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The Effectiveness of Digital Marketing in Increasing Sales on E-Commerce in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of digital marketing in increasing sales in e-commerce in Indonesia. The background of the study is based on the increasing use of digital marketing strategies by business actors, but not all are able to experience a significant impact on sales results. This study used a descriptive qualitative method with data collection techniques such as in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation with e-commerce business actors, marketing managers, and consumers. Data analysis was conducted using the Miles and Huberman approach through data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results show that digital marketing strategies, specifically social media, SEO/SEM, and influencer marketing, have proven effective in increasing brand awareness and interaction with consumers. Significant sales increases are experienced by business actors who consistently implement these strategies, while MSMEs face obstacles such as limited resources, high advertising costs, and intense competition. Supporting factors for success include content creativity, utilization of analytical data, and direct interaction with consumers. This study confirms that the effectiveness of digital marketing is greatly influenced by the strategy, consistency, and capacity of business actors, as well as the need for ecosystem support for MSMEs to compete sustainably.

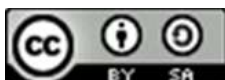
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INTRODUCTION

The development of e-commerce in Indonesia shows very significant growth along with the increasing number of internet users, smartphone penetration, and changes in people's lifestyles who are increasingly accustomed to conducting digital transactions (Nasution et al., 2020). This is marked by a surge in online transaction volume, the increasing number of operating e-commerce platforms such as Tokopedia, Shopee, and Lazada, and growing consumer confidence in the security and convenience of online shopping. Furthermore, technological infrastructure support, increasingly efficient logistics services, and a variety of digital payment methods have accelerated the adoption of e-commerce across all levels of society, including MSMEs, which are increasingly encouraged to utilize digital platforms as a means of expanding their markets and increasing their competitiveness (Widjaya & Fasa, 2025).

Digital marketing has become a key strategy for companies to reach consumers more effectively and efficiently, given the changing behavior of people who increasingly rely on digital technology in their daily activities. Through various channels such as social media, search engines, email marketing, and marketplaces, companies can build more personalized, measurable interactions that align with their target market segments. Furthermore, digital marketing allows companies to monitor consumer behavior in real time, quickly adjust promotional strategies, and optimize marketing budgets for maximum results. With these advantages, digital marketing serves not only

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as a promotional tool but also as a crucial instrument in building brand awareness, consumer loyalty, and corporate competitiveness in the digital era (P. Lestari & Saifuddin, 2020).

The importance of digital marketing in the modern era cannot be denied because this strategy can have a significant impact on business growth and sustainability (Ndraha et al., 2024). Through various tools such as Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Search Engine Marketing (SEM), social media marketing, email marketing, and influencer marketing, companies can build broader brand awareness, increase consumer interaction, and effectively drive sales conversions.

Digital marketing also enables companies to conduct more targeted market segmentation based on consumer behavior, interests, and needs, making promotional messages more relevant and personalized. With its analytical capabilities, this strategy allows companies to evaluate campaign performance in real time, optimize marketing budgets, and adapt approaches to market dynamics. Therefore, digital marketing is not only a promotional tool but also a crucial strategy for building long-term relationships with consumers and increasing competitiveness amidst increasingly fierce business competition (Aminuddin & Choiri, 2025).

Facts on the ground show that even though the implementation of digital marketing continues to increase and more and more e-commerce business players are adopting it, not all of them have succeeded in feeling a significant impact on increasing sales (Carvalho & Carvalho, 2020). Several factors influencing this situation include business owners' limited understanding of how to optimally manage digital marketing strategies, limited budgets for paid campaigns, and increasingly fierce competition on e-commerce platforms. Furthermore, poor promotional content quality, inaccurate market segmentation, and a lack of consistency in implementing digital strategies are also obstacles that contribute to less-than-expected results. Thus, while digital marketing has significant potential to support business growth, its less-than-optimal implementation has prevented some businesses from fully capitalizing on this opportunity (Kamil & Ridlo, 2024).

There's a clear gap between the investment made by businesses in digital marketing and the sales results they achieve. Many companies and MSMEs have allocated significant budgets to various digital marketing strategies, such as paid advertising, influencer collaborations, and social media content optimization. However, the results aren't always commensurate with the costs, as sales conversion rates often remain low. This can be caused by inaccurate strategy selection, mismatched target markets, poor content quality, or a lack of ongoing evaluation of the campaign's effectiveness. This situation demonstrates a gap between the enormous potential of digital marketing and the reality of its achievement on the ground. Therefore, more in-depth research is needed to understand the factors that influence the success or failure of digital marketing implementation in increasing sales.

The urgency of this research lies in the need for an in-depth study of the extent to which digital marketing effectiveness truly has a tangible impact on increasing sales, particularly in the context of e-commerce in Indonesia, which is currently experiencing rapid growth. Although digital marketing is believed to expand market reach, increase interaction with consumers, and drive sales conversions, the reality on the ground shows a gap between the amount of investment made and the sales results obtained. Therefore, qualitative research is important to explore the direct experiences of business actors, both MSMEs and large companies, as well as consumer perceptions as the primary target of digital marketing strategies. Through this approach, it is hoped that a more comprehensive understanding of the supporting and inhibiting factors of

digital marketing effectiveness can be obtained, so that the research results can contribute to the development of digital marketing strategies that are more targeted, efficient, and have a real impact on improving sales performance.

Previous research has focused more on quantitative analysis of the relationship between digital marketing and sales, such as measuring ROI, traffic, or conversion rates. Consequently, there are still limitations in exploring in-depth aspects related to how digital marketing strategies are implemented, the factors that make them effective or ineffective, and the subjective experiences of business actors in using them. This gap indicates a lack of qualitative research that specifically explores the effectiveness of digital marketing from the perspective of marketing managers, MSMEs, and consumers in Indonesia, even though these perspectives are crucial for understanding the reality of digital marketing strategy implementation more comprehensively and contextually.

The novelty of this research lies in the use of a descriptive qualitative approach to understand the effectiveness of digital marketing from the perspective of e-commerce players and consumers, which differs from the majority of previous research that tends to be oriented towards quantitative analysis. This research not only measures results numerically, but also provides a comprehensive overview of non-technical factors that influence digital marketing effectiveness, such as creativity in content, quality of interactions with consumers, and the level of trust in the brand. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of the dynamics of digital marketing strategy implementation in the field, including the challenges and opportunities faced by business actors. Furthermore, this research focuses on the context of e-commerce in Indonesia, which has unique market characteristics, both in terms of consumer behavior, digital culture, and the level of technology adoption. Therefore, the research results are expected to provide original contributions to the development of digital marketing theory and practice in developing countries with similar characteristics.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies in driving sales growth on e-commerce platforms in Indonesia, while also identifying factors that support and hinder their successful implementation. Furthermore, this study aims to provide recommendations for more effective, relevant, and contextual digital marketing strategies for e-commerce businesses in Indonesia, thus serving as a reference for optimizing the use of digital technology to improve competitiveness and sales performance.

METHODS

This research method uses a descriptive qualitative approach to understand the phenomenon of digital marketing implementation and its impact on sales, with a focus on exploring the experiences, strategies, and perceptions of e-commerce players in Indonesia (Indriyani & Da Lopez, 2025). The research was conducted on e-commerce platforms such as Tokopedia, Shopee, and Lazada, with subjects including marketing managers, MSMEs using e-commerce, and active consumers. Informants were selected using purposive sampling with the criteria of business actors who have actively used digital marketing for at least one year, active consumers, and parties who understand digital marketing strategies. The research data consisted of primary data in the form of in-depth interviews, observations, and direct documentation, as well as secondary data from sales reports, company publications, scientific articles, and related literature.

Data collection techniques were conducted through in-depth interviews to explore digital marketing experiences and strategies, observations of digital marketing practices (advertising, social media, SEO, marketplaces), and documentation in the form of sales reports and promotional materials. The research instrument was the researcher

herself with a semi-structured interview guide, field notes, and visual documentation if necessary. Data analysis used the Miles & Huberman model, which includes data reduction, presentation of data in narrative form, tables, or charts, and drawing conclusions to find patterns and relationships between digital marketing and increased sales. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation (business actors, consumers, secondary data), technical triangulation (interviews, observations, documentation), and member checking to ensure the data aligns with the informant's intent. The research steps included determining the research focus, selecting key informants, data collection, thematic analysis, compiling research results and drawing conclusions (Dawadi, 2020).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Effectiveness of Digital Marketing Strategy

E-commerce players acknowledge that the use of social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook has proven effective in increasing brand awareness due to their broad audience reach and the ability to target consumers according to market segmentation. Through engaging visual content, interactive campaigns, and collaborations with influencers, social media enables companies to build a stronger brand image while creating an emotional connection with consumers (Supriyadi, 2025). Furthermore, features like paid advertising, live streaming, and integrated marketplaces provide businesses with additional opportunities to expand product visibility and foster deeper engagement with their audiences. Thus, social media serves not only as a promotional channel but also as a key strategy for strengthening brand positioning amidst increasingly fierce e-commerce competition.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Search Engine Marketing (SEM) have been proven to significantly increase traffic to online stores by placing products or services in strategic positions in search results, thereby increasing brand visibility and increasing the opportunity for potential consumers to access the store (Untari Ningsih et al., 2022). However, even when visitor numbers increase, sales results don't always immediately increase due to other factors that influence purchasing decisions, such as product quality, price, store credibility, and user experience interacting with the e-commerce platform. This suggests that SEO and SEM are more effective at attracting attention and building awareness, while sales conversion requires other supporting strategies such as content optimization, good customer service, and ongoing brand trust management.

Influencer marketing has proven effective in increasing consumer trust in products, especially in the fashion and cosmetics categories, because consumers tend to pay attention to recommendations from figures they consider credible or influential on social media (Adireja et al., 2024). Through authentic content, product reviews, tutorials, and endorsements, influencers can build a positive image and foster trust in the quality of the products they offer. This strategy not only increases awareness but also influences consumer preferences and purchasing decisions, especially when influencers are perceived to share similar lifestyles or values with their audience. Thus, influencer marketing has become a crucial tool for e-commerce players in strengthening brand reputations and fostering more personalized interactions with consumers in the digital age.

Digital marketing strategies have proven effective in reaching a wider audience and increasing brand exposure, but success in driving increased sales depends heavily on several important factors (Sularno, 2025). Product quality is a key determinant, as products that meet consumer expectations are more likely to generate repeat purchases and word-of-mouth recommendations. Furthermore, the consistency of digital

marketing campaigns, in terms of frequency, messaging, and communication style, plays a crucial role in building consumer trust and loyalty. Another crucial factor is target market relevance; strategies tailored to the characteristics, preferences, and needs of the audience will be more effective than generic approaches. Therefore, while digital marketing can increase reach and awareness, successful sales still require a strong integration of product quality, campaign consistency, and a deep understanding of the target market (Wardani, 2023).

The Relationship Between Digital Marketing and Sales Increase

The relationship between digital marketing and increased sales can be seen from the experiences of several business actors who experienced a significant increase in sales after consistently implementing digital marketing strategies (T. Lestari et al., 2024). Consumers are more likely to make purchases when products are offered through attractive promotions, supported by positive testimonials, and actively interact with brands on social media, building trust and loyalty. However, not all businesses experience the same results; some MSMEs still face a gap between digital marketing costs and the resulting sales growth. This demonstrates that the effectiveness of digital marketing depends not only on strategy implementation but also on supporting factors such as product quality, appropriate market segmentation, and the ability to manage campaigns sustainably.

This demonstrates the difference in digital marketing effectiveness between large companies and MSMEs, where operational scale, resource capacity, and technological savvy play a significant role. Larger companies generally have greater access to marketing budgets, dedicated teams, and sophisticated analytical tools, enabling them to design and manage digital campaigns more optimally (Miklosik et al., 2019). Conversely, MSMEs often lack human resources with digital skills and marketing data analysis capabilities, so implementing their digital marketing strategies doesn't always result in significant sales increases. Therefore, internal factors such as digital competence, campaign management, and data utilization are key to determining the effectiveness of digital marketing across various business scales.

Supporting Factors for Digital Marketing Success

Several factors contribute to successful digital marketing, including creative content, such as creating short videos, engaging storytelling, and visual design that captures audience attention. Furthermore, utilizing data analytics is key to understanding consumer trends, preferences, and shopping behavior patterns, allowing marketing strategies to be tailored to specific targets (Maulida & Isnaini, 2025). Another equally important factor is direct engagement with consumers through interactive features like live shopping, comment sections, and private messaging, which helps build emotional connection, increase trust, and drive sales conversions more effectively. The combination of these three factors allows e-commerce players to optimize their digital marketing strategies and achieve maximum results.

Emotional engagement and personal interaction have proven to be key in building consumer trust, as consumers tend to be more loyal to brands that are able to provide a warm and relevant interaction experience to their needs (Istiqomah et al., 2024). Interactive digital marketing, such as quick responses to comments, live streaming Q&A sessions, or personalized promotional messages, has greater potential to drive sales conversions. This approach not only increases engagement but also strengthens long-term relationships between consumers and brands. Therefore, digital marketing strategies that combine emotional and interactive aspects tend to have a more significant impact on increasing sales.

Obstacles in Implementing Digital Marketing

The main obstacle in implementing digital marketing includes limited human resources who have competence in the field of digital marketing, so that the strategies implemented are often less than optimal (Daenuri & Munawaroh, 2025). Furthermore, the relatively high cost of digital advertising poses a significant challenge, especially for MSMEs with limited budgets for paid marketing campaigns. Another equally important factor is the intense competition on e-commerce platforms, where consumers have numerous choices and tend to easily switch to competitors' products if the offering or shopping experience is inadequate. This combination of obstacles can limit the effectiveness of digital marketing in increasing sales, requiring businesses to develop creative, efficient strategies that align with their capabilities (Abdurrahman et al., 2025).

These obstacles demonstrate the importance of training and mentoring for MSMEs to have better capabilities in optimizing digital marketing strategies, starting from creating attractive content to utilizing analytics to understand consumer behavior (Azzahro et al., 2024). In addition to improving human resource capacity, developing a product differentiation strategy is also key to MSMEs remaining competitive amidst intense competition, for example by offering unique value, superior quality, or a more personalized shopping experience. With the combination of improved digital competency and product differentiation, MSMEs have a greater opportunity to maximize the effectiveness of digital marketing and achieve significant sales increases.

Implications for Business Actors

The implications for businesses show the different strategies that need to be implemented based on business scale. Large companies have the ability to maximize digital marketing through measurable, data-driven strategies and collaboration with major influencers to increase brand awareness and sales conversions (Hidayat et al., 2022). Meanwhile, MSMEs need to focus more on creating creative content, targeted promotions, and optimizing direct interactions with consumers through social media or interactive features on e-commerce platforms. Furthermore, support from the digital marketing ecosystem, such as competency-building training, supportive government policies, and collaboration with e-commerce platforms, is crucial to driving more equitable sales growth and enabling businesses of all sizes to optimally utilize the potential of digital marketing (Nazar & Salsabila, 2024).

CONCLUSIONS

Digital marketing has proven effective in increasing brand awareness and consumer engagement in e-commerce in Indonesia, particularly through social media, SEO/SEM, and influencer marketing. Significant sales increases are generally experienced by businesses that consistently implement digital marketing strategies, but not all MSMEs are able to achieve optimal results due to resource constraints. Factors supporting digital marketing success include creative content, the use of analytical data, and direct interaction with consumers that strengthens trust and loyalty. Key obstacles include limited competent human resources, high digital advertising costs, and intense competition in the e-commerce market. Large companies have an advantage in maximizing digital marketing through data-driven strategies and large budgets, while MSMEs rely more on creative content and personal interactions with consumers. Ecosystem support, such as digital marketing training, government policies, and collaboration with e-commerce platforms, is a crucial factor for MSMEs to compete sustainably. Overall, the effectiveness of digital marketing in increasing sales is greatly

influenced by the right strategy, consistent implementation, and the resource capacity of the business owner.

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