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MAKERERE UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL

**ELECTRONIC MARKETING AND MARKETING PERFORMANCE OF
SELECTED TELECOMMUNICATION COMPANIES IN UGANDA IN THE POST
COVID-19 PANDEMIC ERA**

BY

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PLAN A

NOVEMBER, 2023

Declaration

I, **Kihembo Hope Mary**, declare that this dissertation is a result of my concerted research effort and investigation. It has never been submitted to any other institution for any degree award.

Signed.....

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Approval

This is to certify that this dissertation has been submitted with our approval as the University Supervisors.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate my work to my family for your unwavering support and emotional attachment. They instilled in me the desire to learn and made sacrifices so I would have access to high quality education from an early age.

Acknowledgement

I thank God the Almighty for my life and success in my academics. I extend my sincere thanks to my supervisors, Dr. Aaron Ecel and Mr. Damba Abdul without whose guidance and encouragement, this report would not have been submitted. I want to extend sincere appreciation to all the respondents from Telecommunication Companies in Uganda who endeavoured to provide responses voluntarily in the challenging period when business was at standstill.

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Abstract

Telecommunication companies in Uganda embraced e-marketing strategies, however, with market performance remaining undesirable for UTL, Roke telecom and Lyca Mobile. The purpose of the study was to establish the association of electronic marketing in terms of social media marketing, short message service, search engine optimisation with marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda.

The researcher used a cross sectional research design with a study population of 230 staff and management from Uganda Telecom Limited, Lyca Mobile and Roke telecom and a sample size of 144, selected using simple random sampling. Questionnaires were used for data collection anchored on a 6 point scale. Test results confirm that there was both reliability and validity given the scores for both being above the minimum of .70. The statistical package for social Scientists (SPSS V. 25) was used for data analysis.

Out of 144 the response was 128 (88.8%), the dominant age group was 30-39 years (54%), males dominated with (92%); majority possessed Bachelor Degree that is 97 (76%), Top management was 7 (5%), Middle management 47(37%) and lower management 74 (58%). staff who had served for 1-2 years were the majority , 48(37%), Uganda Telecom Limited had 78 (61%), Lyca Mobile, 32 (25%) and Roke telecom 18 (14%). The results revealed a positive and significant relationship between social media marketing and marketing performance ($r=.580^{**}$, $p< 0.01$); short messaging service and marketing performance ($r=.279^{**}$, $p< 0.01$); search engine optimisation and marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda ($r=.309^{**}$, $p< 0.01$). Social media marketing, short message service and search engine optimisation predict 36% of the variance in Marketing Performance among telecom companies in Uganda. Social Media Marketing (Beta=.505, $p<0.01$) and Search engine optimisation (Beta=.199, $p<0.01$) were the only significant predictors of the variance in market performance.

The study concludes that the use of media sharing , social networks and community blogs is associated with improvements in market performance in terms of sales volume, market share and customer satisfaction. Proper use of text messaging, video messaging and audio messaging is likely to improve on the ability of telecommunications companies to realise enhancements in marketing performance. Telecommunications companies can improve on marketing performance using appropriate search engine optimisation through key word ranking, aesthetic appeal and working on having content quality all the time. In a bid to improve marketing performance, telecommunications are likely to get significant marketing performance improvements if these two elements are worked on.

The study recommends emphasising media sharing enhancements, improved social networking, management to improve on the intensiveness in the use of blogs, management to encourage better use of search engine optimisation through key word ranking, using key words on the internet in reference to products, ICT staff of telecommunications to always improve on the visual appearance of adverts, management to form a quality management team to oversee the content quality.

Key Words : social media marketing, short messaging service, search engine optimisation , marketing performance , telecom companies in Uganda.

CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Marketing performance is viewed by Hadrian, Milichovský and Mráček (2021) as a comparison of results from marketing campaign against predetermined objectives and major performance indicators in terms of market share and sales volume and revenue. According to Gakii and Maina (2019), marketing performance is the utilization of scarce resources by businesses to meet the demand of consumers for market related goals such as market share, profit and sales volume. On the other hand, electronic marketing refers to the application of marketing principles and techniques via electronic media and more specifically the Internet (Mezgebe, 2020). Electronic marketing entails both direct response marketing and indirect marketing elements and uses a range of technologies to help connect businesses to their customers. It encompasses all the activities a business conducts via electronic means with the aim of attracting new business, retaining current business and developing its brand identity. (Labanauskaitė, Fiore & Stašys, 2020). Wirtz and Lovelock (2019) posit that e-marketing practices enhance firm performance through improved sales. However, Hamed and Neda (2014) noted that using e-marketing strategies can take some time to realize measurable success.

According to Mohan and Ali (2019) electronic marketing is challenging due to technological glitches, intrusive advertising and identity theft. Although firms apply various strategies to acquire large market shares in varied industries, e-marketing programs rarely assure tele-firms of their continued survival in telecommunication industry (Agwu, 2015; BMI, 2016). Telecommunication companies have been experiencing enormous strategic failures; poor demand creation; and less prospects conversion to actual buyers of e-marketed services (Brown, 2017). Unless tremendous efforts are employed to improve e-marketing in

companies, marketing performance will continue to deteriorate and several businesses will collapse.

On a global scene, electronic making has dominated the marketing industry, especially the telecommunication industry, and it is virtually unfeasible to find anything on the web without utilizing a search engine (Yosra, Ayodeji & Adebola, 2020). Approximately, a third of the world's population is connected to the internet and makes use of social media on a daily basis which has led to a change in consumer behaviour (Awobamise, 2018). In China, by 2000, companies such as Huawei, ZTE, Great Dragon and Datand heavily relied on electronic marketing tools such as social media marketing, use of message services and search engine optimization to market their products (Khamis et al., 2017). Other companies which have heavily depended on electronic marketing were Siemens in Germany, Nortel in Canada and Alcatel in France (Nsikan, Ibinabo & Olowononi, 2017). Based on survey data regarding the most widely-used social-media platforms in Indonesia until early 2021, 93.8% of the population used Youtube, 87.7% of the population used Whatsapp and 86.6% of the population used Instagram (Soelaiman & Ekawati, 2022).). Other data also shows that based on mobile-application market-research data, the Top-3 applications downloaded via Android and iOS platforms during January-March 2021 were Tiktok, Facebook, and then Instagram (Conney, 2021). A survey conducted by Sea Insights with 2,200 business actors as respondents showed that 54% of MSME entrepreneurs were more adaptive in using social media to improve their performance. Around 70% of respondents admitted that they would continue to use digital media through e-commerce to sell their goods on social media (Khoirunnisa, 2020).

In African countries such as Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda, Airtel and MTN have used electronic marketing techniques to bolster their performance. In Nigeria, Airtel and

Globacom increased their share of the market (Nsikan et al., 2017). Social media marketing tools such as google, YouTube, Facebook are used on a daily basis, and they influence market performance of many companies (Khamis et al., 2017). In addition, Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) has often been used by companies worldwide to improve visibility of their websites through organic searches on a search engine results page via different ranking algorithms (Tomasi & Xiaolin, 2019).

The emergence of COVID-19 pandemic necessitated the use of alternative means of marketing business while ensuring standard operating procedures (SOPs) such as fewer physical contact. Electronic marketing was one the means adopted by most companies as a marketing strategy while putting SOPs in consideration since it involves marketing without meeting the clients face-to-face. For instance, according to Kemp (2019), in Indonesia alone more than half of the population used social media, and spent at least 3 hours and 26 minutes every day accessing social media for any purpose. According recent studies of Liao, Widowati, and Hsieh (2021) and Naeem (2021), social media users in the world reached over 3 billion in 2021. Even when the Covid19 restrictions have been eased, companies continue to employ E-marketing to enhance marketing performance. However, Adede, Kibera and Owino (2017) noted that E-marketing of services has been one of the major challenges facing tele-firms in the entire global service industries.

In the case of telecom companies in Uganda, despite employing E-marketing strategies, companies such as Uganda Telecom Limited, Lyca Mobile, Roke telecom and Smiles Communications Uganda limited experience marketing performance challenges. These companies are in followership positions in the telecom industry hence making them fit for investigating poor performance. The companies have registered a decline in sales volume, market share and customers continue to complain about the services received (Uganda

Communications Commission Quality of Services (QoS) report, 2020; O'Dea, 2021). The UTL Annual Report (2020) had low market share of 6.2%. The report further revealed that UTL's M-Sente had the lowest market share of 4% compared with MTN which had the largest market share of 78%. The Annual Performance Report of Roke Telecom (2021) revealed that a total of 954 customers expressed dissatisfaction due to slow internet connectivity. In addition, in 2021, Lyca mobile registered a 25% decline in sales volume (Annual Report, 2022). Therefore, there is need to study the effect of social media marketing, short message service and search engine optimization on marketing performance to suggest possible solutions.

1.2 Problem Statement

Adoption of e-marketing practices results into better performance in sales, distribution and customer acquisition which eventually positively affects overall sales performance (Hossinpour et al., 2014; Brodie et al., 2007). The emergence of COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent restrictions compelled companies to use alternative means of marketing. Telecommunication companies are some of those that embraced the e-marketing strategy. However, market performance for several of them remains undesirable (O'Dea, 2021). For instance, UTL's sales volume remained stagnant at 8% in 2021 while the sales revenue for Roke telecom reduced from \$ 7million to \$ 5.9 performance. UTL's market share was only 10% in 2016, then declined to 9% between 2017 and 2020, and further declined to 2 percent in the third quarter of 2021 (O'Dea, 2021). O'Dea (2021) further shows that the market share for Lyca Mobile was 0.9% while Roke telecom had a market share of 1.2%. This shows these companies have failed to achieve their target market share in the telecommunication industry and have revenue shortfalls. In addition, according to the Uganda Communications Commission Quality of Services (QoS) report (2020), on a scale of 0-14, Uganda Telecom registered 8.5 billing complaints from customers. Therefore, the researcher intends to

investigate the effect of E-marketing on the market performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to establish the association of electronic marketing in terms of social media marketing, short message service, search engine optimisation with marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda.

1.4 Specific Objectives

The study was guided by the following specific objectives;

- i.** To establish the association between Social Media marketing and marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda
- ii.** To establish the association between Short Messaging Service and marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda
- iii.** To establish the association between search engine optimisation and marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda
- iv.** To establish the predictive potential of social media marketing, short message service and search engine optimisation on the marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda.

1.5 Study Questions

- i.** What is the association between social media marketing and marketing performance of telecommunication companies?
- ii.** What is the association between short messaging service and marketing performance of telecommunication companies?
- iii.** What is the association between search engine optimisation and marketing performance of telecommunication companies?

- iv.** What is the predictive potential of social media marketing, short message service and search engine optimisation on the marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda?

1.6 Scope of the study

1.6.1 Conceptual Scope

This study focused on electronic marketing in terms of social media marketing, short message service, search engine optimisation, and their effect on marketing performance in terms of sales volume, market share and customer satisfaction.

1.6.2 Geographical Scope

This study was conducted Uganda Telecom Limited Head Office located at Plot 2A, 4A Speke Rd, P.O. Box 7171, Kampala, Uganda, Lyca Mobile, Plot 77 Yusuf Lule Road; Opposite Garden City Main Entrance; Nakasero Kampala; Uganda and Roke telecom, Guardian Georgia Building, Plot 67 Spring Road, Bugolobi, Kampala

1.7 Significance of the Study

The study was postulated to be of significance to various stakeholders.

To the Government, the study findings could guide in the design of strategies geared towards growth of the communication industry in the country.

To Policymakers like Ministry of ICT and the Parliament of Uganda, the study findings could be used to inform policy making regarding best practices geared towards improvement of the telecommunication industry. Thus, this study may go a long way in contributing to future policy frameworks development.

To academicians, the study may provide additional literature that can be referred to by scholars conducting studies in the same area.

1.8 Conceptual Framework

There are various elements by which electronic marketing is formed. All forms operate through electronic devices. According to Afrina, Saida and Kaniz (2015), the most important elements of digital marketing include online advertising, email marketing, social media, text messaging, affiliate marketing, Search Engine Optimisation(SEO). And Pay Per Click (PPC). However, this study intends to consider social media marketing, short message service and online marketing because they are the ones mostly used by telecommunication companies to improve marketing performance.

Social media marketing entails the use of various applications that allow consumers to tag, blog, digg and post information about various products (Zuhdi, Daud, Hanif, Nguyen & Shankar, 2019). The information created by social media is created, spread and used by consumers. Although there are several social media platforms, this study intends to focus on Facebook, Twitter, and Google+ because they are the ones mostly used by telecommunication companies.

Under short message service, this study used text messages and Video/Audio messages because they are the commonly used means of electronic marketing via messages. In addition, online marketing strategies will include websites, emails and search engines since they are the major online marketing strategies employed by firms for online marketing (Schwarzl & Grabowska, 2015).

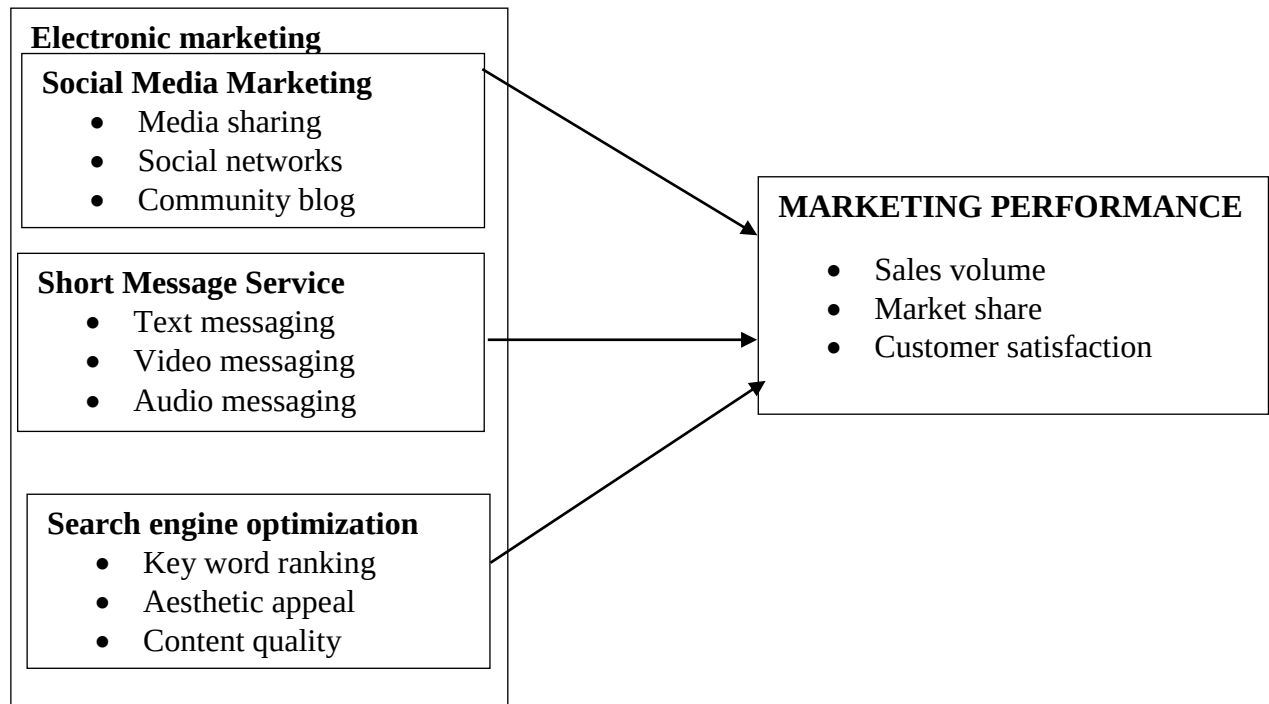
E-marketing refers to electronic marketing techniques that aim to engage with customers for better brand recognition and higher profits (Saleh, 2019). It is much more relationship-oriented. Digital marketing techniques focus on spreading brand recognition through multiple electronic platforms without the expectation of customer interaction in return (Yasmin, Tasneem & Fatema, 2015). Social media marketing is the use of social media platforms to

interact with customers to build brands, increase sales, and drive website traffic. It is a form of internet marketing that uses social media apps as a marketing tool (Zuhdi et al., 2019)

Conceptual framework

Independent variable

Dependent Variable



Source: Adopted and modified from Etuk, Udoh, & Eke (2021), Filaras, & Shahab (2022); Branstad & Solem (2020); Nadube, & Didia, (2018); Pfiffelmann et al. (2020) and Zhang et al. (2019).

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework shows the relationship between social media marketing and marketing performance. It also shows the relationship between short message service and marketing performance. In addition, it shows the relationship between online marketing and marketing performance. The conceptual framework further shows the predictive potential of social media marketing, short message service and online marketing on the marketing performance.

CHAPTER TWO : LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section covers a review of literature related to the study the study. It is presented based the main variables and objectives of the study.

2.2 Review of Key Concepts

2.2.1 Marketing Performance

Marketing performance is the assessment of the relationship between marketing activities and business performance (Jaworski, 2018). In order to assess market performance, managers use quantitative and/or qualitative measures. The former measures (such as sales volume) tend to be objective and easy to assess. Unfortunately, they seldom capture the qualitative aspects of the selling job, especially the extra-role performance aspects (Hidayatullah, Firdiansjah, Patalo & Waris, 2019; Alonso-Dos-Santos, Soto-Fuentes & Valderrama-Palma, 2020). According to Morgan (2012), marketing performance is a factor often used to measure the impact of the success of the strategies that have been implemented by the company. The company's strategy can be directed to producing a better marketing performance such as sales volume and the level of sales growth made by the company and good financial performance. Morgan further stated that the three main values of good marketing performance are sales value, sales growth and market share. The company's sales growth depends on the number of overall customers who already know a constant average level of consumption in purchases (Hidayatullah et al., 2019).

2.2.2 Social Media Marketing

The emergence of social media has changed the way business operates. Through media sharing, social media affects different aspects of business operations and may also impact the financial and non-financial performance of a firm (Santosa, Ratnasari, Palupiningtyas & Balaka, 2020). Facebook, twitter and google⁺ in particular, are the fastest-growing categories

of social media through which companies and customers share information about specific company products (Shareef, Mukerji, Dwivedi, Rana & Islam, 2019). Other companies use business blogging as a form of social media to get more online visibility (Stubb, Nyström & Colliander, 2019). In a marketing sense, a blog is directly aimed at achieving business goals for brand awareness, lead generation, sales, and brand preference (Chaffey, 2020). The robust social media platforms have created an exemplary scope for any brand to advertise its product through exposure, attention and perception; to develop opinions and to create values (Dwivedi, Kapoor & Chen, 2015). According to Schulze et al. (2014) and Shareef et al. (2019) social media has opened up an excellent platform for marketers to increase their product promotion through viral marketing that is viewed by more than one billion connected consumers.

2.2.3 Short Messaging Service

Short Message Service (SMS) is the transmission of short text messages to and from a mobile phone, fax machine, and/or IP address (Anorue et al., 2020). According to Chiguvi, Mahambo and Kgetho (2020), text messaging is the act of typing and sending a brief, electronic message between two or more mobile phones or fixed or portable devices over a phone network. SMS is a relatively simple messaging system provided by the mobile phone networks. The SMSC transfers the message in a Short Message Delivery Point-to-Point format to the serving system. SMS messages are transferred between mobile phones via a Short Message Service Center. Olushola and Abiola (2017) observed that SMS (Short Message Service) is used widely for identity formation, romance, business, and several other socio-cultural purposes. So, businesses can leverage SMS to reach out to their customers. Cheng et al. (2009) noted that SMS messages are an alternative to voice communication over the telephone when silent, private, or very brief communications are best and since they are

somewhat non-traditional. SMS messages have an element of playfulness that often encourages creativity, and customers can find such novelty addictive (Chiguvi et al., 2020).

2.2.4 Search Engine Optimisation

Search engine optimization (SEO) is a mechanism which allows the searcher to get most appropriate results via online search (Ravneet & Ajay, 2018). SEO helps marketers by displaying their respective advertisements to the right people in the right place and right time. Marketers can advance the rankings of their advertisement on the search-results pages by improving their quality score in order make them more significant and therefore more search engine compatible (Sen, 2019). SEO assist to improve the positioning of a site for the query results for given keywords. SEO system incorporates the off-page optimization and on-page optimization. Off-page optimization involves creating back connections on other authenticated websites and subsequently boosting domain-level and page-level authentication. The inclusion of extra terms, semantically identified with the objective keywords, is viewed as a progressed SEO strategy (Moreno & Martinez, 2020).

2.3 Social Media Marketing and Marketing Performance

Social media marketing has gained popularity among enterprises in terms of usage and business expansion (Ameen et al., 2020). In their research on airline companies, Punel and Ermagun (2018) show that social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter offer an important marketing strategy for improved marketing performance. As social media engages companies and customers in two-way dialogues, being active on social media allows companies to provide updates, share news, promote their services, and assist clients. At the same time, it allows companies to get feedback and opinions and identify customer expectations (Chiang, Lo & Wang, 2017; Chiang, Tu & Wang, 2018).

The emergence of mobile technologies led to the use of social networks in the digital marketing communications (Yadav et al., 2015). According to Rima et al. (2021) the growth of social network websites marks a transition from the conventional single direction. Business companies spread information about goods via social networks by taking into account their popularity and the impact on users. The social component in social networks turns them into a privileged medium for consumers to disseminate information on trademarks (Rima et al., 2021). On the other hand, a business blog is a social media marketing channel which helps support business growth. Stubb, Nyström and Colliander (2019) noted that bloggers share opinion on different topics to online followers, and businesses consider this as an opportunity to gain more online visibility and promote their brands to a wider audience. In a marketing sense, a blog is “directly aimed at achieving business goals for brand awareness, lead generation, sales, and brand preference (Chaffey, 2020).

2.4 Short Messaging Service and Marketing Performance

In a study conducted by Collins (2014) on Short Messaging Service (SMS) as a marketing communication tool and customer satisfaction in India banking sectors, it was found that there is relationship between SMS and customer satisfaction which enhances marketing performance. Chen and Lin (2019) noted that firms’ marketing messages can attract users’ attention and induce further internal reactions. Marketing messages have informational and visual aspects that can affect the user’s experience. Informativeness can enhance the effectiveness of marketing messages by conforming to users’ preferences. Informativeness in marketing messages aims to give users enough information to facilitate purchasing decisions. At the same time, for marketing messages, social media platforms allow consumers to comment on or “like” preferred content (Dallas et al., 2012), thereby generating communication information.

Product promotion on social media is mainly reflected through marketing messages and consumer engagement. When marketing messages are published on social media, some generate a great deal of user interaction through “likes” and comments while others generate very little (Chen & Lin, 2019). It is very important, therefore, for a company to know how to use the two above mentioned kinds of information on social media to promote product sales and achieve better marketing performance (Chen et al. 2020).

Advertising presented in form of audio or video messages may increase consumers’ attention to communicator cues compared with text-only ads, but focusing on the communicator can reduce attention to information about the product being advertised (Grewal, Gupta & Hamilton, 2021). Dupré et al. (2020) provide a performance comparison of eight commercially available automatic classifiers for facial affect recognition using both images and videos, indicating that they strongly contribute towards improved marketing performance.

2.5 Search Engine Optimisation and Marketing Performance

During the past decade, product search engines have been trying to combine advanced techniques from information retrieval and recommender systems into their ranking design to improve the user search experience (Drivas, Sakas & Giannakopoulos, 2019). Recent studies show that product search engines can improve the ranking design and the user search experience based on the prediction of consumer preferences (De los Santos, & Koulayev, 2017). Drivas et al. (2019) asserted that search engine advertising and display create the organizations’ brand awareness and consideration in terms of users’ search behavior in search engines. However, Kritzinger and Weideman (2020) noted that with search engine optimisation, there is no guarantee that the conversion to a sale will happen. Nonetheless, businesses hire SEO experts to help identify the best keywords to optimize their website to increase their ranking in organic results on search engines (Kareem, Yousif & Abdalwahid,

2020). Leveraging search engine optimization to improve organic search ranking is believed to be more effective than other search engine related marketing initiatives, such as search engine advertising via sponsored links (Tomasi & Xiaolin, 2019).

According to Sundar, Cao and Machleit (2020) aesthetic appeal could have a direct influence on a consumer's behaviour. Aesthetics can affect user satisfaction, and influence their willingness to buy or adopt a system. The environment of a search engine enables organisations to test the relationships between aesthetics and usefulness (Munir, Ilyas, Maming & Kadir, 2020). In addition, aesthetics may form user's attitudes towards the system, may improve or worsen their performances, affect their satisfaction, and influence their willingness to buy a given product (Tractinsky, 2019).

Ahmed and Sagid (2021) noted that content quality is one of the most important reasons of development in the field of electronic marketing using websites, the web search engines, e-mail and social media sites. Content quality is also considered a major factor in the success or failure of e-commerce, as the quality of service increases the rates of customer retention and the positive spoken word (Kusumasondjaja, 2018). Content quality is a marketing strategy used to lure a specific scope of customers by creating value-rich, relevant and consistent content that viewers can relate to. It is concerned with delivering the content which the audience is seeking in all the places they are searching for it (Nguyen & Feifei, 2021).

2.6 Social Media Marketing, Short Message Service, Search Engine Optimisation and Marketing Performance

Several fastest-growing companies are zealously striving to use viral marketing on social media promote product attention and exposure for improved marketing performance (Wang et al., 2019). Marketers of these companies acknowledged that social media space is the fundamental hub they now consider when generating initial consciousness about the

existence of a product and the motivation to use it (Kapoor et al., 2016). In a similar vein, Menon et al. (2019) noted that social media, more specifically Facebook and Twitter, are essential communication channels for building a relationship of trust with consumers, gaining their fidelity and subsequently enhancing marketing performance.

According to Chiguvu et al. (2020), when SMS messages are sent between users or to and from an application, they give service development an extra flexibility that encourages innovation, attracts more customers and improves marketing performance. Esmaeilpour (2014) also noted that SMS instalment service positively affects customer satisfaction and marketing performance. According to Khiong (2022) search engine marketing is the quickest developing promoting medium on the planet, anticipated to progress toward becoming many times more intense and powerful than customary media outlet. Search engines are the essential search tools utilized for data recovery on the Web. Another significant aspect about SEO is it provides continuous and real time insights about the online behavior of the consumer (Ravneet & Ajay, 2018).

On the other hand, Wohllebe (2019) asserted that emails are a major core of everyday business and client-related communication. Improving email marketing effectiveness and reach can greatly contribute towards improvement in marketing performance (Georgescu & Bogoslov, 2019). Therefore, email marketing remains an essential tool for attracting and retaining customers. Based on email marketing statistics, a company can find out how other businesses use email to maximize their Return on Investment (ROI) and connect with their customers (Păvăloaia, Anastasiei & Fotache, 2020).

2.7 Research Gap

Under the different themes reviewed above, authors make an effort to show links between the variables. For instance, on Social media marketing and marketing performance, Ameen et al.

(2020); Rima et al. (2021); Stubb et al. (2019); and Chaffey (2020) suggest possible associations. They however do not point out the statistical significance of the associations and the Ugandan context is missing hence a gap for further investigation. On the link between Short Messaging Service and marketing performance, Collins (2014), Chen and Lin (2019) , Chen and Lin (2019) and Chen et al.(2020) all suggest associations between variables but with no statistical significance of the associations and limited Uganda context. On the link between Search engine optimisation and marketing performance, Drivas et al. (2019), De los Santos and Koulayev (2017), Nguyen and Feifei (2021) all agree that there is a positive link , however, Kritzing and Weideman (2020) asserts that there is no guarantee that the conversion to a sale will happen. These disagreements call for additional research, which the current study offers. Social media marketing, short message service, search engine optimisation and marketing performance have been revealed to have association and Search engine optimisation and marketing performance are presented as being linked but narratively , hence the need for statistical evidence.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The researcher used a cross sectional research design because the study intends to analyze the association between social media marketing, short messaging service, search engine optimisation and marketing performance and gather views from different sub-groups of the population at the same time (Sarantakos, 2013). The researcher also used quantitative approaches to collect and analyse data.

3.2 Population and Sample Size

The population of the study was 230 staff and management from Uganda Telecom Limited, Lyca Mobile and Roke telecom (Internal reports for Staff lists, 2023). Consideration of staff members is based on the fact that they have knowledge about the sales volume, market share and customer satisfaction in regard to their respective companies. Staff members also had knowledge of how their companies employ electronic marketing tools. The study on the selected companies is justified because of their poor marketing performance. Other telecom companies have been excluded because of relatively better marketing performance. A sample size of 144 respondents was determined using predetermined table for determining sample size by Krejcie and Morgan (1970).

Table 3.1: Sample Population and Sample Size

Category	Target population	Sample size	Sampling technique
Top Management	12	8	Simple random sampling
Middle level management	82	51	Simple random sampling
Lower level staff (sales and marketing)	136	85	Simple random sampling
Total	230	144	

Source: Internal reports for Staff lists (2023) for Uganda Telecom Limited, Lyca Mobile and Roke telecom (2023)

3.3 Sampling Techniques

The researcher used simple random sampling to select respondents from Top management, middle level management and lower level staff members from the sales and marketing departments in order for staff members at those levels equal chances to participate in the study. Unit of analysis were the staff while the unit of inquiry were the telecoms.

3.4 Sources of Data

The source of data was staff members and customers of Uganda Telecom Limited, Lyca Mobile and Roke telecom researcher used primary data collected from the field.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

The researcher used a questionnaire covering all the variables in the study. The questionnaire was designed on a six point Likert scale for the items of the constructs to ease data processing and analysis. The scale was marked 6= Strongly Agree (SA), 5= Agree (A), 4= Somehow agree (SHA), 3= Somehow disagree (SHD), 2= Disagree (D), 1= Strongly Disagree (SD).

3.6 Measurement Of Variables

3.6.1 Marketing Performance

Marketing performance was measured by looking at the extent to which telecom companies improve sales volumes, market share and customer satisfaction (Jaworski, 2018; Hidayatullah et al., 2019).

3.6.2 Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing was measured by looking at the extent to which telecom companies used selective market targeting, direct dialogue with customers and personalisation of marketing content to improve marketing performance (Ameen et al., 2020; Chiang, Lo & Wang, 2017; Chiang, Tu & Wang, 2018).

3.6.3 Short Message Service

Short message service was measured by looking at the extent to which companies used text and video/audio messages as electronic marketing strategies (Anorue et al., 2020; Grewal et al. 2021).

3.6.4 Search Engine Operation

Search engine operation was measured considering how the telecom companies used key word ranking, aesthetic appeal and content quality as electronic marketing tools (Tomasi, & Xiaolin, 2019; Drivas et al., 2019).

3.7 Reliability and Validity of The Measurement Instrument

3.7.1 Reliability

Reliability of a measure is an indication of the stability and consistency with which the instrument measures the concept and helps to assess the ‘goodness of a measure (error free) (Sekaran, 2003). The reliability of the instruments was measured using the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient taking only variables with an alpha coefficient value of more than 0.70 accepted for social research generated from SPSS.

3.7.2 Validity

The validity of the instrument was tested using the Content Validity Index. This involved scoring the relevance of the questions in the instruments in relation to the study variables and a consensus judgment given on each variable. As can be seen below, the formula for Content Validity Index (CVI) is:

$$\text{CVI} = \frac{\text{No. of items rated relevant}}{\text{Total no. of items on the questionnaire}}$$

Table 3.2: Validity and reliability statistics

Variable	Items	Validity	Reliability
Social media marketing	13	0.800	.749
Short message service	12	0.750	.708
Search Engine Optimisation	10	0.90	.758
Marketing performance	11	0.85	.704

Source: primary data (2023)

From table 3.2 above, results confirm that there was both reliability and validity given the scores for both being above the minimum of .70 as recommended by Gugiua and Gugiub (2017) citing Nunnally (1978).

3.8 Data processing, Analysis and Presentation

After data collection, quantitative data was entered into the computer and analysed using statistical package for social Scientists (SPSS V. 25). This was used to generate descriptive statistics in form of frequencies, means and standard deviation. Then data was analysed according to the research questions. Pearson correlation coefficient were used to measure the relationship between study variables. The regression was used to measure the ability of the independent variables to predict the dependent variable.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the presentation, analysis and interpretation of findings. The presentation follows the order of the objectives, namely; to establish the association between social media marketing and marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda; to establish the association between short messaging service and marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda, to establish the association between search engine optimisation and marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda, to establish the predictive potential of social media marketing, short message service and search engine optimisation on the marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda.

4.1 Response Rate

Out of 144 the response was 128 (88.8%), which was a quite a good response and the findings are representative of the companies that were investigated as supported by Baruch (1999).

4.2 Demographic Characteristics

The study explored demographics, age of the respondent, gender, highest level of education, level of management, years served in the company, company code and the results obtained are presented in the table 4.1 below;

Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics

Age of the respondent	Frequency	Percent
30-39	69	53.9
40-49	33	25.8
50-59	25	19.5
60 and above	1	.8
Gender		
Male	92	71.9
Female	36	28.1
Highest level of education		
Certificate	19	14.8
Diploma	8	6.3
Bachelor Degree	97	75.8
Master's Degree	4	3.1
Level of management		
Top management	7	5.5
Middle level management	47	36.7
Lower level management	74	57.8
Years served in the company		
6 months-1 year	29	22.7
1-2 years	48	37.5
3-4 Years	35	27.3
5-above	16	12.5
Company Code		
Uganda Telecom Limited,	78	60.9
Lyca Mobile	32	25.0
Roke telecom	18	14.1
Total	128	100.0

Source: primary data (2023)

Age of the Respondent

From table 4.1, the age of respondents revealed that the dominant age group was 30-39 years (54%), followed by 40-49 years (26%). This is an indicator that most telecom staff are middle aged.

Gender

From table 4.1, gender revealed that both males and females participated in the study, however, males dominated with (72%) and females were the minority with 36(28%).

Highest Level of Education

From table 4.1, most respondents were educated at least up to a certain level. However, majority possessed Bachelor Degree that is 97 (76%), followed by Certificate that is 19 (15%). This confirms that most respondents were literate enough to comprehend the study. It also shows telecoms as companies with relatively educated staff.

Level of Management

From table 4.1, respondents were from different levels of management. Top management was represented by 7 (5%), Middle level management was represented by 47(37%) and lower management by 74 (58%).

Years Served in the Company

From table 4.1, results indicated that staff had served for different tenures in the different companies. Those who had served for 1-2 years were the majority , 48(37%), followed by those who had served 3-4 Years , that is 35 (27%), 6 months-1 year(n=29, 23%) and lastly, those who served 5 years and above(n=26, 13%). As such, staff had some level of experience to tell what was happening in their respective companies.

Company Code

From table 4.1, responses were obtained from the target companies with Uganda Telecom Limited having the largest number of respondents, that is 78 (61%), Lyca Mobile, 32 (25%)

and Roke telecom 18 (14%). This shows that the results obtained are representative of the companies explored.

4.3 Summary Descriptive Statistics

The study also explored the behaviours or characteristics of the variables. The responses obtained on this are presented below. The mean is interpreted such that a mean of 6= Strongly Agree (SA), 5= Agree (A), 4= Somehow agree (SHA), 3= Somehow disagree (SHD), 2= Disagree (D), 1= Strongly Disagree (SD). The standard deviation is used to show the dispersion of results from the mean hence the deviations in the opinions on a given aspect. The larger the standard deviation, the more divergent the opinions are. This interpretation of the mean applies to all the descriptives in this report.

4.3.1 Social Media Marketing

In this section, the results on social media marketing are presented. The mean is interpreted such that a mean of 6= Strongly Agree (SA), 5= Agree (A), 4= Somehow agree (SHA), 3= Somehow disagree (SHD), 2= Disagree (D), 1= Strongly Disagree (SD). The standard deviation is used to show the dispersion of results from the mean hence the deviations in the opinions on a given aspect. The larger the standard deviation, the more divergent the opinions are.

Table 3.2: Social Media Marketing

Descriptive Statistics	Mean	Std. Deviation
Social Media Marketing		
Media sharing		
Our company markets its products via a variety of social media platforms	3.73	1.35
Our company uses the social media to share news regarding its activities	4.15	1.14
Our company uses the social media to update customers about its services	4.57	1.03
Our company shares information about its services via social media to promote the services offered	3.17	1.47
Our company uses social media to give feedback to customers to encourage consumption of its products.	3.33	1.50
Social networks		

Our company uses social networks to spread information about its products	3.14	1.33
Social networks are used to disseminate information on our company's trademark.	3.80	1.23
There has been growth in the use of social network websites to promote consumption of our company's products	3.77	1.38
Social networks are an effective marketing strategy	3.98	1.52
Community blog		
Our company uses blogs as a form of marketing to get online visibility.	3.30	1.29
Our company uses blogs to create brand awareness	3.40	1.59
Blogs support growth of our company's business	3.60	1.40
Our company uses blogs to promote its brand to a wider audience	3.94	1.39

Source: primary data (2023)

Social Media Marketing

From table 4.2, the analysis of social media marketing revealed results where (mean=3.68, SD=1.36). This means that respondents generally somehow agreed that social media marketing was in use among the various telecoms. These results were obtained with a larger standard deviation, indicating wider variance in opinions.

Media Sharing

From table 4.2, the analysis of media sharing revealed results where (mean=3.79, SD=1.298). This means that respondents somehow agreed that media sharing was in use among the various telecoms. These results were obtained with a larger standard deviation, indicating wider variance in opinions.

Social Networks

From table 4.2, the analysis of social networks revealed results where (mean=3.67, SD=1.37). This means that respondents somehow agreed that social networks were in use among the various telecoms. These results were obtained with a larger standard deviation, indicating wider variance in opinions.

Community Blog

From table 4.2, the analysis of community blog revealed results where (mean=3.56, SD=1.42). This means that respondents somehow agreed that community blogs were in use among the various telecoms. These results were obtained with a larger standard deviation, indicating wider variance in opinions.

4.3.2 Short Message Service

In this section the descriptive results on short message service are presented. The mean is interpreted such that a mean of 6= Strongly Agree (SA), 5= Agree (A), 4= Somehow agree (SHA), 3= Somehow disagree (SHD), 2= Disagree (D), 1= Strongly Disagree (SD). The standard deviation is used to show the dispersion of results from the mean hence the deviations in the opinions on a given aspect. The larger the standard deviation, the more divergent the opinions are.

Table 4.3: Short Message Service

Descriptive Statistics	Mean	Std. Deviation
Short Message Service		
Text messaging		
Our company sends text messages to attract customers to purchase its products	2.97	1.36
Our company uses text messages to induce customers' internal reactions about its products	3.87	1.26
Written messages give customers enough information to facilitate their purchasing decision	3.60	1.63
Text messages are appropriate in marketing our company products	3.70	1.48
Video messaging		
Our company sends audiovisual messages to customers informing them about company products	4.04	1.17
Our company uses video messages to negotiate with customers about the services offered	4.29	1.27

Our company uses video advertisements to create awareness about the products and services offered.	3.78	1.28
Video messages efficiently market out company products	4.36	1.20
Audio messaging		
Our company sends audio messages to customers advertising its products	3.83	1.43
Our company uses voice messages to attract customers attention	4.67	0.86
Audio messages give customers enough information about our company's products	4.66	0.72
Audio messages efficiently market out company products	4.79	0.81
Source: primary data (2023)		

Short Message Service

From table 4.3, the analysis of short message service revealed results where (mean=4.05, SD=1.21). This means that respondents somehow agreed that short message service were in use among the various telecoms. These results were obtained with a larger standard deviation, indicating wider variance in opinions.

Text Messaging

From table 4.3, the analysis of text messaging revealed results where (mean=3.54, SD=1.43). This means that respondents somehow agreed that text messaging services were in use among the various telecoms. These results were obtained with a larger standard deviation, indicating wider variance in opinions.

Video Messaging

From table 4.3, the analysis of video messaging revealed results where (mean=4.12, SD=1.23). This means that respondents somehow agreed that video messaging was in use among the various telecoms. These results were obtained with a larger standard deviation, indicating wider variance in opinions.

Audio Messaging

From table 4.3, the analysis of audio messaging revealed results where (mean=4.49, SD=0.96). This means that respondents agreed that audio messaging was in use among the various telecoms. These results were obtained with a larger standard deviation, indicating wider variance in opinions.

4.3.3 Search Engine Optimisation

In this section, the results of search engine optimisation are presented. The mean is interpreted such that a mean of 6= Strongly Agree (SA), 5= Agree (A), 4= Somehow agree (SHA), 3= Somehow disagree (SHD), 2= Disagree (D), 1= Strongly Disagree (SD). The standard deviation is used to show the dispersion of results from the mean hence the deviations in the opinions on a given aspect. The larger the standard deviation, the more divergent the opinions are.

Table 4.4: Search Engine Optimisation

Descriptive Statistics	Mean	Std. Deviation
Search engine optimization		
Key word ranking		
Our company uses key words on the internet in reference to its products as a marketing tool	4.73	0.85
Our company uses key word phrases on its website to create product awareness	4.38	0.80
Our company advances the ranking of its adverts on the search results page	4.18	1.01
Our company improves the ranking design based on consumer preferences	4.51	1.30
Aesthetic appeal		
Our company uses visual appearance of its adverts on the internet to market its products.	3.05	1.71
Our company uses interface aesthetics to influence customers' a positive attitude towards company products	3.26	1.99
Our company makes aesthetic considerations in web designing	3.66	1.52
Content quality		
The information displayed on our company's website is of good quality	3.79	1.70
The content of the information on our website portrays a true picture of our company products	4.15	0.93
The information displayed on our company website meets the required standards	3.82	1.44

Source: primary data (2023)

Search Engine Optimisation

From table 4.4, the analysis of search engine optimisation revealed results where (mean=3.95, SD=1.33). This means that respondents somehow agreed that search engine optimisation was in use among the various telecoms. These results were obtained with a larger standard deviation, indicating wider variance in opinions.

Key Word Ranking

From table 4.4, the analysis of key word ranking revealed results where (mean=4.45, SD=0.99). This means that respondents somehow agreed that there was use of key word ranking among the various telecoms. These results were obtained with a larger standard deviation, indicating wider variance in opinions.

Aesthetic Appeal

From table 4.4, the analysis of aesthetic appeal revealed results where (mean=3.32, SD=1.74). This means that respondents somehow disagreed that there was an aesthetic appeal in their respective telecoms. These results were obtained with a larger standard deviation, indicating wider variance in opinions.

Content Quality

From table 4.4, the analysis of content quality revealed results where (mean=3.92, SD=1.36). This means that respondents somehow agreed that content quality existed among the various telecoms. These results were obtained with a larger standard deviation, indicating wider variance in opinions.

4.3.4 Marketing Performance

The mean is interpreted such that a mean of 6= Strongly Agree (SA), 5= Agree (A), 4= Somehow agree (SHA), 3= Somehow disagree (SHD), 2= Disagree (D), 1= Strongly Disagree (SD). The standard deviation is used to show the dispersion of results from the mean hence the deviations in the opinions on a given aspect. The larger the standard deviation, the more divergent the opinions are.

Table 4.5: Marketing Performance

Descriptive Statistics	Mean	Std. Deviation
Marketing Performance		
Sales volume		
Our company has registered an increase in the amount (quantity) of products sold over the past three years	3.75	1.29
Our company has registered an increase in the categories (types) of products sold over the past three years	4.34	1.03
Customers are always willing to buy our products repeatedly	2.98	1.78
Our customers always purchase more of our products	3.32	1.16
Market share		
Our company has registered an increase in market share over the past three years	3.76	1.33
Our company has registered an increase in the number of customers compared to companies in the same industry	3.92	1.52
Our company has registered an increase in profits.	3.91	1.46
Our company has a higher percentage of customers for all products sold in comparison with competitors	3.81	1.65
Customer satisfaction		
Our customers are satisfied with the services offered by the company.	4.13	1.32
There has been a reduction in complaints about our services	4.27	1.35
Our customers appreciate the services we provide them	3.75	1.26

Source: primary data (2023)

Marketing Performance

From table 4.5, the analysis of marketing performance revealed results where (mean=3.81, SD=1.38). This means that respondents somehow agreed that marketing performance among the various telecoms was good. These results were obtained with a larger standard deviation, indicating wider variance in opinions.

Sales volume

From table 4.5, the analysis of sales volume revealed results where (mean=3.60, SD=1.32). This means that respondents somehow agreed that sales volume among the various telecoms were good enough. These results were obtained with a larger standard deviation, indicating wider variance in opinions.

Market Share

From table 4.5, the analysis of market share revealed results where (mean=3.85, SD=1.49). This means that respondents somehow agreed that market share among the various telecoms was just acceptable. These results were obtained with a larger standard deviation, indicating wider variance in opinions.

Customer Satisfaction

From table 4.5, the analysis of customer satisfaction revealed results where (mean=4.05, SD=1.31). This means that respondents somehow agreed that customer satisfaction among the various telecoms was fairly acceptable. These results were obtained with a larger standard deviation, indicating wider variance in opinions.

4.4 Inferential Statistics

4.4.1 Correlation Results

In this section, the study presents the correlation results to confirm the direction and strength of the relationships between the study variables. The results are presented in the table 4.6 below;

Table 4.6: Correlation Results

Correlations	1	2	3	4
Social Media Marketing (1)	1			
Short Message Service (2)	.279**	1		
Search engine optimisation (3)	.309**	.130	1	
Marketing Performance (4)	.580**	.217*	.361**	1

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

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: primary data (2023)

Table 4.7: Regression Results

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.613 ^a	.375	.360	.55913	.375	24.850	3	124	.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), Search engine optimisation, Short Message Service, Social Media Marketing									
ANOVA ^a									
Model	Sum of Squares		df	Mean Square		F	Sig.		
	Regression		23.306	3		7.769	24.850		
1	Residual		38.765	124		.313			
	Total		62.071	127					
a. Dependent Variable: Marketing Performance									
b. Predictors: (Constant), Search engine optimisation, Short Message Service, Social Media Marketing									
Coefficients ^a									
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance VIF
(Constant)	.199	.542		.368	.713				
1 Social Media Marketing	.655	.100	.505	6.541	.000	.580	.506	.464	.847 1.181
Short Message Service	.078	.115	.050	.676	.500	.217	.061	.048	.920 1.087
Search engine optimisation	.225	.084	.199	2.666	.009	.361	.233	.189	.903 1.108
a. Dependent Variable: Marketing Performance									
Source: primary data (2023)									

Source: primary data (2023)

4.4.1 Social Media Marketing and Marketing Performance of Telecommunication

Companies in Uganda

From table 4.6, the relationship between social media marketing and marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda was explored. The results revealed a positive and significant relationship between social media marketing and marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda ($r=.580^{**}$, $p<0.01$). This means that improvements in Social Media marketing are likely to lead to improvements in marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda.

The results in table 4.7 show that Social Media Marketing (Beta=.505, $p=.000$ or $p<0.01$) thus a significant predictor of the variance in market performance. A unit change in social media marketing will lead to a .505 change in market performance among telecom companies in Uganda.

4.4.2 Short Messaging Service and marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda

From table 4.6, the relationship between short messaging service and marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda was explored. The results revealed a positive and significant relationship between short messaging service and marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda ($r=.279^{**}$, $p< 0.01$). This means that improvements in short messaging service are likely to lead to improvements in marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda.

Short Message Service ($\text{Beta}=.050$, $p=.500$ or $p>0.01$) and thus not a significant predictor of the variance in market performance among telecom companies in Uganda. A unit change in short message service will lead to a .050 change in market performance among telecom companies in Uganda.

4.4.3 Search engine optimisation and marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda

From table 4.6, the relationship between search engine optimisation and marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda was explored. The results revealed a positive and significant relationship between search engine optimisation and marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda ($r=.309^{**}$, $p< 0.01$). This means that improvements in search engine optimisation are likely to lead to improvements in marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda.

Search engine optimisation ($\text{Beta}=.199$, $p=.009$ or $p<0.01$) thus a significant predictor of the variance in market performance. A unit change in search engine optimisation will lead to a .199 change in market performance among telecom companies in Uganda.

4.4.4 The Predictive Potential of Social Media Marketing, Short Message Service and Search Engine Optimisation on the Marketing Performance of Telecommunication Companies in Uganda

The regression was run to understand the predictive potential of social media marketing, short message service and search engine optimisation on the marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda. In this section, the study presents the regression results to confirm the ability of the independent variables to predict the variance in the dependent variable. The results are presented in the table 4.7 below;

The regression results in the table 4.7 above prove that the model fits the relationship ($F=24.850$, $P<0.01$). The results further confirm that social media marketing, short message service and search engine optimisation predict 36% of the variance in Marketing Performance among telecom companies in Uganda (Adjusted R Square=.360, $P<0.01$). This means that improvements in social media marketing, short message service and search engine optimisation will predict positive variances in market performance among telecom companies. However, the 64% of the variance is accounted for by other factors not explored currently.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the summary and discussion of findings, conclusion and recommendations. The presentation is in accordance with the study objectives namely; to establish the association between Social Media marketing and marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda; to establish the association between Short Messaging Service and marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda, to establish the association between search engine optimisation and marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda, to establish the predictive potential of social media marketing, short message service and search engine optimisation on the marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda.

5.2 Discussion of Findings

In this section, findings are discussed in the order of the study objectives.

5.2.1 Social Media Marketing and Marketing Performance of Telecommunication Companies in Uganda

The first objective explored the relationship between social media marketing and market performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda. The results revealed a positive and significant relationship between social media marketing and marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda. This means that once telecommunications companies engage in social media marketing, they are likely to get better market performance. These findings are supported by Punel and Ermagun (2018) noting that social media platforms offer an important marketing strategy for improved marketing performance. This too is supported by Chiang, Lo and Wang, 2017; Chiang, Tu and Wang (2018).

Social media marketing includes media sharing (social media platforms, share news regarding activities, updating customers about services). In support of this, Rima et al. (2021) present that social media marketing is medium for consumers to disseminate information on trademarks.

Another element is social networks (using social networks to spread information about products, use of social network websites to promote consumption of company's products, social networks being an effective marketing strategy). In the same way, Chaffey (2020) notes that social media promotes brand awareness, lead generation, sales and brand preference

Finally, community blog (blogs as a form of marketing to get online visibility, blogs to create brand awareness, blogs to promote the brand to a wider audience), also is associated with improved market performance. These ideas are supported by Stubb et al. (2019) who noted that bloggers share opinion on different topics, promote online visibility and promote their brands to a wider audience.

5.2.2 Short Messaging Service and Marketing Performance of Telecommunication Companies in Uganda

The second objective explored the relationship between short message service and marketing performance of telecommunications companies. The results revealed a positive and significant relationship between short messaging service and marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda. This means that once telecommunications companies engage in short messaging services, there is a likelihood of realising improvements in market performance. In the same way, Collins (2014) found that there is relationship between SMS and customer satisfaction which enhances marketing performance. In addition, social media platforms allow consumers to comment on or "like" preferred

content (Dallas et al., 2012) thereby generating communication information and enhanced marketing performance in the end.

Short Message Service includes; Text messaging (sending text messages to attract customers to purchase its products; using text messages to induce customers' internal reactions about its products, messages to give customers enough information to facilitate their purchasing decision, text messages being appropriate in marketing the company products). In support of this, Dupré et al. (2020) indicate that short messaging service strongly contribute towards improved marketing performance. In addition, it was earlier noted that some marketing messages generate a great deal of user interaction through "likes" and comments while others generate very little (Chen & Lin, 2019).

Another component is video messaging (sending audiovisual messages to customers informing them about company products, using video messages to negotiate with customers about the services offered, using video advertisements to create awareness about the products and services offered, Video messages efficiently marketing out company products. In support of this, Grewal et al. (2021) note that advertising presented in form of audio or video messages may increase consumers' attention to communicator cues compared with text-only ads, but focusing on the communicator can reduce attention to information about the product being advertised.

In addition, short message services that improve market performance include audio messaging (sending audio messages to customers advertising its products, using voice messages to attract customers attention, using audio messages to give customers enough information about company's products, using audio messages to efficiently market out company products. Linked to the above, Chen and Lin (2019) noted that firms' marketing messages can attract users' attention and induce further internal reactions.

5.2.3 Search Engine Optimisation and Marketing Performance of Telecommunication Companies in Uganda

The third objective explored the relation between search engine optimisation and marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda. The results revealed a positive and significant relationship between search engine optimisation and marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda. This means that as search engine optimisation improves, there is a likelihood of getting better marketing performance among telecommunications companies. These results are supported by literature where it is noted that product search engines can improve the ranking design and the user search experience based on the prediction of consumer preferences (De los Santos & Koulayev, 2017). In addition, Drivas et al. (2019) asserted that search engine advertising and display create the organizations' brand awareness. The results however contrast with Kritzinger and Weideman (2020) who noted that with search engine optimisation, there is no guarantee that the conversion to a sale will happen.

Search engine optimisation includes; Key word ranking (using key words on the internet in reference to its products as a marketing tool, uses key word phrases on its website to create product awareness, advancing the ranking of its adverts on the search results page, improving the ranking design based on consumer preferences). In support of the above, leveraging search engine optimization to improve organic search ranking is believed to be more effective than other search engine related marketing initiatives, such as search engine advertising via sponsored links (Tomasini & Xiaolin, 2019).

Aesthetic appeal is another component of search engine optimisation which improves marketing performance in such ways as (using visual appearance of its adverts on the internet to market its products, using interface aesthetics to influence customers' a positive attitude

towards company products, making aesthetic considerations in web designing). In the same way, Sundar et al. (2020) note that aesthetic affect user satisfaction and influence their willingness to buy or adopt a system. In addition, aesthetics may form user's attitudes towards the system, may improve or worsen their performances, affect their satisfaction and influence their willingness to buy a given product (Tractinsky, 2019).

Content quality is still another component of search engine optimisation which is likely to improve marketing performance for instance through information displayed on websites being of good quality, content on the website portraying a true picture of company products, and information displayed on company website meeting the required standards. All these elements interact to lead to better odds for getting better marketing performance. These results are in line with literature where it is noted by Ahmed and Sagid (2021) that content quality is one of the most important reasons of development in the field of electronic marketing using websites, the web search engines, e-mail and social media sites. The ideas are also supported by Kusumasondjaja (2018) noting that content quality is a marketing strategy used to lure a specific scope of customers by creating value-rich, relevant and consistent content that viewers can relate to.

5.2.4 The Predictive Potential of Social Media Marketing, Short Message Service and Search Engine Optimisation on the Marketing Performance of Telecommunication Companies in Uganda

The final objective was to establish the predictive potential of social media marketing, short message service and search engine optimisation on the marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda.

It was revealed that the model fits the relationship, implying that the factors identified, that is social media marketing, short message service and search engine optimisation were indeed

relevant in the equation for predicting marketing performance among telecommunications companies. In support of this, viral marketing on social media to promote product attention and exposure for improved marketing performance (Wang et al., 2019); social media space is the fundamental hub for generating initial consciousness about the existence of a product and the motivation to use it (Kapoor et al., 2016).

It was further revealed that social media marketing, short message service and search engine optimisation predict 36% of the variance in Marketing Performance among telecom companies in Uganda. This means that the combined effect of these factors can create a felt impact in the marketing performance results among telecommunications companies. These findings merit the support of Esmailpour (2014) who noted that SMS instalment service positively affects customer satisfaction and marketing performance. Khiong (2022) notes that search engine marketing is the quickest developing promoting medium on the planet. SEO provides continuous and real time insights about the online behavior of the consumer (Ravneet & Ajay, 2018).

Social Media Marketing and Search engine optimisation (were the only significant predictors of the variance in market performance. Short Message Service was not a significant predictor of the variance in market performance among telecom companies in Uganda. However, the fact that all these elements had positive associations with marketing performance means they are worth considering. In the same way, Menon et al. (2019) noted that social media (e.g Facebook and Twitter), are essential communication channels for building a relationship of trust with consumers, gaining their fidelity and subsequently enhancing marketing performance.

5.3 Conclusion

Social Media marketing and Marketing Performance of Telecommunication Companies in Uganda

From the above findings, the study concludes that the use of media sharing , social networks and community blogs among telecommunications companies is associated with improvements in market performance in terms of sales volume, market share and customer satisfaction.

Short Messaging Service and Marketing Performance of Telecommunication Companies in Uganda

The study concludes that the proper use of text messaging, video messaging and audio messaging is likely to improve on the ability of telecommunications companies to realise enhancements in marketing performance.

Search Engine Optimisation and Marketing Performance of Telecommunication Companies in Uganda

In conclusion, telecommunications companies can improve on marketing performance using appropriate search engine optimisation through key word ranking, aesthetic appeal and working on having content quality all the time.

The Predictive Potential of Social Media Marketing, Short Message Service and Search Engine Optimisation on the Marketing Performance of Telecommunication Companies in Uganda

The study concludes that since social media marketing and search engine optimisation were the only significant predictors of the variance in market performance, it is noted that in a bid to improve marketing performance, telecommunications are likely to get significant marketing performance improvements if these two elements are worked on.

5.4 Recommendations

Social Media marketing and marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda

The study recommends management of telecommunication firms emphasise media sharing enhancements using a variety of social media platforms, intensive sharing of news, updating customers more appropriately on product and services offering, all of which intended to promote better marketing performance.

The study recommends that all company staff should work towards improved social networking in terms of spread information about its products, disseminating information on company's trademark, growth in the use of social network websites. In the end, better marketing performance may be realized.

It was revealed that aesthetic appeals are significantly associated with marketing performance, the study recommends the ICT staff of telecommunications to always improve on the visual appearance of adverts, influencing customers' positive attitude towards company products and making aesthetic considerations in web designing.

Short Messaging Service and marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda

The study recommends use of SMS to reach out to clients who may not be using smart phones always or sometimes.

Search engine optimisation and marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda

Since community blogs were noted to be important, the study recommends management improves on the intensiveness in the use of blogs as a form of marketing, brand awareness and promoting brands to wider audiences.

The study recommends management of telecommunication companies encourages better use of search engine optimisation though for instance key word ranking, using key words on the internet in reference to products, using key word phrases on website to create product awareness and ranking design based on consumer preferences.

Predictive potential of social media marketing, short message service and search engine optimisation on the marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Uganda

The study recommends management should constitute a quality management team to oversee the content quality improvements in terms of information displayed on company's website, content portraying a true picture of our company products, information meeting the required standards

5.5 Limitations of the Study

The study used a cross-sectional study design and collected data at a one point in time. Thus, the study was not in position to obtain data on how electronic marketing affected marketing performance over a long period of time as would have been if the study had adopted a longitudinal design. Since the study used a questionnaire, it never solicited for in-depth information that would have been obtained using instruments such as interview guide and focus group discussion guide.

5.6 Areas for Further Study

The study recommends further studies in the areas of ;

Website quality and effectiveness of internet marketing among telecommunications companies.

Value for money in the investment in electronic marketing among telecommunications companies.

Customised search engine optimisation and brandawareness among telecommunications clients.

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Appendix I: Questionnaire

Questionnaire for employees selected telecom companies in Uganda

I am Kihembo Hope Mary, a student of Makerere University Business School, pursuing a master's degree in Business Administration. Currently, I am conducting a study on ***electronic marketing and marketing performance of selected telecommunication companies in Uganda in the post Covid-19 pandemic era*** in partial fulfilment for the requirements of the Masters' Degree. The study is not an inspection but rather a situation analysis for better improvement of the performance. All findings will be kept confidential and anonymous. This will be done by not putting the name of the respondent on the questionnaire. I request for your time and honest answers for a successful study.

Section A: Back ground characteristics of respondents

1. Age of the respondent

a) 18-29 ☐ b) 30-39 ☐ c) 40-49 ☐ d) 50-59 ☐ e) 60 and above

2. Gender: a) Male ☐ b) Female ☐

3. Highest level of education:

a) Certificate ☐ b) Diploma ☐ c) Bachelor Degree ☐
d) Masters Degree ☐ e) PhD ☐ f) Others (Specify.....)

4. Level of management:

a) Top management ☐ b) Middle level management ☐ c) Lower level management ☐

5. Years served in the company

a) 6 months-1 year ☐ b) 1-2 years ☐ c) 3-4 Years ☐
d) 5-above ☐

Company Code (Instead of Name)

In the next section, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement by selecting the most suitable response to the following statements about social media marketing, short message service, search engine optimisation and marketing performance

6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Somehow agree (SHA)	Somehow disagree (SHD)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)

Section B: Social Media Marketing

CODE	Statement	SA	A	SHA	SHD	D	SD
	Media sharing	6	5	4	3	2	1
SMM1	Our company markets its products via a variety of social media platforms	6	5	4	3	2	1
SMM2	Our company uses the social media to share news regarding its activities	6	5	4	3	2	1
SMM3	Our company uses the social media to update customers about its services	6	5	4	3	2	1
SMM4	Our company shares information about its services via social media to promote the services offered	6	5	4	3	2	1
SMM5	Our company uses social media to give feedback to customers to encourage consumption of its products.	6	5	4	3	2	1
	Social networks						
SMM6	Our company uses social networks to spread information about its products	6	5	4	3	2	1
SMM7	Social networks are used to disseminate information on our company's trademark.	6	5	4	3	2	1
SMM8	There has been growth in the use of social network websites to promote consumption of our company's products	6	5	4	3	2	1
SMM9	Social networks are an effective marketing strategy	6	5	4	3	2	1
	Community blog						
SMM11	Our company uses blogs as a form of marketing to get online visibility.	6	5	4	3	2	1
SMM12	Our company uses blogs to create brand awareness	6	5	4	3	2	1
SMM13	Blogs support growth of our company's business	6	5	4	3	2	1
SMM14	Our company uses blogs to promote its brand to a wider audience	6	5	4	3	2	1

Section C: Short Message Service

SL	Statement	SA	A	SHA	SHD	D	SD
	Text messaging	6	5	4	3	2	1
SMS1	Our company sends text messages to attract customers to purchase its products	6	5	4	3	2	1

SMS2	Our company uses text messages to induce customers' internal reactions about its products	6	5	4	3	2	1
SMS3	Written messages give customers enough information to facilitate their purchasing decision	6	5	4	3	2	1
SMS4	Text messages are appropriate in marketing our company products	6					
	Video messaging						
SMS5	Our company sends audiovisual messages to customers informing them about company products	6	5	4	3	2	1
SMS6	Our company uses video messages to negotiate with customers about the services offered	6	5	4	3	2	1
SMS7	Our company uses video advertisements to create awareness about the products and services offered.	6	5	4	3	2	1
SMS8	Video messages efficiently market out company products	6	5	4	3	2	1
	Audio messaging						
SMS9	Our company sends audio messages to customers advertising its products	6	5	4	3	2	1
SMS10	Our company uses voice messages to attract customers attention	6	5	4	3	2	1
SMS11	Audio messages give customers enough information about our company's products	6	5	4	3	2	1
SMS12	Audio messages efficiently market out company products	6	5	4	3	2	1

Section D: Search engine optimisation

SL	Statement	SA	A	SHA	SHD	D	SD
	Key word ranking	6	5	4	3	2	1
SEO 1	Our company uses key words on the internet in reference to its products as a marketing tool	6	5	4	3	2	1
SEO 2	Our company uses key word phrases on its website to create product awareness	6	5	4	3	2	1
SEO 3	Our company advances the ranking of its adverts on the search	6	5	4	3	2	1

	results page						
SEO 4	Our company improves the ranking design based on consumer preferences	6					
	Aesthetic appeal	6	5	4	3	2	1
SEO 6	Our company uses visual appearance of its adverts on the internet to market its products.	6	5	4	3	2	1
SEO 7	Our company uses interface aesthetics to influence customers' a positive attitude towards company products	6	5	4	3	2	1
SEO 8	Our company makes aesthetic considerations in web designing	6	5	4	3	2	1
	Content quality	6	5	4	3	2	1
SEO 10	The information displayed on our company's website is of good quality	6	5	4	3	2	1
SEO 11	The content of the information on our website portrays a true picture of our company products	6	5	4	3	2	1
SEO 12	The information displayed on our company website meets the required standards	6	5	4	3	2	1

Section E: Marketing Performance

CODE	ITEM	SA	A	SHA	SHD	D	SD
	Sales volume						
MP1	Our company has registered an increase in the amount (quantity) of products sold over the past three years	6	5	4	3	2	1
MP2	Our company has registered an increase in the categories (types) of products sold over the past three years	6					
MP3	Customers are always willing to buy our products repeatedly	6	5	4	3	2	1
MP4	Our customers always purchase more of our products	6	5	4	3	2	1
	Market share						
MP5	Our company has registered an increase in market share over the past three years	6	5	4	3	2	1

MP6	Our company has registered an increase in the number of customers compared to companies in the same industry	6	5	4	3	2	1
MP7	Our company has registered an increase in profits.	6	5	4	3	2	1
MP8	Our company has a higher percentage of customers for all products sold in comparison with competitors	6					
	Customer satisfaction						
MP9	Our customers are satisfied with the services offered by the company.	6	5	4	3	2	1
MP10	There has been a reduction in complaints about our services	6	5	4	3	2	1
MP11	Our customers appreciate the services we provide them	6					

Appendix ii: Table for Determining Sample Size from a Given Population

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	246
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	351
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	181	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	180	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	190	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	200	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	210	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	373
65	56	220	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	230	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	240	144	550	225	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	250	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	260	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	270	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	256	2600	335	100000	384

Note: “N” is population size

“S” is sample size.

Appendix iii: correlation details

	Correlations															
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Media sharing (1)	1	.259**	.105	.710**	-.046	.170	.199*	.152	.240**	.212*	.100	.277**	.186*	.465**	.521**	.542**
Social networks (2)	.259**	1	.041	.650**	.132	.094	.007	.147	-.025	.087	.196*	.126	.123	.210*	.420**	.325**
Community blog (3)	.105	.041	1	.591**	.103	.126	.236**	.246**	.219*	.118	.072	.194*	.222*	.201*	.135	.258**
Social Media Marketing (4)	.710**	.650**	.591**	1	.094	.201*	.230**	.279**	.227**	.215*	.186*	.309**	.273**	.453**	.552**	.580**
Text messaging(5)	-.046	.132	.103	.094	1	.014	-.084	.659**	-.131	-.161	.039	-.145	-.064	-.112	.064	-.071
Video messaging (6)	.170	.094	.126	.201*	.014	1	.106	.624**	.108	-.035	.090	.055	.006	.257**	.215*	.236**
Audio messaging (7)	.199*	.007	.236**	.230**	-.084	.106	1	.439**	.300**	.384**	.198*	.455**	.309**	.173	.212*	.301**
Short Message Service (8)	.152	.147	.246**	.279**	.659**	.624**	.439**	1	.102	.037	.165	.130	.094	.145	.259**	.217*
Key word ranking (9)	.240**	-.025	.219*	.227**	-.131	.108	.300**	.102	1	.135	.024	.497**	.253**	.132	.127	.224*
Aesthetic appeal (10)	.212*	.087	.118	.215*	-.161	-.035	.384**	.037	.135	1	.290**	.840**	.431**	.100	.097	.263**
Content quality (11)	.100	.196*	.072	.186*	.039	.090	.198*	.165	.024	.290**	1	.601**	.272**	.088	.229**	.241**
Search engine optimisation (12)	.277**	.126	.194*	.309**	-.145	.055	.455**	.130	.497**	.840**	.601**	1	.497**	.154	.206*	.361**
Sales volume (13)	.186*	.123	.222*	.273**	-.064	.006	.309**	.094	.253**	.431**	.272**	.497**	1	.067	.164	.489**
Market share (14)	.465**	.210*	.201*	.453**	-.112	.257**	.173	.145	.132	.100	.088	.154	.067	1	.619**	.859**
Customer satisfaction (15)	.521**	.420**	.135	.552**	.064	.215*	.212*	.259**	.127	.097	.229**	.206*	.164	.619**	1	.798**
Marketing Performance (16)	.542**	.325**	.258**	.580**	-.071	.236**	.301**	.217*	.224*	.263**	.241**	.361**	.489**	.859**	.798**	1
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).																
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).																