

The impact of digital marketing on consumers' intention to buy small and medium-sized enterprises' food products

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Abstract The impact of digital marketing strategies on customer buying intentions among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the food industry, with a focus on online advertising, social media engagement, and e-commerce platforms. The research aims to identify key factors influencing customer attitudes and behavior, providing SMEs with actionable insights to increase their digital marketing efforts and engage effectively with target audiences. Understanding the complexity of the relationship between marketing strategies and consumer responses is essential for businesses seeking to increase market share and optimize campaign outcomes. Using a purposive sampling approach, data were collected from 150 respondents within the SME food production sector. A qualitative methodology was employed, complemented by multiple linear regression analysis, to examine the relationships among exposure to digital marketing, perceptions of SME food products, and purchase intentions. The findings reveal a significant association between customer buying intentions and the effectiveness of SMEs' physical and digital marketing strategies. Social media engagement, targeted marketing, is a critical determinant of purchase behavior. The study underscores the pivotal role of online advertising in influencing consumer decisions and highlights the necessity for SMEs to adopt customer-centric, tailored marketing programs. Staying attuned to consumer preferences is vital for SMEs to strengthen their competitive position and sustain growth in the food sector.

Keywords: e-commerce, advertising, engagement, customization, perception

1. Introduction

The internet, a worldwide media outlet, has changed marketing by redefining conventional communication techniques. With online research, digital marketing is a cutting-edge tool that has a substantial influence on cost reductions, consumer happiness and business development. With the constant evolution of technology, physical marketing (PM) has given way to digital marketing (DM), which uses digital media for efficient communication (Mehmeti-Bajrami et al., 2022).

Digital marketing, referred to as e-marketing, web marketing, or online marketing, is an essential part of marketing that entails determining and meeting the requirements of prospects through product and service shipping, advancement, and commercials while employing technology to create strategies that work Duralia, (2024). To optimize the food and beverage industry's capability and performance, the Indonesian government is pushing for a digital shift. Packaging for foods modifies the design, label content, and nameplates to assist those with health goals in classifying food into "good for you" and "harmful" categories (Hallez et al., 2023). To understand how social media and digital content activities impact small, middle, and tiny business performance, coupled with business orientation. Consumers seek healthier items low in calories, fat, sugar, or salt, leading to an increase in "better-for-you" (BFY) products. However, excessive sugar content and a lack of nutritional content can sometimes meet customer needs (Theben et al., 2020).

Aryani et al. (2023) used structural equation modeling (SEM) and qualitative methods to examine data from 272 respondents. According to the survey, creating digital content can result in improved online performance and modern business thought. Brzakovic et al. (2021) examine the effects of digital marketing initiatives on factors related to customer service standards in Serbia's SME industry. It seeks to comprehend whether these elements are interdependent and how much they affect one another, assisting administrators in creating initiatives, methods and best practices that improve customer happiness

and commitment. Prior studies have evaluated primarily the caliber of service. The internet has become essential for community contact due to the rise of internet users (Figure 1).

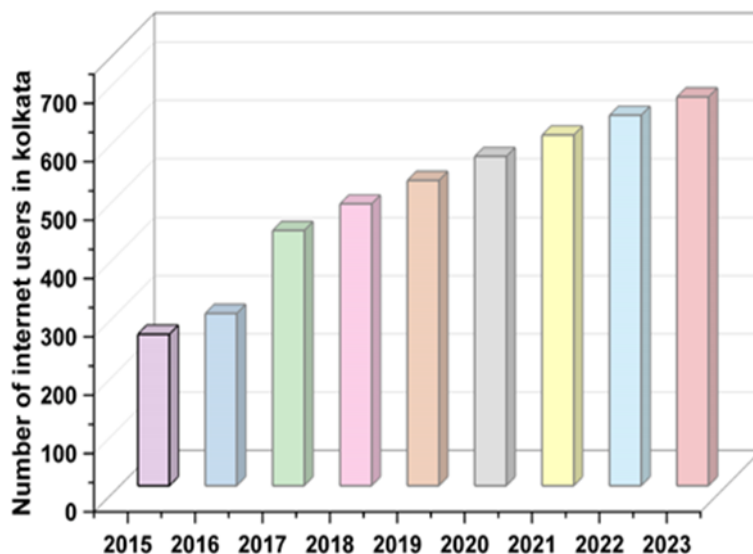


Figure 1 Number of internet users. Source: Brar and Singh (2021).

Social networking has become a necessary tool for news, employment, blogs, companies, and advertising. Users increasingly depend on Facebook, Instagram (Ratnadianti et al., 2020), YouTube (Ahmad et al., 2020), Twitter (Ancín et al., 2022), and other well-known platforms for traffic and attention. Over time, Facebook's user base has grown by 20%, reaching 2.79 billion as of 2018. With 5.9 million likes per day, Instagram has over 950 million (Rehman et al., 2020) active users. Seventy-four percent of Twitter's 330 million active users use the platform for information. With 1.5 million active users (Suleman et al., 2020), Instagram is presently the leading medium for searches. With 22 million organizations and 19 million available positions, LinkedIn has over 267 million active members. SMEs have yet to make the majority of their usage of the internet for marketing and sales initiatives. According to survey data, 52.68% (Sharabati et al., 2024) of internet users make purchases online, whereas 38.49% (Ray et al., 2020) make sales online. An innovative and effective marketing tool that makes it easier for customers and sellers to interact is the DM. It serves as the primary medium for communication in managing a business and plays a significant role in fostering innovation and facilitating trade at the international stage. The secret for SMEs (Peter & DallaVecchia, 2021) looking to expand their consumer base and gain popularity is the DM.

Potential customers are said to play five roles in the decision-making process according to Erlangga et al. (2021). Specifically,

- Starter: Buyers who are limited in what they are prepared to buy or have specific necessities and wants but need more skills to fulfill them on their own.
- Bloggers: Consumers who possess the power to affect another individual's purchasing decisions, irrespective of whether there is a deliberate component.
- Judge: Customers who choose which to purchase, whether they should buy, what products to buy, where to buy them, how to buy them, and where to buy them.
- Purchaser: The person who has executed the transaction.
- Client: Customers who utilize or utilize any of their items.

For SMEs to improve their marketing strategy, the concept of social identity experience is essential (Wang et al., 2020). It entails tactics that focus on individual experiences and imaginative action, such as understanding and operating. Thinkers concentrate on the future, whereas ACT links clients to innovations, trends, behaviors, and cultures. These techniques can help SME sellers draw in more customers and provide them with inspiration, which will improve the way they market as a whole. In food-based SMEs, Dangi et al. (2020) offer business-to-business, or B2B, and B2C, or business-to-consumer, particular attention, or B2C, particular attention. Rudawska (2019) looks at how SMEs in the European food and drink industry use sustainable marketing strategies. B2B organizations deployed more significantly, primarily concentrating on visible customer tools, according to a survey conducted among 770 SMEs.

Lin (2021) reported that while Facebook, PIXNET, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and LINE are practical worldwide methods, awareness of the brand, purchasing online, and sales potential are critical local objectives for SMEs in development. Burhanudin et al. (2022) aimed to help Kerinjing Village's MSMEs and local businesses use e-commerce and online advertising to increase the value of their products. To survive the COVID-19 pandemic, companies must develop innovative marketing

approaches. Thirty-five people completed the beginning, comprehension, and training portions of the program. The outcomes will be monitored and analyzed. Thaha et al. (2021) reported on adoption and company performance over the past three years and analyzed 121 studies on digital marketing trends in SMEs during the past ten years. Kalei (2020) discovered that DM strategies greatly impact the advertising effectiveness of the nation's top 100 SMEs. These findings suggest the use of websites, blogs, social media, search engine optimization, display advertising, and other tools for digital marketing, as well as calls for more research. Phiri (2020) explored how digital marketing tools could improve the market performance of Zimbabwean agroprocessors, emphasizing the necessity of evaluating new and current frameworks in various settings to produce pertinent knowledge.

Adam et al. (2020) analyze the impact of digital technology on the supply chain management methods used by SMEs, which was investigated in a study conducted in the Indonesian region of Aceh. While product reviews do not affect customer happiness and loyalty, DM platforms do. Olazo (2022) assesses the digital marketing tactics and obstacles encountered by 134 SMEs in Pampanga. Technological barriers must be overcome to use technology, which could have an impact on financial performance and stability. Lestari et al. (2020) used the partial least squares (PLS) statistical tool and 16 hypotheses in this study to analyze empirical research models to improve the performance and competitiveness of SMEs that collaborate with go food in Makassar city. The results show that technology acceptance model (TAM) theory, the resource-based view (RBV), and consumer culture theory (CCT) are valid. Priyono et al. (2020) investigated the technological changes in Indonesian SMEs during the COVID-19 epidemic and identified three pathways: inadequate digital literacy but high digital maturity, high social capital, and financial difficulties but low digital maturity. Suryani et al. (2021) provide valuable advice for stakeholders by confirming that brand awareness and E-WOM have an impact on improving brand image in the digital age. The purpose of this interaction is to use the brand of a good to establish a connection between the customer and the cultural and social environment. The use of PM has been found to have a significant effect on buying aims in several prior studies.

2. Study Model

2.1. Data collection

This study employed an analytical approach, selecting over 150 participants from SMEs (Dasgupta & Banerjee, 2023) in the food industry via a quota sampling strategy. The product's period correlation method is used to test for validity, and all of the instrument's items pass this test.

2.2. Hypothesis development

The goal of this interaction is to establish a connection between the consumer and the context of society and culture through the use of a product's brand. Numerous earlier studies have indicated that the use of PM affects purchase intentions.

H1: Digital advertising affects SMEs' ability to make purchases.

H2: SMEs' market intentions to purchase are influenced by PM.

H3: The desire of the small and medium-sized recreational food sector to buy food products is simultaneously driven by physical marketing and digital marketing.

H4: DM affects PM.

2.3. Statistical analysis

Cronbach's alpha was used to verify the reliability. Each parameter was found to have a value of 0.983 for the DM, 0.725 for the PM, and 0.793 for the buy desire. A value > 0.59 indicated that the parameter was dependable. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to examine the data for this study. The traditional criteria of heteroscedasticity, convergence and normality were employed before performing multiple linear regression testing. This suggests that the regression technique can pass the definitive sums test.

3. Results

The intent to buy is the dependent variable in a regression analysis of two independent factors: the variables that are uncorrelated either predict or describe it. The table includes unstandardized coefficients (B) representing the coefficients assigned to each independent variable in the regression equation. Standard errors (Std. Error) show the standard deviation of the coefficient estimates, with more significant errors suggesting more considerable uncertainty. Standardized coefficients (Beta) are the coefficients standardized by dividing them by the standard deviation of the dependent and independent variables. The test statistic calculates the quantity of typical mistakes. A greater absolute t value indicates an extra meaningful connection between the two variables, and the coefficient estimate is zero. The significance (Sig.) is the p-value associated with the t statistic, indicating the probability of seeing the specified t coefficient in the event that the null hypothesis is correct. The constant represents the intercept term in the regression equation, with a constant of -3.948. The model's fit is not explicitly

given in the output. It includes the coefficient of variation (R2) as one type of statistic. The formula (1 and 2) that was used for the regression evaluation, as displayed in Table 1 below, was as follows:

$$Z = x + ya1 + ya2 + e. \quad (1)$$

where Z is the purchase intent and where x,andy represent the independent variables and predictors a1 anda2 are the dependent variables of the DM and PM, respectively. By adding the beta value, the regression equation becomes

$$Z = -3.948 + 0.519 + 0.209 + e. \quad (2)$$

In addition, to address the hypothesis partially on the basis of Table 1, the following data are shown:

Table 1 Statistical results.

Design	Unnormalized Rates		Normalized Rates	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Err	Beta		
1 constant	-3.948	1.975	-	0.015	-2.738
Digital Marketing	0.519	0.039	0.698	0.000	12.048
Physical Marketing	0.209	0.045	0.278	0.000	4.548

Hypothesis 1: Variable a1 (DM) t is 12.048, which means that t count > t table (12.048> 1,993). Based on the data analysis, the prediction was confirmed, or the Z variable (buy intention) was affected by the variable a1, or internet marketing. The significance value of 0.000 < 0005 indicates that internet marketing has a substantial partial influence on purchase intention.

Hypothesis 2: Since the PM variable (a2) has a t-count of 4.548, over t-table, t-count is greater than (3,237 > 1,993). According to statistics, the hypothesis that the variables a2, or PM have an effect on Z variables or purchase intentions is confirmed. Purchase intention was highly influenced by PM, with a significant value of 0.000 < 0.005.

Hypothesis 3: The results of an analysis of variance (ANOVA) for a regression model are shown in Table 2. This type of analysis is used to assess the overall fit of a regression model and test the significance of the predictors. The critical components of the table include the "Model Sum of Squares, DF (Degrees of Freedom), mean square, F value, significance (Sig.), predictors (Constant, DM (a1), PM (a2)), and dependent variable (Purchase Intention (Z))". By multiplying the regression's mean square by the residuals' mean square, one can compute the F test, which is a ratio of deviations. A small p-value, usually less than 0.05, means that there is sufficient evidence to refute the null hypothesis, according to which all regression coefficients are zero. The F values of 154,809 is considerable, providing more evidence of whether the hypothesis fits the information well.

Hypothesis 4: To investigate the impact of the DM on PM, create views, gather data, conduct correlation studies, use regression analysis and statistical tests. A small p value suggests that the alternative should be accepted and that the significance of the effect is assessed via a p value.

Table 2 Effects of the parallel evaluation.

Model	Total Square	DF	MS	f	Sig.	P value
Regression Analysis	919,458	2	486,749	154,809	000	0.01
Remaining	381,000	98	4,058	-	-	-
Total	1230,400	99	-	-	-	-

Table 3 provides a statistical model. A regression analysis consists of critical components such as the correlation coefficient (R), R2 (coefficient of determination), adjusted R2 (independent variable) and standard error of the estimate. The predictors in the model are the constant, PM and DM.

Table 3 Outcome of the factor computation.

Model	R	R2	Adjusted R2	std deviation of errors
1	88.5	79.6	78.5	0.97159

The dependent variable is purchase intention. The combination of these factors accounts for an R square of 79.6 for the variability in purchase intention. The adjusted R2 square is slightly less than the R square, suggesting that the inclusion of physical marketing and internet marketing cannot add much explanatory power or can overfit the Std. The error of the estimate (0.97159) indicates the average deviation between the observed and forecasted values (see Figure 2).



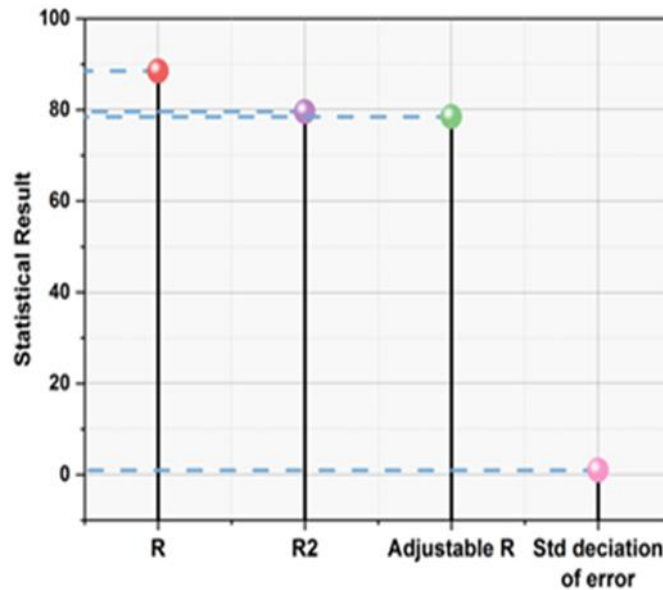


Figure 2 Conclusion of the factor.

4. Discussion

A limitation of Aryani et al. (2023) was that they focused on MSMEs in the beverage and food industry within a specific geographic and cultural context, restricting the applicability of the findings to other industries or geographical areas. Additionally, the use of self-reported data to measure social media and digital content marketing activity may introduce response bias, affecting the accuracy of the results. These factors could impact the study's ability to capture the full range of entrepreneurial attitudes and digital marketing effectiveness.

The drawback of Brzakovic et al. (2021) is that they focused on SMEs in the Republic, which may not be representative of the variety of operating situations SMEs encounter around the world. The cross-sectional architecture makes it difficult to monitor the changes in the effects of digital marketing over time. Furthermore, it evaluates perceived service quality via subjective indicators that cannot fully reflect objective service outcomes.

The impact on the accuracy and thoroughness of determining the efficacy of digital marketing. A limitation of Ratnadianti et al. (2020) is its focus on SMEs in Bogor city's snack business, which restricts the applicability of the findings to other areas or sectors. The reliance on qualitative or self-reported data introduces bias and restricts the breadth of measurable results. Additionally, the external economic factors that could influence campaign effectiveness, as well as rapidly evolving trends in digital marketing, may compromise the accuracy and relevance of the results.

The limitation, noted by Ahmad et al. (2020), is that YouTube is simply used as a platform for advertising; it ignores the combined advantages of multiplatform digital marketing strategies for brand recognition. Additionally, the results could be impacted by demographic bias if the sample is largely composed of younger or more tech-savvy individuals. Furthermore, the study does not account for long-term trends in brand recall or purchasing patterns, which restricts its capacity to thoroughly assess how digital marketing affects customer perception and decision-making.

By expanding the scope to encompass a variety of industries and geographical areas, our study overcomes these constraints and guarantees that the results are more broadly applicable and representative of SME experiences around the world. To reduce response bias and increase the precision of measuring digital marketing activity, we integrate behavioral analytics with self-reported data. Furthermore, our study employs a longitudinal methodology, which enables us to monitor how the influence of digital marketing changes over time. We consider the combined effects of different marketing methods by examining several digital platforms, which provide a more thorough understanding of their significance in consumer behavior and brand recognition.

5. Conclusion

It examines how consumers' decisions to purchase food items from SMEs are influenced by online marketing. It emphasizes improved exposure, interaction, accessibility of data, evaluations, and ease of use. However, there are also obstacles, such as maintaining an online persona, keeping up with the latest developments, and handling expenditures wisely. The difficulties SMEs encounter when internet marketing is used to promote their businesses are covered in this thorough response. Purchase intention is slightly influenced by PM and the DM, according to previous research. Understanding internet marketing in the modern age is aided by a regression model. This suggests the use of online marketing techniques to

increase purchase intent. Research shortcomings, notably in the food industry, indicate that more domains and factors should be investigated.

Ethical Considerations

This study is committed to upholding the highest ethical standards in its collection and use of primary data involving human participants. The data collection was conducted independently of any institutional affiliations, ensuring that participants were selected without bias or socioeconomic influence.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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