

Research Article

Optimizing Sales Performance of Culinary MSMEs Through Strategic Digital Marketing in the Digital Transformation Era

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Abstract

This study analyzes the influence of digital marketing strategies on the sales performance of culinary MSMEs in the digital era. The phenomenon shows that digital marketing adoption among culinary MSMEs remains low despite increasing digital market potential. Using a survey of 30 culinary MSME owners, this study examines three strategic components content marketing, social media marketing, and e-commerce marketing and their impact on five sales performance indicators: sales volume, growth, target achievement, new customer acquisition, and customer retention. Regression analysis results indicate that digital marketing strategies significantly affect sales performance, with an R^2 of 0.322. Social media marketing has the most significant influence, followed by content marketing and e-commerce marketing. These findings contribute to the academic literature by validating the integrated role of digital marketing in enhancing MSME performance. From a managerial perspective, the study implies that culinary MSMEs should prioritize strategic use of social media to enhance brand visibility, develop consistent, engaging content to foster customer trust, and optimize e-commerce platforms to expand market reach. Furthermore, regular analysis of digital metrics and customer engagement data is essential for continuous improvement. Strengthening digital capabilities can enhance competitiveness and accelerate sustainable sales growth in the evolving digital marketplace.

Keywords: Digital marketing, culinary MSMEs, content marketing, social media marketing, e-commerce marketing, sales performance.

JEL Classification: M37, L26, O33

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1. Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technology has significantly transformed the global business landscape, influencing sectors across the micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) spectrum. In Indonesia, MSMEs play a vital role in sustaining the national economy by contributing approximately 61.07% to the country's GDP and employing around 97% of the national workforce (Tambunan, 2023).

The culinary MSME sector, in particular, has benefited from digitalization trends that enhance business visibility, customer engagement, and market reach. However, despite these opportunities, many MSMEs have not yet fully adopted digital marketing strategies. This limited adoption prevents businesses from optimizing sales performance, suggesting a substantial gap between the potential of digital marketing and its real-world application (Bruce et al., 2023).

The acceleration of digital transformation became even more critical during the COVID-19 pandemic, when restrictions on physical interaction forced many MSMEs to shift to digital platforms to maintain operations (Lailla et al., 2022; Afrianti et al., 2024). Digital marketing enables MSMEs to promote their products through social media, e-commerce, and online content to reach broader audiences (Kotler et al., 2021). However, empirical evidence suggests that only about 35% of MSMEs have successfully optimized their digital marketing strategies, leaving the rest lagging in technological adaptation (Bruce et al., 2023). This phenomenon underscores the urgency of evaluating how digital marketing strategies affect MSME performance, especially in industries such as culinary businesses, where digital presence directly influences purchasing decisions.

Several studies have explored specific elements of digital marketing, such as content marketing, social media marketing, and e-commerce marketing, each showing positive contributions to sales performance (Harini et al., 2021; Nur et al., 2021; Palupi & Sulistyowati, 2022). However, these studies often treat each variable separately, resulting in a fragmented understanding of digital marketing's holistic impact. For instance, Ijomah et al. (2024) emphasized the role of innovation in digital strategy to achieve sustainable growth, while Kurniawan et al. (2023) showed that digital marketing adoption can enhance MSME performance by 42%. Despite these findings, a research gap remains regarding the combined influence of multiple digital marketing strategies on sales performance, particularly in Indonesia's culinary MSME context. Thus, this study integrates content marketing, social media marketing, and e-commerce marketing into a unified model to assess their joint effect on sales performance indicators.

Sales performance serves as a crucial measure of business success, encompassing dimensions such as sales volume, sales growth, target achievement, customer acquisition, and retention (Magdalena et al., 2021; Zulkifli & Christiana, 2024). Evaluating these aspects through the lens of integrated digital marketing strategies provides insight into how MSMEs can sustain growth and competitiveness in the digital economy. According to Caffey and Smith (2023), the strategic integration of digital tools enables marketers to simultaneously improve communication efficiency, brand equity, and sales outcomes. Therefore, understanding the synergy among these strategies is vital to developing effective marketing frameworks that address the challenges of digital adaptation faced by culinary MSMEs.

This study aims to analyze the influence of integrated digital marketing strategies comprising content marketing, social media marketing, and e-commerce marketing on the sales performance of culinary MSMEs in Indonesia. Theoretically, this research contributes to expanding marketing science by providing an integrated model that explains the joint impact of digital marketing variables on MSME sales outcomes. In practice, the study offers valuable insights for business practitioners and policymakers to support MSME digitalization programs. The novelty of this study lies in its comprehensive examination of three interrelated digital marketing components within the specific context of culinary MSMEs, filling a gap in the empirical literature and providing actionable recommendations to improve digital competitiveness (Anggraini et al., 2023; Sri Handono et al., 2024).

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis

Literature Review

Digital Marketing for MSMEs

Digital marketing is defined as the use of digital technology to achieve marketing objectives in a measurable, segmented, and interactive manner (Caffey & Smith, 2023). In the context of

MSMEs/MSMEs, the integration of digital channels not only increases market reach but also communication effectiveness and marketing cost efficiency (Kotler et al., 2021). Research across various contexts shows that adopting digital tools can improve MSME business performance, but adoption rates and implementation quality vary due to limited resources and digital literacy. Empirical studies show that optimizing digital channels can improve business performance by tens of percent in some regions (Kurniawan et al., 2023).

Content Marketing

Content marketing is a strategic approach focused on creating and distributing valuable content to attract and retain a specific audience. In the culinary sector, content such as product photos, recipe videos, brand stories, and customer reviews has been shown to increase consumer engagement and trust (Nur et al., 2021; Hendayani Novia et al., 2023). Content consistency and quality are associated with increased brand awareness and ultimately impact sales metrics (Alamsyah & Hasan, 2022). Local studies also confirm that relevant content influences consumer purchasing decisions and loyalty.

Social media marketing

Social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, etc.) have become central to culinary MSMEs due to their visual nature and real-time interaction mechanisms that facilitate product promotion and customer relationships (Mas'adi et al., 2022). Research shows that active social media use increases consumer visibility and interaction, which positively correlates with sales and customer loyalty (Maytanius et al., 2023; SyariHarahap et al., 2021). Furthermore, interactive features (live, polls, UGC) have been shown to strengthen engagement and accelerate conversions.

E-commerce

E-commerce marketing through marketplaces (e.g., GoFood, GrabFood, ShopeeFood) and websites allows for easier transaction access and a broader market for culinary businesses. Empirical evidence shows that MSMEs utilizing marketplaces experience significant sales increases compared to those relying solely on offline channels (Palupi & Sulistyowati, 2022; Anggraini et al., 2023). Furthermore, integrating sales channels (omnichannel) increases product availability and reduces friction in the purchasing process.

Sales performance

Sales performance is measured through sales volume, sales growth, target achievement, new customer acquisition, and customer retention rates (Magdalena et al., 2021; Zulkifli & Christiana, 2024). The literature shows that the combination of digital channels (content + social media + e-commerce) tends to have a synergistic effect: content attracts attention and builds trust, social media accelerates engagement, and e-commerce facilitates transactions, making the overall conversion cycle more efficient (Caffey & Smith, 2023; Kurniawan et al., 2023). However, several studies note challenges in new customer acquisition, requiring more intensive targeting and advertising strategies (Bruce et al., 2023).

Hypothesis

The Influence of Content Marketing and Sales Performance

Content marketing is a strategic approach in digital marketing that emphasizes the creation and distribution of valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain target customers. According to Content Engagement theory (Kotler et al., 2021), high-quality content will strengthen brand perception and drive purchasing decisions. In the context of culinary MSMEs, content such as product photos, behind-the-scenes stories, and recipe videos is essential for building trust and fostering consumer interaction. Nur et al. (2021) found that engaging digital content on Instagram significantly increased customer engagement and sales. Research by Hendayani Novia et al. (2023) also showed that a consistent content strategy can increase customer loyalty through ongoing two-way communication. Alamsyah and Hasan (2022) noted that MSMEs that regularly implement content marketing strategies experience a 35% increase in brand awareness. Kurniawan et al. (2023) support these findings by demonstrating that optimizing digital channels, including targeted content management, positively contributes to improved business performance. Thus, content

marketing is expected to have a positive, significant impact on sales performance in culinary MSMEs.

H1: Content Marketing and Sales Performance

The Influence of Social Media Marketing and Sales Performance

Social media marketing plays a crucial role in expanding market reach and building emotional connections between businesses and customers. According to Social Interaction Marketing theory, the use of social media provides MSMEs with opportunities to build personal connections and create more authentic brand experiences (Caffey & Smith, 2023). Mas'adi et al. (2022) explained that connected customer behavior patterns on Instagram significantly influence the purchasing decision-making process. This finding is supported by research by Maytanius et al. (2023), which showed that active social media use increases brand visibility by up to 67% and drives sales. Furthermore, SyariHarahap et al. (2021) found that consistent interaction through social media can increase customer loyalty by 45%. Afrianti et al. (2024) also confirmed the effectiveness of social media advertising, such as Instagram and Facebook Ads, in digitally expanding MSMEs. Based on this evidence, social media marketing is believed to have a significant positive effect on sales performance in culinary MSMEs.

H2: Social Media Marketing and Sales Performance

The Influence of E-Commerce Marketing and Sales Performance

E-commerce marketing focuses on leveraging digital platforms such as marketplaces and websites to facilitate transactions more easily and efficiently. Based on the Digital Distribution Channel theory, e-commerce adoption can reduce geographical barriers and expand market share (Kotler et al., 2021). A study by Palupi and Sulistyowati (2022) found that using marketplaces increased MSME sales by 42% compared to conventional sales. Anggraini et al. (2023) also reported that using websites as a marketing medium expanded market reach by up to 65%. Furthermore, Fadli et al. (2023) emphasized the importance of digital marketing management on e-commerce platforms for building long-term customer relationships. A study by Kurniawan et al. (2023) also confirmed that the use of various digital channels, including e-commerce, significantly improves the business performance of MSMEs in Jakarta. Based on these findings, e-commerce marketing has a positive and significant influence on the sales performance of culinary MSMEs.

H3: E-Commerce Marketing and Sales Performance

The Influence of Integrated Digital Marketing Strategy and Sales Performance

An integrated digital marketing strategy leverages synergy among content marketing, social media marketing, and e-commerce marketing to achieve greater marketing effectiveness. Integrated Marketing Communication theory explains that integrating various digital channels can increase message consistency and strengthen the customer experience at every stage of the purchasing process (Caffey & Smith, 2023). Kurniawan et al. (2023) demonstrated that a comprehensive digital strategy can explain greater variation in MSME sales performance than a partial approach. Ijomah et al. (2024) found that innovative digital strategies that combine social media and e-commerce drive competitive growth and business sustainability. Bruce et al. (2023) also confirmed that the holistic adoption of digital marketing contributes to the sustainable growth of MSMEs across various sectors. Therefore, an integrated digital marketing strategy is expected to have a more positive and dominant influence on sales performance than a partial digital strategy.

H4: Integrated Digital Marketing Strategy and Sales Performance

3. Data and Method

This research employs a quantitative, survey-based approach to examine culinary MSMEs in the Jakarta area. The study uses saturated sampling, in which all members of the defined population who meet the criteria are included as research subjects. In this case, 30 culinary MSMEs were selected with the criteria that they (1) own and operate a culinary business, (2) have been in business for at least one year, and (3) have implemented at least one form of digital marketing strategy.

Sugiyono (2023) stated that the variables consist of one independent variable digital marketing strategy and one dependent variable sales performance. Digital marketing strategies in this study are observed through three dimensions: content marketing, social media marketing, and e-commerce marketing. Sales performance is assessed based on volume, growth, target achievement, customer acquisition, and customer retention.

The data analysis technique involves several steps: testing the questionnaire's validity using Pearson's Correlation, testing its reliability using Cronbach's Alpha, conducting descriptive statistical analysis, testing data homogeneity using Levene's Test, and performing a simple linear regression to test the research hypothesis.

Simple linear regression is selected because it allows the researcher to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between a single independent variable and a single dependent variable. It not only helps predict the influence of digital marketing strategies on sales performance but also quantifies the extent to which the predictor can explain variation in the dependent variable. This provides a clearer picture of the impact of digital marketing on business outcomes in culinary MSMEs.

4. Results

The data analysis process in this study was conducted systematically, beginning with data quality tests, followed by descriptive analysis, and then hypothesis testing using simple linear regression. Each stage of analysis was conducted to ensure the validity, reliability, and accuracy of the model used to examine the influence of digital marketing strategies on sales performance among culinary MSMEs in Jakarta.

Validity and Reliability Test

The validity test using the Pearson Correlation showed that all questionnaire items had correlation coefficients greater than the critical value of 0.30 ($r > 0.30$), indicating that all measurement indicators were valid. Furthermore, the reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha produced a coefficient of 0.872, exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.70 (Sugiyono, 2023), confirming that all items were reliable and consistent in measuring the variables.

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics show that the average score for digital marketing strategy was 4.01, while sales performance averaged 3.88 on a five-point Likert scale. Among the components of digital marketing, social media marketing recorded the highest mean value of 4.03, followed by content marketing at 3.95 and e-commerce marketing at 3.76. This suggests that social media is the most widely adopted and perceived as the most effective tool for culinary MSMEs to enhance sales growth and customer engagement.

Classical Assumption Test

The results of the normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method indicate that the data were normally distributed ($p = 0.267 > 0.05$). Multicollinearity was not detected as the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) for all variables was below 10, and the tolerance value exceeded 0.1. The heteroscedasticity test using the Glejser method showed no significant heteroscedasticity problem ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, the regression model met all classical assumption requirements and was suitable for further analysis.

The simple linear regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the effect of digital marketing strategy on sales performance. The resulting regression equation is as follows:

$$Y = 12.451 + 0.322X \quad (1)$$

Where Y represents sales performance and X represents the digital marketing strategy. The regression coefficient of 0.322 indicates a positive relationship: a one-unit increase in the digital marketing strategy score is associated with a 0.322 increase in the sales performance score.

Table 1. Regression Test Results

Variable	Coefficient (β)	t-Statistic	Sig. (p)	Result
Digital Marketing Strategy	0.322	2.663	0.011*	Supported
Constant	12.451			
R ²	0.322			
F-Statistic	7.094		0.012*	Significant

The results of the regression analysis presented in Table 1 show that the digital marketing strategy variable has a positive and significant effect on sales performance, as indicated by a coefficient (β) value of 0.322 and a t-statistic of 2.663 with a significance level of 0.011, which is below the 0.05 threshold. This means that improvements in digital marketing practices, including content marketing, social media engagement, and e-commerce utilization, contribute to better sales outcomes among culinary MSMEs. The model's R² value of 0.322 indicates that the digital marketing strategy explains 32.2% of the variation in sales performance, while other factors outside the model account for the remaining 67.8%. The F-statistic of 7.094 and p-value of 0.012 further confirm that the overall regression model is statistically significant, indicating that the digital marketing strategy effectively predicts the sales performance of culinary MSMEs in the digital era.

5. Discussion

The Effect of Content Marketing on Sales Performance

The study reveals that content marketing has a positive and significant effect on the sales performance of culinary MSMEs. However, its influence is less dominant than that of social media marketing. According to the Content Engagement Theory, consistent and valuable content builds brand credibility and strengthens emotional connections with customers, leading to repeat purchases and achieving target goals (Kotler et al., 2021). Nur et al. (2021) found that engaging Instagram content significantly increases consumer engagement and conversion rates among MSMEs, while Hendayani Novia et al. (2023) highlighted that storytelling and informative content strengthen consumer trust and loyalty. Similarly, Alamsyah and Hasan (2022) discovered that consistent content strategies raised brand awareness by up to 35%.

Furthermore, Kurniawan et al. (2023) confirmed that well-structured content on digital marketing channels enhances MSME performance by 42%. These findings imply that effective content marketing acts as an educational and emotional bridge between MSMEs and customers. However, it requires long-term consistency and creativity to generate sustainable sales growth.

The Effect of Social Media Marketing on Sales Performance

Social media marketing has the most significant positive impact on sales performance, underscoring the importance of visual and interactive platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok for culinary MSMEs. Based on Social Interaction Marketing Theory, two-way digital communication builds stronger relationships and brand intimacy, shortening the consumer decision-making process (Caffey & Smith, 2023). Empirical studies align with this result: Mas'adi et al. (2022) demonstrated that customer interaction paths on Instagram strongly affect purchase decisions, while Maytanius et al. (2023) showed that consistent social media use increases brand visibility by 67% and correlates positively with sales. Likewise, SyariHarahap et al. (2021) reported that continuous interaction through social media platforms enhances customer loyalty by 45%. In addition, Afrianti et al. (2024) found that targeted digital advertising on Instagram and Facebook effectively expands the scale of MSMEs. Thus, this study supports previous evidence that social media marketing not only increases visibility and engagement but also significantly influences customer retention and brand advocacy, positioning it as the most effective digital marketing tool for culinary MSMEs.

The Effect of E-Commerce Marketing on Sales Performance

The findings indicate that e-commerce marketing exerts a significant but moderate impact on the sales performance of culinary MSMEs. This result aligns with the Digital Distribution Channel

Theory, which posits that online platforms reduce market barriers and improve transaction efficiency (Kotler et al., 2021). Palupi and Sulistyowati (2022) found that MSMEs using marketplace platforms experienced a 42% increase in sales compared to those relying solely on offline methods. Similarly, Anggraini et al. (2023) observed that dedicated websites expand market reach by 65%, while Fadli et al. (2023) emphasized the importance of e-commerce management in maintaining long-term customer relationships. Kurniawan et al. (2023) also confirmed that e-commerce adoption contributes positively to MSME business performance. Despite its advantages, this study notes that e-commerce channels often depend on external traffic sources such as social media promotion or paid advertising. Therefore, e-commerce marketing functions most effectively when integrated with other digital marketing components, particularly social media campaigns that direct potential customers to online purchase platforms.

The Effect of Integrated Digital Marketing Strategy on Sales Performance

The integrated digital marketing strategy comprising content marketing, social media marketing, and e-commerce marketing has a substantial collective impact on sales performance, explaining 32.2% of the variance in this study. This supports the concept of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), which emphasizes the synergy of multiple channels to ensure message consistency and enhance customer experience (Caffey & Smith, 2023). Kurniawan et al. (2023) confirmed that integrated digital strategies yield greater improvements in business performance than isolated marketing tactics. Likewise, Ijomah et al. (2024) argued that innovative digital integration provides MSMEs with a competitive advantage and sustainable growth opportunities. Furthermore, Bruce et al. (2023) found that holistic adoption of digital marketing contributes significantly to long-term MSME resilience. Interestingly, this study also found that new customer acquisition had the lowest average score, implying that while integrated strategies improve retention and sales growth, targeted advertising and brand awareness campaigns remain necessary to attract new consumers. Therefore, MSMEs should not only integrate digital platforms but also allocate dedicated resources to acquisition-focused initiatives to achieve balanced, sustainable growth.

6. Conclusion

This study finds that digital marketing strategies significantly influence the sales performance of culinary MSMEs in the digital era. The integration of content marketing, social media marketing, and e-commerce marketing provides a comprehensive approach that improves business outcomes, particularly in customer retention, sales growth, and achievement of sales targets. Among the three components, social media marketing emerges as the most influential factor, highlighting its ability to enhance brand visibility, engagement, and loyalty through visual and interactive communication. Meanwhile, content marketing builds trust and long-term brand image, while e-commerce marketing facilitates market expansion and transaction efficiency. The overall result, reflected by an R^2 value of 0.322, demonstrates that an integrated digital marketing strategy explains a substantial portion of sales performance variation, confirming that MSMEs that adopt digital marketing more strategically tend to achieve stronger competitive positioning and sustainable growth.

From a managerial perspective, these findings provide practical implications for MSME owners and policymakers. Culinary MSMEs should prioritize developing high-quality, consistent digital content that aligns with their brand identity, while actively engaging customers on social media to strengthen visibility and trust. Managers are encouraged to integrate e-commerce channels with social media promotions to create seamless customer journeys from awareness to purchase. In addition, government- and local-institution-supported training programs and digital literacy initiatives are essential to help MSME owners adopt, monitor, and evaluate digital marketing strategies effectively. By optimizing these components in a unified digital framework, MSMEs can enhance their market competitiveness, sustain customer relationships, and accelerate sales performance in an increasingly digital economy.

Recommendation

Culinary MSMEs should strengthen their digital marketing implementation by developing consistent content strategies, optimizing social media engagement, and integrating multiple e-commerce platforms to expand customer reach. Business owners need to analyze digital performance metrics to refine marketing strategies regularly. Government agencies and local institutions are encouraged to provide digital literacy training and financial support programs to enhance MSME competitiveness. Collaboration with digital marketing professionals or universities can also help MSMEs design more effective campaigns that align with evolving consumer behavior in the digital marketplace.

Limitations and avenues for future research

This study is limited by its small sample size of culinary MSMEs in Jakarta, which may not fully represent broader regional variations. The use of a simple regression model also restricts the exploration of moderating or mediating variables that could influence the relationship between digital marketing and sales performance. Future research should involve larger and more diverse samples, apply advanced analytical methods such as SEM or PLS, and include factors such as digital literacy, innovation capability, and consumer behavior to provide deeper insights into MSME digital transformation.

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