

Navigating and Future Research Agenda: The Digital Marketing Landscape in Small Medium Enterprise (SMEs)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to develop the digital marketing literature in SMEs and research themes in the future. This study used the PRISMA method, involving 646 articles for bibliometric analysis. The findings show that there is a significant increase in literature from 2020 – 2023. Higher education institutions and academic journals showed a high intention to improve the literature. In addition, various studies have multidisciplinary relevance to the themes of technology, policy, economics, and social sciences. The future research agenda is related to digital literacy, adoption behaviour, social media, digital marketing, e-commerce, service quality, and personal branding. Future research is expected to collect various studies with a larger number of articles.

INTRODUCTION

The presence and development of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) play an important role in economic growth. SMEs have proven to actively contribute to job creation, poverty alleviation, and economic growth in Indonesia (Jauhari & Periansya, 2021). SMEs have provided 97% of jobs which have an impact on 56% of Indonesia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Najib et al., 2021), so that the development of SMEs has an impact on economic stability.

The contribution of SMEs is part of the integration between social and economic value. SMEs have proven their ability to deal with various crises, such as the 98 crisis, the 08 global crisis and the COVID 19 pandemic (Wicaksono, 2022). This is because the government also provides encouragement through various financial stimuli and regulatory improvements conducive to SME growth (Hidayati & Rachman, 2021). In addition, the government also encourages the creation of innovation in SMEs to increase competitiveness domestically and internationally (Taneo et al., 2023). However, the implementation process has encountered various obstacles, including limited access to finance and human resources for SMEs that are not yet qualified.

SMEs face various challenges in optimizing their business income. Limited knowledge in the field of marketing has hindered SMEs from increasing their sales turnover (Ajiva et al., 2024). In addition, limited funds have made it difficult for SMEs to change their marketing strategies from conventional to digital (Oklander et al., 2024). Most SMEs have a limited understanding of technology in the field of marketing, thus missing out on various opportunities to increase their business growth (Dhungana, 2024). In addition, most SMEs do not have effective marketing strategy planning, thus affecting the sustainability of business growth (Abdullah & Kadir, 2019).

The shift in conventional marketing strategies to digital technology is becoming increasingly important for SMEs because of changes in consumer behaviour that tend to capture various types of information digitally (Ma & Wang, 2024). Additionally, consumers tend to prefer digital purchase transaction processes (Pires et al., 2022). Digital marketing has proven to be an effective instrument for responding to shifts in consumer behaviour in the digital era (Wahyudin & Azali, 2020). SMEs that implement digital marketing have experienced a significant increase in revenue and have been able to cut various operational expenses (Prayitno et al., 2024). Some SMEs have also effectively taken advantage of e-commerce platforms (Sudarmiatin et al., 2023), because digital platforms have a wider range of applications, allowing them to make customers feel involved in every transaction (Bruce et al., 2023).

This systematic review emphasises the urgency of cooperation between SMEs and large companies to increase the effectiveness of digital marketing (Bahukeling et al., 2024). This collaboration can provide opportunities for SMEs to receive expertise in digital marketing (Riswanto et al., 2020). In addition, SMEs need to pay attention to the use of social media as a tool for reaching consumer engagement with the products offered (Yudianto et al., 2024).

The implementation of digital marketing has improved the operational efficiency of SMEs. Digital change also contributes to the resilience of SMEs. In

addition, the adoption of digital marketing not only expands consumer reach but also analyzes and reveals more complex consumer behaviour (Maulana et al., 2022), thus making it easier for business actors to decide on strategies and planning in marketing (Samira et al., 2024). However, SMEs can also market to specific demographic areas at a more cost-efficient rate (Risdiyanto et al., 2023).

Malesev & Cherry (2021) identified an increasing trend in the use of digital platforms in SME marketing through bibliometric analysis. In addition, Chen & Lei (2024) investigated the must-have abilities to increase the income of SMEs in the digital era. Furthermore, Amiri et al. (2023) mapped the development of digital marketing research in the SMEs sector which is shifting towards the strategic role of digital transformation in SMEs' operational systems. Meanwhile, Sudari & Pambreni (2024) describe research trends that tend to lead to the impact of digital marketing on the presence of competitive advantages in SMEs. Then, Sudarmiati et al. (2023) mapped out the challenges and opportunities of using digital marketing for SMEs because the application of digital technology is inevitable in a dynamic business environment. Meanwhile, this study not only aims to map the development of research related to digital marketing in SMEs, but also reveals what aspects affect the development of literature on the implementation of digital marketing in SMEs, as well as revealing future research directions related to the use of digital marketing in SMEs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital marketing plays an important role in the sustainability of SMEs through increased market reach and customer engagement (Bruce et al., 2023). The adoption of digital marketing can provide opportunities for SMEs to grow and increase their income (Omar et al., 2020). However, the implementation of digital marketing can also optimise the reach of customers whose geographical area is close to the location of SMEs' business places (Risdiyanto et al., 2023). In addition, the use of social media, Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), and Search Engine Marketing (SEM) has the potential to maximise the effectiveness of SME product advertising to customers. Digital marketing also allows SMEs to engage directly with customers anytime and anywhere (Vuttichat & Patchara, 2023). The pattern of interaction between SMEs and customers not only creates loyalty but also serves as a source of data for SMEs to understand customer tastes and behavior (Mulyana et al., 2024). However, the ability to analyse data well will potentially be the basic source of SMEs' decisions in optimising products in accordance with customer wishes (Omar et al., 2020).

Digital marketing optimization can reduce marketing costs (Kanellos et al., 2024), because SMEs have a choice of paid platforms and applications available for free through social media and email (Maulana et al., 2022). This opportunity is an important indicator because some SMEs have limitations on their marketing budgets. Effective digital marketing implementation has proven to increase product awareness and visibility for customers, thus providing opportunities for increased sales. However, some SMEs have not yet taken advantage of digital marketing due to their limited understanding and mastery of technology (Amiri et al., 2023).

The presence of digital marketing can benefit SMEs (Bruce et al., 2023). However, the implementation process has encountered many challenges, including limited resources, capabilities, and understanding of digital devices (Ramdani et al., 2022). In addition, the transition from conventional marketing to digital is often interpreted as an obstacle in doing business and not as an opportunity to expand the reach of products to customers and not as an opportunity to expand the reach of products to customers (Herhausen et al., 2020). However, some SMEs consider digital marketing a waste of resources in managing SMEs' finances (Berbatovci & Buja, 2024). However, the presence of COVID-19 has changed SMEs' views on the urgency of using digital marketing in marketing their products (Sudarmiatin et al., 2023).

Changes in SMEs' perception of digital marketing must be followed by an increase in their ability to utilize digital technology (Anwar et al., 2024). The gap in digital device utilization skills has hindered the adoption of digital marketing (Taiminen & Karjaluo, 2015). Most SMEs do not have the ability to support the implementation of digital marketing (Nazaruddin et al., 2024). In addition, some SMEs only implement basic online installation without considering SEO and SEM (Erlanitasari et al., 2020). SMEs need to improve their skills by participating in various training and socialization (Febrianty et al., 2024), because competition does not only occur between SMEs; it also involves large industries with various resource advantages (Wang, 2024).

METHODOLOGY

This study collected various metadata from the OpenAlex database platform. OpenAlex is an open-access bibliographic database that is an alternative to commercial databases such as Scopus and Web of Science (WoS) (Pretolesi et al., 2025). In addition, OpenAlex has a wide range of scientific works covering various open-access academic sources on PubMed, Arxiv, Microsoft, Crossref, DOAJ, Scopus, and WoS (Fang et al., 2024). It can also support the metadata extraction process through an Application Programming Interface (API) (Aria et al., 2024). This study used the Preferred Reporting Items Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) method to describe the systematics of the article search in accordance with the research objectives with the following framework:

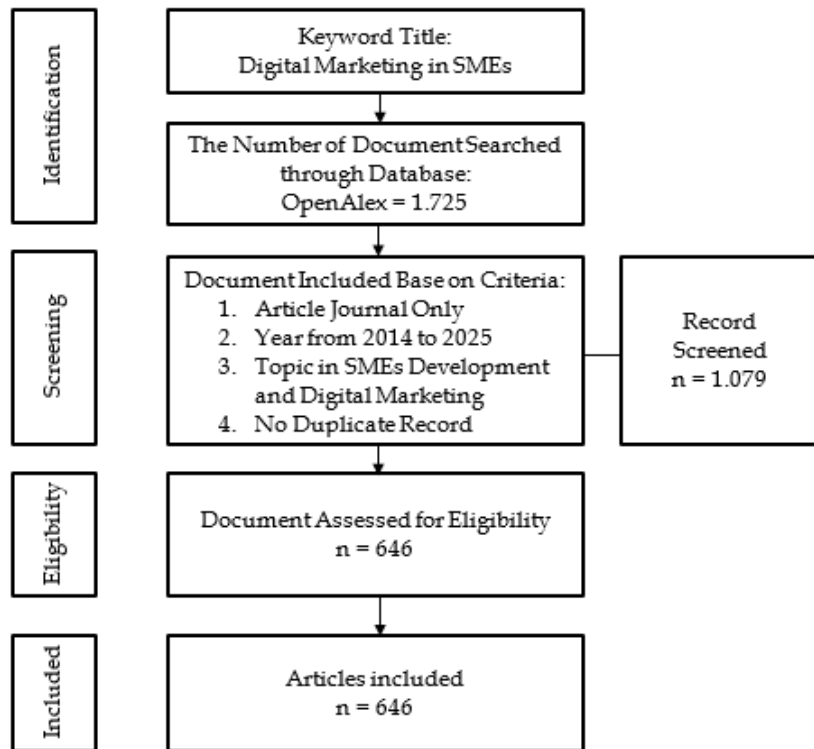


Figure 1. Framework of PRISMA

The PRISMA framework aims to present a systematic database search strategy with a structured identification process to collect relevant literature through identification, screening, eligibility, and included indicators (Kutiame et al., 2022). This identification process used the keywords digital marketing in SMEs to extract titles and abstracts, resulting in 1,725 documents. This gives rise to various results that are irrelevant and have no relationship with the discussion in the research. Next, the extraction was carried out by selecting the search topic SMEs Development and Digital Marketing as coupling on the OpenAlex platform so that it could filter the articles into 646 documents. In addition, the search was limited to documents published in English with a time range of 2014 – 2025.

This study presents a meta-literature review that includes quantitative and qualitative bibliometric approaches. Bibliometric analysis aims to describe research trends, identify gaps, and generate new ideas on a theme (Liu et al., 2024). This study conducted an analysis based on dimensions in the form of literature growth, most relevant institutions, most relevant sources, most relevant authors, co-occurrence network, collaboration network, country collaboration map, top-cited articles, and mapping of future research. This study used RStudio as a tool for mapping bibliometric analysis with the bibliometrix package through biblioshiny.

RESEARCH RESULT

This study presents findings based on analysis dimensions in the form of literature growth, the most relevant institutions, sources, and authors, co-occurrence networks, collaboration networks, country collaboration maps, top-

cited articles, and mapping of future research. However, in the first stage, this study provided a descriptive description of the general information in the data used as follows:

Table 1: General Information		
	Description	Results
<i>Main Information About Data</i>		
	Timespan	2014:2025
	Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	468
	Documents	646
	Annual Growth Rate %	20.81
	Average citations per doc %	3.929
	References	4215
<i>Authors</i>		
	Authors	2051
	Authors of single-authored docs	75
<i>Authors Collaboration</i>		
	Co-Authors per Doc %	3.39
	International co-authorships %	8.204
<i>Document Types</i>		
	article	646
<i>Note: Data processed by Biblioshiny</i>		

Table 1. revealed that there were 646 research article documents with 468 journal sources with an annual growth rate of 20.81% and average citations per doc, which reached 3,929% through 4215 references during the period 2014 – 2025. In addition, there are 2051 authors, 75 of whom published their articles as single authors. The collaboration trend indicates that the average co-authors per document amount to 3.39%, and the involvement of international co-authorships reaches 8,204% per article, thus describing the engagement between authors globally. Furthermore, Figure 1 shows the growth of literature on Digital Marketing in SMEs during 2014 – 2025, as follows:

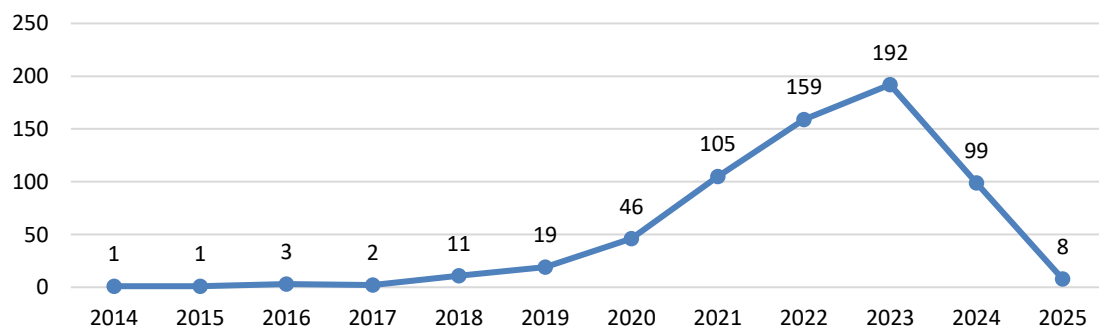


Figure 2. Literature Growth of Digital Marketing in SMEs

Note: Data processed by Biblioshiny

Figure 2. indicates a significant increase over the past decade. Literature growth slowed down from 2014 to 2018. However, there has been significant growth from 2020 to 2023, with achievements of 46, 105, 159 and 192 articles,

respectively. It shows a shift in the trend in SMEs' strategies in utilizing digital approaches during COVID-19, thus triggering an academic focus on marketing development in SMEs. However, there was a decrease in the literature from 2024 to 2025, with 99 and 8 publications, respectively. This shows that the theme of digital marketing in SMEs is saturated. Overall, this theme exhibits a dynamic pattern. However, it still aims to improve various focus views and research themes for marketing academics.

Table 2: Most Relevant Institutions

Rank	Affiliations	Articles	Rank	Affiliations	Articles
1	Universitas Muhammadiyah Magelang	39	6	Universitas Internasional Batam	22
2	Universitas Negeri Malang	32	7	Telkom University	20
3	IPB University	27	8	Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Yogyakarta	19
4	Universitas Pamulang	23	9	Universitas Sumatera Utara	19
5	Universitas Putera Batam	23	10	Universitas Sebelas Maret	17

Note: Data processed by Biblioshiny

Table 2. revealed the Most Relevant Institutions in the field of digital marketing in SMEs based on the productivity of articles at various universities, the top five of which are the Universitas Muhammadiyah Magelang with 39 articles, the Universitas Negeri Malang with 32 articles, IPB University with 27 articles, Universitas Pamulang with 23 articles and Universitas Putera Batam with 23 articles, it illustrates the significant contribution from various universities. The top 10 universities had the most minor publications, with 17 articles. The order in this table can also help researchers understand various universities that focus on digital marketing in SMEs to build academic networks for future research.

Table 3: Most Relevant Source

Rank	Sources	Articles
1	Community Empowerment	9
2	International Journal of Data and Network Science	8
3	KnE Social Sciences	8
4	Dinamisia: Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat	6
5	Jurnal Masyarakat Mandiri	5

Note: Data processed by Biblioshiny

Table 3. shows that the most relevant sources consist of various journals and conferences in the SME digital marketing domain. The top five, Community Empowerment, was the most productive source, with nine articles. The International Journal of Data and Network Science and KnE Social Sciences had

eight articles, *Dinamisia: Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat* had six articles, and *Jurnal Masyarakat Mandiri* had five articles. The distribution of research articles in various journal sources illustrates the high research interest in the role of digital marketing in SMEs, which can strengthen sustainable collaboration in this field. Figure 2 shows the most relevant authors in the domain of digital marketing in SMEs in the context of developing the research landscape as follows:

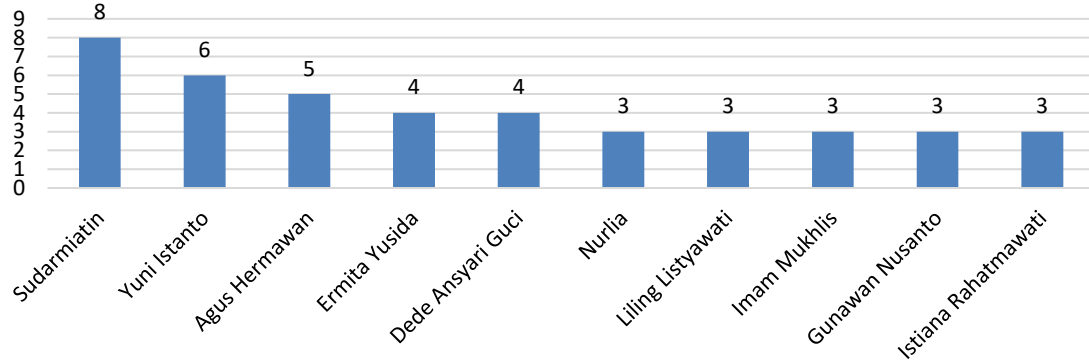


Figure 3. The Most Relevant Authors
Note: Data processed by Biblioshiny

Figure 3. shows that Sudarmiati, a professor from the Universitas Negeri Malang, is present as the most relevant author with eight articles, then Yuni Istanto from the Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Yogyakarta with six articles, Agus Hermawan from the Universitas Negeri Malang with five articles. Other author contributions include Ermita Yusida from the Universitas Negeri Malang and Dede Ansyari Guci from the Universitas Prima Indonesia with four articles, as well as Nurlia, Liling Listyawati, Imam Mukhlis, Gunawan Nusanto, and Istiana Rahmawati with three articles. This indicates the diversity of the authors' active contributions to the development of digital marketing in SMEs.

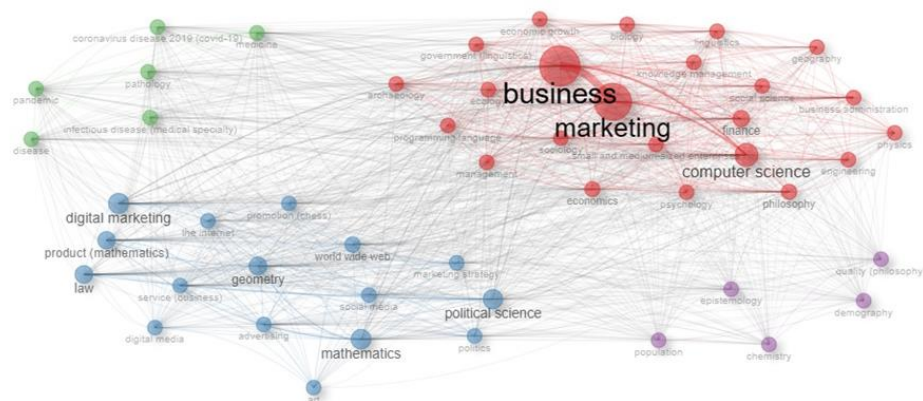


Figure 4. Co-occurrence Network
Note: Data processed by Biblioshiny

The co-occurrence network comprehensively mapped the thematic field and interconnections in the theme of digital marketing in SMEs. Business and Marketing are the terms that appear most often and are related to other terms in various research articles. Computer Science also shows a strong connection in

various articles in the context of integrating technology and intelligence and artificial intelligence in the marketing field of SMEs. In addition, this network also shows other thematic groups, namely Digital Marketing, Law, and Products, as terms that are interrelated in various sources. This shows that digital marketing products must consider legal aspects when developing research plans and strategies. In addition, the thematic presence of interconnected social media, advertising, and promotion shows that various digital platforms play an important role in SMEs' marketing strategies. In addition, this study also aims to map collaboration between authors, as follows:



Figure 5. Collaboration Network

Note: Data processed by Biblioshiny

Figure 4. shows the visualization of the collaboration network related to research collaboration between authors in the field of digital marketing in SMEs. Sudarmiatin showed dominance in research collaboration, including with Agus Hermawan and Agung Wiharno. In addition, Yuni Istanto also has a high level of writing collaboration network, including Istian Rahmawati, Gunawan Nusanto and Dyah Sugandini. The large size of the nodes shows that the authors have carried out a vast network of co-authoring contexts as contestant writers and co-authors. This research also describes the map of global collaboration in the context of digital marketing in SMEs as follows:

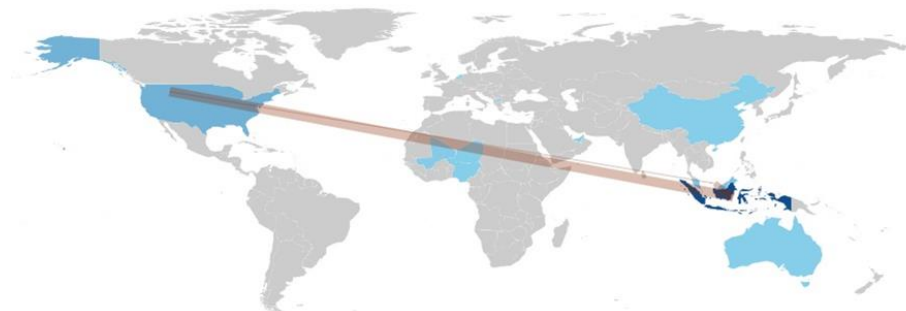


Figure 6. Country Collaboration Map

Note: Data processed by Biblioshiny

Figure 6. shows that Indonesia is a country with a research domain in the field of digital marketing in SMEs with a strong research context, especially in the United States of America (USA). In addition, Indonesian researchers have relatively limited research relationships with other regions, namely, countries in

Asia, Africa, Europe, and Australia. These findings show that the study of digital marketing in SMEs attracts international researchers, even though it is concentrated in Indonesia alone.

Table 4. List of Top-cited Article

Rank	Document	DOI	Year	Local Citations	Global Citations	Total Citation
1	Dedi Purwana	10.21009/jpmm.001.1.01	2017	25	463	488
2	Rahmatul Jannatin Naimah	10.31961/impact.v2i2.844	2020	8	207	215
3	Ibrahim Daud	10.5267/j.ijdns.2021.10.006	2021	4	109	113
4	Arifin Djakasaputra	10.5267/j.ijdns.2021.6.003	2021	7	73	80
5	Ade Octavia	10.18488/journal.aefr.2020.105.516.525	2020	1	75	76

Note: Data processed by Biblioshiny

Table 4. shows the top five of the Top-cited Articles, including Dedi Purwana, with 488 local and global citations. Then, Rahmatul Jannatin Naimah with 215 total citations, Ibrahim Daud with 113 total citations, Arifin Djakasaputra with 80 total citations and Ade Octavia with 76 total citations, as follows:

- 1) Purwana et al. (2017) conducted a study on increasing SME income through awareness and skills in utilising digital marketing. The results show that most SMEs have not used digital marketing patterns to increase business productivity. However, there is great interest in its future use when business actors are equipped with a good understanding of digital marketing.
- 2) Naimah et al. (2020) investigated marketing activities in SMEs to increase sales. However, the findings show that most SMEs are still doing conventional marketing methods, and have not been adaptive in responding to the use of technology in business activities.
- 3) Daud et al. (2022) analysed the effects of digital finance, digital marketing, and digital payments on the financial performance and found that the three variables had a positive and significant influence on financial performance. This is because all variables can benefit SMEs by increasing their business potential.
- 4) Djakasaputra et al. (2021) investigated the role of digital marketing in the service quality and sales performance of SMEs in Indonesia. In addition, his research indirectly measures the role of digital marketing in the sales performance of SMEs through service quality. The results of the study show that digital marketing influences the service quality and sales performance of SMEs. In fact, digital marketing can also influence sales performance indirectly through service quality.
- 5) Octavia et al. (2020) analysed the role of e-commerce adoption in the business performance of SMEs. The results of this study show that e-commerce adoption plays a significant role in business performance. This is because e-

commerce adoption is able to provide positive managerial implications in improving the business performance of SMEs.

Table 5. Mapping of Future Research

Title	Findings	Contributions	Novelty	Practical Implications	Future Research
Utilization of Digital Marketing for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Malaka Sari Village, Duren Sawit (Purwana et al., 2017)	- The study aimed to enhance SMEs' digital marketing knowledge and skills - Participants showed great interest in using social media marketing continuously - Few participants actively used social media for promotion - Many participants lacked technological skills for effective social media marketing	- The study enhances knowledge of digital marketing for SMEs - It includes practical experience in creating social media accounts - Participants showed great interest in continuous social media marketing use	- The study aims to enhance digital marketing knowledge for SMEs. - It focuses on social media marketing strategies for better sales. - Participants engaged in practical social media account creation - The research highlights the low usage of social media for promotion	- Participants learned to create attractive social media accounts for marketing - Digital marketing skills can enhance sales and profits for SMEs - Experience sharing improved understanding of digital marketing practices	Investigate the use of digital marketing by SMES in urban and rural areas
The Implementation of Digital Marketing as a Marketing Strategy for MSMEs (Naimah et al., 2020)	- Training improved understanding of digital marketing for MSMEs - Participants received assistance in creating Google Business and Instagram accounts - Effective periodic guidance is recommended for optimal marketing strategies - Preparations included materials, location setup, and participant coordination	- Training on digital marketing importance for MSMEs was provided - Assistance in creating Google Business and Instagram accounts was offered - The output includes published scientific articles and activity reports - Practical tutorials for managing digital media were conducted	- The research focuses on digital marketing for MSMEs in Banjarmasin - It addresses the need for modern marketing strategies in traditional businesses - Training includes creating Google Business and Instagram accounts for MSMEs - The approach combines theoretical and practical training for effective implementation	- Training on digital marketing enhances MSME marketing systems and sales activities - Practical sessions include creating Google Business and Instagram accounts - Periodic guidance is recommended for effective digital marketing implementation	Investigate the impact of digital marketing strategies on MSME income

The effect of digital marketing, digital finance and digital payment on finance performance of Indonesian SMEs (Daud et al., 2022)	• Digital finance positively affects finance performance in MSMEs • Digital payments significantly enhance MSME finance performance • Digital marketing contributes positively to finance performance • Improved digital literacy is essential for MSME entrepreneurs • Research findings aid MSMEs in enhancing business performance through digitization	• The study provides insights into digital payments and SMEs' performance improvement • It highlights the importance of digital literacy for entrepreneurs • Findings show significant effects of digital finance, payment, and marketing on performance • The research offers a new perspective on small business financial management	• The study analyzes digital finance, marketing, and payment effects on performance • It highlights the role of information technology in MSME financial activities • Findings emphasize improving MSME business performance through digitization and financial literacy	• MSME actors can enhance business performance through digitization and financial literacy • Digital finance positively impacts MSME financial performance • Entrepreneurs should improve digital literacy for better business activities • Future research should explore MSME behavior using open-ended questions	• Future research should collect more complete data using open-ended questions • Exploring MSME behavior in detail is recommended for future studies • Investigating the impact of financial literacy on MSME performance is suggested
Empirical study of Indonesian SMEs sales performance in digital era, The role of quality service (Djakasaputra et al., 2021)	• Digital marketing significantly affects quality service and sales performance • Quality service positively influences sales performance • The study utilized SmartPLS for data analysis • Primary data was collected from 125 SME managers in Banten	• Digital marketing significantly affects quality service and sales performance • Social media enhances communication and marketing for SMEs • Digital marketing reduces promotional costs and increases efficiency • The study provides insights for SMEs to innovate marketing strategies	• SMEs innovate promotion methods using social media for increased sales volume • Digital marketing enhances service quality and sales performance • E-marketing offers advantages over traditional marketing for all company sizes	• Digital marketing significantly impacts sales performance and quality service • SMEs can enhance communication with customers using social media • Effective digital marketing can increase sales volume for home industries • Social media serves as a cost-effective promotional tool for MSMEs	• Investigate digital marketing planning in SMEs • Revealing the role of service quality as a digital marketing support variable on the performance of the SMEs sales

Impact on E-Commerce Adoption on Entrepreneurial Orientation and Market Orientation in Business Performance of SMEs (Octavia et al., 2020)	• Entrepreneurial orientation significantly improves SMEs' business performance • Market orientation positively influences organizational performance • E-commerce adoption enhances business performance for SMEs • Majority of SMEs in Jambi Province lack digital marketing strategies • Study involved 250 SMEs utilizing e-commerce technology	• The study contributes to SME business performance literature through e-commerce adoption • It provides managerial implications for practitioners in Indonesia and beyond • The research supports previous studies on marketing and entrepreneurship	• Entrepreneurial orientation fosters innovation and competitive advantage in SMEs • SMEs must innovate products and services to survive market competition • The study analyzes e-commerce adoption's impact on SME business performance	• E-commerce adoption can enhance SME business performance significantly • SMEs should improve digital technology utilization for better competitiveness • Entrepreneurial orientation influences business performance positively in SMEs • Training employees in ICT is crucial for performance improvement	• Longitudinal studies on causal relationships are suggested for future research • Further testing of variables is recommended in subsequent studies • Literature review is needed to gather more information related to the research

DISCUSSION

The results of the study revealed a decrease in the number of digital marketing literature in SMEs by 2024. This decline shows a shift in the focus of research, giving rise to other sub-disciplines such as business, marketing, computer science and political science. The overall growth of literature has experienced a dynamic nature that develops from the findings of digital marketing research in the SMEs sector, so that it can contribute to the field of academic and practical studies. In addition, the distribution of research results shows that there is an increase in interest in various academic institutions in theory and practice (Austin & McBeath, 2022), which is related to the change from a conventional marketing ecosystem to a digital one. In addition, academic journals also receive research related to digital marketing in SMEs through publications in various journals (Berbatovci & Buja, 2024). This finding can encourage researchers to explore various contexts of digital marketing implementation strategies for SMEs (Ajiva et al., 2024).

Researchers have shown a high intention to increase the distribution of publications in the implementation of digital marketing in SMEs (Amiri et al., 2023). Researchers have also contributed to the development of digital marketing strategies and their practical implementation in the business environment (Saura et al., 2023). This finding provides an understanding that the results of the research can be a reference for business actors in understanding the concept of digital marketing to create revenue optimization in SMEs (Rahmadhani et al., 2024). The results of the co-occurrence network show that the digital marketing research map in SMEs has multidisciplinary relevance to technology, policy, economics, and social sciences in presenting complex findings. These findings

can be considered by researchers conducting research in a similar context, but they can still present differences with other studies.

The results of the collaboration network investigation revealed that collaboration networks between researchers are still limited. Therefore, more interdisciplinary collaboration is needed between various researchers across institutions to create an exchange of knowledge and diversity of methodologies in analyzing different phenomena (Stephens & Cummings, 2021). In addition, collaboration networks can create a more comprehensive understanding of strategies and innovations in implementing digital marketing in SMEs (Lu et al., 2024). In addition, the results of the country collaboration investigation showed that research collaboration on the theme of digital marketing in SMEs was dominated by researchers from Indonesia and the USA. Although this theme has received attention in various countries, it is still concentrated regionally, so there is a need for an expansion of international research networks to increase its global impact. In addition, collaboration between countries can create cross-sociocultural insights, so that understanding the phenomena that occur in various countries (de Hei et al., 2020).

The presence of various studies on digital marketing in SMEs has given rise to some of the most frequently cited publications from 2014 to 2025. This has sparked other contemporary research ideas in the context of SMEs' digital marketing. In addition, the higher number of global citations than local citations shows that research on digital marketing in SMEs has gained international relevance (Saes & Junior, 2019). The diversity of themes explored through various citations presents the multidisciplinary nature of digital marketing research and its implementation in SMEs. These findings suggest that researchers have played a role in creating the basis for policy and regulation to ensure SME competition. In addition, this study proposes various research themes that can be explored by researchers in the future.

Table 6. Future Research Agenda

Research Thame	Definition
Digital Literacy and SME Performance	This study examines how increasing digital literacy among SME owners affects their financial and operational performance. Increasing digital literacy is expected to help SMEs in optimizing digital marketing strategies and utilizing technology for business growth
Digital Marketing Adoption Behavior in SMEs	This study explored the behaviors and barriers faced by SMEs in adopting digital marketing. Qualitative research with in-depth interviews can provide a more comprehensive insight into the factors that influence such adoption
Evaluation of the Impact of social media and SME Performance	The study could examine how the use of social media platforms, such as Instagram and Google Business, can increase sales and brand awareness for SMEs. This research can use case study methods or field experiments
Innovation in Digital Marketing Strategies for SMEs	This study can focus on innovations in digital marketing that can help SMEs compete in a

	wider market. This could include the use of the latest technologies such as AI and data analytics in marketing campaigns
E-Commerce, Entrepreneurship Orientation and SME Performance	This study can explore how the adoption of e-commerce affects the entrepreneurial orientation and market performance of SMEs. Focusing on how SMEs can improve their competitiveness through e-commerce can be an interesting topic
Service Quality in Digital Marketing,	This study can explore how digital marketing strategies can improve service quality and customer satisfaction for SMEs. Focus on specific sectors such as industries
Personal Branding on SME Performance through social media	This study can examine how personal branding through social media such as LinkedIn, Instagram, or Facebook can improve the performance of SMEs. The focus is on the strategies used by entrepreneurs to build self-image and its impact on sales and customer engagement

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study aims to map the development of literature related to digital marketing in SMEs. In addition, this study reveals aspects that affect the development of literature, as well as future research directions related to the use of digital marketing in SMEs. This study uses bibliometric analysis that accommodates meta-literature reviews quantitatively and qualitatively by utilizing the features in RStudio. In addition, this study used the PRISMA method to systematically and measurably verify the research data database. This study involved 646 articles with analytical dimensions in the form of Literature Growth, Most Relevant Institutions, Most Relevant Source, Most Relevant Authors, Co-occurrence Network, Collaboration Network, Country Collaboration Map, Top-cited Article, and Mapping of Future Research.

The findings show that the development of digital marketing literature in SMEs has increased significantly from 2020 to 2023. However, this decreased from 2024 to 2025. The development of literature is also influenced by the contribution of higher education institutions, which encourage the study of digital marketing in SMEs. In addition, various journals have shown good acceptance of this theme. Researchers have also shown high interest in the publication of digital marketing themes in SMEs through a series of collaborative research between higher education institutions and countries. The digital marketing research map in SMEs has multidisciplinary relevance to technology, policy, economics, and social sciences in presenting complex findings. Furthermore, this research also reveals the direction of future research, which includes several themes, including Digital Literacy and SME Performance, Digital Marketing Adoption Behavior in SMEs, Evaluation of the Impact of Social Media and SME Performance, Innovation in Digital Marketing Strategies for SMEs, E-Commerce, Entrepreneurship Orientation and SME Performance, Service Quality in Digital Marketing, Personal Branding on SME Performance through Social Media.

This study recommends that all stakeholders encourage intensive collaboration between higher-education institutions, both at the national and international levels, to improve the quality of research and expand academic networks in the development of digital marketing literature in SMEs. In addition, researchers are expected to pay more attention to sustainable themes.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

This study has limitations on the use of the database in the period 2014 – 2025; therefore, it only accommodates 646 articles. Future research is expected to collect various studies related to digital marketing in SMEs with a larger number of articles.

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