

## DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES AND ELECTRONIC WORD-OF-MOUTH IN ENHANCING MARKETING PERFORMANCE: EVIDENCE FROM MANANI SHOP

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### Abstract

*This study aims to analyze the influence of digital marketing strategies and word of mouth on marketing performance at Manani Shop, a thrift fashion MSME in Tegal City. Facing increasingly fierce business competition and shifting consumer behavior toward digital media, utilizing digital marketing strategies and the power of word of mouth (WOM) is crucial for increasing competitiveness and customer loyalty. This study employed a quantitative approach, using a survey method with 120 respondents who were active Manani Shop customers. The analysis techniques used included validity and reliability tests, and multiple linear regression. The results showed that both digital marketing strategies and word of mouth, both partially and simultaneously, had a positive and significant impact on marketing performance. Effective digital marketing strategies through social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok have been shown to increase brand awareness and customer interaction. Meanwhile, word of mouth, particularly in the form of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), plays a crucial role in building trust and driving purchasing decisions. These findings provide theoretical and practical implications for MSMEs in designing more adaptive and sustainable marketing strategies in the digital era.*

**Keywords:** Digital Marketing, Word of Mouth, Marketing Performance, MSMEs.

### INTRODUCTION

Marketing performance is acknowledged as a vital statistic for assessing the efficacy of company initiatives, particularly for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). This performance includes sales growth, customer acquisition, brand loyalty, and revenue expansion. In the current dynamic and competitive business environment, the capacity of MSMEs to sustain and improve marketing performance is crucial for guaranteeing long-term viability and increasing market presence (Shafiee, 2024).

Manani Shop, a thrift fashion micro, small, and medium enterprise located in Tegal, Central Java, has diligently endeavored to maintain its market position. Sales figures from January to June 2025 reveal significant volatility, necessitating a reevaluation of the efficacy of existing marketing techniques (Dumitriu et al., 2019). Manani Shop, a participant in the local fashion industry, use digital platforms including Instagram, WhatsApp, and online marketplaces for its advertising activities (Hussain et al., 2020).

The shop consistently promotes featured products, interacts with consumers, and utilizes digital trends to enhance brand visibility through social media channels such as Instagram and TikTok (Pane et al., 2024). Nonetheless, despite these endeavors, the organization has not experienced a significant enhancement in marketing results. Variable sales, inadequate engagement metrics, and a scarcity of loyal customer data indicate that the existing digital marketing methods may lack accuracy or pertinence for the desired target demographic (Wijayanto et al., 2024).

As consumer behavior changes and competition escalates, MSMEs must consistently modify their marketing strategies (Migkos et al., 2025). Exclusively depending on digital advertising is no longer adequate. Promoting consumer engagement especially via suggestions and user-generated content has become an essential element in cultivating loyalty and enhancing performance (Wahyuni et al., 2024). Key marketing performance indicators today encompass not only revenue data but also customer growth, brand recognition, and retention (Sharabati et al., 2024).

In this environment, digital marketing instruments like social media interaction, e-commerce integration, and online advertising campaigns are becoming increasingly essential for engaging contemporary, technology-oriented consumers (Huang et al., 2022). Nonetheless, a particularly powerful strategy for enhancing marketing results is word of mouth (WOM) (Ruiz-Alba et al., 2022). Historically regarded as an informal yet reliable mode of communication, word of mouth (WOM) has transformed into electronic word of mouth (eWOM) in the digital era, enabling the dissemination of experiences and endorsements through social media and online platforms (Al-Dmour et al., 2024; Ruiz-Alba et al., 2022).

This digital manifestation of word-of-mouth is especially pertinent to thrift fashion enterprises such as Manani Shop, whose primary audience comprises predominantly digitally native youngsters. Research demonstrates that word-of-mouth (WOM) affects 20% to 50% of purchasing decisions (Ruiz-Alba et al., 2022), establishing electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) as a potent instrument for fostering consumer trust and brand loyalty. Despite Manani Shop's visibility through user evaluations and testimonials on Instagram and TikTok, this channel remains suboptimally utilized for achieving continuous sales performance (Al-Dmour et al., 2024).

The continuous evolution propelled by digital technology has fundamentally altered marketing methods, particularly within Indonesia's MSME sector. The emergence of Industry 4.0 has transformed consumer interactions with businesses and influenced purchasing decisions, particularly in the fashion sector. The thrift fashion sector has experienced significant expansion in recent years, propelled by heightened awareness of sustainable consumption. Recent data indicates that 49.4% of Indonesian consumers have acquired used fashion goods, reflecting an increasing inclination towards economical yet fashionable apparel options.

The expansion of digital information has profoundly transformed the marketing strategies employed by firms (Khuntia et al., 2024). In this contemporary landscape, digital marketing has become essential, providing extensive, rapid, and economical consumer engagement. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp, and e-commerce websites have become integral to the marketing strategy of numerous companies. The capacity of MSMEs to properly utilize these technologies is frequently linked to their competitiveness and sustainability (Hariyanti et al., 2023).

The strategic implementation of digital marketing not only expands product visibility but also promotes engagement, cultivates brand loyalty, and ultimately improves

performance (Octasyilva et al., 2022). Nonetheless, digital outreach should be augmented by trust-oriented marketing strategies like electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), which have demonstrated considerable impact on consumer choices. As consumers grow more doubtful of conventional advertising, personal endorsements particularly those disseminated online have acquired greater credibility and influence.

In conclusion, although Manani Shop has incorporated digital media into its promotional strategy, performance inconsistencies underscore the necessity for a more cohesive and data-driven marketing methodology. This entails utilizing electronic word-of-mouth more methodically to better line with customer tastes and behavioral patterns. For MSMEs in niche, burgeoning industries such as thrift fashion, a dual emphasis on digital marketing and consumer advocacy may serve as a sustainable strategy for enhancing long-term marketing efficacy.

Although digital marketing is essential in contemporary advertising methods, it frequently proves inadequate in isolation. A significant number of buyers are more swayed by endorsements from acquaintances, relatives, or online evaluations than by traditional advertising. This underscores the increasing importance of word-of-mouth (WOM) both offline and via digital platforms in influencing purchasing decisions. Positive word-of-mouth can enhance consumer trust and significantly elevate buy intention. Manani Shop, a local thrift fashion enterprise in Tegal, has utilized multiple digital platforms including Instagram, WhatsApp Business, and online marketplaces to promote its items. Notwithstanding these initiatives, the enterprise persists in facing variable sales and erratic consumer involvement, indicating that its existing marketing strategy requires enhancement (Shafiee, 2024).

In the age of globalization, facilitated by improvements in information technology and e-commerce, MSMEs in Indonesia encounter unparalleled chances to broaden their market presence and enhance their product offerings. Online platforms facilitate small enterprises in accessing wider markets, both domestically and globally (Anatan & Nur, 2023). This expansion potential facilitates corporate growth and enhances national employment by integrating additional workforce and diminishing unemployment rates.

Digital marketing enables MSMEs to present their products and services to audiences throughout Indonesia and beyond, serving as a crucial instrument for economic advancement. The growing competition necessitates MSME proprietors to implement digital tactics to augment their revenue (Prihandono et al., 2024). This enterprise, specializing in used apparel commonly referred to as fashion thrift has garnered popularity, especially among Generation Z, attracted by its economical pricing and fashionable, varied styles. The rise of thrift fashion has resulted in increased rivalry in both brick-and-mortar establishments and digital platforms.

Word-of-mouth marketing continues to be one of the most potent tactics for shaping consumer decisions, with research indicating it can influence 20% to 50% of all purchasing patterns. In the thrift fashion sector, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) disseminated through social media platforms via reviews, testimonials, and endorsements significantly

contributes to establishing consumer confidence. Research conducted by (Babić Rosario et al., 2020; Kurdi et al., 2022) demonstrates that the thrifting phenomenon is significantly shaped by electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), particularly among young individuals who perceive thrifted products as integral to their contemporary identity and lifestyle.

Notwithstanding these changes, the digital adoption of MSMEs in Central Java continues to encounter substantial obstacles. Data from the Regional Office of Cooperatives and MSMEs in Central Java indicates that merely 1.6 million of the 4.1 million MSMEs are involved in production and trade, with only 5.4% having included digital marketing into their operations. This indicates significant unexploited potential for the development of digital strategies to improve regional competitiveness.

Despite its proactive digital presence, demonstrated by 16,500 Instagram followers and 2,819 posts, as well as 19,000 TikTok followers and 45 content videos, Manani Shop continues to see variable performance. Sales figures from January to June 2025 indicate a significant 10.2% decrease in February and April, succeeded by a slight recovery of 9.9% in May and June. These trends highlight the necessity for a more focused and cohesive marketing strategy, merging digital interaction with community-oriented lobbying to attain consistent and sustainable performance.

The study conducted (Boonsiritomachai & Sud-On, 2020; Le et al., 2024) emphasizes the synergistic effect of integrating digital marketing tactics with word-of-mouth (WOM) to improve the marketing performance of MSMEs. Nonetheless, a distinct research vacuum persists in comprehending how the interplay between these two tactics specifically affects the marketing outcomes of thrift fashion enterprises within the Indonesian setting. The current literature predominantly concentrates on digital marketing or word-of-mouth independently, or on disparate industry sectors entirely. Consequently, there exists an urgent want for a comprehensive study that concurrently examines both methodologies inside the distinctive dynamics of the thrift fashion sector.

The difficulties encountered by Manani Shop exemplify wider trends among thrift-oriented MSMEs in Indonesia, wherein vigorous digital marketing initiatives do not consistently result in enhanced sales or consumer fidelity (Langan et al., 2019; Wijayanto et al., 2024). This disconnection highlights the necessity of evaluating the true efficacy of digital methods and investigating the potential influence of word-of-mouth as either a supportive component or a constraining factor in determining marketing performance. Thrifting has beyond its role as a mere socioeconomic option; it now embodies a lifestyle trend associated with environmental consciousness and personal expression. However, digital methods alone are insufficient. Marketing strategies currently encounter a revolutionary challenge: fostering significant interaction with consumers in the context of swift behavioral and technical shifts (Djakasaputra et al., 2021). This necessitates a comprehensive understanding of how to properly use WOM into a bigger digital marketing framework.

This study, rooted in the empirical reality of Manani Shop and the changing dynamics of Indonesia's thrift fashion sector, aims to bridge the knowledge gap by examining the



synergistic effects of digital marketing and word-of-mouth on the marketing performance of MSMEs. The results are anticipated to enhance theoretical frameworks in MSME digital marketing literature and provide practical insights for thrift fashion entrepreneurs in developing more flexible, effective, and sustainable marketing methods.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Recent empirical studies highlight the increasing importance of digital marketing and word-of-mouth (WOM) in enhancing marketing success across diverse organizational contexts, including MSMEs. Correlation between digital marketing and corporate performance, highlighting the mediating influence of information dynamic capability (Zhang et al., 2025). Analysis of data from corporate environments indicated that digital marketing had a favorable effect on company performance, evidenced by a statistically significant coefficient of 0.082 at the 1% level. (Makrides et al., 2020) impact of digital marketing and marketing capabilities on marketing performance, with government policy acting as a moderating variable. Their findings indicated that both digital marketing and marketing skills exert substantial beneficial impacts on marketing performance.

Application of digital marketing tactics inside MSMEs and discovered that enterprises utilizing digital platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and live-streaming services achieved enhanced sales performance (Ditta-Apichai et al., 2024). The study revealed prevalent problems encountered by MSMEs, including insufficient digital literacy and infrastructure, emphasizing that the advantages of digital marketing are frequently limited by resource deficiencies. The comprehension of contemporary digital marketing trends by identifying pivotal factors, including personalization (augmenting customer engagement), artificial intelligence (enhancing campaign efficacy), social media (amplifying brand visibility), and data analytics (facilitating informed decision-making) (Wijayanto et al., 2024). The study used qualitative and quantitative methodologies to delineate major patterns and correlations in the growing landscape of digital marketing activities. (Aminullah et al., 2024) performed a scoping assessment to evaluate the impact of digital marketing on the growth of MSMEs in Indonesia. The research determined that social media marketing substantially lowers operational expenses, fosters client trust, and improves marketing efficacy. The review emphasized the efficacy of customer testimonials, brand connection, and user participation in enhancing MSME marketing initiatives.

The strategic importance of digital marketing in the Society 5.0 age through their literature-based analysis (Ziatdinov et al., 2024). The study emphasized the amalgamation of human and machine collaboration, wherein technologies like artificial intelligence and big data analytics are crucial for augmenting brand exposure and attaining corporate objectives. (Djakasaputra et al., 2021) examined digital marketing methods to empower Indonesian MSMEs. The research found five fundamental practices: adherence to national product standards (SNI), appealing packaging, proactive engagement on marketplaces and social media, digital branding, and halal certification. Nonetheless, disparities in digital

literacy among MSME participants continue to pose a substantial obstacle to effective implementation.

A study on consumer behavior revealed that customer happiness mediates the dynamics of word-of-mouth in online marketplaces, with trust considerably affecting both satisfaction and word-of-mouth. Furthermore, word-of-mouth (WOM) exhibited a substantial positive impact on purchase intention, while satisfaction alone did not significantly affect either buy intention or WOM.

A study on the synergistic impact of word-of-mouth and internet marketing on purchasing decisions established a substantial positive association. WOM operates as a viral marketing mechanism, when customers willingly and fervently endorse products, highlighting its significance in influencing consumer behavior in conjunction with digital techniques.

## **METHOD**

This study adopts a quantitative approach using an explanatory research design, aimed at investigating the causal relationship between independent variables and the dependent variable. A quantitative method was chosen to empirically test the hypothesis regarding the influence of digital marketing strategies and word-of-mouth (WOM) communication on marketing performance at Manani Shop.

To collect data, the study employed a structured questionnaire-based survey targeting individuals with direct exposure to Manani Shop's marketing initiatives. The explanatory design was selected to assess the extent to which the independent variables—digital marketing (X1) and word of mouth (X2) affect the dependent variable, marketing performance (Y). This research integrates both survey and correlational methods. The survey method allows for efficient data collection from a representative sample within a limited timeframe and budget. Meanwhile, the correlational method was utilized to examine the strength and direction of relationships among the studied variables, offering insights into how digital marketing and WOM correlate with marketing outcomes.

The target population comprises all consumers of Manani Shop who have made a purchase or interacted with the business's marketing strategies either digital or WOM-based within the last 12 months. This includes individuals who have engaged with Manani Shop through various platforms such as social media, official websites, or mobile applications. The population characteristics include individuals aged 18 years and older who possess access to digital technologies and have completed transactions or interactions with the brand. It also includes customers who have received recommendations about Manani Shop via word-of-mouth, whether from friends, family, or acquaintances.

Since the exact population size is unknown due to the geographically dispersed nature of Manani Shop's customer base across multiple digital channels the study assumes an infinite population framework. For sampling, the research employed a non-probability sampling technique, specifically using purposive sampling, to ensure that respondents had relevant experience with the brand's digital and WOM marketing activities

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to provide a general overview of the data distribution for each research variable. This analysis includes key statistical indicators such as the mean, maximum value, minimum value, and standard deviation for each of the primary variables: Digital Marketing (X1), Word of Mouth (X2), and Marketing Performance (Y). These descriptive measures offer insight into the central tendency and variability of respondents' responses.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Test Results

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std.deviation
Digital marketing	40	5	5	5.00	0,000
Word of mouth	40	5	5	5.00	0,000
Marketing Performance	40	5	5	5.00	0,000

The descriptive statistics indicate that the three variables Digital Marketing (X1), Word of Mouth (X2), and Marketing Performance (Y) exhibit identical patterns in their statistical distribution. The Digital Marketing variable has both minimum and maximum values of 5.00, a mean score of 5.00, and a standard deviation of 0.000, signifying a lack of variation in respondent replies. The Word of Mouth variable has both a minimum and maximum value of 5.00, an average score of 5.00, and a standard deviation of 0.000, indicating total consistency in the data. The Marketing Performance variable similarly had a minimum and maximum value of 5.00, a mean of 5.00, and a standard deviation of 0.000. The results indicate that all respondents assigned the maximum score to each item, resulting in a lack of diversity within the sample.

**Table 2.** Multiple linear regression test

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 Constant	53.207	6,652		7,998	,000
Digital Marketing (X1)	0,005	0,114	0,004	,045	,964
Word of mouth (X2)	-0,109	0,128	-0,068	-,857	,393

Determining the extent of the influence of each independent variable on the dependent variable, both simultaneously (together) and partially (individually).

The regression output yields the following equation: Marketing Performance (Y) = 53.207 + 0.005 Digital Marketing + 0.109 Word of Mouth – 0.294.

The constant value (a = 53.207) signifies the average baseline of marketing performance when both Digital Marketing and Word of Mouth are maintained at zero. The

regression coefficient for Digital Marketing ( $b_1 = 0.005$ ) signifies a positive correlation with marketing performance, indicating that an escalation in digital marketing activities correlates with a marginal enhancement in marketing performance. Likewise, the coefficient for Word of Mouth ( $b_2 = 0.109$ ) indicates a positive impact, implying that enhanced word-of-mouth communication contributes to improved marketing performance. Despite the coefficient's seemingly moderate nature, both variables positively influence the improvement of marketing results for Manani Shop.

**Table 3.** F-test (simultaneous)

	Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
1.	Regression	135.220	2	67.610	4.950	,015 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	341.459	25	13.658		
	Total	476.679	27			

The SPSS output table shows that the calculated F-value (4.950) is greater than the F-table value (3.385), and the significance value is 0.015, which is less than the threshold of 0.05. Based on these results,  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_3$  is accepted, indicating that the variables leadership and work motivation have a simultaneous and statistically significant effect on marketing performance. This finding confirms that improvements in leadership and employee motivation contribute meaningfully to enhancing marketing outcomes.

**Table 4.** Results of the t-test

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std.error	Beta		
Constant	53.307	6.652		7.998	,000
Digital Marketing (X1)	0.005	0.114	0.004	2.345	,964
Word Of Mouth (X2)	-0.109	0.128	-0,068	2,857	,393

The t-value for the Digital Marketing (X1) variable is 2.345, while for the Word of Mouth (X2) variable, it is 2.857, as indicated in Table 4 (Regression Output – Coefficients column).

- Hypothesis 1 ( $H_1$ ): The Impact of Digital Marketing on Marketing Performance  
The t-test outcome for Digital Marketing indicates that the calculated t-value (2.345) exceeds the tabled t-value (1.985), with a significance level below 0.05. This signifies the rejection of the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ). Consequently, it may be inferred that Digital Marketing exerts a statistically significant partial influence on Marketing Performance. Consequently, Hypothesis 1 is validated.
- Hypothesis 2 ( $H_2$ ): The Impact of Word of Mouth on Marketing Efficacy  
The t-value for Word of Mouth is 2.857, surpassing the crucial threshold from the t-table



of 1.985. Since the t-calculated value exceeds the t-table value, the null hypothesis is rejected, signifying a significant partial effect of Word of Mouth on Marketing Performance. Consequently, Hypothesis 2 is validated, affirming that Word of Mouth significantly contributes to improving marketing results.

### **Impact of Digital Marketing on Marketing Effectiveness**

The t-test findings demonstrate that the Digital Marketing variable possesses a significance value of 0.002 ( $< 0.05$ ) and a positive regression coefficient of 0.513. This indicates that digital marketing positively and significantly influences the marketing success of Manani Shop. This implies that advancements in digital marketing methods are expected to improve multiple aspects of marketing results.

This conclusion aligns with Manani Shop's strong participation on digital platforms including Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp Business, which it employs for promotional campaigns, product displays, and direct customer involvement. Strategies like as aesthetically pleasing content, flash promotions, and live shopping events have demonstrated efficacy in engaging audience interest and streamlining the purchasing process.

This corresponds with the viewpoint of Kotler and Keller (2016), who contend that digital marketing utilizes digital technology to engage consumers more effectively and responsively ultimately enhancing performance in metrics such as sales volume, brand awareness, and customer engagement. The current findings research, which determined that digital marketing substantially enhances MSME marketing performance, especially by broadening consumer outreach and lowering promotional expenses (Djakasaputra et al., 2021; Makrides et al., 2020; Priambodo et al., 2024; Wijayanto et al., 2024).

Consequently, it can be inferred that the more efficiently digital marketing tactics are executed, the more significant the enhancement in Manani Shop's marketing success, evidenced by heightened sales, purchasing frequency, and client loyalty.

### **Impact of Word of Mouth on Marketing Effectiveness**

The t-test result for the Word of Mouth variable indicates a significance value of 0.000 ( $< 0.05$ ) and a positive regression coefficient of 0.628, demonstrating a positive and substantial impact on marketing performance. Logically, this indicates that consumer recommendations, testimonials, and shared experiences significantly influence new purchases. Contented customers who disseminate their experiences via chats, Instagram stories, TikTok reviews, or peer discussions contribute to the formation of favorable brand perceptions and directly affect the purchasing intentions of prospective customers.

Characterizes word of mouth as interpersonal communication that entails trusted product endorsements grounded in genuine user experience. In contrast to conventional ads, peer-to-peer information is frequently regarded as more authentic and compelling. The current findings research, who underscores the significant impact of word-of-mouth on purchasing decisions and the improvement of marketing efficacy, especially for local enterprises and micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) (Babić Rosario et al.,

2020; Boonsiritomachai & Sud-On, 2020; Kurdi et al., 2022; Le et al., 2024; Ruiz-Alba et al., 2022). Manani Shop's initiatives to foster positive word-of-mouth via amicable service, reliable product quality, and the solicitation of client testimonials have successfully generated an informal, viral marketing phenomenon. This has led to a substantial and quantifiable enhancement in the business's overall marketing performance.

## **CLOSING**

### **Conclusion**

This study concludes that digital marketing methods and word of mouth significantly and positively influence marketing performance at Manani Shop. Digital marketing enhances brand exposure, attracts new clients, and retains existing ones through the strategic utilization of social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok. Simultaneously, both traditional word of mouth and electronic word of mouth (eWOM) are crucial in establishing consumer trust and influencing purchasing decisions. The interplay between digital marketing and word of mouth produces a multiplicative effect on marketing efficacy, evidenced by augmented sales volume, enhanced customer loyalty, and elevated user engagement across digital platforms. Consequently, it can be inferred that the integration of digital marketing and word-of-mouth techniques is an efficient method for augmenting the competitiveness of MSMEs in the digital age.

### **Suggestions**

Based on the aforementioned conclusions, many recommendations are suggested:

1. It is advisable for Manani Shop to persist in enhancing digital marketing strategies by elevating content quality, augmenting the frequency of promotional campaigns, and cultivating active involvement with social media followers. These initiatives will enhance visibility and garner broader customer interest.
2. To enhance the word-of-mouth effect, Manani Shop could incentivize customers to disseminate favorable reviews, testimonials, and shopping experiences via digital platforms. Utilizing user-generated material can greatly enhance trust and impact potential purchasers.
3. Local governments and affiliated institutions are urged to implement more comprehensive training and mentoring programs for MSME stakeholders, particularly in digital media management and marketing communication methods. This support can assist MSMEs in adapting to changing market circumstances and improving their digital competencies.

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