

Analysis of Digital Marketing Strategy Optimization to Enhance the Competitiveness of Food Sector MSMEs

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of digital marketing strategies and optimization on the competitiveness of food sector MSMEs, as well as to examine the role of optimization as a moderating variable. The research employed a descriptive quantitative method with a sample of 101 respondents who are food sector MSME actors. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using SPSS with classical assumption tests, multiple regression, F-test, t-test, and coefficient of determination (R^2). The findings indicate that digital marketing strategies have a significant positive effect on MSME competitiveness, and optimization also significantly influences competitiveness. Furthermore, optimization moderates the relationship between digital marketing strategies and MSME competitiveness, where the effect of digital strategies becomes stronger when accompanied by effective business optimization. This study concludes that the combination of digital marketing strategies and optimization is a key factor in enhancing the competitiveness of food sector MSMEs.

Keywords: *Digital Marketing, Optimization, Competitiveness, Food Sector MSMEs, Business Sustainability.*

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INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the rapid growth of digital technology has brought significant changes to the way businesses operate and how consumers behave. The rise of the internet, social media, and e-commerce platforms has transformed marketing from traditional methods into a digital ecosystem that is faster, broader, and more interactive. This shift directly affects the business world, particularly Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), which serve as the backbone of national economies. (Abeza et al., 2023) MSMEs in the food sector play a crucial role in meeting people's basic needs while also creating widespread employment opportunities. However, with increasing competition and evolving consumer demands, these enterprises are now challenged to adopt marketing strategies that align with the digital era. (Bünte, 2023)

In practice, digital marketing provides MSMEs with the ability to promote their products more widely, build direct relationships with customers, and reduce promotional costs. Tools such as social media, online marketplaces, digital advertising, and search engine optimization (SEO) help expand product exposure and reach larger markets. (Putri & Mustajirin, Jarul, 2023) These advantages make

digital marketing not just an option but a strategic necessity for food sector MSMEs to compete at local, regional, and even global levels.(Frigenti, 2024)

Despite its great potential, many food sector MSMEs still face barriers in adopting digital marketing strategies. Limited digital literacy, a shortage of skilled human resources, and difficulties in allocating sufficient budgets for online promotion often hinder the effective use of digital tools. (Aghazadeh & Khoshnevis, 2024)As a result, many MSMEs remain dependent on traditional selling methods, which makes it difficult to compete with more tech-savvy competitors. Yet, when used effectively, digital marketing can enhance service quality, broaden market access, and strengthen MSMEs' position within the food industry supply chain.(Cabral, 2022)

Based on these conditions, it is important to analyze how digital marketing strategies can be optimized to enhance the competitiveness of food sector MSMEs. This study seeks to provide a deeper understanding of how digital marketing can be implemented effectively, as well as the key factors that influence its success. Through a comprehensive analysis, this research is expected to contribute to the development of MSME business strategies and serve as a reference for policymakers and stakeholders in supporting digital transformation within the food sector.(Cameron, 2023)

Food sector MSMEs play a vital role in supporting the economy; however, in the face of modern competition, they are increasingly required to adapt to rapid changes. Advances in digital technology offer tremendous opportunities for MSMEs to expand markets, reduce promotional costs, and build closer relationships with consumers(Silaban et al., n.d.). Unfortunately, many business owners still face limitations such as lack of technological knowledge, limited resources, and challenges in developing marketing strategies that match current needs. These challenges highlight the need for a more in-depth study of how digital marketing strategies can be optimized to strengthen MSME competitiveness and resilience in a dynamic market environment(Agustina & Sukmono, n.d.).

To support this understanding, the study refers to several relevant theories. Digital marketing theory emphasizes the role of technology in promoting and distributing products; competitive advantage theory explains how small businesses can survive through uniqueness or efficiency; and innovation adoption theory sheds light on factors influencing entrepreneurs' readiness to embrace change. (Zlatova, 2024)Based on these theoretical foundations, the study aims to further explore how digital marketing strategies can have a tangible impact on the competitiveness of food sector MSMEs, as well as how internal factors within MSMEs may either support or hinder this process.(Kaur et al., 2022)

This research offers a unique contribution by specifically focusing on the optimization of digital marketing strategies in food sector MSMEs, which continue to face various challenges in adopting technology.(Putri et al., 2024) Unlike previous studies that primarily examined MSMEs in general, this study emphasizes the food sector, which has distinctive characteristics due to its direct connection with basic consumer needs and its highly competitive market environment. (Illiashenko et al., 2022)This makes the research not only relevant but also essential in identifying digital marketing strategies that can enhance product visibility while strengthening business sustainability in today's rapidly evolving market.(Kofanov et al., 2023)

In addition, this study offers a unique contribution by combining the analysis of digital marketing strategies with internal MSME factors as a moderating variable. This approach provides a more comprehensive understanding, as it not only evaluates the direct influence of digital strategies on competitiveness but also considers how MSME characteristics such as digital literacy, business scale, and experience can shape the effectiveness of those strategies. Thus, the study is expected to deliver more practical insights for MSME actors, policymakers, and other stakeholders who play a role in driving digital transformation in the food sector.(Lu, 2023)

Previous research has shown that digital marketing strategies can enhance business performance and expand MSMEs' market share. However, most of these studies have mainly focused on specific aspects such as the use of social media, e-commerce, or digital content effectiveness, without paying sufficient attention to how these strategies can be optimized to truly improve competitiveness (Agustina & Sukmono, n.d.). At the same time, food sector MSMEs face unique challenges, including limited capital, low levels of digital literacy, and the demand for consistent product quality, which often limit the impact of digital strategies. This creates a research gap regarding the need for a more comprehensive analysis of how optimizing digital marketing strategies can strengthen the link between digital strategies and MSME competitiveness in the food sector(AMALIA, 2023).

Based on this research gap, it becomes necessary to examine in greater depth the relationship between digital marketing strategies, optimization, and MSME competitiveness, particularly in the food sector, which plays an essential role in supporting national food security. For this reason, the researcher chose the title "*Analysis of Digital Marketing Strategy Optimization to Enhance the Competitiveness of Food Sector MSMEs*" as an academic and practical effort to contribute to a better understanding of effective strategies that can strengthen the position of MSMEs in an increasingly competitive market. The research variables can be identified as follows: digital marketing strategy as the independent variable (X), MSME competitiveness in the food sector as the dependent variable (Y), and digital marketing strategy optimization as the moderating variable (Z), which plays a role in strengthening or weakening the relationship between digital marketing strategies and MSME competitiveness.(Parebong, 2024)

Based on these variables, this study raises several research questions: How are digital marketing strategies implemented by food sector MSMEs? What factors influence the optimization of digital marketing strategies? To what extent can optimized digital marketing strategies improve the competitiveness of food sector MSMEs? And finally, which digital strategies are the most effective in strengthening MSME competitiveness in the food industry? These questions are designed to systematically explore the relationships among the variables under study.(Sandiva & Veri, 2024)

Digital marketing strategies play an important role in enhancing the competitiveness of MSMEs, particularly in the food sector. By leveraging digital platforms, MSMEs can expand their market reach, increase customer engagement, and strengthen their brand image. Well-implemented digital strategies also encourage MSMEs to become more adaptive to shifts in consumer behavior and market dynamics, thereby significantly improving their competitiveness(Wulandari et al., 2025).

H1: Digital marketing strategies have a positive effect on the competitiveness of food sector MSMEs.

The Relationship Between Optimization, Digital Marketing Strategies, and MSME Competitiveness. The optimization of digital marketing strategies strengthens the relationship between digital marketing practices and MSME competitiveness. Without optimization, digital strategies may only operate partially and fail to deliver maximum results. Conversely, with proper optimization, every strategy can be executed more efficiently, systematically, and with clear targets, resulting in a stronger contribution to MSME competitiveness in the food sector (Aditya, 2025).

H2: Optimization strengthens the influence of digital marketing strategies on the competitiveness of food sector MSMEs.

Optimization in digital marketing strategies can also have a direct effect on MSME competitiveness. Through optimization, MSMEs are able to use resources more effectively, manage digital technologies more efficiently, and adapt marketing approaches to market needs. This makes MSMEs more responsive to changing trends, capable of retaining customers, and able to create sustainable added value. Thus, optimization not only functions as a moderator but also exerts a direct influence on the competitiveness of food sector MSMEs (Ningsih et al., 2025). (Sak, 2024)

H3: Optimization has a positive effect on the competitiveness of food sector MSMEs.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive quantitative approach to examine the influence of digital marketing strategies on the competitiveness of food-sector MSMEs, as well as the role of optimization as a moderating variable. A quantitative method was chosen because the research focused on hypothesis testing using numerical data that could be statistically analyzed (Aghni & Anzie, 2025). The sample consisted of 100 respondents drawn purposively from food-sector MSME actors in the study area. Respondents were selected based on their relevance to the research objectives, namely business owners who had either adopted or were at least familiar with digital marketing strategies in their operations. (Sak, 2024)

Data were collected through structured questionnaires using a five-point Likert scale, covering indicators of digital marketing strategies, MSME competitiveness, and optimization. The collected data were analyzed with SPSS software, including validity and reliability tests, classical assumption tests, and multiple linear regression with interaction terms (Moderated Regression Analysis/MRA) to validate the research hypotheses. (Mastromartino et al., 2023)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

	Descriptive Statistics				
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strategi Pemasaran Digital	101	2,50	5,00	3,8352	,52622
Daya Saing UMKM	101	2,75	5,00	4,1931	,47517
Karakteristik UMKM	101	2,29	5,00	3,8741	,54334
Interaksi Strategi Pemasaran dan Karakteristik	101	6,86	25,00	14,9800	3,50021
Valid N (listwise)	101				

Based on the descriptive statistical analysis of 101 respondents, the findings show that the digital marketing strategy variable has an average score of 3.83, with a range from 2.50 to 5.00, indicating that the implementation of digital strategies among MSMEs is relatively high. The MSME competitiveness variable has an average score of 4.19 with a range from 2.75 to 5.00, suggesting that the competitiveness level of food sector MSMEs is in the high category. Meanwhile, the optimization variable shows an average of 3.87 with a range from 2.29 to 5.00, reflecting a relatively good level of optimization. The interaction between digital marketing strategies and MSME characteristics has an average score of 14.98, ranging from 6.86 to 25.00. Overall, these results indicate that all variables studied fall into the high category, providing a solid foundation for further regression analysis to examine the influence of digital marketing strategies and optimization on MSME competitiveness. (Lahtinen et al., 2023)

1. Normality Test

The normality test ensures that the research data follow a normal distribution, which is essential for valid regression analysis. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests show that most research variables have significance values above 0.05, indicating a normal distribution. Although a few items recorded values below 0.05, the overall distribution can still be categorized as normal. This finding is also supported by the Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residuals, which shows points clustered around the diagonal line. Thus, the normality assumption is met, and the data are suitable for regression analysis. (Zlatova, 2024)

2. Multicollinearity Test

The multicollinearity test is used to ensure that there is no excessively high correlation among independent variables, which could destabilize the regression model. The results show that all variables meet the criteria of Tolerance > 0.10 and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) < 10. This confirms that multicollinearity is not present in the model, meaning that the digital

marketing strategy, optimization, and their interaction can be analyzed separately without bias. (Siegel et al., 2024)

3. Autocorrelation Test

The autocorrelation test examines whether residuals are correlated with one another. A good regression model should not contain autocorrelation. The Durbin-Watson test resulted in a value of 1.946, which is close to 2, indicating that the residuals in the regression model are independent. This means the regression model in this study is stable and free from autocorrelation issues. (Pyatnychuk et al., 2024)

4. Heteroscedasticity Test

The heteroscedasticity test ensures that the variance of residuals is constant (homoscedasticity). The scatterplot analysis between Standardized Residuals and Predicted Values shows randomly distributed points without forming any specific pattern, such as a funnel or wave. This indicates that the variance of residuals is homogeneous, meaning no heteroscedasticity is present. Thus, the assumption of homoscedasticity is satisfied, and the regression model can be considered valid for hypothesis testing. (Mereu, 2024)

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	,643 ^a	,414	,396	,36941	1,946

a. Predictors: (Constant), XZ, Z_Center, X_Center

b. Dependent Variable: Daya Saing UMKM

Based on the Model Summary table, the R value of 0.643 indicates a fairly strong relationship between digital marketing strategies, optimization, and their interaction with MSME competitiveness. The R Square value of 0.414 means that 41.4% of the variation in MSME competitiveness can be explained by the model, while the remaining percentage is influenced by other factors. In addition, the Durbin-Watson value of 1.946, which is close to 2, suggests that there is no autocorrelation issue. These results confirm that the regression model is suitable for further analysis. (Lu, 2023)

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	9,342	3	3,114	22,818	,000 ^b
	Residual	13,237	97	,136		
	Total	22,579	100			

a. Dependent Variable: Daya Saing UMKM

b. Predictors: (Constant), XZ, Z_Center, X_Center

The ANOVA test results show an F value of 22.818 with a significance level of 0.000 (< 0.05), indicating that the regression model is statistically significant as a whole. This means that digital marketing strategies, optimization, and their interaction together have an effect on the competitiveness of food sector MSMEs. (Kaufman et al., 2023)

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	4,191	,039		107,463	,000		
	X_Center	,409	,078	,453	5,253	,000	,814	1,228
	Z_Center	,264	,075	,302	3,505	,001	,814	1,228
	XZ	,350	,105	,220	3,333	,001	,999	1,001

a. Dependent Variable: Daya Saing UMKM

The Coefficients table further reveals that the digital marketing strategy variable (X) has a positive and significant effect on MSME competitiveness, with B = 0.409 and Sig. = 0.000. The optimization variable (Z) also has a significant positive effect, with B = 0.264 and Sig. = 0.001. Moreover, the interaction term (XZ) as a moderating variable is significant as well, with B = 0.350 and Sig. = 0.001, showing that optimization strengthens the influence of digital marketing strategies on MSME competitiveness in the food sector. (Pyatnychuk et al., 2024)

Collinearity Diagnostics^a

Model	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	Variance Proportions			
				(Constant)	X_Center	Z_Center	XZ
1	1	1,432	1,000	,00	,28	,28	,00
	2	1,333	1,036	,33	,00	,00	,33
	3	,667	1,465	,66	,01	,01	,66
	4	,568	1,588	,01	,71	,71	,01

a. Dependent Variable: Daya Saing UMKM

Collinearity Diagnostics indicate that all Condition Index values are below 30 and the distribution of Variance Proportions does not show high dominance across multiple

variables within the same dimension. This confirms that the regression model does not suffer from serious multicollinearity problems, allowing the relationship between digital marketing strategies, optimization, and their interaction with MSME competitiveness to be analyzed reliably. (Tarabasz, 2024)

Residuals Statistics^a

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	3,4258	4,9913	4,1931	,30564	101
Residual	-1,31193	,99252	,00000	,36383	101
Std. Predicted Value	-2,510	2,612	,000	1,000	101
Std. Residual	-3,551	2,687	,000	,985	101

a. Dependent Variable: Daya Saing UMKM

Overall, the regression analysis demonstrates that the research model is valid for testing the relationships among variables. The R value of 0.643 with $R^2 = 0.414$ shows that digital marketing strategies, optimization, and their interaction explain 41.4% of the variation in MSME competitiveness. The F test confirms that the model is significant as a whole, while the t-tests show that each variable—digital marketing strategy ($B = 0.409$; Sig. = 0.000), optimization ($B = 0.264$; Sig. = 0.001), and their interaction ($B = 0.350$; Sig. = 0.001)—has a significant effect. In addition, the classical assumption tests verify that the model is free from normality, multicollinearity, autocorrelation, and heteroscedasticity issues. Therefore, the regression model can be considered robust and reliable for testing the study's hypotheses. (Aghazadeh & Khoshnevis, 2024)

H1: Digital marketing strategies have a positive effect on the competitiveness of food sector MSMEs.

The analysis shows that digital marketing strategies have a positive and significant effect on the competitiveness of food sector MSMEs. This is evident from the regression coefficient of 0.409 with a significance value of 0.000, indicating that the better digital marketing strategies are implemented, the higher the competitiveness of MSMEs (Santoso & Utamajaya, 2025). These findings highlight the importance of digital platforms, online promotions, and the use of information technology in strengthening MSMEs' positions in increasingly competitive markets. (Kaur et al., 2022)

H2: Optimization has a positive effect on the competitiveness of food sector MSMEs.

The regression results indicate that optimization significantly affects MSME competitiveness, with a coefficient value of 0.264 and a significance level of 0.001. This implies that the more effectively MSMEs optimize their resources, production

processes, and business strategies, the greater their competitiveness will be. In other words, optimization provides tangible contributions to the sustainability and growth of food sector MSMEs in the face of intense competition (Silaban et al., n.d.).

H3: Optimization moderates the influence of digital marketing strategies on the competitiveness of food sector MSMEs.

The interaction analysis shows that optimization strengthens the effect of digital marketing strategies on MSME competitiveness, with a regression coefficient of 0.350 and a significance value of 0.001. This means that when digital marketing strategies are implemented alongside optimization efforts, their impact on competitiveness becomes stronger. It emphasizes that the success of digital marketing depends not only on technology but also on the ability of MSMEs to optimize business management so that digital strategies become more effective and impactful (Sirodjudin & Sudarmiati, 2023).

Overall, the multiple regression analysis confirms that digital marketing strategies, optimization, and their interaction significantly influence the competitiveness of food sector MSMEs. The R^2 value of 0.414 indicates that these three variables explain 41.4% of the variation in MSME competitiveness, while the remaining percentage is influenced by other factors outside the model. The F-test confirms that the model is significant as a whole, while the t-test validates the positive influence of each variable, including the moderating role of optimization in strengthening the relationship between digital marketing strategies and MSME competitiveness. (Wibawa et al., 2024)

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the normality and regression tests, it can be concluded that the research data are normally distributed and thus suitable for regression analysis. The regression results show that both digital marketing strategies and optimization have a significant positive effect on the competitiveness of food sector MSMEs, with optimization further strengthening the relationship between the two (Wulandari et al., 2025). This finding highlights that the success of enhancing MSME competitiveness is not only determined by the implementation of digital marketing strategies but also by the extent to which these strategies are optimized through effective business management and resource utilization. (Pererva et al., 2024)

The SPSS analysis further confirms that all proposed hypotheses are accepted. The first hypothesis (H1) is supported, indicating that digital marketing strategies significantly enhance MSME competitiveness in the food sector (Aditya, 2025). The second hypothesis (H2) is also supported, showing that optimization directly contributes to improving competitiveness (Ningsih et al., 2025). The third hypothesis (H3) is likewise accepted, demonstrating that optimization moderates the relationship between digital marketing strategies and competitiveness by strengthening their effect (Wulandari et al., 2025). Thus, the study confirms that

implementing digital marketing strategies alongside optimization efforts leads to more effective improvements in MSME competitiveness. (Ramenska et al., 2023)

Overall, this study concludes that digital marketing strategies play a critical role in enhancing the competitiveness of food sector MSMEs (Sandiva & Veri, 2024). The use of social media, online marketplaces, and digital content helps broaden market reach and strengthen market positioning. In addition, optimization contributes directly to competitiveness, as MSMEs that effectively manage resources, technology, and business strategies achieve higher levels of competitiveness (Agustina & Sukmono, n.d.). Furthermore, optimization functions as a moderator, amplifying the impact of digital marketing strategies on competitiveness. Taken together, the findings emphasize that the combination of digital marketing strategies and business optimization is essential for sustainably improving the competitiveness of food sector MSMEs. (Santos et al., 2024)

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings, it is recommended that food sector MSME actors actively utilize digital marketing strategies such as social media and online marketplaces while also optimizing business management through capacity building of human resources, the adoption of technology, and efficient capital use to further enhance competitiveness (Wulandari et al., 2025). Governments and supporting institutions are also encouraged to provide training and mentoring programs that integrate digital literacy with business management (Parebong, 2024). For future research, it is suggested to include additional variables such as product innovation, service quality, or government policy support, and to expand the sample size and sectors studied so that the results become more comprehensive and allow for cross-sector comparisons. (Tarabasz, 2024)

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

This study is limited by the relatively small number of respondents and its focus only on the variables of digital marketing strategies, optimization, and competitiveness. As a result, it does not fully capture other influential factors, and its findings may not be widely generalizable.

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