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E-COMMERCE ADOPTION AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF MSMEs

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ABSTRACT

Micro, small, and medium-sized businesses (MSMEs) in the food and beverage industry are experiencing considerable growth because of their progressive use of digital media. Traditional marketing strategies have limitations in terms of time and location. Despite this, online marketing enabled the engagement of a significant number of individuals, irrespective of their geographical location. The objective of this empirical study is to examine the role of digital media marketing in the competitive advantage and performance of MSMEs. The purpose of this investigation was to evaluate the influence of digital marketing on the performance and competitive advantage of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises. This research used a quantitative approach for analysing data using SPSS and the structural equation model with the help of the linear structural relations (LISREL) software. It appears from the findings that digital marketing significantly and positively relates to competitive advantage. Moreover, digital marketing has a substantial impact on enhancing the favourable outcomes of micro, small, and medium enterprises.

KEYWORDS

E-Commerce, digital media marketing, MSMEs

INTRODUCTION

A substantial rise in the number of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) operating in the food and beverage industry can be partly because these businesses are increasingly adopting digital media forms. With the help of digital transformation, they can expand their business and tap into new markets (Asikin, Fadilah, 2024, Radović-Marković et al., 2021). The food and beverage sector has grown due to the variety of advertising options provided by internet marketers through venues like Grab Food and Go Food, small and medium-sized businesses. Shift from Industry 4.0 to Industry 5.0 is considered a critical period for business growth.

Digital marketing allows these businesses to sell their items efficiently, which boosts their market share and overall competitiveness. The use of digital media for product promotion is emphasized as a strategic method to gain dominance in the market (Chakti, 2019; Komalasari et al., 2021). The fundamental concept of digital marketing revolves around harnessing extensive media, such as television and the

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internet. These mediums provide infographics and other visual representations of the company's marketed products. Utilising this visual strategy enables firms to efficiently convey their product offerings and appeal to a broader audience, hence expanding their market reach and influence (Kumar et al., 2020, Tiago, Verssimo, 2014). Digital marketing has surpassed traditional marketing by reaching a wider variety of consumers at more convenient times and from more locations. Digital marketing has surpassed the conventional form of marketing.

Digital marketing provides more flexibility and wider outreach compared to traditional marketing, which is constrained by time, location, and audience reach (Asikin et al., 2024). This feature allows firms to cooperate with a broader and more diversified audience, hence improving their comprehensive marketing efficiency (Das, 2018, Putri, Marlien, 2022). The challenges faced in conducting promotional and sales activities hinder MSME participants from acquiring information about desired customer products, meeting consumer preferences, fulfilling product requirements of producers or MSME participants, and establishing clear business objectives while expanding their consumer base (Rahardja, 2022).

Using empirical methods, the purpose of this research article is to evaluate the impact of online digital media marketing on the competitive advantage and performance of MSMEs (Melović et al., 2020). The common man has become very familiar and accessible with digital media in the marketing field due to the widespread use of the internet (Tariq et al., 2022). Online purchasing has gained popularity and security due to the instant rating system available in each online marketing platform, which also extends to the sales domain (Leeflang et al., 2014). With the use of digital media marketing and e-commerce automation, helps spread the word about products. Saebah and Asikin (2022) proposed that digital marketing involves leveraging digital technology to establish a platform that not only meets the needs of buyers but also aids companies in achieving their intended goals.

According to the American Marketing Association (AMA, 2009), digital marketing is all the methods, actions, and structures that are made possible by digital technology to create, communicate, and deliver value to customers and other important stakeholders (Tariq et al., 2022). Utilising websites, social networks, emails, databases, mobile and wireless channels, and digital TV, digital marketing is carried out over the Internet (Leeflang et al., 2014). The primary goals are to increase exposure to target consumers, learn more about their demographics, buying habits, and brand loyalty. All of these things are being done to reach marketing targets. The Digital Marketing Primer by Järvinen (2015) defines that advertising that uses media on the internet is called digital marketing.

The American Marketing Association (AMA) defines digital marketing as a collection of activities and processes that involve organisations that use digital technology to convey, generate, and deliver messages to members of the customer base, as well as other interested parties. Utilizing digital marketing as a strategy for gaining a competitive edge can have a significant impact, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises looking to promote their products in the online marketplace (Asikin et al., 2024). Rachmadi (2020) provides a variety of definitions for e-marketing, with one defining it as an organization's attempt to use online media for information, communication, promotion, and sales of its goods and services (Radović-Marković et.al., 2011).

Enhancing a company's value to its customers is a key aspect of gaining a competitive edge. Using this factor, a company can earn more than its industry rivals. Having a competitive advantage is crucial for a company to thrive in a competitive market. A company's competitive advantage arises from the value or benefits it can provide to its customers. A company can gain a competitive edge by adopting one of the three generic strategies (Asikin et al., 2024). Hynes (2021) suggests that cost leadership, distinctiveness, and focus are the three main ways to achieve competitive advantage. The overall strategy for gaining a competitive edge includes these different approaches. A company's cost advantage strategy entails positioning itself as a producer with a competitive edge in terms of pricing within its industry.



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Depending on the makeup of the industry, this cost advantage could have a variety of sources. To be successful, producers who aim to keep costs low must be able to recognise and take advantage of any possible sources of savings. Cost leadership focuses on producing standardised products at low costs to meet the needs of price-sensitive consumers. The differentiation strategy's objective is to distinguish our services and products from those of our competitors. The goods and services must have unique benefits or distinguishing qualities that attract customers' interest.

D. Hunger and T. W. Kotler (2000) argued that differentiating oneself from competitors serves as a proactive strategy for achieving superior outcomes within a specific industry. This is attributed to the fact that a company's distinct selling points have the potential to foster customer loyalty, thereby contributing to an expansion of market share. While the pursuit of competitive strength differs from cost advantage techniques, it is essential to note that this strategy still takes cost estimations into account. Instead, the main focus is not on cost. One of the final generic strategies is to focus on a specific group of customers, product line segment, or geographic market.

A focused strategy is developed to effectively achieve specific objectives, whereas a strategy centred on low costs and differentiation aims to fulfil extensive industry-wide goals. The underlying principle of this approach is that, relative to its broader competitors, the company will be positioned to more successfully and efficiently achieve its distinct strategic objectives by adopting this strategy. The focus is to improve service quality within a predetermined target. Implementing this approach requires the company to focus its efforts on serving a specific market segment (Asikin et al., 2024). Additionally, Gebrie (2021) asserts that a competitive strategy combines assets and capabilities that set an organisation apart from its rivals, such as cash, technological superiority, brand recognition, and other assets. A company's internal limits on the competitive strategies it can use are set by its strengths and problems, along with its core values.

According to Jalilvand (2017), the competitive forces in an industry, regardless of whether it produces products or services, will determine an organisation's competitive capabilities. Five basic competitive forces determine the level of competition in an industry: the threat of new competitors, strong suppliers, influential buyers, substitute products, and the level of competition (Asikin et al., 2024). Linawati (2015) defines performance as a collection of diverse management activities that offer a comprehensive assessment of the level of success, progress, and shortcomings that have been achieved in the execution of their duties and obligations in public accountability. The term "performance" refers to how well an organisation has achieved its goals within a given period. An organisation's performance can be evaluated through various metrics, including sales volume, profit margin, return on investment, turnover rate, and market share.

Furthermore, these efforts serve as the foundation of the populace's economic structure, with the primary goal of mitigating disparities across various groups, income levels, and commercial entities, as well as addressing issues of poverty and unemployment. Wahiddudin (2019) asserts that performance is contingent upon task completion and the outcomes that result from it. The MSMEs sector is a critical component of the economy of a country or region. Growing small and medium businesses is a key way to fight poverty and boost the economy. The country's micro, small, and medium-sized enterprise (MSME) sector is struggling in the face of a dynamic and complicated commercial environment. The rapid expansion of free trade also brings intense competition, which can be felt on a local, national, and international scale. Due to its essential impact, free trade is a crucial component of MSME growth and development. It can substantiate thoroughly their activities. The primary focus should be on producing goods for human capital and financial support under an organised management structure. To achieve enormous success in this field, it is critical to execute an appropriate strategy. Additionally, it's crucial to shed light on diverse market ingredients in challenging circumstances (Asikin et al., 2024).



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METHODS

The researchers conducted the thorough literature analysis on the relationship between digital marketing and the performance of MSMEs. By outlining the pertinent theories, this review will lay solid theoretical groundwork for the research. Following that, we employed quantitative research methods and relied on questionnaires as our primary data collection tools. It is critical to carefully analyze these questionnaires to determine how MSME sector owners view their digital marketing strategies and overall business performance. The study included MSME owners from a selected region, with samples chosen at random to ensure the findings can be applied more broadly.

We collected the data through both online surveys and in-person interviews, taking into account the preferences of the sample respondents. The researcher selected digital media marketing as an independent variable, competitive advantage, and business performance as dependent variables. It will be analysed using appropriate statistical techniques, such as regression analysis (Ridzki et al., 2023; Asikin et al., 2024). This analysis will reveal how much digital media marketing affects MSMEs' performance and competitive advantage. In addition, in-depth interviews with several MSME owners have also been conducted to gain a better understanding of how digital marketing enhances their competitive advantage and business performance (Asikin et al., 2024).

RESULTS

Descriptive Research Variables (Digital Marketing (X))

Chaffey and Chadwick (2016) proposed that Digital marketing is a marketing activity that uses digital media using the internet that utilizes media in the form of the web, social media, email, and digital tv, to increase target consumers and to find out the profile of behaviour, product value, and loyalty of customers or target consumers to achieve marketing goals. The indicators of digital marketing strategy variables are measured by six indicators (Figure 1): using Digital TV (X1.1), social media (X1.2), e-mail (X1.3), mobile (X1.4), Internet (X1.5), and database (X1.6) (Asikin et al., 2024).

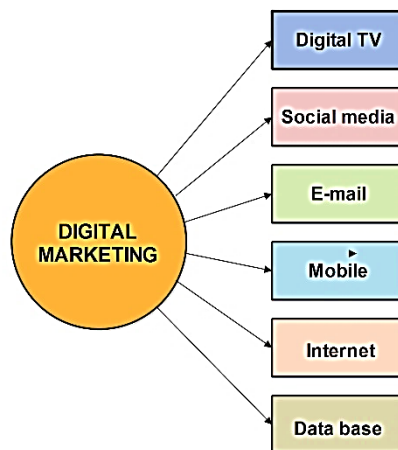


Figure 1. Digital marketing indicators



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DISCUSSION

In an attempt to address the research problem formulation, this discussion centres on decisions that emerge from hypothesis testing. Hypotheses testing outcomes are summarized as follows:

The Impact of Digital Marketing Techniques on Competitiveness

Path analysis was used to do research, and the results showed that digital marketing plans are very important for improving competitive advantage. It is apparent that a competitive advantage is achieved through the implementation of a robust digital marketing strategy. Digital marketing strategy has a significant favourable influence on competitive advantage with $P = 0.000 < 0.05$ with a coefficient value of 0.404, this coefficient shows that the better the marketing strategy, the better the competitive advantage will also be in a positive direction. The coefficient of influence is marked positive, meaning that a good digital marketing strategy increases competitive advantage. This assertion is substantiated by the findings of the preliminary hypothesis testing, which suggest that a robust digital marketing strategy could significantly impact competitive advantage (Asikin et al., 2024).

The results of this study back up Chaffey and Chadwick's (2016:11) idea that digital marketing is a way to reach and understand target consumers through digital media like the internet, email, digital TV, and social media. To successfully achieve business goals, it is crucial to gain a deeper understanding of consumer behavior, the value of a product, and customer loyalty. Herman's (2018) study reveals that the strategic implementation of a company's diversified array of resources is precisely associated with achieving a competitive advantage. Because of this, digital marketing tactics might help MSMEs get ahead of the competition. This study's results serve to substantiate the research conducted by Wiktor (2021), suggesting that organizations that extensively implement digital marketing strategies experience a more significant influence on their brand promotion and positioning. According to studies conducted by Blichfeldt (2021), Foroudi (2017), and De Pelsmacker (2018), digital technology has a significant impact on all aspects of human activities, including marketing.

The Impact of Online media Advertising on the Survival of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises

The investigation demonstrates that digital marketing tactics exert a substantial and favourable impact on the performance of micro, small, and medium enterprises. This suggests that the effectiveness of MSMEs is directly correlated with the suitability of their digital marketing approach. The impact of digital media marketing techniques on MSME performance is statistically significant ($P = 0.016 < 0.05$), with a coefficient value of 0.342. This positive coefficient indicates that there is a direct correlation between the quality of the digital marketing strategy and the performance of micro, small, and medium enterprises. In other words, as the digital marketing strategy improves, so does MSMEs' performance.

The positive coefficient of influence indicates that a well-executed digital marketing plan will lead to improved performance of MSMEs in the food sector. The results of the third hypothesis test demonstrate that digital marketing techniques exert a favourable and substantial impact on the performance of micro, small, and medium enterprises. Effective marketing strategies are crucial for MSME industries and their associated products. Chaffey's (2022) claims, which support the study's conclusion, suggest that digital



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media marketing effectively leverages digital technology through various online services and media support. It is imperative to establish digital networks, including blogs, podcasts, social media networks, email, digital TV, and websites, to sustain the contribution of MSME's to human society.

These channels are crucial for enabling marketing activities. Sinambela (2016:480) further defines employee performance as the ability of employees to execute specific skills. By leveraging their employees' capabilities, MSME companies can optimise their performance by employing digital marketing strategies (Etim et al., 2021). Therefore, the findings of this study align with the hypothesis that using digital marketing techniques can enhance the effectiveness of micro, small, and medium enterprises.

The results of this study support the conclusions of additional research conducted by Chang (2016). Different advertising methods have different economic benefits, which can affect managers' judgements of ad efficacy and external stakeholders' assessments of firm performance. Kano (2022) observed in their research that the impact is more significant as companies increasingly rely on digital marketing. The results demonstrate the impact of digital technology on performance, as indicated by Blichfeldt's (2021).

The Effect of Competitive Advantage on MSME Performance

The hypothesis testing results indicate that competitive advantage significantly and positively impacts the performance of MSMEs in the food sector. This implies that the better the competitive advantage, the better the performance of these MSMEs. Specifically, competitive advantage has a significant positive effect on MSME performance, with a p-value of 0.005 (less than 0.05) and a coefficient value of 0.308. According to this positive coefficient, the performance of MSME's is improved as a result of increased competitiveness (Asikin et al.). The fifth hypothesis test results further confirm that the performance of MSME's is substantially and positively influenced by a competitive advantage strategy.

These findings support Teng's (2007) theory that a company's competitive advantage is gained by implementing strategies that exploit its many resources. Increased competitiveness therefore leads to improved performance of MSME's as per the positive coefficient. The fifth hypothesis test result also confirms that through a competitive advantage strategy, performance of MSME's is significantly and positively affected.

These conclusions validate Teng's (2007) theory positing that competitive edge of a firm is attained by adopting strategies that tap into its abundant resources. Furthermore, they uphold Parnell's (2005) assertion that competitive strategy merges objectives which are reinforced by better resources and abilities than those of rivals including financial capabilities, technology supremacy, brand awareness and employee efficiency. This study endorses Leitão's (2019) concept that performance is the value of a number of work activities which help an organization reach its goals. Accordingly, the findings imply that achieving a competitive advantage can enhance the performance of actors in MSMEs within agriculture sector (Teng, 2007; Parnell, 2005; Leitão, 2019).

The Effect of Online Marketing Strategy on the Performance of MSME Through Competitive Advantage

As shown by the route analysis, which demonstrates the outcomes of the hypothesis testing that, In the food industry micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises can gain a competitive advantage over digital marketing techniques. So, an appropriate marketing plan can make these businesses more competitive, which will have an effect on how well they do in the long run. There is statistical evidence from the



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Sobel test ($p=0.016$) that digital marketing techniques have an effect on MSME performance via competitive advantages. Micro small and medium-sized enterprises in the food industry can enhance their performance due to the competitive edge provided by digital marketing. Internet use, with a score of 4.42, stands out as the most significant factor, highlighting its crucial role in the performance of MSME. This is largely due to the key role competitive advantage characteristics play in explaining the positive and substantial impact of digital marketing strategies on MSME performance.

Consistent utilization of the internet, along with other key indicators, is essential for improving the performance of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises and, consequently, their competitive advantage. With a score of 4.48, internet use is the most prominent factor among the various factors, emphasising its critical role in the performance of MSME. This is mainly because competitive advantage characteristics play such a pivotal role in explaining the positive and substantial effect of digital marketing tactics on the performance of MSME. It is vital to make constant use of the internet, in addition to other important indicators, in order to improve the performance of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises and, subsequently, the competitive advantage of MSME.

CONCLUSION

After careful analysis and discussion of the results, it becomes evident that implementing digital marketing strategies yields significant benefits. Digital media can boost the potential, market coverage, and competitiveness of micro, small, and medium businesses. Through the utilisation of digital marketing tools like social media, these companies have the ability to broaden their reach, enhance customer engagement, and effectively establish and sustain a larger customer base. Furthermore, making use of online food ordering platforms like Grab Food and Go Food can greatly assist MSMEs in the food and beverage industry to efficiently connect with potential customers.

As a result, in this digital era, it is essential to allocate resources to digital marketing in order to enhance the competitive advantage and overall efficiency of MSMEs.

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