EFFECT OF DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES ON THE CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT IN MICRO SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract: Digital marketing strategies are crucial for the growth and success of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). These strategies enable MSMEs to effectively compete in the market, reach a larger audience, and achieve business objectives. The purpose of this study is to examine the Effect Of Digital Marketing Strategies on The Customer Engagement In Micro Small And Medium Enterprises In Nairobi County, Kenya. The study employed a descriptive research design. This study use qualitative design methods. For the purposes of this study. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data and were administered to the owners of MSMES in Nairobi City County. The study employed simple random sampling. The sample size was 60. SPSS research analysis tool was used emphasizing on the Multiple Regression Analysis and the Spearman Correlation Coefficient among others to assess the magnitude and relationship and thus come up with a finding of the relationship of the independent and dependent variables. There exists a positive significant correlation between digital marketing strategies and customer engagement among the selected MSMES in Nairobi County. There exists a positive correlation between search engine optimization and customer engagement among MSMES in Nairobi County. There exists a positive relationship between pay per click ads and customer engagement among MSMES in Nairobi County. There exists a positive relationship between email marketing strategy and customer engagement among MSMES in Nairobi County. There exists a positive relationship between social media marketing and customer engagement.

Keywords: Digital Marketing Strategy, Customer Engagement, Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMES).

1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary global business landscape, digital marketing has evolved beyond a mere social media presence endeavour to a fundamental aspect of organizational strategy. Corporations across various industries, including micro, small, and medium enterprises, are increasingly recognizing the significance of integrating digital marketing strategies into their operations. This paradigm shift is propelled by the realization that digital marketing can be a key driver of business success, particularly in terms of enhancing the corporation's presence, visibility, brand, products, price, accessibility, and feedback which inevitably enhances their performance.

Digital marketing strategies are crucial for the growth and success of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). These strategies enable MSMEs to effectively compete in the market, reach a larger audience, and achieve business objectives. Digital marketing strategies are vast, with options like social media marketing, online search engine optimization, content marketing, email marketing, influencer marketing, pay-per-click advertising, affiliate marketing mobile marketing, video marketing, analytics, and data-driven marketing, webinars, online events and many more options in the digital world that has played a crucial role in how micro, small and medium enterprises operate today.

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a critical role in the global economy, contributing significantly to employment, innovation, and economic growth. Understanding the unique characteristics, challenges, and opportunities faced by MSMEs can help in crafting effective strategies for their success, including digital marketing strategies.This research endeavors to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the intricate relationship between digital marketing strategies undertaken by micro, small, and medium enterprises and the resultant impact and effect on their performance. By dissecting the multifaceted dimensions of digital marketing, this study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how these strategies affect micro, small, and medium enterprises.

Jain, (2014) stated that large businesses usually have huge opportunities due to their large marketing budgets enabling them to be easily visible through multi-channel marketing efforts and campaigns. On the other hand, due to limited cash resources, micro, small, and medium enterprises are hugely limited in the marketing possibilities on how they can gain visibility. However, Ayyagari, Beck, and Kunt (2007) in their study stated that both in developing nations and advanced economies, micro, small, and medium enterprises contribute roughly 60% of the manufacturing sector's formal employment. This therefore means the performance and growth of micro, small, and midsized enterprises in any country is important since it implies growth in the economy, and therefore more incentives and strategies need to be made to grow the sector.

Micro, small and Medium Enterprises must understand that most customers look for a business online before deciding on whether to interact with it (Konsti-Laakso, Pihkala, & Kraus, 2012). Panda, (2013) noted that 70% of American customers will look for an online review of a product before making a choice, 79% of customers use a smartphone while shopping and 83% of mothers prefer an online search while looking for products they have seen on television. These statistics clearly show how digital marketing is important for small and medium enterprises to embrace. According to Bawden (2020), these searches are done to establish the legitimacy of the business the potential customer intends to purchase from.

Digital marketing according to Stone (2015) has been utilized mostly in Japan as the deliberate mode for the promotion and sale of services and products by leveraging online marketing tactics such as social media marketing, search marketing, and email marketing. Micro, Small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) have long been recognized as an important and integral part of every country's economy and are also the fastest-growing segment in most markets (Harrigan & Nel, 2014).

In Rwanda, a study by Donner (2016) found that digital marketing is mostly conducted using mobile smartphones which are utilized to allow micro-entrepreneurs to develop new business contacts. The growth and development of the ICT sector according to (Yusuf, 2013) has offered such countries like Rwanda a platform on which to build a future and become part of the global digital economy and has encouraged e-commerce, e-business, e-marketing, and business innovation for especially the country's SME sector, and enhanced competitiveness making Rwanda a knowledge-based economy.

Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSME's) have been defined based on various aspects mostly turnover, lifespan, and number of employees. OECD (2005) indicated that micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs are non-subsidiary independent enterprises that employ less than 250 employees. According to (Ayyagari, 2007), most jobs are provided by MSMEs in many economies globally. MSME's in OECD countries which have less than 250 employees employ more than 60% of the formal workforce (Dietrich, 2010).

In Kenya, the Micro, small, and Medium Enterprises Bill (2013) defines small enterprises are those firms in the trade and service industry or business activities that have a turnover range between Kshs 500,000 to Kshs 5 million and have employed between 5 and 10 people. In the manufacturing sector, investment in plant, machinery and equipment ranges between 10 and 50 Million Kshs. In Kenya, the MSMEs constitute about 75 percent of the businesses, have 4.6 million

people employed, account for 87 percent of newly created jobs, and contributes around 18.4 percent of the gross domestic product (KNBS, 2013).

A strong MSME sector is considered to provide social benefits such as the empowerment of local communities and a path out of poverty. In developing countries, MSMEs are also considered to have a positive impact on regional income distribution (Taiminen & Karjaluoto, 2015). Gradually, more and more MSMEs are becoming aware of the importance of digital marketing platforms and their role in boosting an enterprise's sales and brand awareness. Small businesses should consider the huge marketplace of prospects online. No small business, no matter how new, should overlook this vast and extensive marketplace. According to (Mcclurg, 2014), one thing is certain in the digital business world, if your firm is not on display, and consumers cannot find your business when searching on the internet, a competitor will surely get your business (Kamal, 2016).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 EMPHIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Li, Larimo, and Leonidou (2021), the implementation of online marketing methods offers significant advantages to businesses. However, the business landscape presents the organizations a leveled working space. Hence, it is imperative for businesses, including MSMES to demonstrate innovation and proactivity in order to achieve success within the ever-evolving digital landscape (Lenka & Gupta, 2020).According to Li, Larimo, and Leonidou (2021), the Internet exerts a significant influence on human behavior. According to Lenka and Gupta (2020), technology has had a significant impact on decision-making processes, interpersonal interactions, and corporate practices. The proliferation of computer, communications, information, and other digital technologies in recent years has led to a significant transformation in the business landscape, commonly referred to as the digital age. This technological boom has had a profound influence on how firms deliver value to their consumers (Umunna, 2021).

The rapid advancement of the internet has presented significant prospects for the commercial sector. According to Li, Larimo, and Leonidou (2021), organizations have discovered novel strategies to accomplish their marketing objectives by leveraging the various tools and functionalities available in the online environment. As a result, there has been a shift in consumer behavior towards online platforms, necessitating the development of online marketing tactics by marketers to effectively capture their attention and engage with them.

The widespread utilization of the internet has had a profound impact on both customers and marketers (Ivanova, 2011). Furthermore, the use and influence of this phenomenon are always expanding (Kotler, 2018). The internet facilitates the retrieval of information, fosters connectivity among individuals and organizations, and enables enterprises to cultivate more robust client relationships. According to Kotler (2018), marketers have increasingly adopted a more discerning approach, prioritizing consumers who yield higher profitability and cultivating more intimate and direct connections with them. nKotler (2018) posits that online marketing entails the strategic endeavour to promote goods and services and cultivate client connections through the utilization of the internet. In contemporary times, the vast majority of company organizations have an online presence and actively utilize it in a substantial manner. Online marketing has emerged as a rapidly expanding approach to marketing in contemporary times.

According to Bharskar and Siddheshwar (2020), the Indian pharmaceutical business is now in the embryonic stage of online marketing. Pharmaceutical businesses in India are employing technology-driven services to facilitate enhanced patient education and health monitoring. The utilization of online marketing by the Indian pharmaceutical sector serves as a valuable tool for providing physicians with a comprehensive understanding of patient health and potential adverse effects associated with certain products. These digital platforms additionally facilitate efficient communication between medical professionals and patients, enabling doctors to effectively convey information pertaining to specific health concerns.

The advent of online marketing has undoubtedly streamlined the processes of advertising, organized awareness campaigns, and achieving widespread reach through cost-effective and efficient approaches (Bharskar & Siddheshwar, 2020). The global dependence on medical drugs is widespread. Cardiovascular problems and hypertension exhibit a higher prevalence in industrialized nations, while poor countries continue to grapple with the burden of infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, typhoid, and others. Pharmaceutical firms are diligently striving to adapt to the advancements brought about by online marketing technologies (Bharskar & Siddheshwar, 2020).

In recent times, the utilization of online marketing within the MSMES have facilitated organizations in adopting an alternative strategy for reaching out to their target audience, including customers, physicians, and caregivers. Several technological advancements have significantly impacted the healthcare industry, such as mobile communications, advanced analytics, the internet, and cloud computing. In the Indian context, a significant number of MSMES have imposed limitations on their utilization of online marketing platforms for the purpose of establishing a corporate image, disseminating information on therapeutic advancements, providing basic dietary instructions, nutrition recommendations, exercise regimens, and related topics. The distribution of products exhibits a moderate level of assertiveness, as only a limited number of firms are involved in the sale of these products over the counter (Aityassine, Al-Ajlouni & Mohammad, 2022).

2.2 THEORITICAL LITERATURE

2.2.1 Customer Engagement Theory

Customer Engagement Theory focuses on the emotional, cognitive, and behavioural involvement that a customer has with a brand, product, or service. It extends beyond traditional notions of customer satisfaction and loyalty, emphasizing the depth of connection and the active participation of customers in their interactions with a company. The development of online marketing strategies is based on the theoretical framework of customer engagement theory. This theory suggests that companies should actively encourage and empower customers to enhance their level of engagement, ultimately leading to more effective marketing outcomes (Harmeling et al., 2017).

Kumar et al. (2019) identified four distinct aspects of customer engagement value: customer lifetime value, customer referral value, customer influence value, and customer knowledge value. The idea of customer engagement has introduced a novel perspective on customer valuation, offering marketers a means to enhance the efficacy and efficiency of their strategic decision-making processes. This, in turn, facilitates the creation of long-term value for consumers. Within the realm of online marketing, particularly in the context of social media, the customer engagement theory allows companies to effectively utilize valuable customer resources, including network assets, persuasion capital, knowledge stores, and creativity. By leveraging these resources, firms can attain a sustainable competitive advantage, as highlighted by Harmeling et al. (2017).

The theory of customer engagement emphasizes the significance of comprehending customer motivations as a fundamental requirement for firms to devise efficient online marketing strategies. This is since diverse customer motivations, stemming from varying attitudes and attachments, can impact their behaviors on social media and ultimately affect the outcomes of social media management systems (Venkatesan, 2017). The study by Harmeling et al. (2017) emphasizes the significance of inputs from both firms, such as social media engagement programs, and customers, such as social media behaviors. It also highlights the importance of varying levels of interactivity and interconnection in achieving favorable marketing outcomes.

According to Kumar et al. (2019), organizations can derive advantages from consumer interaction in both concrete, such as increased revenues, market share, and profits, and intangible, such as feedback and new ideas that aid in product or service development, ways. Drawing upon the principles of customer engagement theory, it is plausible for MSMES to formulate an online marketing plan comprising four interconnected components: The factors influencing the firm's social media marketing objectives and the customers' motivations for using social media are referred to as "drivers." The actions taken by the enterprise to engage with social media and the behaviors exhibited by customers on social media platforms are known as "inputs." The manner in which the firm establishes connections and interacts with customers to exchange resources and fulfill their needs is categorized as "throughputs." Lastly, the outcome of customer engagement resulting from these processes is referred to as "outputs.

2.2.2 Game Theory in Marketing Strategies

Game Theory, a mathematical framework for analyzing strategic interactions between rational decision-makers, has significant applications in marketing strategies. It helps companies anticipate competitive actions and reactions, optimize pricing strategies, design effective promotions, and enhance overall strategic planning. The implementation of an effective marketing strategy is of paramount importance in industries characterized by intense competition, where competitors are vying for the attention of the same target group with items that are either comparable or identical. In highly competitive

industries, businesses and brands must make a strategic decision between two primary marketing approaches: product discounts or advertising expenditure. The practice of product discounting involves offering a brand for sale at a price lower than its prevailing market rate. This strategy serves to appeal to a wide range of consumers who are interested in purchasing (Kozlenkova, Samaha, & Palmatier, 2014). On the other hand, allocating funds towards advertising endeavors aids businesses in distinguishing their products, cultivating a favorable consumer perception, and ensuring that prospective buyers are well-informed about the unique value proposition offered by the product.

The implementation of these two techniques results in financial expenses for the business in the form of losses and expenditures. Hence, it is imperative for a business to ascertain the optimal approach to strike a balance between these two factors, thereby maximizing both payoffs and profits (Kozlenkova et al., 2014). According to Kumar and Gupta (2016), game theory can be utilized by management to effectively determine the optimal course of action in situations characterized by intense competition. The game matrix can effectively demonstrate the anticipated outcomes of various marketing methods, allowing for the identification of preferred solutions based on diverse assumptions.

One example of the use of game theory is its utility in facilitating the determination of optimal pricing strategies and decision-making processes. The application of the theory necessitates the formulation of assumptions regarding the behavior of other players, enabling a deeper understanding of their strategies and counterstrategies. The outcomes and rules of the game-matrix solution also incorporate data on business sand sector behavior that is sourced externally (Kumar & Gupta, 2016). While game theory can be utilized to illustrate the potential results of different marketing tactics, its ability to provide precise solutions to marketing difficulties is limited. Careful consideration of the expected results. The presence of intrinsic ambiguity in these metrics is a challenge to achieving precision, similar to the intricacies associated with elucidating the decisions confronted by all competitors simultaneously (Kumar & Gupta, 2016).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND MODEL SPECIFICATION

The study employed a descriptive research design. This study use qualitative design methods. For the purposes of this study. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data and were administered to the owners of MSMES in Nairobi City County. The study employed simple random sampling. The sample size was 60.

4. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

4.1.1 Marketing Strategies Adopted by Selected MSMES

Table 4.1 displays the perspectives of the participants on their degree of concurrence with statements pertaining to marketing methods implemented by specific MSMES

Table 4.1: Marketing Strategies Adopted by Selected MSMES

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		agree		Strongly agree		Mean	Std dev
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent		
Our organization has invested in Search Engine Optimization to attracts more visibility and increases traffic	0	0	1	1.9	11	20.4	34	63.0	8	14.8	3.91	0.65
Our organization has invested in Search Engine Optimization to enhance brand visibility	0	0	0	0	12	22.2	35	64.8	7	13.0	3.90	0.59
Our organization uses Pay Per Click Ads to increase website traffic	1	1.9	0	0	12	22.2	30	55.6	11	20.4	3.93	0.77
Our organization uses Pay Per Click Ads to increase brand visibility	0	0	0	0	4	7.4	39	72.2	11	20.4	4.13	0.52

Our organization uses Email marketing strategy to get orders and feedback from our customers	0	0	0	0	16	29.6	29	53.7	9	16.7	3.87	0.67
Our organization uses Email marketing strategy to inform our customers of new products in the market	0	0	2	3.7	8	14.8	34	63.0	10	18.5	3.93	0.82
Our organization uses social media marketing to get orders and feedback from our customers	0	0	0	0	7	13.0	39	72.2	8	14.8	4.02	0.53
Our organization uses social media marketing to inform our customers of new products in the market	1	1.9	0	0	5	9.3	37	68.5	11	20.4	4.06	0.68

Evidence presented above showed that 63.0% of the respondents agreed that their MSMES had invested in search engine optimization to attract more visibility and increase traffic. The findings indicate that 20.4% of the participants held a moderate viewpoint towards the remark, while 14.8% expressed strong agreement and 1.9% expressed disagreement. In general, the statement had a mean value of 3.91 and a standard deviation of 0.65, indicating agreement according to the measuring scale. This therefore denotes that the MSMES had invested in search engine optimization to attract more visibility and increase traffic. These findings tally with those of Bharskar and Siddheshwar (2020) that the use of search engine optimization (SEO) approaches by companies provide a significant opportunity to reach their target audiences.

Descriptive statistics presented above show that 64.8% of the respondents agreed that their MSMES had invested in search engine optimization to enhance brand visibility, 22.2% of the respondents had a moderate opinion with the statement while 13.0% of the respondents' strongly agreed with the statement. These findings are consistent with those of According to Kotler (2018), Search engine optimization (SEO) helps increase website traffic by improving search engine ranking. In overall, the item had a mean of 3.90, the standard deviation of 0.59 which translates to "Agree" as per the measurement scale. This therefore implies that the majority of the respondents agreed that MSMES have invested in search engine optimization to enhance brand visibility. These findings are consistent with those of According to Kotler (2018), Search engine optimization (SEO) helps increase website traffic by improving search engine ranking

The research findings indicate that a majority of the participants, specifically 55.6%, expressed agreement with the notion that their MSMES employs Pay Per Click Ads as a means to enhance website traffic. Additionally, a significant proportion of the respondents, namely 22.2%, had a moderately favorable perspective on this statement. It was observed that 20.4% of the participants expressed strong agreement with the statement, whilst 1.9% of the participants strongly disagreed with it. The overall mean of the statement was found to be 3.93, with a standard deviation of 0.77. This indicates that, according to the measuring scale, the response falls into the "Agree" category. This therefore implies that the majority of the respondents agreed that MSMES use Pay Per Click Ads to increase website traffic.

The evidence shown above indicates that a majority of the respondents, specifically 72.2%, expressed agreement with the notion that their respective MSMES utilized Pay Per Click Ads as a means to enhance brand visibility. Furthermore, 20.4% of the respondents strongly agreed with this statement, while 7.4% held a more moderate stance on the matter. The statement had a mean value of 4.13 and a standard deviation of 0.52, indicating agreement according to the measuring scale. This therefore denotes that the MSMES use Pay Per Click Ads to increase brand visibility. These findings are consistent with those of Kotler (2018), Pay-per-click advertising campaigns allow firms to have total control of firms' budget, targeting and ad placements. With ongoing PPC campaign optimization, MSMES quickly find the sweet spot between budget and results.

From the study results, 53.7% of the respondents agreed that their MSMES use Email marketing strategy to get orders and feedback from their customers, 29.6% of the respondents had a moderate opinion while 16.7% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement. In overall the statement had a mean of 3.87, the standard deviation of 0.67 which translates to "Agree" as per the measurement scale. This therefore implies that the majority of the respondents agreed that their MSMES uses email marketing strategy to get orders and feedback from their customers. Consistent with the findings of Olson et al. (2021), this study confirms that email marketing is an effective way for businesses to not only maintain relationships with their existing clientele, but also to attract new ones.

The results indicated that 63.0% of the respondents agreed that their organization uses Email marketing strategy to inform their customers of new products in the market, 18.5% of the respondents strongly agreed, 14.8% of the participants had moderate opinion while 3.7% differed. In overall the statement had a mean of 3.93, the standard deviation of 0.82 which translate to "Agree" as per the measurement scale. This therefore indicates that MSMES used email marketing strategy to inform their customers of new products in the market. These findings concur with those of Hanson and Kalyanam, (2020) email marketing benefits for businesses, from increasing brand awareness to building stronger customer relationships.

The findings of the study indicate that a significant majority of the participants, specifically 72.2%, expressed agreement with the notion that their respective organizations employ social media marketing strategies to solicit orders and obtain feedback from their client base. Furthermore, 14.8% of the respondents strongly endorsed this statement, while 13.0% held a more moderate perspective on the matter. The statement exhibited a mean value of 4.02 and a standard deviation of 0.53, indicating a classification of "Agree" on the measuring scale. This therefore implies that the majority of the respondents agreed that MSMES used social media marketing to get orders and feedback from their customers These findings concur with those of Bharskar and Siddheshwar (2020) that a strong social media marketing strategy can generate conversation about the brand, products and partners.

The findings indicate that a majority of the respondents, specifically 68.5%, expressed agreement with the utilization of social media marketing as a means to disseminate information about new products in the market. Furthermore, a significant proportion of the respondents, accounting for 20.4%, strongly agreed with this statement. A smaller percentage of the respondents, 9.3%, held a moderate opinion on the matter, while a minority of 1.9% had strong disagreement with the aspect. A mean value of 4.06 and asstandard deviation of 0.68 was obtained, indicating a categorization of "Agree" on the measuring scale. Consequently, it can be inferred that a significant proportion of the participants concurred that MSMES employ social media marketing as a means to disseminate information about new medicines available on the market to their clientele. The results of this study align with the research conducted by Lim and Rasul (2022), which also found that social media marketing benefits include heightened brand recognition, enhanced consumer interaction, cost-efficient marketing strategies, greater website traffic, and improved search engine rankings.

On the challenges involved in online marketing, the respondents indicated that there is intense competition where the online space is highly competitive, with numerous businesses vying for the attention of the same target audience. They also indicated that online marketing involves handling sensitive customer data, making businesses vulnerable to cyberattacks and data breaches. The respondents indicated that there are numerous online marketing channels, from social media to search engines and email marketing. Choosing the right mix of platforms and managing them effectively can be daunting. They indicated that negative reviews and comments can harm a company's online reputation. The findings supported Umunna (2021) findings that online marketing in organizations presents several challenges that businesses must navigate to achieve success in the digital landscape.

4.1.2 Indicators of Customer Engagement

Table 4.7 displays the perspectives of the participants about their degree of concurrence with various items that pertain to indicators of customer engagement among the selected MSMES in Nairobi County

Table 4.2: Indicators of Customer Engagement

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Neutral		agree		Strongly agree		Mean	Std dev
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	percent		
The communication channels in our organization have enhanced better interaction with our customers	1	1.9	3	5.6	32	59.3	18	33.3	4.22	0.72
Our organization understands our customers preferences, needs and behaviors through engaging with customers	1	1.9	12	22.2	31	57.4	10	18.5	3.91	0.76
Our organization actively listens and responds to our customers concerns through online interactions	0	0	10	18.5	30	55.6	14	25.9	4.07	0.67

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Our organization responds to customer inquiries and comments promptly through various online platforms	1	1.9	0	0	36	66.7	17	31.5	4.26	0.65
Our organization has a platform where customers can access information and make decisions on their own	1	1.9	6	11.1	35	64.8	12	22.2	4.06	0.71
Our organization has built an emotional connection with customers which has led to brand loyalty and trust	1	1.9	2	3.7	33	61.1	18	33.3	4.24	0.70
There has been continuous improvement in products in our organization as a result of engaging with customers	0	0	6	11.1	31	57.4	17	31.5	4.20	0.63

The study established that 59.3% of the respondents agreed that the communication channels used by MSMES have enhanced better interaction with their customers, 33.3% of the respondents strongly agreed, 5.6% of the participants were moderate while 1.9% had a strong agreement with the aspect. In overall the statement had a mean of 4.22, the standard deviation of 0.72, which translates to "Agree" as per the measurements scale. This therefore implies that the majority of the respondents agreed that communication channels used by most of the MSMES in Nairobi have enhanced better interaction with their customers. These findings concur with those of Bleier, de Keyser and Verleye (2017) that without an active presence on the most commonly used digital communication channels, all business strategies and other efforts are likely to be in vain.

The findings showed that 57.4% of the respondents agreed that the organization understands their customer's preferences, needs and behaviors through engaging with customers while 22.2% of the participants had moderate view. Further, 18.9% of the respondents strongly agreed while 1.9% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. In overall a mean of 3.91, the standard deviation of 0.76, translates to "Agree", this therefore implies that majority of the respondents agreed that MSMES understood their customer's preferences, needs and behaviors through engaging with customers.

The research findings indicate that a majority of the participants, specifically 55.6%, expressed agreement with the notion that MSMES actively engage in listening to and addressing customer problems through online interactions. Furthermore, 25.9% of the participants strongly agreed with this proclamation, while 18.5% held a more moderate perspective. The statement's overall mean was found to be 4.07, with a standard deviation of 0.67. This indicates that the response falls into the "Agree" category. This means the majority agree that MSMES actively listens and responds to their customers' concerns through online interactions. These findings concur with those of Fernandes and Moreira (2019) that a customer communications platform delivers business correspondence throughout the customer's journey towards a purchase, this capability provides multiple benefits such as optimizing the customer experience and keeping customers engaged.

The study found that a majority of the respondents, specifically 66.7%, expressed agreement with the promptness of the MSMES in addressing customer concerns and comments through various online platforms. Furthermore, a significant proportion of the respondents, specifically 31.5%, highly agreed with this statement. The data unveiled a notable proportion of respondents, specifically 1.9%, who expressed strong disagreement with the given assertion. The statement exhibited a mean value of 4.26 and asstandard deviation of 0.65, indicating a classification of "Agree". This therefore implies that the majority of the respondents agreed that MSMES respond to customer inquiries and comments promptly through various online platforms. These findings concur with those of Mathur (2019) that adoption of various online platforms allow users to create highly personalized experiences and manage those preferences, ensuring organizations keep their customers fully engaged in the communication channel of their choice.

The findings showed that 64.8% of the respondents agreed that their organization has a platform where customers can access information and make decisions on their own, 22.2% were of moderate opinion, 11.1% were of moderate opinion while 1.9% of the respondents had a strongly disagreement. In overall the statement had a mean of 4.06 and standard deviation of 0.71, which translates to "Agree" as per the measurement scale. This therefore implies that the majority of the respondents agreed that most of the MSMES had platforms where customers can access information and make decisions on their own. These findings support those of Khan and Adil (2022) that centralized customer communications platforms allow businesses to get the right messages (feedback) to their customers faster.

The findings showed that 61.1% of the respondents agreed that their organization has built an emotional connection with customers which has led to brand loyalty and trust, 33.3% strongly agreed, 3.7% of the participants were of moderate opinion with the statement while 1.9% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. Overall the statement had a mean of 4.24, the standard deviation of 0.70, which translates to "Agree", this therefore implies that majority of the respondents agreed that most of the MSMES had built an emotional connection with customers which has led to brand loyalty and trust. These findings go hand in hand with those of Abimbola, (2023) that client engagement systems can generate messages that are rich in text and have multimedia embedded in them, which enterprises can leverage into marketing opportunities thus building trust.

The findings show that 57.4% of the participants agreed that there has been continuous improvement in products in most of the MSMES as a result of engaging with customers, 31.5% of the participants strongly agreed while 11.1% of the respondents were of moderate opinion. Overall the statement had a mean of 4.20, the standard deviation of 0.63, which translates to "Agree", this therefore implies that there has been continuous improvement in products in most of the MSMES as a result of engaging with customers. These findings support those of Abimbola, (2023) that organization can use client communication platforms to gather data on their products and affect them during product development.

The respondents agreed that customer engagement been effective as there has been increased customer loyalty in the organization which in turn has generated a stable and predictable revenue stream. The customers in the organizations share positive experiences with their friends and social networks and this has led to new customers and increased brand visibility. The customers have also provided valuable feedback and suggestions for improvement which inform product development and service enhancements. The customers have also provided valuable data and insights into their preferences of organization products. The findings are in support of Lim and Rasul (2022) findings that engaging with customers is not only about attracting their attention but also about nurturing relationships, meeting their needs, and exceeding their expectations.

4.1.3 Effect of Digital Marketing Strategies on Customer Engagement

The opinions of the respondents, broken down according to the degree to which they agree with various assertions about the impact of various internet marketing methods on consumer involvement, are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Effect of Various Online Marketing Strategies on Customer Engagement

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		agree		Strongly agree		Mean	Std dev
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent		
The adoption of online marketing strategies has led to better interaction thus enhancing customer loyalty	0	0	0	0	8	14.8	34	63.0	12	22.2	4.07	0.61
The adoption of online marketing strategies has led to better interaction thus enhancing customer satisfaction	2	3.7	0	0	4	7.4	28	51.9	20	37.0	4.19	0.87
The adoption of online marketing strategies has led to better interaction thus enhancing customer trust	0	0	0	0	8	14.8	29	53.7	17	31.5	4.17	0.67
The online marketing strategies have made customers feel valued thus enhancing their loyalty	1	1.9	0	0	3	5.6	32	59.3	18	33.3	4.22	0.72
There has been positive feedbacks as a result of online marketing which have strengthened our products brand reputation	0	0	2	3.7	7	13.0	29	53.7	16	29.6	4.06	0.88
Online marketing strategies has differentiated our products from those of competitors thus provide exceptional customer experiences leading to customer satisfaction	2	3.7	0	0	4	7.4	35	64.8	13	24.1	4.06	0.81

It was established that 63.0% of the participants agreed that adoption of online marketing strategies has led to better interaction thus enhancing customer loyalty, 22.2% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement while 14.8% of the participants were of moderate opinion. In overall the statement had a mean of 4.07, the standard deviation of 0.61which translates to "Agree" as per the measurements scale. This therefore implies that the majority of the respondents agreed that adoption of online marketing strategies by MSMES had led to better interaction thus enhancing customer loyalty. These findings correspond with those of Becker and Jaakkola (2020) that by leveraging the power of social media, businesses can connect with their target audience, build strong relationships with customers, and ultimately drive growth and success.

The findings revealed that 51.9% of the respondents agreed that adoption of online marketing strategies has led to better interaction thus enhancing customer satisfaction, 37.0% of the respondents strongly agreed, 7.4% of the participants were of moderate opinion with the statement while 3.7% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the view. Overall, the statement had a mean of 4.19, the standard deviation of 0.87 which translates to "Agree" as per the measurement scale. This therefore implies that the majority of the respondents agreed that adoption of online marketing strategies by MSMES has led to better interaction thus enhancing customer satisfaction. Results are consistent with those found by Umunna (2021). Businesses may better reach new customers and expand their client base with the help of digital marketing because of the increased visibility and accessibility of their products and services through several digital channels.

The results revealed that 53.7% of the respondents agreed that the adoption of online marketing strategies has led to better interaction thus enhancing customer trust, only 14.8% of respondents held a moderate opinion, whereas 31.5% strongly agreed with the statement. There was a consensus among respondents with a meansscore of 4.17 and asstandard deviation of 0.67 (equivalent to "Agree" on the 5-point Likert scale). This therefore implies that the majority of the respondents agreed that the adoption of online marketing strategies by MSMES has led to better interaction thus enhancing customer trust. These findings concur with those of Mikassi (2022) digital marketing help businesses in devising better strategies for an improved customer experience, loyalty and trust.

It was noted that 59.3% of the respondents agreed that online marketing strategies have made customers feel valued thus enhancing their loyalty, 33.3% of the respondents strongly agreed, 5.6% of the participants had a moderate judgment while 1.9% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. Overall, the statement had a mean of 4.22, the standard deviation of 0.22, which translates to "Agree" as per the measurement scale. This therefore implies that the majority of the respondents agreed that online marketing strategies by MSMES have made customers feel valued thus enhancing their loyalty. These findings concur with those of Aityassine, Al-Ajlouni and Mohammad (2022) online marketing can help build relationships in a targeted way, online marketing empowers firms to target a highly specific vertical or niche, delivering their message to a wide audience that needs firms services.

It was established that 53.7% of the respondents agreed that there has been positive feedback as a result of online marketing which has strengthened products brand reputation, 29.6% of the respondents strongly agreed, a total of 13.0% of the participants held a moderate viewpoint, however 1.9% of the respondents expressed severe disagreement. The statement was rated as "Agree" across the board with a mean score of 4.06. This therefore implies that the majority of the respondents agreed that there has been positive feedback as a result of online marketing by MSMES which has strengthened product's brand reputation. These findings concur with those of Yoong and Lian (2019) that online marketing has changed the way marketers approach markets and customers that took power in the interaction with brands.

It was observed that 64.8% of the respondents agreed that online marketing strategies shave differentiated the firm's products from those of competitors thus providing exceptional customer experiences leading to customer satisfaction while 24.1% of the respondents strongly agreed. It is worth mentioning that 7.4% of the participants held a moderate viewpoint, but 3.7% of the respondents expressed severe disagreement with the given statement. In general, the statement had a mean score of 4.06 and asstandard deviation of 0.81, indicating that it falls into the "Agree" category on the measurement scale. This therefore suggests that online marketing strategies have differentiated the firm's products from those of competitors thus providing exceptional customer experiences leading to customer satisfaction. These findings concur with those of Khan and Adil (2022) indicated that online marketing can facilitate the sharing of user-generated content and customer reviews, testimonials and ratings.

On the influence of online marketing on customer engagement, the respondents agreed that online marketing keep customers informed about promotions, updates and news which in turn enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty. Online marketing allows organizations to reach customers anytime, anywhere. This convenience encourages customers to engage

with brands at their own pace and on their preferred channels leading to customer loyalty. Online marketing channels facilitate two-way communication. Customers can provide feedback, ask questions, and engage in conversations with brands, fostering a sense of community and involvement. Online marketing enable organizations respond to customer feedbacks and this shows that organizations value customer input and are committed to improving their products or services. The findings support Mikassi (2022) findings that online marketing has a significant influence on customer engagement in organizations. It has transformed the way businesses interact with and build relationships with their customers.

4.2 Karl Pearson Correlation Analysis

Table 4.4 presents the findings on the link between independent variables and customer engagement among the selected MSMES in Nairobi County.

Table 4.4: Karl Pearson Correlation Analysis

		Customer Engagement	Search Engine Optimization	Pay Per Click Ads	Email Marketing Strategy	Social Media Marketing
Customer Engagement	Pearson Correlation	1	.311[*]	.363[**]	.305[*]	.428*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.022	.007	.025	.012
	N	54	54	54	54	54
Search Engine Optimization	Pearson Correlation	.311[*]	1	.129	-.249	.514*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.022		.353	.070	.000
	N	54	54	54	54	54
Pay Per Click Ads	Pearson Correlation	.363[**]	.129	1	.037	.108
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.353		.789	.054
	N	54	54	54	54	54
Email Marketing Strategy	Pearson Correlation	.305[*]	-.249	.037	1	.096
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.025	.070	.789		.412
	N	54	54	54	54	54
Social Media Marketing	Pearson Correlation	.428*	.514*	.108	.096	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	.000	.054	.412	
	N	54	54	54	54	54

The correlation factor of 0.311 indicated a positive link between search engine optimization and customer engagement among MSMES in Nairobi County, as shown in Table 4.9. Theep value of 0.022 was less than 0.05, making this modest association statistically significant. The aforementioned data lend credibility to the propositions put forth by Umunna (2021). The use of search engine optimization (SEO) strategies can facilitate the establishment of industry authority and enhance brand awareness for organizations. Failing to engage with the realm of SEO can significantly impede the potential for growth.

The research findings also revealed a statistically significant positive association between pay per click advertisements and consumer engagement within the MSMES in Nairobi County. This was demonstrated by a correlation coefficient of 0.363 and a p-value of 0.007, which was below 0.05. These findings corroborate the conclusions of Nduthu (2018) that the utilization of pay-per-click advertisements in marketing is economically efficient, user-friendly, and yields a substantial return on investment. Consequently, it is a favorable option for small enterprises seeking to optimize their marketing efforts.

A positive correlation was observed between the email marketing approach and customer engagement among MSMES in Nairobi County. The correlation coefficient of 0.305 indicated a positive association, and the significance value of 0.025, which was below the threshold of 0.05, further supported this finding. These findings confirm research by Hanson and Kalyanam (2020) that Email marketing allows firms to create targeted campaigns by leveraging data about the email subscribers.

A positive correlation was observed between the social media marketing and customer engagement among MSMES in Nairobi County. The correlation coefficient of 0.428 indicated a positive association, and the significance value of 0. 012, which was below the threshold of 0.05. The findings supported Bharskar and Siddheshwar (2020) findings that the utilization of social media has played a significant role in shaping various aspects of contemporary society, such as MSMES marketing and the healthcare sector.

4.3 Summary of the Key Findings

The study revealed that MSMES in Nairobi County, had various online marketing strategies which include Search Engine Optimization, Pay Per Click Ads, Email Marketing and Social Media Marketing Strategy. It was agreed that MSMES have invested in search engine optimization to enhance brand visibility as shown by a mean of 3.91 and majority agreed that MSMES use Pay Per Click Ads to increase website traffic as shown by a mean of 3.93. MSMES use Pay Per Click Ads to increase brand visibility. MSMES used email marketing strategy to inform their customers of new products in the market as shown by a mean of 3.93. and that MSMES employ social media marketing strategies to solicit orders and obtain feedback from their client base as exhibited by a mean value of 4.02.

It was revealed that MSMES in Nairobi County utilized several key indicators of customer engagement, respondents agreed that communication channels used by most of the MSMES in Nairobi have enhanced better interaction with their customers as indicated by a mean of 4.22. MSMES actively listen and respond to their customers' concerns through online interactions indicating a mean of 4.07. Customer communications platform delivers business correspondence throughout the customer's journey towards a purchase and that a customer communications platform delivers business correspondence throughout the customer's journey towards a purchase.

The research revealed a statistically significant positive association (r = 0.311) between search engine optimization and consumer engagement within the MSMES that were chosen for analysis in Nairobi County. The research findings also revealed a significant positive correlation (r = 0.363) between the utilization of pay per click ads and customer engagement within the MSMES in Nairobi County. Similarly, a positive relationship (r = 0.305) was observed between the implementation of email marketing strategies and customer engagement among MSMES in the same region. Finally, a positive correlation (r = 0.428) was observed between the social media marketing and customer engagement among MSMES in Nairobi County.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

There exists a positive significant correlation between digital marketing strategies and customer engagement among the selected MSMES in Nairobi County. There exists a positive correlation between search engine optimization and customer engagement among MSMES in Nairobi County. There exists a positive relationship between pay per click ads and customer engagement among MSMES in Nairobi County. There exists a positive relationship between email marketing strategy and customer engagement among MSMES in Nairobi County. There exists a positive relationship between social media marketing and customer engagement.

The study also recommended MSMES should implement online marketing strategies that tailor content and offers to individual customer preferences and behavior since personalization enhances customer engagement by making customers feel valued and understood. To effectively interact with clients via social media, it is recommended that organizations generate captivating and easily shared content. It is advisable to promote active consumer engagement by encouraging them to share their experiences with your brand through the creation of user-generated content, including reviews, testimonials, and social media posts.

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