

**EFFECTS OF DIGITAL MARKETING ON PERFORMANCE SMALL AND
MEDIUM ENTERPRISES SMES IN UGANDA: A CASE OF DOGTAS EXCLUSIVE**

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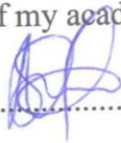


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DECLARATION

I, NIWAMANYA SHAWN, REG NO: S21B12/097, do hereby declare that this research report has never been published by any other person and so is purely done by myself with a close guidance of my academic supervisor.

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APPROVAL

This is to clarify that this research dissertation has been prepared by **NIWAMANYA SHAWN** OF **REG NO: S21B12/097** entitled “effects of digital marketing on the performance of small medium enterprises in Uganda” under my supervision and is hereby approve for submission of a bachelor degree of procurement and logistics management at Uganda Christian university academic supervisor.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research report to my family, relatives, friends and loved ones for the love, care and support they have rendered/provided to me during my academic journey and in the process of writing this research report, may all Mighty bless you all abundantly.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ROI	Return on investments
SME'S	Small medium enterprises
SEO	Search engine optimization
SMM	Social media marketing

ABSTRACT.

This study examined effects of digital marketing on performance small and medium enterprises (SMES) in Uganda. a case of Dogtas exclusive, and their effect on operational performance. The research specifically looked into social media marketing, search engine optimization, and content marketing. It was found out that social media marketing often led to trade-offs between cost and quality, which affected marketing timelines and decision-making. The Limited resources and an inadequate understanding of digital marketing techniques frequently prevent SMEs from reaping the full benefits of digital platforms. Additionally, a lack of digital skills was seen to introduce delays due to strict time constraints and lack of labor to provide it.

The study aimed at identifying these constraints and evaluate their impact on small and medium enterprise performance to suggest ways to improve digital marketing practices. Using a cross-sectional design, the study combined quantitative and qualitative methods, gathering data through questionnaires and interviews from a sample of 32 employees out of a total population of 35, selected via Krejcie and morgan 1970.

Primary data was collected through direct observations and online questionnaires by the use of google forms. The study ensured validity by maintaining a Content Validity Index (CVI) of at least 0.70 and upheld reliability through consistent data analysis methods. In chapter four, the data collected is presented, analysed, and interpreted using tables, pie charts, and bar graphs. Key findings reveal that social media marketing led to massive benefits in small medium enterprises performance, while the content marketing affects high-quality content which was thought to establish businesses as an authority in its industry. Although regulatory creativity and change of methods is crucial, it adds to delays, costs and decrease in performance.

The study's significance lies in its potential to improve marketing and performance practices at Homeart Dogtas exclusive, offering insights that could lead to enterprise expansion and enhanced performance outcomes. The research is geographically focused on Homeart DOGTAS Exclusive furniture shop, Kampala, Uganda, and spans a period of three months. Anticipated limitations include respondent unavailability and potential reluctance to share information, which will be managed through careful planning and confidentiality assurances.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

The chapter includes an overview of the research starting with the background to the study, the problem statement, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, conceptual framework, significance of the study, scope of the study, and the operational definitions. This research is about digital marketing and performance of small and medium sized enterprises in Uganda taking a case study of Dogtas exclusive

1.1 BACKGROUND

Ng'ang'a (2016) reports that marketing as a vital endeavour in any business, more so in SMEs since it enables the company to focus on their clients, what they want and need and how to inform them that they have those products so as to enable sales. The success or failure of a business is dependent on whether its marketing endeavours reflect the needs of their clients and the benefits that they stand to accrue from the utilization of their products or services; it is therefore imperative that SMEs employ marketing strategies that are current /and responsive to the ever-changing needs of their clients (Brenes, Mena & Mulina, 2007). As result of increased competitiveness and dynamism of the business sector, it has become imperative for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to implement the development, management and monitoring of their businesses in an efficient manner so as to increase their marketing performance (Minama, 2016). The impact of digital marketing on the performance of SMEs can be profound. These creative endeavours not only captivate consumers but also differentiate SMEs from their competitors. Digital marketing strategies tailored for global audiences can help SMEs overcome geographical limitations and tap into new revenue streams. (Chinakidzwa, Maxwell Phiri, 2020)

Statista, 2023 says that Digital marketing in Africa has experienced significant growth and transformation over the past decade, driven by increasing internet penetration, mobile phone usage, and a youthful population eager to engage with digital technologies. As of 2024, Africa boasts over 600 million internet users, with a significant proportion accessing the web via mobile devices due to the continent's mobile-first nature. This digital revolution has catalysed a shift in marketing strategies, with businesses increasingly leveraging social media platforms, search engine optimization (SEO), and content marketing to reach their target audiences. Countries such as Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa are at the forefront of this digital wave, with robust infrastructure and a growing tech-savvy population fostering a conducive

environment for digital marketing innovation (Deloitte, 2023). Additionally, local startups and SMEs are harnessing the power of digital marketing to compete on a global scale, showcasing African creativity and entrepreneurship (McKinsey, 2023). Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok are immensely popular, providing brands with direct channels to engage with consumers, particularly the younger demographic. Furthermore, the advent of affordable smartphones and data plans has democratized access to digital content, enabling even remote and underserved regions to participate in the digital economy (GSMA, 2023). E-commerce platforms are also gaining traction, with companies like Jumia and Takealot leading the charge, further emphasizing the critical role of digital marketing in driving online sales (TechCrunch, 2023). Despite these advancements, challenges such as digital literacy, data privacy concerns, and infrastructural limitations persist, requiring ongoing efforts to ensure inclusive and sustainable growth of the digital marketing landscape in Africa (World Bank, 2023).

Kabinet Digital, 2024 says that the digital marketing landscape in Uganda is vibrant and diverse. It includes a range of services such as search engine optimization (SEO), content marketing, social media marketing, email marketing, and paid advertising. SEO helps businesses improve their visibility on search engines like Google, while content marketing involves creating valuable content to attract and engage customers. Social media marketing, particularly on platforms like Facebook and Instagram, is vital for building brand presence and fostering customer relationships. Email marketing remains a robust tool for personalized communication, and paid advertising offers targeted reach through platforms like Google Ads and Facebook Ads.

Several digital marketing agencies are spearheading this transformation in Uganda. Notable among them are Saja WebSolutions, which offers a comprehensive suite of digital services including web design and development, and Evolution Media Group, known for its expertise in software services and digital marketing. Other key players include Researchtec Global, which combines market research with digital marketing, and Baw Digital, specializing in social media marketing and SEO (Clutch.co, 2024; TechBehemoths, 2024). Facebook's reach in Uganda was estimated to cover 19.5% of the local internet user base in early 2024, with Instagram also seeing significant user growth, highlighting the importance of social media in the digital marketing mix. The increasing adoption of these platforms provides businesses with valuable opportunities to connect with their target audiences more effectively (DataReportal, 2024).

One primary effect is the expansion of market reach. Digital marketing channels such as social media, email, and search engine optimization (SEO) enable SMEs in Kampala to reach a wider audience beyond their physical location. A study by Katamba and Mugume (2020) found that SMEs utilizing digital marketing strategies experienced a significant increase in their customer base, leading to improved sales and revenue. Moreover, digital marketing offers cost-effective solutions compared to traditional marketing methods. SMEs in Kampala often have limited marketing budgets, and digital platforms provide affordable advertising options.

According to a report by Naluwairo (2019), SMEs in Kampala allocate a significant portion of their marketing budgets to digital channels due to their cost-effectiveness and measurability. Another critical effect is improved customer engagement and interaction. Digital marketing allows SMEs in Kampala to engage with their target audience in real-time through social media platforms, email newsletters, and interactive websites. This fosters stronger customer relationships and brand loyalty. A study by Ssekandi et al. (2021) emphasized that SMEs in Kampala leveraging digital marketing tools witnessed higher levels of customer engagement, leading to repeat purchases and positive word-of-mouth referrals.

Homeart Dogtas exclusive home furniture have been practicing digital marketing for a while now and have had exponential sales throughout the years which have come from the use of digital marketing through a few blogs and content uploads on social media platforms. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Google Advertisements provide targeted advertising options that allow businesses to direct their marketing efforts toward specific demographics, thereby optimizing their marketing spend (Statista, 2021).

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

According to Rowley (2011), digital marketing referred to the usage of digital channels such as the internet to promote, endorse and market a company's products or services. Digital marketing encompasses various online strategies such as social media marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), content marketing, email marketing, and online advertising. These strategies enable businesses to engage with customers in real-time, target specific demographics, and measure the effectiveness of their marketing efforts through data analytics. Many SMEs in Uganda struggle to effectively use digital media. By leveraging digital marketing, the company has been able to improve its brand recognition, engage with a wider audience, and enhance customer loyalty. Moreover, targeted digital campaigns have allowed

Doğtaş Exclusive to increase its sales, optimize its marketing budget, and improve customer satisfaction through personalized marketing efforts. Limited resources, a lack of digital skills, and an inadequate understanding of digital marketing techniques frequently prevent SMEs from reaping the full benefits of digital platforms. As a result, SMEs risk missing out on possibilities to expand their operations, increase sales, and enhance overall performance. The increase in the adoption of digital marketing strategies such as social media, Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Display adverts and websites can be attributed to increased internet penetration, cheap internet enabled phones and integration of ICT with most daily activities (Wang & Chang, 2013). (Kithinji., 2014) reports that digital marketing is relatively cheaper and its results are easier measure since the data on views, clicks and hours spent on websites is easily available and therefore effectiveness more measurable. The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of digital marketing on the performance of Ugandan SMEs, as well as to discover factors that determine their efficiency.

1.3 GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The general objective of the study was to investigate the effect of digital marketing on the performance of small medium enterprises in Uganda. A case of Dogtas exclusive

1.3.1 Specific objectives

To assess the role of social media marketing on the performance SMEs in Uganda.

To examine the effect of search engine optimization for the performance of SMEs in Uganda.

To establish the effect of content marketing on the performance of SMEs in Uganda

1.4 Research Questions

What is the effect of social media marketing on the performance of SMEs in Uganda a case of Dogtas exclusive?

What is the effect of content marketing on the performance of small medium enterprises in Uganda a case of Dogtas exclusive?

What is the effect of content marketing on the performance of SMEs in Uganda a case of Dogtas exclusive

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1.5.1 Geographical scope

The study was carried out from Homeart DOGTAS Exclusive furniture shop, located in an urban setting on plot 22 alongside Jinja Road, Spear House Dewinton Rise, Kampala. The coordinates of Homeart DOGTAS Exclusive furniture shop are :0°21'27.0"N, 32°44'29.0"E (Latitude:0.31567; Longitude:32.59136).

1.5.2 Content scope

This study was focused on independent variable which is effect of digital marketing and the dependent variable which is the small and medium enterprises in Uganda. The study will focus on the effects of digital marketing

1.5.3 Time scope

The study was completed in four months, with one month dedicated to the first chapter and the literature review. Two months for data analysis, two weeks for report writing, and two weeks for review and completion. The researcher believes that the time period is appropriate for the study given the time and budgetary constraints since it will enable the researcher to gather both the most recent and historical data to guarantee the validity and dependability of the findings.

1.5.4 Justification

Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn offer SMEs in Kampala a powerful means to connect with their audience on a personal level, build brand awareness, and drive website traffic. According to a recent study by Wamala and Naggaga (2022), 86% of SMEs in Kampala actively use social media for marketing purposes, citing its effectiveness in reaching their target audience and generating leads. Additionally, social media marketing allows for real-time interaction with customers, enabling SMEs to address inquiries promptly and build trust. SEO plays a crucial role in improving the online visibility and ranking of SME websites on search engine results pages (SERPs). A study by Mutesasira and Mubiru (2023) found that SMEs in Kampala implementing SEO strategies experienced a significant increase in website traffic and online visibility, leading to higher conversion rates. With consumers increasingly relying on search engines to find products and services, investing in SEO ensures that SMEs in Kampala remain competitive in the digital marketplace. Content marketing involves creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience. In Kampala's competitive business landscape, content

marketing helps SMEs establish thought leadership, build brand authority, and engage potential customers. According to a recent report by Kato and Nakato (2024), SMEs in Kampala that prioritize content marketing witness higher engagement levels on their digital platforms, resulting in increased brand loyalty and customer retention. Additionally, quality content improves SEO efforts by providing valuable information that attracts organic traffic.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study was significant as it provided valuable insights into the role of digital marketing in enhancing the competitiveness and growth prospects of SMEs in Uganda.

The findings of this study were to be used by new and existing institutions in coming up with strategies and in development of services that target the right clients. Uganda Christian University School of Business will also benefit from the findings to assist their Institution to have a competitive advantage.

The regulatory and governmental bodies will use the findings to come up with future service regulations, policies and laws that will aid in regulating and the operationalization of the manufacturing industry.

The findings and recommendations will help policymakers, business support organizations, and SME owners/managers in developing strategies to leverage digital marketing effectively for business growth and sustainability.

1.7 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework below indicates the effect of marketing on the performance of small and medium enterprises in Uganda. A general conceptualization diagram as shown below illustrates that marketing is an independent variable and small medium enterprises is dependent variable while the socio-economic factors, organizational structures have a moderating effect small medium enterprise. (Carter, 2024)

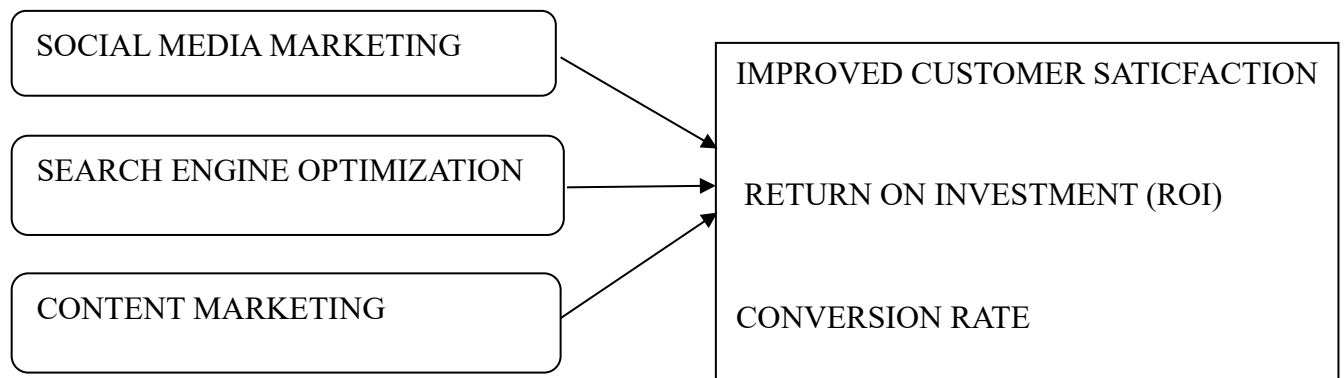
Figure 1: Conceptual frame work

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

DIGITAL MARKETING

DEPENDANT VARIABLE

PERFORMANCE OF SMEs



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

According to Rowley (2011), digital marketing refers to the usage of digital channels such as the internet to promote, endorse and market a company's products or services. This chapter looked at the related literature on the different variables used in this study namely digital marketing as the independent variable and performance of Small medium enterprises in Uganda as the dependent variable taking a case study of Dogtas Exclusive.

Search engine optimization (seo) on the performance of sme's in Uganda

"Search engine is a web site or a database, along with the tools to generate that database and search it contents for "keywords" that describe what you're looking for" (Awad 2007). Search engine optimization (SEO) is a popular and familiar term on the Internet. It is also considered to be "the practice of making a website attractive to a search engine by presenting its code and content in such a way that the search engine will assume it will address a specific inquiry from a (human) searcher" (Charlesworth 2009, 178).

In his research, Binter (2019) found that the majority of his sample respondents strongly believe that digital marketing has a good impact on the performance of B2B enterprises. It has been observed that, in terms of business performance, business quality leads to productivity, and productivity increases business performance. (Prakash et al., 2017) It has also been shown that providing products that meet consumer needs may help a company gain a competitive advantage. This will ultimately lead to the production of high-quality goods, which will improve the company's profits. (Forker et al., 1996) Moreover, not only will quality help to a company's increased success, but all competitive quality dimensions are strongly correlated with several performance measures. (Curkovic et al., 1999; Rashid et al., 2020).

Regarding the impact that SEO has on the visibility of universities on search engine results pages, Vallez & Ventura (2020) found that the findings of their study indicate that higher education institutions need to employ SEO techniques in order to boost their visibility in an efficient manner. This study has a direct link to our hypothesis since it demonstrates the significance of SEO for the visibility of university websites on SERP, which in turn affects the overall performance of businesses. It is necessary to be aware that search engine optimization

(SEO) should be planned on a long-term connection rather than on a short-term relationship, notwithstanding the significance of SEO implementation. According to research conducted by Erdman et al., (2022), it is possible to make long-term conclusions from projected cost per click, which serves as the economic cost of organic keywords. This study focuses on the impact of search engine optimization as a marketing tool and its influence on various marketing variables like market share, brand equity and others. In this study, the authors have attempted to comprehend and understand empirically, the impact of search engine optimization on various marketing variables identified (after the study) as market share and brand equity as the most prominent ones and product awareness, purchase persuasion and consumer insights the other important ones.

(Bhandari, Bansa, 2018) Organic search results represent the non-sponsored section of the SERP (Dou et al., 2010). The process of improving website visibility in organic search results is referred to as search engine optimization (SEO). SEO is a process of creating a website so that it ranks well for chosen keywords within the organic search results of major search engines (Iskandar and Komara, 2018). SEO is also the process of improving the volume and quality of traffic to a website from search engines via “organic” search results for selected keywords (Kritzinger and Weideman, 2013).

Unlike search advertising, which requires you to pay for every click sent to your website from a search engine, traffic sent to your site from a search engine’s organic results is free (Chen et al., 2011). SEO is a series of processes that are conducted systematically for improving the volume and quality of traffic through search engine to the website. The process adapts a website to the working mechanism or algorithms of search engine. (Iskandar and Komara, 2018.) In SEO, usually companies strive to push the rankings of their websites higher in the organic search results through a variety of techniques or by hiring external consultants to develop specific techniques that will cause search engines to index their sites in higher positions (Dou et al., 2010).

Currently, a growing SEO industry focuses on providing advice and content management to website owners with the purpose of improving their site’s rankings on popular search engines like Google (Pant and Srinivasan, 2010). Despite the apparent importance of the topic, there has been very little research done on SEO. At the same time, SEO has grown to become a multi-billion-dollar business. (Berman and Katona, 2013) SEO helps a website to gain top ranking positions on the search engine for its related keywords. When a user searches for those

keywords on the search engine, he accesses the top ranked websites and possibly makes an online purchase from one of these websites. Hence if an SME implements SEO on its website and attains higher ranking positions for its related keywords, it increases the likelihood of generating sales through these search engine rankings. (Aul, Vani, 2011)

Content marketing on the performance of sme's in Uganda

Content marketing, buzz marketing are similar to each other. Nowadays this channel is frequently used in both online and offline marketing The content is the key factor that decides mostly the success of a campaign. This direct interaction fosters stronger customer relationships and builds trust, which is essential for retaining customers and encouraging repeat business (Kamukama & Tumwine, 2017).

Iyadi, 2022 says substance promoting is all approximately locks in shoppers with the things they really need, in a way that serves brand's objectives and standards, instead off air attempting to jam logo into their fringe. It is getting the precise clients you need, rather than a unclearly characterized demo. It is attentively providing the knowledge they want, instead of trying to divert them from the one they came for.

It is the development of advertising itself into something more efficient, more effective and much less odious. Content marketing embodies a company's core brand elements. It uses a range of media formats such as text, audio, presentations, video, photographs, e-books and infographics to tell a company's brand or firm's story. It can be read on a range of devices such as computers, smartphones, tablets etc. (mgbame, iyadi,2022) Viral marketing has some advantages: it is free, a company does not need to use the services from the advertising agencies to make a campaign but it can make by itself. This connectivity enables SMEs to leverage social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, to engage with customers, build brand awareness, and drive sales (Statista, 2021).

Company can make an impression on people so they more likely remember its name. Moreover, online viral marketing can reach a large number of people; if it is done with the right strategy, it can bring a positive effect to the company and their online visitors. (Rajagopal2010). The first person who tagged his name on a product can get it for free. This made the products of IKEA become famous online. Platforms such as Google Ads and Facebook Ads allow these businesses to target specific demographics with tailored marketing campaigns, optimizing their marketing expenditures (Guma, 2019).

Internet environment enables those media to be created and developed well. Media appears in the virtual world with a powerful ability and provides many things for online users. Even though they cannot surpass those traditional media like television, radio and newspapers, they are still preferable. This connectivity enables SMEs to leverage social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, to engage with customers, build brand awareness, and drive sales (Statista, 2021). A study by the World Bank highlights that SMEs utilizing digital marketing strategies see a significant improvement in market access and customer base expansion, resulting in higher sales and profitability (World Bank, 2019). Branded content marketing, as a branch of brand communication, seeks to produce valuable information to satisfy consumer needs (Schultz Citation2016).

Branded content marketing fulfils the duties of informing and educating consumers on certain topics, sharing perspectives and values, as well as entertaining them (Harad 2013). Although content marketing shares the same goal as advertising in terms of increasing sales and building brands (Neff 2015), it doesn't present explicit selling pitches. Branded content marketing has been found to help brands build trust and credibility (du Plessis 2017; Muntinga et al. 2011), better connect with the target audience (du Plessis 2017), and facilitate consumer learning (Rowley 2008).

Essentially, branded content marketing is viewed as an ongoing socialization between brands and consumers, which aims at "changing consumers' inactive behaviour through unobtrusive, engaging brand conversations" (du Plessis 2015). During this process, consumers extract value out of their exposure to branded content marketing, which in turn, has been found to drive brand loyalty and subsequent patronage intentions (Lou et al. 2019).

Prior research on branded content marketing often posits the relationships between content marketing and brand outcomes (e.g., awareness, equity) based on qualitative reviews (e.g., Ahmad, Musa, and Harun 2016, du Plessi 2015, Holliman and Rowley 2014, Gagnon 2014, Kee and Yazdanifard 2015, Rowley 2008). Quality content is a key component of content marketing. Quality content allows you to target keywords related to your business and address searchers' questions, which in turn helps you achieve higher rankings. When creating content, it's important to think about quality and depth. Does your content effectively answer searchers' questions, or does it leave them with unanswered questions? (Carter, 2024). Another line of the extant research explicated the causal relationship between branded content marketing and brand building, and substantiated the argument regarding the positive impact of branded

content marketing on brand building (e.g., Coursaris et al. 2016; Lou et al. 2019, Padilla Vivero 2016). For instance, Coursaris et al. 2016) focused on the links between general social media marketing communication, brand equity, consumer engagement, and purchase intentions.

Social media marketing on the performance of (sme's) in Uganda

Social media marketing (SMM) is increasingly recognized as a pivotal tool for enhancing the performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Uganda. The literature suggests that SMM can significantly improve brand awareness, customer engagement, and sales performance. For instance, platforms like Facebook and Instagram are noted for their extensive reach and engagement capabilities. A 2024 report by DataReportal indicated that Facebook's ad reach in Uganda covered 19.5% of the local internet user base, highlighting its potential as a marketing tool for SMEs (DataReportal, 2024). Several digital marketing agencies are spearheading this transformation in Uganda.

Notable among them are Saja Web Solutions, which offers a comprehensive suite of digital services including web design and development, and Evolution Media Group, known for its expertise in software services and digital marketing. Other key players include Researchtec Global, which combines market research with digital marketing, and Baw Digital, specializing in social media marketing and SEO (Clutch.co, 2024; TechBehemoths, 2024). Facebook's reach in Uganda was estimated to cover 19.5% of the local internet user base in early 2024, with Instagram also seeing significant user growth, highlighting the importance of social media in the digital marketing mix. The increasing adoption of these platforms provides businesses with valuable opportunities to connect with their target audiences more effectively (DataReportal, 2024).

According to (Kalema et al. 2022), social media marketing positively impacts small medium enterprises by improving sales, customer engagement, and operational efficiency. Their study in Uganda revealed that compatibility and perceived ease of use are critical for social media marketing adoption among SMEs, while perceived usefulness showed a negative impact due to potential overestimation of required resources and skills. The role of social media agility, which refers to the ability of SMEs to quickly adapt and respond to changes in the social media landscape, is also significant. (Onngam and Charoensukmongkol, 2023) found that social media agility positively affects business performance, especially for smaller firms operating in less dynamic environments.

Social media marketing, particularly on platforms like Facebook and Instagram, is vital for building brand presence and fostering customer relationships. Email marketing remains a robust tool for personalized communication, and paid advertising offers targeted reach through platforms like Google Ads and Facebook Ads (Kabinset Digital, 2024). In the context of business-to-business (B2B) SMEs, the use of social media for internal and external marketing activities has shown mixed results. The adoption of social media marketing among SMEs is influenced by several factors, including perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and compatibility with existing business processes. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Innovation Diffusion Theory (IDT) have been instrumental in understanding these dynamics. A study by (Kikawa et al. 2022) employed these theoretical frameworks to analyse the adoption of social media marketing among Ugandan SMEs.

(Corral de Zubielqui and Jones, 2023) highlighted that while SMM can enhance product innovation and firm performance, the benefits are moderated by factors such as marketing innovation. Their research indicated that internal social media use for promotion and branding positively impacts firm performance, but excessive use for customer communication might not yield the same results.

Moreover, the performance of SMEs is also influenced by the moderating effects of firm characteristics and environmental factors. For instance, (Onngam and Charoensukmongkol, 2023) noted that smaller firms benefit more from social media agility than larger ones, and the effect is more pronounced in stable environments. From the perspective of the World Wide Web, SMEs can build their web presence and grow their business through their company websites. Presently, it is the right time for businesses to evaluate if the search engines can become their new marketing channel. On a global level, millions of internet users are using the internet to make their purchasing decisions. Many of them actually buy via the internet through the means of electronic shopping or e-shopping. For meeting their shopping needs, consumers start their search by using the search engines (Thelwall, 2000)

Carter, 2024 says a whopping 2.3 billion people use social media, making it a valuable digital marketing component. Social media allows you to connect with current and potential customers and develop relationships with them. If they have questions about your products and services, they can connect and ask you directly on social media. social media listening allows you to uncover key trends and insights into consumers' thoughts and opinions related to your brand,

industry, products, services, and even competitors. You can use this information to inform other strategies. (WebFX's, 2024)

Summary of the literature review

Social media marketing (SMM) is increasingly recognized as a pivotal tool for enhancing the performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Uganda. The literature suggests that SMM can significantly improve brand awareness, customer engagement, and sales performance. For instance, platforms like Facebook and Instagram are noted for their extensive reach and engagement capabilities. A 2024 report by DataReportal indicated that Facebook's ad reach in Uganda covered 19.5% of the local internet user base, highlighting its potential as a marketing tool for SMEs (DataReportal, 2024). However, there is a gap in understanding the specific strategies that yield the highest return on investment (ROI) for different types of SMEs. Many studies focus broadly on the benefits of social media but do not delve deeply into tailored strategies for various business models (Kabinset Digital, 2024).

Content marketing is another critical component of digital marketing for SMEs in Uganda. It involves creating and sharing valuable content to attract and retain customers. The effectiveness of content marketing in building brand loyalty and driving organic traffic is well-documented. However, the literature reveals a gap in localized content strategies. Most research highlights general benefits but lacks insights into how content should be tailored to resonate with the Ugandan market. For example, while the importance of content marketing is emphasized, specific recommendations on cultural relevance, language, and regional preferences are often missing (Kabinset Digital, 2024).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents deal with the research design, study population, sample size, composition of the respondents, sampling techniques and procedures, data collection methods, data collection instrument, validity and reliability of the instrument, data collection procedures, data analysis and measurement of the variables.

3.1 Research design

The researcher will use cross sectional research design which will involve collecting data from respondents at only one point in time without any follow up activities, Creswell, J. W. (2014). The researcher will also use qualitative and quantitative approaches. Under quantitative approach questionnaire is to be filled by respondents following the questions asked and as for the qualitative approach, interview guide will be used to collect data from respondents Saunders, Thornhill. 2019.

3.2 The study population

The study population consisted of thirty-five (35) staff of DOGTAS EXCLUSIVE HOME FURNITURE. These is purposively selected by the researcher since they served in positions relevant to the study for example of the thirty-five (3), ten (10) deal in social media marketing five (5) in content creation and the rest (20) know of digital marketing as a factor that has effects on the performance of Dogtas Exclusive.

3.3 Sample size

The sample size comprised of respondents derived using the Krejcie and morgan 1970 to determine the size which is, where N is your population, i.e. the total pool you are sampling from. This is what your sample must represent. E.g. you have 100. S is the sample size (or number of surveys) you will need. The table shows That out of the 35, 32 Are most suitable respondents needed. (Rajendran 2020).

Table 1: The Number of respondents from each department

Departments	Target Population	Sample size	Percentage %
Procurement	6	6	18.8

Logistics	7	6	18.8
Store	9	7	21.9
Contract	10	10	31.3
TOTAL	35	32	100

3.4 Sampling techniques and procedure

The researcher will use stratified sampling which will involve identifying sub groups and selecting a sample from each sub group and of which the samples will be different departments of Dogtas Exclusive

3.5 Data collection methods

The study utilized both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. Qualitative methods involved the use of open-ended questionnaires and interviews on credit risk management and financial performance, while quantitative involved the use of closed ended questionnaires.

3.5.1 Questionnaires

The researcher will apply the self-administered questionnaire as an instrument in the collection of data. The questionnaire consists of closed ended questions. This method is chosen due to its convenience in collecting information from various people at the same time since questionnaires were first supplied and collected after filling in. This method was also economical in terms of time management as questionnaires were easy to fill and took less of respondents` time and that of the researcher in administering and analysing them (Amin, 2005).

3.5.2 Interview guide

This will involve verbal interactions between the researcher and the respondent. An interview guide will be used that comprises of semi structured questions that will get an in-depth analysis from the respondents about the study. This method will be good for the researcher because it is accurate, also helps the researcher make corrections and also the information will be got from the right source.

3.6 Validity and reliability of the instrument

3.6.1 Validity

To ensure the validity of the instrument (questionnaire), the research supervisor will act as an expert to assess the validity of the research instrument.

3.6.2 Reliability

Jacob Cohen, a prominent statistician, defined data reliability in the context of psychometrics. According to Cohen, data reliability referred to the extent to which observations or measurements of a particular construct were consistent and free of random error. He introduced the concept of reliability coefficients, such as Cronbach's alpha, to quantify the reliability of measurements

3.7 Data collection procedures

Before the administration of the questionnaire, the researcher will request for an introductory letter from the Uganda Christian University to The SMEs, A case of Dogtas exclusive. During the administration of the questionnaire, the researcher will specifically ask the respondents to accept to tick the questionnaires, to answer all questions or items set out in the questionnaire and to be objective in answering the questions. The researcher will ensure that retrieving the questionnaire will be done within two weeks from the date of their distribution. All questionnaires will be retrieved and checked. After the administration of the questionnaire, the data collected will be organized, summarized statistically and drafted in tables and charts using software like SPSS and Microsoft Excel.

3.8 Data analysis

Data collected was edited, sorted and checked for errors that were made during data collection by using simple descriptive statistical techniques with the help of frequency tables to facilitate interpretation and presentation of the data. The researcher used both Microsoft Excel programs to come up with percentages and frequency tables.

3.9 Limitations of the study

The results are based on the stable information and some unstable ones. The theory part is the stable information; they can be updated but the grounded idea is hardly changed. The suggestions for the c-marketing campaign are subjective; it is based on the opinion of the researcher, so the SMEs should decide carefully whether they will be taken or not.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents analyses and interprets the study findings on effects of digital marketing on performance small and medium enterprises (SMES) in Uganda. a case of Dogtas Exclusive. The first section presents response rate, this is followed by background information about the respondents, and finally descriptive and inferential presentation and analysis of the study findings in relation to the specific objectives.

4.1 Response Rate

This section gives the number of people who responded to the study against those which the researcher had targeted and also the characteristics of the respondents in relation to gender, age, level of education, current occupation and term of service. This was based on the information provided in the questionnaire and interviews by the respondents.

The response rate for this research was 100% which was high. Amin (2005) suggested that a high response rate also suggests more accurate survey results.

Response rate = received questionnaires = 32

Total questionnaires distributed = 32

4.2 Demographic Information

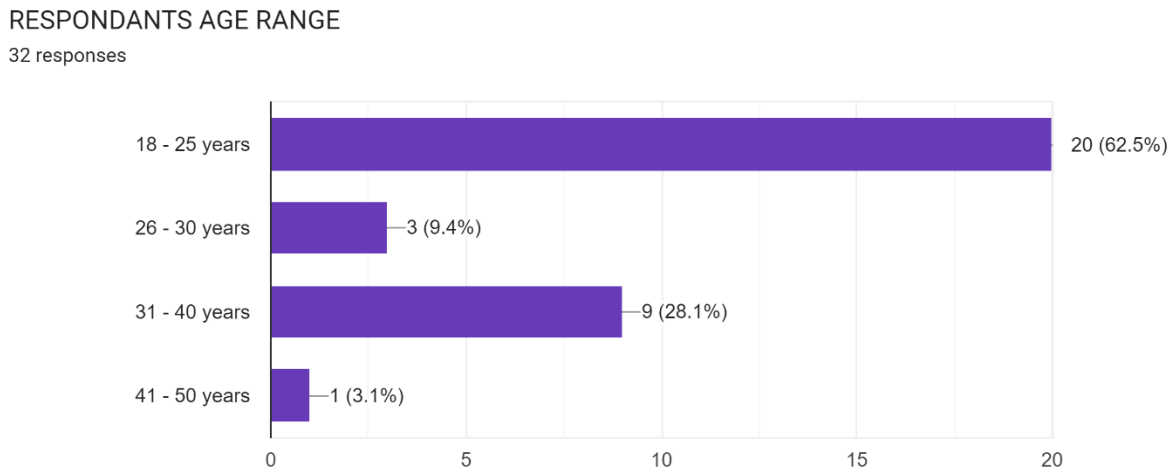
The demographic information about the respondents in relation to level of education, job title, term of service and experiences were investigated by the study. Findings are presented in the following sections below

4.2.1 Findings on the of the respondents ages

According to the table below, the age group distribution among the 32 respondents reveals that the sample is predominantly composed of younger individuals. Specifically, (62.5%) of respondents are between the ages of 18-25 years, while (9.4%) fall into the 26-30 years category. No respondents were recorded in the age groups of less than 18 years, but from 31-40 years were (28.1%), 44-50 years were (3.1%). This distribution suggests that the

surveyed employees at Homeart Dogtas Exclusive are predominantly young adults, potentially indicating specific demographic trends within the company

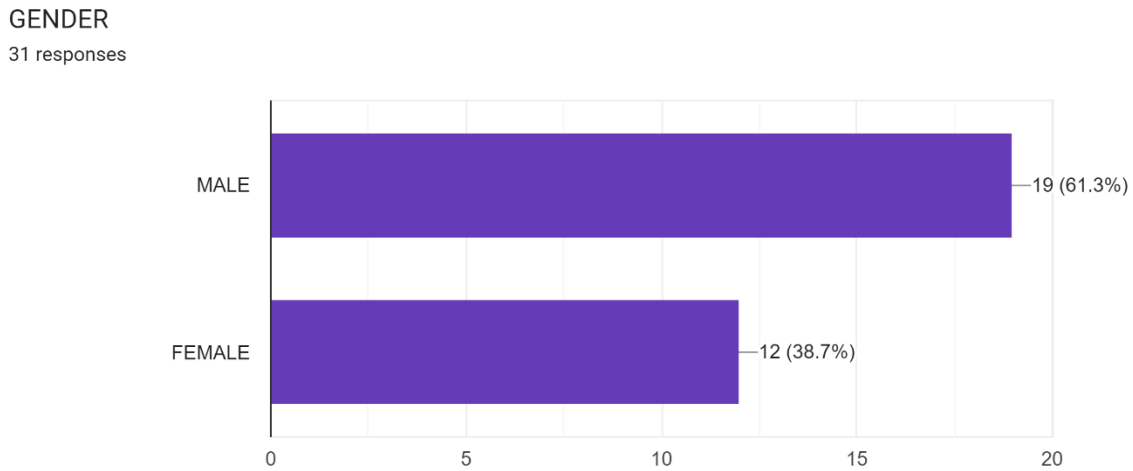
Figure 2: Findings on the ages of the respondents



4.2.2 Findings on the gender of the respondents

The gender of the respondents was observed in the study because gender differences will influence the way employees perform at work. The study targeted 32 employees of Home art Dogtas Exclusive Kampala, Uganda. From the study, 35 out of 35 sample respondents filled-in and returned the questionnaires making a response rate of 100% as per table below

Figure 3: Findings on the gender of the respondents



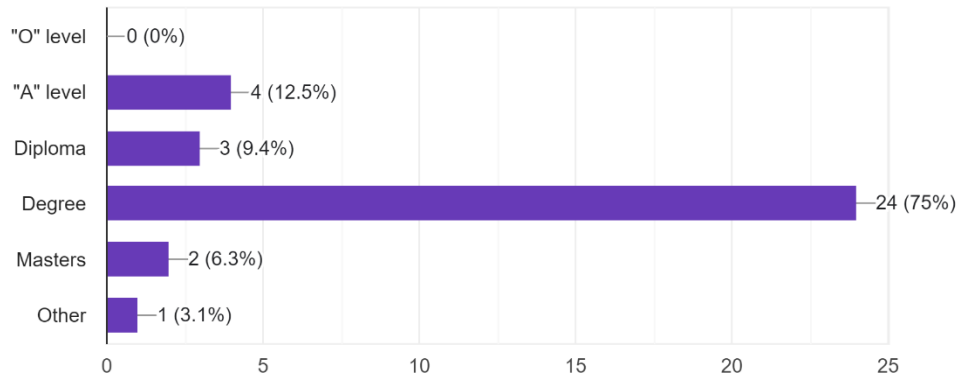
4.2.3 Findings on the level of education of the respondents

According to the table below, the educational level distribution among the 64 respondents indicates a highly educated sample. The majority, 57%, hold a Bachelor's degree, reflecting a dominant educational background within this group. A smaller portion, 9.4%, have attained a Diploma level of education. There were respondents with Certificate level 12.5%, Master's degree at 6.3%, or PhD qualifications at 3.1%. This distribution suggests that the surveyed group is predominantly comprised of individuals with a Bachelor's degree, while those with lower or higher educational qualifications are not represented in this sample.

Figure 4: Findings on the level of education of the respondents

LEVEL OF EDUCATION

32 responses



(Primary data, 2023)

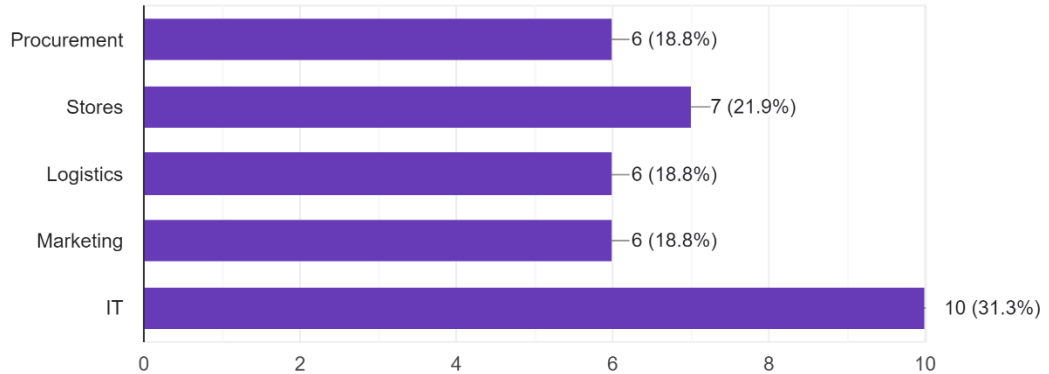
4.2.4 Findings on the Job title/ departments of the respondents

According to the table above, Frequency column indicates the number of respondents in each department/unit. For instance, there are 10 respondents in Information technology, 6 in Procurement, and 7 in Stores and there are 6 in both marketing and The Percentage column reflects the proportion of respondents from each department relative to the total of 34 respondents. Procurement, with 18.8%, information technology with 31.3% is the most prevalent department among the respondents, highlighting its significant representation in the sample. This helps to understand the overall distribution of respondents across departments.

Figure 5: Findings on the Job title/departments of the respondents

ORGANISATION DEPARTMENT YOU BELONG TO

32 responses



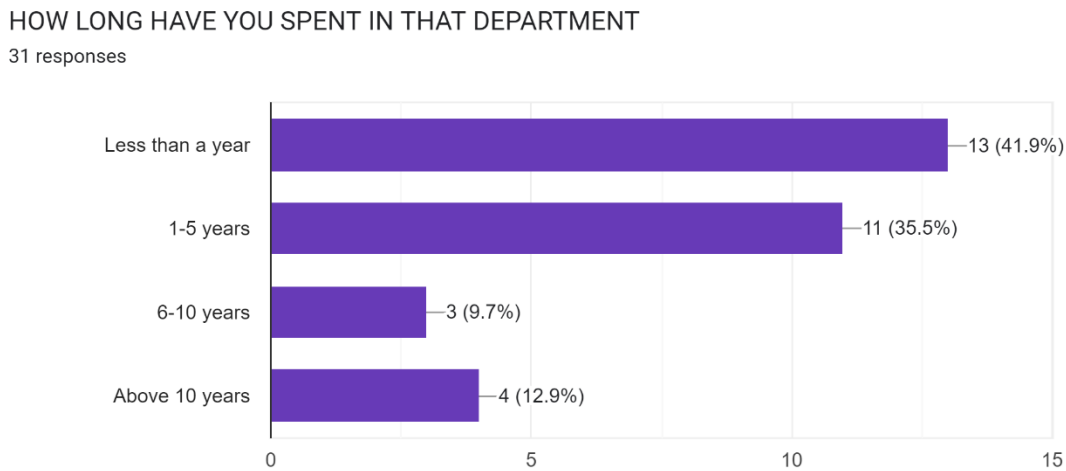
(primary data, 2024)

4.2.5 Findings on the time spent/the term of service in the departments involving digital marketing of the respondents

The table presents the distribution of respondents based on their years of working experience in the manufacturing industry. According to the data, 41.9% of respondents have less than 1 year of experience, while 57.1% have between 1 and 3 years of experience. Another 21.4% have 4 to 6 years of experience. There are no respondents with 7 to 10 years or more than 10 years of experience.

The Frequency column shows the count of respondents within each experience range. The Percentage column represents each experience range as a proportion of the total 64 respondents. For example, 35.5% of the respondents have 1 to 5 years of experience, indicating it is the most common experience range. The Valid Percentage reflects the proportion of respondents within each experience range, adjusted to ensure that all data is accounted for accurately. This percentage matches the overall percentage in this case as there are no missing responses. The rest are aligned from 6 to 10 years which is 9.7% and 10 years onwards was 12.9%

Figure 6: Findings on the years spent in those departments involving digital marketing of the respondents



(Primary data,2024)

4.3 Effect of social media marketing on performance of dogtas exclusive

The first objective of the study was to examine the effect of social media marketing on performance of Dogtas Exclusive. The findings on effect of social media marketing on performance of small medium enterprises were gathered from questionnaire and interview guide.

Social media marketing was measured using 8 items scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 5= strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2= disagree, 1= strongly disagree. The study analysed the digital marketing practices at Dogtas Exclusive and the findings are presented in the table 5 below

Table 2: showing the effect of social media marketing on performance of Dogtas Exclusive.

Statement	Agreed (freq)	Disagreed (freq)	Neutral (freq)
The use of social media platforms has significantly contributed to the increase in sales for my business.	31(96.9%)	0	1(3.1%)
Social media marketing has enhanced my business's ability to engage and retain customers.	32(100%)	0	0
Social media marketing has played a crucial role in increasing my business's brand awareness.	30(96,8%)	0	1(3.2%)
Social media marketing is a cost-effective tool for promoting my business compared to traditional marketing methods.	28(90.3%)	0	3(9.&%)
My business has gained a significant number of new customers through social media marketing campaigns.	31(100%)	0	0
The use of social media has improved customer service and satisfaction in my business.	27(84.4%)	2(6.3%)	3(9.4%)
Social media marketing has provided my business with a competitive edge in the market.	31(100%)	0	0
My business faces challenges in effectively utilizing social media for marketing purposes.	17(53.1%)	6	9(28.1%)

(Primary data, 2024)

The table 5 above shows that the respondents agreed and as well as disagreed with the questions on social media marketing in Dogtas Exclusive. Most respondents 16 (50.0 %) agreed that the use of social media platforms has significantly contributed to the increase in sales for my business. The other percentage (46.9%) 15 was on the strongly agreed part and the rest went to the neutral part which was 1(3.1%). This indicate that social media marketing has significantly impacted business performance, with most respondents agreeing that it has contributed to increased sales, enhanced customer engagement and retention, boosted brand awareness, and provided a cost-effective alternative to traditional marketing methods. Additionally, 100% of respondents reported gaining new customers and achieving a competitive edge through social media marketing. However, while social media has improved customer service and satisfaction

for most businesses, over half of the respondents face challenges in utilizing it effectively for marketing purposes, indicating potential gaps in strategy or expertise.

Table 3: Pearson’s correlation between social media marketing and performance of small medium enterprises

		Social media marketing	Performance
social media marketing	Pearson Correlation	1	.743**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	32	50
Performance	Pearson Correlation	.743**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	32	32

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

(primary data, 2024)

The findings indicated in table above shows that there is a significant positive relationship between social media marketing and performance. This relationship is affirmed by r-values of 0.743** with significant p-values of 0.000 at the level of 0.05 (2-tailed) ($r = .743^{**}, p < .05$). This emphasizes the importance of social media marketing to drive performance.

Overall Summary by Grading System: Strongly Agree: 161.8%; Agree: 449.2%; Neutral: 151.7%; Disagree: 40.7%; Strongly Disagree: 3.2%.

4.4 the effect of search engine optimization (seo) on small medium enterprises performance

This table summarizes respondents’ responses on the relationship between Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and small medium enterprises Performance in Uganda a case of Dogtas Exclusive. Where; SA – Strongly Agree, A- Agree, NS – Not Sure, D – Disagree, SD – Strongly Disagree. Here is the corrected table with accurate counts and percentages for each response:

Table 4: Effect of search engine optimization (SEO) on small medium enterprises performance

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Implementing SEO strategies has significantly improved my business's visibility in search engine results.	1725(78.1%)	6(18.8%)	1(3.1%)
SEO practices have led to a noticeable increase in website traffic for my business.	21(65.7%)	10(31.3%)	1(3.1%)
My business has seen an improvement in conversion rates due to higher rankings in organic search results.	21(67.7%)	10(32.3%)	-
SEO is a more cost-effective marketing strategy compared to paid Search advertising for my business.	21(65.7%)	7(21.9)	5(15.6%)
The long-term benefits of SEO outweigh the initial investment required for my business.	18(58.1%)	11(35.5%)	3(9.7%)
My business faces challenges in effectively implementing SEO strategies.	12(43.8%)	9(28.1)	3(28.4%)

(Primary data,2024)

According to the above table 7, The table indicates that SEO strategies have positively influenced digital marketing at Dogtas Exclusive, with most respondents agreeing that SEO has improved search engine visibility and increased website traffic. Many also noted improvements in conversion rates as a result of higher organic rankings. SEO is seen as a more cost-effective strategy compared to paid search advertising, and its long-term benefits are considered worthwhile despite the initial investment. However, some respondents highlighted challenges in effectively implementing SEO strategies, which could limit the overall effectiveness of digital marketing efforts at Dogtas Exclusive. most respondents (53.1%) agreed that Implementing SEO strategies has significantly improved my business's visibility in search engine results., with 25% strongly agreeing and 18.8% being neutral. The rest (1.3%) disagreed to the notion.

Table 5: Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient Index between search engine optimization (SEO) and small medium enterprises performance

		Search engine optimization	Small medium enterprises performance
Search engine optimization	Pearson correlation Sig. (2 tailed) N	1 32	0.053 0.589 32
Small medium enterprises performance	Pearson correlation Sig. (2 tailed) N	0.053 0.589 32	1 32

(Primary data, 2024)

The table above shows Pearson’s correlation coefficient index between small medium enterprises performance and search engine optimization; $r = 0.053$ and $sig. = 0.589$ greater than 0.05. This meant that small medium enterprises performance significantly related with search engine optimization in the study. These results showed that small medium enterprises performance would ensure search engine optimization.

The overall percentages of the questions in the questioner above showing that The effect of search engine on the performance of SMES in Uganda. Is necessary in the development of digital marketing in Dogtas Exclusive and would benefit the sector in the near future; Strongly Agree: 113.4%; Agree: 334.5%; Neutral: 192.9%; Disagree: 53.4%; Strongly Disagree: 12.5%.

4.4 The effect of content marketing on the performance of sme’s in uganda.

This table summarizes respondents’ responses on the effect of content marketing on the performance of small medium enterprises Performance in Uganda a case of Dogtas exclusive. Where; SA – Strongly Agree, A- Agree, NS – Not Sure, D – Disagree, SD – Strongly Disagree

Here is the corrected table with accurate counts and percentages for each response:

Table 6: The Effect of Content Marketing on the Performance of SMEs in Uganda

Statement	Agree (freq)	Neutral(freq)	Disagree(freq)
Content marketing has significantly improved customer engagement for my business.	28(87.5%)	4(12.5%)	-
High-quality content has established my business as an authority in its industry.	24(77.4%)	5(16.1%)	2(6.4%)
Content marketing has been effective in generating leads for my business.	28(90.4%)	4(12.9%)	4(12.5%)
Content marketing provides a higher return on investment compared to other marketing strategies.	22(68.8%)	7(21.9)	12(37.5%)
Consistent content marketing has improved customer retention for my business.	25(78.1%)	6(18.8%)	6(18.7%)
My business faces challenges in consistently creating and distributing high-quality content.	20(62.5%)	5(15.6%)	8(50%)
Content marketing has positively influenced my business's SEO efforts.	22(68.8%)	10(31.3)	-
Content marketing has been a driving factor in the growth and success of my business.	24(77.5%)	7(22.6%)	-

(Primary data, 2024)

According to the table, it highlights that content marketing has had a strong positive impact on digital marketing for Dogtas Exclusive. Most respondents agree that content marketing has significantly improved customer engagement, established industry authority, and effectively generated leads. It also plays a key role in customer retention and enhances SEO efforts.

However, some respondents face challenges in consistently creating and distributing high-quality content, which may affect overall performance. Despite these challenges, content marketing is seen as a crucial factor in driving business growth and success, offering a favourable return on investment when implemented consistently. most respondents (65.6%) agreed that Content marketing has significantly improved customer engagement for my business. with (21.9%) strongly agreeing. Only (12.5%) were neutral.

Table 7: Pearson’s correlation coefficient index between content marketing and performance of SMES.

		Content Marketing	Performance
Content Marketing	Pearson correlation	1	0.048
	Sig. (2 tailed)		0.619
	N	32	32
Performance	Pearson correlation	0.048	1
	Sig. (2 tailed)	0.619	
	N	32	32

(Primary data, 2024)

Table 9 above shows Pearson’s correlation coefficient index between content marketing and performance; $r = 0.048$, sig. = 0.619 greater than 0.05. The findings indicate that the significance value in testing the reliability of the model for

the relationship between social media, search engine optimization, websites and blogs

and display adverts and marketing performance was $F = 32$, $p = 0.048$. Therefore the model is statistically significant in predicting the relationship between the study variables. Results are as presented above. This implied that there is an insignificant association between content marketing and performance of small medium enterprises in Uganda a case of Dogtas exclusive.

Table 8: Performance of small medium enterprises

Statement	Agree	Neutral/	Disagree
My company's revenue has increased over the past year.	22(8.6%)	6(19.4%)	
My company is profitable and maintains a healthy profit margin.	24(77.4%)	5(22.5%)	
I am confident in the financial stability of my company.	28(90.4%)	4(12.9%)	4(12.5%)
My company holds a significant market share in its industry.	22(68.8%)	7(8.9%)	12(22.3%)
Consistent content marketing has improved customer retention for my business.	31(96.9%)	6(18.8%)	
My business faces challenges in consistently creating and distributing high-quality content.	20(62.5%)	5(15.6%)	8(50%)
Content marketing has positively influenced my business's SEO efforts.	27(87.1%)	4(21.9%)	-
Content marketing has been a driving factor in the growth and success of my business.	23(77.5%)	8(22.6%)	-

(primary data, 2024)

The table reflects the performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), with most respondents reporting positive outcomes over the past year. A majority agree that their company's revenue has increased, they maintain healthy profit margins, and they are confident in their financial stability. Many also feel that their businesses hold significant market share. Content marketing is highlighted as a key factor in improving customer retention and positively influencing SEO efforts, driving business growth and success. However, challenges persist in consistently creating and distributing high-quality content, which could hinder overall business performance

Table 9: Pearson’s correlation coefficient index of performance of SMES.

		Small medium enterprises and performance	Performance
Content Marketing and performance	Pearson correlation Sig. (2 tailed) N	1 32	0.048 0.619 32
Search engine optimization	Pearson correlation Sig. (2 tailed) N	1 32	0.053 0.589 32
social media marketing	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 32	.743** .000 .50

(Primary data, 2024)

Table 9 above shows Pearson’s correlation coefficient index between content marketing and performance; $r = 0.048$, $\text{sig.} = 0.619$ greater than 0.05. The multiple regression values in the table indicated that all the measures of innovation capability, that is, social media marketing, Search Engine Optimization, studied have a positive and significant influence on the marketing performance. This is because all predictor variables: social media, search engine optimization, websites and blogs and display adverts β -values were positive. This was an indication that these variables are directly proportional to the digital marketing performance of SMEs, in which case an increase in social media, search engine

CHAPTER FIVE.

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FINDINGS.

5.1. introduction.

The chapter presents summary of the results that were presented in chapter four. It also relates these results to similar studies which were carried out elsewhere as revealed by different scholars. This chapter also provides summary of the findings, discussions, conclusions and recommendations.

5.1 Summary of the findings

This section presents the summary of the findings that were obtained in the study and presented in the previous chapter. The study found that the respondents agreed that social media usage increased their customer engagement, improved their complaint resolution and improved the experience and satisfaction of their customers. Further, the respondents also agreed that the usage of social media led to increased sales, enabled access to new markets and clients, increases brand recognition and strengthens customer loyalty. The study determined that social media usage had a significant influence on the marketing performance of SMEs. The findings showed that 21.2% of the marketing performance of SMEs could be explained by social media usage.

The findings of the study indicate that the respondents agreed that SEO increased the number of unique visitors to their websites, increased the number of clicks on their adverts, enabled access to new markets and increased the number of unique visitors to their social media pages. However, the study established that the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that SEO increased their market share. The study also established that SEO had a significant influence on the marketing performance of SMEs. The findings showed that 16.7% of the marketing performance of SMEs could be explained by search engine optimization.

The study established that the respondents agreed that Websites and blogs increased market share, enabled access to new markets and customers and increased the number of unique visitors to social media pages. Moreover, the findings of the study indicate that websites and blogs led to an increase in the number of clicks on adverts, improved brand recognition and increased customer satisfaction. The study also determined that websites and blogs had a significant influence on the marketing performance of SMEs.

The findings showed that 20.6% of the marketing performance of SMEs could be explained by websites and blogs. The findings of the study indicate that the respondents agreed that display adverts increased the number of unique visitors to their websites and social media pages, increased their sales volumes and increased their market share. Further, the findings of the study indicate that majority of the respondents agreed that websites and blogs enabled access to new markets and customers and also improved their brand recognition. The study also determined that display adverts had a significant influence on the marketing performance of SMEs. The findings showed that 45.8% of the marketing performance of SMEs could be explained by websites and blogs.

5.2. discussion of the findings

5.2.1 the effect of social media marketing on performance of small medium enterprises

The results on the effect of social media marketing on performance of Dogtas Exclusive showed that most respondents 50.0 % agreed that the use of social media platforms has significantly contributed to the increase in sales for my business. The other percentage 46.9% was on the strongly agreed part and the rest went to the neutral part which was 3.1%. The findings show that there is a significant positive relationship between social media marketing and performance. This relationship is affirmed by R-values of 0.743** with significant p-values of 0.000 at the level of 0.05 (2-tailed) ($r = .743^{**}$, $p < .05$). This emphasizes the importance of social media marketing to drive performance.

In consonance with the results above, social media marketing, particularly on platforms like Facebook and Instagram, is vital for building brand presence and fostering customer relationships. Email marketing remains a robust tool for personalized communication, and paid advertising offers targeted reach through platforms like Google Ads and Facebook Ads (Kabinset Digital, 2024). In the context of business-to-business (B2B) SMEs, the use of social media for internal and external marketing activities has shown mixed results.

More so, the results are indicative of the fact that the adoption of social media marketing among SMEs is influenced by several factors, including perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and compatibility with existing business processes. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Innovation Diffusion Theory (IDT) have been instrumental in understanding these dynamics.

What is crucial with the results is what Corral de Zubielqui and Jones (2023) highlighted that while SMM can enhance product innovation and firm performance, the benefits are moderated by factors such as marketing innovation. Their research indicated that internal social media use for promotion and branding positively impacts firm performance, but excessive use for customer communication might not yield the same results.

Moreover, the performance of SMEs is also influenced by the moderating effects of firm characteristics and environmental factors. For instance, (Onngam and Charoensukmongkol, 2023) noted that smaller firms benefit more from social media agility than larger ones, and the effect is more pronounced in stable environments. From the perspective of the World Wide Web, SMEs can build their web presence and grow their business through their company websites. Presently, it is the right time for businesses to evaluate if the search engines can become their new marketing channel. On a global level, millions of internet users are using the internet to make their purchasing decisions. Many of them actually buy via the internet through the means of electronic shopping or e-shopping. For meeting their shopping needs, consumers start their search by using the search engines (Thelwall, 2020).

5.2.2 search engine optimization (seo) on the performance of sme's in Uganda

According to the results on table four, 50.0% of respondents agreed and 46.9% strongly agreed that social media platforms have contributed to increased sales. This supports the claim made by Binter (2019) that digital marketing, including social media, has a positive impact on business performance. The observation of increased sales aligns with the idea that using social media can enhance a business's quality and productivity, leading to improved performance.

68.8% of respondents agreed, and 31.3% strongly agreed that social media marketing has improved engagement and retention. This echoes the importance of SEO and social media in enhancing customer insights and purchase persuasion as outlined by Bhandari & Bansa (2018). Engaging with customers helps to build loyalty, which ultimately boosts long-term business success.

Still, 61.3% of respondents agreed and 35.5% strongly agreed that social media has increased brand awareness. This is directly related to Vallez & Ventura (2020)'s findings that SEO and digital marketing improve visibility, which is essential for enhancing brand awareness. Additionally, Aul & Vani (2011) highlighted how SEO helps businesses rank higher on search engines, thereby increasing brand visibility. Similarly, 61.3% agreed and 29% strongly agreed

that social media marketing is more cost-effective than traditional methods. This supports Chen et al. (2011), who pointed out that SEO is more cost-effective than paid advertising, as it generates organic traffic, which is free compared to pay-per-click methods.

Likewise, 61.3% of respondents agreed that they gained new customers through social media campaigns, showing a tangible benefit of digital marketing. This correlates with Bhandari & Bansa (2018), who mentioned how SEO and social media enhance market share and help businesses attract new customers through higher. 71.9% of respondents felt social media provided a competitive advantage. This finding resonates with Curkovic et al. (1999), who emphasized that superior business performance is linked to a company's competitive quality dimensions. Utilizing SEO or social media gives businesses an edge over competitors by ensuring they stand out in search engine results and social platforms. 37.5% of respondents believed they face challenges in effectively utilizing social media for marketing, with 15.6% strongly agreeing. This is in line with Erdman et al. (2022), who noted that SEO requires long-term planning and investment to achieve meaningful results. The complexity of SEO and social media marketing might make it difficult for businesses to fully capitalize on their benefits.

5.2.3 to establish the effect of content marketing on the performance of smes in uganda.

The results on the third objective indicate that 65.6% of respondents agreed that content marketing has significantly improved customer engagement for their businesses, with 21.9% strongly agreeing. This aligns with Kamukama & Tumwine (2017) and Iyadi (2022), who emphasized that content marketing fosters direct interaction between brands and customers, enhancing customer relationships and building trust. The ability of content marketing to provide the exact information customers seek, rather than imposing brand messaging, strengthens these relationships. The data underscores that most businesses see content marketing as a driver of meaningful engagement, supporting its effectiveness in fostering customer loyalty.

More crucially, a majority (54.8%) agreed that high-quality content has helped establish their businesses as authorities in their industries, with 22.6% strongly agreeing. This is consistent with du Plessis (2017) and Rowley (2008), who argue that branded content marketing builds trust, credibility, and industry authority. Businesses that consistently produce valuable and educational content are better positioned as thought leaders. The statistics also show that while

some respondents were unsure (16.1%), a clear majority agreed on the authority-building power of content marketing.

The data shows that 71% of respondents agreed that content marketing has been effective in generating leads, with 19.4% strongly agreeing. This finding corresponds with the insights of Statista (2021) and Guma (2019), which emphasize that content marketing, especially when integrated with digital tools like Google Ads and social media platforms, helps businesses reach new customers. Content marketing's role in driving targeted traffic and capturing potential leads aligns with these observations, as it provides value-driven, customer-focused information that attracts potential buyers.

A significant portion of respondents (63.3%) agreed that content marketing provides a higher ROI compared to other marketing strategies, with 22% strongly agreeing. Rajagopal (2010) discussed how viral marketing and content marketing provide cost-effective ways to reach large audiences without significant expenditure on traditional advertising methods. This high ROI is further supported by the flexibility of content marketing to use various formats - such as blogs, videos, and infographics—that resonate with target audiences, making it a more efficient approach to marketing. 31.3% of respondents were unsure, reflecting the challenge in directly measuring ROI for some businesses, though overall, the data confirms content marketing's cost-effectiveness.

According to the data, 62.5% of respondents felt that consistent content marketing has improved customer retention for their businesses, with 12.6% strongly agreeing. This supports the views of Kamukama & Tumwine (2017), who note that trust and stronger customer relationships, built through continuous content engagement, lead to higher customer retention. As content marketing keeps customers engaged and informed, businesses are more likely to see repeat purchases and long-term loyalty, which the data also reflects.

Interestingly, 46.9% of respondents agreed that their businesses face challenges in consistently creating and distributing high-quality content, with 15.6% strongly agreeing. Iyadi (2022) acknowledged that while content marketing is powerful, producing consistent, high-quality content can be difficult. Although a portion of respondents disagreed (3.1%) or were unsure (18.8%), this statistic highlights a common issue many businesses face - balancing quality with the frequency of content production.

5.3 Conclusions

The study concludes that there is a strong effect of social media marketing on performance of Dogtas Exclusive as the use of social media platforms has significantly contributed to the increase in sales for my business. The findings show that there is a significant positive relationship between social media marketing and performance. This emphasizes the importance of social media marketing to drive performance.

The study also affirms that there is a strong relationship between search engine optimization (SEO) and the performance of Dogtas Exclusive as social media marketing has improved engagement and retention. This emphasizes the importance of SEO and social media in enhancing customer insights and purchase persuasion as outlined. It means that engaging with customers helps to build loyalty, which ultimately boosts long-term business success.

The effect of content marketing on the performance of SMES in Uganda is significant as content marketing has significantly improved customer engagement for their businesses. This means that content marketing fosters direct interaction between brands and customers, enhancing customer relationships and building trust. The ability of content marketing to provide the exact information customers seek, rather than imposing brand messaging, strengthens these relationships.

5.4 Recommendations

Improve search engine optimization expertise: Since a significant percentage of respondents identified a lack of digital marketing expertise as a challenge, it is crucial for SMEs to invest in training programs or seek professional assistance to enhance their knowledge and skills in digital marketing strategies.

Increase access to digital infrastructure and content: Addressing the limited access to digital infrastructure can help SMEs in Uganda fully leverage the potential of digital marketing. Governments and relevant stakeholders should work towards improving digital infrastructure and internet connectivity in both urban and rural areas.

Stimulate collaboration and knowledge sharing: Encouraging collaboration among SMEs can facilitate the exchange of best practices and experiences in digital marketing. Establishing industry-specific forums, workshops, or online communities can promote knowledge sharing and create opportunities for SMEs to learn from each other. **Focus on measuring ROI:** SMEs should prioritize establishing clear metrics and tracking mechanisms to measure the return on

investment (ROI) of their digital marketing efforts. This will enable them to assess the effectiveness of their strategies and make informed decisions about resource allocation.

5.5 Limitations

Delay resulting from postponement of most set appointments with the respondents. This meant that the researcher had to visit the premises more times than planned and also had to make changes on their schedule. Also, constant allocation of business duties from the respondents since the researcher was a former employee of the company that was being studied.

The increased visits to the manufacturing industry and also the process of recording the responses collected, was limited to a certain number of times to the researcher. The services involved in the analysis of the responses gathered according to the environment around Dogtas.

To analyse the impact of quality improvement on the content management of Dogtas Exclusive was a bit difficult hence time delay

Financial challenges were faced during this process in forms of meals and stay and constant transportation back and forth from school and also to the point of study

5.6 Suggestion for further study

This study focused on the effects of digital marketing on performance small and medium enterprises (sme's) in Uganda. a case of Dogtas exclusive. Since all of results were explained by the independent variables in this study, it is recommended that a study be carried out on other factors that affect small medium enterprise performance like supply chain links, networking and internet coverage specifically, a study should be carried out in order to pick out other variables not covered in this study. The research should also be done in other industries and the results compared so as to ascertained whether there is consistency on the effects of digital marketing on performance small and medium enterprises (sme's) in Uganda.

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Appendices
Appendix 1: QUESTIONNAIRE
For employees in selected departments in Homeart Dogtas exclusive

Dear sir/madam

My name is Niwamanya Shawn, I am a student of BPLM at Uganda Christian University. I am conducting a study on “Effects of digital marketing on performance small and medium enterprises (SME’s) in Uganda. A case of Dogtas exclusive.” You have been specifically selected to participate in this study and the information collected shall be purely for academic purpose and treated with the highest level of confidentiality. The success of this study shall greatly dependent on your response. Your cooperation shall highly be appreciated.

Section A. Bio Data

Please tick the most appropriate answer

1. Gender a) Male b) Female

2. Age

a) 21-30 years b) 31-40 years

c) 41-50 years d) Above 50 years

3. Education level

a) Certificate b) Diploma

c) Degree d) Masters

e) Others specify:

4. Which department do you belong to in Dogtas Exclusive?

.....

5. How long have you spent working with NWSC?

a) Less than 1 year b) 1-5 years

c) 6-10 years

d) Above 10 years

Note: In the following sections, rate your degree of agreement on each statement under each objective using a scale of 5(Strongly Agree), 4(Agree), 3(Not sure), 2(Disagree) and 1(Strongly Disagree).

Section B (a): Social Media Marketing and SME Performance

Questions		Responses				
No.	TO ASSESS THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON THE PERFORMANCE OF SMES IN UGANDA.	5	4	3	2	1
1	The use of social media platforms has significantly contributed to the increase in sales for my business.					
2	Social media marketing has enhanced my business's ability to engage and retain customers.					
3	Social media marketing has played a crucial role in increasing my business's brand awareness.					
4	Social media marketing is a cost-effective tool for promoting my business compared to traditional marketing methods.					
5	My business has gained a significant number of new customers through social media marketing campaigns.					
6	The use of social media has improved customer service and satisfaction in my business.					
7	Social media marketing has provided my business with a competitive edge in the market.					
8	My business faces challenges in effectively utilizing social media for marketing purposes.					

Section B(b): Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and SME Performance

Questions		Responses				
No.	To examine the effect of search engine optimization on the performance of SMEs in Uganda.	5	4	3	2	1
1	Implementing SEO strategies has significantly improved my business's visibility in search engine results.					
2	SEO practices have led to a noticeable increase in website traffic for my business.					
3	My business has seen an improvement in conversion rates due to higher rankings in organic search results.					
4	SEO is a more cost-effective marketing strategy compared to paid search advertising for my business.					
5	The long-term benefits of SEO outweigh the initial investment required for my business.					
6	My business faces challenges in effectively implementing SEO strategies.					
7	Higher search engine rankings have positively impacted the credibility and trustworthiness of my business.					
8	My business has gained a competitive advantage in the market due to successful SEO practices.					

Section B(c): Content Marketing and SME Performance

Statements		Responses				
No.	To establish the effect of content marketing on the performance of SMEs in Uganda.	5	4	3	2	1
1	Content marketing has significantly improved customer engagement for my business.					
2	High-quality content has established my business as an authority in its industry.					
3	Content marketing has been effective in generating leads for my business.					
4	Content marketing provides a higher return on investment compared to other marketing strategies.					
5	Consistent content marketing has improved customer retention for my business.					
6	My business faces challenges in consistently creating and distributing high-quality content.					
7	Content marketing has positively influenced my business's SEO efforts.					
8	Content marketing has been a driving factor in the growth and success of my business.					

Section C: Performance of small medium enterprises

	Statements	Responses				
No.	To establish the effect of content marketing on the performance of SMEs in Uganda.	5	4	3	2	1
1	My company's revenue has increased over the past year.					
2	My company is profitable and maintains a healthy profit margin.					
3	I am confident in the financial stability of my company.					
4	My company holds a significant market share in its industry.					
5	Our marketing strategies effectively attract new customers.					
6	Our business operations are highly efficient.					
7	We face significant operational challenges that hinder our efficiency.					
8	Our customers are generally satisfied with our products/services.					

Thank you very much for your cooperation

Appendix 2: KREJCIE AND MORGAN TABLE

Table 3.1									
<i>Table for Determining Sample Size of a Known Population</i>									
N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	346
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	354
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	191	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	170	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	180	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	190	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	200	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	370
65	56	210	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	220	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	230	144	550	226	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	240	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	250	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	260	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	254	2600	335	100000	384

Note: N is Population Size; S is Sample Size *Source: Krejcie & Morgan, 1970*

APPENDIX 3: INTRODUCTORY LETTER



SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

19th Aug, 2024

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Name: NIWAMANYA SAHWN

Reg. No: S21B12/097

A bachelor's student who is seeking permission from your office to collect data for her dissertation titled

THE EFFECTS OF DIGITAL MARKETING ON SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SME's) IN UGANDA.

We shall be grateful if you could render assistance to her in collecting the necessary data for her dissertation

The Uganda Christian University School of Business thanks you in advance

Mukisa Simon Peter
Research coordinator

A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa

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