

## **Digital Advertising Preference and Marketing Performance of Automobile Products in Rivers State, Nigeria**



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**ABSTRACT:** The study examined the relationship between Digital Advertising Preference and Marketing Performance of Automobiles in Rivers State. The study adopted the correlational research design; the population of 30 automobile firms in Port Harcourt. 150 staff members made up the population of the unit. According to the research's population of thirty (30), the study used a census technique and looked at all thirty vehicle companies with a particular emphasis on the personnel. Each business received five (5) copies of the questionnaire, which were dispersed in this manner. For the research, a total of 150 respondents were employed as participants. The structured questionnaire was used as a tool for gathering data. At a significance level of 0.05, the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was utilized to evaluate the hypotheses. According to the research of the study, Rivers State's preference for digital advertising has a big impact on how well cars are marketed there. The study came to the conclusion that automakers must continually investigate digital advertising cues like email and social media advertisements because these types of ads have the power to draw customers in, encourage purchases, and keep them coming back for more. The research suggests that automakers in Rivers State employ email advertisements to boost sales and profitability in a few specific supermarkets, and they should use social media platforms to advertise their brands and get more clientele.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Digital channels are used in digital advertising to facilitate efficient communication. An established method of obtaining information and things is via digital channels. The use of digital advertising methods has significant economic implications. Digital marketing, which is described as online channels generated by "the range of access platforms and communication tools" (Wymbs, 2011), includes digital advertising. Such internet platforms are used by marketers to foster connections with consumers. Various sub-categories of digital advertising include email marketing, banner advertisements, and social networking (Wymbs, 2011).

A digital advertising strategy is a planned method for achieving strategic communication objectives via the utilization of online platforms and digital data. Managers choose interactive platforms or technologies for an organization's or client's particular campaign or overall communication program using data-driven decision-making and planning processes. A digital strategy uses a variety of software tools, including websites, social media platforms, mobile apps, and online data sources. The use of digital advertising strategies for automobiles will improve marketing performance, this is so because of the growing need for online market place (Mathew, 2019).

According to Homburg (2007), marketing performance is the efficacy and efficiency of an organization's marketing efforts in relation to objectives connected to the market, such as revenues, growth, and market share. Businesses often choose between emphasizing effectiveness and efficiency when determining their marketing objectives and budget allocation.

A company may utilize the results of its marketing to learn how customers respond to its product offers. Higher sales are a sign that customers are happy with the goods or services they received, and vice versa. Because improving financial proficiency and achieving organizational objectives are the only ways to enhance marketing proficiency, every firm aspires to do so (Ogunnaiké et al., 2014). As a result, monitoring a company's marketing effectiveness is essential for its survival and development. An organization will be able to generate more profit and extend its operations if it is regularly doing well in terms of growing sales and market share from year to year. However, a firm would struggle to expand and remain competitive in its sector if its market proficiency is weak across the board (sales and market share) (Niazi, 2011).

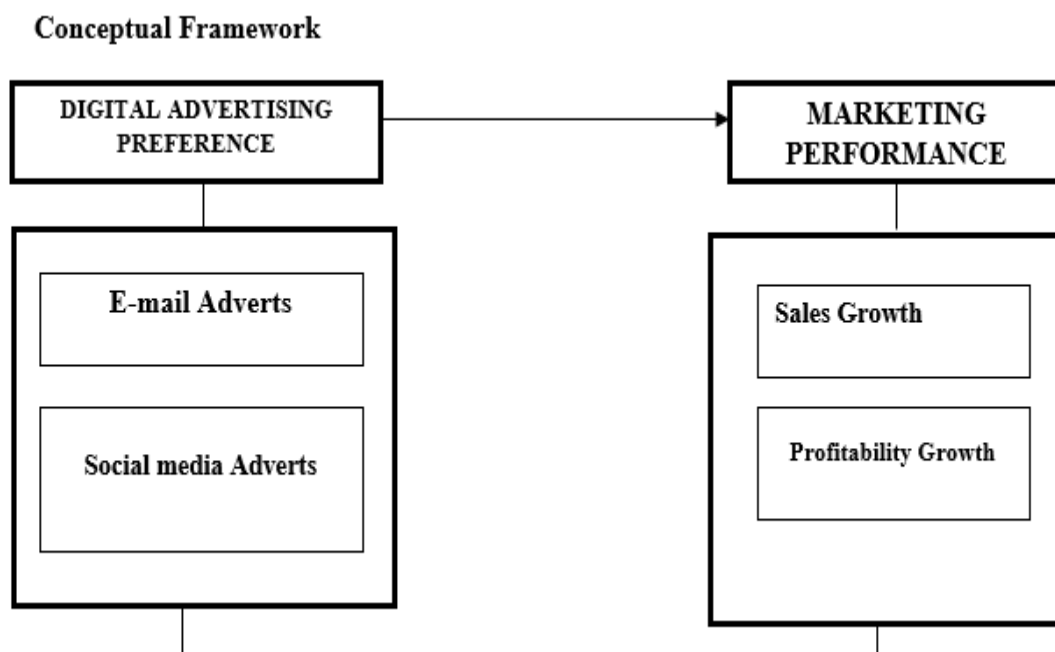
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## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The growth of internet and digital advertising has significantly impacted the effectiveness of marketing. As advertising shifts from print to online, the automotive industry in particular is under growing pressure to compete in this era of new communication technologies. The rise in internet advertising and the fall in print advertising are indicators of this strain.

The fierce rivalry created by the expansion of social media by several online retailers is one of the biggest problems facing vehicles in the current economic climate. Automobiles experienced poor marketing performance, low sales and lack of repeat purchase from customers. This is as a result of the growth in online advertising space adopted by online stores. These online stores operated with different digital advertising strategy; they bombard people with adverts online. Additionally, they have efficient after-service response and service delivery systems. This has led to the closure of several conventional vehicle dealerships in the state, and a more recent observed trend has seen many of these dealerships go out of business.

Extant literature has advocated for automobiles to adopt digital advertising strategies to enable them compete effectively and improve their marketing performance. Research stipulates that digital advertising strategies were perceived more suited for B2C operation than B2B. Since 2004, according to Google trends, there has been an increase in interest in digital advertising tactics, whereas interest in these methods among businesses has just recently begun. To this end, the adoption of digital advertising strategy is needed by automobiles for effective competition and increase in sales. It is on this premise that this study examined the relationship between Digital Advertising Preference and Marketing Performance of Automobiles in Rivers State.



**Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework of Digital Advertising Preference and Marketing Performance of Automobile products in Rivers State.**

**Source:** Agnihotri et., al., (2016); Karjaluo et., al., (2015).

## Aim and Objectives of the Study

This study's primary objective was to investigate the connection between automobile marketing performance in Rivers State and consumer preference for digital advertising. The following aims are more specific:

- i. ascertain the extent of relationship between email adverts and profitability growth of automobile products in Rivers State.
- ii. examine the extent of relationship between email adverts and sales growth of Supermarket in Rivers State
- iii. evaluate the extent of relationship between social media adverts and profitability growth of automobile products in Rivers State.
- iv. examine the extent of relationship between social media adverts and sales growth of automobile products in Rivers State.

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## Research Questions

In order to address the objectives of the study, the following research questions were formulated:

- i. to what extent does E-mail adverts relate with profitability growth of automobile products in Rivers State?
- ii. to what extent does E-mail adverts relate with sales growth of automobile products in Rivers State?
- iii. to what extent does social media adverts relate with profitability growth of automobile products in Rivers State?
- iv. to what extent does social media adverts relate with sales growth of automobile products in Rivers State?

## Research Hypotheses

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between E-mail adverts and profitability growth of automobile products in Rivers State.

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant relationship between E-mail adverts and sales growth of automobile products in Rivers State.

H<sub>03</sub>: There is no significant relationship between social media adverts and profitability growth of automobile products in Rivers State.

H<sub>04</sub>: There is no significant relationship between social media adverts and sales growth of automobile products in Rivers State.

## Review of Related Literature

### Concept of Digital Advertising Preference

Digital advertising is the use of internet as a platform to promote companies goods and services. Firms enable consumers to switch from time- and location-based behavior to non-temporal and non-locational behavior, lower transaction costs, and cater their goods and services to their requirements. "Digital advertising endeavor do not only relate to the use of internet technology, but also interactive actions in enabling engagement with organization's consumers," say Ellis-Chadwick and Doherty (2012). Digital platforms, e-mails, websites, and telecommunications technology in the form of electronic communications technology, which encompasses both online and offline networks, are used to achieve marketing objectives (Baker & Sinkula, 2005).

Digital advertising technologies, according to Bordi et al (2018), are the means and means of communication. To them, the means of communication are the instruments (such as instant messaging) whereas the modes of communication relate to the spatiality and the synchronization of communication in real time on the Internet. According to Sarokin (2016), the microelectronic combination of computer and telecommunication is used to process, store, and transmit audio, visual, textual, and numeric information through digital communication technologies.

### Dimensions of Digital Advertising Preference

#### E-mail Ads

One of the interesting, cutting-edge tactics enabling interactive marketing is email. E-mail marketing, according to Kinnard (2000), is the act of sending marketing communications to receivers who principally want them. Email marketing entails sending prospective and current consumers product information through email. Building trust and loyalty with existing consumers to promote repeat business as well as attracting new customers includes using email to deliver adverts and solicit purchases. Email marketing is a direct and interactive marketing tactic that is used to attract and keep clients by studying each one individually (Tapp, 2000). Many individuals regard email marketing to be their preferred and most affordable form of communication since it can be tailored to each receiver individually. It enables simple engagement, is traceable, and allows for straightforward measurement of its impacts. Asking consumers for their consent to be reached by the marketer by email at any time improves the performance of e-mail marketing (MacPherson, 2001)

#### Social Media Ads

A social media ad is a planned marketing initiative that uses one or more social media channels to support or advance a company objective (Mathew, 2016). Many different programs that use technical jargon and other language are part of social media. Social media-generated content is a new sort of informational resource that is produced, disseminated, and utilized by customers who want to educate one another about goods, services, brands, and issues (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Facebook, MySpace, Digg, Twitter, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, Tiktok, and Google+ are a few examples. Social media has established trends in a variety of fields, including

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politics, technology, the environment, and the entertainment sector, because to its accessibility, speed, and reach. Users of social media basically promote themselves via spreading.

### **Concept of Marketing Performance**

A company may utilize the results of its marketing to learn how customers respond to its product offers. Higher sales are a sign that customers are happy with the goods or services they received, and vice versa. Because improving financial proficiency and achieving organizational objectives are the only ways to enhance marketing proficiency, every firm aspires to do so (Ogunnaiké et al., 2014). As a result, monitoring a company's marketing effectiveness is essential for its survival and development. An organization will be able to generate more profit and extend its operations if it is regularly doing well in terms of growing sales and market share from year to year. However, a firm would struggle to expand and remain competitive in its sector if its market proficiency is weak across the board (sales and market share) (Niazi, 2011).

### **Sales Growth**

Sales growth is the percentage increase in a company's net sales from one fiscal period to the next. According to Iskandar (2021), sales growth (growth of sales) is defined as a rise in the volume of sales from one year to the next or sometimes. Sales growth is a sign of market demand and how fiercely competitive a market is for businesses. High sales growth will reflect more revenue, which will result in a rise in dividend payments. Companies with rising profitability often have more retained earnings.

### **Profitability Growth**

Because a corporation has to be in good shape to last its whole existence, profitability is an issue that warrants significant attention (Iskandar, 2021). It will be difficult for businesses to get outside money if they don't make a profit. A company's high profitability indicates that it is managing its assets properly and efficiently in order to generate profits each quarter. The objective of investors who purchase stock in a business is undoubtedly to make a profit, and the bigger the firm's capacity for profit generation, the greater the return investors may anticipate, which raises the company's value (Iskandar, 2021).

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

### **The study adopted Diffusion of Innovation Theory**

#### **Diffusion of Innovation Theory**

Rodgers' (1983) Diffusion of Innovation Theory describes how, why, and how quickly new innovations are adopted. Researchers may approach a research challenge via a theoretical lens by using the diffusion of innovation theory. At various stages of technological development, businesses have also utilized the idea to accept innovations (Rogers, 2003). According to the diffusion of innovation theory, innovation is transmitted across specific systems through specific channels (Rogers, 1995). Innovative ideas that are shared among members of a social system via a variety of channels are referred to as being in the diffusion process (Rogers, 2003). When multiple social network users recognize developing and using new ideas, communication occurs. Since the 1970s, the diffusion of innovation theory has been successfully used to the marketing of products and services to end customers (Al-Hakim & Lu, 2017). Most firms have focused primarily on innovations and technical breakthroughs; researchers then used the diffusion hypothesis in marketing-based studies (Dearing, 2009; Dibra, 2015).

Thus, contextually, the diffusion innovation theory brings to bear that marketing performance which is measured by the degree of profitability growth, and sales growth rate, can be effective in automobiles, when digital advertising strategies of email adverts and social media campaigns are put into action.

### **Empirical Review**

Novita and Sri (2020) examined the impact of digital marketing on the performance of East Java-based Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in terms of intellectual capital and perceived quality. Explanatory research employs a survey technique, with questions distributed quantitatively and data analyzed using PLS. Perceived quality was shown to be a weak point for MSMEs, indicating the need of digital marketing training that emphasizes on intellectual capital and perceived quality. MSME is a part of the unorganized economy that aids the community's economic well-being and growth. Although the predictor variable (digital marketing) is the same, the instrumentation and geographic scope of this and the current studies vary; the former was conducted in East Java, the latter in South-South Nigeria.

Mehrabi et al. (2014) looked at how social media marketing affects consumer loyalty to a business. The researchers employed a questionnaire to gather data from 196 social media users for their study. We used ANOVA, Pearson correlation, and regression analysis on the information we gathered. Research found that consumers' brand loyalty is positively and significantly linked to all of the social media marketing characteristics (advertising campaign, giving relevant material; updating content; offering popular

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content; and providing suitable program) studied. In terms of scale, this research is comparable to the current one, but the instrumentation and geographic scope of the latter are distinct.

Maslowsaka (2019) used an experiment (n=109) to investigate the persuasiveness of customized e-mail newsletters in terms of enhanced attention, cognitive activity, assessment, attitude, intention, and conduct. A customized or generic mail promoting a sports facility was given to participants at random. The message was evaluated more favorably as a result of personalization, but the other impact factors were unaffected. Personalization is a useful way to boost message assessment only among those who have a strong desire for uniqueness, according to the impacts, which were reduced by consumers' worries about privacy, trust, and the need for uniqueness

### METHODOLOGY

The population of 30 car manufacturers in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, was collected from <https://www.nigeriabusinessweb.com/view state-rivers-auto-33-1.html>. The study used a correlational research approach. 150 staff members made up the population of the unit. According to the research's population of thirty (30), the study used a census technique and looked at all thirty vehicle companies with a particular emphasis on the personnel. Each business received five (5) copies of the questionnaire, which were dispersed in this manner. For the research, a total of 150 respondents were employed as participants. The structured questionnaire was used as a tool for gathering data. At a significance level of 0.05, the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was utilized to evaluate the hypotheses.

### Data Presentation

**Table 4.1 Questionnaire Distribution and Retrieval**

Qutnr. Dist.	Qutnr. Retrieval	Useful	Not Useful	%
150	120	108	12	80

Source; survey Data, 2023.

The distribution and retrieval of the questionnaire are shown in the table above. The researcher distributed 150 copies of the questionnaire; 120 copies were eventually recovered; 108 copies were helpful, and 12 copies were not. This represents an 80 percent response rate, which was substantial for the research.

### Bivariate iiAnalysis

Here, iithe iidimensions iand iimeasures iiof iithe iipredictor iand iicriterion iivARIABLES iwere iianalyzed iusing iinferential iistatistics.

### Test iiof iiHypotheses iione

Ho<sub>1</sub>: ii There iiis iino iisignificant iirelationship iibetween iiE-mail iiadverts iand iiprofitability iigrowth iiof iiautomobile iiproducs iiii iRivers iState.

Correlations			
		E-mail iiadverts	profitability iigrowth
E-mail iiadverts	Pearson iicorrelation	1	.501**
	Sig. ii(2-tailed)		.000
	N	108	108
profitability iigrowth	Pearson iicorrelation	.501**	1
	Sig. ii(2-tailed)	.000	
	N	108	108

\*\* . iicorrelation iis iisignificant iiat iithe ii0.01 iilevel ii(2-tailed).

Source: iiSPSS iiOutput, ii2023.

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which states that there is no significant relationship between E-mail newsletters and repeat purchase growth of automobiles in Rivers State. Thus, we can say that higher levels of between E-mail adverts and profitability growth of automobile products in Rivers State.

### Test of Hypotheses two

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant relationship between E-mail adverts and sales growth of automobile products in Rivers State.

Correlations

		E-mail adverts	sales growth
E-mail adverts	Pearson Correlation	1	.897**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	108	108
sales growth	Pearson Correlation	.897**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	108	108

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

Source: SPSS, 2023.

The output analyzed the extent to which E-mail adverts relate with sales growth of automobiles in Rivers State. Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient indicates a strong association between the two variables ( $r=0.897^{**}$ ). The test of significance indicates that with  $P < 0.01$  we can reject the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between E-mail adverts and sales growth of automobiles in Rivers State. Thus, we can say that higher levels of E-mail adverts were associated with higher levels of sales growth of automobiles in Rivers State.

### Test of Hypotheses three

H<sub>03</sub>: There is no significant relationship between social media adverts and profitability growth of automobile products in Rivers State.

Correlations

		social adverts	mediaprofitability growth
social media adverts	Pearson Correlation	1	.483**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	108	108
profitability growth	Pearson Correlation	.483**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	108	108

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

Source: SPSS, 2023.

The output analyzed the extent to which social media adverts and profitability growth of automobile products in Rivers State. Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient indicates a strong association between the two variables ( $r=0.483^{**}$ ). The test of significance indicates that with  $P < 0.01$  we can reject the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between social media campaigns and profitability growth of automobiles in Rivers State. Thus, we can say that higher levels of social media adverts were associated with higher levels of profitability growth of automobiles in Rivers State.

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## Test of Hypotheses

H<sub>04</sub>: There is no significant relationship between social media adverts and sales growth of automobile products in Rivers State.

Correlations

		social iicampaigns	imediasales iigrowth
social iimedia iicampaigns	Pearson iCorrelation	1	.500**
	Sig. ii(2-tailed)		.000
	N	108	108
sales iigrowth	Pearson iCorrelation	.500**	1
	Sig. ii(2-tailed)	.000	
	N	108	108

\*\* . iCorrelation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS, 2023.

The output analyzed the extent to which social media campaigns relate with sales growth of automobiles in Rivers State. Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient indicates a strong association between the two variables ( $r=0.500^{**}$ ). The test of significance indicates that with  $P < 0.01$  we can reject the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between social media campaigns and sales growth of automobiles in Rivers State. Thus, we can say that higher levels of social media campaigns were associated with higher levels of sales growth of automobiles in Rivers State.

## Summary of Findings

Based on the analysis, the following findings were discovered:

- i. There is significant relationship between E-mail adverts and profitability growth of automobile products in Rivers State.
- ii. There is significant relationship between E-mail adverts and sales growth of automobile products in Rivers State.
- iii. There is significant relationship between social media adverts and profitability growth of automobile products in Rivers State.
- iv. There is significant relationship between social media adverts and sales growth of automobile products in Rivers State.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study finding established that E-mail adverts significantly relate with repeat purchase growth and sales growth of automobile products in Rivers State. This position is in consonant with the study of Smith (2016) who submitted that E-mail newsletters are a way to keep the audience in the loop. With the help of newsletters, you can always keep them excited and wanting for more. At times, it also contains a push-button for them to do a specific action, like clicking on a button to enter a giveaway and other similar acts. They can also be used to promote new products or services of the organization.

The results of this research demonstrated a substantial relationship between social media campaigns and the rise of repeat purchases and sales of vehicle items in Rivers State. This result is consistent with that of a research by Hafele (2011), who found that social media marketing has given mass communication and mass marketing a new term of exponential diffusion and trust by encouraging users to share messages to personal connections. New marketing and outreach strategies are being created, which gives firms access to more resources. With the development of analytical software by official social network site platforms, social media marketers are now gaining better and more useful knowledge.

## CONCLUSION

According to the study's data, there is a strong correlation between the preference for digital advertising and the sales of cars in Rivers State. According to the research study, consumers' choice for digital advertising had a favorable and substantial impact on how well vehicle items were marketed in Rivers State. Because digital advertising has the power to draw people in, encourage

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purchases, and keep them coming back for more, automakers must constantly investigate digital advertising signals like email and social media advertisements.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's results and conclusion, the following suggestions were made:

1. To increase profitability and sales in a few Rivers State supermarkets, automobiles should start using email advertisements.
2. The utilization of social media platforms by auto manufacturers in Rivers state would help them advertise their businesses and draw in more customers.

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