boosted by digital elements (Rowley, 2018). It has its own characteristics and dynamics, which should be understood in order to be able to select effective business tactics and strategies. Digital channels can be classified in various ways.

Email Business Strategy: Email business involves the use of email business software to connect to customers through their personal emails (Adejoke & Adekemi, 2016). This type of advertising is dependent on authorization from the customer and can be used as a tool to enhance communication and corporate relationships. (Chille, 2018). Deshpande (2020) describes email business is the process of maintaining a database of cold and warm contacts of customers, and sending them email notifications about company products and services. It is an active channel for connecting with existing and potential customers. It involves sending out promotional emails to attract new customers or convincing existing ones to make a purchase (Onobrakpeya & Mac-Attama, 2017). Email business helps maintain old and new customers' database, retain existing ones, promote discounted offers, and distribute content. There are different types of email business as described below (Schwarzl & Grabowska, 2015)

Affiliate Business Strategy: is similar to Digital commission-based business. Organizations provide customized communication to partners (Deshpande, 2020). Basically, affiliate business promotes other people's products and affiliates receive a commission every time an affiliate makes a sale or introduces a lead (Chris, 2020). Affiliates receive a specific cut / commission every time someone buys through their custom link. A partner called an affiliate promotes products or services from

another company called merchant (Schwarzl & Grabowska, 2015). Affiliate business strategy uses banners or links of their websites on a merchant's website to find and attract buyers to their web page. There are three different ways affiliates participate in commissions (Schwarzl & Grabowska, 2015). When a customer clicks on a link provided by an affiliate's website and buys the product from the affiliate merchant they receive a specific commission. Here the affiliates receive a commission for each person who filling out web-based forms and contact details (email address). Commission fees may also depend on the prices of the product sold or the service you bring to the third category: The affiliate earns a certain percentage of the price of the product. This component of digital business is simply the act of selling a company's product and receiving a commission from it.

Mobile Business Strategy: Mobile communication has a large effect on customer relationship management, as it can create mutual understanding and maintain the relationship between the company and its customer, mobile. Mobile communication helps in developing personalized relationships with each customer. The development of technology has not only enhanced the communication ability of existing promotional tools (e.g., advertising, sales promotion and direct business), but has also provided new avenue for which these tools can be used. Although a high amount of literature exists on mobile business, a general agreement on its definition is still lacking (Varnali and Toker, 2019; Leppäniemi, Sinisalo, & Karjaluo, 2016). The Mobile Business Association (MMA, 2018) viewed mobile business as the set of practices that assist firms to communicate and connect with their customers in an interactive and significant way via any mobile device. Scharl, Dickinger and Murphy (2015) refer to mobile business as using a wireless channel to provide customers with time and location-sensitive, private information that increase services/products and ideas, thereby profiting all stakeholders. Moreover, four different terms, consisting of mobile advertising, wireless business, mobile business and wireless advertising, are interchangeably used to define the concept of business via mobile media.

Performance of Small and Medium Enterprises (SME)

Typically, performance is ultimate outcome expected in every business activity (Muhammad et al., 2019; Ahmed et al., 2018; Galdeano et al., 2018; Ahmed, Mozammel & Ahmed, 2018; Roespinoedji et al., 2019). SME performance is the total performance of the firm and is showed by the aggregate of performance of finance, business, and human resource functions of the organization in a given time. Firms formulate goals and objectives to be achieved within a given time frame. Performance measures the organizations' effectiveness against these set objectives. Thus, organizational performance refers to the ability of an organization to attain its goals such as high-profit margin, product quality, and larger market share, better financial results at a stipulated time and by applying the relevant strategy. Organizational performance has many dimensions which may be difficult to quantify (Rowley, 2017) opines that, both financial and non-financial indicators have been used to measure performance. The financial indicators were sales growth and percentage profit margin. In the service industry, employee productivity has been used as a measure of performance (Mishra, 2018). Gavrea, Ilies and Stegorean, (2017) SME performance shows the actual output or results of an organisation as measured against its proposed outputs (or goals and objectives). It is one of the most important variables in the field of management research today. Although the concept of SME performance

is very common in academic literature, its definition is not yet a universally accepted concept. Richard et al, (2016) view SME performance as comprises three specific areas of firm outcomes: financial performance (profits, return on assets, return on investment and others product market performance (sales, market share, etc.); and shareholder return (total shareholder return, economic value added, others.

Waiganjo, Mukulu & Kahiri, (2016) note that SME performance may be assessed in terms of its multiple objectives of profitability, employee satisfaction, productivity, growth among many other objectives. Proponents of the balanced score card performance management system have suggested a broader performance appraisal approach that recognizes both the financial and non-financial measures including sales, profitability, return on investments, market share, customer base, product quality, innovation and company attractiveness. Richard et al, (2019) explains that SME performance includes the actual output or results of firms as measured against its intended outputs

(goals and objectives). Kunze (2013), has defined SME performance as consisting of both SME and operational dimensions of performance.

To survive and succeed in a potentially austere environment, Small and medium enterprises must effectively deploy and combine their physical, human and organisational assets. Thus, they will develop long-term competitive advantages and, in turn, achieve superior performance (Lonial & Carter, 2015). However, due to their limited resources, Small and medium enterprises need to identify and exploit other means to be able to enhance their competitiveness and performance. In general, various factors of the internal environment, which potentially influence the performance of Small and medium enterprises, are mentioned in the literature of these, particular attention is paid to: firm age and size (Arend, 2014; Nicolini, 2017), human resources and human resource practices (Katou, 2016; Sheehan, 2013), entrepreneurial networks (Bratkovic Kregar & Antoncic, 2016;) occupational health and safety measures (Gopang et al., 2017), product, process, organisational, marketing innovation (Leitner & Guldenberg, 2019), organisational orientations (market, entrepreneurial, and learning orientations) (Lomberg, Urbig, Stockmann, Marino, & Dickson, 2017), internationalisation (Chiao, Yang, & Yu, 2016; Majocchi & Zucchella, 2013), export (Altuntas et al., 2018), market orientation, planning flexibility (Alpkan et al., 2017), ownership and family involvement (Lien & Li, 2017), intellectual capital (Gomezelj Omerzel & Smolci, Jurdana, 2016).

Although most of the published literature analyse different specific elements of the organisation's internal and external environment as being critical to their performance, there are also a number of studies that also take into account the macroeconomic/contextual factors. In this respect, Kanu (2015) focuses on studying the influence of the general level of corruption on Small and medium enterprises performance.

Also, various factors of the external environment are subject to researchers' attention. For instance, the impact of the state government approach to business development is carefully considered for Small and medium enterprises in Malaysia (Rasiah, 2016). In the U.K., researchers focus on the innovation policy, which has a great impact on service and manufacturing Small and medium enterprises (Foreman-Peck, 2013). In Brazil, researchers report the impact of a cluster development policy on Small and medium enterprises' performance (Figal Garone, Maffioli, de Negri, Rodriguez, & Vazquez-Bare, 2015), while Lin and Lin (2016), studying a sample of 77 Taiwanese Small and medium enterprises, found that the level of organisational performance depended on the types of network relationships. In Taiwan, Chi, Wu, and Lin (2018) explore the impact of foreign direct investment (FDI) on Small and medium enterprises and organisational performance, mediated by FDI related programmes of training. There are also studies that suggest a holistic approach, integrating the internal and external environment factors in a synergetic influence on Small and medium enterprises' performance.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on Cue Utilization Theory. The theoretical framework is embedded in cue utilization theory developed by Easterbrook 1959 which implies that products or services contain a variety of cues that serve as quality indicators of a product. The theory categorizes cues that help consumers to determine quality as intrinsic and extrinsic to a product or service purchases. In the case of manufactured products, the physical features of the product such as size or shape serves as intrinsic cues, while extrinsic cues include the brand name and price.

Cue Utilization Theory is related to this study because the theory evaluate the value of digital business tools (social media business, email business and affiliate business) in determining consumers' preference of a website quality, available product information and simple payment system us by an organization. Logically this theory form the objective of this study.

Empirical Review

Ayoola and Ibrahim (2020) examined the effects of Digital business on customer satisfaction of selected aviation services in Nigeria. The research design was survey design. The population was 18 domestic airlines and six of them were selected as sample due to the number of active airlines in Nigeria. Data from this study were collected from one hundred (100) customers using questionnaire and analyzed using both descriptive (tables, mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics

(regression analysis). The findings show that search engine optimization, social media business and email business have a positive impact on customer satisfaction in aviation services in Nigeria.

Mohammed and Naveen (2020) examined the impact of digitalisation on Small and Medium enterprises in Nigeria. There is a general consensus that the Small and Medium Enterprises is the key to the economic development of every nation and Nigeria is not an exception. In point of fact the digitalisation wave is said not to be transitory but the beginning of a whole new era in general life and business. This paper examined the challenges, need and opportunities of digitalisation of the Small and Medium Enterprises as some of its objectives. The study utilised both the primary and secondary source of data collection and made use of the chi square to test its hypothesis. Findings in the study however showed that digitalisation has a great impact on Small and Medium Enterprises of Nigeria as it automates the product and process as a result of which both quality and production increases. Despite having a high potential for future growth, the Small and Medium Enterprises in Nigeria are said to experience some challenges such as lack of digital strategy trainings, lack of usage of digital technology for business purposes and lack of safe cybersecurity intelligence among others. The basic idea of digitalisation is to make complete use of Information and communication technology facilities for accessing worldwide resources and beneficial for society simultaneously. The Small and Medium Enterprises plays a very significant role in employment of citizens in the economy and this enables the startups take advantage of growth opportunities in the digitalisation process.

Uchenna, Larry and Ogwulumba (2019) examined the impact of digital business and organizational performance in selected service industry in Nigeria. The broad objective of the study is to assess the impact of digital business adoption on organizational performance. The specific objectives were to: examine the nature of relationship between digital business service delivery and organizational performance; and to determine the nature of relationship between customer satisfaction in digital business and organizational performance. Two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 839 employees of the selected companies in Lagos State. Validated questionnaire was administered to 270 respondents from which 202 correct responses were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics (Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient). The research findings revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between service delivery in digital business and organizational performance. It was also found that there is a positive and significant relationship between Customer satisfaction in e-business and organizational performance. Based on the findings we concluded that, digital business has impact on organizational performance in service industries in Nigeria. It was recommended among others that management should ensure service delivery are effective and there should be room for feedback to know where they didn't do well, as it will enable the organization to be more effective.

Agboola, Awobajo, Oluwatobi, Akinbode, Fagbohun, Esse, Segun-Adeniran, Asaolu and Betek, (2019) investigated how digitalization enhances the performance of commercial banks adopting the purposive method and simple random sampling selecting 370 non managerial employees from a commercial bank. A self-structured questionnaire was used as the major instrument for data collection and was analysed using SPSS version 25. From the result, it was discovered that there was a mild significant and positive relationship between the digitalization process and commercial bank performance. Also, there is a positive significant relationship between product innovation and performance of commercial banks in Nigeria. The study recommends that digitalization processes if adequately and correctly implemented, will have a significant positive relationship on the performance of commercial banks in Nigeria *ceteris paribus*.

Beenu and Rathika (2019) analyze the impact of customer's attitude towards digital and conventional advertising. Customer's attitude was characterized by a variety of features such as credibility of customers, educating customers, materialism and good commercial advertising. A descriptive study was conducted, 110 samples were selected using convenience sampling technique. The results show that digital advertising has a greater impact than conventional advertising.

Mesfin (2019) examined the impact of social media on business performance: the case of commercial bank of Ethiopia. The study adopted an explanatory research design with structured questionnaires being utilized in the data collection among 96 personnel working for the commercial bank of Ethiopia. The collected research data were analysed using correlation and regression analysis. The

findings of the research indicate that social media usage contributed positively to real-time communication, repeat exposure among customers, and the competitive advantage of commercial banks. Regression results indicate a positive relationship between social media business and the market performance effectiveness with the commercial bank of Ethiopia. The study conducted a case study of a Commercial bank of Ethiopia, while current research examined all registered Kenyan banks.

Dodokh and Al-Maaitah (2019) studied the impact of social media on organizational performance in Jordanian Dead Sea cosmetic industry. The study contains three dynamic variables: social media for business, social media for customer's relations and services, and social media for information accessibility on organizational performance in terms of speed, time to market, cost reduction, and innovation in Jordan. Data was obtained from a sample of 169 managers working in 23 different organizations in cosmetic sector. Structural equation modelling was used to test the hypotheses. The results have shown that there is a strong positive impact of using social media on organizational performance.

METHODOLOGY

Survey research design was adopted in this study. One of the advantages of using survey research is that it allows the collection of a large amount of data from a sizeable population in a highly economical way.

The population of the study comprises 2093 registered owners of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Anambra State. The sample consist 404 register small and medium scale enterprises in Anambra State. The statistical formula devised by Borg and Gall (1973) was employed to determine the sample size. With respect to this research, the researcher made use of primary and secondary data. This study made use of questionnaire to generate the primary data. Secondary data will be sources from journals, textbook, newspaper and SMEDAN and National Bureau of Statistic Collaborative Survey (2019). The study used structured questionnaire as the research instrument. The research instrument was questionnaire, which was subjected to face and content validity procedures. The reliability of the questionnaire was established through the test- retest method and Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.92 was obtained. The need to enhance easy comprehension and analysis prompted the used of the frequency distribution table to present the data gathered. Simple percentages analysis was use to analyzing the research questions while Simple Multiple Regression Analysis was use in testing research hypotheses. Probability value (p-value) measures the individual significant level of the individual independent variables. A p-value that is less than 0.05 (p-value < 0.05) level of significance shows that the variable is significant but when the p-value is more than 0.05 (p-value > 0.05) level of significance, it shows that the variable is not significant.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In this section, the data generated from the employees of the selected sampled SMEs were presented, analyzed and interpreted. A total of four hundred and four copies of questionnaire were distributed to the respondents, out of which four hundred copies of questionnaire were returned properly filled and found relevant to the study. Four copies of questionnaire were not properly filled. Therefore, the analysis in this section was based on the four hundred relevant copies which represent 99% of the entire copies (400). The section covers A the demographic features of the respondents. The section B analyzed the data relevant to research questions

Presentation of Data relevant to the Research Questions

Question One: *Does affiliate business strategy affect the sales performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria?*

Effect of Affiliate business Strategy on sales performance of SMEs in Anambra State

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean
1	Affiliate business strategy has driven sales of SMEs business	157 39.3%	169 42.3%	43 10.8%	20 5.0%	11 2.8%	4.10
2	Affiliate business strategy has guided the improvement of SMEs products with reference to customers' feedback	122 30.5%	154 38.5%	78 19.5%	22 5.5%	24 6.0%	3.82
3	Affiliate business strategy has been effective in answering frequently asked questions	99 24.8%	212 53.0%	48 12.0%	23 5.7%	18 4.5%	3.88
4	Affiliate business strategy has been efficient in facilitating information on specific topics regarding the organization's products, for prospective customers	92 23.0%	126 31.5%	72 18.0%	62 15.5%	48 12.0%	3.38
5	Affiliate business strategy has created avenue for access to new markets	85 21.3%	178 44.5%	77 19.3%	49 12.3%	11 2.8%	3.69

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2023

The result on Table 1 indicates that 157(39.3%) respondents strongly agreed that affiliate business strategy has driven sales performance of SMEs business, 169(42.3%) disagreed, 20(5%) strongly disagreed and 43 (10.8%) were undecided. On whether affiliate business strategy has guided the improvement of SMEs products with reference to customers' feedback, 122(30.5%) respondents strongly agreed, 154(38.5%) agreed, 22(5.5%) disagreed, 24(6.0%) strongly disagreed and 78 (19.5%) were undecided. 99(24.8%) respondents strongly agreed that affiliate business strategy has been effective in answering frequently asked questions, 212(53%) agreed, 23(5.8%) disagreed, 18(4.5%) strongly disagreed and 48 (12%) were undecided. 92(23%) respondents strongly agreed that affiliate business strategy has been efficient in facilitating information on specific topics regarding the organization's products, for prospective customers, 126(31.5%) agreed, 62(15.5%) disagreed, 48(12%) strongly disagreed and 72 (18%) were undecided. Also Affiliate business strategy has created avenue for access to new markets, 85(21.3%) respondents strongly agreed and 178(44.5%) agreed. However, 49(12.3%) disagreed, 11(2.8%) strongly disagreed while 77 (19.3%) were undecided. With a cutoff mean score of 2.50 for the rating scale, all the items had mean scores above the cutoff point. This implies that Affiliate business strategy influence SMEs performance in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Question Two: *Does e-mail business strategy affect the financial performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria?*

Table 2 Effect of Email business and financial performance of SMEs

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean
1	Email business has increased financial performance of SMEs for products by prospective customers	86 21.5%	191 47.8%	65 16.3%	41 10.3%	17 4.3%	3.72
2	Email business has effectively and steadily increased financial performance of SMEs	142 35.5%	118 29.5%	57 14.3%	44 11.0%	39 9.8%	3.70
3	Email business has provided a consistently increased financial performance of SMEs	105 26.3%	211 52.8%	69 17.3%	9 2.3%	6 1.5%	4.00
4	The delivery rate of e-mail business is quite good in reaching target customers and has enhanced financial performance	136 34.0%	138 34.5%	25 6.3%	22 5.5%	79 19.8%	3.57
5	Customers and organization can connect to each other through email business, make comments on writing, discussing about the issues	120 30.0%	193 48.3%	32 8.0%	22 5.5%	33 8.3%	3.86

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2023

Table 2 shows that 86 (21.5%) of the total sample strongly agreed that e-mail business has increased financial performance of SMEs for products by prospective customers, 191(47.8%), Agreed, 41 (10.3%) disagreed, 17(4.3%) strongly disagreed while 65 (16.3%) were undecided. 142(35.5%) respondents strongly agreed that e-mail business has effectively and steadily increased financial performance of SMEs 118(29.5%) agreed. Only 44(11%) respondents disagreed, 39(9.8%) strongly disagreed and 57 (14.3%) respondents were undecided. On questions that Email business has provided a consistently increased financial performance of SMEs, 105(26.3%) respondents strongly agreed and 211(52.8%) agreed. Conversely, 9(2.3%) disagreed, 6(1.5%) strongly disagreed and 69 (17.3%) were undecided. On whether The delivery rate of e-mail business is quite good in reaching target customers and has enhanced market share, 136(34%) respondents strongly agreed and 138 (34.5%) agreed, 22(5.5%) disagreed,79(19.8%) strongly disagreed and 25 (6.3%) respondents were undecided . On whether customers and organization can connect to each other through email business, make comments on writing, discussing about the issues, 120 (30%) respondents strongly agreed 193(48.3) agreed 22(5.5%) disagreed,33(8.3%) strongly disagreed and 32 (8%) were undecided . Using a cutoff point of 2.50 for the rating scale, all the items had mean scores were above the cutoff point. This implies that E-mail business to a large extent affects SMEs financial performance positively in Anambra State, Nigeria

Question Three: *Does mobile business strategy affect marketing performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria?*

Table 3 Effect of Mobile business strategy on SMEs marketing performance

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean
1	Mobile business strategy provides the customer with the economic value of reduced search time.	134 33.5%	165 41.3%	52 13.0%	34 8.5%	15 3.8%	3.92
2	Mobile business strategy create and maintain long term interactive relationship with the customers	125 31.3%	189 47.3%	53 13.3%	20 5.0%	13 3.3%	3.98
3	Mobile business strategy technology has increased marketing performance of SMES	173 43.3%	172 43.0%	38 9.5%	9 2.3%	8 2.0%	4.23
4	Mobile marketing strategy enable SMEs to instantly track success of their campaign and provide an opportunity	85 21.3%	178 44.5%	77 19.3%	49 12.3%	11 2.8%	3.69
5	Mobile communication channels are seen to be more private that is aimed at influencing marketing performance	86 21.5%	191 47.8%	65 16.3%	41 10.3%	17 4.3%	3.72

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2023

Table 3 presents the effect of Mobile business influence SMEs performance in Anambra State. The result reveals that 134(33.5%) respondents strongly agreed that mobile business strategy provides the customer with the economic value of reduced search time, 165(41.3%) agreed, 34(8.5%) disagreed, 15(3.8%) strongly disagreed and 52 (13%) were undecided . 125(31.3%) respondents strongly agreed that mobile business strategy create and maintain long term interactive relationship with the customers, 189(47.3%) agreed, 20(5%) disagreed and 13(3.3%) strongly disagreed and 53 (13.3%) were undecided. On the issue raised on mobile business strategy technology has increased marketing performance of SMES, 173(43.3%) respondents strongly agreed and 172 (43%) agreed. Conversely, 9(2.3%) respondents disagreed, 8(2%) strongly disagreed and 38 (9.5%) were undecided. 85(21.3%) respondents strongly agreed that Mobile marketing strategy enable SMEs to instantly track success of their campaign and provide an opportunity. However, 49(12.3%) disagreed,11(2.8%) strongly disagreed while 77 (19.3% were undecided. shows that 86(21.5%) of the total sample strongly agreed that Mobile communication channels are seen to be more private that is aimed at influencing marketing performance 191(47.8%) agreed, 41 (10.3%) disagreed, 17(4.3%) strongly disagreed while 65 (16.3%) were undecided. Using a cutoff mean score of 2.50 for the rating scale, all the items had mean scores above the cutoff point. This implies that Mobile business strategy positive influence SMEs marketing performance in Anambra State.

Test of Hypotheses

4.4.1 Hypothesis One

Ho: Affiliate business strategy has no significant positive effect on sales performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria

H₁: Affiliate business strategy has a significant positive effect on sales performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria

Table 4: Regression analysis showing the effect of affiliate business strategy on sales performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)		
Sales Performance	36.496	1.834		19.901	.000
Affiliate Business Strategy	2.696	.119	.750	22.655	.000

Simple Regression R=0.750, Simple Regression R²=0.562, Adjusted R²=0.561, F_{1,398}=511.350

*p<0.05

Table 4 revealed that affiliate business strategy has a significant positive effect on sales performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria. (t =22.665, p<0.05). The null hypothesis is rejected. The table indicated a significant multiple correlation between the predictor variable (Affiliate Business Strategy) and on sales performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria. The value of the coefficient of determination (R² = 0.562) indicated that affiliate business strategy accounted for about 56.2% (R² x 100) of the observed variance in sales performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria while the remaining 43.8% unexplained variance is largely due to other variables outside the regression model which are otherwise included in the stochastic error term. The calculated F-ratio (511.350) is statistically significant at p<0.05 level of significance. This implies that the predictor variable (Affiliate Business Strategy) provides a significant explanation for the variation in on sales performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria, Nigeria.

Hypothesis Two

Ho: E-mail business strategy has no positive significant effect on financial performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria

H₃: E-mail business strategy has a positive significant effect on financial performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria

Table 5: Regression analysis showing the effect of E-mail business strategy on financial performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta(β)		
Financial performance	38.408	1.368		28.076	.000
E-mail business strategy	2.601	.090	.824	28.90	.000

Simple Regression R=0.824, Simple Regression R²=0.679, Adjusted R²=0.678, F_{1,398}=842.360

*p<0.05

Table 5 revealed that e-mail business strategy has significant positive effect on financial performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria (t =28.90, p<0.05). The null hypothesis is rejected. The table shows that there is significant multiple correlation between the predictor variable (e-mail business strategy) and financial performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria. The value of the coefficient of determination (R²= 0.679) indicated that E-mail business strategy accounted for about 67.9% (R² x 100) of the observed variance in financial performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria while the remaining 32.1% unexplained variance is largely due to other variables outside the regression model which are otherwise included in the stochastic error term. The calculated F-ratio (842.360) is statistically significant at p<0.05 level of significance. This implies that the predictor variable (e-mail business

strategy) provides a significant explanation for the variation in financial performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis Three

H₀₅: Mobile business strategy has no positive significant effect on marketing performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State

H₅: Mobile business strategy has no positive significant effect on marketing performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State

Table 6: Regression analysis showing the effect of Mobile business strategy on marketing performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)		
Marketing performance	37.928	1.713		22.144	.000
Mobile business strategy	2.523	.108	.761	23.361	.000

Simple Regression R=0.761, Simple Regression R²=0.579, Adjusted R²=0.578, F_{1,398}=547.467

*p<0.05

Table 6 revealed that mobile business strategy has on significant positive effect on marketing performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria (t =23.361, p<0.05). The null hypothesis is rejected. The table showed that there is significant multiple correlation between the predictor variable (Mobile business strategy) and marketing performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria. The value of the coefficient of determination (R²= 0.579) indicated that mobile business strategy accounted for about 57.9% (R² x 100) of the observed variance in marketing performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria while the remaining 42.1% unexplained variance is largely due to other variables outside the regression model which are otherwise included in the stochastic error term. The calculated F-ratio (547.467) is statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that the predictor variable (Mobile business strategy) provides a significant explanation for the variation in marketing performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study examined the effect of digital business strategy on the performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria. Data were sourced from small and medium enterprises in Anambra State. The data generated were analyzed using simple regression analysis. The result revealed the following.

Affiliate business and Financial Performance of SMES

The result of the third hypotheses showed that affiliate business strategy has a significant positive effect on sales performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria. This finding is in line with the submission of Chaffey (2019) who noted that affiliate business strategy has a significant positive effect on sales performance of small and medium enterprises. Künn-Nelen, de Grip, and Fouarge (2013) Garnero, Kampelmann, and Rycx (2014) result shows that affiliate marketers draw those online visitors to purchase something from the advertiser; advertiser will pay a commission fee in return for that there are a lot of professional online affiliate marketers that make a fulltime income off of a single blog just through affiliate commissions.

Email Business Strategy and Financial Performance of SMEs

The study results demonstrated that E-mail business strategy has significant positive effect on financial performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria. Shirazi (2017) also held similar views that electronic business has a positive and significant effect on financial performance. Eid and El-Gohary (2013) found out that email business was key to enhancing business effectiveness and the success of small and medium enterprises.

Mobile business and Marketing performance of SMEs

Finally the last hypothesis revealed that mobile business had a significant positive effect on product performance of small and medium enterprises, Anambra State Nigeria. This finding agrees with

Leppäniemi and Karjaluoto 2018, Shankar and Balasubramanian 2019, Kaplan 2016, Altuna and Konuk (2019). Their result shows that mobile business had a significant positive effect on product performance of small and medium enterprises. They opine that mobile business channel, through which information can be quickly and effectively shared to consumers. Karjaluoto, 2019 Ververidis and Polyzos (2016) view mobile business activities interact with the consumer via the use of mobile devices in order to augment the selling of products or services and the provision of vital information about these products and services.

Summary of Findings

The findings of the study are summarized as follows:

1. Affiliate business strategy has a significant positive effect on sales performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria. ($t = 22.613, P = 0.0000$).
2. E-mail business strategy has significant positive effect on financial performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria ($t = 29.023, p = 0.000$).
3. Mobile business strategy has no significant positive effect on marketing performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria ($t = 23.398, P = 0.000$).

CONCLUSION

The use of dignity business strategy emerged as a result of stiff competition in various firms, over environmental performance, sales performance, product performance, financial performance and marketing performance by small and medium enterprises. This has increased small and medium enterprises into aggressive advertisement to get consumers attention. To achieve this, small and medium enterprises sample the most their product to get customers preference towards their product through digital business channels. The study therefore concludes that digital business strategy had a significant positive effect on the performance of small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends the following

1. The study also recommended that small and medium enterprises should seek collaboration with technology firms that can help in designing business tools and undertake affiliate business strategy, which can drive web traffic and ranking of the small and medium enterprises website in other to improve sales performance.
2. With regard to email business, the study recommends that small and medium enterprises should develop a customer-tailored business strategy. This will help in improving the quality of business communication and financial performance of small and medium enterprises.
3. The research recommends that small and medium enterprises should leverage on mobile business to offer customers transactional messaging and technical support, which can be key to better service quality which can improves marketing performance of small and medium enterprises

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