

DIGITAL MARKETING PRACTICES IN MOROCCAN SMEs (SMALL AND
MEDIUM SIZED ENTERPRISES): A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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LES PRATIQUES DU MARKETING DIGITAL DANS LES PME (PETITES ET MOYENNES ENTREPRISES) MAROCAINES : REVUE DE LITTERATURE SYSTEMATIQUE

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DIGITAL MARKETING PRACTICES IN MOROCCAN SMEs (SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED ENTERPRISES): A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW**ABSTRACT**

The digital era offers Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) opportunities to grow and even challenge larger companies. Yet, it is observed by scholars that SMEs are reluctant to implement new technology tools, which leads us to question the decisive factors to either adopt or not digital marketing practices.

Therefore, this paper aims to systematically explore literature on digital marketing's components since it encompasses a large area of practice. The research goal is to understand the position and corporate behavior regarding the adoption of this discipline in global SMEs with a closer look at the Moroccan context.

The methodology followed is a qualitative documentary research that consists of data collection, references selection, and thorough analysis. This process consists of two phases. The first phase involves conducting an exploratory systematic literature review to refine the generated results using keywords, abstracts, and titles. The documents were screened based on specified inclusion and exclusion criteria to eliminate irrelevant topics. The second phase involves conducting an in-depth extended systematic literature review to thoroughly analyze the content of the references by reading and comprehending the full texts.

This research work reveals that e-marketing positively influences SMEs. Social media marketing is disclosed to be the most adopted form in SMEs. However, this literature review uncovered conflicting opinions regarding the implementation of e-marketing in SMEs. Some sources highlighted limitations like resource constraints, while others saw potential in this area as technology becomes increasingly accessible.

The perspective of this paper is to conduct an exploratory qualitative research, followed by a confirmatory quantitative research within Moroccan SMEs to identify factors influencing them to adopt social media marketing. This article is structured according to IMRaD framework. It outlines an introduction for context and research problem, followed by research methodology, review of literature, results and discussion, and finally a conclusion.

KEYWORDS: DIGITAL MARKETING, E-MARKETING, SOCIAL MEDIA, SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED ENTERPRISES (SMES)

RÉSUMÉ

L'ère numérique offre aux Petites et Moyennes Entreprises (PMEs) des opportunités de croissance voire même de concurrence avec les grandes entreprises. Sauf qu'il est observé par

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des chercheurs que les PME restent réticentes lorsqu'il s'agit de l'implémentation de nouvelles technologies, ce qui remet en question leurs facteurs décisifs pour adopter ou pas les pratiques du marketing digital.

Par conséquent, cet article vise à explorer systématiquement la littérature sur les composantes du marketing digital, qui englobe un ensemble de pratiques. Ce document vise à identifier la position et le comportement des PME par rapport à l'adoption du marketing digital dans leurs stratégies, avec un aperçu sur contexte marocain.

La méthodologie de recherche prise en compte est une recherche qualitative documentaire, qui commence par la collecte de données, la sélection de données et l'analyse de données. Ce processus constitue deux phases. La première implique la réalisation d'une revue de littérature systématique exploratoire pour affiner les résultats générés en utilisant des mots-clés, des résumés et des titres. Les documents ont été examinés selon des critères d'inclusion et d'exclusion spécifiés pour éliminer les sujets non pertinents. La deuxième phase implique l'exécution d'une revue systématique approfondie de la littérature pour analyser en profondeur le contenu des références en lisant et en comprenant les textes complets.

Ce travail de recherche révèle que le marketing digital influence positivement les PME. De plus, le marketing par les réseaux sociaux est la forme la plus adoptée chez les PME. Or, on trouve des opinions opposées sur le sujet. Certains auteurs ont souligné les limites posées par des contraintes de ressources financières tandis que d'autres voyaient un potentiel dans ce domaine.

La perspective de cette étude est d'établir une recherche qualitative exploratoire, suivie d'une recherche quantitative confirmatoire au sein des PME marocaines pour identifier les facteurs qui les influencent à adopter le marketing des réseaux sociaux. Cet article est structuré selon la méthode IMRaD. Une introduction pour le contexte, la définition de la problématique de recherche, suivie par la méthodologie mobilisée, la revue de littérature, les résultats, la discussion, et enfin une conclusion.

MOTS-CLÉS : MARKETING DIGITAL, MARKETING NUMERIQUE, RESEAUX SOCIAUX, PETITES ET MOYENNES ENTREPRISES (PMES)

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INTRODUCTION

It is certainly undeniable that Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs) widely contribute to the economic growth of all countries. Based on the National Business Survey conducted in 2019 by the High Planning Commission (HCP) in Morocco, 93% of the country's business structure is represented by the micro enterprises also known by the very small enterprises (VSEs) with a predominance of 64%. Followed by the small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) with 29%. As a result of the increased accessibility offered by the Internet, these businesses have more opportunities to grow, perform better and reach a global audience. Nevertheless, it seems that SMEs do not capitalize on the online world's full potential. At the beginning of 2019, The Moroccan General Confederation of Businesses (CGEM) shared the preliminary results of a study on digital transformation and the perception of the 4.0 phenomenon among the Moroccan small firms. Only 30,8% of both VSEs and SMEs assert running a digitalization project. 36,3% state being at the research and reflection stage and 32,9% point out that digitalization is a topic that was never mentioned before within the enterprise.

This paper aims to systematically explore literature on digital marketing's components since it encompasses a large area of practice, it also studies the correlation between firms' size and the usage of online marketing tools. By coming out with a literature survey, we seek to understand the interconnections between digital marketing practices and SMEs' performance indicators as well as the most used practice of digital marketing. Although digitalization and digital marketing in particular is more likely to be a recent field of study, we still find a large literature survey available and it continuously drives more interest each year. What is the core of digital marketing? How can SMEs leverage it to serve their business goals? The aim of this article is to introduce, decompose and simplify various approaches and perspectives of researchers and academics who are knowledgeable towards this topic.

The term "Digital Marketing" was used for the first time in 1990 with the launch of "Archie" the first internet search engine (Simplilearn Solutions, 2020). It has since then evolved over time to not only be identified as boosted traditional marketing via digital tools, but rather as a new approach to marketing as a whole with its own dynamics and characteristics (Taiminen & Karjaluo, 2015). Over the previous 70 years, marketing shifted beyond being product-oriented or product-focused (Marketing 1.0) to become more customer-focused (Marketing 2.0) and it evolved afterwards to be human-oriented (Marketing 3.0). Recently, and due to technology convergence, new trends emerged to highly influence marketing practices, and so a new marketing approach was required as a result of this natural discipline outgrowth. That is when (Marketing 4.0) appeared (Kotler, 2017).

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Digital marketing, a term that once referred to marketing products and services via digital networks has now evolved into a broader concept. It encompasses the usage of digital technologies to attract customers, establish brand recognition, cultivate customer loyalty, and boost sales. Digital marketing's definition evolved from being an explicit term describing (Financial Times, 2017). According to the American Marketing Association, the creation, communication, and delivery of value for customers and other stakeholders can be defined as digital marketing activities, organizations, and processes. From a broader perspective, digital marketing can be described as a flexible and technology-driven approach where companies team up with their clients and partners to collectively produce, convey, provide, and uphold benefit for all involved parties. (Kannan & Li, 2017).

The purpose of this article is to open a discussion and clarify the numerous components of the research material. Through this systematic literature review, we will come across how digital marketing practices can influence SMEs performances and the limitations these businesses face to keep up with the digital pace.

1. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research turns around the idea of contributing to existing knowledge in order to solve problems. So, every researcher proceeds with a problem-solving perspective or mindset. Creating knowledge starts from grasping previous and historical knowledge and then potentially finding a gap that can be the center of further research. We can either add or correct what has been already said or found about a certain topic. That is why a scientific collection of references is the first step, also known by exploratory literature review. It is then followed by a filtering or a selection process to only keep the relevant literature, referred to as comprehensive in-depth literature review.

Research methodology pertains to the approach taken in designing research by gathering and evaluating data. Data has two main sources: primary sources, referring to collecting data for the first time and secondary sources, referring to existing data. In our case, and since this is a systematic literature review, we will focus on using systematic methods to only collect secondary data. We will work on synthesizing and recycling the findings of other researchers. As mentioned before, the first step to establish a literature review is to gather references and an effective method to do so is to search in academic databases, using relevant keywords like "Digital marketing" and "E-marketing". To further refine our findings, we used Boolean operators, keywords synonyms and looked for "Online marketing" OR "Marketing 4.0" OR "E-marketing", "Digital marketing" AND "SMEs". We also refined the search to only find recent research that was conducted in the past 10 years (2010-2020). This process is characterized by precise selection criteria for papers (Table 1). It helped effectively reduce the large number

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of existing resources and it excluded the ones that are unrelated to our topic of research like: e-commerce, large companies, entrepreneurship and traditional marketing.

Table N°1: Academic papers' selection criteria

<i>Keywords</i>	<i>Publication date</i>	<i>Academic database</i>	<i>Papers Indexing</i>	<i>Language</i>
Digital Marketing in SMEs, e-marketing, online marketing, marketing 4.0 etc.	[2010-2020]	Web of Science, Scopus, ScienceDirect, Springer, Google Scholar, ProQuest	SJR: Scientific journal rankings Q1, Q2, Q3	English

Source: Author's processing

1.1. EXPLORATORY SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

As its name implies, by conducting an exploratory systematic literature review, we are able to investigate all the relevant references within the field of study, to only select and read the most relevant ones. In order to proceed with this, it is important to mobilize a reference management software to keep our database well-organized and help cite them during the writing process. We chose to work with Zotero for its easy manipulation, it is also an open source software and free to use. In essence, we worked with Excel MS to complete our reference database, by filling out the reference number, title, document type, publication date, author(s), journal/publisher, country, H Index, Scientific Journal Ranking (SJR) and abstract.

Table N°2: Types of references

<i>Document Type</i>	<i>Reference Count</i>
Journal article	27
Thesis	6
Conference article	2
Book chapter	5
Book	2
Total	42

Source: Author's processing

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The collected references contain different types of documents (*Table 2*) for a more complete and enriching review. The journal articles are the main components and they represent the foundation of this paper. We considered some thesis (Bachelor's, MBA/Master's and PhD) to grasp the basis of writing a scientific manuscript. Some book chapters and books to understand the background information of the field from previous well-known authors and researchers. And a couple of recent conference articles to follow the digital marketing updates and the questions raised around it.

Next, we downloaded all the documents from our digital Zotero library and transferred them into NVivo; it is a qualitative data analysis software that helps researchers organize and analyze qualitative data (image, text, video, audio). In our case, we want to conduct a textual analysis on the files' full-text.

1.1.1. WORD CLOUD

A textual analysis will help us have an overview on the most frequent words used by authors and it will help us detect the references that meet our search queries. After uploading our bibliography list into NVivo, we organized files into separate folders based on the type of documents for a better organization. Then we selected all the documents and run a word frequency query.

Figure N°1: Word cloud



Source: Processed with NVivo

The word cloud indicates the most repeated words with a larger font and flashing color (*Figure 1*). The word “marketing” was the most frequent in our textual analysis and it was found 9709 times, followed by the word “social” recurring 5420 times and “digital” was spotted 5085 times. It is important to point out that this analysis followed a grouping of exact matches, excluding with that stemmed words, synonyms, specializations and generalizations.

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On the word cloud, the words that appear the closest to “marketing” usually are found together in texts like common word pairs or collocations. This figure facilitates the process of identifying references in which the searched keywords appear the most frequently.

1.1.2. ANALYSIS OF EXPLORATORY REVIEW DATA

Clearly, the word “marketing” centered in the word cloud is the largest among other words next to “social” and “digital”. Furthermore, it is also the most recurrent word in collected references.

Table N°3: Most recurrent words in the references’ full-text

<i>Word</i>	<i>Length</i>	<i>Count</i>
Marketing	9	9709
Social	6	5420
Digital	7	5085
Media	5	4522

Source: Author’s processing with NVivo

According to NVivo’s word frequency query results, the following first four words (*Table 3*): “marketing”, “social”, “digital” and “media” are the most recurring in the references’ full-text, which extents their importance as selecting factors when it comes to filtering documents in the next step.

As mentioned previously, the references were collected from multiple sources and academic databases (*Table 1*), namely: Web of science, Scopus, ScienceDirect, Springer, and ProQuest with subscription access with other sources like Google Scholar. Some documents, mainly books were recommended and sent from our supervisor and other professors. We focused on review articles as they save a lot of time by summarizing the existing state of our research topic.

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Table N°4: Sources of the collected references

<i>Sources</i>	<i>References in %</i>
Web of Science	25,00%
Scopus	17,25%
ScienceDirect	17,25%
ProQuest	17,25%
Google Scholar	12,50%
Springer	5,00%
Other	5,00%

Source: Author's processing

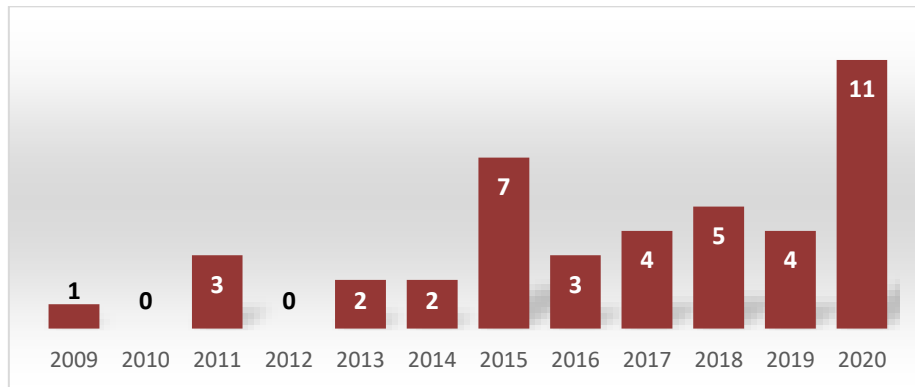
Most listed sources are accessible through subscription. However, free databases can be useful like Google Scholar, Microsoft Academic, Dimensions etc. Web of Science takes the lead with 25% of the collected references and most of them are well-ranked journal articles. Followed by Scopus, ScienceDirect and ProQuest with 17,25% each. The documents generated from Scopus and ScienceDirect are book chapters and conference/journal articles. We focused on ProQuest to collect Thesis. And the remaining sources are either offline sources or sources that helped get access to papers behind a paywall.

Due to the refining option offered by most databases, our search focused on documents published from 2010 until 2020. Research related to technology advances and digital evolution expands rapidly, also the topic of our literature review "Digital Marketing" drew a lot of interest among researchers, entrepreneurs and students around the world for the past decade. According to Google Trends, the usage rate of the keyword "Digital Marketing" increased over the years from 5 in 2009, to reach 100 in 2020.

It is needless to say that digital marketing is an enduring topic since it represents a continuity of marketing as a whole discipline. However, it is necessary to consult the most recent work to stay updated and receive inspiration to contribute in developing knowledge in this field.

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Figure N°2: Collected references by year of publication



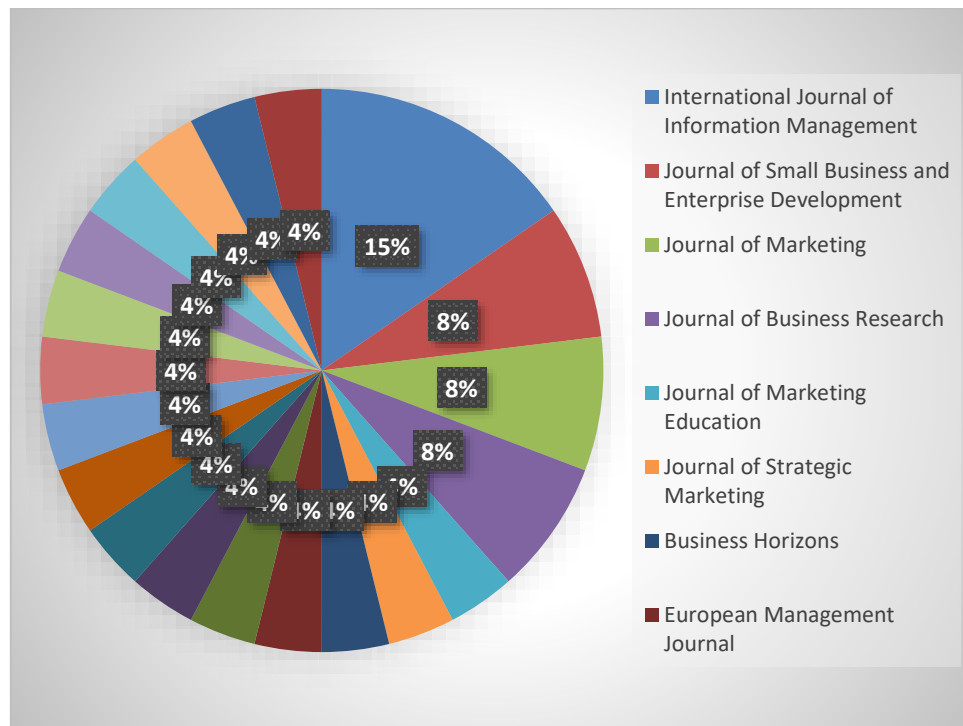
Source: Author's processing

Our selection criteria follow a qualitative approach through abstract reading to restraint our literature review from irrelevant publications. It is common to find the searched keywords in many documents' abstracts. However, the center of their research can deviate from our aim. We also enhanced during our research and refining process the most cited papers, and well-known journals in the field.

Since the dominant type of references is journal articles, it is central to know on which journals are these articles published, what are their H-Index-an author-level metric invented by Hirsh in 2005 to measure the effectiveness of the journals' authors publications-, their impact factor and their scientific ranking (SJR) to evaluate journals among others. Some good quality journals do not have an impact factor or SJR because they're relatively new and it doesn't express their poor contribution to the scientific community.

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Figure N°3: Journals of the selected academic papers



Source: Author's processing

Among the articles selected, 15% were publications issued from one journal, 8% of articles were in each of three different business and marketing journals mentioned above, and the left 64% are distributed equally in other indexed journals (*Figure 3*). The rest of unlisted sources are presented in details with the corresponding number of articles (*Appendix 1*).

1.2. EXTENDED SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

Based on NVivo's word cloud feature and our predetermined selection criteria, we were able to clearly detect in which references certain keywords appear and how often they do. We also identified where the main keywords like "digital", "marketing", "SMEs" appear together. Via this process, we decided on which references to focus on and read more in-depth.

The exploratory systematic literature review allowed us to access all the available literature regarding our topic of research, and select from the several databases only the relevant references to save. Research on digital marketing and e-marketing significantly increased over the years. Yet, despite the collective acceptance of its importance, authors address the topic of marketing in SMEs from different perspectives and studies showed that there is a lack in research in terms of how marketing is viewed as a discipline and applied in SMEs. On specific

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marketing topics like the importance of networking in the competition for SMEs, some scholars have reviewed the body of current literature (O'Donnell, 2014). Others contributed conceptual advancements based on the field of entrepreneurial marketing to the discussion of how SMEs react to their markets (Miles et al. 2015). Therefore, there is a need for thorough literature reviews on how SMEs respond to their shifting markets (Bocconcelli et al., 2018).

Online marketing in SMEs is a broad topic and according to the collected literature review, there is a lack in addressing this topic and related research questions in specific geographical areas and particularly in Morocco. We plan with this paper to study the grounded research and project its findings on the Moroccan SMEs context.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

By means of reading records and qualitative full text analysis of the selected references, we established a synthesis table through a summarized template for each document. The literature review helps determine SMEs position towards new forms of marketing practices. That can later on justify the low adoption rate in developing countries including Morocco. The selected documents include essential keywords often found together repeatedly.

There are different approaches to social media implementation, resulting from the variety of organizational contexts and staff competency levels. The common motivator shared by all company cases is the generated anxiety if they happen to neglect what is seen today as a new instrument for business development. Research also showed some evidence that social media adoption behavior is led through a determined plan to mainly add value to customers (Durkin et al., 2013).

Firms face internal and external pressures to establish a presence and engage with audiences on various social media platforms. Businesses' perceived benefits and use of digital marketing can determine their level of digital marketing engagement. Additionally, businesses need to work on their relationship-based interactions with customers if they want to increase their digital marketing engagement. (Melo Borges Tiago & Cristovao Verissimo, 2014). Social Network Sites (SNS) are the most popular to communicate with external stakeholders. Internal social media usage was mostly found in larger companies. Both small and large firms reported the important benefits of social media. Yet they all seem in need of tangible and intangible resources (Verheyden & Goeman, 2013). There are three main challenges and solutions to SMEs adopting digital marketing practices. First, filling "talent gaps" resulting from the increased data complexity and the low supply amount of analytically trained people. Second, "organizational design" since digital marketing requires a structural change and for companies to be designed in a different manner. Lastly, the need to implement "actionable metrics" to

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provide firms with deeper understanding on how marketing can improve their performances in the digital setting (Leeflang et al., 2014). SMEs appear not to exploit digital techniques to their full potential. Therefore, they do not derive benefits from the existent opportunities they offer. This prompts the question of whether SMEs fully grasped the transformation in communication brought about by digitization. (Taiminen & Karjaluo, 2015).

Resource limitations hamper SMEs to increase finances, grow an audience base and create content. The best to succeed in a digital environment are the ones with the "key" to audience attention, often at the cost of the initial content creators (Hobbs, 2015). Mistakes SMEs should try to avoid are expertise illusion, lack of patience, insufficient budget, fear of the new, prejudice, focus on wrong segment, and not engaging on a brand strategy. The suggested tips for SMEs to benefit from digital marketing are to gather data by testing, to be bold, create relevant content, follow a documented strategy, and analyze results (Soininen, 2015).

By adopting digital marketing and collaborating with digital agencies to promote educational programs. SMEs in the education sector increased the number of conversions, they reduced student acquisition costs, they improved their Return on Investment (ROI) and they improved the quality of students (VANKAYALA, 2015). As long as a company has a solid network and selects the appropriate platforms before implementing social media, it can help the company's competitive position. In the B2B sector, social media can also raise brand awareness. (Bång et al., 2015).

There is a high level of digital channels usage amongst SMEs, particularly social media. The web 2.0 and information and communication technologies are diminishing SMEs barriers (financial resources, knowledge and skills) for technology adoption (Stankovska et al., 2016). Three main themes developing in five-year time frame (in 2021): As a means of facilitating personal expression, a decision-support tool, and a source of market intelligence, digital, social media, and mobile marketing (DSMM) is used. Despite the appreciation of academic research and the corresponding practitioner discussion, the extent of research's applicability is limited, and this led to areas where academia and practice were not in sync. (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016).

A model developed in a study reveals that a first order practice like following potential customers on Instagram can lead SMEs to gain followers instantly on the same digital channel (Virtanen et al., 2017). SMEs face different challenges while creating a digital marketing strategy. This latter can be either totally inexistent, with low conversion rates, high cost-per-conversion (CPC) rate, or low revenues and visibility (Rautela, 2018).

The price of a product and its brand are the biggest partial correlation that influence customers' buying interests. Also, the usage of technology in SMEs businesses is a difficult task because of the deficiency of resources alongside market issues (Syazali et al., 2019).

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The acceptance of social media is affected by technological, organizational and environmental factors (Jokonya & Mugisha, 2019).

When SMEs adopt social media marketing (SMM), perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and compatibility all have a positive impact on the effectiveness of SMM. The practice of this latter by SMEs is meaningfully but unfavorably impacted by cost. Moreover, facilitating conditions have also an insignificant impact (Chatterjee et al., 2021).

Even if SMEs managers express interest in digital marketing, according to their perception, entrepreneurial environment keeps manifesting reluctances. Resulting mainly from: insufficient knowledge, lack of belief in their capacities to apply them, lack of allocating budgets to online promotion, and unclear communication strategy (Coman et al., 2020).

Following literature review and of a previous comparative study, a total of 24 digital marketing tools are showcased, with the most commonly mentioned ones including affiliate marketing, emailing, search engine optimization, advertising for websites, and social media. (Peter & Dalla Vecchia, 2021).

Social media adoption exceeds marketing and is found in other domains like: Engaging in business networking, conducting information searches, and utilizing crowdfunding are all fields that can greatly improve a firm's performance (Olanrewaju et al., 2020).

The more a business digitizes its processes, the more it encourages entrepreneurial behavior to make smart choices in global markets. There are several ways to benefit from arising digital opportunities (Hervé et al., 2020). SMEs encounter difficulties in adopting social media marketing. Thus, they do not use it to its full potential (Tlapana & Dike, 2020).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Previous research explored the key factors to social media adoption by SMEs and entrepreneurs. Scholars found later on that this usage surpassed marketing purposes and interfered in other domains like: networking, crowdfunding, and information search to enhance organizational novelty and achievement (Olanrewaju et al., 2020). Research revealed that Social Network Sites (SNS) are the most popular to exploit in SMEs in order to connect with external stakeholders and that internal social media was mostly found in larger firms. Only to prove that companies' size matters when it comes to social media adoption (Verheyden & Goeman, 2013). Social media implementation results from different approaches related to the variety of organizational contexts, staff competency and a purposeful agenda to add value to the customer experience. Yet, the mutual motivator in SMEs is the anxiety generated if they happen to neglect what is considered today to be a novel instrument for corporate development (Durkin et al., 2013). A study showed that firms face

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internal and external pressures to have a digital presence in social media platforms (Melo Borges Tiago & Cristovao Verissimo, 2014).

Social media adoption is impacted by various factors, including technological, organizational, and environmental influences depending on the business sector. (Jokonya & Mugisha, 2019). The factors that would help marketers adopt social media marketing are belief-parameters. In SMEs, variables like practicality and compatibility have a significant and positive effect. However, facilitating conditions like technical infrastructure and top management support are positive but insignificant. Costs are also determined to be significant with a negative impact towards social media adoption (Chatterjee & Kumar Kar, 2020). Literature review presented twenty-four unique e-marketing tools and only eleven are frequently mentioned, they include for instance: Social media, content marketing, affiliate marketing, and search engine optimization (Peter & Dalla Vecchia, 2021).

Abundant works of literature center on the opportunities and the competitive advantages digital marketing offers. Some articles outlined the difficulties and challenges SMEs face. First, “talent gaps” engendered by the increased complexity of data and the low number of analytically trained people. Second, “organizational design”: Digital marketing requires a structural change that companies seem reluctant to give in. And third, the importance of “actionable metrics” that can help businesses have a deeper understanding of how digital marketing can improve their performances. (Leeflang et al., 2014). Further research findings accentuate the difficulty of working within resource constraints that impede the ability to obtain funding, build an audience, and create content. To succeed in the digital environment, it is mandatory to acquire its audience attention. (Hobbs, 2015). The most common mistakes that SMEs should try to avoid are: expertise illusion, lack of patience, prejudice, insufficient budget, too afraid of the new and not enough engagement on a brand strategy. To strengthen their digital marketing practice, SMEs should gather data by testing, to be bold and daring, to share relevant content, to document their strategy and analyze results.

Some studies disclosed that SMEs do not make the most out of digital tools to derive benefits from the existing opportunities they offer. (Taiminen & Karjaluo, 2015) and that can be caused by the numerous challenges they happen to encounter. (Tlapana & Dike, 2020). However, other studies indicated a high level of digital channels usage amongst SMEs, particularly social media. The web 2.0 technologies are diminishing small businesses barriers (financial resources, knowledge and skills) in favor for technology adoption. (Stankovska et al., 2016).

Digital marketing helps SMEs through a generic sales funnel to acquire and retain customers by increasing the number of conversions, reducing customer acquisition costs, by improving

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their Return on Investment (ROI) and by attracting the right segment and targeted audience. (VANKAYALA, 2015). Certainly, social media can massively contribute to a company's competitive position. But, the condition is for the firm to maintain a well-established network, and to choose the right platforms to utilize before implementation. (Bång et al., 2015).

A model developed in a study in 2017 on marketing of a startup company on Instagram revealed that a first order practice like following potential customers, e.g., young mothers on Instagram can lead SMEs to gain followers instantly on the exact same channel. To conclude that effective usage of social media can greatly contribute to establishing or boosting brand awareness. (Virtanen et al., 2017).

On one hand, SMEs find low conversion rates, high cost-per-conversion rates (CPC) and low revenues and visibility, very discouraging to consider adopting digital marketing. But on the other hand, implementing an online marketing strategy offers a higher ROI compared to classic marketing strategies, it is less expensive than conventional methods, it connects SMEs with their customers and brings them closer together. Social media are free to use and there are a variety of tools available. (Rautela, 2018). Based on a local study in Indonesia, the price of a product and its brand are the biggest partial correlation that influences online customers' buying interests and despite the importance of digital marketing in increasing middle-income business communities, SMEs find it a difficult task still to adopt technology because of resource shortage and market obstacles. (Syazali et al., 2019). Among the main opportunities digital channels offer is to become international and reach a global audience. A study demonstrated that increased digitalization of a company's functions promotes an entrepreneurial mindset, which can lead to effective decision-making in global markets. (Hervé et al., 2020).

The literature survey uncovered contrasting standpoints associated to digital marketing adoption in SMEs. Some researchers revealed the limited possibilities existing due to a large list of challenges and resource difficulties. Others see potential in this field, now that technology complexity diminish and it advances to become accessible to everyone.

Our research detected a literature gap concerning online marketing in Moroccan SMEs. There are no enough references on this topic in the geographical frame of Morocco. According to High Planning Commission (HCP), SMEs in Morocco are companies with a turnover that doesn't exceed 75 million dirhams and has below 200 employees. And the micro enterprises are companies who do not achieve a turnover of more than three million dirhams, with a maximum of 10 employees. Recently, in 2020 and under to the global pandemic circumstances, small businesses had to reach out to online channels to avoid the economic crisis caused by the lockdown. Many enterprises in various sectors like: retail, grocery stores,

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fast food and pharmaceutical services enhanced digital marketing to stay in touch with customers and we witnessed an e-commerce acceleration. Businesses agreed to follow the digital trend and have an online presence by obligation at first, and the question that rises is whether they will continue this adoption after the pandemic. Further research is required.

CONCLUSION

Due to the increasing rate of Internet use among the globe's population, businesses are required to join the digital revolution and have not only an online presence but also a complete e-marketing strategy. Digital marketing is the outcome of technological, environmental, and customer behavior changes. It is considered to be the newest and most efficient form of marketing. Information and communication technology adoption in SMEs knows limited research. This scientific article is a systematic literature review that aims towards exploring worldwide SMEs positions vis-a-vis digital marketing practices. The adopted research methodology follows two stages. First, the exploratory systematic literature review to refine results by keywords, abstract and title. The documents were then filtered based on inclusion and exclusion criteria to avoid irrelevant topics. Second, is the extended systematic literature review used to go in-dept on the references' content and carefully read and grasp the full texts. This study's managerial implication is to emphasize the significance of digital marketing for small businesses, managers are facing environmental and technological changes that should also be met through the company's communication strategy and marketing plan.

Despite the time and place shifts in which the studies were conducted, this paper showed that authors approve on digital marketing being an important strategy component to guarantee SMEs' growth and improve their performances. Barriers to technology adoption are gradually diminishing to offer small businesses easier access, cheaper, and more user-friendly digital tools to conquer the global marketplace. Nevertheless, there are mixed ideas and perspectives regarding the ability of SMEs to adopt social media and whether or not they can exceed the implementation challenges. Every author adapts the research on the country they conduct the study in, with different economic spectrums, technology integration and social environment, we can observe different outcomes. To conclude, Moroccan SMEs appear to resist using the complete capacity of digital marketing and local research is needed to investigate the usage this new form of marketing has beyond crisis conditions like 2020's global pandemic. This study contributes by uncovering a significant research gap related to marketing technology adoption in SMEs, and this leads to new perspectives for further research mainly in the framework of a developing country such as Morocco.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: LIST OF SELECTED JOURNALS AND CORRESPONDING ARTICLES

Selected journals	Number of corresponding articles
International Journal of Information Management	4
Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development	3
Journal of Marketing	2
Journal of Business Research	2
Journal of Marketing Education	1
Journal of Strategic Marketing	1
Business Horizons	1
European Management Journal	1
International Journal of Research in Marketing	1
Advances in Intelligent Systems and Computing	1
Journal of Interactive Marketing	1
International Journal of Management Reviews	1
Global Media Journal	1
Management Science Letters	1
Economic Research-Ekonomska Istrazivanja	1
Studies in Systems, Decision and Control	1
Industrial Marketing Management	1
Journal of Direct, Data and Digital Marketing Practice	1
Technology Innovation Management Review	1
Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	1
Journal of Applied Quantitative Methods	1

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