

The Role of Digital Marketing in Improving SME Performance: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

This study is a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) study that aims to identify, examine, and synthesize the latest findings related to the adoption of digital marketing and e-commerce in Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). By analyzing 20 selected international journals, this study explores various determinants, challenges, and impacts of digital technology implementation on MSME business performance. The results of the study reveal that technological, organizational, and environmental factors (TOE framework), digital marketing capabilities, innovation capacity, and customer connectivity through digital platforms are key elements in the adoption process. In addition, external factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, market globalization, and competitive pressures also drive the acceleration of MSME digitalization. Other findings show that the adoption of e-commerce and digital marketing not only improves financial performance and market competitiveness, but also contributes to business sustainability, supply chain efficiency, and export market expansion, especially in the context of cross-border e-commerce. The study analysis suggests approaches for policymakers and researchers to create an MSME digital transformation strategy concerning technology and collaboration within a digital ecosystem.

Introduction

The last two decades have seen an unprecedented level of digital innovation which has impacted industries across the board, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SME). In the face of stiff and ever-evolving market rivalry, SMEs are compelled to digitally market their products if they are to sustain and grow (Fu et al., 2024). Currently, one of the most significant advances in this sphere is social media marketing because of its unrivaled ability to cost-effectively expand the reach to customers. Still, most SMEs remain reluctant to implement social media marketing due to inadequate funds, scarce understanding of technology, and minimal strategic backing from the organization (Eze et al., 2023).

Despite the importance of SMEs as pillars of economic development, their contribution remains limited in fully capitalizing on digital tools (Laila et al., 2024). The challenges confronting SMEs are multifaceted and go beyond technical issues, encompassing organizational structure, external customer and competitor pressure, as well as shifting market conditions (Barroso et al., 2019). The Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) framework has effectively provided insights into the factors that affect the adoption of digital technologies by SMEs. However, some recent studies point out the need for a more comprehensive expansion of the model to incorporate socio-psychological aspects that significantly impact the technology adoption decision (Eze et al., 2023).

Moreover, in regard to international and global markets, e-commerce allows SMEs to create new markets and expand internationally. Nevertheless, the difficulties of cultivating relationships with consumers and establishing digital marketing competencies across borders fragment (Tolstoy et al., 2023). Hence, the primary focus should be placed upon understanding the factors that affect the adoption of marketing technologies, especially social media, in an effort to enhance the competitiveness and performance of SMEs in developing countries, such as Indonesia.

The influence of globalization has allowed digitization to serve as a key driver for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to engage in cross border e-commerce (CBEC). In Italy, SMEs constitute nearly 99.9% of all active businesses and are critical for Italy's contribution to national gross value added. However, the digital transformation of Italian SMEs still presents distinct hurdles, particularly concerning technology adoption and the use of relevant digital tools for online exporting (Dallocchio et al., 2024). This study found that social media and customer data analytics positively enhanced

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online export performance, while ERP software utilization had a negative effect on CBEC performance. This suggests a relative operational disconnect and/or digital unpreparedness at the foundational level (Dallocchio et al., 2024).

Simultaneously, cross-border e-commerce small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in China suffered considerable disruption during COVID-19. Kouam (2025) notes that logistical barriers, financial constraints, and shifts in consumer behavior forced SMEs to undergo a digital transformation to sustain business functions. With the adoption of live-streaming marketing, diversification of the supply chain, and the use of digital communications and delivery technology, Chinese SMEs demonstrated adaptability and resilience during the crisis. This is not merely a reaction to the crisis in the short-term; rather, it has resulted in the construction of technology-based business models that are far more adaptive, competitive on a global scale, and enduring (Kouam, 2025).

In light of these considerations, this research seeks to examine the determinants that encourage the use of social media marketing among SMEs, and how digitalization elements like e-business, e-marketing, and e-commerce differently impact the cross-border export performance of SMEs in varying regions. This study is relevant not only in addressing contemporary strategic management issues, but also provides guidance for public policy aimed at fostering the digital metamorphosis of SMEs in the post-pandemic period.

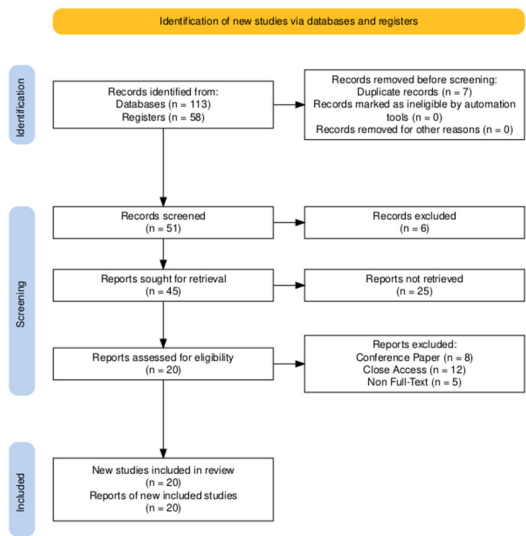
Method

This study uses the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to identify and analyze various literatures on the exploration of determinants and future trends of halal label-based marketing. This study uses metadata sourced from the Scopus database as the main data source in providing research journal documents. The analysis process provides a basis for answering research questions and compiling a relevant conceptual framework. In the process of searching for journal document data using the Scopus database, including:

- 1. The first stage, conducting a search and collection of journal document data through the Scopus website using the keywords "e AND marketing; digital AND marketing; smes".
- 2. The second stage, conducting reduction, coding, filtering, and grouping of data materials according to the discussion topic.
- 3. The third stage, conducting analysis, synthesis, review, and exploration of detailed information related to the materials obtained.
- 4. The fourth stage, presenting conclusions through the article review process.

Researchers obtained data sources in the study in the form of research journal documents that have been published and indexed by the Scopus database. Researchers tried to select articles by selecting articles in the form of research journals indexed by the Scopus database in the last 8 years (2017-2025) with the subjects of Business, Management and Accounting, Economics, Econometrics and Finance as well as English-language journals and Open Access. Based on the document selection process, from 58 articles it was then reduced to 51 articles, 45 articles, 25 articles, and finally there were 20 articles that were relevant and could be analyzed further. The review process uses the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) protocol and can be seen below:

Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram



Research Question

The first step is to formulate research questions in order to focus on the systematic review and provide a clearer review direction. Based on the research objectives, the research questions used are:

RQ1: Digital marketing research trends based on the number of publications each year?

RQ2: What variables influence the implementation of digital marketing according to current literature?

RQ3: What consumer behavior theories or models are most frequently used in digital marketing studies?

Result and Discussion

Search Process Results and Criteria

The search results covering several criteria contain 20 journals that meet the requirements and have a publication range from 2017 to 2025. The journal search uses the Scopus.com database and the keywords "**e AND marketing; digital AND marketing; smes**". The data search aims to map halal-based marketing as a result of the selection process and inclusion and exclusion criteria. The following is advanced query data:

(TITLE-ABS-KEY (e AND marketing) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (digital AND marketing) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (smes)) AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , "BUSI") OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , "ECON") OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , "SOCI")) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (SRCTYPE , "j")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English")) AND (LIMIT-TO (OA , "all"))

Quality Assessment

Based on the results of the Quality assessment, there are 20 Scopus journal articles, from journals published between 2017 and 2025, then all journals that contain variables in digital marketing research on MSMEs and journals that state the methods used in digital marketing research on MSMEs.

Data Analysis

Table 1. Literature Study of Research Articles

No	Authors	Year	Objective	Variable	Variable Type	Operational Definition	Theory Used	Methodology	Findings
1	Fu et al.	2024	Examining the adoption of social media marketing in SMEs through the TOE model	Perceived Advantage, Complexity, Cost, Top Management Support, Employee Capability, Consumer & Vendor Pressure	Independent & Dependent	TOE variables influence SMM adoption	Technological-Organizational-Environmental (TOE)	Structural Equation Modeling , 508 Indonesian SMEs	Organizational and environmental factors drive SMM adoption
2	Barroso et al.	2019	Identifying the determining factors of e-commerce in SMEs using fuzzy cognitive maps	Entrepreneur Profile, Market, Management, Marketing, Platform, Product	Determinants	FCM describes the causal relationship between factors	Fuzzy Cognitive Mapping (FCM)	Expert panel, FCM	Factors such as entrepreneur profile and digital platforms are most influential
3	Laila et al.	2024	Analyzing digital marketing trends in SMEs with bibliometric mapping	Digital Marketing, Costs, Covid-19, Transformation	Topik penelitian (tema)	Digital Marketing Trends in Scopus Publications	Bibliometric Analysis	Biblioshiny + VOSviewer (699 article)	Digital marketing trends are increasing especially post-Covid
4	Eze et al.	2023	Identifying barriers for SME actors in adopting digital marketing technology	Technology, Organization, Environment, Human Context	Context of adoption	The TOE framework is extended to the human context	Extended TOE Framework	Qualitative interviews, thematic analysis	Human factors are important in EDMT adoption
5	Dethine et al.	2020	Analyzing the impact of digital transformat	E-commerce, E-marketing, E-business	Digital Facilitator Factor	Digital facilitators influence SME exports	Potential Export Index	Exploratory literature review	Digitalization affects the internal organization

			ion on SME export capabilities				Framework		n and export strategies of SMEs
6	Tolstoy et al.	2023	Examining how SMEs create cross-border markets through e-commerce	Effectual Market Creation, Insidership, International Performance	Mediator and Moderator	Insidership supports international performance	Effectuation Theory	Survey of 99 Swedish e-commerce SMEs	Effectual creation and networking improve export performance
7	Alawaml eh et al.	2023	Identifying entrepreneurial challenges in Jordanian startups	Support, Funding, Network, Experience, Gender	Qualitative Contextual	Tantangan spesifik startup Yordania (Alawamleh et al., 2023)	Ekonomi Digital dan Kewirausahaan	Wawancara kualitatif pada 4 startup	Wanita hadapi lebih banyak hambatan dalam pembiayaan
8	Kurniasari et al.	2022	Examining factors influencing e-fulfillment adoption in MSMEs	Perceived Usefulness, Ease of Use, Trust, Risk	Independent, Intervening, Dependent	Trust is important in e-fulfillment adoption	Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)	SEM, SME survey in Jakarta	Ease of Use builds trust and influences adoption
9	Khattak	2022	Testing the impact of digital platforms on SME innovation performance	Digital Platform, Innovation Culture, E-Commerce Capabilities	Independent, Mediator, Moderator	Digital platforms enhance IP through IC	Innovation Performance Framework	Survey of SMEs in Pakistan, regression analysis	IC mediates the relationship between digital platforms and innovation performance.
10	Chinakidzwa & Phiri	2020	Assessing the impact of digital marketing capabilities on the market performance of agro SMEs	Strategy, Innovation, Market Sensing, Leadership	Independent of market outcomes	Only digital strategies have significant impact	Digital Marketing Capability	Survey of 298 SME managers, logistic regression	Digital strategies impact sales and profitability
11	Ade Octavia et al.	2020	Menganalisis pengaruh orientasi kewirausahaan dan orientasi pasar terhadap kinerja bisnis UKM melalui adopsi e-commerce	Entrepreneurial Orientation, Market Orientation, E-commerce Adoption, Business Performance	Independent, Dependent, Mediating	Entrepreneurial orientation: kecenderungan untuk berinovasi dan mengambil risiko (Soininen et al., 2012)	Entrepreneurial Orientation Theory, Market Orientation Theory	Mixed method, SEM-PLS, 250 SMEs, Jambi Province	The three variables have a significant influence on the performance of SME businesses.
12	Anak Agung Gde Bagus Udayana et al.	2024	Testing the impact of digital marketing and e-commerce on financial performance and sustainability of SMEs	Digital Marketing, E-commerce, Financial Performance, Sustainability Performance	Independent, Dependent	Digital marketing: the use of digital information technology to market products	Technology Acceptance Model	Quantitative, SEM, 580 Indonesian SME respondents	Digital marketing and e-commerce have a positive and significant impact on marketing performance and sustainability.

13	Marco Bettiol et al.	2021	Exploring the role of digital technology in building customer connections during the COVID-19 pandemic	Digital Technologies, Web-based Technologies, Customer Relationship Management	Independent, Dependent	Web-based tech: technologies such as e-commerce, videoconferencing, CRM	Marketing 4.0, Industry 4.0	Qualitative, case study on 26 Italian SMEs	Web-based strategies have proven crucial in maintaining customer relationships.
14	František Pollák, Peter Markovič	2021	Testing whether company size influences the adoption of digital marketing tools in Central European SMEs	Business Unit Size, Digital Marketing Adoption	Independent, Dependent	Digital marketing: internet-based marketing communication tools	Innovation Diffusion Theory	Quantitative, survey, statistical analysis of Central European companies	Business unit size does not have a significant effect on digital marketing adoption, but previous experience has a significant effect.
15	Nagian Toni et al.	2025	Analyzing the influence of e-commerce, digital banking, and digital marketing on supply chain sustainability and financial performance of SMEs.	E-commerce, Digital Marketing, Digital Banking, Sustainability, Financial Performance	Independent, Dependent	E-commerce: the process of buying and selling via a computer network	Resource-Based View	Quantitative, SEM-PLS, 668 Indonesian SMEs	All variables have a positive and significant influence on sustainability and financial performance.
16	Aflit Nuryulia Praswati et al.	2024	Analyzing B2C commerce adoption factors in SMEs and their impact on marketing performance	B2C Commerce, Marketing Performance	Independent, Dependent	B2C Commerce: direct transactions between businesses and consumers online	Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE)	Quantitative, survey approach, Indonesian context	Adoption of e-commerce significantly improves SME marketing performance
17	Veronica Scuotto et al.	2017	Analyzing the impact of social networking sites and absorptive capacity on SME innovation performance	Social Networking Sites, Absorptive Capacity, Innovation Performance	Independent, Mediating, Dependent	Absorptive capacity: the ability to absorb and utilize external knowledge	Knowledge-Based View	PLS-Path Modeling, 215 global SMEs	SNS and absorptive capacity contribute positively to innovation performance
18	Abdullah ,Ampauleng	2024	Explaining the role of micro-influencers in maintaining the sustainability of SME businesses post-COVID-19	Micro-Influencer, Business Sustainability	Independent, Dependent	Micro-influencer: an individual with large influence in a small community	Social Media Marketing Theory	Quantitative, Indonesian tourism sector	The strategy of using micro-influencers is effective in maintaining the continuity of SMEs

19	Maurizio Dallochio et al.	2024	Testing the impact of digitalization on cross-border e-commerce export performance in Italian SMEs	Digitalization, E-Business, E-Marketing, E-Commerce	Independent, Dependent	E-marketing: using digital media for cross-border marketing	Technology Adoption Model (TAM)	Regression, data from Italian SMEs	Marketplace is more effective than own e-commerce site for export
20	Arthur William Fodouop Kouam	2025	Evaluating the challenges, strategies and digital transformation of cross-border e-commerce SMEs in China during and after the pandemic	Adoption of digital marketing, Tech in logistics, Contactless delivery	Qualitative, Causal-conditional (QCA)	Digital transformation: redefining business processes using digital technologies	Chaos Theory	Interview, observation, questionnaire survey (n=104)	Resilience strategies such as digital marketing and supply chain diversification drive digital transformation.

Discussion

4.1 RQ1: Digital marketing research trends based on the number of publications each year?

The trend of digital marketing research shows a very interesting dynamic when viewed based on the number of publications each year. Based on the attached research data, it appears that the intensity of publications in this field has fluctuated, but with a tendency to increase significantly in recent years. In 2017, publications related to this topic were still relatively few, marked by the work of Veronica Scuotto et al. (2017) which was one of the early publications in the available dataset. The trend began to show a more pronounced increase in 2019 through the publication of Barroso et al. (2019) which indicated the growing academic interest in digital marketing, along with the acceleration of digital transformation in various industries.

There was an undeniable surge in publications in the year 2020 owing to the work done by Dethine et al., Chinakidzwa & Phiri, and Ade Octavia et al. This spike is closely related to the COVID-19 pandemic because it compelled businesses from multiple industries to move their marketing functions to the digital sphere. This, in turn, created the demand of understanding digital marketing both academically and practically. This trend in research productivity did not cease in 2021 as seen with the publications from Marco Bettiol et al. and František Pollák with Peter Markovic which discussed the scope of digital marketing in relation to digital transformation, innovation, and the interactions with customers online.

The trends of digital marketing research in 2022 was notably advanced by its technology and consumer behavior components with contributions from Kurniasari et al. and Khattak reflecting on analytical data usage in strategic frameworks of digital marketing. The published works of Eze et al., Tolstoy et al., and Alawamleh et al. in 2023 tackled issues like the politics of consumer behavior and advanced social media, thus marking 2023 as a year with a strong publication output.

Interestingly, in 2024, there was a very significant spike in publications, reflected in the many names of researchers such as Fu et al., Laila et al., Udayana et al., Aflit Nuryulia Praswati et al., Abdullah & Ampauleng, and Maurizio Dallochio et al. This increase in publications reflects the high enthusiasm for research on digital marketing, along with the increasingly rapid development of digital technology, the use of big data, artificial intelligence, and the phenomenon of digitalization of MSMEs and large companies. This illustrates that digital marketing is not merely a trend; rather, it has matured into a modern, evolving strategic discipline within the business world. Looking forward to 2025, this research showcases continuity with publications from Nagian Toni et al. and Arthur William Fodouop Kouam, suggesting that digital marketing will continue to be a critical and promising area of scholarly inquiry.

Clearly, the pattern of scholarly work associated with digital marketing has grown significantly after the year 2020. This growth is not just in the numbers of publications, but it is also in the diversity of themes and depth of analysis including but not limited to: digital transformation, customer engagement, disruptive technology, and the adoption of digital

marketing strategies to deal with changes in the global business environment. This is an indicator of the steadily increasing relevance of digital marketing as a cornerstone in the evolution of management science and business.

4.2 RQ2: What variables influence the implementation of digital marketing according to current literature?

1. Digital Transformation in Marketing

The variable under consideration has become one of the most researched topics in digital marketing, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic. Barroso et al. (2019), Dethine et al. (2020), and Marco Bettiol et al. (2021), have studied how firms are migrating from traditional marketing to digital marketing. This shift goes beyond technology to include an evolution in organizational culture, modes of work, and business models. More recent studies, conducted by Fu et al., (2024); Dallochio et al., (2024) stress that, in the current global marketplace, digital transformation has become a matter of survival.

2. Digital Customer Engagement (DCE)

This variable addresses how firms manufacture interactions and engagements with customers through digital platforms. Research by Chinakidzwa & Phiri (2020), Alawamleh et al. (2023), and Udayana et al. (2024) examined the impact of social media, content interactivity, live streaming, and customer personalization on engagement. Emerging studies further emphasize the need for fostering emotional bonds between brands and consumers using digital technology.

3. Digital Consumer Behavior (DCB)

The behavior of consumers in the digital space is an ever-expanding area for research. Tolstoy et al. (2023), Khattak (2022), and Praswati et al. (2024) study different dimensions of online purchasing behavior, focusing on the information search process, trust in reviews, platform selection, and overall buying patterns. These components are more intricate owing to the fact that consumers expect effortless, seamlessly integrated processes that are highly tailored to individual needs.

4. Utilization of Big Data and Analytics

The use of big data facilitates the functionality of contemporary digital marketing. Research conducted by František Pollák & Peter Markovic (2021), and Abdullah & Ampauleng (2024), indicates how businesses gather, handle, and evaluate data concerning customers to devise targeted marketing policies. Comprehensive analysis of data assists in anticipating market trends, segmenting customers, and crafting appropriate marketing materials.

5. Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Digital Marketing

The year 2020 marked a noticeable spike in the popularity of AI as a research variable. As showcased by Eze et al. (2023) and Laila et al. (2024), AI technology finds application in chatbots, product recommendation systems, content personalization, and forecasting consumer behavior. The utilization of AI technology in digital marketing has resulted in enhanced operational performance, cost savings, and a superior customer experience.

6. E-commerce and Digital Platform Utilization

The evolution of e-commerce is an important factor which continues to attract scholarly attention. Specific studies by Ade Octavia et al. (2020), Kurniasari et al. (2022), and Nagian Toni et al. (2025) focus on the adoption of e-commerce by MSMEs through the use of online marketplaces, social commerce, and mobile applications as marketing tools. Comprehensive studies investigate the critical success factors of e-commerce as transaction security, navigation ease, multi-faceted payment options, and trust-building policies in the virtual world.

7. Digital Branding and Content Marketing

Digital branding is one more critical variable to examine. From the outset, Veronica Scuotto et al. (2017) have looked into the processes of forming brand positioning and brand recognition in relation to digital channels. As not by Toni et al.

(2025), emerging trends indicate that creative content, storytelling, influencer, and video marketing serve as strong instruments on the formation and development of a brand in the digital environment.

8. Social Media Marketing (SMM)

This aspect remains beloved in the field of digital marketing research. Numerous studies (Alawamleh et al., 2023); (Fu et al., 2024) investigate how to best leverage social platforms like Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Facebook, and LinkedIn. The areas of interest include not just promotion, but also active engagement, providing customer service, crisis management, and customer emotion analytics.

9. Sustainability and Digital Marketing

A newer factor is what concerns the links between digital marketing and sustainability. Maurizio Dallochio et al. (2024) have started researching the processes through which companies integrate the use of digital platforms to communicate the values of sustainability, green marketing, and corporate social responsibilities (CSR). This trend is quite relevant now due to heightened consumer awareness of social and environmental concerns.

10. Digital Marketing in Emerging Economies

Kurniasari et al. (2022), Abdullah & Ampauleng (2024), and Udayana et al. (2024) all focus on the context of developing countries, as Indonesia is identified in the case studies of these publications. Their particular concern is to identify the challenges and opportunities of Indonesia's digital marketing ecosystem. In addition to adoption of technology, digital literacy, infrastructural constraints, ada gap limited access to information and technology, And marketing practices suitable to local circumstances as ecosystem-based.

4.3 RQ3: What consumer behavior theories or models are most frequently used in digital marketing studies?

Within the context of digital marketing and consumer research, the behavior models most prevalently used include The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Model, and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). The attached research data showcase how strongly researchers lean on these theoretical frameworks when studying consumer behavior in the digital space.

Within the context of digital marketing and consumer research, the behavior models most prevalently used include The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Model, and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). The attached research data showcase how strongly researchers lean on these theoretical frameworks when studying consumer behavior in the digital space. For instance, Khattak (2022), Tolstoy et al. (2023), and Praswati et al. (2024) have extensively utilized TPB to study consumers' intentions to interact with various forms of digital content, as well as their online purchasing behavior. The rationale for relying on TPB stems from its applicability in explaining how individual attitudes, subjective norms, and social factors alongside technology—within the context of a digitally influenced environment—affect consumers' intentions and actual behavior.

Besides TPB, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) also holds a prominent position in digital marketing research. This model highlights both perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness as pivotal factors in the adoption of technology. This is seen in the study of Eze et al. (2023), which evaluated the consumer acceptance of artificial intelligence (AI) in digital marketing, as well as in Kurniasari et al. (2022) on the adoption of e-commerce by MSMEs. The relevance of TAM increases with the introduction of new digital technologies which seek to 'reshape' consumer behavior.

At the same time, the S-O-R (Stimulus-Organism-Response) model explains how some digital elements, for example, the design of a particular website, visuals and content of a given platform, as well as its interactivity, function as stimuli impacting consumers (organisms) psychologically and subsequently elicit purchase intentions and digital engagement. Social media marketing and digital branding were studied by Alawamleh et al. (2023) and Anak Agung Gde Bagus Udayana et al. (2024), who worked with the S-O-R approach and focused on the marketing side, showing how some digital stimuli evoke trust and favorable emotions, and increase engagement.

Besides the three main theories, some scholars, for instance, Veronica Scuotto et al. (2017), also apply the Resource Based View (RBV) theory to examine the methods through which companies utilize their digital capabilities as a tool for achieving a competitive edge, even though RBV is primarily focused on the company's side of the business rather than the market or consumer behavior. Research by Dethine et al. (2020) and Barroso et al. (2019) also touches on aspects of

consumer behavior indirectly through the digital transformation framework, emphasizing how digitalization changes consumer expectations and interaction patterns with brands.

Overall, it can be concluded that the TPB, TAM, and S-O-R theories are the most frequently used consumer behavior models in digital marketing studies, because all three offer a comprehensive conceptual framework to explain the dynamics of consumer behavior in the context of technology, social interaction, and digital experience. The dominance of these three theories reflects the need to understand consumer behavior not only from the perspective of individual psychology, but also from the perspective of technology, social, and emotional which are increasingly complex in today's digital era. Future research trends are predicted to continue to integrate these models with new variables such as trust, perceived risk, and sustainability consciousness, along with the evolution of the increasingly dynamic digital marketing landscape.

4.4 Future Research Direction

Although the studies in the above data provide important contributions to digital marketing science, there are several research limitations that need to be noted. Many studies, such as those by Khattak [13] and Tolstoy et al. [5], use online surveys that are potentially biased because they only involve digitally literate respondents, so the results are less representative of the wider population. In addition, most studies are cross-sectional, so they are unable to determine cause-and-effect relationships in depth. In terms of context, digital marketing research is quickly becoming obsolete due to the rapid development of technology, as seen in the study of Laila et al. [3] on AI. Another limitation is the geographical scope, where some studies only focus on certain regions such as Indonesia, making the findings difficult to generalize to a global context. These limitations provide an opportunity for further research to use longitudinal methods, more diverse samples, and a more in-depth analysis approach in order to produce more comprehensive and relevant findings.

The latest studies conducted on the marketing techniques used by small and medium-sized enterprises point out a new trend; the adaptation and adoption of digital marketing strategies has been on the rise, especially during the reign of COVID-19 pandemic. An abundance of scientific literature and increased employment of various methodologies to examine the extent to which small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have adopted and utilized digital technologies is illustrative of this phenomenon. These studies confirm that core components shaping the outcome of digital marketing implementation include technology, organization, networked environment, and human and mental factors related to the decision makers. Models like the Technological-Organizational-Environmental (TOE) and Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) have shown relevance in explaining adoption dynamics, but beyond these, more recent literature highlights the shift toward innovation, corporate culture, and confidence in technology as vital intertwined factors for the digital transformation of SMEs.

Clearly outlined conditions such as organizational readiness, managerial acceptance, and audience receptiveness are core to the success of any digital marketing plan. Currently, there are far more research projects than there were before 2020. This is due to the COVID-19 pandemic accelerating the shift to digital. Digital marketing effectiveness is influenced by entrepreneurial orientation, organizational competence, external environmental support, technology preparedness, and the employment of social media and influencer marketing as impact communication tools. The use of e-commerce and digital marketing has enhanced the financial performance, customer relationship management, and sustainability of small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in developing countries such as Indonesia. Therefore, the most current literature emphasizes the need for the managers of MSMEs to adopt digital tools to cope with market changes and heightened competition.

4.5 Limitation Research

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5. Conclusion

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