

Assessment of the Influence of Online Marketing on Real Estate Properties in Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

Online marketing, which is a branch of technology, is becoming very popular in various business sectors as a means of conducting business activities. The advent of online marketing has caused a shift in the way information is disseminated among everyone who can use the internet. Since the real estate business is information-driven, online marketing of real estate properties is indispensable. The purpose of this research was to assess the influence of online marketing on real estate properties in Awka, Anambra state. This was achieved by studying the effectiveness, the advantages and disadvantages of online marketing of real estate properties in Awka. The scope of study covered the city of Awka in Anambra state. The target population is real estate practitioners registered with the Nigerian Institute of Estate Surveyors and Valuers (NIESV) in Awka. This population was not represented by any sample size but was enumerated to be 16 in number. Questionnaires were distributed, and descriptive statistical analysis, such as percentage and mean analysis, was used to analyze the data collected. The result shows the engagement of real estate practitioners in Awka in online marketing of their properties. The result confirms that online marketing of real estate properties is more advantageous than the offline (traditional) modes such as billboards, newspaper, radio and television. It was also deduced that most real estate professionals in Awka have online presence, list their properties on relevant platforms, and have concluded transactions that originated online. It is recommended that real estate professionals should view the offline (traditional) modes of marketing as complementary and not competitive with online marketing of real estate properties. This is because both are needed for the business of real estate to thrive and command optimum yield to the real estate professional.

KEYWORDS: Real estate, Properties, Online Marketing, Awka.

Date of Submission: 17-01-2022

Date of Acceptance: 31-01-2022

I. INTRODUCTION

Much of the world's business today is carried out over digital networks that connect people and companies (Kotler and Armstrong, 2012). The internet is the network of computers all over the world, which allows communication and sharing of information among users. This connection is occasioned through different internet platforms. Social media are internet sites or platform which facilitates free interaction among people; receiving, sharing and discussion of issues of interest; use of personal words, videos, pictures, and audio multimedia (Olukolajo, Ojo and Akinwamide 2015). It enables individuals to be part of a collaborative conversation in order to provide mutually beneficial value in a trusted business environment (Rodriguez 2011).

Almost any information can be accessed from the internet, as all the user has to do is to connect his computer to the internet. This activity is what is called 'going online'. By going online, the user connects his computer to the activities of other interconnected computers on the internet. This, however, forms the basis for Online Marketing.

Marketing, according to Investopedia, refers to "the activities a company undertakes to promote the buying or selling of a product or service. It includes advertising, selling, and delivering products to consumers or other businesses". Therefore, Online Marketing entails communicating and sharing of relevant information among users of connected computers, for the purpose of promoting products and/or services through the internet. Simply put, Online Marketing means promoting buying and selling using the internet.

The main advantage of Online Marketing, also known as Internet or Digital Marketing, over the traditional offline marketing, which include mediums like print, billboard, television and radio advertisements, is the accessibility of readily available information for the consumption of the marketer. Digitalized marketing,

which is an offshoot of technology, has become the expected way of conducting many aspects of businesses some businesses exist purely online. Real Estate Marketing is one of such aspect of businesses that will command greater result on various digitalized marketing platforms (Jejelola and Ogungbe 2020).

The need for real estate owners to gain online presence becomes stronger as the internet continually exercises its unique power on online marketing by providing features that enable consumers to access available real estate properties more conveniently. Few decades ago, even after the public could access the World Wide Web, advertisements for real estate properties in newspapers were one of the major sources of ads revenue because they daily covered the pages of these prints; Estate Surveyors and Valuers continued to advertise properties through such traditional means.

The real estate industry was obviously affected by the internet when some Estate Surveyors and Valuers automated their listing services. The implication was that the public could then access listings, recent sales, tax information and other property details online. "Real estate listings moved from off-line listings available only to real estate professionals to online listings on major Internet portals such as AOL Real Estate, Yahoo! Real Estate, and MSN House and Home (now housed in its own section under MSN Money)," (Joel, 2015).

Because of the need for laser-sharp strategies for reaching out to consumers and securing great opportunities for transactions, real estate properties have, today, saturated the online market, attracting the benefits of real estate online marketing. In this study, the researcher is interested in providing information on the influence of online marketing on real estate properties in Awka, Anambra State.

Being the capital city of Anambra state, Awka is fast-developing and is currently in an era where the people, who are the potential consumers of real estate properties, have positioned themselves to be easily demographically targeted because of their ever-increasing online presence and activities, using several available technical and creative tools. Also, these consumers want to be kept abreast with trends and information relating to the property market in Awka, maintaining minimum risk and maximum effectiveness. The internet provides such opportunities, encouraging a shortened and more convenient sales cycle. Online marketing enables the real estate practitioners to market real estate products globally (Nwogu and Ifekanandu, 2021).

On the other hand, because the information about real estate properties is readily available and constantly updated online by real estate companies, the long line-up of intermediate real estate brokers is constantly shortened, as the public becomes more aware of the internet and responds to its beckon for engagements. The level of online marketing on real estate disposal awareness amongst real estate professionals in Nigeria is quite low (Kakulu, 2018, as cited in Nwogu and Ifekanandu, 2021). However, traditional modes of marketing have not been completely phased out because a healthy co-existence of both is needed for the transaction of real estate properties. After a thorough search online, clients must contact the concerned real estate agent to finalize deals before kicking off with the transaction procedures.

The real estate industry with its diverse activities has also been seen participating in this new trend; but with diverse responses from practitioners. In Nigeria, the adoption of information technology for real estate transactions began with property website where property information was published; however, challenges such as failure of the sites to effectively meet the customer's need, unfulfilled promises on services, links to pages that are non-functional or nonexistent, has discredited this medium before their clients (Chukwuemeka, 2012). Myriad social networks are readily available online and are being explored when renting or buying apartments. (Sawyer, Croston, Wignand and Allbritton 2003) had envisaged that the residential agents whose job is to serve as intermediaries connecting buyers and sellers, may have their job threatened with the advent of ICT which has provided buyers and sellers a new way of finding one another

Information and Communication Technology is highly employed in Online Marketing; this is the only means by which the purpose of its operations is satisfied. Also, the transaction of real estate properties is both information and communication oriented, such that without these, the real estate industry would not thrive. This makes the business of real estate properties a viable setting for assessing online marketing. With the fast-growing population and civilization in Awka city, it becomes more difficult for real estate properties to be adequately marketed to the potential consumers, who make up the teeming population, using the traditional modes of marketing such as print, billboard, television and radio advertisements.

This is majorly because the people now have improved online presence and engagements, which affects their attention to offline activities, to a reasonable extent. The problem of this study is highly associated with the problems of traditional marketing strategies, which include high marketing cost, limited accessibility, poor track of marketing results, and time consumption. These are the problems that are expected to be curbed by the means of online real estate property marketing. The current study seeks to assess the extent to which online marketing has solved these problems, the setback, as well as its general influence on real estate properties in Awka, Anambra state, Nigeria.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ONLINE MARKETING IN REAL ESTATE PROPERTIES

The effectiveness of online marketing in real estate properties can be judged by the extent it can be successful in producing the intended results of real estate professionals in satisfying their customers. It answers the question of how adequate online marketing is in accomplishing the motives for which a real property investment is made.

(Jejelola and Ogungbe 2021), with the advent of the internet, companies are beginning to create solutions that help to meet the needs of their clients without breaking a sweat. The real estate industry in Nigeria is not left out too, as the increased penetration of digital technology and new owners and investors coming into the Nigerian land market have made online listing of property inevitable.

The upsurge of online activities ever since the inception of the internet makes it expedient that real estate properties secure their own spaces on various online platforms. The more awareness is created about these online platforms, the more real estate companies get on board, and the more the companies who stick solely to traditional marketing modes keep going farther from business.

(Rodriguez 2011), with the evolution of the Internet and Web 2.0, organizations around the world are implementing a social media strategy to have a presence in the new connected world. The goal, though, is not to just have a presence, but to build a network. That network will then provide opportunities to develop new relationships, build brand awareness and create a competitive advantage. Real estate professionals need to capture detailed information on prospective clients in order to gain a better understanding of their needs and buying process. Also, a well-implemented social media strategy may be an effective prospecting tool to find qualified potential clients.

The connectivity that came with the internet is a very powerful tool for businesses, including real estate businesses. Such connectivity serves a fertile ground for both business and casual relationships. As such, it is very easy for real estate professionals to study and understand the behavior, interest, age and geographical distribution of their network. Since the transaction of real estate properties is information-driven, such online details make the job easier for the real estate professional; more so when he has the skill to deploy such information for smooth transactions in real estate properties.

The real estate business requires dissemination of information to thrive; the challenge in any sales organization is finding the right type of clients through prospecting efforts. Prospective clients need to know what property types are in the market and the current value of properties (Abayomi, Abiodun and Olaseni, 2018).

The internet is readily available and easily accessible by property searchers, who seek to have an interest in properties. Therefore, the issue of whether they are currently far or close to the prospective property may not be a hindrance to their search. With the internet, which makes it possible for real estate professionals to display their properties online, the globe has been posed as a very small place—just as small as any device that can access the internet.

(Bertram 2018) said that the number of renters searching for property online platforms rose to 10 per cent in 2016 – an increase of 5 per cent since 2015, while direct home buyers also shot up to 8 per cent at the end of 2016. This is an indicator that consumers are continually attracted to the internet for enquiries on available real estate properties. The internet traffic is very much on the rise.

It is in the interest of this study to unveil how the real estate properties in Awka move in trend with these ever-evolving results achieved through online marketing of real estate properties.

ONLINE REAL ESTATE PROPERTY MARKETING PLATFORMS

Several national-level real estate websites (Property Listing Websites) provide local demographic or financial data for user-selected properties. These real estate websites include: NPDC, Jll. Africa, Jumia House, Nigerian Property: Nigerian property market, PropertyPro.ng (formerly known as Tolet.com.ng), Nigeria Property Centre, Zoomek, Private Property, Property Deal Zone, One inkproperties.com, www.rentnow.com, Porch integrated services www.porchintegrated.com, Village head Master.com, www.nairarent.com, <http://nigeriaads.com/real-estate>, www.finbuyorrent.com, Lamudi.com.ng, www.nigergardencity.com, www.House-era.com, www.naijavillas.com, www.monselho.com, www.evilla.com.ng, Property 24, Hutbay, Castle Nigeria, Property Index, Land.ng to mention but a few (Jejelola and Ogungbe, 2020).

Other online platforms, apart from the website, that can be leveraged by the Real Estate professionals include:

- i. Social Media
- ii. Blogs
- iii. Video Hosting websites

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn are good marketing tools because of the network of people in these platforms—real estate professionals can easily connect with their desired audience. It is also easier to build and position real estate brands on social media for easy transactions in real

estate properties. The opportunity to repeatedly engage the audience is another advantage of social media. The sales cycle is shortened when social media handles serve as a leading traffic generator for websites, which is easily converted to business opportunities.

Blogs are avenues to get potential customers more informed about the company and their services, thereby, strategically positioning the company and the services before the potential customer.

Video hosting websites such as Youtube, Tiktok and Reels can be used for marketing real estate properties. Videos are made brief but rich, so that information is passed within a short period of time. Some of these websites also help to spread words about the company and the project by reaching look-alike audiences.

So many real estate companies are yet to leverage these platforms, hence, the reason for this study.

ONLINE REAL ESTATE MARKETING TECHNIQUES AND STRATEGIES

The following are the provisions of the above-mentioned internet platforms through which real estate professionals can market real estate properties:

- i. **A Mobile-friendly Website:** It is very important that every online real estate agent develops a well-designed and functional website. It should be able to work with Google's algorithm so that Google can easily rank it among other competing websites. Also, it should be connected to the agent's marketing channels. Because of the various types of devices in vogue today, the real estate professional must ensure that his website is mobile-friendly, that is, suitable for all mobile phones, as well as desktops. The website is very important, as it is the leading strategy on which other strategies are built. With a well-designed website, it is easy to create contents that will lead prospective buyers there. The website is like an online office of the real estate professional.
- ii. **Virtual Realities and Tours:** So much has changed in the real estate industry. The change became faster with the event of the COVID-19 pandemic. In property listing, photographs are no longer enough to convince consumers to acquire a property. They need to have a feel of what it would look like to live in the house or use the property, as the case may be. The way to do this is through virtual tours in and around the property. The potential clients should be able to see the property, floor plans and the surrounding in details. The good part of virtual tours is that no special technology is required to do this because the internet and ICT have provided so many toolkits, widely available, to make virtual realities and tours possible. This marketing strategy is very effective in wading off less-likely customers for any particular property.
- iii. **Social Media Advertisement:** The two types of social media advertisement include organic adverts and ad campaigns. While organic adverts is the traditional 'spray and pray' marketing technique where the real estate professional markets to his network alone without spending money, running ad campaigns involves paying owners of these social media platforms to show an property advert to more likely buyer. The latter is a cost-effective way of reaching potential customers and generating quality leads. It also increases the reach of marketing materials, as well as generating convertible engagements on social media posts.
- iv. **Ad Retargeting campaigns:** social media and websites algorithm is so powerful that it can almost read the minds of users per time. There have been cases where users go through the specifications of products online and do not purchase them immediately. What the algorithm does is make the advertisements of the products follow such users around to other platforms or websites. This is called retargeting. Real estate professionals can leverage on this technology to track anyone who shows even the slightest interest in a listed property. An active retargeting strategy can lead to a good conversion rate. Property investment is never a one-off decision; customers are likely to look at myriads of options. Feeding them with such option brings them closer to a brand.
- v. **Listing Properties on Online portals:** These online portals are already set up with powerful search algorithms and toolkits to handle leads, images, graphics and videos. They cover listings from multiple sources and update them regularly. Potential customers visit the portals to check for updated listings. The real estate professional can add his lists to the tops three or five property portals in a given region or area. Being creative here is very necessary, especially as regards the amount and quality of information dished out about the listed properties. Also, there should be a funnel that directs potential customers back to the real estate professional for further enquiries or transactional details.
- vi. **Email Marketing/Subscriptions:** When people subscribe to an email list, they expect to be kept updated as regards the subject of the email list. Therefore, a real estate professional creating an email list must be willing and ready to always keep in touch with his subscribers regarding the information they would search for elsewhere. This is also a means for the real estate agent to position himself better in the minds of the potential customers, providing them with information on floor plans, customization, benefits, amenities and the surrounding. There are available toolkits for email marketing that allows users to segment subscribers into different parts, according to age, income, interest and other relevant information. There is also a provision for personalizing emails so that each subscriber feels personally addressed, by mentioning their first name. The hack in email marketing is that the real estate professional keeps feeding his subscribers with relevant information, thereby keeping them in the loop for a future project that will suit them.

ADVANTAGES OF ONLINE REAL ESTATE PROPERTY MARKETING

(Benefield et al 2020) said that the online mode of marketing real estate enables the real estate practitioners to reach a larger number of clients within a short time and with a small budget. He stated that the traditional modes of real estate property marketing such as television and radio announcement, billboard advertisement, hanging to-let sign boards, use of newspapers property bulletin or magazine are more expensive and produce lower results. According to Sirgy (2014), in marketing, strategic analysis involves an assessment of the internal and external environments. An assessment of the internal environment involves an analysis of sales and customers, whereas an assessment of the external environment involves an analysis of the market and the competition. The traditional modes of marketing do not strictly target specific customers and, sometimes, geographical locations beyond the target location are inevitably reached.

A television advert for an available real estate property is shown to everyone—young and old, employed and unemployed, students and workers, property investors and consumers, willing buyers and unwilling buyers—who has a television and happens to tune in to the advertising channel at the time. The implication is that even though the advert is hitting a large audience, only very little percentage of them is the target audience who really needs to see the advert. It is the same thing for the use of bill-boards, signboards, newspapers and magazines. As a result, so much is paid for a very little result.

On the other hand, online marketing of real estate properties provides the opportunity for the real estate professionals to target a specific age bracket, geographical location, occupation, native speakers as well as interests. This is what (Kendal 2017) meant when he said that online marketing is the most cost-effective mode of marketing. Apart from little requirement to set up physical structure infrastructure, there is usually a maximum audience at minimal cost.

(Curtest 2019) opined that the online mode of marketing is an ideal way for real estate firms to do business through advertising locally or internationally. Locally and internationally, distance is no longer a barrier to real estate professionals in deploying their marketing strategies. The use of online marketing will exceed the boundaries and introduce the real estate products to the demographic of internet users (Curtest, 2019).

With online marketing, everything can be tracked and illustrated in detailed graphs that illustrate traffic growth, leads and sales conversions from a specific search marketing campaign (Kendal, 2017). This means that it will be easier to access the direct marketing impact for real estate properties.

(Santhini and Deepa 2016) said, “Due to slowdown, property developers are cutting back on advertisement expenditure incurred on traditional marketing modes of print media like newspaper, banners, flex prints, brochures, flyers and others to enhance brand visibility and lure potential customers and are instead shifting to newer technologies through marketing tools like search engine optimization, search engine marketing apart from realistic photography, 3D visualizations, interactive walkthroughs and other gesture based effects including plenty of textures and objects to add a more natural look to their projects.” Research has proven that the traditional modes of marketing can be slow and expensive. Online marketing presents more favorable strategies to tackle them.

(Rodriguez 2011), real estate professionals have found early success in lead generation and building brand awareness through the utilization of social media platforms. Lead generation simply means the collation of information about potential customers, with the view of establishing a relationship with them and sustaining such a relationship until and after their patronage, while brand awareness, according to Wikipedia, Brand awareness is the extent to which customers are able to recall or recognize a brand under different conditions. Online marketing makes it very easy for real estate professionals to generate leads and create brand awareness for their network.

The advantages of online marketing of real estate properties over the traditional modes can be summarized as:

- i. It is more cost-effective.
- ii. Information can reach a wider audience within a very short time.
- iii. It is less stressful. The customer does not have to travel all the way just to have a look at a property, especially when he is not ready to pay for it. This gives a room to screen out the ones who are not yet ready to part with their money.
- iv. Minimizing risk. There are so many risks associated with the business of real estate properties. One is in setting up infrastructure where people can make enquiries, and the other is in reaching the audience. Money can be lost in both when the desired result is not gotten. However, with online marketing, the risk is lower due to the opportunities leverages the internet provides.
- v. Efficiency. Most internet platforms have been programmed to ensure that information and messages reach relevant audiences first.

This study has come to bridge the gap between one real estate professional, who leverages these advantages of online real estate property marketing, and another, who is yet to do the same, by uncovering the potentials of the marketing platform provided by the internet.

DISADVANTAGES OF ONLINE REAL ESTATE PROPERTY MARKETING

The disadvantages of online real estate property marketing can be analyzed by the generic pitfalls associated with online marketing. The essence of this study is to know the extent to which the advantages outweigh the disadvantages or vice-versa.

(Yuvraj et al 2018) said this about online marketing of real estate products, “it is not possible to observe customer reaction and adjust search parameters. A broker-agent can convince buyers to submit an offer and help them navigate through the negotiation process and convince a client to sign and close. All these processes are difficult when taking the online approach.”

This means that the real estate professional may find it difficult to appeal to the emotions of his prospective customer when he does not afford a physical meeting with them. An offline meeting will afford interactions through questions and observations to understand what a potential buyer really wants. This way, it is easier to make a decision, whether to continue to work with the client or not.

Another major disadvantage of online marketing of real estate properties is that videos, graphics and pictures may not accurately portray the features of a property. There could be a case of ‘what is obtainable online’ versus ‘what is obtainable offline’ which could be better-off or worse-off.

This is why the traditional modes of marketing real estate properties cannot completely phase out. However, engaging the opportunities of online marketing will make the transaction cycle very short.

It can be concluded that in the current scenario there exists a great competition between online and offline agencies as the factors covering real estate properties and deals are fulfilled efficiently by both the agencies (offline and online). But if the online agencies improve in their financial data which is over the online portals and website, extend their boundaries over current vicinity and enhance the customer relationship management along with improvement in an advertisement for properties and deal they can definitely gain more profit and achieve more target audience as compared to offline agencies in near future (Yuvraj et al, 2018).

III. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The researcher considers this design appropriate for this study since it intends to collect data from real estate practitioners in Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria. The population of the study comprises of 16 registered estate surveyors and valuers in Awka. They have the following characteristics:

- i. They are professionals who are engaged in the practice of estate management as estate surveyors and valuers.
- ii. They are registered under and recognized by the Nigerian Institute of Estate Surveyors and Valuers (NIESV), Awka branch.
- iii. Their offices (whether branch or main) are located in Awka.

16 structured questionnaires were distributed which comprised of two sections.

The data collected for this research work was analyzed using percentage analysis and mean ranking. The detailed results will be presented in tables with 100% as its base.

The Mean Score Index will be used to rank all options provided based on five liker scale (ie ordinal scale), as will be shown in the questionnaire.

Percentage response:

$$\text{Percentage response} = \frac{X}{Y} \times \frac{100}{1}$$

Where;

X = number of respondents per option

Y = total number of respondents

The researcher will use the Likert type scale—Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Unsure (US), Disagree (DA) and Strongly Disagree (SDA), with each assigned a number ranging from 5 (SA) to 1 (SDA). The average mean is computed thus:

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{5+4+3+2+1}{5} = \frac{15}{5} = 3$$

With 3.0 as the computed mean, it means that any variable with a mean of 3.0 and above may be regarded as positive and accepted, while others with a mean below 3.0 may be regarded as negative and not accepted.

Mean Score Index:

$$M_s = \frac{\sum fX}{N}$$

Where,

M_s = mean score of each variable

f = frequency of response of each variable

X = score or ranking given to each variable.

IV. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

SECTION A

Table 4.1: Analysis of the distributed questionnaire

S/N	Questionnaire	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Number distributed	16	100
2	Number collected	16	100
3	Valid questionnaire	16	100

From Table 4.1, a total of sixteen (16) questionnaires were distributed to the targeted real estate professionals in Awka, and all of them were collected. Also, all of them were filled correctly. This represents a response rate of 100%, which should be a perfect rate for the study.

Table 4.2: Gender

S/N	Sex of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Male	10	62.5
2	Female	6	37.5

Table 4.2 above shows that 10 respondents, representing 62.5% of the respondents, were male while 6 respondents, representing 37.5% of the respondents, were female. This analysis reveals that the majority of the respondents were male.

Table 4.3: Age of distribution

S/N	Age of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Below 20	-	-
2	20 – 39 years	15	93.75
3	40 and above	1	6.25

Table 4.3 above shows that 15 respondents, representing 93.75% of the respondents, fell under the age bracket 20 – 39 years while 1 respondent, representing 6.25% of the respondents, were 40 years and above. This analysis reveals that the majority of the respondents were within the age of 20 and 39 years.

Table 4.4: Academic Qualification of Respondents

S/N	Academic Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	HND/BSC	11	68.75
2	PGD/MSC/PHD	5	31.25

Table 4.4 above shows that 11 respondents, representing 68.75% of the respondents, had either HND or BSC while 5 respondents, representing 31.25% of the respondents, had either PGD, MSC or PHD. This analysis reveals that the majority of the respondents were holders of HND or BSC certificates.

Table 4.5: Working Experiences of the Respondents

S/N	Years of Experience	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	0 - 5 years	9	56.25
2	5 - 10 years	4	25.00
3	10 – 25 years	3	18.75
4	25 years and above	-	-

Table 4.5 above shows that 9 respondents, representing 56.25% of the respondents, had working experience under the bracket of 0 – 5 years, 4 respondents, representing 25% of the respondents, had working experience under the bracket of 5 - 10 years, while 3 respondents, representing 18.75% of the respondents, had working experience under the bracket of 10 - 25 years. This analysis reveals that the majority of the respondents had working experience of 0 – 5 years.

SECTION B

Table 4.6: What is effectiveness of online marketing of real estate properties in Awka?

S/N	Effectiveness of Online Marketing of Real Estate Properties	SA	A	US	DA	SDA	Mean (X)	Remark
1	Available platform for listing properties	7	8	1	-	-	4.4	Accepted
2	Access to detailed information about prospective clients	3	5	7	1	-	3.6	Accepted
3	Rising internet traffic	3	10	2	1	-	3.9	Accepted
4	Quick dissemination of information	10	6	-	-	-	4.6	Accepted
5	Diverse digital marketing tools and platforms	4	8	2	2	-	3.9	Accepted

Table 4.6 shows that 7 respondents strongly agree that there are available platforms for listing properties online, 8 respondents agree while 1 respondent is unsure. Therefore, since the mean 4.4 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that online marketing is effective in Awka because of available online platforms for listing properties.

The analysis shows that 3 respondents strongly agree that there is access to detailed information about prospective clients online, 5 respondents agree, 7 respondents are unsure, while 1 respondent disagrees. Therefore, since the mean 3.6 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that online marketing is effective in Awka because of access to detailed information about prospective clients online.

The analysis shows that 3 respondents strongly agree that there is rising internet traffic, 10 respondents agree, 2 respondents are unsure, while 1 respondent disagrees. Therefore, since the mean 3.9 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that online marketing is effective in Awka because of the rising internet traffic.

The analysis shows that 10 respondents strongly agree that there is quick dissemination of information using the internet while 6 respondents agree. Therefore, since the mean 4.6 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that online marketing is effective in Awka because of quick dissemination of information.

Also, the analysis shows that 4 respondents strongly agree that there are diverse digital marketing tools and platforms, 8 respondents agree, 2 respondents are unsure, while 2 respondents disagree. Therefore, since the mean 3.9 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that online marketing is effective in Awka because of the availability of diverse digital marketing tools and platforms.

Table 4.7: What are the advantages of online marketing of real estate properties in Awka?

S/N	ADVANTAGES OF ONLINE MARKETING OF REAL ESTATE PROPERTIES	SA	A	US	DA	SDA	Mean (X)	Remark
1	It is cost-effective. It enables real estate practitioners to reach a larger number of clients within a short time and small budget.	11	5	-	-	-	4.7	Accepted
2	Businesses are concluded through local and international marketing.	8	7	1	-	-	4.4	Accepted
3	Fast and inexpensive	7	9	-	-	-	4.4	Accepted
4	Lead generation and brand awareness	8	8	-	-	-	4.5	Accepted
5	Access to a wider audience	10	4	2	-	-	4.5	Accepted
6	Less stressful on the side of the client	8	8	-	-	-	4.5	Accepted
7	Risk minimization	6	2	6	1	1	3.7	Accepted
8	Efficiency	4	7	5	-	-	3.9	Accepted

Table 4.7, shows that 11 respondents strongly agree that online marketing is cost-effective and enables real estate practitioners to reach a larger number of clients within a short time and small budget, while 5 respondents agree. Therefore, since the mean 4.7 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that online marketing is advantageous in Awka because it is cost-effective and enables real estate practitioners to reach a larger number of clients within a short time and small budget.

The analysis shows that 8 respondents strongly agree that businesses are concluded through local and international online marketing, 7 respondents agree, while 1 respondent is unsure. Therefore, since the mean 4.4 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that online marketing is advantageous in Awka because businesses are concluded through local and international online marketing.

The analysis shows that 7 respondents strongly agree that online marketing is fast and inexpensive while 9 agree. Therefore, since the mean 4.4 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that online marketing is advantageous in Awka because it is fast and inexpensive.

The analysis shows that 8 respondents strongly agree that online marketing promotes lead generation and brand awareness while 8 respondents agree. Therefore, since the mean 4.5 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is

accepted that online marketing is advantageous in Awka because it promotes lead generation and brand awareness.

The analysis shows that 10 respondents strongly agree that online marketing gives access to wider audience, 4 respondents agree, while 2 respondents are unsure. Therefore, since the mean 4.5 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that online marketing is advantageous in Awka because it gives access to a wider audience.

The analysis shows that 8 respondents strongly agree that online marketing is less stressful on the side of the client while 8 respondents agree. Therefore, since the mean 4.5 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that online marketing is advantageous in Awka because it is less stressful on the side of the client.

The analysis shows that 6 respondents strongly agree that online marketing minimizes marketing risks, 2 respondents agree, 6 respondents are unsure, 1 respondent disagrees, while 1 respondent strongly disagrees. Therefore, since the mean 3.7 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that online marketing is advantageous in Awka because it minimizes marketing risks.

Also, the analysis shows that 4 respondents strongly agree that online marketing is efficient, 7 respondents agree, while 5 respondents are unsure. Therefore, since the mean 3.9 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that online marketing is advantageous in Awka because it is efficient.

Table 4.8: What are the disadvantages of online marketing of real estate properties in Awka?

S/N	DISADVANTAGES OF ONLINE MARKETING OF REAL ESTATE PROPERTIES	SA	A	US	DA	SDA	Mean (X)	Remark
1	It is not possible to observe the prospective customer's reaction or adjust with them.	3	8	4	1	-	3.9	Accepted
2	Video graphics and pictures may not accurately portray the features of a property.	3	6	4	3	-	3.6	Accepted
3	There is still a need for offline (physical) meetings before transactions are concluded.	10	3	3	-	-	4.6	Accepted

Table 4.8 shows that 3 respondents strongly agree that it is not possible to observe the prospective customer's reaction or adjust with them online, 8 respondents agree, 4 respondents are unsure, while 1 respondent disagrees. Therefore, since the mean 3.9 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that online marketing is disadvantageous in Awka because it is not possible to observe the prospective customer's reaction or adjust with them online.

The analysis shows that 3 respondents strongly agree that videos graphics and pictures may not accurately portray the features of a property, 6 respondents agree, 4 respondents are unsure, while 3 respondents disagree. Therefore, since the mean 3.6 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that online marketing disadvantageous in Awka because videos graphics and pictures may not accurately portray the features of a property.

Also, the analysis shows that 10 respondents strongly agree that online marketing of real estate properties comes with the need for offline (physical) meetings before transactions are concluded, 3 respondents agree while 3 respondents are unsure. Therefore, since the mean 4.6 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that online marketing is disadvantageous in Awka because it comes with the need for offline (physical) meetings before transactions are concluded.

Table 4.9: What are the online marketing platforms for real estate properties in Awka?

S/N	ONLINE MARKETING PLATFORMS FOR REAL ESTATE PROPERTIES	SA	A	US	DA	SDA	Mean	Remark
1	Social media	13	2	1	-	-	4.8	Accepted
2	Blogs	3	8	3	2	-	3.8	Accepted
3	Video hosting websites	4	5	4	3	-	3.6	Accepted

Table 4.9 shows that 13 respondents strongly agree that social media is an online marketing platform for real estate properties in Awka, 2 respondents agree, while 1 respondent is unsure. Therefore, since the mean 4.8 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that social media is an online marketing platform for real estate properties in Awka.

The analysis shows that 3 respondents strongly agree that blog is an online marketing platform for real estate properties in Awka, 8 respondents agree, 3 respondents are unsure, while 2 respondents disagree. Therefore, since the mean 3.8 is greater than the average mean 5.0, it is accepted that blog is an online marketing platform for real estate properties in Awka.

Also, the analysis shows that 4 respondents strongly agree that video hosting websites are online marketing platforms for real estate properties in Awka, 5 respondents agree, 4 respondents are unsure, while 3

respondents disagree. Therefore, since the mean 3.6 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that video hosting websites are online marketing platforms for real estate properties in Awka.

Table 4.10: What are the techniques and strategies for online marketing of real estate properties in Awka?

S/N	ONLINE MARKETING TECHNIQUES AND STRATEGIES FOR REAL ESTATE PROPERTIES	SA	A	US	DA	SDA	Mean	Remark
1	Mobile friendly website	11	5	-	-	-	4.7	Accepted
2	Virtual realities and tours	5	7	2	2	-	3.9	Accepted
3	Social media advertisements	10	6	-	-	-	4.6	Accepted
4	Ad retargeting campaigns	3	8	3	2	-	3.8	Accepted
5	Listing properties on online portals	8	8	-	-	-	4.5	Accepted
6	Email marketing and subscriptions	6	5	4	1	-	4.0	Accepted

Table 4.10 shows that 11 respondents strongly agree that a mobile friendly website is an online marketing technique and strategy for real estate properties in Awka while 5 respondents agree. Therefore, since the mean 4.7 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that a mobile friendly website is an online marketing technique and strategy for real estate properties in Awka.

The analysis shows that 5 respondents strongly agree that virtual realities and tours is an online marketing technique and strategy for marketing of real estate properties in Awka, 7 respondents agree, 2 respondents are unsure, while 2 respondents disagree. Therefore, since the mean 3.9 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that virtual realities and tours is an online marketing technique and strategy real estate properties in Awka.

The analysis shows that 10 respondents strongly agree that social media advertisements is an online marketing technique and strategy for marketing of real estate properties in Awka while 6 respondents agree. Therefore, since the mean 4.6 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that social media advertisements is an online marketing technique and strategy for real estate properties in Awka.

The analysis shows that 3 respondents strongly agree that ad retargeting campaigns is an online marketing technique and strategy for real estate properties in Awka, 8 respondents agree, 3 respondents are unsure, while 2 respondents disagree. Therefore, since the mean 3.8 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that ad retargeting campaigns is an online marketing technique and strategy for marketing of real estate properties in Awka.

The analysis shows that 8 respondents strongly agree that listing properties on online portals is an online marketing technique and strategy for real estate properties in Awka, while 8 respondents agree. Therefore, since the mean 4.5 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that listing properties on online portals is an online marketing technique and strategy for marketing of real estate properties in Awka.

Also, the analysis shows that 6 respondents strongly agree that email marketing and subscriptions is an online marketing technique and strategy for real estate properties in Awka, 5 respondents agree, 4 respondents are unsure, while 1 respondent disagrees. Therefore, since the mean 4.0 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that email marketing and subscriptions is an online marketing technique and strategy for marketing of real estate properties in Awka.

Table 4.11: What are the offline marketing modes for real estate properties in Awka.

S/N	OFFLINE MARKETING MODES FOR REAL ESTATE PROPERTIES	SA	A	US	DA	SDA	Mean	Remark
1	Direct mail	4	4	4	4	-	3.5	Accepted
2	Billboards	9	7	-	-	-	4.6	Accepted
3	Referral	9	7	-	-	-	4.6	Accepted
4	Magazines/Newspapers	7	4	5	-	-	4.1	Accepted
5	Radio	7	7	1	1	-	4.3	Accepted
6	Television	9	4	2	1	-	4.3	Accepted

Table 4.11 shows that 4 respondents strongly agree that direct mail is an offline marketing mode for real estate properties in Awka, 4 respondents agree, 4 respondents are unsure, while 4 respondents disagree. Therefore, since the mean 3.5 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that direct mail is an offline marketing mode for real estate properties in Awka.

The analysis shows that 9 respondents strongly agree that the bill board is an offline marketing mode for real estate properties in Awka while 7 respondents agree. Therefore, since the mean 4.6 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that the bill board is an offline marketing mode for real estate properties in Awka.

The analysis shows that 9 respondents strongly agree that referral is an offline marketing mode for real estate properties in Awka while 7 respondents agree. Therefore, since the mean 4.6 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that the referral is an offline marketing mode for real estate properties in Awka.

The analysis shows that 7 respondents strongly agree that the magazine/newspaper is an offline marketing mode for real estate properties in Awka, 4 respondents agree, while 5 respondents are unsure. Therefore, since the mean 4.1 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that magazine/newspaper is an offline marketing mode for real estate properties in Awka.

The analysis shows that 7 respondents strongly agree that the radio is an offline marketing mode for real estate properties in Awka, 7 respondents agree, 1 respondent is unsure, while 1 respondent disagrees. Therefore, since the mean 4.3 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that the radio is an offline marketing mode for real estate properties in Awka.

Also, the analysis shows that 9 respondents strongly agree that television is an offline marketing mode for real estate properties in Awka, 4 respondents agree, 2 respondents are unsure, while 1 respondent disagrees. Therefore, since the mean 4.3 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that television is an offline marketing mode for real estate properties in Awka.

Table 4.12: What are the advantages of the offline marketing modes for real estate properties in Awka?

S/N	ADVANTAGES OF OFFLINE MODES OF MARKETING FOR REAL ESTATE PROPERTIES	SA	A	US	DA	SDA	Mean	Remark
1	Hard copies are easier to remember.	7	6	3	-	-	4.3	Accepted
2	Prints and newspapers are trustworthy and credible.	7	5	2	2	-	4.1	Accepted
3	Ability to reach a large audience.	4	4	4	2	2	3.4	Accepted

Table 4.12 shows that 7 respondents strongly agree that hard copies are easier to remember in Awka, 6 respondents agree, while 3 respondents are unsure. Therefore, since the mean 4.3 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that hard copies are easier to remember in Awka.

The analysis shows that 7 respondents strongly agree that prints and newspapers are trustworthy and credible in Awka, 5 respondents agree, 2 respondents are unsure, while 2 respondents disagree. Therefore, since the mean 4.1 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that prints and newspapers are trustworthy and credible.

Also, the analysis shows that 4 respondents strongly agree that a large audience in Awka can be reached using offline modes, 4 respondents agree, 4 respondents are unsure, 2 respondents disagree, while 2 respondents strongly disagree. Therefore, since the mean 3.4 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that prints and newspapers are trustworthy and credible.

Table 4.13: What are the disadvantages of the online marketing modes for real estate properties in Awka?

S/N	DISADVANTAGES OF OFFLINE MODES OF MARKETING FOR REAL ESTATE PROPERTIES	SA	A	US	DA	SDA	Mean	Remark
1	Low response rate	8	6	-	2	-	4.3	Accepted
2	The method is not measurable	4	10	2	-	-	4.1	Accepted
3	TV and radio broadcast are very expensive	6	9	-	1	-	4.4	Accepted
4	Lack of a well-defined audience	8	6	2	-	-	4.3	Accepted
5	Circulation of prints is not directly proportional to readership.	4	9	3	-	-	4.1	Accepted

Table 4.13 shows that 8 respondents strongly agree that there is low response rate using offline (traditional) marketing modes in Awka, 6 respondents agree, while 2 respondents disagree. Therefore, since the mean 4.3 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that there is low response rate using offline (traditional) marketing modes in Awka.

The analysis shows that 4 respondents strongly agree that the method is not measurable in Awka, 10 respondents agree, while 2 respondents are unsure. Therefore, since the mean 4.1 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that the method is not measurable in Awka.

The analysis shows that 6 respondents strongly agree that TV and radio broadcasts are very expensive in Awka, 9 respondents agree, while 1 respondent disagree. Therefore, since the mean 4.4 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that the TV and radio broadcast are very expensive in Awka.

The analysis shows that 8 respondents strongly agree that there is lack of a well-defined audience using offline modes of marketing for real estate properties in Awka, 6 respondents agree, while 2 respondents are

unsure. Therefore, since the mean 4.3 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that there is a lack of a well-defined audience using offline modes of marketing for real estate properties in Awka.

Also, the analysis shows that 4 respondents strongly agree that the circulation of prints is not directly proportional to readership in Awka, 9 respondents agree, while 3 respondents are unsure. Therefore, since the mean 4.1 is greater than the average mean 3.0, it is accepted that the circulation of prints is not directly proportional to readership in Awka.

V. CONCLUSION

From the discussion so far, it appears that the advent of online marketing of real estate properties in Awka has posed the inherent problems generic with online marketing. Some of these problems include the misleading presentation of properties that can be created through picture and video editing, as well as the need for physical meetings before transactions are concluded. This is where it becomes necessary that both modes of marketing complement each other in order to secure optimum returns to the real estate practitioner. In other words, real estate properties can be marketed online and the transactions concluded offline—that is complementary. Some real estate practitioners also do not have sufficient knowledge about the effectiveness and advantages of online marketing of real estate properties in Awka, and others are intimidated by the technology involved in it, therefore, they shy away from the mode of online marketing. However, the significance of this study is to unravel the basic elements of online marketing and how it can help grow the business of real estate properties in Awka. It will be a tool to help solve this problem of ignorance on the part of real estate practitioners in Awka.

5.1 Recommendations

Base on the findings, the following recommendations can be made:

1. There is a need for every real estate practitioner to have strong online and media presence. This is the basic ticket to accessing all the tools of online marketing provided by the internet. It is good for business.
2. Real estate professionals should make it a habit to list their properties on relevant online platforms. This is how they reach their potential customers.
3. Real estate professionals should discover, engage, and stay up-to-date with relevant online marketing techniques and strategies for their properties.
4. The state government should provide the necessary infrastructures (electricity, access roads, drainage etc.) within the housing estates and in other areas of the local government, to improve the living conditions of the people.
5. Offline and online modes of marketing real estate properties should not be seen as competitive by the real estate practitioner but complementary. Properties can be listed online and the transactions concluded offline.
6. NIESV and ESVARBON should review various real estate practice codes to accommodate the prevalent online marketing approaches. They should also create awareness among members regarding the effectiveness and advantages of online marketing of real estate properties, especially in Awka.
7. More research studies like this should be embarked on by researchers, as it would promote this creation of awareness among real estate practitioners.

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Cynthia Oluchi, et. al. "Assessment of the Influence of Online Marketing on Real Estate Properties in Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria." *International Journal of Engineering and Science*, vol. 12, no. 1, 2022, pp. 57-69.