



UNIVERSITY OF MEDIA, ARTS AND COMMUNICATION

GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM

**EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL MARKETING ON BUSINESS
OPERATIONS: A STUDY OF GHANA WATER LIMITED**

BY

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ARTS IN PUBLIC RELATIONS WITH MARKETING**

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DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I hereby declare that this research is a result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or any other higher education institute. I further declare that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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Student	Index number	Signature	Date
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CERTIFICATION BY SUPERVISOR

This dissertation has been prepared and presented under my supervision according to the guidelines for supervision and formatting of dissertation laid down by the University of Media, Arts and Communication UniMAC-GIJ.

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Supervisor	Signature	Date
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to God almighty and to my mother for inspiring this journey..

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To Almighty God, I have experienced your mercy and grace from the very beginning of this journey till now. Yours remains the glory. Special thanks also go to Ing. Michael Botse-Baidoo, I truly appreciate your kindness to me. To Mr. Joseph Opoku-Mensah for ensuring that the work was completed. Additionally, I wish to express my sincerest gratitude to Dr. George Kwabena Asamoah, my supervisor, whose boundless enthusiasm, patience, insightful feedback, invaluable guidance, and unwavering stream of ideas have been instrumental throughout my thesis journey. His vast knowledge and extensive experience in research have been pivotal in the successful completion of this paper. Without his unwavering support and expert guidance, this achievement would not have been conceivable. I am profoundly grateful for having had such an exceptional supervisor for this study. Mr. Sampson Ampah and Mr. Nii Abbey for the encouragement and assistance and finally Mr. Eric Hammond for his support.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of digital marketing on the business operations of Ghana Water Limited (GWL), focusing on three key objectives: assessing the current state of digital marketing, evaluating its influence on operational efficiency, and examining its role in customer engagement and satisfaction. Guided by the Dynamic Capabilities Theory, the study adopts a qualitative approach, utilizing interviews with key stakeholders, including marketing professionals, operational staff, and customers. The findings reveal that GWL has made significant progress in adopting digital marketing strategies such as social media engagement, email campaigns, and online payment systems. These initiatives have enhanced communication speed, improved operational efficiency and fostered customer interaction. However, challenges persist, including inconsistent digital efforts, limited digital literacy among customers, usability issues with the company's website, and resource constraints. Digital marketing has positively influenced operational efficiency by streamlining billing processes and enabling real-time communication, yet the lack of advanced data analytics tools and staff training limits its full potential. Similarly, customer engagement has improved through interactive social media platforms, personalized email campaigns, and feedback mechanisms. The study concludes that while digital marketing has enhanced GWL's operations and customer relations, addressing these challenges is crucial for maximizing its impact. Recommendations include improving digital accessibility, investing in website optimization, expanding staff training programs, and leveraging advanced data analytics tools. These steps will enable GWL to fully harness digital marketing's potential, enhance customer satisfaction, and improve operational efficiency.

Keywords

Digital Marketing, Operational Efficiency, Customer Engagement, Utility Sector, Ghana Water Limited, Dynamic Capabilities Theory, Social Media, Digital Transformation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION BY STUDENT	i
CERTIFICATION BY SUPERVISOR	i
DEDICATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
CHAPTER ONE	1
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background of Study	1
1.2 Problem Statement	3
1.3 Research Objectives.....	5
1.4 Research Questions	5
1.5 Significance of Study.....	5
1.6 Scope of Study	7
1.7 Organization of Study	7
CHAPTER TWO	8
LITERATURE REVIEW	8
2.0 Chapter Overview	8
2.1 Theoretical Review- Dynamic Capabilities Theory.....	8
2.1.1 The Relevance of The Theory to The Study	9
2.2 Digital Marketing.....	11
2.3 Methods of Digital Marketing	13
2.4 Social Media Marketing.....	14
2.5 Benefits of Social Media Marketing	16
2.6 Firm Performance	16
2.7 The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Firm Performance	17
CHAPTER THREE	23
METHODOLOGY	23
3.0 Introduction.....	23
3.1 Research Paradigm.....	23
3.2 Research Approach	24

3.3 Research Design.....	25
3.4 The Population of The Study	26
3.5 Sampling Technique.....	27
3.6 Data Collection Method.....	28
3.7 Data Analysis	29
CHAPTER FOUR.....	31
DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION	31
4.0 Introduction.....	31
4.1 The Current State of Digital Marketing at Ghana Water Limited.....	31
4.2 The Impact of Digital Marketing on Operational Efficiency.....	34
4.3 The Impact of Digital Marketing on Customer Engagement and Satisfaction.....	37
CHAPTER FIVE	43
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	43
5.0 Introduction.....	43
5.1 Summary.....	43
5.2 Conclusion of Study.....	44
5.3 Recommendations of Study	44
REFERENCES	46

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

Electronic marketing has become a tool of increasing company efficiency in the modern environment. The use of social media, email, search engine results, and websites to promote the sale of products and services is called digital marketing. The purpose of this study is to look at how digital marketing impacts on the functioning of organizations with reference to Ghana Water Limited. GWL, a state-owned company that supplies water all over Ghana, provides a clear example of how digital marketing strategies may influence the customer outreach, organizational efficiency, and firm performance.

1.1 Background of Study

The evolution of digital marketing can be traced back to the 1990s with the advent of the Internet and the subsequent growth of digital technologies. Initially, businesses relied on traditional marketing methods such as print media, television, and radio. However, the internet has revolutionized how businesses reach and interact with customers. Today, digital marketing encompasses various activities, including search engine optimization (SEO), content marketing, social media marketing, email marketing, and more (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). The adoption of digital marketing strategies has been driven by the need for businesses to engage with tech-savvy consumers who spend significant time online. Companies that effectively leverage digital marketing can enhance brand visibility, foster customer relationships, and drive sales (Kingsnorth, 2019). In the context of utility companies like GWL, digital marketing can also play a crucial role in educating the public about water conservation, billing systems, and service updates.

Digital marketing influences business operations in several key areas. Firstly, it enhances customer engagement and relationship management by providing platforms for businesses to engage with customers in real-time, fostering stronger relationships. Through social media, email newsletters, and interactive websites, companies can provide personalized experiences, gather customer feedback, and address concerns promptly (Ryan, 2016). Secondly, digital marketing increases brand awareness and market reach. Utilizing digital channels allows businesses to reach a wider audience compared to traditional methods. SEO and social media campaigns can increase visibility and attract potential customers globally (Kotler et al., 2017). Moreover, digital marketing enables

data-driven decision-making. Digital marketing tools allow businesses to collect and analyze vast amounts of data regarding customer behavior and preferences. This data-driven approach helps in making informed decisions about marketing strategies and operational improvements (Leeflang et al., 2014). Additionally, digital marketing is often more cost-effective than traditional marketing. Online advertising can be tailored to specific demographics, ensuring that marketing budgets are spent efficiently (Todor, 2016).

Utility companies, such as water providers, traditionally relied on physical infrastructure and face-to-face interactions for customer service. However, the digital transformation has opened new avenues for these companies to enhance service delivery and customer satisfaction. For GWL, implementing digital marketing strategies can have several benefits. Digital platforms can be used to educate customers about water usage, conservation techniques, and the importance of timely bill payments. Informative content distributed through social media, websites, and email newsletters can enhance customer knowledge and cooperation (Singh & Gaur, 2018). During service interruptions or emergencies, digital channels provide a quick and effective means of communicating with customers. Timely updates on social media and the company website can help manage customer expectations and reduce frustration (Kemp, 2020).

Furthermore, digital marketing can promote the use of online billing and payment systems, making it easier for customers to manage their accounts. This can lead to improved cash flow and reduced administrative costs for the company (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). Social media and online surveys allow companies to gather customer feedback efficiently. This feedback can be used to identify areas for service improvement and enhance overall customer satisfaction (Ryan, 2016).

Ghana Water Limited has recognized the potential of digital marketing to transform its operations and customer interactions. The company has begun integrating digital marketing strategies to address several operational challenges and enhance service delivery. Key initiatives include social media engagement, where GWL has established a presence on major social media platforms to interact with customers, share important updates, and gather feedback. This engagement helps build a community around the company's services and fosters trust (Amoah, 2020).

Additionally, the company's website serves as a central hub for information regarding services, billing, and customer support. Enhancing the website's usability and ensuring it is mobile-friendly are critical components of GWL's digital strategy (Asiedu, 2020). GWL uses email marketing to

send regular newsletters and updates to customers. These campaigns provide valuable information on water conservation, upcoming maintenance work, and new service offerings (Osei, 2019). Online surveys and feedback forms allow GWL to collect customer opinions and suggestions. This data is crucial for continuous improvement of services and addressing customer needs more effectively (Mensah, 2021).

While the integration of digital marketing presents numerous opportunities, GWL faces several challenges. The effectiveness of digital marketing depends on the digital literacy of the customer base. In regions with low internet penetration or limited access to digital devices, reaching customers through digital channels can be challenging (Ocloo & Tsetse, 2013). Handling customer data responsibly and ensuring privacy is a critical concern. GWL must implement robust data protection measures to maintain customer trust (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). Investing in digital marketing requires financial and human resources. GWL needs to balance these investments with other operational priorities to ensure sustainability (Ryan, 2016).

Despite these challenges, the opportunities presented by digital marketing for enhancing customer engagement, operational efficiency, and service delivery are significant. By leveraging digital marketing effectively, GWL can improve its relationship with customers, streamline operations, and position itself as a forward-thinking utility provider. The impact of digital marketing on business operations is profound, offering numerous advantages in customer engagement, brand awareness, data-driven decision-making, and cost efficiency. For Ghana Water Limited, integrating digital marketing strategies is crucial for improving service delivery and customer satisfaction. While challenges such as digital literacy and data privacy need to be addressed, the potential benefits far outweigh the obstacles. This study aims to explore these dynamics in depth, providing insights into how GWL can harness digital marketing to enhance its operations and better serve its customers.

1.2 Problem Statement

Digital marketing can play a transformative role in several aspects of GWL's operations. For instance, through social media and other online platforms, GWL can engage more effectively with its customers, providing timely updates on water supply, maintenance schedules, and emergency disruptions. Digital marketing tools also offer opportunities for educational campaigns about water conservation, billing systems, and customer rights. Furthermore, by implementing SEO and

content marketing, GWL can improve its online presence, making it easier for customers to find information and interact with the company.

Empirical evidence supports the effectiveness of digital marketing in enhancing customer engagement and service delivery. For example, a study by Rahimnia and Hassanzadeh (2013) found that companies utilizing digital marketing strategies experienced significantly higher levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty. Similarly, research by Järvinen and Karjaluoto (2015) demonstrated that data-driven digital marketing enables organizations to make more informed decisions, leading to improved operational efficiency and customer service. Another critical aspect is the use of data analytics provided by digital marketing tools. These tools can help GWL gather valuable insights into customer behavior, preferences, and feedback, which can be used to optimize service delivery and enhance customer satisfaction. A study by Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) highlighted that businesses employing data analytics in their digital marketing efforts saw marked improvements in understanding customer needs and tailoring services accordingly. Additionally, digital marketing can streamline payment processes through online billing and payment systems, reducing operational costs and improving cash flow.

Despite the potential benefits, GWL faces several challenges in implementing digital marketing strategies. One significant challenge is the digital divide, as not all customers have equal access to the internet or possess the digital literacy needed to interact with online platforms. This disparity can limit the effectiveness of digital campaigns and exclude segments of the population from receiving timely information and services. According to Ocloo and Tsetse (2013), digital literacy and access issues are prevalent in many parts of Ghana, which can hinder the reach and impact of digital marketing initiatives. Moreover, there are concerns related to data privacy and security. As GWL collects and processes customer data through digital channels, it must ensure robust data protection measures to maintain customer trust and comply with regulatory requirements. The risk of cyberattacks and data breaches poses a significant threat to the company's reputation and operational integrity. Research by Smith et al. (2011) emphasized the importance of data privacy in maintaining consumer trust, noting that breaches can lead to severe reputational damage and loss of customer confidence.

Resource allocation is another critical challenge. Investing in digital marketing requires financial and human resources that GWL must balance with other operational priorities. Developing a

comprehensive digital marketing strategy, training staff, and maintaining digital infrastructure demand substantial investments, which might strain the company's budget. Ryan (2016) discusses the need for careful resource management in digital marketing to ensure that the benefits outweigh the costs, particularly for public sector organizations with limited budgets. The existing literature on digital marketing largely focuses on its impact on retail, entertainment, and other consumer-oriented sectors. There is limited research on how digital marketing influences utility companies, especially in developing countries like Ghana. This research gap is significant because utility companies operate under different constraints and objectives compared to consumer goods companies. Their primary goal is to provide essential services reliably and efficiently rather than maximizing profit. Thus, the application and impact of digital marketing in this context require a tailored approach.

1.3 Research Objectives

To address these gaps and challenges, this study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. Assess the current state of digital marketing at GWL
2. Evaluate the impact of digital marketing on operational efficiency
3. Examine customer engagement and satisfaction

1.4 Research Questions

1. What is the current state of digital marketing strategies employed by Ghana Water Limited (GWL)?
2. How does digital marketing influence the operational efficiency of Ghana Water Limited?
3. What is the impact of digital marketing on customer engagement and satisfaction at Ghana Water Limited?

1.5 Significance of Study

The study offers substantial contributions to the academic and theoretical landscape, particularly in the field of digital marketing and its application to public utility services.

The work contributes to the existing literature by offering insights on the adoption of digital marketing in a field that is not well researched, public utilities. In view of this, the research concentrates on GWL which has not been explored in the literature, therefore, contributed to the existing knowledge on how digital marketing strategies can be implemented in sectors other than

the usual consumer-centric industries. The results advance theoretical knowledge in the areas of digital marketing and operations management in the context of utility companies. The study combines elements of digital marketing, customer relations, and service delivery theory, making for a richer understanding of those processes within the context of the public sector. In light of this, the study enhances the theoretical models on customer relationship management by establishing how digital marketing affects customer interactions and services at GWL. It offers academicians and practitioners an understanding of how social media and e-mail marketing tools can improve customer satisfaction and loyalty.

The conclusion drawn from this study has important policy implications for policy makers especially in developing countries where public utility service is relevant. It gives insights to policy makers on the advantages and disadvantages of using digital marketing in public utilities sector. This could help in establishing policies and frameworks as to how the state-owned enterprises embrace digital marketing for improved service provision. The paper also reveals digital divide as one of the big issues that act as a barrier to the implementation of digital marketing. It can be easily utilized by policymakers who can tailor methods of enhancing digital literacy and increasing the availability of the internet and digital devices. That way, all parts of society will be protected to guarantee that everyone is positively impacted by the progress in digital technology. Since, digital marketing requires a lot of data of customers, the research stresses on the issue of data privacy and protection. Such insights can be useful to policymakers to set up strict laws for data protection so as to ensure that consumer details are protected and consumers can have confidence in the virtual transactions with the utility companies.

The managerial implications of this research are enormous since it presented concrete findings on leveraging digital marketing for the improvement of GHIL and other utility companies. The study offers applied suggestions on how to embed digital marketing approaches into the utility firms. refers to guidelines on social media activity, website, email campaign and analytics that can assist utilities to improve their online image and customers' satisfaction. The study provides some useful information regarding the way in which digital marketing can enhance the customer experience. These insights can help utility companies to improve their approaches to customer relations, by better understanding how to interact with and provide service in ways that are most satisfactory to customers. The study also shows how digital marketing can make it easier to manage things like

bills and services changes. These insights can be applied by utility companies in a bid to cut on the costs of operations, increase efficiency and therefore increase on service delivery.

1.6 Scope of Study

The effect of digital marketing on Ghana Water Limited (GWL); a state-owned utility company in Ghana is the focus of this research. In order to gain a broad view of the significance of digital marketing in this respect, it is centered on several primary areas of study. Firstly, the work evaluates the effectiveness of the current digital marketing of GWL through social media, e-mail marketing, search engine optimization and online customer service. Secondly, it assesses how these strategies impact operations, for instance, the ability to improve billing, cut operational costs and improve services. Furthermore, the research explores the impact of digital marketing on customer interactions and satisfaction and how the digital tools may enhance the communication, feedback mechanisms and customer experiences. The study also looks at the barriers to digital marketing implementation for GWL which includes; digital literacy, internet connection, and data privacy. In this regard, the research will offer recommendations focusing on the identified areas, which will be beneficial for the enhancement of GWL digital marketing strategy as well as the organization's performance as a whole; therefore, the study will benefit both academia and the management of public utilities.

1.7 Organization of Study

This study comprises five chapters. Chapter one consists of an introduction, problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, justification of the study, and a breakdown of the chapter. Chapter two presents a literature review and various theories. Chapter three deals with the research method explaining the underlining study design, population and sampling methods, instruments used in data collection, procedures in administering the instruments, and methods of data analysis. The analysis and discussion of the findings are presented in chapter four. In turn, chapter five synthesizes the study and offers conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Chapter Overview

The chapter presents the literature review of the study in relation to the effects of digital marketing on business operations with specific reference to the utility industry. The layout of the review is based on the objectives of the study and discusses issues such as digital marketing, operation tasks, and customers. The chapter starts with an analysis of the theoretical background of the research, namely the Dynamic Capabilities Theory. It then reviews literature on the various forms of digital marketing strategies, their adoption in the utility firms, and their impact on organizational performance. In this chapter, the author provides a review of the literature and highlights the research gaps to locate the investigation into Ghana Water Limited (GWL) within the existing scholarship. This review therefore provides a background on which the subsequent discussions on how digital marketing can be adopted to increase operational efficiency and customer satisfaction in the utility sector will be based on.

2.1 Theoretical Review- Dynamic Capabilities Theory

The Dynamic Capabilities Theory was developed by Teece and Pisano in 1994 based on the RBV of the firm by Barney (1986, 1991). RBV maintains that firms within a particular industry will achieve different levels of performance because of differences in the resources and capabilities they command. However, there have been criticisms that the RBV is rather static in its approach as it is unable to adequately explain how firms can sustain such competitive advantages in environments that are characterized by elevated levels of dynamism and volatility, such as the current business environment. Because of this shortcoming, Teece, Pisano, and Shuen (1997) proposed the use of dynamic capabilities. The authors described dynamic capabilities as the firm's

capacity for integrating, creating and modifying internal and external resources to adapt to dynamic environments. This idea can be considered even more important in the current environment as the COVID-19 outbreak affected numerous enterprises globally. Pandemic has forced companies to adapt in a way that they interact with the customer through internet-based platforms, and hence has pushed the digital technology adoption forward. In this new environment, companies have to be ready and willing to change in order to try and stay ahead of the changes that COVID-19 has brought. This means not only the change in technological means and channels but also the change in organizational resources and capabilities to respond to the new opportunities of customers. Companies that will be able to build and exploit the dynamic capabilities will be in a better place to survive the post pandemic market.

2.1.1 The Relevance of The Theory to The Study

The Dynamic Capabilities Theory as advanced by Teece and Pisano (1994) offers a fundamental model for analyzing how organizations can sustain themselves in this environment. This theory is particularly relevant to the current research investigating the effects of digital marketing on business processes at Ghana Water Limited since it provides understanding of how the organization can maximize the use of its internal and external assets to adapt to the digital environment.

The Dynamic Capabilities Theory is built on the RBV of the firm which posits that the firm's performance is a function of the resources and capabilities that are unique to it. However, RBV has been criticized for its lack of dynamic capability, that is, there is no explanation of how firms can maintain competitive advantage in the context of dynamic environments. The Dynamic Capabilities Theory is an attempt to fill this void since it specifically deals with the firm's capability to integrate, develop and reconfigure competencies in relation to environmental change.

Therefore, for Ghana Water Limited digital marketing is a revolution of how the firm communicates with its customers and how it carries out its business. The pandemic has highlighted the need for digitalization as companies around the globe have had to shift their strategy in order to target consumers over the internet. In this regard, the Ghana Water Limited's capacity to develop and mobilize dynamic capabilities is paramount. The ability of the organization to integrate and recombine its current resources including the customer information, digital channels, and marketing skills can be valuable in improving the business processes, customer relations, and the overall market position.

Dynamic Capabilities Theory can be useful in the study on the effects of digital marketing on the business of Ghana Water Limited. This framework enables a discussion of how the organization can not only integrate to use digital marketing tools but also evolve these tools overtime to suit the ever-changing needs of the customers and the overall business environment. Further, it emphasizes the need for developing agility and innovation as part of the firm's agenda to reinforce its status of Ghana Water Limited as a contender in the world that continues to shift towards digital frameworks.

The Dynamic Capabilities Theory is therefore quite useful when analyzing the digital marketing effects on Ghana Water Limited. It offers strong theoretical support for the management of the challenges and opportunities that arise in the context of digital transformation at the company. Therefore, by fostering dynamic capabilities, Ghana Water Limited can be sure that does not only survive in the conditions of the continuous technological and market evolution, but also can constantly develop and prosper.

2.2 Digital Marketing

Digital marketing can be described as the application of digital media and, particularly, the Internet for advertising goods or services (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). Kotler et al. (2021) define digital marketing as a broad concept that goes beyond simple web advertising, and includes content marketing, social networking, SEO, email marketing, and data analysis. On the other hand, Charlesworth (2022) opines that digital marketing should be understood as the concept of marketing that encompasses both online and offline marketing to form a holistic concept of the marketing experience for the customers.

The debate of defining digital marketing reveals the fact that the concept is evolving. In this context, while some scholars tend to focus on the technological aspect of RMA, others pay attention to its strategic aspect. For instance, Ryan (2020) defines digital marketing as the use of technology to accomplish marketing objectives, Wymbs (2018) on the other hand defines it as the purposeful use of digital tools to generate customer value.

The major strands of digital marketing are content marketing, social media marketing, search engine marketing, and data driven marketing. Holliman and Rowley (2019) defined content marketing as the process of developing and sharing content to capture and interact with a particular audience. They claim that content marketing is extremely valuable to the process of branding and customer relationship building. In a similar vein, Pulizzi (2020) also lays importance on content marketing as a way to create and capture customer attention as well as become a thought leader.

Another important aspect is SMM, which enables businesses to interact with customers on sites where they are active. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2020), social media is characterized by two-way communication between the brand and the consumer is crucial to relationship building and the development of trust. However, Tuten and Solomon (2022) reveal that social media

marketing should be understood with the culture of the social platform and the behaviour of the users.

SEO is the act of enhancing the Website with the goal of making it appear on top of the search engine, so that it can attract more traffic (Clarke & Clarke, 2019). Järvinen and Karjaluoto (2021) posit that SEO is a primary component of digital marketing because it affects the discoverability of a firm's website. But they also state that SEO activities have to be dynamic to meet the emergent trends in search engine systems. Another, data analytics is another key component that informs customers' behaviors as well as campaigns' outcome (Tiago & Veríssimo, 2021). According to Kannan and Li (2017), digital marketing helps business organizations to create value by customizing their products in a way that will create value to the customers. But they also mention some of the issues that are related to data privacy and ethics of data usage in the context of digital marketing.

Digital marketing has impacted consumer behaviour by changing the way consumers seek information, decide to purchase and engage with a brand. In a study done by Constantinides (2020), the author found out that its bargaining power is high due to the availability of information that is available online. In the same vein, Solomon et al. (2020) posits that through digital marketing there emerged the so-called empowered consumer, who expects truth in advertising and individual attention from the firms.

However, some scholars have some differing opinions regarding the extent to which digital marketing influences the buying behavior of consumers. For example, Smith (2021) opined that, despite the fact that digital marketing has a mediated impact on consumer behaviour, there are other non-digital factors such as brand image, price and quality of the product which must always

be considered. Similar to this argument, Leeflang et al. (2021) reveal that digital and traditional marketing should be combined.

On the one hand, digital marketing has many opportunities, on the other hand, there are its threats. One of the main issues is that the technological advancement is fast; hence, the business needs to be on the lookout always (Chaffey & Smith, 2020). However, the digital marketing environment has become complex with several opportunities and platforms that might mislead the marketer (Kingsnorth, 2019).

Nevertheless, digital marketing has a huge potential in terms of new markets, customization and client relationship enhancement. De Pelsmacker et al (2021) have indicated that organizations that adopt digital marketing initiatives can be competitive in the market. But they also mentioned that digital marketing is not easy to be successful needs to have a plan, always learn and never be afraid to try something new.

2.3 Methods of Digital Marketing

According to Divya and Bulomine (2014), online marketing are various activities such as blogging, posting pictures, and sharing product information to engage potential customers. Websites and blogs, when used alongside other networking tools, are particularly powerful for online marketing. Blogs, in addition to serving as marketing platforms, facilitate communication with clients and address any issues that arise. Displaying products through articles on online platforms and social media effectively raises product awareness, and many directories allow for free submissions (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012). Mady (2011) highlights the effectiveness and cost-efficiency of article marketing, where writing articles can attract a global audience and offer accessible advertising opportunities for both advertisers and publishers. This method involves creating content that promotes specific products and services. Video marketing, on the other hand, is

identified as an exceptionally effective tool due to the high volume of daily video views by internet users. Short promotional videos have the potential to reach a broad audience, with platforms like YouTube and Instagram playing crucial roles in global marketing strategies (Buzzeto-More, 2013). Cox and Shirley (2010) also assert that video-sharing platforms are engaging and effective for marketing, as videos generally capture more attention than written advertisements.

2.4 Social Media Marketing

Different scholars have provided different definitions of Social Media Marketing (SMM). To tailor the concept to the purpose of this paper, Heim (2010)'s definition is used, according to which SMM is communication with the customers using social media as a means of reaching the customers. In the recent past social media was used as a way of being connected with friends and families but today business use it as a marketing tool. According to Hounhouigan, Ingenbleek, Van der Lans, Van Trijp & Linnemann (2014), customer centric strategic initiatives lead to customer gains and business profitability.

In their research with consumers, Gajendra and Wang (2014) observed that when customer feedback and experience is shared online, marketers gain a better understanding of their purchase intentions. Customers, as noted by Umrez (2014) desire customized marketing communications. One advantage of advertising through social media as a marketing tool is that it enables the small business retailer to extend their social RFM to audiences beyond their local vicinity (Sajid, 2016). Consumers have total responsibility in dictating their level of interaction with the businesses (Tiago & Verrissimo, 2014).

Through the use of social media, retailers are able to access customer information easily many times within number of platforms available nowadays (Nobre & Silva, 2014). Information technology in the form of digital platforms can be used to develop online surveys that will help

customers provide feedback on products or services and also avail to the customers' information regarding such products or services hence changing their behavior (Keng et al., 2014). To promote the number of times their sites are visited, and the ability of their customers to purchase from their organizations, retailers regularly post descriptions of products or services, customers' feedback, coupons and discounts, and sales on social networking sites (Nobre and Silva, 2014). Customer education is important in building better customers' purchase experiences (Keng et al., 2014).

SMM is viewed crucial for firms through the lens of brand managers in the United States (Buzzeto-More, 2013). To the best of my knowledge, no other form of marketing can effectively persuade buyers at each stage of buying process (Saravanakumar & Sugantha-Lakshmi, 2012). Also, SMM facilitates customer engagement in the generation of value (Clark & Melancon, 2013). It also applies to the customer relationship management since the disgruntled customers tend to air their grievances on their social media platforms thereby providing companies with a window through which to address the frustrations (Buzzeto-More, 2013).

Nevertheless, SMM has defects. Social media presents a cause for concern because through customer comments, brand images may be compromised (Clark and Melancon, 2013). Besides that, social media site goes global and it has dual brand image because of the different tactics used in other countries (Saravanakumar & Sugantha-Lakshmi, 2012). Achieving a goal within SMM entails fans following and engaging with an SMA, not an easy feat when it comes to creating and nurturing customer relationships (Buzzeto-More, 2013; Clark & Melancon, 2013). In the same way, information derived from social media can cause customers to make purchase decisions while at the same time deny potential customers opportunities to make procurements hence denying companies sales. Direct selling or advertising on social media platform is usually replied by few users (Buzzeto-More, 2013)

2.5 Benefits of Social Media Marketing

SMM is now a strategic necessity for a firm, according to more than 95% of brand managers in the United States as stated by Buzzeto-More in 2013. The kind of marketing that can potentially reach out and engage buyers on all and every step of the buying process is social media marketing (Saravanakumar & Sugantha-lakshmi, 2012). Therefore, the sort of marketing that wishes to guide clientele through certain stages of the buying process or marketing that needs to reach the client at any time of the buying process will find it rather handy. Social media can also be used to co-create value with customers (Clark & Melancon, 2013). Customers receive value in form of coupons and discounts, decision information and breaking news, as well as importance feelings by participating in the decision making process (Buzzeto-More, 2013; Mohammadian & Mohammadreza, 2012). Among the reports most valuable for companies is the report, which in general illustrates the fact that SMM helps gain clearer understanding of significant client segments. Through engaging these customers, business organizations can gain valuable insights in relation to customers' requirements, wants and dreams in a bid to serve them optimally, hence improving sale, profits and firm's strength (Mohammadian & Mohammadreza, 2012). Since close to 93% organization owners use social media for their organizations, Kim, Koh, Cha, and Lee (2015) asserted that social media plays a key role in restaurant promotion. Because social media is useful not only for advertisement and promotion, but is also one of the primary means of business development, the restaurant industry is one of the most active ones in this sphere.

2.6 Firm Performance

SMM is now a strategic necessity for a firm, according to more than 95% of brand managers in the United States as stated by Buzzeto-More in 2013. The kind of marketing that can potentially reach out and engage buyers on all and every step of the buying process is social media marketing (Saravanakumar & Sugantha-lakshmi, 2012). Therefore, the sort of marketing that wishes to guide

clientele through certain stages of the buying process or marketing that needs to reach the client at any time of the buying process will find it rather handy. Social media can also be used to co-create value with customers (Clark & Melancon, 2013). Customers receive value in form of coupons and discounts, decision information and breaking news, as well as importance feelings by participating in the decision-making process (Buzzeto-More, 2013; Mohammadian & Mohammadreza, 2012). Among the reports most valuable for companies is the report, which in general illustrates the fact that SMM helps gain clearer understanding of significant client segments. Through engaging these customers, business organizations can gain valuable insights in relation to customers' requirements, wants and dreams in a bid to serve them optimally, hence improving sale, profits and firm's strength (Mohammadian & Mohammadreza, 2012). Since close to 93% organization owners use social media for their organizations, Kim, Koh, Cha, and Lee (2015) asserted that social media plays a key role in restaurant promotion. Because social media is useful not only for advertisement and promotion, but is also one of the primary means of business development, the restaurant industry is one of the most active ones in this sphere.

2.7 The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Firm Performance

This paper focuses on how social media has transformed the communication process between businesses and customers, marketing, and organizational performance. Blogging sites like Facebook, twitter, Instagram, Linked I have made it easy for firms to interact with the customers and get new and unique strategies for marketing their products. Kaplan and Haenlein (2020) notes that Customer engagement is among the most important areas where social media affects the firm performance. platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn has provided firms with novel avenues to engage with their audience, gather customer insights, and implement innovative marketing strategies. Kaplan and Haenlein (2020) argue that one of the most significant

impacts of social media on firm performance is through enhanced customer engagement. Social networks give firms an opportunity to communicate with customers and develop loyalty.

Brodie et al. (2021) have pointed out that the companies' engagement on social media can result in an increase of customer satisfaction and loyalty. The study stresses on the need to have appropriately engaging and well-responsive social media strategies for the purpose of nurturing the customer relationships. In addition, Werenowska (2020) also notes that social media engagement has the benefit of making the firms' brands more approachable to consumers. The rise of platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn have provided firms with novel avenues to engage with their audience, gather customer insights, and implement innovative marketing strategies. Kaplan and Haenlein (2020) argue that one of the most significant impacts of social media on firm performance is through enhanced customer engagement. Social media platforms enable firms to interact directly with customers, fostering a sense of community and loyalty. According to Brodie et al. (2021), active engagement on social media can lead to higher customer satisfaction and retention. The study emphasizes that interactive and responsive social media strategies are crucial for building long-term relationships with customers.

Moreover, Werenowska (2020) adds that social media engagement allows firms to humanize their brands, making them more relatable to consumers. Those that use the social platform to share the stories, answer to customer questions, and address the issues create better emotional bonds with the audience. Such an emotional bond is associated with customer retention and positive word of mouth which are two fundamental concepts of long-term firm profitability (Kumar & Pansari, 2022). However, in a different view, Riaz et al. (2019), argue that, Social media also has crucial role in improving brand recognition and image.. The rise of platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn have provided firms with novel avenues to engage with their audience,

gather customer insights, and implement innovative marketing strategies. Kaplan and Haenlein (2020) argue that one of the most significant impacts of social media on firm performance is through enhanced customer engagement. Social media platforms enable firms to interact directly with customers, fostering a sense of community and loyalty.

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Moreover, Werenowska (2020) adds that social media engagement allows firms to humanize their brands, making them more relatable to consumers. Firms that effectively leverage social media to share stories, respond to customer queries, and address concerns can build stronger emotional connections with their audience. This emotional connection is linked to increased customer loyalty and advocacy, which are critical components of sustained firm performance (Kumar & Pansari, 2022).

In a different view, Riaz et al. (2019), assert that, social media also plays an important role in enhancing brand awareness and reputation. Social media platforms are currently popular than ever before, thus presenting firms with a unique opportunity to unlock the market (Salleh et. al, 2021). For example, Kaplan and Haenlein (2020) claimed that proper adoption of social media marketing boosts brand awareness and memorability to a large extent. By advertising, choosing the right influencer, and sharing viral content, firms can raise their brand awareness and gain new customers.

Also, according to Timilsina (2017), social media enables firms to control their brand image in advance. Through social media monitoring, firms stand to benefit from timely detection of

negative comments or wrong information with a propensity to harm the firms' image. A study by Van der Meer and Verhoeven (2021) shows that the companies that provide active social media crisis management are in a better position to safeguard their reputation and, therefore, their future performance. Jenn (2017) discovered that social media is a reservoir of market information and customer information that is useful for decision making and planning, Instagram, and LinkedIn has provided firms with novel avenues to engage with their audience, gather customer insights, and implement innovative marketing strategies. Kaplan and Haenlein (2020) argue that one of the most significant impacts of social media on firm performance is through enhanced customer engagement. Social media platforms enable firms to interact directly with customers, fostering a sense of community and loyalty.

According to Brodie et al. (2021), active engagement on social media can lead to higher customer satisfaction and retention. The study emphasizes that interactive and responsive social media strategies are crucial for building long-term relationships with customers. Moreover, Werenowska (2020) adds that social media engagement allows firms to humanize their brands, making them more relatable to consumers. Firms that effectively leverage social media to share stories, respond to customer queries, and address concerns can build stronger emotional connections with their audience. This emotional connection is linked to increased customer loyalty and advocacy, which are critical components of sustained firm performance (Kumar & Pansari, 2022).

In a different view, Riaz et al. (2019), assert that, social media also plays an important role in enhancing brand awareness and reputation. The widespread use of social media platforms provides firms with unparalleled opportunities to reach large and diverse audiences (Salleh et. al, 2021). For instance, Kaplan and Haenlein (2020) argue that strategic use of social media can significantly

amplify brand visibility and recognition. Through targeted advertising, influencer partnerships, and viral content, firms can increase their brand presence and attract new customers.

Additionally, Timilsina (2017) opines that social media allows firms to manage their brand reputation proactively. By monitoring social media channels, firms can quickly identify and address negative feedback or misinformation, mitigating potential damage to their reputation. A study by Van der Meer and Verhoeven (2021) highlights that firms with active social media crisis management strategies are better equipped to maintain a positive brand image during crises, thereby protecting their long-term performance.

Jenn (2017) findings revealed social media serves as a rich source of market intelligence and customer insights, which are essential for informed decision-making and strategic planning. A firm is in a position to evaluate the data collected from social media to know the customer preferences, the market trends and also the activities of competitors. As reported by He, Zha, and Li (2022), SA helps firms to receive real-time feedback and adjust their action plans. In addition, the social media channels contain important information on customers' actions and attitudes. Organizations can benefit from this data to enhance their products, targeting of advertisements and customer satisfaction. The capacity to obtain meaningful data from social media is connected to increased firm flexibility and adaptability needed for better performance in changing environments (Godes & Mayzlin, 2021).

Social media marketing can be used as a way of promoting products and thereby enhancing sales since it improves the product's exposure, generates leads and ultimately, conversions. Malthouse et al. (2021) showed that firms engaging in social media marketing have higher sales growth than those not engaging in social media marketing. According to the research, this growth is due to the

possibility of the use of social media to target the right audience and develop unique marketing experiences. Digital selling tools present directly for sale by means of such features as, shoppable posts and social selling. Such features can be used by firms to make the purchasing process easier to facilitate direct buying of products from the social media platforms. It is therefore possible for an organization to enhance the use of social media and e commerce resulting in enhanced sales and revenues (Stephen & Galak, 2022).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The methodology used to conduct this study is presented in this chapter. This chapter also covers the study's design, research approach, Population of Study, sampling strategy, sample size, and methods for data collecting and analysis.

3.1 Research Paradigm

Kuhn (2012) defined paradigm as a set of shared assumptions, beliefs and practices which are practiced in a scientific community. It is a road map, indicating what topics can and cannot be explored and how the phenomena under study can be explained within that community. The paradigm can be categorized generally, with objectivism at one pole and subjectivism at the other pole, indicating the differences between views, values and methodologies (Johnson and Duberley 2000). The choice of a research paradigm is important because the paradigm determines the basic beliefs that the researchers bring to bear on their subjects. This has implications on the approach and design of the research work in a very big way.

When conducting social science research, scholars work with declarative and tacit theories of the social context and its investigation (Bryman & Bell, 2015). These assumptions are based on ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumption (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Major paradigms of social scientific research are positivism, interpretivism, constructivism, realism, relativism, and critical realism that characterize different philosophical stances (Chan, 2015; Kim, 2003; Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991). These paradigms are the epistemological, ontological, and methodological positions of the researcher (Creswell, 2014). Consequently, it is crucial to state the philosophical stance used in a research study since the selected paradigm defines the manner in which the research's theoretical framework and methodological framework and analysis are

developed. The general concepts surrounding this paradigmatic approach are critical to the understanding of the research and its working definition. The study chose a constructivism paradigm since it fits well within the objectives of the research since it aims at capturing the views of people practicing digital marketing at Ghana Water Limited. Thus, constructivism, in general, about the understanding of knowledge as a construction of social interactions and personal experience can be used in understanding how the practices of digital marketing are perceived, given meaning and acted upon within the organization. The study used the constructivism paradigm to investigate the effect of digital marketing on GWL because it is interested in how the people in the organization create and interpret their experiences of the digital marketing practices. This paradigm is most suitable for the study as it affords the opportunity of studying the various interpretations which stakeholders have placed on digital marketing activities. Due to this emphasis on the qualitative viewpoint from the marketing managers, operational staff, and customers, the study can discover specific performances of digital marketing on the operational effectiveness and customer relations. These micro-level dynamics are where Constructivism allows one to embrace the variations since it is designed to acknowledge the various perspectives that go on in the overall evaluation of digital marketing strategies at GWL.

3.2 Research Approach

In the context of social science research, three main research paradigms: quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research are acknowledged being each advantageous in the study of social reality (Roth & Mehta 2002). Yet, all these approaches may be useful when studying the same concerns utilizing different types of data collection and analysis (Djamba & Neuman, 2002; Roth & Mehta, 2002). In the light of the suggested objectives for this study, the present researcher has chosen the qualitative paradigm. As stated above, qualitative research mostly deals with the search

for meanings that people or cultural groups give to certain aspects of social or human reality. It uses inductive approach that aims at fine grain, contextualized view and captures the richness of the phenomenon under consideration (Creswell, 2014). In contrast to quantitative approaches, which are semi structured, objective and reductionist, qualitative research seeks to describe reality from the participants' point of view, appreciating the existence of many versions of reality in any one circumstance (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). This approach is thus interpretative and constructionist by nature, recognizing the bi-directional relationship between the researcher and the participant, and cherishing the individualisms recovered in the experience (Creswell, 1994). Consequently, the qualitative method enhances the examination of the study's subject to improve the understanding of the research problem.

This research took a qualitative research approach in order to capture the detailed impacts of digital marketing on GWL. This approach is justified as it enables marketers to gain a deeper understanding of the perception that marketing professional and customers have towards marketing strategies. Besides, the study will be conducted as interviews and focus groups where they participate in collecting detailed information on how the organization's digital marketing initiatives are perceived and implemented, and their effects on GWL's operational efficiency, as well as customers. This level of understanding is necessary to parse the intricacies of the ways in which digital marketing affects each individual case study that employs them, which may not be fully revealed by metrics alone.

3.3 Research Design

Zikmund (2003) described research design as a broad framework for undertaking a research study in order to achieve its goals. This concept put much focus on sketching mechanisms for data gathering and analysis. The purpose of research design was primarily on identifying the right

methodology or approach to obtaining data, a blueprint of the research endeavor. The aim of this study was to operationalize its research paradigm, purpose, strategy, approach, and method of data collection, sample and sampling techniques, data collection sources, and survey instruments. Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012) make distinctions in regard to business research objectives as exploratory, explanatory, or descriptive objectives. As the objectives of this study reflect, exploratory research was conducted. According to Kowalczyk (2013, p 111) exploratory research is a systematic study of relatively unknown phenomena that help uncover unknowns in areas least understood. Qualitative research was conducted in this study because it aims to discover novel ideas regarding the impact of social media on the performance of firms in the real estate industry that is relatively unexplored in literature.

The study used exploratory research design to look at the effects of digital marketing on GWL because this subject is relatively new and challenging within the organization. This design is justified because the research could adaptively probe and analyze phenomenon that are still not clear or well defined in the field of digital marketing. The use of exploratory techniques enables the study to find out more information, develop hypotheses and identify key areas that need to be investigated, provides an initial investigation of how digital marketing affects GWL and customers it deals with. It also allows the identification of dynamic and change processes in the field of digital marketing activities inside the organization.

3.4 The Population of The Study

According Moffatt (2015), the population means the whole aggregate of people with certain properties of interest and relevant to the researcher. In most cases it must comprise all constituent parts within a well-defined domain. The target population in this research is global heads of marketing and digital marketing experts, GWL staff, and individuals who use GWL digital

platforms. This population is justified because such individuals are those engaged in or exposed to the GWL's digital marketing endeavours and therefore would be in the best position to offer insights about the current state of digital marketing, its effects on organizational performance and consumers in particular. By targeting these stakeholders, the study will be better placed to collate relevant data that will answer the research questions and objectives based on responses of people who are in close interaction with GWL's digital marketing strategies.

3.5 Sampling Technique

Sampling means pulling out of a larger population some units which can be used to make general guesses about the population from the research results obtained. Again, the size of the sample varies with the kind of data analysis needed, the level of accuracy, and heterogeneity (Warfield, 2010). Which probability sampling techniques to use or whether to use non-probability sampling techniques have an impact on the sample's representativeness, time, cost, and accessibility (Cooper and Schindler, 2008). In this research, since an exploratory research design is employed, a non-probability purposive sampling technique was adopted. This means that, the subjects to be used in the study are chosen in a way that they are in possession of the data required for the understanding of the research problem hence limiting the generation of misleading results (Patton, 1990). There are two types of purposive sampling as follows: Targeted purposive sampling aims at identifying narrow, heterogeneous 'information-rich' cases that are most relevant to the study objectives (Morse, 2010; Patton, 2015). This method, which is a type of non-probability sampling, enables purposeful assessment, unlike random sampling, which involves a deliberate choice made subject to given criteria to confirm that the participants have experience in the phenomenon under consideration (Creswell, 2014). For this reason, purposive sampling is appropriate in such research

since it embraces the general study aims, as well as offers precise information under the explorative research strategy.

In this study, purposive sampling was used to purposefully select participants from Ghana Water Limited (GWL) who are engaged in or who have information regarding digital marketing. This sampling technique is justified because it enables the research to target personnel who are best suited to contribute to the research goals, objectives and questions to the study including marketing managers, digital marketing specialists, operational employees, active customers and others. Involving these particular participants, the study is capable of acquiring rich and relevant information that pertains to elements of the research questions concerning the current state of digital marketing, its effects on operational effectiveness, and customers. In purposive sampling, the method ensures that data collected is adequate and relevant hence improving the study's likelihood of giving recommendations that are useful.

3.6 Data Collection Method

In qualitative research methodologies, recognizing the socio-cultural context during data collection and analysis is crucial for achieving a comprehensive understanding of the subjects under study (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016). Qualitative data, which cannot be quantified numerically, is conveyed through textual content, spoken narratives, auditory elements, or visual cues during interpretation and description (Bryman & Bell, 2005). Interviews, a prevalent method in qualitative research, were chosen for this study. They involve structured conversations with a series of questions and responses (Bell, 2005), and can be conducted face-to-face, over the phone, or through online platforms (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016). This flexibility allows for the exploration of individuals' experiences and perspectives from their unique viewpoints. In some cases, interviews may become informal conversations, blurring the lines between interviewer and

interviewee, which highlights the need for methodologies that gather rich and reliable data. For this research, interviews were selected as the primary qualitative data collection method, guided by a well-constructed interview guide and recorded using a recording device for accurate transcription.

The selection of interviews as the qualitative data collection method for this study was justified by the need to capture in-depth, contextual insights into the participants' experiences and perspectives. Given the study's focus on understanding the nuanced ways social media strategies are perceived and implemented by real estate firms, interviews offered a flexible and rich data collection approach. This method allowed the researchers to explore individual viewpoints in detail and adapt questions based on the flow of conversation, thereby uncovering underlying themes and patterns that might have been missed by other methods. Furthermore, the use of interviews facilitated the gathering of complex, narrative data essential for addressing the study's exploratory objectives, which aimed to provide a deeper understanding of the phenomenon within its socio-cultural context.

3.7 Data Analysis

Qualitative research process starts by gathering data in the form of notes, interview recordings or texts, documents etc. The first of these is the selective and broad one: This initial phase seeks to both identify and tease out the various possible meanings inherent in the given shade of event or outcome. However, Djamba and Neuman (2002) noted that the first cut can be considered as preliminary and inadequate, to propose a rigorous programmatic methodological layout that entails data categorization, articulation, explication, and pattern/context recognition (Djamba, 2002). For this study, thematic analysis was used in analysis of the collected data. The research aims to explore, scrutinize and ensure that there is understanding of coherence and patterns that are

inherent in the data collected from the interviews. More so, it aims to provide a framework that is designed to incorporate aspects that are relevant to the study while at the same time acknowledging side issues that are discovered from the interviews qualitatively (Yin, 2004). Pacing, pitch, stress, timing, and silence were deliberately logged together with the data following their transcription. The researcher also played an active role in notes taking and code generation during the coding level. These codes and themes stem from the raw data, and signal patterns of main concern that aligned well with the research inquiries (Guest et al., 2013). This interview data was then grouped into thematic clusters of the study and analyzed thematically.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter provides the discussions of the study findings based on the thematic analysis in light of the formulated objectives. Qualitative research approach used for the study allowed the researcher to elicit participants' impression on the effects of digital marketing GWL. The analysis is structured around the study's three key objectives: examining the predictions for current state of digital marketing in GWL organization and reconsidering its contribution to the enhancement of the company's operational performance, customer interactions and satisfaction. In each section, the participants' voices are included to support the rationale of the emerged themes in order to include a detailed picture of the phenomenon under study.

4.1 The Current State of Digital Marketing at Ghana Water Limited

The first research question of the current study was to examine the current level of digital marketing implementation at GWL. The participants provided various insights that could provide valuable insights on the possibilities that reign in the use of digital marketing and the issues that were experienced in the course of the company's usage of this form of marketing. That is why these insights brought some constructive advancements and some setbacks that can be expected from an organization that is in a process of digital transformation at the present moment, such as GWL. As one of the areas of concern, the issue of social media was tackled with regard to the GWL. A digital marketing manager highlighted the organization's efforts to build an online presence, stating:

Our current strategies include active engagement on social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram. These platforms allow us to share updates on water supply schedules, maintenance activities, and payment options. However, we are still learning to

balance our content to make it both engaging and informative. This requires significant time and expertise, which we are gradually building.

This statement underlines the importance of the social media for GWL as the means of communication and cooperation with the customers. Website like Face book and Instagram can be used for real time update creating a link to the customer base for the company. Though, the continuous battle to fight between interactivity and information supports the fact that it requires specific expertise and active work to maintain relevant content. One of the participants also expressed that although GWL mainly centralise customer information on a website, this has certain limitations. They noted:

The website serves as a hub for customer information, including service updates and payment options. Yet, its usability remains an issue. Customers often complain about difficulties navigating the site, particularly on mobile devices. We know the website holds great potential for improving customer access, but there is a need for more investment in its optimization.

This perspective points to a critical gap in GWL's digital infrastructure. A functional and user-friendly website is essential for enhancing customer experience, particularly as more users rely on mobile devices for access. The inability to navigate the site effectively creates barriers to customer satisfaction and reduces the overall effectiveness of digital marketing efforts. Consistency in digital marketing emerged as another challenge. A senior marketing officer elaborated on this issue, stating:

The consistency of our posts and updates is not always assured. Sometimes, urgent announcements about water interruptions or new policies delay because our team has limited capacity to create timely content. This inconsistency affects customer trust and our reputation online.

This insight highlights the operational challenges faced by GWL's marketing team. Inconsistent communication, especially concerning urgent matters, undermines customer confidence and the reliability of digital platforms as a source of information. This challenge reflects a broader need for adequate staffing and streamlined processes to ensure timely updates. The integration of traditional and digital marketing approaches was another theme explored. A participant from the operational department explained:

While digital marketing is an important part of our communication strategy, we still heavily rely on traditional methods like radio announcements and physical notices. Bridging these two approaches is key, but the transition is slow due to budget constraints and limited expertise.

This statement illustrates the hybrid nature of GWL's marketing efforts. While digital marketing has opened new channels for communication, traditional methods remain dominant, especially in areas where digital literacy and internet access are limited. The slow transition reflects systemic challenges, such as limited funding and the need for capacity-building, which hinder full adoption of digital marketing strategies. Social media's role as a feedback mechanism was also emphasized.

One respondent stated:

Social media has become a valuable platform for customer feedback. Customers often post complaints or inquiries, which we address directly. This interaction has improved our understanding of customer needs, although it sometimes overwhelms our small team."

This comment highlights how social media has transformed customer interaction, providing a direct and accessible platform for feedback. However, the volume of inquiries can strain resources, indicating the need for a scalable solution to manage customer engagement effectively. Finally, the utility of email marketing was discussed by a customer service representative, who observed:

Our email provides valuable updates on water conservation tips and service changes. While effective, the challenge lies in expanding our

email list to reach a larger audience, particularly those who are not digitally inclined.

This reflection highlights the fact that email marketing can be used as a communication tool and at the same time poses a question of how to reach the audience. Even if newsletters provide targeted and rather informative content, the number of recipients is rather limited to the extent of the email list which has a negative effect mainly on non-digital customers. The implications mentioned in the findings reflect the need for embracing digitization in marketing, especially for GWL which has improved on social media, e-mail and its website in communicating with customers. However, some issues remain crucial when using these strategies; for instance, resource limitations, web design, content uniformity and, accessibility. Overcoming these challenges will require the investment to enhance technology acquisitions, staff training, and installation of infrastructure to support the integration of digital marketing in GWL.

4.2 The Impact of Digital Marketing on Operational Efficiency

The second objective focused on assessing how digital marketing has influenced the operational efficiency of Ghana Water Limited (GWL). Participants provided valuable insights, highlighting successes such as streamlined processes, enhanced communication, and cost reductions, while also pointing out significant hurdles related to customer literacy, data utilization, and staff training. A key area of success identified by participants was the integration of online payment platforms. An operational staff member explained:

The integration of online payment platforms has made a huge difference in our operations. Customers can now pay their bills from the comfort of their homes, reducing congestion at our offices. However, some users face challenges with the payment interface, which creates additional workload for our support team."

This observation underscores the transformative potential of digital payment systems in simplifying billing processes and reducing administrative burdens. However, technical issues with

the payment interface highlight the need for system improvements and user support mechanisms.

Another significant improvement noted was in data management. A senior IT officer shared:

Digital marketing tools have allowed us to gather data on customer behavior. For example, social media analytics help us understand peak hours for customer engagement, enabling us to plan our campaigns better. Despite this, we lack advanced tools to analyze and fully utilize the data we collect."

This comment reflects the dual role of digital marketing in facilitating data collection and exposing gaps in analytical capabilities. While tools like social media analytics provide valuable insights, the absence of advanced data management systems limits GWL's ability to make data-driven decisions and optimize operations effectively. Participants also highlighted the cost-efficiency of digital marketing relative to traditional advertising methods. As one participant explained:

Using digital platforms has reduced our reliance on costly methods like newspaper advertisements. Social media ads are not only cheaper but also more targeted. However, the return on investment is not always clear, as we struggle with tracking conversions effectively.

This perspective illustrates the financial benefits of digital marketing, particularly in terms of reducing overhead costs and reaching more targeted audiences. However, the lack of clear metrics for measuring the success of digital campaigns indicates an area for improvement in tracking and evaluating performance. Another key impact was the improvement in communication speed. A customer service representative noted:

"Previously, notifying customers about service interruptions took days. Now, with social media and email alerts, we can disseminate information almost instantly. This has greatly improved our operational response time and reduced customer frustration."

This enhanced communication capability is a significant advantage of digital marketing, allowing GWL to respond quickly to operational issues and keep customers informed. Timely updates reduce customer anxiety and improve the company's overall service delivery. Despite these successes, challenges persist, particularly regarding customer literacy and accessibility. One participant stated:

One of the barriers to operational efficiency is that not all our customers are tech-savvy. Many still prefer to visit our offices for inquiries or payments, which limits the full potential of our digital efforts.

This observation highlights the digital divide as a major obstacle to operational efficiency. Customers who lack the skills or resources to engage with digital platforms rely on traditional methods, limiting the impact of GWL's digital transformation. Bridging this gap requires targeted educational initiatives and support for less tech-savvy customers. Finally, participants addressed the challenges of staff adaptation to digital tools. A marketing manager noted:

Training our team to adapt to digital tools has been both a necessity and a challenge. While younger staff are quick to learn, some of our senior employees struggle with the shift to digital platforms, slowing down the overall process.

This statement reflects the internal challenges of capacity-building within the organization. While younger employees may adapt quickly to digital systems, older staff may require additional support and training, underscoring the importance of a comprehensive and inclusive training strategy. These narratives illustrate how digital marketing has improved operational efficiency at GWL by streamlining processes, reducing costs, and enabling faster communication. However, the findings also reveal critical gaps in infrastructure, customer digital literacy, data analytics, and staff training that need to be addressed. By investing in these areas, GWL can fully realize the operational benefits of its digital marketing strategies and enhance its overall service delivery.

4.3 The Impact of Digital Marketing on Customer Engagement and Satisfaction

The third objective of this study explored the influence of digital marketing on customer engagement and satisfaction at Ghana Water Limited (GWL). Participants highlighted both the successes achieved through digital initiatives and the persistent challenges that hinder inclusive and effective customer interaction. One significant finding was the interactive nature of social media, which has revolutionized GWL's customer engagement. A marketing officer explained:

Social media has transformed how we engage with customers. They can now comment on our posts, send direct messages, or participate in polls. This two-way communication has made customers feel more connected, though it also opens us up to criticism, which we must address carefully.

This reflects the dual-edged nature of social media as a tool for engagement. While it fosters stronger connections and real-time interaction, it also requires GWL to manage feedback—both positive and critical with care. Such interactions demonstrate transparency and responsiveness, enhancing trust and satisfaction, but they also demand consistent monitoring and resource allocation. Another key insight was the emotional connection fostered by personalized messages campaigns. A respondent noted:

Messages are crafted to address specific customer concerns, such as tips for reducing water bills or preparing for service disruptions. These personalized messages show that we care, which has improved customer satisfaction overall.

Personalized communication demonstrates that GWL values its customers' individual needs, reinforcing a sense of care and attention. This aligns with the principles of relationship marketing, which emphasize building long-term, personalized connections to enhance customer loyalty and satisfaction.

Participants also emphasized the importance of feedback mechanisms in improving customer relations. A customer service officer explained:

Online surveys have been a game-changer for gathering customer opinions. For example, our recent survey on billing preferences helped us understand customer frustrations and adjust accordingly. This proactive engagement builds trust.

Feedback tools such as online surveys enable GWL to identify customer pain points and take corrective actions, promoting a sense of partnership and inclusion in service delivery. This approach not only addresses immediate concerns but also fosters trust by demonstrating responsiveness to customer input. Again, the immediacy of responses via social media was noted as a significant improvement over traditional communication method. One customer remarked:

I posted a query about my water bill on their Facebook page, and they responded within minutes. This level of responsiveness was unheard of with traditional methods like phone calls or in-person visits.

This demonstrates the effectiveness of digital platforms in providing quick and efficient customer support. Such responsiveness not only resolves issues promptly but also enhances customer satisfaction by reducing wait times and uncertainty. Lastly, participants reflected on the impact of digital content on brand perception. A member of the communications team shared:

By sharing educational content on water conservation and environmental sustainability, we've seen a positive shift in how customers view GWL. They now see us as more than just a service provider but as an advocate for sustainable practices.

This indicates how digital marketing can shape public perception beyond the immediate scope of service delivery. By positioning itself as a socially responsible organization, GWL strengthens its brand image and builds goodwill among its customers. The findings reveal significant strides in customer engagement and satisfaction through digital marketing initiatives, including interactive social media, personalized campaigns, and effective feedback mechanisms. However, challenges

such as limited accessibility and the need for continuous management of digital interactions highlight areas requiring attention.

The analysis indicates that digital marketing has brought substantial improvements in customer engagement and satisfaction at GWL. The ability to interact with customers in real-time, personalize communication, and leverage feedback mechanisms has strengthened customer relationships and enhanced satisfaction. However, issues such as the digital divide and resource limitations must be addressed to ensure inclusivity and sustained success. By bridging these gaps, GWL can maximize the potential of digital marketing to meet its customer engagement goals and foster long-term loyalty.

Discussion

The discussion connects the study's results to existing literature and the theoretical framework of Dynamic Capabilities Theory. Each objective is addressed in relation to previous studies and relevant theoretical insights to provide a comprehensive understanding of the findings.

Objective One: The Current State of Digital Marketing at GWL

The research established that GWL has made some strides in integrating Digital Marketing, with social media presence, the provision of the newsletter, and a website. However, it was also found that some of the barriers were a weak use of technical solutions, variability in approach, and poor website design. The present research supports Ryan (2016)'s idea that digital marketing must be consistent and have enough resources to be successful. Likewise, Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) posit that for 'digital marketing' to improve brand awareness and its relationship with customers, organizations need to establish usable platforms and staff.

The problem that GWL has faced includes issues of web usability, which are disclosure with the findings of Asiedu (2020) who pointed that effective web optimization is crucial in enhancing customer access in the public utilities. In addition, the integration of traditional promotional tools alongside the digital also supports the assertion by Ocloo and Tsetse (2013), that organizations in emergent economy have limited resources when implementing online marketing strategies.

From the theoretical analysis, the Dynamic Capabilities Theory holds ground with regards to the notion that resources in organizations have to be transformed to suit new environments (Teece et al., 1997). That is why, attempts at building digital marketing capabilities are still present in GWL's initiatives, albeit only at the first stage. Nevertheless, the results suggest that more resources and capacity strengthening are required to support these endeavours, which corresponds to the theory's principles about managing flexibility and resource utilization.

Objective Two: The Impact of Digital Marketing on Operational Efficiency

Overall, GWL has benefited from digital marketing in its operations through the enhancement of billing and cutting on expenses relating to other marketing techniques. These findings are similar to Todor's work (2016) that pointed out that companies noted that digital marketing was cheaper than traditional marketing. Also, Kemp (2020) established that digital tools improve response time in operations, an advantage seen in GWL's timely social media and email communication of service notices.

But at the same time the research showed threats like customers' low level of digital competence and lack of suitable data analysis instruments. This concurs with the findings of Leeflang et al. (2014) who asserted that firms sometimes fail to optimally implement the benefits of digital marketing because of inadequate operational capabilities in data management as well as limited

customer uptake. This paper explains how the Dynamic Capabilities Theory can help to understand how GWL might overcome these challenges. This way the organization can increase and improve the configurability of its resources through improving its digital environment and providing training to its employees and customers. This process is important in the ability to design and implement incremental, sustained operations improvements during a time of constantly growing digital shifts. The study showed that Digital marketing has improved the level of communication with the GWL customers through social media marketing, email marketing and feedback. These efforts are in support with Kaplan and Haenlein (2020) differentiations where social media promotes two-way communication that leads to the establishment of better and close emotional bonds between the organizations and their customers. In the same vein, Mensah (2021) explained the necessity of online survey in collecting relevant information from customers to enhance service delivery.

But the fact is that when comparing the frequencies of using ICT, not all categories showed an increased interest, and the problem of digital divide emerged. This challenge is similar to the argument made by Constantinides (2020) that digital marketing's efficiency depends on equal technology opportunities. Further, the requirement for timely and relevant information puts an emphasis on specific content marketing as described by Holliman & Rowley (2019).

The Dynamic Capabilities Theory takes this argument a step further by emphasizing the centrality of adaptability judgments in customer engagement approaches. The use of digital tools in dealing with customers' concerns is also an indication of the fact that GWL had intended to create dynamic capabilities at an initial stage. But, to achieve better accessibility to its website and enhance the availability of its other digital endeavors, more innovation and funding will be needed. By so

doing, GWL can improve on its interaction with customers as well as increase their level of satisfaction.

Conclusion

Across all objectives, the study's findings demonstrate GWL's ongoing efforts to adapt to the demands of digital transformation. The Dynamic Capabilities Theory, which emphasizes an organization's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure resources to respond to changing environments, provides a robust framework for interpreting these efforts. GWL's adoption of digital marketing represents an attempt to build the capabilities necessary for enhancing operational efficiency and customer engagement. However, the challenges identified ranging from limited digital literacy to resource constraints highlight the need for a more strategic approach to developing these capabilities. The theory suggests that organizations must not only adopt new tools but also continuously innovate and refine their processes to remain competitive. For GWL, this means addressing the identified gaps and leveraging its digital marketing efforts more effectively to achieve sustained improvements.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the study, highlighting key findings related to the impact of digital marketing on the business operations of Ghana Water Limited (GWL). It also draws conclusions based on the findings and offers recommendations to address the challenges identified. By reflecting on the study's objectives, this chapter provides actionable insights for GWL to enhance its digital marketing strategies and improve operational efficiency and customer satisfaction.

5.1 Summary

The study aimed to examine the influence of digital marketing on GWL's operations, focusing on three main objectives: reviewing the literature on digital marketing to identify where it is now, measuring its effectiveness for improving operational effectiveness, and analyzing its effectiveness for interacting with customers and making them happy. The study established that GWL has advanced in the right direction in embracing new media marketing, including social media, an E-Newsletter, and an official website. However, these efforts are faced with various challenges such as: inconsistency, inadequate resources, and the aspect of e-commerce to customers.

On the aspect of operation efficiency, the research established that digital marketing has provided easy solutions to issue like billing and communication. Although, there are still shortcomings of widespread infrastructure and inadequate digital literacy of some customers to unleash these advantages fully. Through customer contacts and feedback through the Internet, GWL has also noted positive effects of interaction through ICT platforms, but the gap in Internet technologies reduces the impact of these measures especially in the rural areas. The study shows that digital marketing can be highly beneficial to GWL although the organization requires to make strategic

investment and development in ICT infrastructure in order to overcome the challenges that have been highlighted.

5.2 Conclusion of Study

In view of the above analysis, the study concludes that digital marketing has brought about positive, albeit mixed fortunes to GWL's business operations. Positive developments like the use of social media and online payment have enhanced the interaction with the customers and operationalization of services but issues to do with; digital literacy, resource management as well as accessibility are still major hurdles. The studies presented in this paper support the Dynamic Capabilities Theory that specifies the importance of adapting resources for organizations to prosper in a complex environment. To the same degree, GWL can establish more effective long-term trends for digital marketing and increase stakeholder satisfaction by adopting more comprehensive approaches.

5.3 Recommendations of Study

- **Enhancing Digital Literacy and Accessibility:** GWL should invest in programs to improve digital literacy among its customers.
- **Optimizing Digital Platforms:** The usability of GWL's website should be improved to enhance customer experience, particularly on mobile devices. Regular updates, user-friendly interfaces, and multilingual support could make the website more accessible and effective.
- **Capacity-Building for Staff:** Training programs should be introduced to equip staff with the skills needed to effectively manage digital marketing tools and platforms. This includes technical training for senior employees who may struggle with adopting new technologies.

- **Data Analytics Integration:** GWL should invest in advanced data analytics tools to maximize the insights gained from customer interactions on digital platforms. These tools would enable more targeted campaigns, better resource allocation, and informed decision-making.
- **Expanding Digital Marketing Efforts:** GWL could diversify its digital marketing strategies by exploring additional platforms such as video marketing and influencer collaborations to enhance brand visibility and customer engagement.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establishing a robust monitoring and evaluation framework would help GWL track the performance of its digital marketing initiatives. Regular assessments would ensure that strategies are aligned with organizational goals and customer needs.

Conclusion

The adoption of digital marketing presents a transformative opportunity for GWL to enhance its operations and customer relationships. While progress has been made, addressing the challenges identified in this study is critical for unlocking the full potential of digital marketing. By implementing the recommendations provided, GWL can position itself as a forward-thinking utility provider, ensuring both operational excellence and customer satisfaction in an increasingly digitalized world.

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