An examination of the correlation between website traffic and the quality of services provided by Jumia Uganda

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ABSTRACT

An attempt to divorce E-marketing from current business operations is a futile one worldwide presently. The two are like Siamese twins since a strong digital marketing platform benefits from current business operations very well. Website development became fundamental following the discovery of the internet in the early 1983 and world wide web in 1989.It is on such background that Jumia Uganda, an online business platform was conceived. The research employed a cross-sectional survey design to investigate the association between electronic marketing efforts and service quality. A mixed-methods research approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, was deemed highly relevant for this study. In addition, from the 255 target respondents, a definite sample size of 101 was determined using William G. Cochran (1997) formula. However, just like any usual business, web-based businesses like the ones of Jumia Uganda are not short of incapacitations which among others is low website traffic which impacts on the sales of such business directly. The paper provides detailed literature review concentrating on the nexus between website traffic and quality services. Based on empirical evidence, we conclude that the moderate positive correlation coefficient of (r=0.390**) suggests a correlation between website traffic and service quality. As website traffic increases, there is a tendency for service quality to improve. The significance level for both correlations was 0.000, indicating that the correlation coefficients were highly significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). This positive correlation implies a connection between website traffic and service quality. From the empirical conclusion, we are in position to come up with a key recommendation stating that to enhance its online presence, Jumia should consider diversifying its website content with engaging formats such as blog posts, videos, and infographics to appeal to a broader audience. Consistent updates and the regular refreshment of content are crucial for maintaining visitor interest.

Introduction

In recent years, the rapid expansion of electronic marketing has transformed the landscape of the retail industry, granting consumers the convenience of online shopping (Smith and Zook, 2011). Jumia Uganda, a prominent online marketplace in the country, has become a key player in the electronic marketing sector, drawing a substantial customer base (Kalema *et al.*, 2022). Despite its popularity, concerns have been mounting among consumers regarding the electronic marketing practices and service quality provided by Jumia Uganda (Nakato & Bwengye, 2021). These concerns underscore the

necessity for a thorough examination of the challenges faced by the company in implementing effective electronic marketing strategies and ensuring superior service quality for its customers. Consequently, this study investigates the electronic marketing and service quality of online merchandisers, with a focus on Jumia Uganda. This chapter delves into the study's background, statement of the problem, purpose, objectives, research questions, scope, and significance.

Jumia Uganda implemented a robust electronic marketing strategy, intending to provide outstanding service through online advertisements, engaging social media campaigns, and personalized email marketing. Despite these efforts, the quality of services in Jumia Uganda's electronic marketing initiatives remained subpar. Challenges included inaccuracies in product information, delayed deliveries, occasional stock shortages, and difficulties in maintaining consistent service quality among various sellers. Additionally, the competitive nature of the online market exerted pressure on pricing and promotions, potentially impacting profit margins (Businge, 2020).

According to a report from the Ministry of National Guidance and ICT on Uganda's National Electronic Marketing Strategy (August 2021), Jumia Uganda faced declining website traffic and online visibility. Factors contributing to this decline included the cost of data, low awareness and adoption of online shopping, and the expense of electronic gadgets. The report revealed a 25% decrease in organic search traffic in 2021 compared to previous periods (2020), and social media engagement had similarly dropped by 30% during the same timeframe, both falling below the industry benchmarks of at least 50%.

Objective

To examine the correlation between website traffic and the quality of services provided by Jumia Uganda.

Literature review

Website traffic within the context of electronic marketing displays a notable level of dynamism, influenced by factors such as time of day, marketing campaigns, seasonal variations, and external events. Kumar, Rai, and Dwivedi (2018) emphasize the unpredictable nature of this dynamism, highlighting how traffic can experience sudden surges or declines. This variability underscores the crucial importance of effectively managing service reliability amidst rapidly changing loads. Scholars argue against a one-size-fits-all approach to service provision, asserting that online merchandisers must implement strategies adaptable to dynamic patterns, ensuring a consistent user experience regardless of traffic fluctuations.

To maintain service reliability in the face of dynamic website traffic, online merchandisers must make significant investments in scalable infrastructure and cloud-based solutions. Zhang, Liu, and Zhang (2019) assert that scalability is a fundamental requirement. Scalable infrastructure dynamically allocates computing resources in response to changing traffic patterns, preventing service degradation during spikes in traffic. This approach allows online retailers to sustain optimal performance even when confronted with unpredictable increases in visitors. Recent studies stress the need for continuous assessment of infrastructure by online retailers to ensure it efficiently handles varying traffic loads.

The impact of website traffic on online sales and revenue generation is a central focus in recent electronic marketing research (Riquelme, 2018). It goes beyond maintaining user experience; it involves capturing potential customers and preventing revenue loss due to performance issues during peak traffic periods. Scholars argue that even brief service disruptions or slow loading times can result in significant revenue

loss. Therefore, service reliability under varying traffic conditions is closely tied to the financial success of online merchandisers.

In the contemporary electronic marketing landscape, user experience remains paramount and is intricately linked to website traffic (Dwivedi, Rana, & Janssen, 2020). High traffic loads can lead to slower loading times and decreased conversion rates, impacting user engagement and trust. Scholars extensively explore how performance issues related to website traffic directly influence user satisfaction and conversion rates, emphasizing the need for traffic management strategies prioritizing user experience.

Advanced machine learning algorithms are increasingly valuable tools for predicting traffic surges and managing resources efficiently (Xie *et al.*, 2021). Predictive analytics enable online merchandisers to proactively allocate resources, maintain reliability, and enhance overall performance. Scholars argue that effective traffic management goes beyond reacting to surges; it involves a proactive approach leveraging predictive models to anticipate and prepare for traffic fluctuations. This not only enhances reliability but also reduces the risk of downtime and performance bottlenecks.

The proliferation of mobile commerce introduces new dimensions to website traffic patterns (Islam, Rahman, & Almogren, 2018). Mobile users interact differently with online stores compared to desktop users, impacting traffic patterns. Scholars emphasize the need to understand how mobile users engage with electronic marketing platforms and how mobile traffic behaves, crucial for optimizing service reliability as mobile commerce gains prominence. Traffic management strategies must account for the distinct characteristics of mobile traffic to ensure consistent reliability and user satisfaction.

Recent studies underscore the utility of Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and reliability metrics in the electronic marketing context (Jin *et al.*, 2019). SLAs provide a contractual framework for setting performance standards, and reliability metrics offer quantifiable measures of service reliability. Scholars argue that these tools are crucial for evaluating how website traffic affects reliability. By defining clear standards and regularly monitoring performance against these benchmarks, online merchandisers can effectively manage and communicate their commitment to service reliability, especially in the context of varying traffic loads.

Many online merchandisers heavily rely on Content Delivery Networks (CDNs) to distribute content efficiently and enhance reliability (Cao *et al.*, 2020). CDNs have become integral to managing website traffic, especially for global electronic marketing platforms. Scholars stress the significance of choosing the right CDN provider and configuring it effectively, as these decisions can significantly influence a platform's ability to handle varying traffic loads while maintaining service reliability. The management and optimization of CDN resources have gained considerable attention in recent literature as critical components of traffic-related reliability strategies.

Methodology

The research employed a cross-sectional survey research design to investigate the association between electronic marketing efforts and service quality. This research design facilitated the collection of data from a diverse group of respondents, offering valuable insights into the current state of electronic marketing and service quality within the context of Jumia Uganda. It allowed for comparisons and analyses across various aspects of electronic marketing and service quality.

A mixed-methods research approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, was deemed highly relevant for this study. This approach involved systematically collecting and analyzing data to provide a comprehensive understanding of Jumia Uganda's electronic marketing service quality. It enabled the gathering of both quantitative data, such as numerical ratings and statistics, and qualitative data, including customer feedback and perceptions.

The study population comprised 5 employees who were purposively selected due to their firsthand knowledge of Jumia Uganda's internal processes and practices. This selection aimed to provide the researcher with insights into the organization's electronic marketing and service quality from an insider's perspective.

In addition to the employees, 250 customers were selected for the study on electronic marketing and service quality of online merchandisers, such as Jumia Uganda. These customers were chosen because they could offer essential insights into their actual experiences, perceptions, and satisfaction levels when using the platform. Their feedback played a crucial role in understanding how electronic marketing strategies and service quality impact end-users and guided potential improvements to enhance the overall customer experience. Therefore, the total population for the study was 255 people.

Results

For the evaluation, the Likert scale was utilized to assess the impact of website traffic on service quality in Jumia Uganda. In interpretation, scores were categorized to signify <3 (disagreement) and >3 (agreement) in accordance with the research indicators outlined in the survey questionnaire. A standard deviation <1 indicated similarities in the responses, while a standard deviation >1 signified diverse responses with variations. To streamline the presentation, the researcher combined both "*agree*" and "*strongly agree*" as "*AGREE*," and "*disagree*" and "*strongly disagree*" as "*DISAGREE*." This subsection consequently outlines the findings provided by both customers and key informants of Jumia Uganda.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics on how website traffic influences service quality in Jumia Uganda.

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
The decline in website traffic for Jumia Uganda is primarily due to technical issues.	88	1	5	2.68	1.318
Changes in search engine algorithms have significantly impacted Jumia Uganda's online website traffic	88	1	5	3.64	1.126
The slow loading speed of Jumia Uganda's website has contributed to its decline in customer visibility.	88	1	5	2.36	1.349
Competitor websites have played a major role in decreasing Jumia Uganda's traffic.	88	1	5	3.05	1.461
The quality and relevance of Jumia Uganda's content have been insufficient in attracting website traffic	88	1	5	2.58	1.210
Jumia Uganda's social media presence has been effective in driving website traffic	88	1	5	3.53	1.203
User experience and website navigation issues have negatively affected Jumia Uganda's traffic.	88	1	5	3.08	1.224
Jumia Uganda's SEO strategies have been successful in maintaining website traffic.	88	1	5	3.02	1.389

The lack of mobile optimization has significantly impacted Jumia Uganda's website traffic	88	1	5	2.93	1.201
Online advertising campaigns have had a positive impact on Jumia Uganda's website traffic	88	1	5	4.82	0.402
Valid N (listwise)	**88**				

Source: Primary data, 2023

The above results contained in table above, presents opinions on how website traffic influences service quality in Jumia Uganda. It was established that the decline in website traffic for Jumia Uganda was not primarily due to technical issues. The mean score of (2.68) indicates disagreement and the relatively low standard deviation of (1.318) implies a commonality in the responses, meaning there was a general consensus among the respondents regarding this impact.

In an interview with one of the marketing managers at Jumia Uganda, she responded;

"The marketing department and the technical team occasionally analyze website traffic data using tools like Google Analytics or similar platforms. We look at metrics such as the number of website visitors, page views, and average time on site, bounce rate, and conversion rates. For instance, as of May 2023, the company had over 19,000 likes on its Facebook page and 9,130 subscribes on its YouTube channel and 12,299 followers on its online Jumia app which has increased online visibility"

She added;

"We run online adverts on several websites like scrabble and word feud, Jumia considers placing advertisements within these apps to reach a wide audience of word game enthusiasts. Targeted advertising can help promote Jumia's products and services to a relevant user base who may be interested in online shopping".

The table above also indicates that alterations in search engine algorithms have had a significant impact on Jumia Uganda's online website traffic. The mean score of (3.64) suggests a moderate level of agreement, and the standard deviation of (1.126) indicates some variations in responses, suggesting that while many respondents agreed, there were also divergent opinions.

In addition, participants were questioned about whether the slow loading speed of Jumia Uganda's website contributed to its decline in customer visibility. The mean score of (2.36) suggests a moderate disagreement. The standard deviation of (1.349) indicates diverse responses, signifying some disagreement among the respondents regarding the extent of this impact.

Concerning the influence of competitor websites on decreasing Jumia Uganda's online visibility and traffic, the mean score of (3.05) indicates a moderate agreement. The higher standard deviation of (1.461) suggests more varied responses, indicating some disagreement and divergence in opinions. The moderate agreement and varied responses imply that Jumia Uganda may not always identify areas where their competitors have gained an advantage and strategize accordingly to enhance their own online visibility and attract more traffic.

The study also investigated whether the quality and relevance of Jumia Uganda's content were insufficient in attracting website traffic. The mean score of (2.58) indicates disagreement. The standard deviation of

(1.210) implies variations in responses, indicating disagreement and differing opinions. It was agreed that the company maintains high-quality and relevant content on their website, improving content strategy to align with target audience interests and addressing any content-related issues.

The researcher also examined whether Jumia Uganda's social media presence effectively drove website traffic, with a mean score of (3.53 showing agreement. The standard deviation of (1.203) implies variations in responses, indicating some disagreement and diverging opinions. It was revealed that the company tracks key metrics, analyzes customer satisfaction levels, provides avenues for feedback, carries out surveys every six months, and implements tools such as C-Sat and V-Sat for monitoring customers and vendors.

Further results from Table 4.2 indicate that user experience and website navigation issues negatively affected Jumia Uganda's traffic. The mean score of (3.08) indicates disagreement. The standard deviation of (1.224) suggests variations in responses, implying disagreement and differing opinions.

Results also show that Jumia Uganda's SEO strategies have been successful in maintaining or improving its website traffic, with a mean score of (3.02) indicating a relatively low agreement. The standard deviation of (1.389) implies some variations in responses, suggesting that while many respondents agree, there were also differing opinions on staying updated with SEO best practices and optimizing website content.

In addition to the above, the interviewee narrated that;

> "The marketing management assesses Jumia Uganda's search engine rankings for targeted keywords. We track the position of relevant keywords in search engine results pages (SERPs) to understand the impact of Search Engine Optimization (SEO) efforts. Higher rankings indicate improved visibility and potential for increased website traffic".

It was also revealed that the lack of mobile optimization has not impacted Jumia Uganda's website traffic and online visibility. The mean score of (2.93) shows disagreement. The standard deviation of (1.201) implies some variations in responses, indicating diverging opinions among the respondents. This was because significant portion of their customers uses mobile devices, hence prioritizing mobile optimization has enhanced website traffic and online visibility.

The results also captured whether online advertising campaigns had a positive impact on Jumia Uganda's website traffic. The mean score of (4.82) suggests a disagreement. The standard deviation of (0.402) indicated disagreement and diverging opinions. The disagreement was attributed to the fact that Jumia Uganda conducts thorough website audits and address any technical issues that may affect user experience and website performance.

In support of the agreement, the interviewee said;

> "Jumia has a customized and user-friendly website design enables customers to navigate effortlessly through the site, find products or information quickly, and complete their desired actions. Clear menus with images, numerous descriptions, well-organized categories, pricing, shipping information, and customer support contacts easily visible and readily available, allowing customers to make informed

decisions without having to search extensively thus, this enhances the user experience and reduce frustration".

Conclusion

The moderate positive correlation coefficient of (r=0.390**) suggests a correlation between website traffic and service quality. As website traffic increases, there is a tendency for service quality to improve. The significance level for both correlations was 0.000, indicating that the correlation coefficients were highly significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). This positive correlation implies a connection between website traffic and service quality.

Recommendation

To enhance its online presence, Jumia should consider diversifying its website content with engaging formats such as blog posts, videos, and infographics to appeal to a broader audience. Consistent updates and the regular refreshment of content are crucial for maintaining visitor interest.

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