

## **Digital Service Marketing and Sales Performance of Selected Small Enterprises in Uyo**

**Ekemini Iniobong Nseyo**

Department of Marketing

Akwa Ibom State University, Obio Akpa Campus, Nigeria

**Kingsley Effiong Essiet**

Department of Marketing

Akwa Ibom State University, Obio Akpa Campus, Nigeria

**Mmenyene-Abasi Sunday Effiong**

Department of Marketing

Akwa Ibom State University, Obio Akpa Campus, Nigeria

doi: <https://doi.org/10.37745/bjmas.2022.0340>

Published November 9, 2023

---

**Citation:** Nseyo E.I., Essiet K.E. and Effiong M.S. (2023) Digital Service Marketing and Sales Performance of Selected Small Enterprises in Uyo, *British Journal of Multidisciplinary and Advanced Studies: Business and Management Sciences 4(6),1-17*

---

**ABSTRACT:** *The study examined the relationship between digital service marketing and sales performance of selected small enterprises in Uyo. The researchers adopted a survey research design in which primary data were obtained through questionnaire administration. The population of the study consisted of 200 small enterprises in Uyo, covering different sectors such as education, fashion, ICT, cosmetic, artisan, logistic, courier, and transportation. The sample size for the study was 133. The researchers employed tables and simple percentage method to analyse the research questions. However, Regression technique and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to test the hypothesis. The finding was that there is a significant relationship between digital service marketing and sales performance of selected small enterprises in Uyo. It was found that digital service marketing has influenced sales performance of selected small enterprises in Uyo positively and significantly. Recommendations were that there is need for provision of improved education on digital service marketing by small enterprises in Uyo. In order to improve sales performance of small enterprises in Uyo, there is need for all entrepreneurs to take advantage of more than one of the digital tools as part of service marketing strategies. The influence of digital service marketing on various sales levels should be monitored for appropriate policy drive towards ensuring sustainable success of small enterprises in Uyo among others.*

**KEYWORDS:** marketing, digital service marketing, sales performance, small enterprises

---

## INTRODUCTION

Small enterprises in Uyo metropolis are yearning for improved sales performance so as to grow their businesses. Due to an increased competition in the market, numerous approaches are employed to attract and retain existing and potential customers with the aim of increasing the levels of sales in order to remain on profitable path. According to Uford, Charles and Etuk (2022), in this era of technology, the potential and existing customers can easily be reached and found on online platforms such as; facebook, instagram, and tweeter. Other platforms include; whatsapp, email, tiktok, teleconference, zoom, webinar, among other several digital platforms using android or smart phones and computer. Therefore, digital service marketing involves the process of reaching out to the target market for exchange of services of value using digital platforms in consideration of monetary value for profit making.

Digital service marketing has the potential to improve sales performance. Improving sales performance however, is dependent on digital marketing skills of small business enterprises. Hence, the concept of the application of digital platform aids in heightening the performance of businesses (Jobber & Ellis-Chadwick, 2013). Moreover, digital service marketing is regarded as an imperative for small enterprises to improve their performances with the aim of maintaining their relevance and ensuring market survival in the face of stiff competition in the market. Globally, small enterprises are seen to have contributed not less than sixty percent of employment in the business sectors (Is-haq, 2019; Macaulay & Mfon, 2023). By implication, the growth of small enterprises in any economy is vital as it stimulates economic growth, which is one of the aims of the governments (Ugurlu, 2009). Hence, greater incentives should be offered to enhance and advance the improvement of small enterprises in Uyo. Part of the relevant factors in the promotion of small enterprises in Uyo is the use of digital service marketing to boost sales performance. Nevertheless, improvement in sales performance may be attained by providing good digital marketing of services. This is found to generate increased knowledge preferences for the promoted services relative to the competing services.

Digital marketing is known to have fast, cost-effective and far reaching effects on most small enterprises (Etuk, Awah & Akpan, 2022). Though, some findings such as the finding of Bordanaba-Juste, Lucia and Polo (2012) suggested that the size of enterprises may likely affect how digital marketing channels are applied, especially in small enterprises being the lowest in the cycle of adoption. Most small businesses usually operate at the lowest stages of business growth which normally requires a lot of attracting and retaining of customers in order to grow, make significant digital marketing strides, ensure operational reach to customers and improve sales performance. Prior to the current digital development, some successful small enterprises have thrived on analogue marketing tools. However, Vargo and Lusch (2004) and Bhattacharya and Bolton (2000), opined that digital technology, in the present era, is a marketing tool and strategy that focuses much more on service exchange, provision, interaction and connection with

customers, as new modes of marketing conduits, frequent changes in the media environment and advancement in technological innovations have made changes possible.

Sales performance improvement denotes an increment in the volume of business revenue generated by an enterprise over a period of time. Sales volume is reflected by a consistent rise in the number of outputs of the company (Macaulay & Mfon, 2023). Performance according to Mahmood (2004), might be in form of increases in prices of services and sales of more services. However, sales performance improvement that follows as a result of price increase might be associated with the inflation adjustment and therefore, might be linked to real or actual growth in sales of services. Conversely, if there are steady costs at the low level, it could then be defined as the real increase in sales. On the contrary, increment in the sales of services could imply growth in sales. It is possible to attribute this growth to expansion in the quality of services, business environmental geographical expansion, increase in the number of service provision and increase in the number of branches.

In Uyo metropolis, the small enterprises have gone beyond the traditional methods of marketing. A viable alternative has been made available in the form of digital service marketing. This alternative provides better opportunities to engage a broad range of markets and create awareness of the availability of services. But it is expedient that small businesses find out the possibility of digital service marketing contributing to the improvement of sales performance of their services in the competitive environment (Uford, 2018). Knowing how much digital service marketing will impact their businesses in the aspects of creating awareness and improving sales performance is of paramount importance.

Though the future of small enterprises in Uyo seems optimistic, a numeral of unsettled problems still exists, particularly, with the service marketing strategies, which has influenced the sales performance. This problem appears obviously, despite the adoption of digital service marketing strategies, which has led to low sales performance. As part of its dynamism in marketing efforts, society encompasses new area of digital platforms as every day passes by, and in turn, new digital marketing strategies to cover this new area of digital world that are birthed, thereby leading to booms in small enterprises.

Although, small enterprises have been acclaimed to be the engine room for economic growth and development (Ekong, Mfon & Ibok, 2023; Macaulay & Mfon, 2023) the current economic challenges in Uyo clearly indicate that small enterprises are not doing well compared to those in other states. Aside other factors, one major challenge faced by most small enterprises in Uyo is lack of awareness about their services by many prospective customers both within and outside the state. The reason may be as a result of the fact that most of them cannot afford the cost of advertisement in the conventional media platforms.

Hinging on this background, it can be perceived that the numeral of empirical researches is comparatively few, specifically on digital service marketing and sales performance. To add to

filling the gap, the researchers focused on examining the relationship between digital service marketing and sales performance of selected small enterprises in Uyo, which is the key objective of this paper. Based on this objective, the hypothesis that “*there is no significant relationship between digital service marketing and sales performance of selected small enterprises in Uyo*” was formulated. The remainder of this paper covered literature review, methodology, data presentation, analysis of empirical results and discussion of findings followed by conclusion and recommendations.

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **Overview of Digital Service Marketing, Sales Performance and Small Enterprises**

Digital service marketing can be defined as the use of the internet and related digital technological platforms to achieve marketing objectives and to support the transaction of marketing activities such as supply chain management, customer relationship and quality services delivery (Harrigan, 2012). Akpan, Mfon and Ibok (2022), see digitalization of services as disruptive innovations since they alter the way businesses are traditionally run. Therefore, digital service marketing is the use of electronic means, computer devices such as smart phones, cell phones, android phones, among others, to communicate with the customers about the availability of services and supply. These techniques have thus ushered in a new way of doing business thereby extending the marketing mixes and eradicating the classical marketing posture. Technology is flexible. This flexibility has rubbed off on marketing activities online making it more significant as it enables high interconnectivity. The internet has been compared to the wheel and the airplane in terms of its ability to impact on sales performance (Richard, 2015).

Sales performance is a major indicator of organizational growth. Sales performance determines profit levels and the rate of expansion of the company as it is the revenue generator as the levels of sales determine the level of profits which invariably determines the level of expansion. The level of sales performance equally determines the competitiveness of the organization, all other factors being constant. In fact, it enhances the competitiveness of the organization. Nonetheless, several factors influence the level of sales performance. These factors include the advertisement rate of the service and the medium employed by the organisation for advertising.

Promotion, especially advertising, over the years have been done through the traditional media which include the television, radio, newspapers or direct sales. But with the advent of the social media, with its attendant opportunities and advantages, many small scale enterprises have availed themselves of the opportunity of having an online presence and being able to communicate with their target audience effectively. Nevertheless, some small enterprises are still hesitant in adopting these platforms. Several reasons account for this, including the low level of education which automatically impacts on the level of internet knowledge possessed by small enterprises owners which subsequently, affect their ability to use these media effectively. Additionally, unavailability of internet services, epileptic power supply, low level of computer literacy and lack of funds to

engage professionals in internet operations are other factors that militate against the use of social media by small enterprises owners (Huang & Brown, 1999).

Businesses need digital service marketing to survive in the contemporary business climate. As stated earlier, digital marketing avails small enterprises a lot of opportunities contrary to what was obtainable in the olden times (Adegbuyi, Akinyele & Akinyele, 2015). More of word of mouth validations are used to promote digital marketing services in order to attract and win customers. The contemporary business environment that is connected by technology, relationships and networks is predominated by small enterprises whose activities are promoted. (Adegbuyi *et al* 2015). In spite of this, ignorance of marketing activities still subsists. According to Tsado and Santas (2018), small enterprises still require a lot of development and influence to grow like large companies. In spite of these challenges, small businesses have contributed immensely to economic development both in developed and developing economies. Small enterprises are known to be very crucial to the development of a nation's economic productivity (Akpan, Mfon & Ibok, 2022; Macaulay & Mfon, 2023).

### **Relationship between Digital Service Marketing and Sales Performance**

Sales performance has been greatly enhanced by the interplay of digital service marketing especially in this new millennium. It is important to drive a more creative and global business with the involvement of access, skills and motivation of using this digital service marketing medium. It is on record that digital service marketing has projected an exponential growth as far back as in the 1990s and 2000s. This has altered the way brands and businesses are run with the use of digital communication technology. The efficiency of digital service marketing campaigns is pronounced when they are incorporated into the marketing strategy of enterprises as people's daily lives are influenced (Etuk, Uford & Udonde, 2023), since consumers patronize digital platforms better than physical stores.

Search engine optimization (SEO) is one of the commonest tools for digital marketing. According to Wienclaw (2017), SEO is "the process of increasing the probability that a website will be listed in online search results and clearly placed in search results". He further listed the SEO strategies to include, keyword addition, website content customization, proper website indexing, and ensuring that website content is unique. Pineiro-Otero and Martinez-Rolan (2016), in their study found out that google search engine commands 80% of worldwide access. Gaikwad and Kate (2016) affirmed that SEO is mandatory for digital marketing.

Furthermore, the impact of digital service marketing, particularly the social media, can be seen in the marketing of services. Kucuk and Krishnamurthy (2007), have asserted that the social media and social networking sites are increasing globally. They are gaining much popularity. They have presented businesses with infinite opportunities to reach and communicate with a myriad of customers all over the world. Thus, small businesses can be conducted in any part of the world and services rendered to customers in any part of the world (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). For instance, at first inception in 2004, Facebook is said to have attracted more than one billion users. Most

customers, including entrepreneurs themselves, spend a good number of their daily hours online interacting and connecting with people. This is the power of social networking. In the course of their interaction and interconnection, they use a number of online platforms such as Facebook, Blogs, Whatsapp, Tiktok, YouTube, Instagram, My space, to share information about products and services (Kozinet, 2002). Each of these tools have made their impacts. For instance, blogging is associated with increase in sales revenue, especially for services that require reviews where customers can read them and make their comments based on their personal experiences (Zhang, Dubinsky & Tan, 2013).

Online surveys show that business activity works just as well as overall marketing strategies. Online services show greater influence on consumers than traditional communication methods (Helm, Moller, Mauroner & Conrad, 2013). Positive effects have been found between digital service marketing and sales performance improvement in several studies (Njau & Karugu, 2014; Srinivasan, Bajaj & Bhanot, 2016;). Incidentally, Taiminen and Heikki's (2015) study's result showed a negative effect of digital service marketing on business returns. However, Wanjuki (2014) found mixed result of the effect of digital service marketing on businesses sales performance.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Social Network Theory**

This theory was propounded by Jacob Moreno in the 1930s. The social network theory is a theoretical construct that is used in the social sciences to look into relationships among persons, groups, organizations and entire societies. It highlights the ability of owners, through networking, to be able to access resources that are beyond their influence in the most cost-effective way. Here, there is a way for businesses owners to obtain value from their access to social resources embodied within a network such as social media. According to Parker and Alstynne (2011), there is a characterisation of digital platforms that links network impacts from the demand scenario to the supply scenario of businesses. Time has set out the significance of social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, My Space, which have proved their popularity (Nielsen, 2010).

Among the social media platforms, Facebook stands out as the commonest site. Next to facebook is the Twitter followed by, LinkedIn, MySpace and YouTube (Pradiptarini, 2011). With the onset of the social media, there has been a reversal in the tools and strategies used in marketing communication. Personalization of marketing has been made possible by the popularity and widespread adoption of digital service marketing practices. It provides the platform for commercial entities to progressively link with individual clients and users, and in turn obtain feedback on a one-to-one basis. Thus, the relevance of social media is clearly seen in its significant role as a viable platform for digital service marketing given its wider adoption. Therefore, this theory is apt in this study.

### **Generational Theory**

This theory was propounded by Karl Mannheim in 1928. The focus of this theory is the relationship between the time of a person's birth and the person's perception of the world at large. By implication, people's values are influenced and shaped over time by their families, friends, events, the society and the period in which they were born. (Jurkiewicz & Brown 1998). The theory further identifies similarities in behaviour among people born within the same generational period since they are influenced and molded generally by the same environmental, societal and technological factors. Thus, this era is known as the information-driven, technological and digital era. The relevance of this theory is on information usage. Its usefulness can be seen in its ability to assist small enterprises in Uyo in the identification of the needs of customers and the subsequent formulation of appropriate marketing contents with the aid of information technology and other digital platforms.

### **Review of empirical studies**

Joseph (2021), did a qualitative study titled "Digital marketing and small businesses: A case study of local deals, Stockholm, Sweden". The respondents were shop owners in Uppsala. Twelve of them were drawn through the purposive sampling technique. They were informed of the purpose of the study and their consent to participate was obtained during the interview. The interview was recorded with a phone recorder and was later transcribed. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. The usefulness of this analysis is in its ability to find similarities between the interviews and code it to a theme. The themes identified were price and quality, trust, interactions marketing, knowledge gap, open to collaboration, customers, and promises not delivered. The results pointed out that the shop owners have trust issues with various digital service providers approaching them.

Omar, Zan, Hassan and Ibrahim's (2020) study titled "Digital marketing as an influence towards business performance among entrepreneurs of Small and Medium Enterprises". The study adopted a cross sectional design. The questionnaire was structured to show the different domains within the identified variables. A sample size of 300 SMEs' entrepreneurs aged between 18 to 55 years who run businesses around Klang Valley was used. The data was analyzed using SPSS software and Smart PLS. The results showed that the business purpose, product advertising, marketing benefits and product reputation have significant relationship with the business performance of SME entrepreneurs. The results of the structural equation modeling analysis revealed that digital marketing significantly influenced business performance.

Bodoine's (2020) investigation on digital marketing and its impact on the growth of small and medium size enterprises in Cameroon, had a case study of Jumia. The study population consisted of 46 consumers and employees of Jumia. The questionnaire was the instrument for data collection which was administered through an online platform. The data sought for reflected both the research questions and objectives of the study. Data was analysed descriptively using the bar chart, pie chart and tables. The test of hypotheses was carried out using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21.00 software. The general finding showed that digital marketing channels such

as social marketing and online marketing, greatly contributed to the growth of SMEs in Cameroon in general and Jumia in particular.

## METHODOLOGY

The researchers adopted a survey research design in line with the objective of the study which was to examine the relationship between digital service marketing and sales performance of small enterprises in Uyo metropolis. The study area was Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. The population of the study comprised 200 small enterprises in Uyo covering different sectors such as education, fashion, ICT, cosmetic, artisan, logistic, courier, and transportation (Field Survey, 2022). The sample size was 133 respondents determined using the Taro Yamane's formula for sample size determination. Primary data were obtained through questionnaire administration. The questionnaire was structured into two sections; A and B. Section A projected the bio-data of respondents while Section B contained the research constructs reduced to statements which were closed-ended and directed at collecting relevant data from small enterprises operators in Uyo metropolis. The four-point adjusted Likert type of rating scale was adopted as follows: Strongly agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3; Disagree (D) = 2; Strongly disagree (SD) = 1. The researcher employed tables and simple percentage method to analyse the data from the questionnaire statements. Stated below is the regression model for testing of the earlier formulated research hypothesis:

$SPSENTPS = f(DSERMKT)$ . Hence,  $SPSENTPS = \beta_0 + \beta_1 DSERMKT + u_t$

Where;

SPSENTPS = sales performance of selected small enterprises in Uyo (Dependent variable).

DSERMKT = digital service marketing (Independent variable)

$u_t$  = the stochastic error term.

$\beta_0$  = the regression constant

$\beta_1$  = the coefficient of the independent variables.

To test the significance of the individual explanatory variables and coefficients to determine whether there is a linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables, we used the p-value. The acceptance and rejection criterion was

If the calculated p-value is less than the benchmark p-value of 0.05 at 5 percent level of significance, the independent variable is considered to have a linear and positive relationship with the dependent variable, and hence the null hypothesis is rejected.

The R-squared ( $R^2$ ) and F-value statistics were used to evaluate the statistical reliability of the result estimated. The  $R^2$  was used to judge the explanatory power of the regression equation. It measures the goodness of fit of the regression line. The F-statistic was used in testing the significance of the overall model. The test of the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) against the alternate hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) is that  $H_0$  is rejected if the calculated statistical probability is less than the p-value of 0.05.



## DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS OF DATA AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### Data Presentation

The data collected from field survey are presented under this section.

### Summary of Questionnaire Administration

In this section, the copies of questionnaire administered to the respondents were collected and presented as shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Summary of Questionnaire Administration and Retrieval

Items	Number of Questionnaire	Percentage of Return (%)
Total questionnaire served	133	100
Total questionnaire returned	120	90.23
Total not returned	10	7.52
Total discarded	3	2.26
Total useful	100	75.19

**Source:** Field Survey (2023)

Table 1 depicts that out of the total of 133 copies of questionnaire administered, 120 copies representing 90.23% were returned, 10 copies representing 7.52% were not returned, 100 correctly and completely filled copies, representing 75.19%, were used for the analysis. Hence, 3 copies of the questionnaire representing only 2.26%, out of 133 copies distributed, were completely discarded.

### Analysis of Respondents' Demographic

In qualitative research that involves the analysis of subjective opinions of the participants, it is often of critical importance to know the types, nature, class, and kinds of persons whose opinion were used in making an informed decision concerning important issues for which problems were found and solutions consequently sought. Table 2 presents the summary of the demographic analysis of the respondents.

**Table 2: Analysis of Respondents' Demographic**

Items	Dimensions	Frequency	Percentage of Return (%)
AGE	25 – 30 years	8	8.00
	31 – 35 years	29	29.0
	36 - 40 years	39	39.0
	Above 40 years	24	24.0
	Total	100	100
SEX	Male	45	45
	Female	55	55
	Total	100	100
EDUACTION	College of Education/Polytechnic	13	13
	Graduate	33	33
	Postgraduate	20	20
	Professional qualification	6	6
	Others	28	28
	Total	100	100

**Source:** Field Survey (2023)

From Table 2, a total of 8 respondents representing 8.0% were aged between 25 to 30 years, 29 respondents representing 29.0% were aged between 31 to 35 years. Also, a total of 39 respondents representing 39.0% were aged between 36 to 40 years. 24 respondents representing 24.0% were above 40 years old. By implication, majority of the respondents were aged 36 to 40 years. Also, 45 respondents representing 45.0% were male while a total of 55 representing 55.0% of the respondents were female. This implied that majority of the participants were female. However, this does not presuppose that using more women in the study will in any way affect the analysis and findings of the study. This is because the opinions expressed are highly likely to represent general opinion or position concerning the research issues and not strictly on masculine opinion or feminine position. Also, the majority (33.0%) of the respondents were graduates.

### **Data Analysis**

The responses to the various statements on the items measuring each construct are presented and analyzed in this section. As presented in each table, the responses to the items measuring research constructs and the analysis are done to know the position of the respondents on each Likert scale. The presentation and analysis is done based on the research objectives.

### **Digital service marketing (DSERMKT)**

The responses of the respondents on digital service marketing are displayed below

**Table 3: Analysis of items and research constructs on Digital service marketing (DSERMKT)**

ITEM CODE	RESEARCH STATEMENT/ ITEMS	S A ( 4 )	A ( 3 )	S D ( 2 )	D ( 1 )
DSERMKT1	I am aware of digital services marketing.	41 (41.0%)	11(11.0%)	34(34.0%)	14(14.0%)
DSERMKT2	I belong to social media platforms	68 (68.0%)	20(20.0%)	8 (8.0%)	4 (4.0%)
DSERMKT3	I advertise my services on different social media platforms	32 (32.0%)	51(51.0%)	10(10.0%)	7 (7.0%)
DSERMKT4	I am able to reach my existing and potential customers	62 (62.0%)	17(17.0%)	18(18.0%)	3 (3.0%)

**Source:** Field Survey Data, 2023

From Table 3, it was revealed that 41 respondents strongly agreed that they were aware of digital services marketing, 11 respondents representing 11.0% also agreed to the claim. However, 34 respondents representing 34% strongly disagreed, while 14 respondents representing 14.0% disagreed to the claim. Also, it was shown that 68 and 20 respondents representing 68.0% and 20.0% respectively strongly agreed and agreed that they belonged to different social media platforms 8 and 4 respondents representing 8.0% 4.0% respectively strongly disagreed and disagreed to the claim. Furthermore, 32 respondents representing 32.0% strongly agreed that they have advertised their services on different digital media platforms and 51 respondents representing 51.0% also agreed to the claim. However, while 10 respondents representing 10.0% strongly disagreed to the claim, 7 respondents representing 7.0% disagreed to the claim. Additionally, it was shown those 62 respondents representing 62.0% strongly agreed that they have been able to reach their existing and potential customers. 17 respondents representing 17.0% also agreed to the claim. However, 18 respondents representing 18.0% strongly disagreed to the claim and 3 respondents representing 3.0% disagreed to the claim. On that strength, it could be stated that respondents' opinion on the items are sufficient to guarantee scientific analysis and a valid conclusion. Implicitly, this could be interpreted to mean that each independent research construct or variable has some kind of relationship with the dependent research construct or variable.

### **Sales performance (SPSENTPS)**

The dependent variable was sales performance. Thus, the respondents were required to indicate the degree of their agreement or disagreement with the statements postulated on sales performance.

**Table 4: Analysis of items and research constructs on sales performance (SPSENTPS)**

Item code	RESEARCH STATEMENT/ ITEMS	SA ( 4 )	A ( 3 )	SD (2)	D ( 1 )
SPSENTPS1	Digital service marketing has improved your sales performance	42 (42.0%)	38(38.0%)	19(19.0%)	1 (1.0%)
SPSENTPS2	Digital service marketing has improved your revenue generation	60 (60.0%)	25(25.0%)	9 (9.0%)	6 (6.0%)
SPSENTPS3	Digital service marketing has increased your market share	28 (28.0%)	38(38.0%)	19(19.0%)	15(15.0%)
SPSENTPS4	Digital service marketing has helped you to improve your profit	58 (58.0%)	22(22.0%)	12(12.0%)	8 (8.0%)

Source: Field Survey Data, 2023

Table 4 showed that 42 respondents representing 42.0% strongly agreed that digital service marketing has improved their sales performance. 38 respondents representing 38.0% also agreed to the claim. However, while 19 respondents representing 19.0% strongly disagreed with the claim, only 1 respondent representing 1.0% disagreed. Also, 60 respondents representing 60.0% strongly agreed that digital service marketing has improved their revenue generation, 25 respondents representing 25.0% also agreed to the claim. However, while 9 respondents representing 9.0% strongly disagreed, 6 respondents representing 6.0% disagreed with the claim. Furthermore, 28 respondents representing 28.0% strongly agreed that digital service marketing has increased their market share; 38 respondents representing 38.0% also agreed. However, 19 respondents representing 19.0% strongly disagreed and 15 respondents representing 15.0% disagreed. Lastly, 58 respondents representing 58.0% strongly agreed that digital service marketing has helped them to improve their profit; 22 respondents representing 22.0% also agreed. Meanwhile, 12 respondents representing 12.0% strongly disagreed with the claim while 8 respondents representing 8.0% disagreed. On that strength, it could be stated that respondents’ opinion on the items are sufficient to guarantee scientific analysis and to postulate a valid conclusion.

**Test of Hypothesis**

The hypothesis ( $H_{01}$ ) was that, there is no significant relationship between digital service marketing and sales performance of selected small enterprises in Uyo.

**Table 5: Results of DSERMKT Regression on SPSENTPS**

Model summary of the relationship between digital service marketing and sales performance of small enterprises

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	D-Wat Stat.
1	.151 <sup>a</sup>	.321	.273	1.066	1.546

a. Predictors: (Constant), DSERMKT

A		N		O		V		A		a	
M o d e l		Sum of Squares		d		f		Mean Square		F	S i g .
1	Regression	2	. 6 1 2		1	2	. 6 1 2	5	. 2 9 7		. 1 3 3 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	1 1 1	. 4 2 8	9	8	1	. 1 3 7				
	T o t a l	1 1 4	. 0 4 0	9	9						

a . D e p e n d e n t V a r i a b l e : S P S E N T P S

b . P r e d i c t o r s : ( C o n s t a n t ) , D S E R M K T

C		o		e		f		f		i		c		i		e		n		t		s		a
M o d e l		Unstandardized Coefficients		Std. Error		Standardized Coefficients		B e t a		T		S i g .												
1	(Constant)	3	. 4 8 0	. 2	4 8					14	. 0 1 8													. 0 0 0
	DSERMKT	. 1	1 3	. 0	4 4	. 1	5 1			2	. 5 6 8 2													. 0 0 3

a . D e p e n d e n t V a r i a b l e : S P S E N T P S

**Source:** Researcher's Computation (2023) from SPSS Output.

From the result in Table 5, it was found, on average, that for every 1% change in digital service marketing, the sales performance of selected small enterprises in Uyo will increase by about 11.3%, and this change is significant at 1% level. With this result, the null hypothesis that “*there is no significant relationship between digital service marketing and sales performance of selected small enterprises in Uyo*”, is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is accepted, which states that there is a significant relationship between digital service marketing and sales performance of selected small enterprises in Uyo”. In quantitative perspective, as indicated by the t-value of 2.568, this would mean that an increase in digital service marketing will lead to about 2.6 increase in the sales performance of selected small enterprises in Uyo. The f-stat value (5.297) which is significant at 1% level implies that the model containing this result is correct and valid. The R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.321 implies that the model explained a total of 32.1% of the variation in the dependent variable while 67.9% of the variation is explained by variables not included in the model. The economic implication of the result is that improvement in the sales performance of selected small enterprises in Uyo can be achieved if there is an increase in the digital service marketing in Uyo.

## DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The result in Table 5 showed that, on average, for every 1% change in digital service marketing, the sales performance of selected small enterprises in Uyo will increase by about 11.3%, and this change is significant at 1% level. With this result, the finding was that there is a significant relationship between digital service marketing and sales performance of selected small enterprises in Uyo. The economic implication of the result is that improvement in the sales performance of selected small enterprises in Uyo can be achieved if there is an increase in the digital service

marketing in Uyo. This finding is consistent with the findings of Omar, Zan, Hassan and Ibrahim (2020); Bodoine (2020), Olusegun, Olympus and Olakunle (2020); Is-haq (2019); Jain (2014); and Pachore, Swapnil and Ganesh (2016), that the availability of data and digital platforms has provided many possibilities for inferences by marketers in order to make the right decision which will influence sales performance positively. Different studies have presented similar results concerning the concepts of digital service marketing and small enterprises' sales performance. Researchers such as Onyango (2016), who did a study on the effects of digital service marketing strategies on the sales performance of cut flowers exporting firms in Kenya, found that digital service marketing significantly exerts a positive effect on the market share and sales performance in order to increase profit. Yasmin, Tasneem & Fatema (2015), found that digital service marketing tools such as advertising, online marketing, email marketing and social media, influence or affect the firm's sales performance.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Conclusion**

The study examined the relationship between digital service marketing and sales performance of selected small enterprises in Uyo. The finding of the study showed that there is a significant relationship between digital service marketing and sales performance of selected small enterprises in Uyo. By implication, the relevant digital service marketing options of small enterprises include email, social media, search engine optimization, pay-per-click and online advertising. For now, the effect of digital service marketing options on sales performance is more positive through e-mails, search engine optimization, and pay per click. The small enterprises in Uyo need to take steps to become more creative and innovative group of entrepreneurs. This is relevant in today's business world in facing the transformation and paradigm shifts in the world of digital service marketing. Consequently, the adoption of digital media has given a new medium for the entrepreneurs in doing business online creatively. The small enterprise sector is becoming healthier and more competitive with the variety of opportunities offered by the entrepreneurs in digital media that also encourage customers to make smarter choices. Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that digital service marketing has influenced sales performance of selected small enterprises in Uyo positively and significantly.

### **Recommendations**

Some policy recommendations were that there is need for provision of improved education on digital service marketing by small enterprises in Uyo. In order to improve sales performance of small enterprises in Uyo, there is need for all entrepreneurs to take advantage of more than one of the digital tools as part of service marketing strategies. The influence of digital service marketing on various sales levels should be monitored for appropriate policy drive towards ensuring sustainable success of small enterprises in Uyo. Small enterprises in Uyo should develop plans and create a budget for exploiting digital service marketing tools and applications to enjoy its superior benefits over traditional marketing. They should use these tools to reach target customers better, promote services through emails, display advertisements, mobile apps, search engine optimization

and search engine marketing, online contents and boost their market share as well as effectively mitigating increasing competition, maximizing their potential access to new markets.

## REFERENCES

- Adegbuyi, O. A., Akinyele, F. A. & Akinyele, S. T. (2015). Effect of social media marketing on small scale business performance in Ota-metropolis, Nigeria. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Management*, 2 (3): 275–283.
- Akpan, A. O., Mfon, A. A. & Ibok, N. I. (2022). Disruptive innovations and marketing performance of online marketers in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. *World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews (WJARR)*, 16(2),181-192. <https://doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2022.16.2.1026>
- Bhattacharya, C.B. & Bolton, R.N. (2000). Relationship marketing in mass markets in *Handbook of Relationship Marketing*.
- Bodoine, T. (2020). Digital marketing impact on the growth of small and medium size enterprises in Cameroon case study Jumia. *Centria University of Applied Sciences*, 1 (1):1-35.
- Bordonaba-Juste, V., Lucia-Palacios, L. & Polo-Redondo, Y. (2012). The influence of organizational factors on e-business use: Analysis of firm size. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 30(2): 212-229.
- Ekong J. E., Mfon A. A., & Ibok N. I. (2023) Innovative marketing skills and business performance of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Business and Management Review*, 11 (3),48-64.
- Etuk, A. J., Uford, I. C., & Udonde, U. E. (2023). Airline Service Recovery Strategies and Passengers' Satisfaction in Nigeria. *International Journal of Business Management and Economic Review*, 6(4): 1-18.
- Etuk, A., Awah, A. E. & Akpan, A. O. (2022). E-marketing and savings mobilization drive of selected microfinance banks in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. *International Journal of Business, Marketing and Management*, 7(3) 1-6
- Gaikwad, M., & Kate, P.H. (2016). E-marketing: A modern approach of business at the door of consumer clear. *International Journal of Research in Commerce & Management*, 7(9): 56-61.
- Harrigan, E. & Patrick, I. 2012. Exploring and explaining SME marketing investigating e-CRM using a mixed methods approach. *Journal of strategic marketing*, 20(2): 127-163.
- Helm, R., Moller, M., Mauroner, O., & Conrad, D. (2013). The effects of a lack of social recognition on online communication behavior. *Computers in Human Behavior* 29: 1065-1077.
- Huang, X. & Brown, A. (1999). An analysis and classification of problems in small business. *International Small Business Journal*. 18 (1):73 – 85.
- Is-haq, H. O. (2019). Digital Marketing and Sales Improvement in Small and Medium Enterprises in Nigeria. *International Journal of Innovation and Research in Educational Sciences*, 6(6):803-810.
- Jobber, D. & Ellis, F. (2013). *Principles and practices of marketing*, 7th edition, McGraw-Hill Education.

- Joseph, J. (2021). Digital Marketing and Small Business: Case Study of Local Deals, Stockholm, Sweden. Master's Dissertation in Industrial Management and Innovation submitted to Faculty of Technology, Uppsala University, 1-67.
- Kozinet, R. (2002). The field behind the screen: Using netnography for marketing research in online communities. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 39(1): 67-72.
- Kucuk, S. U., & Krishnamurthy, S. (2007). An analysis of consumer power on the internet. *Technovation*, 27(1-2): 47-56.
- Macaulay, I. J. & Mfon, A. A. (2023). E-marketing tools and marketing performance of selected small and medium scale enterprises in South East, Nigeria. *Iconic Research and Engineering Journals*, 7(1), 455-474
- Mahmood, M. A. (2004). *Advanced Topics in End User Computing (3rd ed.)*. Idea Group Publishing.
- Mangold, G., & Faulds, D. (2009). Social media: The new hybrid element of the promotion mix. *Business Horizons*, 52(4): 357-365.
- Njau, J. N & Karugu, W. (2014). Influence of e-marketing on the performance of small and medium enterprises in Kenya: Survey of small and medium enterprises in the manufacturing industry in Kenya. *International Journal of Business and Law Research*, 2(1): 62-70.
- Olusegun, O. O., Olympus, O. O. & Olakunle, A. I. (2020). Online Marketing and the Performance of Small-Scale Enterprises in Nigeria: A Study of Selected SMEs in Ikeja, Lagos State, Nigeria. *Annals of Contemporary Developments in Management & HR (ACDMHR)*, 2(3):1-10.
- Onyango K. (2016). *Influence of digital marketing strategies on performance of cutflowers exporting firms in Kenya*. Unpublished. MBA Research Project. School of Business, University of Nairobi
- Pachore, S. P., Swapnil, B. & Ganesh, A. (2016). Impact of online digital marketing on small business or start up. *IJARIE*, 2(1):151-166.
- Pineiro-Otero, T., & Martinez-Rolan, X. (2016). *Understanding digital marketing-basics and actions*. Springer International Publishing Switzerland.
- Richard, C. (2015). *Email Marketing in a Digital World : The Basics and Beyond*, Business Expert Press.
- Srinivasan, R., Bajaj, R. & Bhanot, S. (2016). Impact of social media marketing strategies used by micro, small and medium enterprises on customer acquisition and retention. *Journal of business and management*, 18(1): 91-101.
- Taiminen, H. & Heikki, K. (2015). The usage of digital marketing channels in SMEs. *Journal of small businesses and enterprise development*, 22(4): 633-651.
- Tsado, E. and Santas, T. (2018). Influence of Social Media Marketing on the Sales Performance of Select Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Niger State, Nigeria. *Novena Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, 1:154-167.
- Uford, I. C. (2018). E-Banking Application and Sterling Bank Customers' Adoption: Issues, Challenges and Benefits. *Business and Social Sciences Journal (BSSJ)*, 3(2): 1-12.



- Uford, I. C., Charles, I. I., & Etuk, A. J. (2022). Effectiveness of E-Marketing Platforms and Consumer Buying Behaviour of Akwa Ibom State University Students Towards Selected Online Products. *AKSU Journal of Management Sciences (AKSUJOMAS)*, 7(1&2): 1-28.
- Ugurlu, E. (2009). Real exchange rate and economic growth: Turkey. *Manas Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi (Manas University Journal of Social Sciences)*, 22: 191-212.
- Vargo, S.L. & Lusch, R. F. (2004) Evolving to a new dominant logic for marketing. *Journal of marketing*, 68(1): 1-17.
- Wanjuki, C.W. (2014). *The growth of digital marketing and its impact on customer service at Barclays Bank of Kenya, Meru Branch*. Unpublished, University of Nairobi.
- Wienclaw, R. A. (2017). Direct E-Marketing. *Direct E-Marketing - Research Starters Business*, 1-6.
- Yasmin, A., Tasneem S. & Fatema. K. (2015). Effectiveness of Digital Marketing in the Challenging Age: An Empirical Study. *International Journal of Management Science and Business Administration*, 1(5), 69-80.
- Zhang, G., Dubinsky, A. J., & Tan, Y. (2013). Impact of Blogs on Sales Revenue. *International Journal of Virtual Communities and Social Networking*, 3: 60-74.