

DIGITAL MARKETING AND ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF AUTOMOBILE MANUFACTURING FIRMS IN PORT HARCOURT

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ABSTRACT

This study examined digital marketing and organisational performance of automobile manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. Correlational survey design was adopted for this study. The population of this study was 60 managers from automobile manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. The study adopted the census techniques. Structured questionnaire instrument title "Digital Marketing and Organisational Performance Questionnaire (DMOPQ)". Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.77 was used ascertained. PPMC (Person Product Moment Correlation) was used to test hypotheses on SPSS version 25. The study finds out that there is a significant relationship between pay-per-click advertising and sales performance of automobile manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. There is a significant relationship between green Production and productivity of manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. There is a significant relationship between social media marketing and market share growth of automobile manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. The study recommended among others that automobile manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt should allocate more resources to targeted PPC campaigns to attract specific segments of potential buyers.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, digital marketing has emerged as a critical tool for enhancing organizational performance, particularly within the competitive landscape of automobile manufacturing. Digital marketing refers to the use of digital technologies, such as websites, social media, email marketing, and search engine optimization, to promote products and services (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). For automobile manufacturing firms, adopting digital marketing strategies is crucial for building brand visibility, attracting customers, and driving sales. The rapid evolution of digital marketing practices has reshaped the way businesses interact with consumers, making it essential for organizations to adapt to these changes to remain competitive.

The concept of digital marketing encompasses a range of online strategies and tools designed to promote products and services through digital channels. These include social media marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), email marketing, content marketing, and pay-per-click advertising (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). The integration of these digital strategies allows firms to reach broader audiences, personalize customer interactions, and gather valuable data analytics that inform decision-making processes.

Pay-per-click advertising is a model of internet marketing where advertisers pay a fee each time one of their ads is clicked. This approach enables firms to gain immediate visibility on search engines and other platforms, driving traffic to their websites (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). Research indicates that PPC advertising can lead to higher conversion rates compared to traditional advertising methods due to its ability to target specific demographics and interests (Kumar et al., 2012).

Social media marketing is a subset of digital marketing that involves the use of social media platforms to promote products, services, or brands. It includes creating and sharing content such as text, images, videos, and advertisements on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and others to engage with a target audience. Social media marketing aims to increase brand awareness, drive website traffic, and boost sales by fostering direct communication between businesses and consumers. This strategy also allows companies to measure engagement,

gather customer feedback, and refine marketing efforts based on analytics (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

Research shows that firms that effectively integrate digital marketing strategies tend to experience enhanced organizational performance and this performance is often measured through various indicators such as market share, customer retention, and profitability (Hollensen, 2020). Automobile manufacturers can use data analytics and customer feedback gathered from digital marketing efforts to make informed decisions, optimize production processes, and respond to market demands more efficiently (Ryan, 2021).

In the context of Port Harcourt's automobile manufacturing sector, digital marketing can significantly enhance organisational performance by improving brand visibility, increasing customer engagement, and driving sales growth. The city serves as a critical hub for automotive production in Nigeria; thus, firms operating within this environment must leverage digital tools to maintain competitive advantage. Research indicates that companies that adopt comprehensive digital marketing strategies experience improved operational efficiency and higher profitability (Bharati & Chaudhury). In an era where consumers rely heavily on online reviews and digital content to make purchasing decisions, it is vital for automobile manufacturers in Port Harcourt to embrace these digital tools to improve their overall performance. It is on this background that the study explores digital marketing (pay-per-click advertising and social media marketing) and organisational performance (sales performance and market share growth) of automobile manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt

Statement of the Problem

Despite the growing recognition of digital marketing's potential, many automobile manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt are still struggling to fully leverage the benefits of pay-per-click (PPC) advertising and social media marketing to enhance their organizational performance. While these firms invest in traditional marketing strategies, they often overlook or underutilize digital tools, which could lead to missed opportunities in capturing market share and driving sales growth. Moreover, the impact of digital marketing on critical performance metrics such as sales performance and market share growth remains under-researched within the local context of Port Harcourt's automobile sector.

The challenge lies in the effective implementation of PPC and social media marketing strategies that align with the evolving consumer behaviors in the digital age. Many firms lack the expertise or resources to optimize these strategies, leading to inefficiencies in targeting the right audience and measuring campaign success. Additionally, the competitive nature of the automobile industry requires firms to adopt dynamic and data-driven marketing approaches, yet many local manufacturers continue to rely on outdated methods that do not yield significant results.

As a result, there is a pressing need to investigate how digital marketing particularly PPC advertising and social media marketing affects the organizational performance of automobile manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. This study seeks to address this gap by examining the extent to which these digital strategies contribute to sales performance and market share growth, providing insights into how firms can enhance their competitiveness in a rapidly changing market. It is against this pitfall that the study examined digital marketing and organisational performance of automobile manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt

Conceptual Framework

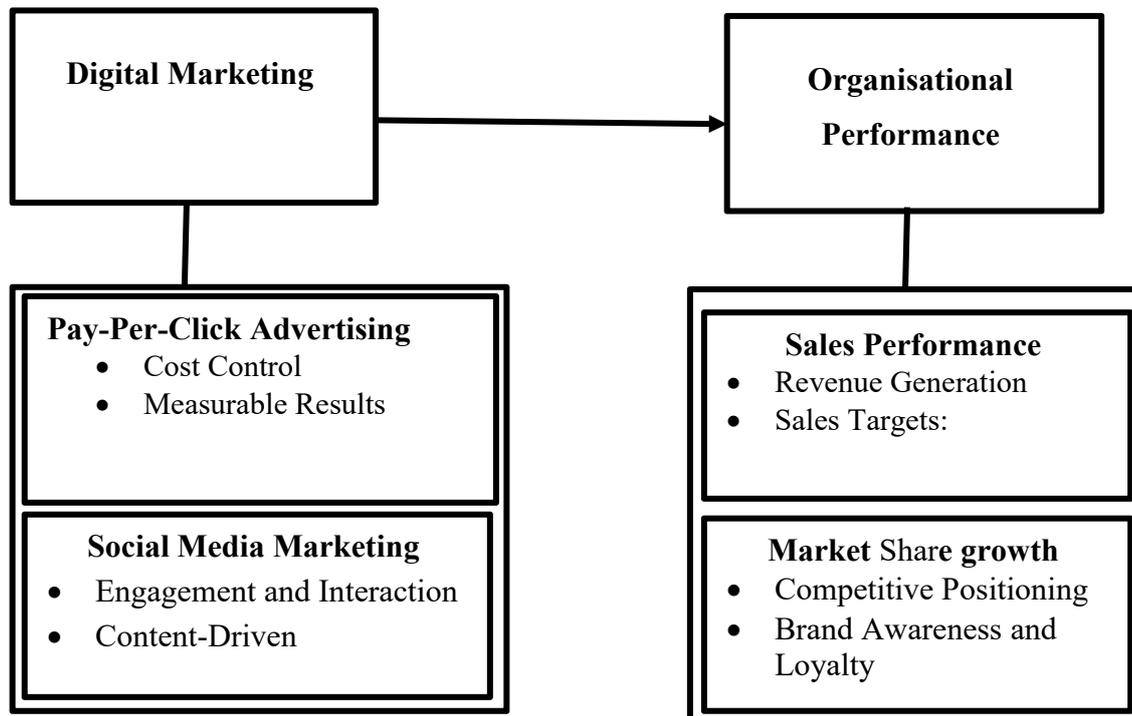


Figure 1: Conceptual framework on Digital Marketing and Organisational Performance of Automobile Manufacturing Firms in Port Harcourt

Source: Chaffey et al., (2019), Ryan (2016), Jones (2017)

Aim and Objectives

The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between digital marketing and organisational performance of automobile manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. The specific objectives are:

1. To determine the relationship between pay-per-click advertising and sales performance of automobile manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.
2. To ascertain the relationship between social media marketing and market share growth of automobile manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. What is the relationship between pay-per-click advertising and sales performance of automobile manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt?
2. What is the relationship between social media marketing and market share growth of automobile manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt?

Hypothesis

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at a significant level of 0.05.

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between pay-per-click advertising and sales performance of automobile manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between social media marketing and market share growth of automobile manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

Significance of the Study

Managers: Digital marketing, particularly pay-per-click (PPC) advertising and social media marketing, provides managers with real-time data and insights that enable more informed decision-making. Managers can track customer behavior, monitor the performance of marketing campaigns, and adjust strategies for optimal impact

Organizations: For automobile manufacturing firms, digital marketing improves overall organizational performance by enhancing visibility, boosting sales, and expanding market share. PPC advertising allows organizations to compete in a saturated market like Port Harcourt by capturing qualified leads, while social media marketing builds brand loyalty and customer relationships.

Customers: Digital marketing offers customers an enhanced shopping experience by providing easy access to information about vehicles, promotions, and services through PPC and social media platforms.

Employees: Digital marketing also benefits employees by creating opportunities for upskilling in new marketing technologies, such as social media management, content creation, and data analytics.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This section reviewed extant literatures under the headings of conceptual review, theoretical review and empirical review.

Conceptual Review

Digital Marketing

Digital marketing is a multifaceted approach to promoting products, services, or brands through digital channels and it represents an evolution in how businesses communicate with consumers in an increasingly digital world. Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) define digital marketing as the application of the internet and related digital technologies in conjunction with traditional communications to achieve marketing objectives. This includes the use of websites, social media, email, and search engine marketing to connect with customers and promote products and services. Kotler, Armstrong, and Opresnik (2021) define digital marketing as the use of digital tools such as websites, social media, mobile apps, and email to engage customers, build customer relationships, and deliver promotions and content tailored to individual customer needs.

Digital marketing has become an essential tool for businesses in the 21st century, offering numerous benefits such as cost-effective advertising, precise audience targeting, real-time data analytics, and enhanced customer engagement. Unlike traditional marketing methods, digital marketing enables businesses to reach global audiences quickly through platforms like social media, search engines, and email campaigns, providing opportunities for growth and expansion. Moreover, it allows businesses to measure the effectiveness of their campaigns instantly, make data-driven decisions, and personalize interactions with customers, leading to better customer satisfaction and higher return on investment (ROI) (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). As a result, digital marketing has become indispensable for companies seeking to remain competitive and adapt to the fast-paced changes in the global market.

Dimensions of Digital Marketing

Pay-Per-Click Advertising

Pay-Per-Click advertising, commonly abbreviated as PPC, is an online marketing model in which advertisers pay a fee each time one of their ads is clicked. This model is primarily used to drive traffic to websites, where the advertiser pays only for actual visits rather than for ad impressions. According to Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019), PPC allows businesses to gain visibility in search

engine results pages (SERPs) through sponsored listings, enabling them to target specific keywords that are relevant to their products or services (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick). This targeted approach not only enhances the likelihood of conversions but also provides measurable results that can be analyzed for optimization.

In the context of digital marketing strategies, PPC plays a crucial role in enhancing brand visibility and driving immediate traffic. According to Kotler et al. (2021), PPC advertising not only complements organic search efforts but also serves as a critical tool for businesses looking to establish a quick market presence. The strategic use of PPC can lead to increased brand awareness, customer acquisition, and ultimately higher sales volumes when executed effectively.

Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing is defined as the process of gaining website traffic or attention through social media sites. It involves creating content that users will share with their social network to help a company increase brand exposure and broaden customer reach (Tuten et al., 2020). This definition emphasizes the strategic aspect of social media marketing, where businesses leverage platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn to engage with their audience in a more interactive manner than traditional marketing methods allow.

social media marketing is described as a form of digital marketing that utilizes various social networks to promote products or services while engaging with consumers in real-time conversations. This definition underscores the interactive nature of social media marketing compared to traditional forms of advertising where communication is typically one-way (Ashley et al., 2019).

Social media marketing has emerged as a pivotal strategy for businesses to engage with consumers, leveraging platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to enhance brand visibility, foster customer relationships, and drive sales through targeted advertising and content creation. The goal is not only to promote products but also to foster community engagement and build relationships with customers.

Organisational Performance

Richard et al., (2009) define organizational performance as the measurement of a company's efficiency and effectiveness in achieving its objectives, often evaluated through financial metrics such as profitability, return on assets, and revenue growth, as well as non-financial indicators like customer satisfaction and employee engagement. They argue that it is a multidimensional construct that reflects how well an organisation utilizes its resources to produce desired outcomes (Richard et al., 2009).

Kaplan and Norton (1992) describe organizational performance as the balanced assessment of a firm's operations, combining financial measures with key performance indicators in areas such as customer satisfaction, internal processes, and the organization's capacity to innovate and grow. This definition emphasizes the multidimensional nature of performance beyond financial outcomes. This comprehensive view allows organisations to assess their overall effectiveness in achieving long-term sustainability.

One key benefit of measuring organizational performance is that it provides insights into a company's strengths and areas for improvement, enabling informed decision-making. By regularly assessing both financial and non-financial performance metrics, organizations can identify inefficiencies, improve resource allocation, and strategically align operations with long-term goals, ultimately leading to sustained competitive advantage (Richard et al., 2009). Understanding and effectively managing organizational performance is crucial for achieving long-term success and sustainability. By adopting a comprehensive approach that considers multiple dimensions, organizations can ensure they meet their strategic goals and adapt to changing market conditions.

Measures of Organisational Performance

Sales Performance

Sales performance refers to the outcomes of sales activities that contribute to an organization's overall success. This includes evaluating the efficiency of sales processes, the effectiveness of sales strategies, and the ability to meet or exceed predetermined goals. It is crucial for assessing organizational health and guiding strategic decision-making (Churchill et al., 2018).

Sales performance is defined as the effectiveness with which a sales team or individual achieves their sales targets and objectives, often measured through metrics such as revenue generated, number of units sold, and customer acquisition rates. It encompasses not only the quantitative aspects of sales but also qualitative factors such as customer satisfaction and relationship management (Ingram et al., 2019).

Sales performance is a critical driver of success in the marketing environment, as it not only enhances revenue generation and market share but also fosters customer loyalty and brand reputation through effective relationship management and targeted sales strategies (Ingram et al., 2019).

Market Share Growth

Market share growth refers to the increase in a company's sales relative to its competitors within a specific market over a defined period (Baker & Saren, 2019). It is a crucial indicator of a firm's competitive position and performance, reflecting its ability to attract and retain customers compared to its rivals. As businesses strive to expand their market presence, growth in market share often signifies effective marketing strategies, product differentiation, and superior customer service.

Market share growth refers to the increase in the percentage of an industry's total sales that a specific company achieves over a period of time (Barney & Hesterly, 2019). This metric is critical for businesses as it indicates their competitive position within the market and their effectiveness in attracting and retaining customers. A growing market share often reflects successful marketing strategies, product differentiation, and overall business performance.

In today's dynamic business environment, organizations leverage various tactics to achieve market share growth, including innovative product offerings, competitive pricing, targeted advertising, and strategic partnerships. Furthermore, understanding consumer preferences and market trends is essential for firms seeking to enhance their market share, as it allows them to make informed decisions that align with customer needs and expectations.

Achieving significant market share growth can lead to numerous advantages, such as increased brand recognition, economies of scale, and enhanced bargaining power with suppliers. However, it also poses challenges, as firms must continually adapt to market fluctuations and competitor actions to sustain their growth. In essence, market share growth is not only a measure of a company's success but also a vital driver of long-term viability and competitiveness in the marketplace.

Theoretical Review

Diffusion of Innovations Theory

The diffusion of innovations theory, developed by Everett Rogers in 1962, is a framework that seeks to explain how, why, and at what rate new ideas and technology spread within cultures. The diffusion of innovations theory describes the pattern and speed at which new ideas, practices, or products spread through a population. The main players in the theory are innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards.

The diffusion of innovations theory is highly relevant to digital marketing and organizational performance of automobile manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt as it elucidates how new marketing technologies, such as pay-per-click (PPC) advertising and social media platforms, are

adopted within this industry. This theory highlights the process through which these firms can effectively integrate innovative digital marketing strategies into their operations, thereby influencing their competitive edge in the market.

By understanding the stages of adoption awareness, interest, evaluation, trial, and adoption automobile manufacturers can strategically position themselves to leverage these digital tools to enhance customer engagement and brand visibility. As a result, successful implementation of these innovations can lead to improved sales performance and increased market share growth by attracting a broader customer base and fostering loyalty among existing customers. The theory also emphasizes the importance of early adopters who can serve as influencers within their networks, further accelerating the diffusion process and enhancing overall organizational performance in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

Empirical Review

Akinola and Adebayo (2020) examined the impact of digital marketing on organizational performance in Nigeria. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of study was small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Lagos State with a sample size of 200 SMEs selected using stratified random sampling. Primary data were collected through questionnaires. A structured questionnaire with Likert scale items. Content validity established through expert reviews. The reliability of instrument of 0.85 coefficient was ascertained using Cronbach's alpha indicating high reliability. Data Analysis was analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis. The study found a significant positive relationship between digital marketing strategies and organizational performance metrics such as sales growth and customer engagement. The study concluded that effective digital marketing strategies enhance organizational performance. They recommended that SMEs invest more in digital marketing training for their staff.

Okeke and Nwankwo, (2021) investigated digital marketing strategies and their influence on business performance in Nigeria's banking sector. The study research design was correlational research design. The population of study were employees from selected banks in Abuja with a sample size of 150 employees using simple random sampling. The sources of data were primary data via structured questionnaires with closed-ended questions validated by experts through pilot testing with a sample size of 30. Reliability coefficient was found to be 0.78. Method of data analysis was Pearson correlation coefficient. The results indicated that there is a strong correlation between the use of digital marketing tools (like social media) and improved business performance indicators such as customer acquisition. The study concluded that banks should leverage digital marketing to improve their outreach. Recommendations included increasing investment in social media campaigns.

Uche and Chukwuma (2019) investigated evaluating the role of digital marketing on organizational growth in Nigerian manufacturing firms. Mixed-methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative methods research design was adopted. The population of study consisted manufacturing firms across Nigeria with a sample size of 100 firms selected through purposive sampling techniques. Both primary (interviews) and secondary data (company reports) as sources of data. Interview guides for qualitative data; structured questionnaires for quantitative data. Validity of instrument was established through expert validation for both instruments, Quantitative instrument had a reliability score of 0.82 coefficient index. Quantitative data analyzed using SPSS and qualitative data analyzed thematically was used for method of data analysis. The study revealed that digital marketing significantly contributes to market expansion and brand visibility among manufacturing firms. The authors concluded that embracing digital marketing is crucial for growth in the manufacturing sector. They recommended regular training sessions on digital tools for employees.

METHODOLOGY

Correlational survey design was adopted for this study. The target population for this study was 60 respondents drawn from the management of the sampled firms. The study adopted the census sampling technique of 60 managers. A self-administered structured questionnaire titled "Digital Marketing and Organisational performance (DMOPQ) was independently subjected to content and construct validity by three Lecturers in the Department of Strategic Management, Faculty of Management Sciences, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt. The corrections and suggestions of the validators were affected on the finale copy of the instrument which was used to collect primary data and the data obtained were accordingly analyzed. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient below the 0.77 was used ascertained.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
.77	2

Source: Researcher Computation via SPSS Version 25

The result of the Cronbach's Alpha reliability test indicates .0. 77 which is above .77 which implies that the items are reliable. PPMC (person product moment correlation) was used to test hypotheses on SPSS version 25.

Analysis of Data

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at a significant level of 0.05.

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between pay-per-click advertising and sales performance of automobile manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

Table 2: Correlations on Pay-Per-Click Advertising and Sales Performance

	Pay-Per-Click Advertising	Sales Performance
Pay-Per-Click Advertising		
Pearson Correlation	1	.732**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	60	60
Sales Performance		
Pearson Correlation	.732**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N	60	60

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

Table 2: Correlations on pay-per-click advertising and sales performance of automobile manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt revealed that there is a significant relationship between pay-per-click advertising and sales performance of automobile manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt (where P. 732 = sig, .000) thus leading to acceptance of alternate hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between pay-per-click advertising and sales performance of automobile manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between social media marketing and market share growth of automobile manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

Table 3: Correlations on Social Media Marketing and Market Share Growth

	Social Media Marketing	Market Share Growth

Social Media Marketing	Pearson Correlation	1	.859**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	60	60
Market Share Growth	Pearson Correlation	.859**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	60	60

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

Table 3: Correlations on social media marketing and market share growth of automobile manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt (where P .859 = sig, .000) thus leading to acceptance of alternate hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between social media marketing and market share growth of automobile manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

Discussion of Findings

Table 2: Correlations on pay-per-click advertising and sales performance of automobile manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt (where P .732 = sig, .000) thus leading to acceptance of alternate hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between pay-per-click advertising and sales performance of automobile manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. This result is in harmony with the findings of Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) which opined that pay-per-click advertising campaigns enable automobile firms to reach specific customer segments actively searching for vehicles or related services. By using keywords related to various car models, prices, and features, firms can attract interested consumers who are more likely to convert into buyers. This targeted approach increases the probability of closing sales, which directly impacts sales performance positively.

Table 3: Correlations on social media marketing and market share growth of automobile manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt revealed that there is a significant relationship between social media marketing and market share growth of automobile manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt (where P .859 = sig, .000) thus leading to acceptance of alternate hypothesis. There is a significant relationship between social media marketing and market share growth of automobile manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. This result is supported by the study of Lee and Hong (2016) found that increased brand visibility through social media marketing significantly contributes to consumer preferences, leading to higher market share. Automobile firms that engage potential buyers with relevant content, updates about new models, and promotions can attract more customers, leading to increased sales and market penetration.

CONCLUSION

Digital marketing, encompassing pay-per-click (PPC) advertising and social media marketing, has proven to be an essential tool for enhancing the organizational performance of automobile manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. By leveraging digital marketing strategies, automobile firms can gain a competitive advantage in a crowded market, improve their market visibility, and build strong customer relationships. The study finds out that pay-per-click advertising significantly relates with sales performance of automobile manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, and social media marketing significantly relates market share growth of automobile manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. Based on the study findings, the study concluded that digital marketing significantly relates with organisational performance of automobile manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Automobile manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt should allocate more resources to targeted PPC campaigns to attract specific segments of potential buyers.
2. Firms should focus on building strong customer relationships through active engagement on social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter.
3. Automobile manufacturers should use remarketing techniques to target users who previously visited their website or engaged with their social media content but did not complete a purchase.

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