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Adoption of Digital Marketing in Small and Medium Scale Enterprises

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Abstract

In this era, economic growth is getting faster because of the use of technology, but there is a gap between large and small-scale businesses due to differences in opportunities to participate and develop digital marketing strategies. SMEs are expected to help the economic growth of a country. The study was performed on the topic of "Adoption of Digital Marketing in Small and Medium Scale Enterprises." The purpose of this study is to explore the adoption of digital marketing by small and medium scale enterprises by using Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The responses were taken from 227 small and medium scale enterprises. The data that has been collected is then analyzed by reliability test. The research approach adopted for the study conforms to descriptive research as it reviews the literature on the influence of digital marketing among small and medium scale enterprises. The results revealed that out of 227 SME, only 61 small and medium scale enterprises are using digital marketing strategies for their business. Using simple linear regression, it is found that perceived ease of use has an impact on perceived usefulness and behavioral intention to use the technology has an impact on actual usage of digital marketing.

Keywords: Digital marketing, small and medium scale enterprises, social media, Websites

1. Introduction

The Internet has dominated daily life over the past few decades, enabling endless amounts of information, while widespread consumer adoption of smart mobile devices has put the Internet in everyone's pocket and the social media revolution has completely changed consumer behaviour and the relationship between consumers and businesses (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016). These technology advancements caused a significant revolution in marketing, giving rise to a new strategy known as "digital marketing," which is defined as the use of digital channels to promote goods and services and reach consumers. Using websites, mobile devices, social media, search engines, and other like channels are all part of this sort of marketing. Digital marketing campaigns have become commonplace, combining SEO, SEM, content marketing, social media marketing, e-commerce, email marketing, affiliate marketing, and other strategies. This is because digital platforms have become more and more integrated into marketing strategies and daily life, and because more people use digital devices than physical stores. Changing the face of industries globally, digital marketing is an ever-evolving beast that spreads its tentacles into every single procedure that companies have used for decades. Companies have adopted artificial intelligence, cognitive computing skills, and other new technologies as a result of the digital transformation of marketing, which enables businesses to realize huge gains. Despite the well-known advantages of digital marketing, little is understood about it by small businesses because most of the literature on the subject concentrates on big firms and organizations (Celuch and Murphy, 2010; Jarvinen et al., 2012; Michaelidou et al., 2011). Small and medium-sized businesses (SME), particularly in developing nations, are crucial to most economies, according to the World Bank. Small enterprises account for the bulk of companies globally and have a significant impact on the employment situation. Around 50% of jobs worldwide are held by SMEs, which make up about 90% of all firms. Up to 40% of the national revenue (GDP) in emerging nations is provided by formal SMEs. Due of their significant economic impact, SME have been a subject of study and a top focus for many governments because of their important economic contribution and the number of people they employ. The

owners of small and medium-sized businesses "develop, change, and evolve their marketing activity intelligence through social media use," while large businesses are expected to have websites that are also mobile-friendly and can hire outside experts to manage search engine optimization projects and social media marketing firms to implement and run social media campaigns. Many major companies outsource some or all of their digital marketing tasks, but some small companies don't even have websites, usually because of cost limitations. The amount of money allocated to digital marketing depends on the firm's current marketing plans and expected returns. The lack of such a strategy broadens the range of situations in which small firms could benefit from engaging in and building a digital marketing strategy. . The purpose of this study is to explore small and medium scale businesses adoption of digital marketing by using Technology Acceptance Model (TAM).

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

SMEs are recognised as a significant source of employment creation. SMEs are sources of revenue for low- and middle-income nations around the world (Ghanem, 2013) Businesses have been recognised as powerful forces in the fight against poverty (Singh et al., 2010). Success of SMEs is crucial for overall national and regional growth of nations (Ahi, Baronchelli, Kuivalainen, & Piantoni, 2017; Chatterjee, Kar, & Gupta, 2018; Keskin, Senturk, Sungur, & Kiris, 2010). The development of the internet and new technologies has changed the function of marketing and its application (Harrigan & Hulbert, 2011; Quinton & Simkin, 2017). Digital marketing, which is linked to a number of advantages, makes use of the power of the internet through websites, search engine marketing, digital advertising, social media and networks, emails and mobile, and e-relationship management (Keller 2009; Wymbs, 2011). These channels can be utilised to raise awareness, promote brand recognition, draw in new clients, boost customer happiness and loyalty, boost sales, and cut expenses (Brennan & Croft, 2012; Jarvinen, Tollinen, Karjaluoto, & Jayawardhena, 2012; Karjaluoto et al., 2015; Taiminen & Karjaluoto, 2015). These advantages show that SMEs who cultivate close ties with their clients could benefit greatly from embracing digital marketing (Chaffey & Smith, 2017; Wymbs, 2011). Digital platforms have the potential to support value creation and customer engagement, which are crucial to SMEs (Karjaluoto et al., 2015; Parsons, Zeisser, & Waitman, 1998; Winer, 2009; Wymbs, 2011). For instance, digital offers the functionality to develop integrated, targeted, and measurable communications, to acquire, retain, and develop deeper customer relationships (Matarazzo, Penco, Profumo, & Quaglia, 2021). Despite this potential, SMEs have not used digital marketing widely, and as a result, these advantages have not yet been completely realised (Brink, 2017; Müller, Pommeranz, Weisser, & Voigt, 2018; Taiminen & Karjaluoto, 2015). Notwithstanding the fact that these companies prefer conventional face-to-face communication methods, other factors are also at play (Jarvinen et al., 2012; Leek et al., 2019). This point is best highlighted by looking at how little social media B2B SMEs use (Brink, 2017; Michaelidou et al., 2011; Shaltoni, 2017). Because of this, these companies frequently underestimate the importance of social media and are unsure of how it might promote their businesses (Michaelidou et al., 2011). Also, they frequently lack the necessary technological expertise and resources, struggle to calculate ROI, and encounter difficulties implementing the more modern business strategies required by social media (Jarvinen et al., 2012; Jussila, Karkkainen & Aramo-Immonen, 2014). The size of a company is a significant determinant of the adoption of technology channels that support digital marketing, according to (Pollak; Markovic, 2021). Generally speaking, smaller businesses have the lowest level of tool adoption, whereas larger businesses have more resources and expertise to do so. Moreover, (Pradhan; Nigam; Tiwari, 2020) identified aversion to change, a lack of specialised knowledge in ICTs, and insufficient information about its application as potential barriers to the adoption of digital marketing. Small businesses encounter more difficulties than larger companies since they have fewer managerial, technical, financial, and time resources, in contrast to larger companies that encourage the use of digital marketing. SMEs face difficulties in providing value to customers because of the organisational culture. Success stories must be communicated in order to motivate managers to embrace technological change and to encourage it among their staff (Real; Roldan; Leal, 2014).

3. Research Methodology

DATA COLLECTION

Data were taken from 227 small and medium scale enterprises. The questionnaire was distributed to 227 small

and medium scale enterprises owners or employees belonging to Madurai, Theni, Coimbatore, Dindigul, Virudhunagar, Sankarankovil, Tirupur, Rajapalyam locations. The respondents were asked to answer questions related to adoption of digital marketing like whether they are using digital marketing strategies for their business, opinions on barriers and benefits of using digital marketing etc. Both primary data and secondary data are used for this research. The primary data is collected using structured questionnaire using 5-point scale questions. The secondary data is collected from various journals. Direct survey method is used to collect the data. The tools used in this study are regression, frequency analysis.

MEASURE

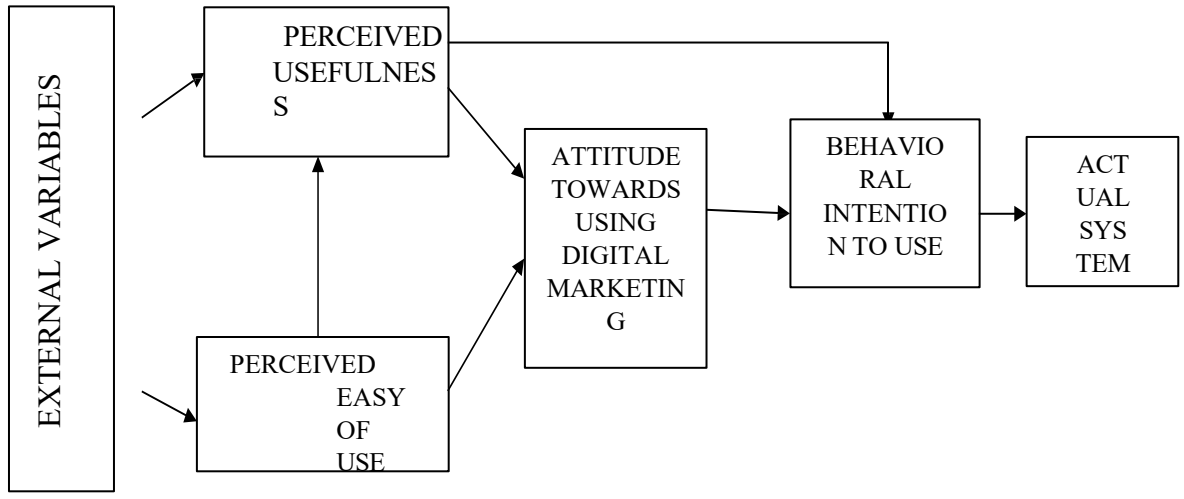
Standard scales were used in this study and measured on a 5- point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. Perceived usefulness was measured using 8 items, Perceived ease of use was measured using 6 items, Attitude was measured using 3 items, Behavioral intention to use was measured using 3 items, actual usage was measured using 2 items. Cronbach's alpha reliability value for this study is 0.745.

Reliability scores for the measurement tool used in this study

Number of items	**Sample size (Only adopters of digital marketing)**	**Cronbach's α**
22	61	0.745

4. TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTANCE MODEL

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) will address how the prospective users accept new technology. A prospective user's attitude towards adopting new technology is hypothesized to be major determinant of whether or not he or she actually uses it. Attitude toward using, in turn is a function of two beliefs: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use.



Fred D. Davis (1989)

Behavior Intention to Use

A tendency to attract users to use a given technology. The level of use of technology in a person can be predicted from the attitude of his attention to the technology, for example, the desire to add supporting peripherals, motivation to continue to use, and the desire to motivate other users (Davis, 1989). Behavioral

intention is a person's desire to carry out a certain behavior or a person's tendency to keep using certain technology.

Perceived Usefulness (PU)

Perceived usefulness is defined as a level where an individual believes that using a certain system will help improve the individual's work performance and performance (Davis, 1989). Based on this definition, it can be concluded that the benefits of using technology can help improve the performance and work performance of individuals who use it. The use of technology drives the intention to adopt digital marketing, such as knowing which sites to use and how best to use them (Lacka and Chong, 2016). Small business owners can gain initial experience using digital marketing technology through their social media accounts and then with accounts specifically for their small businesses

Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU)

Perceived ease of use is a technology that is defined as a benchmark for someone who believes that technology can be understood and used easily. A level or situation where a person believes that using a certain system does not require heavy effort (Davis, 1989). Several indicators that can be used to measure perceived ease of use include flexible, easy to learn, easy to use, and can control work. A technology that is difficult to control will provide a significantly negative level of perceived ease of use.

Attitude (AT)

Attitude is an expression of feelings, which reflects whether someone is happy or not, likes or dislikes, and agrees, or disagrees with objects and is the most important concept in the study. In the context of information system adoption, a negative attitude shows that the user will tend to refuse to use the information system, but if the attitude is positive, the user will accept the use of the information system. According to TAM, attitudes towards information systems are directly influenced by the perceptions of the users, namely the perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Attitudes as a user evaluation of their interest in using information systems (Hartono 2007). According to Hartono's research (2007), the attitude of using information systems is influenced by perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use.

5. OBJECTIVES:

1. To study the present status of adoption of digital marketing by SME.
2. To study the factors that influence the adoption of digital marketing by SME.
3. To compare the SME's opinions on benefits and barriers of using digital marketing.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic profile of the respondents

SME's details (n=227)	**Frequency**
Survey locations of SME	
Madurai	104
Theni	1
Coimbatore	47
Tirupur	68
Dindigul	1
Rajapalyam	3

Sankarankovil	2
Virudhunagar	1
Classification of company	
Small- sized company	140
Medium-sized company	87
Type of economic activities	
Industrial	24
Commercial	181
Services	22

As shown from the table, it is found that the majority of the respondents (104) belong to Madurai location. Out of 227, 140 enterprises are small-sized company and 181 enterprises are performing commercial activities.

6.1 To study the present status of adoption of digital marketing by SME

In order to study the present status of adoption of digital marketing by SME following descriptive statistics is used.

Employee details (n=301)	**Frequency**
Present status of adoption of digital marketing	
Yes	61
No	166
Reasons for not adopting digital marketing	
Not aware of	20
Inadequate staff skills	45
Lack of knowledge	15
Not affordable	59
Lack of trust	17
Not required for the business	10
Marketing strategies used by non-digital marketing adopters	
Pamphlet	60
Newspaper	14
Hoarding	0
Radio	0
Word of mouth	92
Reasons for adapting digital marketing	

Increase sales	42
Competitive pressure	1
Compete with large firm	7
Cost effective compared to traditional marketing	11
Enhance company image	12
Reach more customers	39
Track and monitor the marketing effort	4
Usage of digital marketing by SME	
Greater than 5 years	17
1 to 5 years	33
Less than 1 year	11
Type of digital marketing strategies adopted by SME	
SEO	3
Email marketing	10
Facebook content	40
Instagram content	26
Blog content	0
Create a website	33
Twitter content	6
You tube content	8
Review online analytics	0
Mobile marketing	5

From the above table, it is inferred that majority of the enterprises (166) have not adopted digital marketing for their business and the major reasons for not adopting digital marketing (59) is because they perceive it as expensive and not affordable. The majority of the non-digital marketing adopters (92) use word of mouth as their marketing strategy. The major reason for adopting digital marketing (42) by small and medium scale enterprises is to increase sales. The majority of the SME have adopted Facebook content (40) as their digital marketing strategy.

6.2 To study the factors that influence the adoption of digital marketing by SME

In order to study the factors that influence the digital marketing adoption by small and medium scale enterprises, regression test is performed.

Analysing the factors that influence SME to adopt digital marketing

In order to analyse the factors that influence the small and medium scale enterprises to accept and use digital marketing, Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is used. Simple linear regression is carried out for five factors

such as perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, Attitude, Behavioral Intention, Actual use. SPSS output was compiled and is presented in the tables given below.

6.2.1 Impact of perceived ease of use on perceived usefulness

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant impact of perceived ease of use on perceived usefulness.

Alternate Hypothesis: There is a significant impact of perceived ease of use on perceived usefulness.

Table 6.2.1 Impact of perceived ease of use on perceived usefulness

Variables	R	Reg coeff	t	R^2	Change Statistics		
					R^2	F	Significance
Perceived ease of use	0.442	0.311	3.783	0.195	0.195	14.313	0.000

While observing Table 6.2.1, it is evident that the independent variable perceived ease of use has a significant impact on perceived usefulness ($F=14.313$; $p<0.05$) explaining a variance of 19.5%. Here since, the significant value is lesser than 0.05 we accept the alternate hypothesis that there is a significant impact of perceived ease of use on perceived usefulness. This is explained by the fact that since users can promote their products or services in an easier manner through digital platform and increase sales in an efficient manner, digital marketing is perceived as useful strategy among small and medium scale enterprises.

6.2.2 Impact of perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness on attitude towards digital marketing

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant impact of perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness on attitude.

Alternate Hypothesis: There is a significant impact of perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness on attitude.

Table 6.2.2 Impact of perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness on attitude

Variables	R	Reg coeff	t	R^2	Change Statistics		
					R^2	F	Significance
Perceived ease of use	0.145	0.096	0.632	0.021	0.021	0.626	0.530
Perceived usefulness	0.145	0.118	0.548	0.021	0.021	0.626	0.585

While observing Table 6.2.2, it is evident that the independent variable perceived ease of use has no significant impact on attitude towards using digital marketing ($F=0.626$; $P>0.05$) explaining a variance of 2.1%. Here, since the significant value is greater than 0.05, we accept the null hypothesis that there is no significant impact of perceived ease of use on attitude towards using digital marketing. This is explained by the fact that even if the digital marketing platforms are perceived to be easy to use, small and enterprises attitudes towards using digital marketing does not depend on perceived ease of use.

While observing Table 6.2.2, it is evident that the independent variable perceived usefulness has no significant impact on attitude towards using digital marketing ($F=0.626$; $P>0.05$) explaining a variance of 2.1%. Here, since the significant value is greater than 0.05, we accept the null hypothesis that there is no significant impact of perceived usefulness on attitude towards using digital marketing. This is explained by the fact that even if the digital marketing platforms are perceived to be useful, small and medium scale enterprises attitude towards using digital marketing does not depend on perceived usefulness. There may be some other factors that affect the small and medium scale enterprises towards adopting the digital marketing.

6.2.3 Impact of perceived usefulness and attitude on behavioral intention to use

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant impact of perceived usefulness and attitude on behavioral intention to use.

Alternate Hypothesis: There is a significant impact of perceived usefulness and attitude on behavioral intention to use.

Table 6.2.3 Impact of perceived usefulness and attitude on behavioral intention to use

Variables	R	Reg coeff	t	R^2	Change Statistics		
					R^2	F	Significance
Perceived usefulness	0.262	0.287	1.480	0.068	0.068	2.132	0.144
Attitude towards digital marketing	0.262	0.163	1.252	0.068	0.068	2.132	0.216

While observing Table 6.2.3, it is evident that the independent variable perceived usefulness has no significant impact on behavioral intention to use the digital marketing (F=2.132; P>0.05) explaining a variance of 6.8%. Here, since the significant value is greater than 0.05, we accept the null hypothesis that there is no significant impact of perceived usefulness on behavioral intention to use. This is explained by the fact that even if the digital marketing platforms are perceived to be useful, small and medium scale enterprises intention to use digital marketing strategies does not depend on perceived usefulness.

While observing Table 6.2.3, it is evident that the independent variable attitude has no significant impact on behavioral intention to use the digital marketing (F=2.132; P>0.05) explaining a variance of 6.8%. Here, since the significant value is greater than 0.05, we accept the null hypothesis that there is no significant impact of attitude on behavioral intention to use the digital marketing. This is explained by the fact that even if small and medium scale enterprises have positive attitude towards digital marketing, their intention to use the digital marketing does not depend on the attitude towards using digital marketing. For example, Davis et al. (1989) found that the role of attitude towards usage (ATU) was only modest in predicting technology acceptance and it is possible that users may use a technology even if they do not have a positive attitude towards the technology per se as long as it is perceived to be useful or easy to use. This is supported by Teo and van Schalk (2009) who found that attitude towards computer use did not have a significant influence on intention to use.

6.2.4 Impact of behavioral intention on actual usage

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant impact of behavioral intention to use on actual usage of digital marketing.

Alternate Hypothesis: There is a significant impact of behavioral intention to use on actual usage of digital marketing.

Table 6.2.4 Impact of behavioral intention to use on actual usage of digital marketing

Variables	R	Reg coeff	t	R^2	Change Statistics		
					R^2	F	Significance
Behavioral Intention to use	0.272	0.281	2.171	0.074	0.074	4.712	0.034

While observing Table 6.2.4, it is evident that the independent variable behavioral intention to use has a

significant impact on actual usage of digital marketing ($F=4.712$; $p<0.05$) explaining a variance of 7.4%. Here since, the significant value is lesser than 0.05 we accept the alternate hypothesis that there is a significant impact of behavioral intention on actual usage of digital marketing. This is explained by the fact that since small and medium enterprises intent to use digital marketing because of its various benefits they will definitely use digital marketing for their business.

The regression equation for analysing the factors that influence the small and medium scale enterprises to adopt digital marketing is represented in the form of:

1) $Y=2.984+0.311\ X_1$

Where Y-Perceived usefulness; X_1- Perceived ease of use

2) $Y_1=5.700+0.281\ X_2$

Where Y_1- Actual usage; X_2- Behavioral intention to use

6.3 To Compare the SME's opinions on benefits and barriers of using digital marketing

In order to compare the SME's opinions on benefits and barriers of using digital marketing the following Multiple Response Analysis is performed. The result of the multiple response analysis for SMEs opinions on benefits and barriers of using digital marketing is presented in the form of table as given below.

Table 6.3.1 SME's opinions on benefits of adopting digital marketing

Frequencies				
		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Benefits of Digital marketing	Penetration into new markets	49	5.5%	21.6%
	Competitive pressure	97	10.8%	42.7%
	Improved customer services	129	14.4%	56.8%
	Reduced cost	97	10.8%	42.7%
	Provide competitive advantage	107	12.0%	47.1%
	Increased customer awareness	104	11.6%	45.8%
	Ease of operation	149	16.6%	65.6%
	Time saving	163	18.2%	71.8%
Total		895	100.0%	394.3%

Table 6.3.2 SME's opinions on barriers in adopting digital marketing

Frequencies				
		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Barriers of digital	Lack of awareness of technology	165	21.5%	72.7%

marketing	Low computer literacy	150	19.5%	66.1%
	Lack of qualified staff for online activity	145	18.9%	63.9%
	Limited financial resources	68	8.8%	30.0%
	Complexity of usage	99	12.9%	43.6%
	High cost for development of internet connection	20	2.6%	8.8%
	Inadequate communication infrastructure	75	9.8%	33.0%
	Disclosing company information	47	6.1%	20.7%
Total		**769**	**100.0%**	**338.8%**

While observing 6.3.1 and 6.3.2 it is evident that total frequency of benefits in adopting digital marketing (N=895) is greater than total frequency of barriers in adopting digital marketing (N=769). Hence it is proven that digital marketing has more benefits than barriers in adoption. Small and medium enterprises believe that the biggest benefits of using digital marketing are Time saving (163), Ease of operation (149) than traditional marketing. Small and medium enterprises also believe that the biggest barriers for adopting digital marketing are Lack of awareness of technology (165) and Low computer literacy (150).

7. FINDINGS

From the descriptive analysis, it is found that majority of the enterprises (166) have not adopted digital marketing for their business and they perceive digital marketing as expensive and so they have opted not affordable (59) as their reason. The marketing strategy used by majority of the small and medium scale enterprises is word of mouth (92). The majority of SME (42) have adopted digital marketing to increase the sales and they are using digital marketing for about 1 to 5 years. The majority of the small and medium scale enterprises (40) are using Facebook to create content as their digital marketing strategy. By performing simple linear regression, it is found that perceived ease of use has an impact on perceived usefulness about digital marketing. It is also found that behavioral intention to use the digital marketing in future has an impact on actual usage of digital marketing. By performing multiple response analysis, it is found that benefits of using digital marketing (895) are greater than barriers in adopting digital marketing (769).

8. Conclusion

Based on the evidence it is concluded that out of 227 samples collected, 166 small and medium scale enterprises have not adopted digital marketing for their business and they believe that adoption of digital marketing is expensive. The purpose of this study is to determine if the TAM could legitimately be applied in adoption of digital marketing among small and medium scale enterprises by examining the relationship of SMEs intention to use digital marketing with selected factors of perceived usefulness (PU), perceived ease of use (PEOU), and attitude towards usage (ATU). By using Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) it is found that small and medium scale enterprises perceive that if the technology is ease to use then it will definitely be useful. The digital marketing strategies may vary according to the type of SMEs or sector. It is also closely tied to corporate goals and the advantages it provides SMEs. The medium that enables and expands contact between small and medium businesses and their customers is now digital marketing. With the help of digital marketing, SMEs can benefit from a special environment that increases their potential market, lowers marketing expenses, boosts sales, and provides better customer relationship management. In general, social media may be a helpful tool that complements business marketing efforts. It is also low-cost, interactive, dynamic, and collaborative.

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