

**DROPSHIPPING AND AFFILIATE MARKETING-CASE STUDY OF UNIBEN
STUDENTS**

BY

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BENIN CITY**

JUNE, 2024

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**A PROJECT WRITTEN AND SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (B.SC.) IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP
IN THE FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN
CITY.**

JUNE, 2024

DECLARATION

I, **Favour YUSUF**, do hereby declare that this project is entirely my own work and composition. The work embodied in this project has not been submitted in any candidature for any degree and is concurrently not being submitted for any other degree. All references made to the works of other persons have been duly acknowledged. All errors and omission and litigation arising from this work are to be wholly borne by me and not the supervisor

Favour YUSUF

Date

CERTIFICATION

We certify that this work was carried out by Miss **Favour YUSUF** in the Department of Entrepreneurship, Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God Almighty who gave me the strength, wisdom and understanding to carry out this work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am eternally grateful to God for his strength, wisdom, capacity and peace of mind to tarry throughout this work.

The success story of this work will not be complete if I fail to give credit to whom credit is due.

With profound gratitude and with deep humility and sincerity, I acknowledge my supervisor, Mr. N.D. Uhumamure who in his own way guided me through this work. I appreciate the efforts of the senior project coordinator Dr. Stephen Obeki Obeki. Special thanks to the Head of Department Dr. Obeki Obeki and all the lecturers in the Department of Entrepreneurship.

My unreserved gratitude goes to my parents Mr. and Mrs. Onyiriuka, for their support and prayers throughout this work.

My sincere gratitude goes to my sibling Onyiriuka Chukwuemeka, Onyiriuka Miracle, Onyiriuka Jeremiah, Onyiriuka Divine, Onyiriuka Anointed and Onyiriuka Chubuiké. I also appreciate my friends Ejiorfo Faith, Vikkie, Shirley, Mr. Peace, Olamide, Blessing and to the rest of my friends too numerous to mention.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the attitude and adoption of affiliate marketing and dropshipping among university students. The main purpose of this study was to specifically find out the level of awareness, influence of academic commitments, impact does ethical dilemmas influence of fear of exploitation and challenges on students participation in affiliate marketing and dropshipping.

The design of the study was a survey research design. The population target of this study comprised of 100 University of Benin student. The research instruments used in gathering data was the questionnaire, which were administered to students of University of Benin. The instrument was validated by the research supervisor and other lecturers in the Department of Entrepreneurship. Mean, standard deviation, percentages, Pearson correlation and regression analysis were used analyze the research questions and hypotheses.

The findings reveals that level of awareness, academic commitments, ethical dilemmas, fear of exploitation and challenges significantly influenced student adoption of affiliate marketing and dropshipping (($P < 0.05$). It was also revealed that the most the most important factors that resulted to adoption of affiliate marketing and dropshipping were academic commitments (0.780), ethical dilemmas (0.755), fear of exploitation (0.738), level of awareness (0.604) and challenges (0.581) respectively. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended that workshops, seminars, and training should be held to teach students about dropshipping and affiliate marketing, Students should connect with affiliate marketing and dropshipping experts and influencers to provide guidance and mentorship, Government and NGOs should encourage youth to develop skills in digital marketing and content creation through online courses or vocational training programs to enhance their affiliate marketing and dropshipping skills.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Affiliate marketing, a form of internet advertising that relies on performance, has emerged as an essential tool in influencing consumer decisions and impacting multiple generations. In the e-commerce industry specifically, it offers firms a powerful strategic advantage. Its adoption is largely fueled by digital natives known as millennials.

The prevalence of affiliate marketing in modern times can be attributed to its broader potential for businesses operating globally. Customers are now able to easily locate and purchase products while being presented with a wider range of options thanks to the increased access they have to data (Nayak, Mishra & Ruth, 2021). As a result, individuals may shift their purchasing decisions towards affiliate marketing practices. According Sivasankaran's definition proposed in 2017 , electronic commerce technologies driven by internet networks allow for buying and selling activities involving information as well as goods or services . These advancements cause ripple effects that alter not just supply chains but also business models, revenue streams, and customer bases present within various economies.

Affiliate marketing has emerged as a novel approach for reaching out to potential customers by leveraging social networks, blogs, online search engines and commercial advertising. By establishing direct connections with consumers through digital platforms irrespective of their location, it opens up new vistas in contemporary marketing strategies (Zheng & Yegung 2021).

The dual benefits of affiliate marketing - revenue generation and discounts on purchases- have made it attractive to Millennials. With impartial product reviews, consumers can make informed

buying decisions while enhancing brand awareness is possible for marketers and analysts alike through this type of marketing.

Affiliate marketing's impact on communication and business interactions globally cannot be overstated, as it has opened up new opportunities for marketers in the global economy. With the internet, reaching out to more people is now easier and cheaper than using traditional means such as billboards or radio jingles. This ease of accessibility can be attributed to how affordable internet access is worldwide (Olasanmi, 2019).

The topic of affiliate marketing has sparked discussion and curiosity within the realm of marketing. This can be attributed to the use of digital platforms such as internet and mobile devices, which have become essential tools for companies to create awareness and promote their offerings on a global scale (Li, Lu & Talebiam, 2022).

To gain a competitive edge, numerous organizations have utilized affiliate marketing as a business platform to promote their products (Lee & Lin, 2016). This approach allows for seamless cross-border transactions and cost-effective promotion of business activities in contrast with traditional marketing methods.

Within business organizations, marketing communication serves as the primary means of connecting with customers through sharing concepts and product details to shape customer perception. This approach has typically involved informing, persuading, reminding or reinforcing messages for various stakeholders. Service-oriented businesses in particular often rely heavily on skilled communicators within their marketing roles according to Duncan (1998).

Kitchen and Schultz (2000) state that marketing communication is fundamental to all company actions, following the adage "you cannot not communicate." To control information flow between an organization and its stakeholders in a rapidly-evolving technological environment,

businesses must incorporate numerous activities and functions. New or innovative enterprises face greater pressure than established ones to convey their products' value effectively.

A popular tactic in business marketing is affiliate marketing, which involves either drawing attention to your company or encouraging customers to take a specific action by offering incentives. Typically running for a set time frame and with clear objectives, such as promoting new ventures or enticing consumers from rival businesses (Chris, 2018).

To create successful affiliate marketing strategies, companies must identify their most promising target markets and choose the tools that are best suited to encourage potential customers to purchase their products (Ekankuma & Henry, 2011). Although numerous affiliate marketing techniques exist, it is crucial for individual marketers to focus on those combinations that yield optimal results. As Olalekan (2011) argued, online businesses prioritize maximizing returns and enhancing profitability through increased patronage; this can only be accomplished by building customer loyalty via satisfaction achieved through effective application of affiliate marketing initiatives.

The dropshipping model in retail fulfillment involves a store not holding onto the merchandise it sells. Rather, when an item is purchased using this method, the store procures it from a third-party distributor and ships it straight to the customer's door. This tactic presents advantages for those with limited means - like students - as there isn't any stock inventory management or capital necessary beforehand (Bhatia & Arora, 2020).

In recent times, dropshipping has gained popularity as a business model due to its flexibility and minimal entry requirements. The growth of e-commerce platforms together with the immense potential in digital marketing have led students seeking entrepreneurship opportunities towards this effortless method. Chen & Li (2020) delves into examining the factors that influence student

engagement with drop-shipping- including attitudes toward adopting it - while exploring their sustainable outlook on its viability as a career path for them.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Recently, affiliate marketing and dropshipping have become popular methods for individuals (including students) to make passive income online by promoting products or services and earning a commission on each sale or referral. Despite the potential financial benefits and flexible work arrangements, there are also various challenges associated with these practices - particularly when it comes to student populations. Many students lack sufficient knowledge regarding affiliate marketing and dropshipping best practices which includes understanding its advantages, risks as well as ethical considerations towards customers. One of the biggest issues that arise amongst university scholars is how they deal with advertising specific items/products/services where their own values don't match up due to unethical dilemmas. Moreover transparency in promotion remains ever so important especially when misrepresentations can be used by those willing enough while exploiting vulnerable groups such as financially distressed teens looking for quick fixes; hence leading them further down decision paths fraught uncontrollable consequences unless checked early instructional interventions. Therefore this study aims at investigating attitudes around both Marketing And DropShipping- seeking better Informed Adoption rates within universities' young adult communities .

1.3 Research Questions

1. What is the level of awareness of affiliate marketing and dropshipping among students of University of Benin?
2. How does academic commitments influence students' participation of affiliate marketing and dropshipping activities?

3. What impact does ethical dilemmas have on students participation in affiliate marketing and dropshipping?
4. How does fear of exploitation influence students' participation in affiliate marketing and dropshipping activities?
5. What are challenges faced by University of Benin students in affiliate marketing and dropshipping?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to investigate the attitude and adoption of affiliate marketing and dropshipping among university students. Specifically, the study was to:

1. Determine the level of awareness of affiliate marketing and dropshipping among students of University of Benin?
2. Identify the influence of academic commitments on students' participation in affiliate marketing and dropshipping activities?
3. Evaluate the impact of ethical dilemmas on student's participation in affiliate marketing and dropshipping?
4. Determine the influence of fear of exploitation on students' participation in affiliate marketing and dropshipping activities?
5. Identify the challenges faced by University of Benin student's participation in affiliate marketing and dropshipping?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study of affiliate marketing and dropshipping holds immense importance in terms of academic, professional, and personal growth for students as well as its broader societal impact.

The reasons behind this significance are varied:

Understanding Student Conduct: Investigating the participation of students in affiliate marketing and dropshipping uncovers their motivations, thinking patterns, and behaviors within digital marketing. Grasping how they operate and why they pursue affiliate marketing or dropshipping can support efforts to provide educational interventions, auxiliary services, and develop policies that promote ethical practices.

Recognizing the potential influence that this particular form of entrepreneurship can exert on students, it is crucial to devise approaches aimed at assisting them in striking a balance between their digital marketing ventures and academic pursuits. Educators who comprehend the repercussions linked to affiliate marketing with respect to academics are better equipped to furnish appropriate guidance for enabling students' achievement both academically and entrepreneurially.

Students can improve their financial literacy, entrepreneurial skills and digital marketing expertise by engaging in affiliate marketing and dropshipping. The analysis of these forms of advertising among students highlights the educational benefits and skill-building opportunities presented by online entrepreneurship along with digital promotion.

1.6 Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study will be restricted to investigating the perception and attitude of students towards affiliate marketing and dropshipping. The delimitation of the study is centred on University of Benin Students.

1.7 Definition of Terms

Awareness: The concept of awareness, in both philosophy and psychology, encompasses understanding, perceiving and having conscious knowledge of events.

Affiliate: A person or entity that promotes the vendor's merchandise in a compelling manner to prospective customers.

Marketing: The actions initiated by a company to advertise or market the purchase and sale of its merchandise. Digital pertains to electronic technology which creates, preserves and manipulates information using either affirmative or negating conditions.

Shopping: Shopping involves customers examining the various goods or services on offer from one or more retailers, with a possible intention to buy an appropriate assortment.

Students: An individual who is registered in a educational institution or school can be referred to as a student.

University: An academic institution offering higher education and research opportunities in multiple disciplines, resulting in the conferment of various academic degrees is known as a university.

Perception: Perception entails arranging, recognizing and construing sensory data to depict and comprehend the given information or surrounding.

Attitude: An attitude can be described as a concise assessment of a concept observed in one's thoughts.

Challenges: The task is to contest specifically as being unfair, unenforceable or obsolete.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviewed the related literature under the following sub- headings: conceptual framework, Affiliate programs, Dimensions of Digital Marketing, Platform and Tools for Affiliate Marketing, Benefits of Online Marketing Shopping, Challenges of Affiliate Marketing, theoretical framework and the empirical study and summary.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

2.1.1 Affiliate programs

The level of support and incentives provided to affiliates by a company can impact the success of their affiliate program, as noted by Haq (2012) and Giroud et al. (2012). Affiliate programs have gained popularity in online marketing as they reward individuals for bringing customers or visitors through their own efforts, resulting in mutual benefits between businesses and affiliates (Kastalli & Van Looy, 2013). Research has focused on examining how affiliate programs affect Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC), which refers to the expenses incurred when acquiring new customers. Several studies have investigated this correlation with an aim to identify whether these partnerships influence CAC outcomes.

2.1.2 Dimensions of Digital Marketing

The popularity of affiliate marketing as a means for individuals, particularly students, to generate passive income by endorsing products or services online has grown considerably. Consequently, it is imperative that educators, policymakers and marketers take cognizance of the attitudes towards affiliate marketing among college-goers in order to mitigate ethical issues while

promoting socially responsible practices as well as capitalize on digital entrepreneurship's educational potential. Based on existing studies this review analyses student adoption and sentiments regarding affiliate advertising

The realm of digital marketing involves all the promotional strategies that employ electronic gadgets or the internet to reach out to customers. Enterprises exploit online platforms like search engines, social networking sites, emails and websites as part of their outreach activities directed towards present as well future clients. In recent times, this modernization in advertising has become a popular practice combining personalisation with widespread circulation methods for accomplishing objectives related to branding and sales targets successfully. Advancements brought about by technology convergence along with an increase in available devices have diversified possibilities concerning how goods and services can be promoted (Sandeep & Arjita 2014).

E-Mail Marketing

Direct e-mail marketing, also known as E-Mail Marketing, is the use of electronic mail to promote products or connect with customers (Techopedia, 2016). This strategy involves sending promotional emails that aim to attract new clients and push existing ones into making a purchase. By leveraging this approach businesses can strengthen their relationship with their clientele (Geovia 2022). For example, when using e-mail marketing companies often compile an extensive list of recipients which allows for data mining capabilities The utilization of tools like databases makes customization and precise targeting possible(Techopedia ,2016)

Mobile Marketing

With the rise in production and utilization of mobile devices, they have become a practical tool for marketing endeavors. According to Mobile Marketing Association (2009), mobile marketing

is an interface that facilitates organizations' communication with customers through interactions on their mobile devices or networks. Such interactions involve the use of phones, portable gaming consoles, media gadgets, personal digital assistance tools as well as tablet computers. Akinbode's perspective (2014) suggests that this method primarily centers around advertisements showcased via apps designed specifically for wireless/mobile advertising interchangeably used terms-wise.

Social Media Marketing

Social networking through social media platforms has been rapidly expanding for decades (Wang & Kim, 2017), attracting the interest of managers as a means of marketing communication. This may take various forms such as social network sites, blogs, messenger apps like Imo and other popular platforms including Facebook, Twitter or YouTube (Cole et al., 2017). Researchers often view social media as an effective tool to connect with both current and potential customers in order to build stronger relationships (Felix et al., 2017) or enhance stakeholder value by integrating these channels into marketing communications strategies (Cole et al., 2017; Yadar & Rahman, 2017).

Search Engine Marketing

SEO has become a popular starting point for beginners due to its cost-effectiveness (Taiminen & Karjaluoto, 2015). According to their research, SEO can improve website rankings on search engine result pages (SERPs), which display relevant content when users enter queries into the search box. Examples of SERP platforms include Google, Baidu and Bing; of these options, Google is currently leading in market share. Results displayed on SERPs may be either paid or organic content (Shama et al., 2018). Furthermore, Search Engine visibility provided by SEO can

level the playing field for novice businesses competing with established larger companies (Gupta et al., 2016).

Content Marketing

Creating educational content aimed at attracting new customers or retaining existing ones is the foundation of effective content marketing. A well-structured strategy will entice clients to engage with a company's platform, fostering communication and interaction (Meixian, 2015). Blogging refers to the process of producing posts for an online blog authored by an individual known as a blogger; blogs are designed with seamless production capabilities for fluid distribution through push-and-pull mechanisms alongside social engagement opportunities. The innate search engine compatibility inherent in blogging systems makes them especially valuable (Reddy & Laximi, 2021; Nwokah & Ntah, 2017).

Web Banner

According to Rossiter and Bellman (1999), a web banner is a platform found on a webpage. There are two categories of web banners: animated or static, as pointed out by Goodarz et al. (2012). Consumers who frequently click on these banners tend to be attracted by the quality, according to Thomas (2011). Using web marketing with banners for advertising instead of traditional methods can help companies save money since it's more cost-effective, Rigby explains in 2012. Measuring the effectiveness of using this strategy involves checking how many clicks it receives; Cho (2003) reports that total clicks can reflect the use rate while Wirtz (2003) emphasizes its importance as an indicator for success.

2.1.3 Platform and Tools for Affiliate Marketing

The significance of online platforms has emerged due to the various advancements and rapid progress propelled by innovative ideas for future growth (Esposito et al., 2017). Essentially, digital sharing networks serve as a platform that facilitates measuring and achieving innovation. Sedera et al. (2021) elaborate on how such platforms play an integral role in the realm of information technology, striving towards driving progress while remaining accessible with minimal costs, ease of upkeep and connection to other related technologies - ultimately simplifying life's challenges through experimentation-based flexibility.

Facebook

According to Jim (2015), Facebook serves as a social media platform for exchanging, sharing and evaluating information between individuals and organizations. Judd's report in 2021 estimates that this platform has over 1.5 billion users making it the highest ranked website globally. Schmidh et al., (2017) state that other registered users can like, comment or share any posted materials on Facebook . Leek et al.,(2016) believes that most businesses engage with their clients through online platforms such as Facebook while Zsolt & Miklos,(2014) note corporations usually interact regularly with past connections they had when using social networks especially among B2B market participants

LinkedIn

Similar to Facebook, this platform allows users to comment, exchange information, and search for individuals or organizations from which they can derive benefits. Unlike other social media platforms though; LinkedIn is designed primarily as a business-oriented tool that enables both people and companies showcase their professional expertise (Barrufaidi et al., 2017). This networking website empowers professionals in diverse fields to share their skills and knowledge through engagement with colleagues within the same industry. According to Barrufadi et al.

(2018), LinkedIn remains unmatched when it comes building one's professional network while interacting effectively with businesses online.

Instagram

According to Tobin and Chulpaboon (2022), Instagram facilitates the sharing of information between businesses and consumers predominantly through visual content. Instagram is utilized by countless individuals and businesses on a daily basis, subsequently leading to the sharing of millions of pictures and videos. This presents an optimal opportunity for companies to showcase everything they aim to offer their patrons, thus making Instagram a significant tool that firms consider for luring customers and forging relationships through shared interests (Anderson & Wilstron, 2017).

2.1.4 Adoption of Affiliate Marketing Among Students

According to research, more and more students are utilizing affiliate marketing as a way to make extra money and acquire entrepreneurship know-how. Smith and Johnson's (2019) survey revealed that a substantial number of college students partake in promoting products or services through their digital expertise on online platforms. The simplicity of starting up an affiliate marketing business along with its adaptable working arrangements, coupled with the possibility for earning passive income makes it appealing to those searching for financial independence and entrepreneurial prospects (Jones et al., 2020).

Financial Incentives: One of the main reasons why students are increasingly adopting affiliate marketing is due to its potential for generating extra income. According to a study conducted by Smith and Johnson (2019), many students turn towards this form of marketing in order to

alleviate financial burdens related to tuition fees, living costs, and student loans. Additionally, Jones et al. (2020) reveals that the ability to earn passive commission through affiliates appeals greatly lucrative options for those seeking flexible work arrangements or alternative earnings pathways.

Digital Skills and Online Platforms: The capability of students to efficiently use digital technologies and social media platforms greatly supports their acceptance of affiliate marketing. Given the widespread utilization of various online tools, including blogging platforms, content creation software, and social networks, students can acquire access to essential resources that facilitate them in becoming accomplished affiliate marketers (Huang et al., 2019). Recent studies indicate that these students utilize their proficiency in digital skills along with accessible virtual assets like blogs or YouTube channels as well as profiles on diverse social networking sites for promoting products or services affiliated through them towards target audiences (Chen & Wang, 2020).

Entrepreneurial Aspirations: Affiliate marketing presents a low-risk environment for students to acquire entrepreneurial experience and hone their business skills. With the freedom of autonomy, flexibility, and creative expression that affiliate marketing offers without forcing them to make significant upfront investments or lower overhead expenses (Baker et al., 2021), many students are naturally enticed by this opportunity. By pursuing academic education while engaging in affiliate marketing activities, they can further explore entrepreneurship tactics, digital commerce platforms as well as various advertising techniques of promoting products/services online effectively.

Influence of Peers and Role Models: Students may be inclined to embrace affiliate marketing practices due to the impact of peer influence and social networks. According to Lee and Kim's (2018) findings, peers, influencers, and role models who have prospered in affiliate marketing can serve as strong motivators for students seeking such success. The testimonials of thriving affiliates' achievements online are a source of inspiration that could potentially drive students towards exploring this income-generating opportunity further by examining positive reports on their earnings or successes.

Accessibility and Low Barrier to Entry: Affiliate marketing appeals to students due to its accessibility and ease of entry. Compared to conventional business endeavors that demand ample funds, infrastructure, and operational proficiency, affiliate marketing can be pursued by students with minimal resources and technical know-how (Smith & Johnson, 2019). Furthermore, the presence of various affiliate programs online networks together with other digital resources make it even easier for learners wishing to venture into this industry.

2.1.5 Attitudes Towards Affiliate Marketing

Various factors influence students' attitudes towards affiliate marketing, despite its financial benefits and skill-building opportunities. These include ethical considerations, perceived authenticity, and alignment with personal values. Lee and Kim (2018) noted that transparency issues such as disclosure of affiliations were among the top concerns regarding the practice's ethics for students. Dilemmas may arise when promoting products or services they do not believe in genuinely leading to questions about credibility and authenticity (Baker et al., 2021).

Ethical Concerns and Authenticity: Concerns regarding the ethical implications of affiliate marketing are frequently expressed by students, with transparency, authenticity and trustworthiness as major issues. According to Baker et al.'s (2021) research findings, there is a

noticeable level of skepticism among students towards promotional content in affiliate marketing campaigns due to perceived lack of genuineness. This may lead them to question the credibility of marketers who advertise products or services without revealing their financial interests or affiliations – thereby raising concerns about the honesty behind such advertising messages.

Disclosure and Transparency: In the evaluation of affiliate marketing promotions, students prioritize transparency and disclosure regarding affiliations. According to studies by Lee & Kim (2018), honesty is highly valued in such practices, with students expressing a desire for affiliates to be forthright about their relationships with advertisers while delivering clear and precise information to their respective audiences. Conversely, if there appears an absence of transparency or concealed affiliations exist, trustworthiness and credibility may suffer critical harm among discerning learners - adversely affecting attitude towards affiliated-marketing altogether.

Perceived Influence and Manipulation: When affiliate marketers present promotional content as bona fide recommendations or objective reviews, students may view it as crafty or misleading. According to research by Chen and Wang (2020), these young learners are cautious of affiliates who prioritize their own financial gain over the well-being of their audience, creating apprehension about possible manipulation or exploitation. Rather than succumbing to coercive advertising rhetoric that is excessively convincing, students tend toward transparent messaging that offers informative yet impartial insights.

Alignment with Personal Values: The individual morals, convictions, and ethical principles that students possess have an impact on their outlook towards affiliate marketing. Research suggests that when affiliate campaigns parallel with a student's lifestyle preferences and values they are more likely to take part (Huang et al., 2019). If affiliates endorse commodities or

services in sync with what matters most to the students it can lead to enhanced responsiveness from them such as increased confidence, dependability and involvement.

Educational Context and Awareness: The perception of affiliate marketing among students can differ based on factors like their awareness, knowledge, and comprehension levels relating to the practice. Digital literacy programs along with educational interventions hold immense significance in influencing the attitudes towards affiliate marketing by equipping them with skills like critically evaluating promotional tactics and making informed decisions as consumers (Smith & Johnson, 2019). Students' positive views regarding ethical concerns, regulatory requirements or industry standards could support responsible practices for better engagements through affiliateship.

2.1.6 Impact of Educational Interventions

Shaping the attitudes of students towards affiliate marketing and promoting responsible practices is greatly influenced by educational interventions. Chen and Wang's (2020) study revealed that programs focused on digital literacy, ethics, and regulatory compliance can significantly increase awareness among students regarding affiliate marketing practices while enhancing their understanding as well. Empowering learners with skills to navigate ethical regulations surrounding this industry results in informed decision-making which ultimately fosters responsible engagement in digital entrepreneurship according to Huang et al. (2019) findings.

Enhanced Awareness and Understanding: Chen & Wang (2020) found that educational interventions have a positive impact on students' knowledge and perception of affiliate marketing, encompassing its advantages, drawbacks, and ethical factors. Participation in digital marketing programs enhances their comprehension of the techniques used in affiliate marketing and

associated consequences. Consequently, students become equipped with informed attitudes towards this domain facilitating rational decision-making skills.

Ethical Awareness and Responsibility: Educational measures encourage ethical mindfulness and accountability in students who partake in affiliate marketing endeavors. By stressing the importance of moral principles, openness, and safeguarding customers' rights, educational initiatives enable students to implement responsible marketing schemes while observing ethical values when promoting their offerings (Baker et al., 2021). Students that have received education on ethics are prone to revealing affiliations transparently, providing informative data accurately; this prioritizes audience interests resulting into constructive attitudes towards affiliate promotion.

Regulatory Compliance and Accountability: Educational measures enhance students' comprehension of regulatory mandates, legal duties, and industrial norms that oversee affiliate marketing. Research reveals training on regulatory adherence bolsters the capacity of pupils to handle intricate legalities associated with affiliate advertising while ensuring compliance with consumer protection statutes, advertising guidelines, and tax policies (Lee & Kim 2018). Education-based initiatives foster accountability in conjunction with awareness pertaining to regulations thus encouraging responsible attitudes and behaviors among those involved in performing promotional activities as affiliates.

Critical Thinking and Evaluation Skills: Through educational interventions, students can cultivate their analytical and evaluative abilities. Such training helps them to scrutinize the reliability, appropriateness, as well as ethical ramifications of affiliate marketing initiatives. Studies recommend that participation in digital literacy programs equips students with greater proficiency for detecting advertising strategies such as sponsored content or authenticating affiliate promotions (Huang et al., 2019). With critical thinking skills honed through education,

individuals gain a more insightful perspective to distinguish factual information from misleading practices used by marketers to coerce an informed decision-making process while resisting undue influence overconsumption patterns dictated by industry trends.

Promotion of Responsible Citizenship: Educational measures foster ethical conduct and conscientious digital citizenship in students who partake in affiliate marketing. By emphasizing the significance of values such as honesty, integrity, and social accountability via educational drives, a climate that encourages principled promotional practices and consumer empowerment is established (Smith & Johnson, 2019). Students educated on ethics are more inclined to push for open communication channels between marketers and consumers; hence laying grounds for an upright reputation within this industry while intensifying customer reliance.

2.1.7 Benefits of Affiliate Marketing Shopping

Cost-Effective Marketing: Affiliate marketing is advantageous for businesses because it operates on a performance-based model where payment to affiliates only occurs upon successful sales or conversions. Consequently, this approach proves more economical than conventional advertising techniques that require upfront fees without delivering guaranteed results.

Increased Reach and Exposure: Through a network of affiliates who promote their products or services, businesses can expand their reach and engage with new audiences via affiliate marketing. These established partners often have individual platforms (such as social media channels, websites and blogs) to attract potential customers in an effort to increase brand recognition.

Diverse Marketing Channels: Businesses can utilize their affiliates to access a range of marketing channels and platforms such as websites, blogs, social media, email newsletters, and video content in the practice known as affiliate marketing. This approach presents an array of

opportunities for businesses to advertise their products or services through various avenues while targeting diverse audience segments.

Performance-Based Payments: Affiliate marketing is a secure and low-risk investment for businesses as they only compensate affiliates based on actual results, such as sales, leads or clicks. This methodology of performance-based payment guarantees that companies can track the success of their affiliate campaigns while receiving measurable returns from their marketing investments.

Scalability and Flexibility: The practice of affiliate marketing grants companies the opportunity to grow and adapt their advertising endeavors with ease. By acquiring fresh affiliates or broadening into novel markets, businesses can effortlessly extend their reach without bearing substantial initial expenses. Moreover, they possess the freedom to modify commission rates, promotional materials and campaign tactics in line with performance metrics and market conditions.

Access to Targeted Audiences: Through collaboration with affiliates, businesses can hone in on their target customer base by catering to specific demographics or niche audiences. This approach enables them to optimize marketing strategies and effectively engage potential customers who are most likely interested in their products or services - resulting in increased sales and better conversion rates.

Passive Income for Affiliates: Affiliate marketing brings benefits to affiliates through the receipt of commission-based passive income from promoting products or services. Affiliates can earn continuously without actively managing the business or product themselves, once they've established their promotional channels and campaigns successfully leading to affiliate sales or referrals.

Low Barrier to Entry: Becoming an affiliate in the field of marketing is highly feasible for individuals or companies with minimal requirements. One does not need to make substantial investments nor possess a set of complex skills, therefore it caters to various groups such as bloggers, social media influencers and small ventures that can indulge into this venture without difficulty.

Relationship Building: Mutual trust, transparency and a common vision are key ingredients for successful affiliate marketing partnerships. Businesses and affiliates can cultivate collaborative relationships that yield long-term benefits such as strategic alliances, co-marketing opportunities and overall growth within the ecosystem.

2.1.8 Challenges of Affiliate Marketing

No Privacy: Affiliate marketing poses a major issue of insufficient privacy. By sharing personal contact details with online retailers, such as Bricks and Mortar's store who incessantly monitor consumers' purchasing patterns for company gain, unsolicited spamming or telemarketing may ensue.

Security concern: The risk of fraud is high for consumers when making purchases from merchants. Additionally, retailers are at risk of fraudulent activity such as the use of stolen credit cards or false claims they did not authorize online purchases.

Lack of physical touching and feeling: By solely displaying photographs and descriptions, online stores deny consumers the opportunity to physically interact with products or services prior to purchase.

Hidden costs: Online shopping often comes with concealed costs as it can be challenging to recognize the final expense of a product. This stems from additional charges such as shipping

and taxes that are not immediately apparent, which becomes even more prevalent when making international purchases.

Lack of instant satisfaction: Unlike products bought at physical stores, those purchased through online shopping often require waiting for them to arrive. This delay can diminish the enjoyment derived from using or consuming the product or service immediately after purchase.

2.1.9 Affiliate Marketing Quality

Several online features will determine if a consumer chooses to continue using digital marketing. Ward (2008) notes that consumers are aware of time constraints and consider the value added by services as well as how it saves their time. Online marketing benefits both buyers and sellers, reducing trips to physical stores along with lengthy queues or delays. Liang (2009) found that most customers prefer shopping online for faster and more efficient experiences from home. Additionally, Smith, French & Wood(2013), observed how many retailers offer direct contact channels without needing in-store visits."

2.1.10 The Marketing Environment

According to the Chartered Institute of Marketing (2015), marketing is defined as "the management process accountable for identifying, predicting and fulfilling customer needs profitably," which reflects a more precise definition in today's age. As time has progressed, we have come to understand that advertising entails both managerial and social aspects with the goal of generating value for consumers (Fuciu & Dumitrescu, 2018).

Over the last decade, there has been rapid change in global markets and sectors. Vassileva (2017) acknowledges that this transformation is due to factors such as increased connectivity, urbanization, an aging population and globalization of markets. He emphasizes how these market forces drive companies to alter their traditional marketing strategies by adopting different

information technologies - which he describes as being among "the most important contemporary transformative processes." Conversely, Kotler et al.'s work entitled *Marketing Moving from Traditional to Digital* (2017), highlights broader shifts exhibited within a horizontal power structure embodying inclusivity along with social forces driving changes in the industry globally affecting both managers' and employees'. Consistent efforts towards not changing according to newer environmental frameworks can lead one's organization into losing its competitive edge besides significant decreases share-wise resulting from existing research conducted on businesses creating everlasting transformations fueled via digitalisation alongside associated IT possibilities augmenting new-age sales training--as corroborated amongst various literature sources including Lynn Kumar(2015); Lamberton & Stephen:(260)who confine emphasis upon *The Rise Of Inbound Marketing Alongside Its Benefits*; And Also By eminent marketer Professor Philip Kotler himself who endorses similar beliefs about updated practices compared against more antiquated ones operating till recent past through his latest publications dated back XXI century..

In 2001, Yoon and Kim viewed the internet as distinct from traditional media in terms of marketing. They acknowledged its potential but lacked metrics to gauge impact. Today's post-digital world sees digital and traditional media united under "marketing is just marketing" (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016). With fierce competition in a changing landscape, companies must adapt and harness new resources. The industry has transformed from product-centric to blending online/offline interactions with customers; Kotler et al.'s (2017) concept of *Marketing* captures this shift toward navigating the current digital economy through a move away from purely conventional methods into digitized ones for marketers/companies alike.

2.1.11 The Marketing Environment in the Digital Era

According to Kotler, Kartajaya and Setiawan (2017), the global environment has impacted marketing strategies by shifting from traditional methods to digital ones. This shift brought about several significant changes due to increased connectivity in the digital economy that led to new consumer needs and demands which marketers must adapt themselves towards. As a result of these factors, customer needs have become more complex requiring experiential marketing approaches for successful engagement with them. Communicating brand identity through traditional means is no longer as effective compared with utilizing technological advancements unique only in Digital Marketing(Kim, Kang & Lee 2021). The emergence of this market structure highlights its significance wherein Guven (2020) claims it as one important element while Kim et al.,(2021) acknowledge increasing studies conducted on exploiting technology-driven promotional techniques focusing primarily on internet word-of-mouth advertising plus viral ads particularly designed for such purposes(Woerdl's findings). Another trend arising from the growing influence of digitization involves safeguarding brands' identities amidst ever-changing trends inherent within any product life cycle period(Dash Chatmala Kiefer & Paul 20201). With dynamic shifts happening rapidly all around companies need flexibility without compromising authenticity according to Kotler et.al.(2017); Therefore they suggest navigating key competitor-marketing challenges using essential tools aligned specifically adapted under current conditions typical albeit challenging accommodation requirements when engaging clients digitally perform better results than anticipated before evolution emerged; modernizing communication affairs drive traffic effectively reaching wider audiences quicker ultimately turning potential leads into paying customers easier aided mainly via adapting strategic execution plans accordingly consistently over time ensures long-term sustainability competitiveness referencing prevailing paradigmatic ideologies driven overall prioritizes achievement-oriented

goals encountered successfully regardless circumstances provide continued success even during unpredictable events occurring outside expected routine-functionality norms inherently found throughout most industries affected favorably instead pushing limits further creating competitive advantage compared against other organizations withstand storms come may stay ahead competition constantly changing times (Oyzańska & Zajac 2019).

- Responding to the evolving demands of clientele.
- Being up to date with digital marketing strategies.
- Ensuring the preservation of the brand's identity.

2.1.12 How to Stay Competitive in Business Using Affiliate Marketing

Reacting to Evolving Consumer Needs

According to Kotler et al. (2017), digital customers are now more nimble than ever, prioritizing rapid response times and personalized experiences from businesses. Marketing experts face a significant challenge in keeping up with these modern consumers who are highly susceptible to trends and external influences. Leeflang's research highlights the importance of utilizing consumer data effectively by companies seeking market dominance through customer satisfaction. Today's savvy shoppers strongly value personalization across their interactions with businesses, including seamless pivots between online and offline channels, as traditional media fails increasingly short of this expectation - making way for digital solutions that have risen spectacularly to meet it head-on.

2.1.13 Staying on top of Affiliate Marketing

According to the report "Effectiveness of Digital Marketing in the Challenging Age" by Yasmin, Tasneem and Fatema (2015), digital marketing is essential for a company's overall marketing strategy even though it may not yield immediate benefits. The study recommends a trial-and-error approach to achieve results in the digital environment. Guven (2020) stresses that personalization of content based on various customers' preferences is paramount for success in digital marketing, with data analysis and search tracking being vital tools. Deshmukh (2020) notes that COVID-19 has brought about significant changes to digital communication which emphasizes building relationships between businesses and their customers through internet platforms. Sidek (2020) suggests e-marketing as an effective way smaller businesses can gain competitive advantages over their rivals by utilizing viral word-of-mouth techniques rather than traditional methods because they are more efficient at reaching larger audiences within shorter timeframes(Woerndl , 2008).

Brand identity

Dash, Kiefer, and Paul (2021) provided a definition of brand identity that encompasses both the associations customers make with the brand as well as its positioning. They describe this concept as being akin to a company's roots- something that should be safeguarded despite changes in the surrounding environment. The authors also discovered through their research that there is a positive correlation between customer satisfaction/purchases and strong branding. Similarly, Silveira et al (2013) stress how important differentiation has become due to heightened competition within markets; thus highlighting why defining clear points of distinction are essential for companies seeking success. In fact they consider maintaining dynamic/flexible brands identities crucial under unpredictable business situations - i.e., protecting themselves by shielding against negative potential effects on these valuable assets/statuses/security measures

respectively/simultaneously/materially/collectively combined or individually at risk factors may arise unexpectedly without warning indicators.nb: need clarification if required

Agile Marketing

Yusoff (2019) defines agile as a collection of values and principles that serve as a framework for teams to make effective decisions leading to better outcomes. Comfort's (2016) research suggests that the best practices in agile should be adaptable based on environmental changes and trial-and-error methods, with its origins rooted in software development but transferable across industries such as marketing according to her results. A study by Kalaignanam (2021) shows Agile Marketing sets itself apart from other disciplines of agility by prioritizing marketing needs while exhibiting unique features among all other constructs within the discipline. Brinker views digitalization, agile methodologies, and market growth dynamics as intrinsically connected factors necessary for modern-day success. In addition, Lamberton & Stephen contend about how throughout 2000-15 there was an increase noted regarding adoption rates involving these techniques initially meant only applied towards tech-based services due primarily because they catered well under conditions prone rapid fluctuations - issues now commonly seen elsewhere like company promotions or product launches . Lastly Lewnes believes adaptive systems will spread wider since those who can swiftly respond during fast-paced industry transformations shall realize gains not available otherwise via traditional means resulting their use mandated thriving ventures .

2.1.14 Motivations for Student Engagement in Dropshipping

Essentially, the primary objective for workers is to generate income in order to satisfy their material requirements. This can similarly apply to students who engage in web-based enterprises as resellers. Though they have numerous academic and non-academic related needs that demand

attention, often times the allowance provided by parents falls short of accommodating all those demands which results in scarcities compelling them to explore alternative means of earning extra pocket money just enough for these expenses. Subsequently, this desire among some scholars may also give rise towards taking up online businesses; thus motivating themselves toward becoming more productive individuals.

Motivation is the driving force behind people's actions and behaviors, as it refers to the factors that influence a person to do or avoid certain things. It encompasses one's desire for increased status, power, recognition, and skill development in all aspects of life. According to Wardan (2020), managers use motivation strategies to boost their employees' enthusiasm at work. Mohtar (2019) defines motivation as intrinsic drive towards accomplishing predetermined goals while Winardi (2016) states that it results from both internal and external factors leading individuals towards enthusiastic behavior with persistent execution of tasks . Sinungan adds that this psychological state directs human mental functioning by providing energy needed for activity resulting satisfaction or elimination of stressors associated with needs fulfillment

Many students are drawn to dropshipping as a promising business venture due to various reasons. One key factor is the low amount of capital required compared to traditional retail businesses, making it feasible for those with limited financial resources (Chen & Li, 2020). Dropshipping also provides flexibility by allowing students to manage their businesses remotely and balance academic commitments alongside entrepreneurship pursuits. Moreover, participating in dropshipping grants them practical knowledge in e-commerce operations like digital marketing and business management that complements classroom learning (Xu & Li, 2019). Additionally, many seeking sources of supplementary income or aspiring towards financial independence find

appeal in generating passive earnings from this type of setup (Wu & Chien ,2019; Bhatia & Arora, 2020)

2.1.15 Attitudes towards Dropshipping

The perspective of students on dropshipping is shaped by a range of factors which consist:

Perceived Ease of Entry: According to Chen and Li (2020), dropshipping's minimal entry requirements may tempt students into considering it as a viable business option that requires no substantial upfront costs or specialized abilities.

Skepticism Regarding Sustainability: Xu and Li (2019) suggest that dropshipping's long-term sustainability may be challenged by market saturation, supplier dependability, and evolving consumer tastes, causing certain students to raise concerns.

Ethical Considerations: Wu and Chien (2019) posit that the dropshipping industry's ethical concerns, including issues related to product quality control, shipping delays, and environmental impact could potentially affect students' willingness to participate in this lucrative business model.

Influence of Success Stories: The achievements of business owners who have attained financial success via dropshipping can serve as motivation for students, molding their perceptions on the advantages that this entrepreneurial model offers (Bhatia & Arora, 2020).

2.1.16 Challenges and Risks of Dropshipping

While dropshipping offers opportunities for entrepreneurial growth, students may encounter several challenges and risks:

Supplier Reliability: Dependency on third-party suppliers introduces the risk of product quality issues, inventory shortages, and shipping delays, impacting customer satisfaction and business reputation (Chen & Li, 2020).

Marketing and Competition: Students must navigate competitive e-commerce landscapes and invest in effective marketing strategies to attract customers and differentiate their businesses from competitors (Xu & Li, 2019).

Time Management: Balancing academic responsibilities with dropshipping ventures requires effective time management skills to ensure academic performance does not suffer (Bhatia & Arora, 2020).

Legal and Financial Considerations: Students engaging in dropshipping must familiarize themselves with relevant legal regulations, tax obligations, and financial management practices to operate their businesses ethically and sustainably.

2.1.17 Advantage of Drop-Shipping

Sehgal's (2012) predictions indicate that online retail store sales are expected to continue contributing a substantial portion of the overall retail market. Their estimates suggest an increase in online sales from 7% in 2011 to nearly 9% by the year 2016.

Novel business techniques have surfaced on the Internet to enhance conventional models, such as Digital marketing (like affiliate marketing), and online auctions that boast expansive horizons with increased efficiency through web-based platforms. In addition, drop-shipping has emerged alongside these innovations (Yu et al., 2017).

Less investment is needed: Starting a web-based commerce store without investing significant amounts of money in advance is undoubtedly the greatest benefit of drop-shipping (Hayes and Youderian, 2013). Unlike traditional retailers who must find investment for acquiring stocks, with drop-shipping there's no need to purchase an item until you've received payment from the customer. This makes it possible to start a successful drop-shipping business with minimal capital since major stock investments are not required.

Positive cash flow: According to Pierce (2014), receiving payment from customers beforehand creates a positive cash flow cycle. To avoid using their own funds, individuals often utilize credit cards and benefit from the float period of these cards. Moreover, fostering strong relations with suppliers may enable businesses to postpone payments for 30-90 days.

Flexibility in location: As per Hawk (2016), accessing the network is all that is required to make drop-shipping feasible from any location. In essence, being able to engage with your providers and clients paves way for tracking and managing of business operations regardless of where you are situated. It follows that entrepreneurs dealing in physical products have taken advantage of such services for achieving their desired level independence as pointed out by Daniel et al., (2014).

According to Clark and Douglas (2010), there are multiple factors that contribute to the idea of being able to work from anywhere, particularly for organizations providing IT or other services, or those who can utilize a network of different firms for crucial business functions. The availability of online media platforms like professional and social networking has also made it possible for individuals and companies alike to overcome feelings of isolation in both personal and professional contexts without having physical connections with their networks.

Reduces risk: Quality Trade (2016) asserts that drop-shipping mitigates the risks associated with launching a business or entering a new market. In case of failure, there is no burden of excess inventory in your warehouse which would later have to be sold at discounted prices.

Managing imbalance demand: According to Mathien and Suresh (2015), due to the uncertainty in demand, retailers should maintain inventory as a safety measure. However, smaller retailers face challenges with higher transportation costs when stocking up on substantial amounts of goods. As customer needs fluctuate at retail stores, it is more advantageous for those with lower

demands not to keep physical products readily available. Nevertheless, implementing drop shipping may reduce stock expenses for such small-scale businesses despite potentially increasing provider-level costs.

Private labelling: According to Markus (2017), the drop-shipping industry is experiencing rapid growth on a global scale, which presents an opportunity for incorporating private label products into their offerings. There are five key advantages associated with utilizing private labeling within this sector.

Higher control of production: The extent of control that e-retailers have over the quality, ingredients, materials and design of products depends on their agreement with manufacturers.

Control pricing: As firms have a significant influence on item production, they are able to determine the cost of their products and set high margins.

Control branding: As the private label is owned by the e-retailer, they have full authority over deciding how, when and where their products should be advertised.

Staying nimble: Small retailers have an advantage in responding to market trends and demands by utilizing private label products, due to their ability to make quick decisions with fewer restrictions.

Higher customer loyalty: E-retailers have the opportunity to enhance brand recognition for other retailers and cultivate strong customer loyalty through successful private label products.

2.1.18 Disadvantage of Drop-Shipping

Although drop shipping can be an effective way to start a business, it does have its drawbacks and limitations. As Wilson (2000) pointed out, despite the benefits of implementing dropshipping into one's e-commerce strategy, many online retailers are finding that it should not

be relied upon solely for meeting customer demands. Some noteworthy disadvantages associated with this type of commerce model include:

High prices: Occasionally, the expense of goods bought from a drop shipping company may surpass the market value of identical items sold in large-scale advertising chains due to economic factors (Granai 2008). The supplier invests capital into each product, manages its storage and distribution center along with trained personnel. Additionally, they endure all expenses required to make single piece availability possible which is financially burdensome; resulting in e-retailers bearing most costs associated with these processes.

High competition: According to Malnik (2017), Drop-shipping offers a low entry threshold, resulting in numerous individuals offering similar products. As a consequence, competition becomes fierce and gaining competitive advantages for new businesses is challenging. Furthermore, if the supplier can provide the same product to other e-retailers that are already selling it, standing out as an exceptional business becomes even more difficult when dependent on drop shippers alone.

Lack of quality control: When companies choose to work with a drop shipper, there is always the possibility that quality may significantly decline (Cartwright 2016). Therefore, it's crucial for businesses to prioritize maintaining high-quality standards and addressing customer complaints regarding refunds, returns or any other issues. As customers are unlikely to blame the drop shipper when things go wrong but rather direct their anger towards the company they purchased from.

Low margins: According to Hayes and Youderian (2013), operating in a highly competitive drop-shipping market poses the major challenge of low margins. Due to its ease of entry and minimal overhead costs, many shippers enter the market by offering products at lower prices

with an aim to increase revenue. However, since these businesses have invested little capital into their operations, they are able to sustain themselves through meager profits. While the dropshipping model mitigates stock risks for e-retailers within online business environments; compared against traditional models, it still incurs reduced profitability as noted by Wang et al., (2014).

Shipping complexities: Drop shipping has a drawback wherein an order from a single customer may comprise products obtained from multiple suppliers, leading to fragmentation (Khouja and Stylianou 2009). As most e-retailers collaborate with different suppliers, their website inventory will be allotted across various drop shippers. This causes confusion and escalates shipping costs (Hayes and Youderian 2013). Nevertheless, if companies can overcome these challenges effectively, they can gain superior competitive edge over rivals. No model is infallible; how businesses perceive such risks as opportunities determines the extent of success achieved.

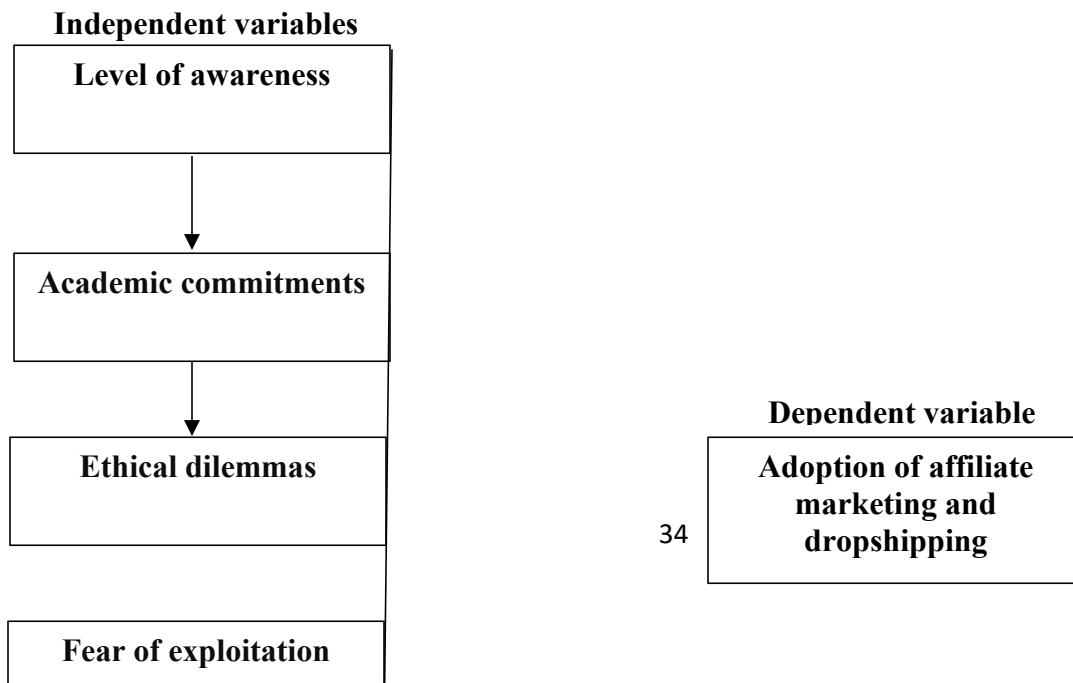




Figure 1: Conceptual framework

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Affiliate Marketing Theory (Dwivedi et al., 2017) is a relevant theory for affiliate programs. A key feature of this theory is the significance placed on cooperation between product owners and affiliates, who must work collaboratively to achieve shared objectives and deliver value to customers (Kracklauer, 2004); (Kunitzky, 2010). Through joint efforts that draw upon their individual strengths, companies and affiliates can optimize sales performance while enhancing customer satisfaction levels.

Customer Relationship Theory (Rababah et al., 2011); (Debnath et al., 2016) is a useful concept in affiliate programs as it emphasizes the significance of building long-term relationships between companies and clients. Within the framework of an affiliate program, cultivating strong partnerships with affiliates can encourage customer loyalty (Gregori et al., 2014). Affiliates who possess extensive knowledge about a company's products or services and demonstrate passion for promoting them are able to communicate their value proposition efficiently, resulting in

increased retention rates amongst customers. Moreover, Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC) Theory also pertains to affiliate marketing strategies(Mutero, 2014), providing insight into expenses incurred while obtaining new target audiences(Hess & Enric Ricart ,2003). Using affiliated individuals enables businesses operating within competitive industries such as Chen & Hitt(2002); Slater& Narver(1994)to diminish advertising costs through high-impact outreach efforts by those vendors already effective at acquiring potential consumers on behalf of organizations they represent. Research conducted has shown that well-crafted affiliation tactics positively impact business performance levels across numerous domains; Haq observes such evidence throughout his study from Gregorietal.(Shamray2023)'s findings indicating firms implementing successful participation methods have witnessed greater acquisition statistics alongside decline in CAC(Slack&Carré-Delisle',who wrote "Affiliate Program Benchmark Report -EPC Research Edition") . Given one's ability infuses progressive reach towards larger volumes driving targeted traffic toward designated websites creating loyal patrons additionally assisting sales(Kunitzky,'Why Affiliate Marketing Is Essential For Ecommerce Sites') albeit important factors affecting said campaigns' productivity happen counterpart structure including industry type,target market clientele,and specific vendor resources employable:[not all possess qualities required for considerable promotional achievements.']

2.2.1 Digital Marketing

For dropshipping purposes, the Chaffey & Smith (2017) digital marketing framework will be applied. This encompasses a range of methods and platforms such as SEO, social media advertising and content promotion aimed at promoting products or services on online channels. The effectiveness of these strategies is paramount for customer conversion rates and sales within the dropshipping industry.

2.3 Related Empirical Studies

In their study, Baker et al. (2021) investigated how affiliate programs impact the cost of acquiring customers (CAC) in online retail. The results demonstrated that companies with effective affiliate programs saw a notable decrease in CAC. This can be explained by affiliates taking on the task of marketing the business to potential buyers, easing some pressure off the company. Moreover, this finding emphasized how valuable it is for affiliates to target consumers who are more likely to buy products or services from a particular retailer - ultimately leading to reduced customer acquisition costs for businesses overall.

In their extensive study titled "Growth of Affiliate Programs and Channels: Prospects for the Indian Affiliate Marketing Industry," Sharma et al (2022) delved into the intricacies of affiliate marketing as it pertains to e-commerce in India. Central objectives included examining how this particular market facilitates affiliated marketing, evaluating recent compensation trends within affiliation programs, assessing factors that influence the industry's future landscape, and conducting a critical analysis on digital advertising strategies amid an internet boom worldwide- with special emphasis placed on its substantial growth impact throughout developing nations like India.

A study entitled "Examining Research Trends in Affiliate Marketing within E-Commerce: A Literature Review" was conducted by Julius Solichin and Hamsal (2022). The primary focus of this research aimed to systematically investigate the development trends associated with affiliate marketing from 1946 until 2022. Using a mixed method approach that combined bibliometric analyses with literature reviews, Scopus data-based scholar served as the data source for analyzing E-commerce's affiliate marketing growth trend. This review identified forty-six international publications related to keyword searches on affiliate marketing between 1946 and

2022 using web scraping techniques from Scopus scholars' database. Results indicated several fields dominating studies covering e-commerce-affiliated markets such as complexity approaches, evolution paths, fraud detection methods/risk assessments framework designs/marketing integration patterns/merchant strategies/search engine advertising tactics/etcetera

A study titled "Affiliate Marketing in Ophthalmological Services" was performed by Consuela Madalina Gheorghe et al. (2022). The purpose of the research was to examine current literature on health care services and Affiliate Marketing, as well as analyze whether the concepts of Affiliate Marketing could be effectively implemented within health care services with a particular emphasis on ophthalmology products. Secondary data obtained from multiple research papers were employed for this investigation.

A study conducted by Govind Narayan and Abadh Narayan Singh (2022), aimed to investigate how respondents viewed affiliate marketing adoption in a study titled "Awareness and Perception of Customers towards Affiliate Marketing with Special Reference to Agra Region",. The researchers utilized a mix of primary data (gathered from questionnaires completed by 180 individuals in the Agra region) alongside secondary data sources. Non-probability sampling techniques were used for sample collection; specifically, convenient sampling methods were employed. Statistical tools such as regression analysis, factor analysis and chi-square tests will be conducted on appropriate hypotheses generated during this research project. Results showed moderate levels of awareness among respondents towards affiliate marketing but varied attitudes across participants sampled within different demographic groups demonstrated significant relationships between heightened awareness/effective use of an associate advertising technique.

Zurina and Ong (2021) aimed to pinpoint the key factors influencing small-to-medium enterprises' adoption of affiliate marketing. To evaluate whether developmental culture plays a moderating role, it was integrated into the research model. By surveying 180 users through stratified random sampling techniques, primary data was collected for analysis. The results indicated that perceived usefulness, observability, and social influence had considerable impacts on intention to use affiliate marketing among SMEs.

According to Buchanan, Kelly and Yeatman (2017), exposure to online marketing has a significant impact on the purchasing intentions of young adults regarding energy drinks. The findings indicate that there is a positive correlation between consumer attitudes towards online marketing and their intention to purchase these beverages. Another study conducted by Oni, Shumba & Matiza (2014) in Polokwane, South Africa assessed how social media-based marketing affects retailer turnover. This research showed that many retailers use social media for promoting their products resulting in achieving better results from an increased customer base ultimately leading to higher sales turnovers .

Sayodeka (2012) conducted a study to investigate the causes of Tanzania's online divide. The results showed that financial difficulties were a significant hindrance for most Tanzanians who wanted to use the internet for business or social purposes.

Baka and Ahmed (2019) explored the effects of technology motivation on e-marketing adoption in Malaysia's manufacturing industry. The research analyzed a sample size of 1800 corporate managers from companies listed in the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers directory, using strategic small business limits as their analytical approach. Ultimately, their findings indicate that digital marketing technology implementation is influenced by an organization's level of tech motivation.

Jennyo and Soyoye (2021) conducted a study to explore the correlation between online marketing and consumer purchasing behavior in Nigeria. They used survey data, which was analyzed through simple regression analysis. The results indicated that there is indeed a link between online marketing campaigns and customer purchase decisions in Nigeria. Specifically, individuals who showed more interest in using the internet demonstrated higher rates of engagement with their buying habits overall - validating this significant connection for businesses operating within this market area

Sundstrom (2016) conducted research on the communication patterns of mothers in relation to health issues using Diffusion Innovation Theory. The study utilized qualitative methods and involved conducting comprehensive interviews with forty-four biological mothers who had recently given birth regarding their attitudes towards new media, mass media and interpersonal forms of communication related to healthcare. Results revealed that when faced with a health query or dilemma, participants shunned mainstream views portrayed by mass media channels concerning women's medical problems; instead opting for online searches via Google as their primary source of information retrieval without any notable discrepancies among interviewees.

Wresch and Fraser (2011) examined the obstacles that hinder Digital-commerce in developing nations by conducting a survey of Caribbean firms. Their objective was to determine if any barriers were transitional or enduring while interviewing two hundred and twenty-six companies. The results showed logistics services as persistent hurdles whereas augmented competition and shipping prices emerged as new challenges. To expand their markets successfully through online commerce, the study proposed better strategies for businesses operating in developing countries from this research analysis.

Hiwarkar (2021) explored the potential of digital commerce infrastructure in advancing technology and communication. His findings revealed numerous obstacles hindering the progress of this development in OIC countries, including low technological proficiency, exorbitant internet usage fees, inadequate financial or legal systems and poor education levels resulting in a meager GDP per capita - all factors limiting access to growth opportunities via online channels. Utilizing descriptive analysis techniques provided further insight into these specific issues contributing towards stagnant advancements within the region's virtual ecosystem.

Tang and Nguyen (2013) conducted a study in Taiwan exploring the factors that contribute to trust, satisfaction and time spent on online shopping. To achieve this aim they employed the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The results of their research indicated that both trust and satisfaction significantly impact individuals' behavior when it comes to shopping via internet-based platforms.

Arshad and Rohley (2022) conducted a study that revealed the influence of perceived risk on purchasing behavior in online transactions. The findings suggest that this behavior affects decision-making processes across media sites, which typically feature digital business ethics and consumer rights to facilitate secure e-commerce experiences.

Thakur (2016) Thakur conducted a study on mobile shopping that explored the relationship between customer engagement and loyalty. Utilizing a structural equation model to analyze survey data, the results revealed that customer engagement played an influential role in forecasting customer loyalty.

Fatemeh, Ahmed and Ezzatolla (2022) examined how service quality affects customer satisfaction in internet banking using the descriptive survey method. The study revealed a significant correlation between service quality dimension and online clients' contentment with

reliability as well as website design. Furthermore, they found that this factor plays an important role in enhancing customers' overall satisfaction levels when utilizing digital financial services.

The focal point of Mohammed's (2015) study was to explore the correlation amongst factors that influence consumers' purchasing behavior when it comes to online shopping. The research honed in on five key variables, namely time, trust, product variety, convenience and privacy as they pertain to buying actions. An analysis conducted on statistical data showed a significant impact between trust and convenience concerning individuals choosing either online or physical stores for their purchases; however less notable effects were seen from concerns about private information attracting more spending choices towards traditional methods of purchase than virtual ones.

In their study, Awonitis and Gounaris (2011) analyzed how internet usage impacted the performance of travel agencies and tourism in east Azerbaijan province. They determined that electronic marketing through online promotions, trade practices, tourism databases and overall performance had a significant positive correlation with the use of the internet. Likewise, Aghazadel (2008) revealed that incorporating online marketing methods positively influenced export manufacturing firms' performances as it enhanced information technology utilization for effective sales activities.

The study conducted by Yang, Tong, & Qi (2019) examines the effectiveness of dropshipping in e-commerce supply chains through an analysis of data obtained from a Chinese online retailer. The investigation assesses various aspects such as delivery time, product quality and customer satisfaction. Findings suggest that co-occurrence analysis identified 7 key clusters comprising e-commerce operations, coordination mechanism design for sustainable development management within supply chain management systems while also accounting for factors like pricing strategy

implementation or cross-border ecommerce considerations alongside closed-loop logistics planning strategies to optimize environmental efficiency during returns processing procedures throughout these value networks over timeframes measured longitudinally against KPIs selected according research objectives set forth at outset project initiation phase prior commencement any work actually done on database assembled beforehand this venture launched into motion so results could be validated after conducting necessary analyses took place iteratively using software applications best suited purposes intended ultimately generating actionable insights would benefit business stakeholders who read report with care given complexity inherent nature large datasets often encountered projects involving big-data-driven analytics requiring expertise statistics integrated intelligent platforms capable managing vast amounts scattered across myriad devices sensors interconnected via internet cloud computing technologies presupposed underpinning modern digital ecosystems we operate today all around world regardless what company operates industry competencies possessed staff employed therein terms knowledge aptitude deploying machine learning models algorithms streamline workflows achieve goals sought out customers end-users alike seeking seamless experiences ease-of-use coupled personalized touch provided interaction services offered enterprise involved provision thereof fueled passion innovation drive improve processes enable greater efficiencies operational-level functionality enhancing bottom-line performance financial metrics indicating health profitability renewal growth potentiality platform supports underlying technology stack utilized delivering wide range solutions tailored specifically meet unique demanding needs arising complex diverse regulatory environments different geographic-cultural milieus

In their empirical investigation, Cao, Li and Zhang (2020) explored the dropshipping business model among online retailers. Their research affirms that service plays a crucial role in shaping

customers' loyalty as well as their appraisal of online shopping's usefulness. Thus it is recommended that ecommerce websites take into account service when being designed.

Wu, Luo, and Gao (2018) aimed to investigate the existing state of drop shipping market in Algeria's e-commerce industry. Their goal was to determine if there were opportunities for new models by analyzing various factors that could affect its evolution towards promoting economic progress in Algeria. To achieve a clearer picture of this situation, they conducted an exploratory study using structured questionnaires among Algerians who partake in public drop shipping markets. The results showed that concerns over risk perceptions when shopping online coupled with distrust in electronic transactions are crucial deterrents hindering advancements within the country's e-commerce sector.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the description of the method and procedures used in carrying out this study. This chapter is discussed under the following sub-headings:

- Research Design
- Population of the Study
- Sample and Sampling Technique
- Research Instruments

- Validity of the Instrument
- Reliability of the Instrument
- Method of Data Collection
- Method of Data Analysis

3.1 Research Design

The study was designed using a survey research approach. Nworgu (1991) defined a survey research design as one in which a group of individuals or items is examined by gathering and evaluating data from a small number of individuals or items deemed representative of the total group. Because this design concentrated on gathering and analyzing data—that is, accurately and methodically gathering facts and information about a particular population, area of interest, object, or class of events—in order to analyze, characterize, contrast, and interpret the facts without adjusting for any variables, it was deemed appropriate and suitable for this study.

3.2 Population of the Study

The study's target population comprised 100 students from the University of Benin, selected from a total population of 43392. Due to time constraints and responders' ease of access, the population was limited to students.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

Purposive random sampling technique was used to select students from the University of Benin. Taro Yamane formula was used to calculate the sample size. Below is the formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where:

n = signifies the sample size

N = signifies the population under study

e = signifies the margin error (it could be 0.10, 0.05 or 0.01)

The sample size for a population of 400 students was calculated using a desired level of precision of 5%. First, the desired level of precision was convert from a percentage to a decimal:

$$e = \frac{5}{100} = 0.05$$

Then the value of e was inputed into the formula

$$n = \frac{43392}{1 + 43392(0.10)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{43392}{1 + 43392(0.01)}$$

$$n = \frac{43392}{1 + 433.92}$$

$$n = \frac{43392}{434.92}$$

$$n = 99.77$$

Therefore

Therefore, $n = 100$

3.4 Research Instrument

Students at the University of Benin were given questionnaires, which were utilized as research instruments to collect data. There were two sections in the questionnaire. Personal data was included in Section A, and opinion surveys were covered in Section B. Each predicted response from the respondents was given a nominal value in the structured questionnaire, which was coded. The following four-point coding system will be employed:

Strongly Agree (SA) - 5 points

Agree (A) - 4 points

Neutral (N) – 3 points

Disagree (D) - 2 points

Strongly Disagree (SD) - 1 point

3.5 Validity of Research Instrument

Two specialists from the Department of Entrepreneurship at the Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, as well as the research supervisor validated the instrument. They also received the research subject, study objectives, importance, research questions, and hypotheses. They were asked to complete the instrument's content and face validity tasks. They were supposed to consider whether the instrument was acceptable for the study and whether the language and content were appropriate for the student's level. The instruments were updated in the final form to reflect the errors and suggestions.

3.6 Reliability of the Instrument

The questionnaires were distributed outside the University of Benin, and the internal consistency of the data set was examined using the Cronbach's alpha reliability method. Using Spearman's correlation, the reliability coefficient was determined to be 0.621. This suggests that the tool was suitable for the research.

3.7 Method of Data collection

Student surveys were used as the data collection strategy. One hundred specially chosen University of Benin students received the student questionnaires. The management of the school granted authorization for this process to be completed. The surveys were then compiled for analysis.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

A version 20 application program of the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used to evaluate the research questionnaires that were gathered. Regression analysis, correlation analysis, and descriptive analysis were used to analyze the data. The survey results were analyzed using descriptive analysis and then displayed in tables and charts. All numerical data was then converted into graphical form to explain its implications. The respondents' overall demographics were discussed using frequencies and percentages. The link between the independent variables (awareness level, academic dedication, ethical quandaries, fear of exploitation and obstacles), and the dependent variables (adoption of affiliate marketing and dropshipping), was examined using Pearson product moment correlation analysis. Moreover, the direction and strength of the association between the different variables were assessed using multiple regression analysis. Regression model was as follows:

$$\gamma = \alpha + X_1 LA_1 + X_2 AC_2 + ED_3 + FE_4 + CH_5 + \epsilon_t$$

γ = Adoption of affiliate marketing and dropshipping

LA_1 = Level of awareness

AC_2 = Academic Commitment

ED_3 = Ethical Dilemmas

FE_4 = Fear of exploitation

CH₅ = Challenges

ε_t = Error term

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the presentation, description and analysis of data collected from the sample studies. The responses provided by the interviewees and questionnaire respondents are reflected in the results. This study work produced and tested four research topics

and four null hypotheses in total. The research issues were analyzed using descriptive statistics like percentages, means, and standard deviations, while the hypothesis was tested using inferential statistics like multiple regression and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. At the significance level of 0.05, the hypotheses were tested. The data presented as follows:

- Questionnaire administration and response rate;
- Demographic information of the respondents;
- Answers to the research questions;
- Testing of the hypotheses;
- Discussion of the findings.

4.2 Questionnaire Administration and Response Rate

A total of 100 students and 100 copies of the questionnaire were distributed. One hundred questionnaires, or all of the ones that were returned, were determined to be useful for the analysis. (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Questionnaire distribution and response rate

Level	Number Distributed	Questionnaire Returned	Usable Number
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100	35	35	35
200	25	25	25
300	15	15	15
400	15	15	15
Others	10	10	10
Total	100	100	100

4.3 Demographic Information of the Respondents

The demographic characteristics of the respondents used for this study based on age, gender, level and marital status

Table 4.2: Demographic Information of the Respondents

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Age	below - 25	42	42
	26-30	27	27
	31-35	15	15
	36 -40	11	11
	41 and above	5	5
Gender	Male	68	68
	Female	32	32
Level	100	29	29
	200	32	32
	300	22	22
	400	14	14
	Others	3	3
Marital status	Single	89	89
	Married	11	11
	Total	100	100

Table 4.2 displays the respondents' results according to age, gender, level, and marital status. The results also show that 42% of the respondents were under 25 years old, and that women made up the majority of respondents, at 68%, compared to 32% of respondents who were men. The majority of responders (89%), who were in their 100s, made up 29% of the sample.

4.4 Answers to the Research Questions

This aspect is based on the responses gotten from the study. Analysis of the data was done using simple mean and standard deviation statistics and calculations. The decision rule was based on the mean value (\bar{x}) of 2.50. That is, any item with mean value (\bar{x}) less than 2.50 will be regarded as disagreed (rejected), while any item with mean value (\bar{x}) equal or greater than 2.50 will be agreed (accepted). The results are presented as follows;

Research question 1: What is the level of awareness of affiliate marketing and dropshipping among students of University of Benin?

Table 4.3: Level of awareness of affiliate marketing and dropshipping among students

Level of awareness	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Mean	STD
I am familiar with the concept of affiliate marketing	8(8)	16(16)	10(10)	39(39)	27(27)	3.99	1.10
I am aware of how dropshipping operates	11(11)	18(18)	18(18)	32(32)	21(21)	3.95	1.06
I often purchase products or services through affiliate marketing links	14(14)	22(22)	19(19)	31(31)	14(14)	4.03	1.06
I am more likely to click on an	21(21)	29(29)	13(13)	28(28)	9(9)	3.92	1.25

dropshipping link when
browsing for product or
services online

Grand mean

3.97

Source: Field survey (2024)

Table 4.3 shows the results for level of awareness of affiliate marketing and dropshipping among students which clearly reveal that most of the respondents agreed that 39(39%) they are familiar with the concept of affiliate marketing with a mean of 3.99 and standard deviation of 1.10, majority of the respondents agreed 32(32%) that they are aware of how dropshipping operates with a mean of 3.95 and standard deviation of 1.06. Most of the respondents agreed 31(31%) that they often purchase products or services through affiliate marketing links with mean rating of 4.03 and standard deviation of 1.06, most of the respondents disagreed 29(29%) that they are more likely to click on an dropshipping link when browsing for product or services online with a mean of 3.92 and standard deviation of 1.25. Therefore, the grand mean of 3.97 (Benchmark 2.50) clearly revealed that students were aware of affiliate marketing and dropshipping.

Research question 2: How does academic commitments influence students' participation of affiliate marketing and dropshipping activities?

Table 4.4: Influence of academic commitments on students' participation of affiliate marketing and dropshipping activities

Academic commitments	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Mean	STD
My academic workload significantly limits the	18(18)	27(27)	29(29)	14(14)	12(12)	3.87	0.93

time I can dedicate to affiliate marketing activities							
My academic workload significantly limits the time I can dedicate to dropshipping activities	34(34)	22(22)	14(14)	16(16)	14(14)	3.78	1.02
Academic commitments such as exams, assignments, projects does not affect my involvement in affiliate marketing	10(10)	16(16)	12(12)	39(39)	23(23)	3.69	1.12
Academic commitments such as exams, assignments, projects does not affect my involvement in dropshipping	16(16)	13(13)	9(9)	38(38)	24(24)	3.71	1.25
Grand mean						3.76	

Source: Field survey, (2024)

Table 4.4 shows the influence of academic commitments on students' participation of affiliate marketing and dropshipping activities. It indicates that majority of the respondents were neutral 29(29%) that academic workload significantly limits the time they can dedicate to affiliate marketing activities with a mean of 3.87 and standard deviation of 0.93. Most of respondents strongly disagreed 34(34%) that academic workload significantly limits the time they can dedicate to dropshipping activities with the mean score and standard deviation of 3.78 and 1.02 respectively. The participants agreed 39(39%) that academic commitments such as exams, assignments, projects does not affect my involvement in affiliate marketing, majority of the respondents agreed 38(38%) that academic commitments such as exams, assignments, projects does not affect their involvement in dropshipping with mean score and standard deviation of 3.71 and 1.25 respectively. The weighted average of 3.76 using 2.50 benchmark summarises the result

that academic commitments does not affect students' participation in affiliate marketing and dropshipping activities.

Research question 3: What impact does ethical dilemmas have on students participation in affiliate marketing and dropshipping?

Table 4.5: Impact of ethical dilemmas on students' participation in affiliate marketing and dropshipping

Ethical dilemmas	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Mean	STD
I consider the ethical implications of my involvement in affiliate marketing	4(4)	6(6)	21(21)	40(40)	29(29)	3.62	1.05
Ethical concerns influence my decision to participate in certain dropshipping ventures.	9(9)	3(3)	10(10)	54(54)	24(24)	3.65	1.14
I am hesitant to engage in affiliate marketing if it involves promoting products or practices I find ethically questionable	0(0)	2(2)	4(4)	59(59)	35(35)	3.71	1.16
I am willing to forgo opportunities in dropshipping if they conflict with my ethical values.	3(3)	8(8)	16(16)	40(40)	33(33)	3.65	1.01
Grand mean						3.66	

Source: Field survey, (2024)

Table 4.5 shows the impact of ethical dilemmas on students' participation in affiliate marketing and dropshipping. The result from the analysis indicates that majority of the respondents agreed (40%) that they consider the ethical implications of my involvement in affiliate marketing (mean = 3.62, SD = 1.05), most of the respondents agreed 54(54%) that ethical concerns influence their decision to participate in certain dropshipping ventures. (mean = 3.65, SD= 1.14), most of the

respondents agreed 59(59%) that they hesitant to engage in affiliate marketing if it involves promoting products or practices they find ethically questionable (Mean = 3.71, SD = 1.16) while most of the respondents agreed that they are willing to forgo opportunities in dropshipping if they conflict with their ethical values (mean= 3.65, SD = 1.01). The weighted average of 3.66 reveals that ethical dilemmas influenced students' participation in affiliate marketing and dropshipping

Research question 4: How does fear of exploitation influence students' participation in affiliate marketing and dropshipping activities?

Table 4.6: Influence of fear of exploitation on students' participation in affiliate marketing and dropshipping activities

Fear of exploitation	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Mean	STD
I worry about being exploited by companies or individuals in affiliate marketing or dropshipping	8(8)	11(11)	14(14)	32(32)	35(35)	3.97	1.10
The fear of being taken advantage of influences my decision to participate in affiliate marketing or dropshipping.	37(37)	29(29)	18(18)	11(11)	5(5)	3.89	1.16
The fear of exploitation affects my overall participation in affiliate marketing and dropshipping activities.	2(2)	6(6)	12(12)	46(46)	34(34)	3.79	1.14
I believe that students should prioritize protecting themselves from exploitation over potential financial gains in affiliate marketing and dropshipping	2(2)	4(4)	20(20)	38(38)	36(36)	3.94	1.09
Grand mean						3.90	

Source: Field survey, (2024)

Table 4.6 presents the influence of fear of exploitation on students' participation in affiliate marketing and dropshipping activities. The result from the analysis indicates that majority of the respondents strongly agreed (35%) that they worry about being exploited by companies or individuals in affiliate marketing or dropshipping (mean = 3.97, SD = 1.10), most of the respondents strongly disagreed (37%) that the fear of being taken advantage of influences their decision to participate in affiliate marketing or dropshipping. (mean = 3.89, SD= 1.16), most of the respondents agreed (46%) that the fear of exploitation affects my overall participation in affiliate marketing and dropshipping activities. (Mean = 3.79, SD = 1.14) while most of the respondents agreed (38%) that they believe that students should prioritize protecting themselves from exploitation over potential financial gains in affiliate marketing and dropshipping (mean= 3.94, SD = 1.10). The weighted average of 3.90 reveals that fear of exploitation influenced students' participation in affiliate marketing and dropshipping

Research question 5: What are challenges faced by University of Benin students in affiliate marking and dropshipping?

Table 4.7: Challenges faced by students in affiliate marking and dropshipping

Challenges	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Mean	STD
The lack of reliable internet access is a barrier to my participation in affiliate marketing activities.	3(3)	7(7)	5(5)	40(40)	45(45)	3.53	1.10
The lack of reliable internet access is a barrier to my participation in dropshipping activities.	1(1)	8(8)	28(28)	34(34)	29(29)	3.49	1.16
Poor electric power supply is a barrier to my	4(4)	6(6)	10(10)	37(37)	43(43)	3.57	1.14

participation in affiliate marketing activities.							
Poor electric power supply is a barrier to my participation in dropshipping activities.	2(2)	3(3)	8(8)	41(41)	46(46)	3.63	1.10
Grand mean						3.56	

Source: Field survey, (2024)

Table 4.7 presents the challenges faced by students in affiliate marketing and dropshipping. The result shows that majority of the respondents strongly agreed (45%) that the lack of reliable internet access is a barrier to my participation in affiliate marketing activities. (mean = 3.53, SD = 1.10), most of the participants agreed that the lack of reliable internet access is a barrier to my participation in dropshipping activities (mean = 3.49, SD = 1.16), most of the respondents strongly agreed that poor electric power supply is a barrier to my participation in affiliate marketing activities (mean = 3.57, SD = 1.14) while most of the respondents were of the opinion that poor electric power supply is a barrier to my participation in dropshipping activities (Mean = 3.63, SD = 1.10). The weighted average of 3.56 reveals that students who participate in affiliate marketing and dropshipping activities are faced with challenges.

4.5 Correlation

Pearson's correlation in SPSS was also used to assess the relationship between attitude and adoption of affiliate marketing and dropshipping among university students. Pearson's R can range from -1 to +1 (Pallant 2010). A positive correlation indicates that as one variable rises, the other rises as well. A negative correlation means that as one increases, the other decreases.

Table 4.8 Attitude and adoption of affiliate marketing and dropshipping

Correlations						
	LA	AC	ED	FE	CH	AAD

LA	Pearson	1	.760**	.702**	.650**	.488**	.604**
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
AC	N	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Pearson	.760**	1	.796**	.767**	.665**	.780**
	Correlation						
ED	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Pearson	.702**	.796**	1	.720**	.445**	.755**
FE	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100
CH	Pearson	.650**	.767**	.720**	1	.606**	.738**
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
AAD	N	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Pearson	.488**	.665**	.445**	.606**	1	.581**
	Correlation						
AAD	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Pearson	.604**	.780**	.755**	.738**	.581**	1
AAD	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100

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

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

Table 4.8 shows the relationship between attitude and adoption of affiliate marketing and dropshipping. The correlation results indicated a positive relationship between all the attitude dimensions and adoption of affiliate marketing and dropshipping. From the result, the most important factors that resulted to adoption of affiliate marketing and dropshipping are academic commitments (0.780), ethical dilemmas (0.755), fear of exploitation (0.738), level of awareness (0.604) and challenges (0.581) respectively. This shows that academic commitments, ethical dilemmas, fear of exploitation, level of awareness and challenges had the strong positive

association between student attitude and adoption of affiliate marketing and dropshipping as shown in Table 4.7.

4.6 Regression Analysis

The purpose of the study is to ascertain University of Benin students' attitudes about the adoption of affiliate marketing and dropshipping, taking into account their degree of understanding, academic responsibilities, ethical difficulties, fear of exploitation, and hurdles. Thus, multiple regression analysis was used to test the null hypothesis that student attitude does not significantly influence the adoption of affiliate marketing and dropshipping among university students. The results are presented in Table 4.8

Table 4.9: Significant Association between attitude and adoption of affiliate marketing and dropshipping

Coefficients ^a							
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	.958	.161		5.962	.000		
LA	.151	.035	.211	4.360	.000	.984	1.016
AC	.185	.038	.238	4.915	.000	.981	1.019
ED	.213	.050	.203	4.225	.000	.992	1.008
FE	.226	.048	.225	4.685	.000	.996	1.004
CH	.724	.067	.728	10.736	.000	.963	1.001

a. Dependent Variable: Adoption of affiliate marketing and dropshipping

4.7 Hypothesis

H₀: Student attitude does not significantly influence the adoption of affiliate marketing and dropshipping among university students.

The result from table 4.9 shows that there is a significant relationship between student attitude does not significantly influence the adoption of affiliate marketing and dropshipping among university students. Therefore the null hypothesis “Student attitude does not significantly influence the adoption of affiliate marketing and dropshipping among university students” was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted because the p value 0.00 was less than 0.05 (p value = 0.00 < 0.05 and T-stat = 4.360, 4.915, 4.225, 4.685 > 2).

4.8 Discussion of Findings

The findings showed that university students' adoption of dropshipping and affiliate marketing was positively influenced by their level of awareness. The findings demonstrated that students have knowledge of dropshipping and affiliate marketing. This result is consistent with a paper by Kadu and Gulhane (2024), which found that students' engagement in affiliate marketing was positively impacted by their understanding of the practice. The majority of respondents concurred that they understood how dropshipping and affiliate marketing worked. The participants held the belief that dropshipping and affiliate marketing platforms were the sources of their purchases. These results are also consistent with a study by Singh and Narayan (2022), which found a substantial correlation between students' effective use of affiliate marketing platforms and their level of awareness. The results of this study are consistent with the findings of Abdelhady, Kamal, and Abd El Samie (2020), who said that students' awareness of affiliate marketing influences their engagement. Elfrink (2020) claims that dropshipping is a new form of e-commerce that students are using to make money, which supports the claim made by study participants that they are more inclined to click on a dropshipping link when looking for goods or services online.

The results of this study's second research question indicate that students' involvement in dropshipping and affiliate marketing was highly impacted by their academic obligations. This study found that students' ability to commit to dropshipping and affiliate marketing was not greatly hampered by their academic workload. This is consistent with Kannan's (2019) study, which found no discernible relationship between MBA students' academic engagement and affiliate marketing activity. Although participating in affiliate marketing and dropshipping while managing academic obligations like exams, assignments, and projects can be stressful for students, Haq (2012) found that students have learned to balance their academic work with ways to make extra money, mostly through e-commerce.

The results of research question three indicate that students' engagement in dropshipping and affiliate marketing was positively impacted by ethical quandaries. According to the respondents, they think about the moral ramifications of their affiliate marketing activities. According to Patrick & Hee (2019), one of the things that affected students' involvement in affiliate marketing was their consideration of ethical quandaries. In line with Baker's study from 2021, this study also showed that students were reluctant to participate in affiliate marketing if it involved endorsing goods or unethical business methods. Ruiz-Herrera et al. (2023) reported that it is important to consider business ethics before engaging in online businesses which confirms the finding of this study that students were willing to forgo opportunities in dropshipping if they conflict with their ethical values.

The finding from research question four revealed that fear of exploitation influence students' participation in affiliate marketing and dropshipping activities. Majority of the students stated that they worry about being exploited by companies or individuals in affiliate marketing or dropshipping. Newton & Ojo, (2018) reported that most students are afraid to participate in

affiliate marketing due to fear of exploitation. The respondents also shows that the fear of being taken advantage of influences their decision to participate in affiliate marketing or dropshipping. Singh & Mittal (2022) reported that fear of being scammed is a major fear of customer's participation in online marketing. According to the respondents used in this study, fear of exploitation affects their overall participation in affiliate marketing and dropshipping activities which is in accordance with the findings of Dodiya, Dudhat and Vidani (2024) who reported that the proneness to digital scam remains a big challenge to participation in affiliate marketing. Result from research question five shows that students are faced with numerous challenges which can affect their participation in affiliate marketing and dropshipping activities. Challenges such as lack of reliable internet access and poor electric power supply were reported by the respondents used in this study as a major limitation to participation in affiliate marketing and dropshipping activities. Challenges such as lack of reliable internet access and poor electric power supply as also be reported by Dibyendu (2021) as limiting factors to participating affiliate marketing and dropshipping activities

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The chapter discusses the summary and description of findings from the study. It also provides detailed conclusions and necessary recommendations.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The study looked into University of Benin students' attitudes about the use of dropshipping and affiliate marketing. A total of 100 questionnaires were obtained from the respondents and used for analysis during the administration of the questionnaire (primary source) to 100 University of Benin students. While inferential statistics (regression) were utilized to analyze the hypothesis, descriptive statistics like frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were employed to analyze the study issues.

The following findings were obtained from the study:

- i. The results obtained from this study showed that students of the University of Benin had knowledge of affiliate marketing and dropshipping
- ii. The study found out that there is a significant relationship between academic commitments and students' participation of affiliate marketing and dropshipping activities
- iii. Furthermore the study found out that ethical dilemmas significantly influenced students' participation of affiliate marketing and dropshipping activities
- iv. The study also revealed that fear of exploitation influence students' participation in affiliate marketing and dropshipping activities
- v. Finally the study found out University of Benin student who participates in affiliate marketing and dropshipping were faced with challenges such as lack of reliable internet access and poor electric power supply

5.2 Conclusion

Even though affiliate marketing has a promising future in a country like Nigeria, it can be challenging for a person to choose the suitable niche and launch an affiliate business. It has never been easy for beginners to create engaging content and attract real clients. A number of factors, including awareness level, academic obligations, moral quandaries, exploitation, and difficulties, greatly influenced students' involvement in dropshipping and affiliate marketing. Consequently, it's critical to establish an atmosphere that encourages people to engage in dropshipping and affiliate marketing.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings made and the conclusion drawn, the following recommendations were made:

1. Students should be taught about dropshipping and affiliate marketing, including its benefits and how to get started, through workshops, seminars, and training sessions.
2. In order to offer advice and mentorship to people interested in investigating affiliate marketing potential, students should establish connections with dropshipping and affiliate marketing specialists and influencers.
3. The government and non-governmental organizations should conduct awareness campaigns using social media, local media, and community awareness programs to disseminate information about affiliate marketing and dropshipping and prevent participants from falling victim to fraud.
4. To improve their affiliate marketing and dropshipping abilities, government agencies and non-governmental organizations should support young people to take online courses or enroll in vocational training programs that teach digital marketing and content production.
5. Financial management and budgeting skills should be incorporated by school

administrators into instructional programs to enable students to make prudent decisions with the money they earn from dropshipping and affiliate marketing.

5.4 Contribution to knowledge

The study contributed to knowledge by identifying that level of awareness, academic commitments, ethical dilemmas, fear of exploitation and challenges can influence students' participation in affiliate marketing and dropshipping activities.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

This research was limited to hundred University of Benin students. It is therefore recommended that the research be extended a larger population size such as all tertiary institutions in Edo state and academic institutions in Nigeria at large.

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APPENDIX

**QUESTIONNAIRE
DEPARTMENT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP
FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY**

**STUDENTS QUESTIONNARE ON DROPSHIPPING AND AFFILIATE MARKETING-
CASE STUDY OF UNIVERSITY OF BENIN STUDENTS.**

Dear respondents,

This is a research questionnaire containing questions on the dropshipping and affiliate marketing-case study of University of Benin students. You are requested to please answer these questions for the purpose of this academic exercise only. Your contributions will be greatly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

Favour Yusuf

Please, show your response to the following statements by placing a tick (√) in the boxes () to represent your response to the statements.

SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- i. **Gender:** Male () Female ()
- ii. **Marital status:** single () married ()
- iii. **Age:** below - 25 () 26-30 () 36 -40()41 and above
- iv. **Level:** 100(), 200(), 300() 400() others()
- v. **Department:** _____
- vi. **Faculty :** _____

SECTION B:

Please tick (√) in the item that represents you or your opinion.

KEY: SA – Strongly Agree, A – Agree, N – Neutral, SD – Strongly Disagreed, D – Disagree

Level of awareness of affiliate marketing and dropshipping among students

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	N	D	SD
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	What is the level of awareness of affiliate marketing and dropshipping among students of University of Benin?					
1.	I am familiar with the concept of affiliate marketing					
2.	I am aware of I have Knowledge of how dropshipping operates					
3.	I often purchase products or services through affiliate marketing links					
4.	I am more likely to click on an dropshipping link when browsing for product or services online					
	How does academic commitments influence students' participation of affiliate marketing and dropshipping activities?					
5.	My academic workload significantly limits the time I can dedicate to affiliate marketing activities					
6.	My academic workload significantly limits the time I can dedicate to dropshipping activities					
7.	Academic commitments such as exams, assignments, projects does not affect my involvement in affiliate marketing					
8.	Academic commitments such as exams, assignments, projects does not affect my involvement in dropshipping					
	What impact does ethical dilemmas have on students participation in affiliate marketing and dropshipping?					
9.	I consider the ethical implications of my involvement in affiliate marketing					
10	Ethical concerns influence my decision to participate in certain dropshipping ventures.					
11	I am hesitant to engage in affiliate marketing if it involves promoting products or practices I find ethically questionable					
12	I am willing to forgo opportunities in dropshipping if they conflict with my ethical values.					
	How does fear of exploitation influence students' participation in affiliate marketing and dropshipping activities?					
13	I worry about being exploited by companies or individuals in affiliate marketing or dropshipping					
14	The fear of being taken advantage of influences my decision to participate in affiliate marketing or dropshipping.					
15	The fear of exploitation affects my overall participation in affiliate marketing and dropshipping activities.					
16	I believe that students should prioritize protecting themselves from exploitation over potential financial gains in affiliate marketing and dropshipping					

	What are challenges faced by University of Benin students in affiliate marketing and dropshipping					
17	The lack of reliable internet access is a barrier to my participation in affiliate marketing activities.					
18	The lack of reliable internet access is a barrier to my participation in dropshipping activities.					
19	Poor electric power supply is a barrier to my participation in affiliate marketing activities.					
20	Poor electric power supply is a barrier to my participation in dropshipping activities.					