

Digital marketing capability: the mystery of business capabilities

The new
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digital era

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to advance the understanding of digital marketing capability by conducting a comprehensive, systematic review of relevant literature at the firm level.

Design/methodology/approach – The study utilizes categorization and contextualization of qualitative methodologies to review the literature, using Scopus databases to collect 57 journals with 143 peer-reviewed papers as the main focus. The research gaps and DMCs were analyzed and synthesized and presented as collective categorization together with the proposed future direction framework.

Findings – This study proposed the relevance of digital marketing capabilities for businesses and the key measurement of business performance. The proposed dimensions of the digital marketing capabilities framework are to identify new research directions for both marketing and IT strands.

Originality/value – This study classifies five main different themes in digital marketing incorporating with digital technologies (DTs) era and proposed relevance of digital marketing capabilities for businesses (B2C and B2B) and keys measurement of business performances.

Keywords Digital marketing capability, Digital marketing, Digital technology, Business capability

Paper type Literature review

Introduction

There is a growing research interest in social science and technological studies in Internet-based digital platforms such as social media (SM), mobile applications, and other digital communication and engagement technologies that have become commonplace in people's lives (Chu *et al.*, 2019; Herhausen *et al.*, 2020; Krings *et al.*, 2021; Lee *et al.*, 2019a). From business owner's perspectives, SM usage has become an integral element to support marketing strategy advancement (Cambra-Fierro *et al.*, 2021; Lamberton and Stephen, 2016; Muninger *et al.*, 2019; Tarsakoo and Charoensukmongkol, 2020). SM offers several distinctions, features, and tools that help in the endeavor of business architecture as an underpinning of strategy and technology. Meanwhile, the term "digitalization" (of business models) has been investigated in numerous studies using a variety of research methods, focusing primarily on two domains: technology and marketing. The prior two domains of digitalization involve taking a simpler solution and discussing the idea by simply adding the SM to business processes and strategies and then labelling it as "digital marketing"—which is misleading. For those businesses that embrace the adventure of the technology revolution, along with careful planning and execution of such an initiative's adoption, could realize the benefits of competency-based management. The level of competency and business performance in the digital age stem from the combinations of digital capabilities related to the specific context of industrial business, including its governance structure, stakeholders and their creative organizational cultures. The massive and growing adoption of SM in conjunction with digital technologies (DTs) has transformed the way business owners and marketers interact with their customers (Degbey and Peltó, 2021). The attributes of such



technologies allow businesses to compete with more data-centric customer acquisition and customer engagement. The use of digital platforms incorporating data-driven marketing results in digital advertising, relationship marketing, games/applications, campaigns, integrated marketing communication (IMC), and such emerging new channels that allow for a broad and effective reach (Degbey and Pelto, 2021; Schiavone *et al.*, 2021). As a result, digital marketing has emerged as a potentially powerful form of marketing revolution that empowers current customers, prospects, audiences, and everyone from the real and virtual worlds to build a network of relationships for business purposes.

There has been much research aimed at trying to initially investigate, explore, and propose a conceptual digital marketing framework adoption (i.e. the assimilation model) for businesses (Busca and Bertrandias, 2020; Omenugha, 2018; Zhang *et al.*, 2020). Such previous investigations were conducted using inductive research with an implied customer-centric focus. Those studies, which have a strong digital presence, tend to include the benefits of DTs (such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Augmented Reality (AR), and Virtual Reality (VR), digital content management, mobile marketing, and advertising) integrated into existing marketing resources and capabilities to propel businesses and grow brands. As a result, factors and constructs derived from such research demonstrate, based on novel theory and methodology that observes the change of consumer behavior and social psychology to blend with digital trends, creating a hybrid form in a new marketing era.

However, there is a little anecdotal evidence focusing on business performance results by leveraging digital marketing resources and capabilities in the specific context of industrial businesses (Cambra-Fierro *et al.*, 2021; Rangaswamy *et al.*, 2020; Reinartz *et al.*, 2019). The research and interest point to a set of factors in relation to the business context environment of digitalization: consensus of resource utilization, business capabilities required, and a balanced and exploitative strategy related to DTs. Indeed, action research with a long-term study focus is required to pursue action and observe research outcomes at the same time. Thus, this research addresses the gap and ambiguity between the digital marketing resources, capabilities, and the business's performance. Despite the growing evidence that DMCs can serve as a basis for competitive advantage (Knudsen *et al.*, 2021), many researchers agree that the outcomes of business performance and customer satisfaction through a full investment in digital marketing adoption by businesses still remain a mystery. This could be because digital marketing embodies a multifaceted nature, culture, and process that is related to advanced technological mechanisms, resulting in an unclear understanding of its resources and capabilities as evolved by businesses. Moreover, due to the phenomenon's intricacy, not all of the factors and constructs of its capabilities have been thoroughly examined and investigated.

This study attempts to answer the research objectives by conceptually reviewing the literature to deepen the understanding of DMCs at the business level and making three contributions: (1) to examine and integrate findings from empirical studies on the antecedents and consequences of digital marketing resources and capabilities at the business level; (2) to present a parsimonious way to identify and classify the DMCs by employing the RBV theory perspective; and (3) to provide a conceptual framework that addresses future research.

Literature review

The implications of digital marketing research

There was evidence from several previous research indicating factors associated with DMCs (Lee *et al.*, 2019a; Ricci *et al.*, 2020). The organization's resources, capabilities, and outcomes have been well investigated in the new era of digital marketing context over the past year. Initial efforts in academia have been devoted to studying such digital platform adoption with a potentially powerful conceptual framework that expands business owners' knowledge

frontier. At the same time, the research conducted and highlighted by practitioners is usually associated with practical tasks, as the starting point of most digital capacity-building begins with the impact of digital transformation on business performance. Organizations choose the best digital tools and latest technologies. There were many digital marketing research areas in different contexts, as shown in Table 1. Digital marketing research was shaped into five areas:

- (1) *SM and marketing tools* — related to digital marketing fundamental elements and tools that foster the marketing activities and processes including online and offline channels (Dolega *et al.*, 2021), multi-channels/platforms (Lee *et al.*, 2019a, b), e-marketing/commerce as well as the method of monitoring, measurements, and analysis tools (Chinakidzwa and Phiri, 2020).
- (2) *Strategy* related to the combination of marketing strategy and technology to create digital transformation strategies with comprehensive planning that accounts for every single solution. Marketing alliances and supply chain, marketing ecosystem, business model transition, and innovation have all been thoroughly investigated, as has identifying and outlining the resource requirements supporting digital marketing strategy. Key elements of a digital transformation framework have also been proposed by integrating DTs with the current business strategy (Ageron *et al.*, 2020; Bicen *et al.*, 2021; Chinakidzwa and Phiri, 2020; Ritter and Pedersen, 2020; Zhang and Watson Iv, 2020).
- (3) *Relationship* — related to the new emergence of collaborative environment where recently studies typically emphasize upon the process of interaction and engagement between business and its customers (i.e. B2C and B2B) (Busca and Bertrandias, 2020). Research’s digital posture initially focused on the virtual (online) community, which is commonly focused on establishing an online group to facilitate transparency in communication by using SM channels to connect with prospects and establish meaningful relationships with existing customers. The digital framework of communication and collaboration was developed and proposed to academics and practitioners in the digital relationship era, where such frameworks have been applied and customized in traditional CRM and loyalty programs by integrating them with DT and analytical tools. As a result, individual customer data is becoming the predominant resource for the development of relationships.
- (4) *Leadership* — related to the research on management styles and leadership of business owners or top executives’ management. The ability to lead, motivate, and coordinate activities, coupled with the management of a set of tasks that ensure the fulfillment of the business’s mission in the digital era, has been well conducted

Publications	Candidates	Selected	Publications	Candidates	Selected
Journal of Business Research	52	17	Technological Forecasting and Social Change	8	3
Industrial Marketing Management	48	13	Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	7	2
Journal of Interactive Marketing	14	3	International Journal of Information Management	7	2
Journal of Marketing	10	2	Information and Management	6	2
International Journal of Research in Marketing	10	2	Relevant publications (others)	30	9
Procedia CIRP	8	2	Total	143	57

Table 1. Number of publications related to the study

(Chinakidzwa and Phiri, 2020). Yet, there are still some issues regarding the capacity of leaders to manage digital marketing resources and capabilities at operational and managerial levels (i.e. what leadership traits and skills are most valued in the digital marketing era in a different business context) (Chesbrough, 2020; Mikalef *et al.*, 2020). This is considerable as a gap, and need to be proven.

- (5) *Digital technology* — related to the research on new and upgraded technology that fosters businesses' marketing programs and strategy. Such technologies will be a game changer for changing customer behavior and can create data-driven marketing. Such data will be customized and devised for business marketing strategy purposes and brand communications. This largely requires a level of sophisticated knowledge regarding an in-depth understanding of the digital marketing process. Research on DTs incorporating marketing disciplines is considered by many businesses as the potential elements and resources that coordinate and integrate all the activities performed by employees into a seamless process (Chu *et al.*, 2019). Unsurprisingly, as such, its digital posture is mostly a function of its organizational IT capabilities. Digital transformation nurtures digital organization strategy, leading to process improvement and modularization.

Classification of DMCs using resource-based view (RBV)

In the strategic and digital marketing literature, businesses compete and can attain a competitive advantage through their business resources and capabilities (Barney, 1991). The RBV has been extensively fulfilled and highlights the impact of DT on business marketing strategy, practices, processes, and information flow, together with business resources and capabilities to accommodate and adapt to such technologies (Ali *et al.*, 2019). In this sense, DMCs emphasize more the specific marketing resources and capabilities between the alignment of new DT and business process (Chinakidzwa and Phiri, 2020).

Despite growing research interests and research efforts in this area in recent years, there still remains a gap in knowledge of DT-enabled business capabilities, particularly digital transformation triggered by DT and a new form of other Internet-related technologies combined with marketing practices. RBV offers a valuable framework to investigate business strategies (Barney, 1986; Grant, 1991). In contrast to traditional business resources, digital resources in digital marketing have been defined as electronic data inputs with a sense of value creation in order to capitalize on digital marketing opportunities and make them more valuable contributions to the business. Such data, in turn, creates capabilities that are able to gain competitive advantage and superior performance. This study defines "digital marketing capability" as a specific set of qualifications of business capacity supported by technological skills and processes designed to access and utilize current and prospective customer data both online and offline that allows more effectiveness in identifying, interacting, and engaging with customers to create detailed customer profiles and marketing values in a digital business environment. The combination of capability and skills, therefore, defines the business's level of competency and how well business can cooperatively work with DTs. Indeed, businesses with non-technical IT/marketing researchers who lack understanding of data analytics and management could have confronted the difficulty of learning such knowledge and skills, not just technically, but also strategically and operationally. While other studies have similarly sought to conceptualize DMCs, this study is different, as this study not only includes marketing capability, but similarly incorporates a dimension related to both contingency factors and DTs that represent DMCs. As a supplement to studies of DMC's efforts, this study identified four types of fundamental capability traits related to DMCs, including (1) SM marketing capability, (2) digital marketing strategy, (3) digital relationship, and (4) leadership capability.

Social media marketing capability. Most of the recent research on DMCs falls under the initial aspects of SM marketing capabilities, which are the customer contact points or the mediums through which the business and its current and prospective customers interact (Muninger *et al.*, 2019; Tarsakoo and Charoensukmongkol, 2020). In the digital era, Luxton *et al.* (2015) suggest that the capabilities of SM marketing must extend beyond just SM advertising. The capacity to integrate with multiple channels in both offline and online e-market business environments (i.e. Omni channels) could provide more engagement from consumers. Business-to-business (B2B) must have a web portal in order to create a new resource of a data type that enables value co-creation activities and practices that competitors cannot replicate. At the same time, business-to-customer (B2C) relies on the specific engagement channels with marketing-sensing capability to scan the environment, market, and customer behavior trends on a daily basis to identify business opportunities to compete in the market (Chinakidzwa and Phiri, 2020). As a result, the forming of online community groups, especially during events, results in new capabilities that can be utilized for competitive advantage.

Digital marketing strategy. Research on digital marketing strategy along with the discussion of the best practices for strategic assimilation of DT has gathered significant attention in the literature over the past year (Busca and Bertrandias, 2020; Omenugha, 2018; Zhang *et al.*, 2020). It involves the business's marketing strategy planning to improve and execute its existing marketing capabilities while incorporating DT presences. Obviously, past studies have attempted to discuss the concept of dynamic and adaptive marketing capabilities, which are aimed at finding new business marketing capabilities that competitors cannot easily imitate (Cao *et al.*, 2019; Hershanty and Jafrizal, 2021). Resources and competencies for customer acquisition, channel integration, customer and lead conversion process, dynamic strategic and capabilities, digital strategic alliances, strategic co-value creation/innovativeness for customer experience, and digital marketing ecosystem—are examples of digital marketing strategy options (Banerjee and Bhardwaj, 2019; Bicen *et al.*, 2021; Chinakidzwa and Phiri, 2020; Herhausen *et al.*, 2020; Olson *et al.*, 2021). Digital marketing strategy relates to marketing strategy and digital marketing execution, which affects business performance (Chinakidzwa and Phiri, 2020). As such, a failure to properly formulate a digital marketing strategy can result in missed opportunities in its digital marketing transformation, narrow integration of new technology into the existing business system, insufficient seamless process, and being unable to develop metrics for accessing digital marketing efforts. Thus, building strategic foresight with dynamic capabilities to cope with environmental uncertainty is perceived as a critical capability (Haarhaus and Liening, 2020). Previous research suggests that it makes no sense to expend business marketing resources on a digital marketing strategy if businesses do not measure its benefits at the same time. As a result, both tangible and intangible benefits derived from digital marketing strategies are difficult to measure and the cause-and-effect cannot be clearly identified; for example, whether an improvement in company performance is actually a result of the digital marketing strategy itself or rather of its SM features.

Digital relationship. Digital relationship capability relates to business capacity management, which is a precursor of superior relationship value creation between businesses and all actors (stakeholders) whose efforts are mutually reinforcing (Dey *et al.*, 2020; Kozak *et al.*, 2021; Matarazzo *et al.*, 2021; Mazzola and Perrone, 2013; Schneckenberg *et al.*, 2021). It is a dynamic relationship mechanism with the stability of an interpersonal relationship for bonding and relationship building in a more condensed form (Saeed *et al.*, 2015). DTs can initially help businesses assimilate the new environment of relationships with customers and information speed, become more trustworthy and relationship-consolidated, and increase their chances of collaboration in both offline and virtual networks (Yawised *et al.*, 2017). This leads to the cultivation of individual loyalty because DTs generate new kinds of practices, including uncovering, appropriating, and cultivating (Morgan-Thomas

et al., 2020) at individual levels (Kozak *et al.*, 2021) and professional (multi-stakeholders) levels (Schiavone *et al.*, 2021).

Leadership capability. A leader's capability is devoted to a leader's ability to articulate a visionary digital value proposition and evaluate how DTs, information, and marketing practices can enhance a business's existing assets, networks, resources, and capabilities to create new customer value. If a leader does not understand the essence of such movements and their (short and long-term planning) objectives, strategies, implementations, technologies, resources, and capabilities, the adoption of such initiatives will not be successful (Mkansi, 2021). This statement is supported by much scholarly attention that leaders need to efficiently lead, highlight responsibilities and procedures for each department and person, and support their team in order to deal with the management changes brought about by DTs (Felix *et al.*, 2017; Krings *et al.*, 2021; Olson *et al.*, 2021; Saura, 2021). Then, after those strategic digital marketing frameworks are in place, it is time to look for the DT solution. Through a contemporary lens, the idea that outsourcing was once viewed as such a reliable source and a successful method has become skeptical of its implementation (Mazumder and Garg, 2021).

Methodology

This study conducted a systematic literature review to explore the capabilities that underpin digital marketing in the private business sector. The main goal was to identify and classify all critical DMCs together with a conceptual framework to examine related constructs in future research. Consistent with other systematic reviews, this study limited the literature review to high quality sources using Scopus and Web of Science databases and covered the period 2012–2021 (Herhausen *et al.*, 2020). All sources needed to explicitly fall within the scope of marketing and information systems (IS), technology, and innovation to ensure that all articles included met a threshold of quality as determined by journal centrality and academic standing. Consistent with other systematic reviews conduct by Herhausen *et al.* (2020), to ensure that all papers included fulfilled a quality criterion defined by journal centrality and academic status, all sources had to expressly fit within the area of marketing and information systems (IS). A search with a related keyword to this study at the origin of the research publication found 200 research publications meeting the expected criteria. The keywords “digital marketing capabilities”, “digital marketing”, “digital technology (AR, VR, AI, etc.)”, “social media” and “e-marketing” were combined with “business capability”, “business/SMEs transformation”, “business innovation”, and “marketing innovation capability” to search for the abstract, title, and keywords of the journal articles. Of 200 research publications, there are 143 research publications that fit the body of context for the research objectives. The preliminary articles selected employs a key criterion where the exclude articles includes (1) non-full version articles, (2) conferences, book chapters, and reports, (3) non-English language, (4) incomplete research, and (5) non-related topics and non-theoretical support.

After conducting more studies in 143 research publications, we obtained 57 research publications that can be used in this study. The extraction of detailed data is found in Table 1. Three strategies for qualitative data analysis were applied, a thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun and Clarke, 2006) by applying the principles of grounded theory approach (Corbin and Strauss, 1990; Strauss and Corbin, 1990) was used to analyze the qualitative topics, contents, and findings data of the selected literature as follows:

Firstly, the categorization strategy of coding enables the researcher to extract new data or codes from the text and group them into categories in order to generate themes. Ideally, it all starts with the creation of categories for data segments that facilitate data analysis and allow comparisons within and between groups. Categorization was implemented in this study through the creation of a table that collects information on each paper regarding the author(s) and year of publication. Based on this table, the literature papers were classified according to the primary objectives and research gaps of this study, as shown in Table 2.

Contingency variables	Digital marketing research area	Classification of digital marketing capability	Performances	
			Customer's satisfaction	Business's performance
<p>Environment (Eze <i>et al.</i>, 2020)</p> <p>Technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Social networking sites -Applications -Smartphone -Internet use -Websites (Eze <i>et al.</i>, 2020) <p>Customer's behavioral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Age/gender, and generation (Mulier <i>et al.</i>, 2021) -Online shopping -E-commerce -e-Payment (Bezhovski, 2016) (Eze <i>et al.</i>, 2020) <p>Business context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Size -Sector -Age of operation -International market (Katsikeas <i>et al.</i>, 2020; Y. Lee <i>et al.</i>, 2019) -Type of market (B2B, B2C, etc.) (Gunasekaran <i>et al.</i>, 2017) (Klings <i>et al.</i>, 2021) 	<p>1. Social media platforms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Digital marketing traits -Content marketing, -Influencer marketing, -Search Engine Optimization (SEO), -Social media online advertising, -Affiliate Marketing, -Pay-Per-Click (PPC), -E-mail marketing, -Game advertising, -Website traffic, (Dolega <i>et al.</i>, 2021) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● E-market sensing capability (Chimakidzwa & Phiri, 2020) ● Social media analytics (Olson <i>et al.</i>, 2021) ● Multichannel/ Omni-channel capabilities (Z. W. Y. Lee <i>et al.</i>, 2019) ● IT/marketing analytics capability (Cao <i>et al.</i>, 2019) ● Video content capability (Mulier <i>et al.</i>, 2021) <p>2. Digital marketing strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Digital market innovation (Chimakidzwa & Phiri, 2020) ● Digital marketing alliances (Bicen <i>et al.</i>, 2021) ● Digital supply chain coordination 	<p>1. Social media marketing Capability: (Muninger <i>et al.</i>, 2019; Tarsakoo & Charoensukmongkol, 2020)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Channels -Single (Multi) channel -Integrated marketing channel (IMC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Contents -Uniqueness -Engagement/attractiveness -Mavens (Kapoor <i>et al.</i>, 2018) ● Smartphone -Analytics -Prediction/sensing -Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016) ● Embedded financial transaction -Payment transaction -One click purchasing (Yao <i>et al.</i>, 2018) <p>2. Digital marketing strategy: Innovation capability: (Chimakidzwa & Phiri, 2020; Herhausen <i>et al.</i>, 2020; Olson <i>et al.</i>, 2021)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Resources and competencies of customer acquisition (Degbey & Pelto, 2021) ● Channels integration capabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Customer lifetime Value (CLV) (Cambra-Fierro <i>et al.</i>, 2021) -Customer Referral Value (CRV) (word of mouth) (Liu <i>et al.</i>, 2021) -Customer relationship performance (Tarsakoo & Charoensukmongkol, 2020) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Brand equity (Kauschnabel <i>et al.</i>, 2019) -Value equity Customer equity (Ho & Chung, 2020) -Robust social media strategy integrated with innovation process. (Muninger <i>et al.</i>, 2019) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Business expansion -Business diversity -Return on investment (Eze <i>et al.</i>, 2020) -Sales growth,

(continued)

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Table 2. Classification framework of categories and sub-categories of research constructs

Contingency variables	Digital marketing research area	Classification of digital marketing capability	Customer's satisfaction	Performances Business's performance
	<p>(Ageron <i>et al.</i>, 2020)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Digitalization on combination of data, permission, and analytics (Ritter & Pedersen, 2020) ● Marketing ecosystem (Zhang & Watson IV, 2020) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● (Bahar <i>et al.</i>, 2021) ● Digital market innovation (Banerjee & Bhardwaj, 2019) ● Dynamic strategic and capabilities foresight (Haarhaus & Liening, 2020) ● Digital networking strategic alliances (Inigo <i>et al.</i>, 2020) ● Strategic Co-value creation and innovativeness for customer experiences (Matarazzo <i>et al.</i>, 2021) ● Digital marketing ecosystem (Morgan-Thomas <i>et al.</i>, 2020) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Market Share, -Leadership in market -Profitability (Chinakidzwa & Phiri, 2020) -Supply chain performance (SCP) with three stage process of firm assimilation test (acceptance, routinization, and assimilation) (Gunasekaran <i>et al.</i>, 2017)
	<p>3. Marketing relationship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaborative Environment (Busca & Bertrandias, 2020) ● Online community (Yuan <i>et al.</i>, 2020) ● Social CRM capability (Greenberg, 2009) ● Social media and sales-based CRM technology (Agnihotri <i>et al.</i>, 2017) ● Customer analytics-driven value creation capability (Hossain <i>et al.</i>, 2021) ● Individual communication capability (Vilanova <i>et al.</i>, 2021) 	<p>3. Digital relationship capability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● (Herhausen <i>et al.</i>, 2020) ● Customer-oriented value (Matarazzo <i>et al.</i>, 2021) ● Embedded customer journey with data-driven capabilities (Kozak <i>et al.</i>, 2021) ● Value co-creation with multi-stakeholder ecosystem (Schiafone <i>et al.</i>, 2021) ● Inside-Out and Outside-in engagement capabilities (Saied <i>et al.</i>, 2015) ● Inter-firm relationships (Mazzola & Perrone, 2013) ● Social CRM (Trainor <i>et al.</i>, 2014) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Customer satisfaction, engagement, and loyalty (Bhatti <i>et al.</i>, 2019) -Building environment that engage in customer's conversation to address specific needs (satisfaction) (Yavised <i>et al.</i>, 2017) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Interactive communication with employee improvement (Bhatti <i>et al.</i>, 2019) -Enhanced salesperson service behaviors (Agnihotri <i>et al.</i>, 2017) -Sustained competitive advantage (Hossain <i>et al.</i>, 2021)
	<p>4. Leadership in marketing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The ability to lead, manage, motivate, and coordinate activities 	<p>4. Leadership capability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● (Chinakidzwa & Phiri, 2020) ● Vision and foresight capabilities (Haarhaus & Liening, 2020) ● Innovativeness 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Promote digital transformation (Porfirio <i>et al.</i>, 2021) -Digital organizational culture (i.e., Cross-

(continued)

Table 2.

Contingency variables	Digital marketing research area	Classification of digital marketing capability	Customer's satisfaction	Business's performance
<p>(Chimakidzava & Phiri, 2020)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Managerial capabilities (Chesbrough, 2020) ● Operational capabilities (Mikalef <i>et al.</i>, 2020) 	<p>(Chimakidzava & Phiri, 2020)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Managerial capabilities (Chesbrough, 2020) ● Operational capabilities (Mikalef <i>et al.</i>, 2020) 	<p>(Degbey & Peito, 2021)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adaptability and flexibility in dynamic and uncertainty environment (Burggraf <i>et al.</i>, 2021) ● Managerial and operational Capability (Ali <i>et al.</i>, 2019) ● Capacity of management high/low risk aversion (Torugsa & Annand, 2017) 		<p>functional and cross-skills collaboration (Cortellazzo <i>et al.</i>, 2019)</p> <p>-A virtual environment of employees' work performance (Bartsch <i>et al.</i>, 2021)</p>
<p>5. Digital technologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Data science (analytics) (Syam & Sharma, 2018) ● Artificial intelligence (AI) (Syam & Sharma, 2018) ● Deep learning (Ma & Sun, 2020) ● Machine learning (Ma & Sun, 2020) ● Big data assimilation (Gunasekaran <i>et al.</i>, 2017) ● Business intelligence (BI) (Caseiro & Coelho, 2019) ● Virtual Reality usage (VR) (Bellalouna, 2021) ● Augmented Reality usage (AR) (Rauschmabel <i>et al.</i>, 2019) ● Internet of things (IOT) (Sestino <i>et al.</i>, 2020) ● A bibliometric network analysis (Krishen <i>et al.</i>, 2021) ● Blockchain technology in digital era. (Pan <i>et al.</i>, 2020) 	<p>5. Digital technologies, transformation, and Innovation (Herhausen <i>et al.</i>, 2020)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● API-bridge between big data and digital marketing (Wolf & Blohm, 2020) ● Digital transformations (Wang & Wang, 2020) ● All in one integrated system -ERP system -Process oriented (core system easily integrated with third party application both in cloud and on premise) (Schneckenberg <i>et al.</i>, 2021) (Demi & Haddara, 2018) 			<p>-IT capabilities supports digital transformation and innovation to create firm's performance. (Hershamty & Jafrizal, 2021)</p> <p>-Product life cycle (Bellalouna, 2021)</p> <p>-Business intelligence (BI) capability impacted network learning and innovativeness of startup business (Caseiro & Coelho, 2019)</p>

Table 2.

Secondly, after classification of publications related to the relevance of constructs and variables, an integrative framework was constructed (see Figure 1). This strategy was applied to identify whether those categories were determinants, dimensions, or outcomes of business performance by considering the context in which the categories were studied. This step allows developing a model of the causal connections among the categories, leading to a main theme that is presented in the proposed conceptual model framework and future research direction section. The framework has four main building blocks. The first one is related to the external factors (contingency variables) dimensions affecting DMCs. The second comprises the main capability determinants of digital marketing. The third is related to DTs, which may indirectly affect business performance. The fourth encompasses the consequences of DMCs.

The last strategy is identifying themes, where this process involves paraphrasing or summarizing each piece of categorization, changing the classification of a node, and entering information into the unconscious, as well as consciously processing the information (Boyatzis, 1998). Ideally, the categories from the second stage were collated and accrued to form subthemes of similar phenomena, leading to a main theme. Of note, at this stage, the researcher had not simply coded every related capability into a single theme but rather had created sub themes (coding the various dimensions relating to each theme).

Dimensions of DMCs framework

As mentioned earlier, previous studies have conceptualized DMCs as comprising just relevant resources, capabilities, and the process of implementation of such initiatives. As a consequence, most such studies have examined DMCs as a unidimensional construct, which means that other essential aspects, such as unanticipated variables and changes, are neglected. The difference in measurement of business performance based on the different bodies of research contexts leads to the difficulty of comparing findings across studies, resulting in mixed conclusions. It raised the question of whether some of the factors are determinants of DMCs and have a positive effect on business performance.

According to Figure 2, DMCs are related to the internal business’s ability to impact the creation of new capabilities in various forms. Based on RBV theory, resources and capabilities are the basic building blocks for digital marketing. Making the best use of a business’s resources and capabilities is a foundation for business success. This implies that

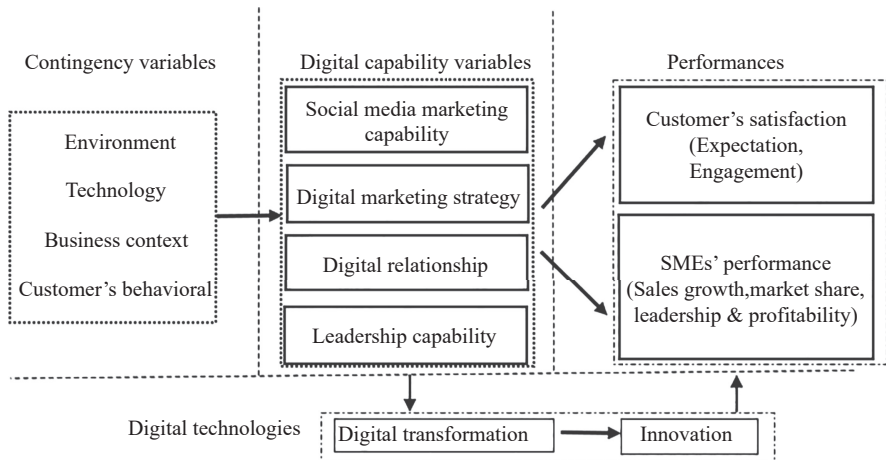


Figure 1.
An integrative
framework of DMCs
related to research
variables

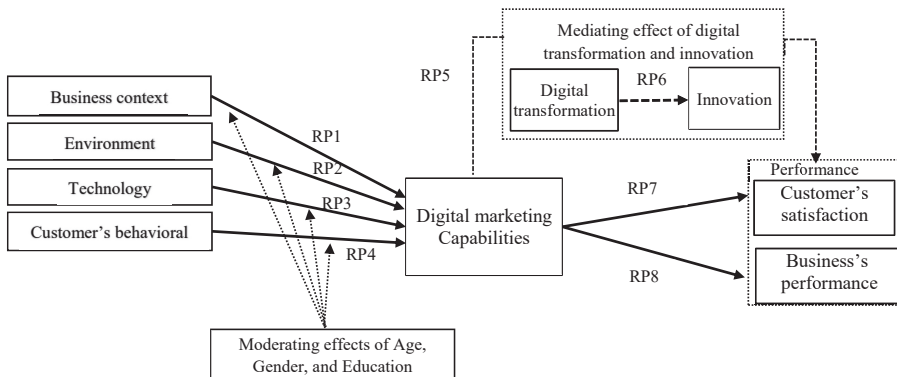


Figure 2. Dimensions of digital marketing capabilities framework

businesses use numerous SM platforms for SM marketing, which might not be a guarantee of success. The development of new digital marketing capabilities revolves around the ability to be more customer-centric, employee and people-oriented communications, streamline, agile, and be able to rapidly diagnose customer challenges by leveraging opportunities to change the status quo and tap into big data and predictive analytics, increasingly unstructured data sources, and create a service-driven revenue ecosystem, with the internet of Things (IoTs) as a vita. Indeed, such new competencies require DT to collaborate with IT knowledge to create algorithm-based solutions. Businesses that have such capabilities largely emphasize technology processes rather than using general tools to engage with audiences. Consequently, whatever the change in technology, market environment, or customers' behavior, businesses have the ability to adapt in the process of researching and implementing in the long run.

Apart from the digital marketing capability construct, this study also proposes related other variables for future examination, including internal and external major consistency variables, including business context, environment, technology, customer behaviors, digital transformation and innovation, and business performance as follows.

Business context

These types of variables are related to industrial context and are characteristic of the business in terms of size, sector, and the degree of customer involvement. This includes target market type (e.g. B2C, B2B, etc.) and a supply chain environment that is growing in uncertainty and complexity.

Environment

A market environment or business environment is related to a competitive, social, cultural, and policy environment. The changing of competition structures leads to the competitive struggles for survival and how businesses can overcome this problem. In particular, the ability of adaptability and flexibility to respond rapidly to changes in the business environment primarily reflects the managerial decisions of business owners and their employees.

Technology

This dimension not only refers to the capacity to adopt new technologies due to the technological changes that have occurred in any industrial sector but also includes new marketing approaches by using advanced technology and creating effective business

processes with an innovative mindset. Thus, a business's capacity to react to technological developments in such a way that such a leader tends to offer adequate resources, encourage the attitude of technology acceptance among staff, perform risk aversion management, and give the required training for efficient digital marketing implementation.

Customer's behaviors

This type of variable is highly connected to changing consumer attitudes and behaviors for a variety of reasons towards consumption. Resulting in organizational behaviors and actions being changed towards an individual customer focus based on what the customer wants and what else the business knows about that customer.

Digital transformation and innovation

This type of transformation and innovation involves the creation of new business models and processes with the integration of DTs. Specifically, DTs, including big data, data science analytics, AR, VR, cloud computing, SM/smartphone platforms, and any business intelligence (BI) solutions, are driving innovations that are changing business models and reinvesting the way businesses operate. Digital transformation refers to the changes built on the foundation of DTs, ushering in unique changes in business operations, business processes, and value creation. Digital transformation is not considered as the upgrade of technology into a business, which is the use of DTs to increase efficiency and effectiveness in business processes and performance. Whereas, digital transformation occurs when DTs are used to radically change the overall business processes and operations, value creation, and in some cases, new digital product offerings.

Business performance

This type of variable refers to the performance of any business that embraces a digital marketing strategy and process. It is a measurement process of how well the business is able to meet its goals and strategies compared with its competitors. As expected, there is a lot of research indicating that business performance in the digital marketing era can be normally classified into two main areas of assessment (as shown in [Table 2](#)); tangible and intangible performance. Tangible performances include revenue, growth, market (share) values ([Chinakidzwa and Phiri, 2020](#)), return on investment (ROI) and business expansion ([Eze et al., 2020](#)), and assimilation process of digital marketing adoption ([Gunasekaran et al., 2017](#)). At the same time, intangible performances include customer's satisfaction in terms of loyalty ([Bhatti et al., 2019](#)), relationship performance ([Tarsakoo and Charoensukmongkol, 2020](#)) and building the environment of conversation engagement ([Yawised et al., 2017](#)), Customer lifetime Value (CLV) ([Cambra-Fierro et al., 2021](#)), Customer Referral Value (CRV) (word of mouth) ([Liu et al., 2021](#)).

Previous research evidence suggests that businesses that have successfully applied digital marketing are superior at generating revenue using their existing resources ([Wielgos et al., 2021](#)). Hence, businesses that have embraced DT are able to effectively utilize the pervasive digital connections and communications among principal partners within the value chain.

Discussions and themes for future research

According to [Figure 2](#), the proposed framework is presented to describe the themes for future research suggestions using RBV as a theoretical lens in determining and investigating the DMCs. With the limitations of the current state of research and empirical evidence that needs to be investigated and supported, this study builds a future research agenda of emerging

research topics related to digital capabilities in the industrial marketing field to create points of connection between academia and practice.

- (1) Research theme 1: “Uncertainty”—Research on DMCs should focus on specific external factors that impact on the transition from marketing capabilities to digital marketing capabilities

The “Uncertainty” theme related to doubts, concerns and uncertainty about the formulation of DMCs stemming from the changes in external business environment which had led to business reluctance to fully embrace digital marketing as central to their business marketing process. Consequently, business strategy regarding digital marketing has been relatively ad hoc, superficial, and usually not supported by a formal integrated marketing strategy and DT framework. Thus, the DMCs are properly unidentified and classified. Thus, research on digital strategies should be clear about how marketing capability is defined and what its nature is. As such, a strategy for digital marketing is vital for developing a business’s marketing capabilities since it gives them guidance on the decisions, functions, and work needed to adapt to the environment and improve performance. There are different strategies that a business can adopt. For example, proactiveness allows businesses to have a more flexible structure that simultaneously enables digital marketing. Since businesses can adopt distinct strategies and marketing capabilities, it is necessary to further examine whether specific external factors (e.g. business context (PR1), environment (RP2), technology (RP3), and customer behavior (RP4)) are better for the development of DMCs. Thus, Research Proposal 1 to 4 are proposed, together with the moderating effects of age, gender, and education (from business owners) on the relationship between external factor variables and DMCs, should be examined. Expectedly, such contingency variables would impact the creation of specific DMCs based on different business contexts.

Research theme 2: “Transition”— Research on DMCs should focus on what specific capabilities that is supported from DTs and impacts on digital transformation.

The “Transition” theme related to an approach to transitioning individuals, employees, teams and organizational culture, and business operational processes. In this sense, initial marketing capabilities could be transformed to fully integrate sustainability into every step of marketing process by using DTs to bridge a gap and to guide business owners and managers on how to create such new capabilities that are not imitable by competitors. DMCs will illustrate the starting points of new business transitions for some businesses. For example, the capacity of a big data infrastructure for unstructured marketing data and the analytics machine system (predictive analysis) to generate new individual/profile data for marketing purposes. Such capabilities would be more leveraged to handle big data, characterized in terms of high volume, velocity, and variety in the industrial, technological, and financial sectors. Furthermore, the use of VR and AR tools, voice searching, deep/machine learning, and IoTs incorporating block chain technology would create a data journey with multiple connected intermediary goals that aspires to ubiquitous optimization across processes, divisions, and the business ecosystem in a hyper-connected future where the proper bridges must be created (between front end and back office, data from “things” and decisions, people, teams, culture, technologies, various players in ecosystems, etc.) in function of that journey is key to succeed. This absolutely requires the role of business owner-managers in capability building and structuring the resource portfolio using the particular processes so that creative and innovative operational and managerial skills are necessary. All the investigation of such factors mentioned above has enabled businesses to ascend on the path towards progress and acquire huge support for DT uptake. Thus, Research Proposal 5 is proposed to explain the influence of DMCs on business performance through the mediating

effect of digital transformation and innovation. Research Proposal 6, which focuses on whether which digital transformations (created by DMCs) will drive future innovation value.

Research theme 3: “Performance”— Research on DMCs should focus on what specific capabilities that impact on business performance

The “Performance” theme related to the approach of measurement and assessment of DMCs created by the business, which such capabilities will drive future value and have an impact on the business’s performance. Such new marketing capabilities would develop from digital SM tools, digital marketing strategy, leadership, digital relationships, and any specific DTs. Table 3 demonstrates a sample of DMCs that need to be assessed in terms of their business performance. Such capabilities in this study developed from the previous section are classified into three main areas: operational, managerial, and collaboration capabilities based on business context and marketing purposes. Thus, the Research Proposal 7 and 8 are proposed. Each capability must be examined with a specific outcome in terms of customer satisfaction or business performance. Defining levels of proficiency in each capability must be specifically discussed and presented to distinguish between tangible and intangible outcomes (business performances) in a business context. The assimilation framework of such capabilities adoption that distinct ties at different hierarchical levels have on particular types of capabilities in a business should be investigated also. This requires action research along with multiple case studies (for those who have already adopted digital marketing presence) to demonstrate the business outcomes of such an initiative’s adoption.

Conclusion

This study presents the results of systematic evaluation of relevant literature at the business level, this study attempts to expand our understanding of digital marketing capabilities. In accomplishing this, this study begins with the present, a parsimonious way to identify and classify the traditional marketing capabilities and DMCs by employing RBV theory perspective. Using the qualitative method and grounded theory approach, 57 relevant journals were analyzed through the development of themes. A propose of DMCs framework was constructed along with the implication of future research direction. The findings suggested that the future studies can focus on investigating on more business capabilities that already engaging in DT to extract more antecedent insight of DMCs. Indeed, this

Table 3.
Relevance of digital marketing capabilities for businesses (B2C and B2B)

Operational capabilities	Managerial capabilities	Collaboration capabilities
Digital integrated business website	Online management capabilities across multiple channel and measurement capabilities	Digital Social CRM technologies
Multiple channel integration capabilities	Capacity of management high/low risk aversion	Online community engagement
Digital individual profile development	Data and information management journey capabilities	Digital communication engagement
Leads, audience, prospective customers, and current customers creation system	Adaptability and flexibility in dynamic and uncertainty environment	Value co-creation with multi-stakeholder ecosystem
Digital analytics technologies for structure and unstructured data	Shared-vision and strategic linked capabilities	Inter-firm relationships capabilities
Data-driven capabilities and visualization	Front-end/back-end development capabilities	Resources/ideas sharing capabilities
Developing/recruiting digital staff talent capabilities		Dynamic strategic capabilities

required on more empirical results regarding on the matters from both academics and practitioners in the area of marketing and IT strands.

The novel of contribution of this study places on both theoretical and practical levels. On theoretical level, the proposed framework shows the main determinants and consequences of DMCs' uptake that need to be addressed in the future. The research gap, themes coupled with relevant research proposals that future studies was provided based on RBV theory. On practical level, the results of this study can help businesses (i.e. business owner-managers, practitioners, policy makers in both marketing and IT strands) of all sizes and industries identify the root causes of their DMC presences and improve their knowledge of digital marketing for businesses.

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