The Role of Digital Marketing Adoption and Online Customer Experience in Enhancing SME Performance in Emerging Economies: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract: *Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are very important for economic growth, especially in developing countries where they create a lot of jobs and income. In recent years, the rapid shift to digital technology has changed how small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) work, mostly by using digital marketing tools and making the online customer experience better. This study seeks to investigate the influence of digital marketing adoption and online customer experience on the performance of SMEs through a systematic literature review (SLR) methodology. The research relies on secondary data obtained from peer-reviewed journal articles published from 2020 to 2025, sourced from Scopus, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar databases. Using pre-set rules for what to include and what to leave out, 22 relevant articles were chosen and analyzed using thematic content analysis. The results show that using digital marketing greatly increases market reach, brand visibility, and operational efficiency. Also, a better online customer experience leads to higher customer satisfaction, trust, and loyalty. However, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in developing economies still have problems like not having enough digital skills, not having enough money, and not having enough infrastructure. The study finds that for SMEs to do better and stay in business for a long time, they need to combine digital marketing with good customer experience management.*

Keywords: *digital marketing adoption; online customer experience; SME performance; digital transformation; systematic literature review*

1. Introduction

Many people agree that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of economic growth in many countries, especially in developing and emerging economies. They play a big role in creating jobs, coming up with new ideas, and helping national economies grow as a whole. Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) are very important for helping local markets, lowering unemployment, and encouraging people to start their own businesses in Uzbekistan. Recent economic reports say that small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) make up a large part of all business activity and are seen as a major force behind long-term economic growth.Digital technologies have changed the way businesses work around the world in the last ten years. Digital systems that make communication faster, give businesses access to more markets, and make operations more efficient are slowly replacing or supporting traditional business models. This change has made things

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easier and harder for small and medium-sized businesses. Digital technologies help small businesses compete with bigger ones by lowering costs and making them more visible in the market. On the other hand, small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) often have a hard time keeping up with digital changes because they don't have enough resources or knowledge. Adopting digital marketing is one of the most important parts of digital transformation. Digital marketing is the use of the internet and other digital tools to sell goods and services. Some of these are search engines, social media sites, email marketing, and mobile apps. Digital marketing is different from traditional marketing because it lets businesses talk to customers directly, keep an eye on how they act, and change their plans in real time. Small and medium-sized businesses can reach more people without having to spend a lot of money. In the digital world, the online customer experience has become a very important factor in how well a business does. The term "online customer experience" refers to how customers and businesses interact with each other through digital platforms. This includes how easy it is to use the website, how quickly it responds, how personalized it is, and how good the service is. When people shop online these days, they want services that are quick, easy, and tailored to their needs. A good experience for customers not only makes them happier, but it also builds trust and encourages them to buy again. Studies have shown that both using digital marketing and having a good online customer experience are important for improving business performance. Digital marketing helps businesses get new customers and make their brand more well-known. Customer experience, on the other hand, affects how many customers stay with a business and how loyal they are. But these two things are very closely related. Good digital marketing strategies bring in customers, but a good customer experience keeps those customers coming back. Even with these benefits, small and medium-sized businesses in developing countries still have a lot of trouble using digital technologies. A lot of small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) don't have the digital skills and knowledge they need to use digital marketing strategies that work. They can't buy new technologies because they don't have enough money. Also, weak technology infrastructure and limited internet access in some areas make it even harder to adopt digital technology. Another big problem is trust, since a lot of people are still worried about data security and online transactions.There is also a gap in the current literature about how digital marketing adoption and online customer experience work together to affect the performance of small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs). Numerous studies examine these factors in isolation; however, there is a scarcity of research investigating their interactions and collective impact on business outcomes. It is important to understand this relationship in order to come up with good plans that can help small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) do better and stay competitive in the digital marketplace.This study seeks to examine the impact of digital marketing adoption and online customer experience on the performance of SMEs through a systematic literature review. This research aims to deliver a thorough comprehension of the impact of digital technologies on SME growth, pinpoint the primary challenges encountered by SMEs, and underscore potential solutions to enhance digital adoption through the examination of recent academic studies.The results of this study are anticipated to enhance both scholarly research and practical implementations. This study offers researchers a systematic examination of the current literature and delineates research deficiencies for subsequent

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investigations. The findings provide significant insights for business practitioners and policymakers regarding the effective utilization of digital technologies by SMEs to enhance performance and attain long-term sustainability.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Digital Marketing Adoption in SMEs

Digital marketing adoption means that businesses use digital technologies and online platforms to sell their goods, talk to customers, and run their marketing campaigns. Digital marketing has become an important tool for small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) in the last few years. This is especially true in emerging economies where traditional marketing methods are often too expensive and don't work as well. Digital marketing is better than traditional marketing for small and medium-sized businesses because it lets them reach more people at a lower cost. Social media, search engines, and mobile apps are some of the platforms that businesses can use to promote their goods, talk to customers, and get feedback right away. Digital marketing is interactive, which helps small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) build stronger relationships with their customers.Past research indicates that the implementation of digital marketing enhances the performance of SMEs. Businesses that use social media marketing, online ads, and content marketing are more likely to get more people to notice their brand and get new customers. For instance, Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok are all social media sites that let small and medium-sized businesses show off their products through pictures and videos. This can have a big effect on how much people pay attention to and engage with them. Making decisions based on data is another important part of digital marketing. Digital tools let small and medium-sized businesses look at how customers behave, see how well their marketing is working, and change their plans based on what they learn. This helps businesses get better results than they would with traditional methods by making their marketing more efficient.But even though it has benefits, many small and medium-sized businesses in developing countries still don't use digital marketing very much. One of the biggest problems is that business owners and workers don't know how to use computers. Many small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) don't know how to use digital tools and platforms well. Some digital marketing tools need money for software, training, or advertising, which is another big reason why people don't use them. Also, the technology infrastructure can be a problem. Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) may have trouble using digital marketing strategies effectively in areas with poor internet connections or few digital devices. These problems show how important it is for governments and organizations to help improve digital literacy and infrastructure. Digital marketing is a big reason why small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) are growing, but it only works if businesses can get past these problems and use digital tools in a smart way.

2.2 Online Customer Experience

Online customer experience is how customers feel and interact with a business when they do business with it online. It includes things like how the website looks, how easy it is to navigate, how quickly it responds, how good the service is, and how personalized it is. Customer experience is very important in the digital world when it comes to customer satisfaction and loyalty. Online interactions depend a lot on digital interfaces, unlike in-person stores where customers can touch and talk to products and staff. So, the quality of

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these interfaces is a big part of what makes customers choose one option over another. A good online experience for customers can make them much happier. Customers are more likely to have a good impression of a business if its website is easy to use, has product information, and lets them make purchases. A good experience also includes quick responses and good communication.Another important part of the online customer experience is personalization. Businesses can use digital technologies to learn about their customers' likes and dislikes and how they act. You can use this information to make personalized suggestions, targeted deals, and tailored services. Customers feel valued when they have personalized experiences, which makes them more likely to come back to the business.

Poor customer service, on the other hand, can hurt a business's performance. Customers may be unhappy if your website takes too long to load, is hard to navigate, doesn't have enough information, or takes too long to respond. In a lot of cases, unhappy customers may go to a competitor, which means you lose sales.Trust is also a big part of how customers feel about doing business online. When shopping online, a lot of people worry about their privacy and the safety of their payments. To gain customers' trust, businesses need to make sure their systems are safe and dependable. Customers will worry less if you give them clear information, safe payment options, and clear rules. To sum up, the online customer experience is a very important factor that affects how customers act in the digital marketplace. Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) that work to make their customers' experiences better are more likely to have strong relationships with their customers and be successful in the long run.

2.3 SME Performance

The performance of small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) is how well they can reach their business goals and make things better overall. Sales growth, customer growth, profitability, and long-term sustainability are some of the most common ways to measure it.In the digital age, SMEs' performance is more and more affected by how well they can use and adopt digital technologies. Companies that successfully use digital tools in their work are more likely to become more efficient and competitive.One of the most important signs of how well a SME is doing is how much its sales are growing. Digital marketing helps businesses reach more people and sell more of their products, which can lead to more sales. Online platforms also let businesses work outside of their own areas, which gives them access to new markets. Another important sign is how many customers you have. Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) can use digital technologies to get new customers and keep the ones they already have. Businesses can connect with potential customers and raise brand awareness through online marketing campaigns and social media. The experience customers have online is very important for keeping them. Companies that offer great digital experiences are more likely to keep customers and get them to buy again. This helps the business stay in business for a long time.Another important part of SME performance is how well they run their businesses. Businesses can use digital tools to automate tasks, cut costs, and boost productivity. For instance, online payment systems make transactions easier, and digital communication tools make customer service better.But the performance of small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) is affected by both internal and external

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factors. The success of a business depends on the economy, government policies, and the technology that it uses.

2.4 Relationship Between Digital Marketing, Customer Experience, and SME Performance

There is a delicate and interconnected link between the use of digital marketing, the online customer experience, and how well small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) do. These things don't operate by themselves; they have an effect on each other in different ways. Getting customers to buy from you is a key aspect of digital marketing. Online advertisements, social media ads, and digital marketing may help businesses receive more attention and reach more prospective clients. But obtaining clients is only the first step.The experience of clients is highly significant once they connect with the firm. A successful online shopping experience makes people delighted and more inclined to buy anything. The link between digital marketing and corporate success is the customer experience.For example, a company may utilize digital marketing to attract visitors to go to its website. If the website is hard to use or takes a long time to load, though, customers can leave without buying anything. Customers are more likely to finish their purchases and return back if the website is engaging and easy to use.Digital marketing and customer service need to work together to generate the greatest outcomes, as this conversation reveals. SMEs who simply care about marketing and not about making the customer experience better may not be able to expand in the long term.

Table 1.

Operational Variables

Variable	Definition	Indicators	Measurement
Digital Marketing Adoption	Use of digital tools for promotion and communication	Social media usage, online ads, content marketing	Frequency and effectiveness
Online Customer Experience	Customer interaction quality in digital platforms	Ease of use, response time, personalization, trust	Customer perception
SME Performance	Business success and growth outcomes	Sales growth, customer growth, retention	Performance indicators

2.5 Research Gap

A lot of research has been done in the past on digital marketing and how people feel about buying things online. But most people only look at these two things separately. There are still not many studies that show how these two things work together and affect the success of small and medium-sized businesses, especially in places like Uzbekistan. Also, rich countries do a lot of research. These countries have better digital technology and infrastructure. The results may not be completely right for poor countries because of this. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in these regions often face difficulties such as insufficient funding, inadequate digital competencies, and poor internet connectivity. A lot of research doesn't connect with each other, which is another problem. They give good advice, but not all of it makes sense in one big picture. This makes it hard to fully understand how digital marketing, customer experience, and the success of small and medium-sized businesses are all related. This study employs a systematic literature review (SLR)

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methodology. This method makes it easier to collect and analyze different kinds of research in a systematic way. This study seeks to improve understanding of the relationship between digital marketing and online customer experience in fostering SME success.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a systematic literature review (SLR) approach to examine the relationship between digital marketing adoption, online customer experience, and SME performance. The SLR method is widely used in academic research because it provides a structured, transparent, and replicable process for identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing existing studies.Unlike traditional literature reviews, which may be subjective, SLR follows clearly defined procedures and criteria. This ensures that the selected studies are relevant, reliable, and aligned with the research objectives. The use of SLR is particularly appropriate for this study because it allows the researcher to analyze a wide range of academic findings and identify common patterns, trends, and research gaps.This study adopts the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework to guide the literature selection process. The PRISMA approach includes four main stages:

- Identification
- Screening
- Eligibility
- Inclusion

These stages help ensure transparency in the selection of articles and improve the reliability of the research findings.

3.2 Literature Selection Criteria

To ensure the quality and relevance of the selected articles, this study uses predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Table 2.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Articles published between 2020–2025	Articles published before 2020
Studies related to digital marketing, customer experience, and SMEs	Irrelevant topics
Peer-reviewed journal articles	Conference papers and non-academic sources
Articles written in English	Non-English publications

These criteria were designed to ensure that only recent and high-quality studies are included in the analysis. By focusing on peer-reviewed journal articles, the study maintains academic rigor and reliability.

3.3 Data Collection Process

The data collection process was conducted using major academic databases to ensure comprehensive coverage of relevant studies. The databases used in this study include:

- Scopus
- ScienceDirect
- Google Scholar

The search process was carried out using combinations of the following keywords:

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- "digital marketing adoption SMEs"
- "online customer experience"
- "SME performance"
- "digital transformation SMEs"

The search was performed in several stages. First, articles were identified based on titles and keywords. Second, abstracts were reviewed to determine their relevance to the research topic. Third, full-text articles were examined to confirm their eligibility based on the inclusion criteria.After removing duplicate and irrelevant articles, a total of **22 articles** were selected for further analysis.

3.4 PRISMA Flow Process

The literature selection process followed the PRISMA structure. The process can be summarized as follows:

- Initial search results: 85 articles
- After removing duplicates: 70 articles
- After screening titles and abstracts: 40 articles
- After full-text review: 22 articles included

This process ensures that only the most relevant and high-quality studies are included in the final analysis.

3.5 Data Analysis Method

The selected articles were analyzed using **content analysis**, which is a qualitative method used to identify patterns, themes, and relationships within textual data.

The analysis focused on three main dimensions:

- Digital marketing adoption
- Online customer experience
- SME performance

Each article was carefully reviewed and coded based on these themes. The findings were then categorized and compared to identify similarities and differences across studies.This approach allows the researcher to synthesize a large amount of information and present meaningful insights regarding the research topic.

3.6 Analytical Framework

To better understand the relationship between the variables, this study develops a conceptual framework based on the literature review.

Table 3.

Analytical Framework

Category	Variable	Role
Independent Variable	Digital Marketing Adoption	Drives customer reach
Mediating Variable	Online Customer Experience	Influences customer satisfaction
Dependent Variable	SME Performance	Business outcomes

The framework suggests that digital marketing adoption directly influences SME performance, while online customer experience acts as a mediating factor that strengthens this relationship.

3.7 Research Validity and Reliability

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Ensuring the validity and reliability of the research is an important part of this study, especially because it is based on a systematic literature review approach. In this research, several steps were taken to maintain the quality and consistency of the findings.

First, the study only included peer-reviewed journal articles, which helps ensure that the data sources are credible and academically reliable. Articles were selected from well-known databases such as Scopus, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar, which are widely used in academic research.

Second, the use of clear inclusion and exclusion criteria helped reduce bias in the selection process. By focusing only on studies published between 2020 and 2025 and directly related to the research topic, the study ensures that the findings are both relevant and up-to-date.

Third, the application of the PRISMA framework improved transparency in the literature selection process. Each stage of the selection process - identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion - was carefully followed and documented. This allows other researchers to understand and replicate the process if needed.

Fourth, content analysis was conducted systematically. Each selected article was reviewed and coded based on predefined themes, including digital marketing adoption, online customer experience, and SME performance. This consistent approach helps improve the reliability of the analysis and reduces the possibility of subjective interpretation.

Finally, to strengthen the reliability of the findings, the study compared results across multiple sources. By identifying similar patterns and conclusions from different studies, the research ensures that the findings are not based on a single source but are supported by broader academic evidence.

Overall, these steps help ensure that the research findings are valid, reliable, and suitable for academic purposes.

4. Results

This section presents the findings of the systematic literature review on the role of digital marketing adoption and online customer experience in enhancing SME performance. Following the structure commonly used in previous SLR studies, the results are organized into four main parts: (1) profile analysis of selected studies, (2) key themes and findings, (3) barriers to digital adoption, and (4) enabling factors supporting SME performance.

4.1 Profile Analysis of Selected Studies

The selected articles (n = 22) were analyzed based on publication year, geographical focus, and research themes. The analysis shows a clear increase in academic interest in digital transformation and SME performance in recent years.Most of the studies were published between 2021 and 2024, which indicates that digital marketing and customer experience are becoming important research topics. The majority of studies were conducted in developing countries such as Indonesia, India, and Uzbekistan, where SMEs play a major role in economic development.

Table 4.

Distribution of Articles by Year

Year	Number of Articles	Percentage
2020	3	13.6%
2021	5	22.7%
2022	6	27.3%

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Year	Number of Articles	Percentage
2023	5	22.7%
2024	3	13.6%
Total	22	100%

The table shows that research activity increased significantly after 2021. This trend reflects the growing importance of digital technologies, especially after global digital transformation accelerated in recent years.

Table 5.

Research Focus of Selected Studies

Focus Area	Number of Studies	Percentage
Digital Marketing	9	40.9%
Customer Experience	6	27.3%
SME Performance	4	18.2%
Combined Variables	3	13.6%

The results indicate that most studies focus on digital marketing adoption, while fewer studies examine the combined effect of digital marketing and customer experience. This confirms the research gap identified earlier.

4.2 Key Findings and Thematic Analysis

The content analysis of the selected articles reveals three main themes:

1. Digital marketing adoption
2. Online customer experience
3. SME performance outcomes

These themes are strongly interconnected and contribute to overall business growth.

Table 6.

Key Factors Influencing SME Performance

Category	Factor	Description	Impact on SMEs
Technology	Digital marketing tools	Social media, SEO, online ads	Increases visibility
Customer	Online experience	Ease of use, fast response	Improves satisfaction
Strategy	Content marketing	Product promotion strategies	Attracts customers
Operations	Digital systems	Online payments, automation	Improves efficiency

The findings show that digital marketing allows SMEs to reach a broader audience and promote products more effectively. Social media platforms are the most commonly used tools due to their low cost and high accessibility.

At the same time, online customer experience plays a critical role in converting potential customers into actual buyers. Customers prefer businesses that offer simple, fast, and personalized digital services.

4.3 Impact of Digital Marketing and Customer Experience

The results indicate that digital marketing adoption has a direct impact on SME performance, while customer experience has both direct and indirect effects.

Table 7.

Impact Analysis

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Variable	Type of Impact	Result
Digital Marketing	Direct	Increases sales and reach
Customer Experience	Direct	Improves satisfaction
Customer Experience	Indirect	Increases loyalty
Combined Effect	Strong	Enhances overall performance

Digital marketing helps SMEs attract customers, but customer experience determines whether those customers stay or leave. Therefore, both factors must work together.

4.4 Barriers to Digital Adoption

Despite the benefits, SMEs face several challenges when adopting digital technologies.

Table 8.

Barriers to Digital Marketing Adoption

Category	Barrier	Description
Financial	Limited budget	High cost of tools
Skills	Lack of knowledge	Low digital literacy
Infrastructure	Weak internet	Limited access
Trust	Security concerns	Fear of online payments

The most common barriers are related to financial limitations and lack of digital skills. Many SMEs cannot afford advanced technologies or training programs.

In addition, trust issues remain a major concern. Customers are often worried about online transactions, which reduces the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies.

4.5 Enabling Factors for SME Growth

The literature also identifies several factors that help SMEs successfully adopt digital technologies.

Table 9.

Enablers of Digital Transformation

Category	Enabler	Description
Technology	Affordable tools	Easy-to-use platforms
Skills	Training programs	Improves knowledge
Strategy	Customer focus	Better engagement
Support	Government policies	Encourages adoption

These enablers help SMEs overcome existing barriers and improve their performance. For example, training programs increase digital skills, while affordable tools reduce financial constraints.

4.6 Summary of Results

In general, the results of this study show that adopting digital marketing is an important way for small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) to improve their performance by reaching more customers and creating more sales opportunities. At the same time, the online customer experience is a big part of why customers are more satisfied and stay loyal for a long time. The results also show that SMEs have a hard time using digital technologies because they don't have enough money or the skills to do so. These obstacles frequently impede the digital transformation process. On the other hand, some things can help small and medium-sized businesses deal with these problems. Businesses can get better at using digital tools and solutions by offering training programs, user-friendly digital tools, and

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policies that support them.The results show that small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) need to use both digital marketing and customer-focused strategies. To grow a digital business in a way that lasts, technology and customer experience must work together.

5. Discussion

This study explains how digital marketing and online customer experience work together to improve SME performance. To make this relationship easier to understand, the process can be presented in a simple conceptual model.

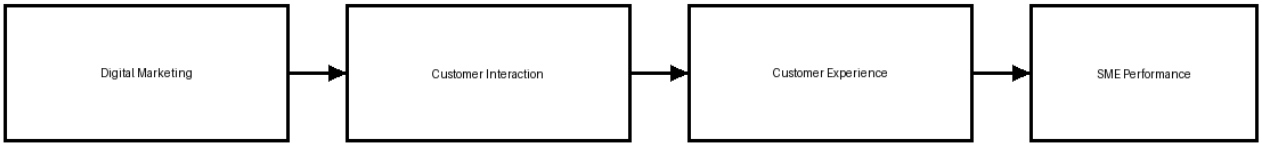


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Digital Marketing, Customer Experience, and SME Performance

The conceptual model presented in Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between digital marketing, customer interaction, and SME performance. It shows that digital marketing activities initiate customer engagement, which then shapes customer experience and ultimately influences business performance outcomes.

Digital marketing helps small and medium-sized businesses get in touch with more people. For instance, a business can reach more customers by using social media or online ads. This is the first thing to do. It gets people's attention and makes them want to know more.Customers then begin to interact with the business. They check out products, send messages, or go to websites. At this point, the customer's experience is very important. Customers are happy when the system is quick and easy to use. They might leave if not.This is why the customer experience is so important to the process. It links marketing to real-world outcomes. Customers are happy when they have a good experience. Customers who are happy are more likely to buy things and come back.The diagram shows that both marketing and experience affect how well a SME does. Just marketing isn't enough. Just having experience isn't enough either. They have to work together.Another important thing is trust. Trust is very important when doing business online. When customers give you their information or pay you, they need to feel safe. Customers might not finish their purchases if a business can't build trust.The results also show that a lot of small and medium-sized businesses have problems. Some companies don't know enough about computers. Some people don't have enough money to buy technology. In some places, the internet connection is also a problem.There are, however, ways to fix this. Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) can start with easy-to-use tools like Instagram or Telegram. At first, they don't need to use complicated systems. You can also improve your digital skills by taking training courses.

The diagram also helps explain this idea. It shows a simple flow. SMEs can improve step by step:

- First, use digital marketing
- Second, improve customer experience
- Third, build trust
- Finally, improve performance

This step-by-step process is more realistic for small businesses.

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6. Conclusion

6.1 Summary of Findings

The main aim of this study was to understand how digital marketing adoption and online customer experience influence SME performance in emerging economies. Based on the review of recent studies, it can be clearly seen that both factors are very important for business success.

First, digital marketing helps SMEs reach more customers and grow faster. Many studies show that using social media, online advertising, and mobile platforms allows businesses to promote their products with lower cost and higher efficiency. This is especially useful for small businesses that do not have large budgets.

Second, online customer experience plays a key role after customers come to the business. When customers visit a website or use an application, they expect it to be simple, fast, and easy to understand. If the system works well, customers feel satisfied and are more likely to buy again.

The findings from Tables 6 and 7 also show that digital marketing has a strong direct effect on performance, while customer experience strengthens this effect by improving satisfaction and loyalty. In addition, the conceptual diagram (Figure 1) explains that digital marketing attracts customers, but customer experience keeps them engaged. Overall, the results confirm that SMEs need to focus on both marketing and customer experience together. Using only one of them is not enough to achieve long-term success.

6.2 Theoretical Contributions

This study enhances existing research by integrating digital marketing adoption and online customer experience within a single framework. Numerous prior studies analyzed these variables in isolation; however, this study illustrates their interrelated functioning within a cohesive process.This research's conceptual model helps explain how digital marketing leads to customer interaction and then to the performance of small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs). This makes it easier to understand how digital environments affect business results. The study also backs up the idea that digital transformation isn't just about technology. It also includes how customers act and what they go through. The results show that customer experience is the link between marketing efforts and business results. This contribution is significant as it offers a more comprehensive perspective on how SMEs can thrive in contemporary digital markets.

6.3 Practical Implications

The results of this study provide several practical suggestions for SME owners and managers.

First, SMEs should start using digital marketing tools actively. Platforms like Instagram, Telegram, and online marketplaces can help businesses reach more people and increase visibility. Even simple marketing strategies can bring good results if used correctly.

Second, improving customer experience should be a priority. Businesses need to make sure that their websites or applications are easy to use and not complicated. Fast response, clear product information, and simple payment systems are very important for customer satisfaction.

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Third, SMEs should improve their digital skills. Many problems identified in Table 8 are related to lack of knowledge. Training programs and learning basic digital tools can help businesses work more effectively.

Another important point is building trust. Customers need to feel safe when they shop online. Businesses should provide secure payment methods and protect customer data. This will increase confidence and encourage more transactions. Finally, SMEs should follow a step-by-step approach, as shown in the diagram. They can start with simple digital tools, then improve customer experience, and gradually grow their business.

6.4 Limitations and Future Research

Although this study provides useful insights, it also has some limitations.

First, the study is based only on secondary data from previous research. It does not include direct data from SMEs. Because of this, the findings may not fully represent real business situations.

Second, the study focuses on general concepts such as digital marketing and customer experience. It does not analyze specific industries. Different sectors may have different needs and challenges.

Third, this research does not deeply examine individual digital platforms. For example, platforms like Tik Tok or e-commerce websites may have different effects on SME performance.

Future research can improve this study in several ways. Researchers can use surveys or interviews to collect real data from SME owners. This will provide more detailed and practical insights. In addition, future studies can include other important factors such as customer trust, brand loyalty, and service quality. Using advanced methods like SEM can also help analyze relationships more clearly. Overall, there is still a need for more research in this area, especially in emerging economies where digital transformation is still developing.

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