

DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY: PRIORITY AND BARRIERS FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM INDUSTRIES

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to examine digital marketing practices in small and medium industries. The aspects studied include the digital marketing strategies and tactics used, as well as the level of difficulty experienced by small and medium-sized industries when marketing digitally. Respondents in this study were managers or business owners in small and medium industries in Indonesia. This study uses a quantitative descriptive method. The findings in this study indicate that the components of the digital marketing strategy are considered very important or are priority strategies used by small and medium industries, but on the other hand the seven this strategy has a high difficulty for small and medium industries to achieve success in carrying out the strategy. The component of digital marketing tactics are considered very effective in promoting their products, but small and medium industry players have difficulties to apply these tactics.

Keywords: *digital marketing strategy, strategy marketing, tactic marketing, SMIs.*

1. Introduction

Technological developments have shifted consumer behavior, currently most consumers have spent their time on social and digital media for various purposes, both for information seeking and product purchases (Faruk, Rahman, & Hasan, 2021). This shift has forced companies to shift their advertising budget to digital marketing (Ainin, Parveen, Moghavvemi, Jaafar, & Shuib, 2015; Faruk et al., 2021). The reason for using social media is influenced by low costs and also does not require high expertise (Ainin et al., 2015).

The internet has now become a favorite advertising medium by advertisers and advertising through the internet is considered effective in promoting company products or services (Anusha, 2016). Advertising on the internet is able to increase company brand awareness, makes it easier to distribute information, is a sophisticated method to target consumers, is a direct channel to customers, and is low in costs (Anusha, 2016; Ainin et al., 2015).

There has been a lot of research on digital marketing. Several studies have examined the relationship between digital marketing and company performance (Ainin et al., 2015; Anusha, 2016; De Pelsmacker, van Tilburg, & Holthof, 2018). Other studies examine the relationship of digital marketing to brands (Ahmed, Kumar, Baig, & Khan, 2015; Melović, Jocić, Dabić, Vulić, & Dudic, 2020). More specifically, researchers have examined strategies through digital marketing (Mandal, 2017; Lipsmeier, Kühn, Joppen, & Dumitrescu, 2020; Ukko, Nasiri, Saunila, & Rantala, 2019; Olson, Olson, Czaplewski, & Key, 2021).

The technological revolution has made digital marketing a leading medium in providing information and promotions, as well as services to customers, due to the increasing number of

features this technology offers (Kim, Kang, & Lee, 2021). With the development of digital marketing and its inclusion in all aspects of business models, recent research studies have examined business models related to digital marketing or digital marketing strategies (Bouncken, Kraus, & Roig-Tierno, 2021; Rachinger, Rauter, Müller, Vorraber, & Schirgi, 2019; Rohn, Bican, Brem, Kraus, & Clauss, 2021; Perelygina, Kucukusta, & Law, 2022).

A study of the literature on digital marketing, shows three shortcomings that prevent them from fully informing the field of industrial marketing (Herhausen et al., 2020). First, this literature review largely has a business-to-consumer focus, largely ignoring the specific context of industrial firms (Herhausen et al., 2020). Second, most research attention has been paid to the tremendous opportunities that digital marketing presents, but little attention has been paid to the related competencies that companies need to be successful. Third, the review of the existing literature focuses on published research only, thus ignoring the acceleration of new digital capabilities emerging in managerial practice, this has an impact on business opportunities (Herhausen et al., 2020).

In the last decade, digitalization has revolutionized marketing and the marketing industry, but not many studies have examined the human resource perspective on structured and configured digital marketing knowledge and practices (Herhausen, Miočević, Morgan, & Kleijnen, 2020). The human resource perspective on marketing knowledge and practices in industrial companies has a marketing capability gap (Herhausen et al., 2020). Based on these results, Herhausen et al., (2020) provides recommendations for future research on digital marketing capabilities in various industries. A study conducted by Kim et al. (2021) suggests thematic research to examine effective digital marketing.

The thematic study of digital marketing using bibliometric analysis conducted by Faruk et al. (2021) has not been holistic, the study recommends getting a more holistic view of future research to be more specific in conducting studies on digital marketing such as email marketing, affiliate marketing, media marketing social. To complement the shortcomings in the research theme on digital marketing, especially in the capability gap (Herhausen et al., 2020), the thematic study of effective digital marketing (Kim et al., 2021), and the study of specifications on digital marketing (Faruk et al., 2021), the research will examine strategies and tactics digital marketing specifically for small and medium industries. The digital marketing strategies studied include sales prospects, customer acquisition, customer engagement, brand awareness, result measurability, website traffic, and web user experience (Olson et al., 2021). The digital marketing tactics used include content marketing, search engine optimization, email marketing, search and social advertising, data-driven personalization, marketing technology usage, and social media marketing.

2. Research Method

This study uses a quantitative description approach and data collection techniques using surveys. The survey was conducted using a questionnaire to marketing managers or owners of small and medium-sized industries. The sample was collected using a purposive sampling method, namely small and medium industries that have a web site and social media for marketing their business. The types of small and medium industries surveyed are limited to the food and beverages, pharmaceutical (herbal products), furniture, handicraft, and fashion industries.

Based on the collected and selected questionnaire data, 165 respondents were obtained as samples. Each respondent was asked to rate on a 5-point scale (1 very low to 5 very high) how important each of the seven strategic priorities or how effective each of the seven digital

marketing tactics was, and how difficult it was to implement digital marketing strategies and tactics. To show the level of importance of the level of business strategy and digital marketing management used, points 4 and 5 are compared and used to assess the importance or effectiveness of the business strategy, its digital marketing tactics, and the level of difficulty of carrying out digital marketing strategies and tactics. The sample in this study can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of Samples

No	Samples	Amount	Percentage
1	Food & Beverages	35	21,2
2	Pharmacy	30	18,2
3	Furniture	25	15,2
4	Handicraft	38	23,0
5	Fashion	37	22,0
		165	100,0

In table 1 it is known that the number of samples in this study were 165 respondents consisting of SMEs engaged in food and beverage (21.2%), pharmacy (18.2%), furniture (15.2%), handicrafts (23, 0%), and fashion (22.0%). The demographics of the respondents can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Education of Respondents

No	Education	Amount	Percentage
1	Junior High School	20	12,1
2	Senior High School	76	46,1
3	Diploma	15	9,1
4	Bachelor	45	27,3
5	Postgraduate	9	5,5
		165	100,0

Respondents' education indicated high school (46.1%), followed by undergraduate (27.3%), junior high school (12.1%), diploma (9.1%), and postgraduate (5.5%). This shows that most of the respondents in this study have secondary education.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

Strategic Priorities Versus Success Barriers

This section describes the priority strategies carried out by small and medium industries in using digital marketing and continues with an explanation of the obstacles in implementing these strategies, then comparing the priority strategies and obstacles in implementing these strategies. The explanation will be described based on each of these priority strategies which include sales prospects, customer acquisition, customer engagement, brand awareness, result measurability, website traffic, and web user experience. To make it easier to understand the frequency distribution of respondents' answers, it is shown in the figure.

1) Sales Prospects

One of the priority strategies in digital marketing is to increase sales prospects. The results of the research on the description of managers or business owners on strategies to increase sales and the obstacles in implementing these strategies in each SMEs can be seen in Figure 1.

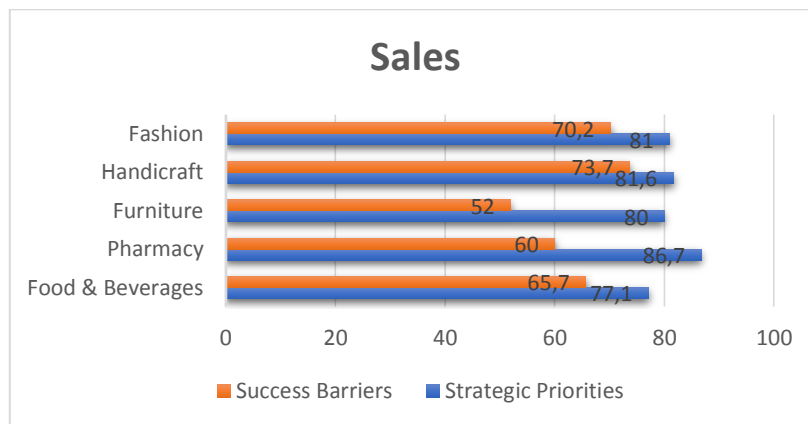


Figure 1. Sales Prospect

In Figure 1 it is known that managers or business owners have placed increasing sales as a very high priority in their digital marketing, this is indicated by a response rate of above 77%. The highest response rate is in the pharmaceutical industry, which is 86.7%. Meanwhile, the highest level of obstacles in increasing sales through digital marketing was experienced by the handicraft industry with a response rate of 73.7%. However, in general, small and medium-sized industries have quite high barriers in implementing a strategy to increase sales through the internet.

2) Customer Acquisition

The next priority strategy is to increase customer acquisition. An overview of the customer acquisition strategy by small and medium-sized industry players can be seen in Figure 2.

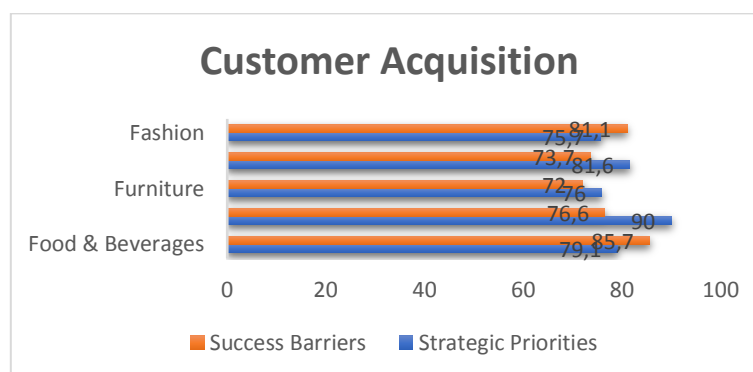


Figure 2. Customer Acquisition

Figure 2 shows that managers or business owners have placed increasing customer acquisition as a very high priority in their digital marketing, this is indicated by a response rate above 75.7%. The highest response rate is in the pharmaceutical industry, which is 90%. Meanwhile, the highest level of barriers in increasing customer acquisition was experienced by the food and beverage industry with a response rate of 85.7%. However, in general, small and medium-sized industries have high barriers to implementing strategies to increase customer acquisition through the internet.

3) Customer Engagement

The next priority strategy in digital marketing is customer engagement. An overview of the customer acquisition strategy by small and medium-sized industry players can be seen in Figure 3.

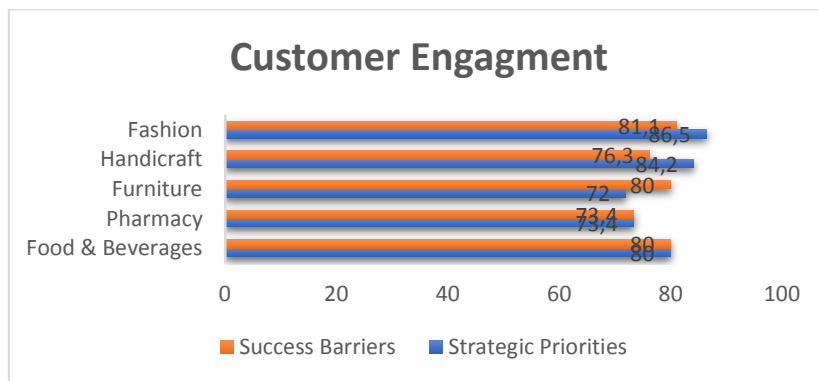


Figure 3. Customer Engagement

Figure 3 shows that managers or business owners have placed increasing customer engagement as a high priority in their digital marketing, this is indicated by a response rate of above 72%. The highest response rate is in the fashion industry, which is 86.5%. Meanwhile, the highest level of barriers in increasing customer engagement was also experienced by the fashion industry with a response rate of 81.1%. However, in general, small and medium-sized industries have high barriers to implementing strategies to increase customer engagement through the internet.

4) Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is very important in building a company's image, so that brand awareness is made a strategic priority by managers and business owners. The description of managers and business owners on brand awareness can be seen in Figure 4.



Figure 4. Brand Awareness

Figure 4 shows that managers or business owners have placed increasing brand awareness as a very high priority in their digital marketing, this is indicated by a response rate above 72%. The highest response rate is in the pharmacy industry, which is 90%. Meanwhile, the highest level of obstacles in increasing brand awareness was experienced by the fashion industry with a response rate of 83.7%. However, in general, small and medium-sized industries have high barriers to implementing a strategy to increase brand awareness through the internet.

5) Result Measurability

Improving measurable results in digital marketing is one of the priority strategies. The responses of managers and business owners to the result measurability can be seen in Figure 5.

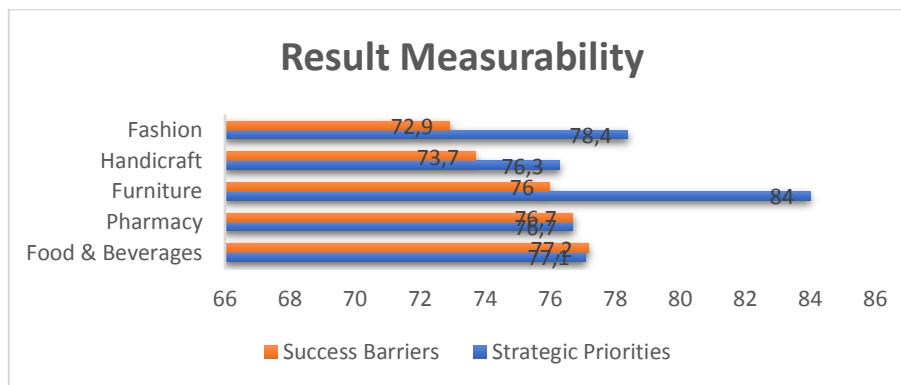


Figure 5. Result Measurability

Figure 5 shows that managers or business owners have placed increasing result measurability as a high priority in their digital marketing, this is indicated by a response rate above 76.3%. The highest response rate is in the furniture industry, which is 84%. Meanwhile, the highest level of obstacles in increasing the result measurability is experienced by the food & beverage industry with a response rate of 77.1%. In general, small and medium-sized industries have high barriers to implementing a strategy to increase result measurability through the internet.

6) Website Traffic

Increasing traffic on the company's website is one of the priority strategies to be achieved by the company. The responses of managers and business owners to website traffic can be seen in Figure 6.



Figure 6. Website Traffic Overview

Figure 6 shows that managers or business owners have placed increasing website traffic as a very high priority in their digital marketing, this is indicated by a response rate above 72%. The highest response rate is in the pharmacy industry, which is 100%. Meanwhile, the highest level of obstacles in increasing website traffic was experienced by the pharmacy industry with a response rate of 93.3%. In general, small and medium industries have high barriers to implementing strategies to increase website traffic through the internet.

7) Web User Experience

Website user experience has become a priority in digital marketing. A good experience will have a positive effect on the company's marketing performance. But how do managers and owners of small and medium industries respond to this strategy? Figure 7 describes the responses of managers and company owners to the user experience of the website.

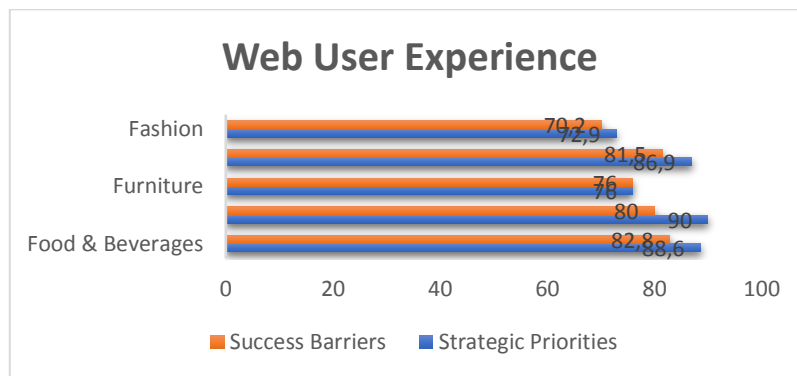


Figure 7. Web User Experience

Figure 7 shows that managers or business owners have placed improving web user experience as a very high priority in their digital marketing, this is indicated by a response rate of above 72%. The highest response rate is in the pharmacy industry, which is 90%. Meanwhile, the highest level of obstacles in improving web user experience is experienced by the food & beverage industry with a response rate of 82.8%. In general, small and medium industries have high barriers to implementing a web user experience improvement strategy through the internet. The overall picture between priority versus barrier strategies regarding digital marketing can be seen in Figure 8.

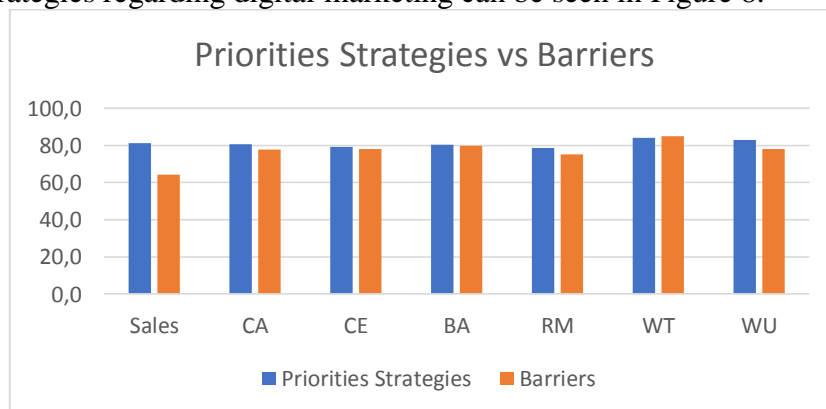


Figure 8. Priorities Strategies versus Barriers

In Figure 8 it can be seen that all digital marketing strategies are considered to have a high priority level, but on the other hand the respondents consider that these strategies are difficult to implement or have difficulty doing them. Of the seven strategies, website traffic and web user experience are the highest priority levels. At the level of difficulty increasing traffic on the website ranks first, but in general the prioritized strategy is followed by the level of difficulty.

Tactics Of Digital Marketing versus Barriers

In this section, we will explain responses to digital marketing tactics that are a priority and the obstacles or level of difficulty in using these tactics. The digital marketing tactics analyzed include content marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), email marketing, search and social ads, data-driven personalization, marketing technology usage, and social media marketing. To make it easier to understand the response to digital marketing tactics and the difficulty level of these tactics can be seen from the graph.

1) Content Marketing

Content marketing is a strategic approach to marketing that focuses on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a defined audience and to drive profitable customer action. Respondents' responses to content marketing can be seen in Figure 9.



Figure 8. Content Marketing

Figure 9 shows the responses of respondents, namely managers and owners of small and medium-sized industries to the effectiveness and level of difficulty of content marketing. Based on the figure, 9 respondents stated that content marketing has high effectiveness in digital marketing, this is indicated by the response rate above 73%. The highest response rate is in the furniture industry company, which is 80%. Meanwhile, the difficulty level of tactic content marketing is experienced by the handicraft industry. These results also show that in general, small and medium industries experience high difficulties in creating content marketing.

2) Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

SEO is a long-term digital marketing tactic for continuous improvement of content and digital asset design with the aim of getting high rankings on search engine pages. Respondents' responses to SEO can be seen in Figure 10.

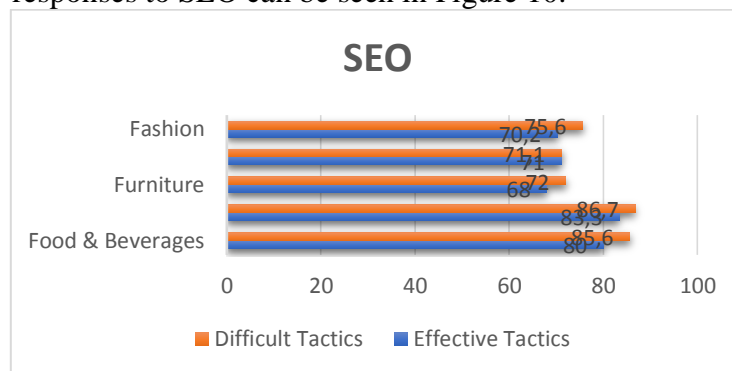


Figure 10. SEO

Figure 10 shows the respondents' responses to the effectiveness and difficulty level of SEO. Based on the picture, 10 respondents stated that SEO has a high effectiveness in digital marketing, this is indicated by the response rate above 68%. The highest response rate is in the pharmaceutical industry, which is 83.3%. Meanwhile, the level of difficulty of tactic SEO experienced by the pharmacy industry is also 86.7%. The results also show that in general, small and medium industries experience high difficulty in SEO tactics.

3) Email Marketing

Email marketing is the act of sending emails directly to prospects and customers with timely and relevant information. Respondents' responses to email marketing can be seen in Figure 11.

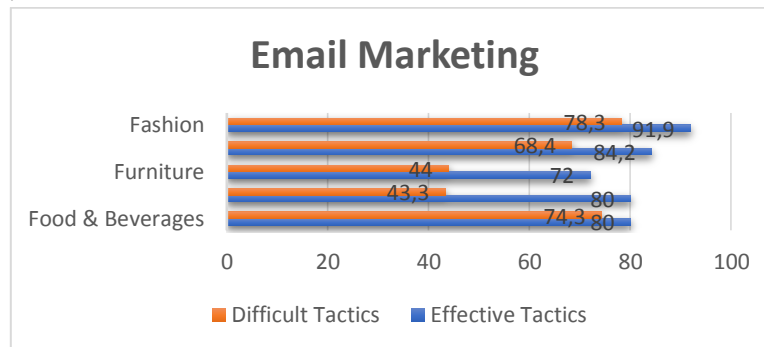


Figure 11. Email Marketing

Figure 11 shows the respondents' responses to the effectiveness and level of difficulty of email marketing. Based on the picture, 11 respondents stated that email marketing has a high effectiveness in digital marketing, this is indicated by the response rate above 72%. The highest response rate is in the fashion industry, which is 91.9%. Meanwhile, the difficulty level of tactic email marketing experienced by the fashion industry is also 78.7%. The results also show that in general, small and medium-sized industries experience high difficulties in email marketing tactics.

4) Search and Social Advertising

Search and social advertising is the act of placing ads so that they appear at the top of the search page or at the side of the search results page. These ads are linked to keywords and appear when certain keywords or phrases are entered into a search engine. Respondents' responses to email marketing can be seen in Figure 12.



Figure 12. Search and Social Advertising

Figure 12 shows respondents' responses to the effectiveness and difficulty level of search and social advertising. Based on the picture, 12 respondents stated that search and social advertising has a high effectiveness in digital marketing, this is indicated by the response rate above 72%. The highest response rate is in the food and beverages industry, which is 85.8%. Meanwhile, the difficulty level of tactic search and social advertising experienced by the food & beverage industry is also 74.2%. The results also show that in general, small and medium-sized industries experience high difficulties in search and social advertising tactics.

5) Data-Driven Personalization

Data-driven personalization is the process of audience segmentation and marketing decisions based on information about individuals from their historical preferences. Respondents' views on data-driver personalization can be seen in Figure 13.

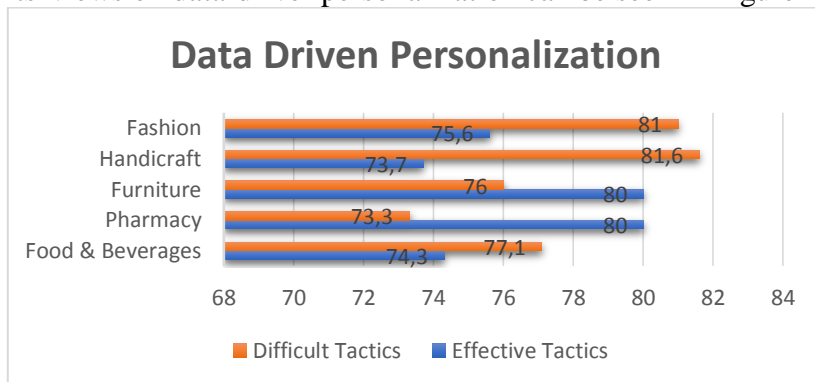


Figure 13. Data-Driver Personalization

Figure 13 shows respondents' responses to the effectiveness and level of difficulty of data-driven personalization. Based on the figure, 13 respondents stated that data-driven personalization has a high effectiveness in digital marketing, this is indicated by the response rate above 73%. The highest response rate is in the furniture and pharmacy industry, which is 80%. While the difficulty level of tactic data-driven personalization experienced by handicraft is 81.6%. The results also show that in general, small and medium-sized industries experience high difficulties in data-driven personalization.

6) Marketing Technology Usage

Marketing technology use is a set of software and technological tools used by marketers to automate or streamline the marketing process, collect and analyze data, and provide a variety of ways to reach and attract target audiences. Respondents' views on marketing technology usage can be seen in Figure 14.

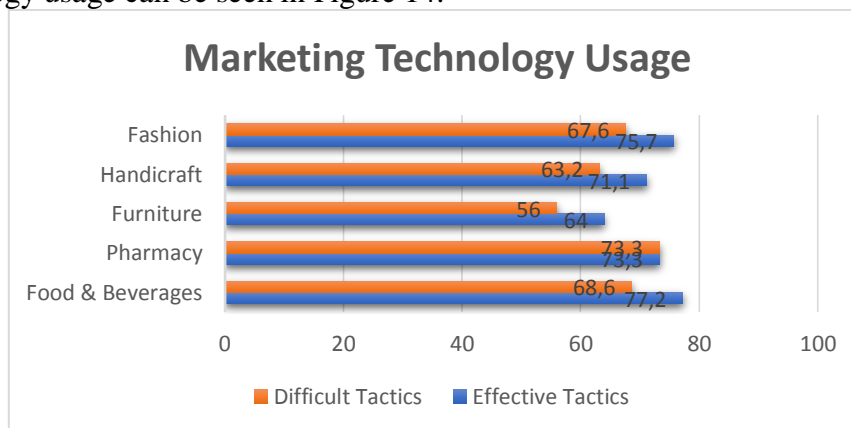


Figure 14. Marketing Technology Usage

Figure 14 shows respondents' responses to the effectiveness and level of difficulty of marketing technology usage. Based on the picture, 14 respondents stated that marketing technology usage has high effectiveness in digital marketing, this is indicated by the response rate above 64%. The highest response rate is in food and beverages, which is 80%. While the difficulty level of marketing technology usage experienced by pharmacy is 73.3%. The results also show that in general, small and medium industries experience high difficulties in marketing technology usage.

7) Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing is an advertisement or promotion on social media companies to display product/service content (eg; Facebook, Instagram, Twitter). Respondents' views on social media marketing can be seen in Figure 15.

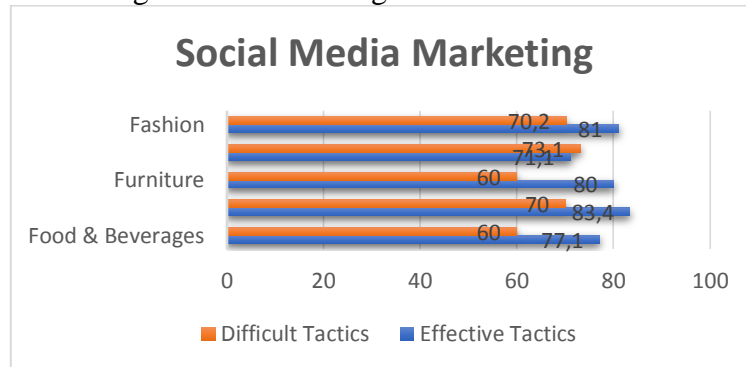


Figure 15. Social Media Marketing

Figure 15 shows the respondents' responses to the effectiveness and level of difficulty of social media marketing. Based on the picture, 15 respondents stated that social media marketing has high effectiveness in digital marketing, this is indicated by the response rate above 70%. The highest response rate is pharmacy, which is 83.4%. While the difficulty level of social media marketing experienced by handicraft is 73.1%. The results also show that in general, small and medium industries experience high difficulties in social media marketing. An overview of digital marketing tactics versus their difficulties can be seen in Figure 16.

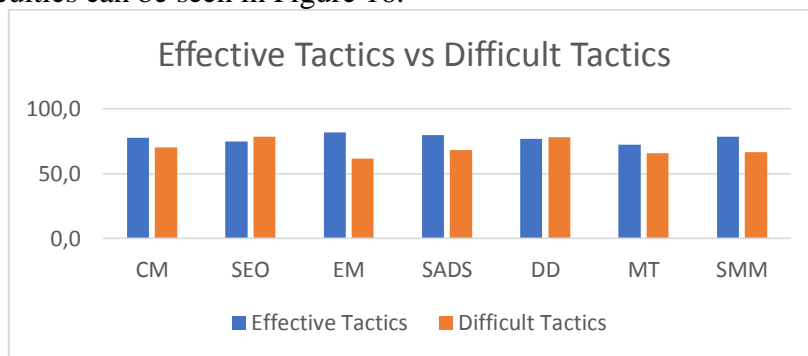


Figure 16. Tactic Versus Barriers

Figure 16 shows that email marketing and search and social advertising are the most effective tactics, while SEO and data-driven personalization are the most difficult tactics. But overall all tactics are considered important and have a high level of difficulty for small and medium industries.

3.2 Discussion

Digitalization has revolutionized marketing and the marketing industry in the last two decades, but not many studies have examined the human resource perspective on structured and configured digital marketing knowledge and practices (Herhausen et al., 2020). Marketing strategies and tactics have evolved from traditional marketing to digital marketing. These advances not only bring new ways of conducting marketing activities in a cost-efficient manner, but also make it easier to track and measure digital marketing activities (Becirspahic, Rhodin, & Balkow, 2018). This study examines the views of digital marketing

strategies carried out by managers and business owners in small and medium industries, besides this research also examines the obstacles or levels of difficulty faced by managers or business owners in applying digital marketing. This is important considering that small and medium industries have limitations regarding digital literacy. In addition, the human resource perspective on marketing knowledge and practices in industrial companies has a marketing capability gap (Herhausen et al., 2020).

The results of the analysis show that all digital marketing strategies are considered to have a high priority level, but on the other hand, the respondents think that these strategies are difficult to implement or have difficulty doing them. Of the seven strategies, website traffic and web user experience are the highest priority levels. At the level of difficulty increasing traffic on the website ranks first, but in general the prioritized strategy is followed by the level of difficulty. These results show that small and medium industries understand the importance of digital marketing, but on the other hand they have difficulty in doing so. Olson et al. (2021) also shows the same results. Digital business strategy has an impact on digital transformation performance, with the condition that managers must be dynamic and keep up with new technology developments (Ukko et al., 2019). Superior managerial capabilities facilitate successful strategic changes, such as digital transformation, manifested as business performance improvements (Ukko et al., 2019; Olson et al., 2021).

Digital marketing tactics are considered very effective in promoting SMEs products until sales occur, but on the other hand digital marketing tactics are still considered difficult by SMEs. The marketing tactic that is considered the most effective by managers or owners of small and medium-sized industries is email marketing, followed by search and social ads, social media marketing, content marketing, data-driven personalization, search engine optimization, and marketing technology usage. Meanwhile, the digital marketing tactic that is considered the most difficult is search engine optimization, followed by data-driven personalization, content marketing, search and social advertising, machine technology usage, social media marketing, and email marketing. These results show support for Olson et al. (2021) research which found that industrial companies have difficulties in carrying out digital marketing techniques, even though these techniques are considered effective for promoting their products. These results support Becirspahic et al. (2018) research which states that digital marketing content is considered important, but each company has a different relevance regarding its strategy and tactics.

The difficulties faced by SMEs in implementing digital marketing strategies and tactics are due to a lack of knowledge because most of their education is secondary school. Then from the digital marketing training activities that have been carried out, most have only attended basic training, only a small proportion have attended professional training or at an advanced level. These results support research conducted by Mandal (2017) which states that digital marketing is an essential part for many companies, for SMEs owners it is a cheap and efficient strategy to offer their products and services. Technology development for SMIs is expected to be able to develop business efficiently, effectively, and sustainably (Morgan-Thomas, 2016).

4. Conclusion

The findings in this study indicate that the components of the digital marketing strategy, namely website traffic, web user experience, brand awareness, customer acquisition, sales, customer engagement, and result measurement are considered very important or are priority strategies used by small and medium industries, but on the other hand the seven this strategy

has a high difficulty for small and medium industries to achieve success in carrying out the strategy. Digital marketing tactics such as content marketing, search engine optimization, email marketing, search and social ads, data-driven personalization, marketing technology usage, and social media marketing are considered very effective in promoting their products, but small and medium industry players have difficulties to apply these tactics.

The study findings support the application of human resource-based theory (RBV), where the perspective of the RBV theory highlights the relationship between the economy and information technology in the modern economic era (Barney, Wright, & Ketchen, 2001). Based on the resource-based perspective (RBV) firms gain competitive advantage through a combination of resources and capabilities that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-replaceable (Barney et al., 2001). The findings of this study also support the components of the digital marketing strategy developed by Olson et al., (2021), namely website traffic, web user experience, brand awareness, customer acquisition, sales, customer engagement, and result measurement. In addition, it also supports digital marketing tactics components which include content marketing, search engine optimization, email marketing, search and social ads, data-driven personalization, marketing technology usage, and social media marketing.

The findings of this study can be used as a reference for managers and business owners to improve their marketing performance or company performance through digital marketing. Managers or business owners can use strategic priorities in their digital marketing, such as website traffic, web user experience, brand awareness, customer acquisition, sales, customer engagement, and result measurement. In addition, you can also use digital marketing tactics components which include content marketing, search engine optimization, email marketing, search and social ads, data-driven personalization, marketing technology usage, and social media marketing.

This research has several limitations including: First, this study only takes a sample of small and medium industries, the results may be different if applied to large industries. Second, another limitation of this study is that it is unable to explore in detail the digital marketing strategy carried out, especially regarding the ability of managers and business owners to carry out the digital marketing strategy, this is because data collection only uses questionnaires. For future research, it is better to conduct in-depth interviews with respondents, so that it is known the ability of each resource in the small and medium industry in carrying out their digital marketing strategy.

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