DIJEFA: Dinasti International Journal of Economics, Finance & Accounting
E-ISSN: 2721-303X
P-ISSN: 2721-3021
https://dinastipub.org/DIJEFA dinasti.info@gmail.com +62 811 7404 455

DOI: https://doi.org/10.38035/dijefa.v7i3.6953
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Received: 04 June 2026 | **Revised:** 14 June 2026 | **Accepted:** 04 July 2026

Digital Marketing and MSMEs Survival Strategy in the E-Commerce Platform Economy: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract: This study aims to synthesize current literature on the role of digital marketing strategies, e-commerce, and technological innovation in enhancing the resilience and sustainability of MSMEs. Drawing from a systematic review of 14 international journals, the analysis maps out MSME survival mechanisms through a well-defined strategic sequence. This path begins with strengthening human capital through financial and digital literacy to mitigate the risk of inflated operational costs. The success of this digital transformation heavily relies on developing dynamic organizational capabilities to respond agilely to volatile platform dynamics. At the operational level, short-form video content and omnichannel marketing tactics prove to be the most efficient methods for building brand awareness and customer engagement. Furthermore, leveraging e-commerce platforms alongside a strong entrepreneurial orientation serves as the primary driver for business growth and long-term financial viability during economic disruptions. This study concludes that digitalization is not merely the adoption of technical tools, but rather the construction of integrated internal capabilities. Management readiness and infrastructure support are critical factors ensuring that digital investments yield a sustainable competitive advantage instead of becoming an operational burden.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, E-commerce, MSME Resilience, Survival Strategies, Dynamic Capabilities.

INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are consistently recognized in various literature as fundamental pillars that support economic stability and growth, both at the national and global levels, where in Indonesia alone this sector makes a very significant contribution by contributing more than 60% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and absorbing around 97% of the total workforce or equivalent to 119.6 million people (Harnida et al., 2024; Ramdani & Fietroh, 2025) . The resilience of MSMEs has been consistently proven to be an economic safety valve, especially during macroeconomic crises or a decline in people's purchasing power, but there is a paradox where although the number of business units is very dominant

reaching tens of millions of units, most of them are still operating on a micro scale with major challenges in terms of productivity and business scalability. Entering the Industry 4.0 era, digital transformation is no longer just an option for MSMEs, but a crucial strategic need to maintain business continuity in the midst of a rapidly changing ecosystem (Goestjahjanti et al., 2025). The emergence of the digital economy and cross-border electronic commerce (e-commerce) has shifted the paradigm of international trade from a conventional physical system to a much more efficient, transparent, and inclusive digital ecosystem, supported by Indonesia's massive digital population reaching around 212 million users by early 2025 (Saputra et al., 2025; Yahya et al., 2025)

The COVID-19 pandemic has become a major disruption event that forced MSMEs to make a sudden digital leap to survive, where areas that are heavily dependent on the tourism sector such as Bali experienced a severe economic contraction to reach -9.85% in the fourth quarter of 2020 (Made et al., 2023). In these crisis conditions, the adoption of digital technology has proven to be a decisive factor in increasing the resilience of MSMEs, which is defined as the adaptive and agile ability to continue to function normally and quickly recover from difficulties by mobilizing available resources (Made et al., 2023). The success of this transformation is highly dependent on organizational dynamic capabilities that include sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring resources to face shifts in consumer behavior in a highly competitive digital market (Maulana et al., 2026). Digital marketing in this context does not only serve as a simple promotional tool, but acts as an operational bridge that leads to consumers from the attention stage to long-term purchases and loyalty through digital media such as Meta Ads, TikTok, and WhatsApp (Saputra et al., 2025; Lunan et al., 2025).

Research on the effectiveness of digital marketing shows that content formats play a vital role in customer engagement rates, where the use of 15-second looping short videos in Meta Ads was found to have a much higher engagement rate of 4.21% compared to single image or carousel formats (Saputra et al., 2025) Informative, engaging content strategies, and consistently through social media has proven to be effective in building strong brand awareness for local MSME products so that they can penetrate a wider market and be no less competitive with large industrial products or imported goods (Maulana et al., 2026; Ramdani & Fietroh, 2025) In addition to marketing, the adoption of supporting technologies such as digital payment systems, data analytics, and sustainable product innovation is an important component in MSMEs' survival strategies to reduce transaction costs and improve operational efficiency ((Habibie et al., 2026; Wahyundaru et al., 2024)). However, the implementation of this digital strategy is often faced with the phenomenon of predatory pricing in promotional features such as flash sales in e-commerce Digital Media, which, although it attracts consumers impulsively, requires strict supervision from the Business Competition Supervisory Commission (ICC) to ensure healthy business competition (Andini & Hidayah, 2024) .

Structural challenges remain a significant obstacle for many MSME actors in fully adopting digital innovation, especially the low level of financial and digital literacy that makes them often confuse personal finance with business (Harnida et al., 2024). Limited technological infrastructure, especially in rural areas or non-metropolitan areas, causes access gaps that hinder local MSMEs from competing in the global market (Yahya et al., 2025). The high cost of technology implementation and lack of technical understanding sometimes lead to a unique phenomenon where technology adoption actually imposes an additional cost burden that is not proportional to the increase in revenue, thus negatively impacting business sustainability if not managed with the right strategy (Harnida et al., 2024). Therefore, it is necessary to integrate government policies that include skills training, provision of access to capital, and strengthening digital infrastructure to ensure that the benefits of the Digital economy can be felt equally by all levels of business actors (Yahya et al., 2025). Theoretical frameworks such as the Resource-Based View (RBV) view digital marketing capabilities as strategic intangible

resources that provide unique competitive advantages for MSMEs if they can be managed into a mature organizational routine (Maulana et al., 2026)

Although the literature on digitalization and digital marketing in the MSME sector has experienced rapid growth in recent years, most previous studies are still fragmented because many studies focus only on the analysis of one specific e-commerce platform or are limited to a specific geographic locus. This partial approach results in a compartmentalized understanding, making it difficult for policymakers and academics to see the pattern of MSME survival strategies that apply universally in the midst of the global Digital economy ecosystem (Yahya et al., 2025). The methodological limitations of previous studies, which mostly used cross-sectional designs, leave a large gap for systematic synthesis studies, considering that longitudinal studies tracking the long-term impact of digital transformation on business resilience in a sustainable manner are still very rare. In addition to methodological issues, there is a gap in the use of performance metrics, where much research still focuses on surface engagement indicators (vanity metrics) such as the number of likes or reach, but fails to directly link them to objective financial results such as ROI, net profit margin, or measurable sales conversions (Saputra et al., 2025).

Exploration of the adoption of advanced Industry 4.0 technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), Cloud Computing, and Blockchain in strengthening MSME survival strategies is also still limited in the literature, even though these technologies have great potential to improve supply chain efficiency and transaction security (Cordova et al., 2025). Based on this background, the need for a comprehensive Systematic Literature Review (SLR) is very urgent to synthesize the latest findings on how digital marketing strategies contribute to the resilience mechanism of MSMEs in the Digital economy era. This study aims to map the relationship between digital capabilities, product innovation, and survival strategies in one complete framework to answer the challenges of increasingly aggressive digital market competition. By following a systematic SLR procedure through the planning stages, searching literature in reputable databases, and synthesizing findings, this article is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of strategic management science as well as a practical guide for MSME actors and policymakers.

METHODS

This study uses a *systematic literature review* approach to synthesize previous findings in order to answer research questions regarding digital marketing strategies and the survival of MSMEs in the digital economy era. The review process is guided by the PRISMA 2020 framework to ensure that the final identification, screening, feasibility assessment, and inclusion stages are carried out in a transparent and replicable manner (Page et al., 2021). The implementation stage begins with a comprehensive literature search on internationally reputable databases, namely *Scopus*, *Web of Science (WoS)* and Google Scholar, because both databases have a wide scope of high-quality journals that have gone through a *peer-reviewed* process.

Table 1. Literature Selection Process

Selection stage	Records	Decision rule
Identification	275	Records obtained from Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar using keywords related to training and development, organizational learning, engagement, retention, and performance.
Initial screening	121	Conference papers, non-journal sources, duplicated records, and non-English records were excluded.
Subject screening	58	Records were screened based on title, abstract, keywords, subject relevance, and access to full text.

Eligibility assessment	22	Full texts were assessed for conceptual relevance, methodological clarity, and contribution to the review questions.
Included in synthesis	15	Studies were included in thematic synthesis when they explained development, learning, engagement, retention, innovation, or performance mechanisms.

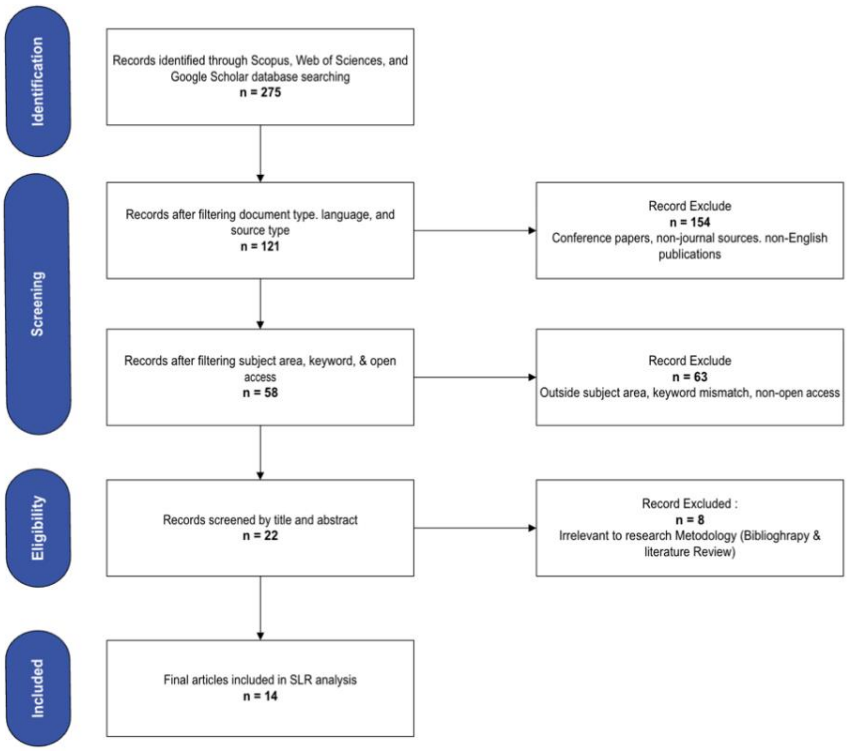


Figure 1. PRISMA-Based Literature Selection Flow

The time span for article publication is limited between 2021 and 2026 to capture the latest post-pandemic dynamics and the emerging trend of Industry 4.0 digitalization. Inclusion criteria are strictly applied to ensure the quality of the manuscript, where the selected article must be an original scientific journal article written in English and focus specifically on the context of MSMEs and the adoption of digital marketing technology. The selection process is carried out through four screening steps: removal of duplicate documents, screening by title, abstract evaluation, and finally *full-text reading* to ensure the suitability of the material with the topic of business resilience. Includes research published in relevant review periods, written in accessible scientific form, and directly aligned with the goal of explaining how development practices contribute to stronger employee engagement and continuity within the organization. Publications are excluded when there is duplication, lack of conceptual relevance, or only addresses learning in general without a clear relationship to the associated attachment, retention, or explanatory mechanism.

The literature search strategy is carried out using *a combination of Boolean based keywords operators* to ensure broad coverage but remain focused. The main keywords used include Search strategies using the right combination of keywords, including: "*Digital transformation*", "*Digital marketing*", "*MSMEs survival strategy*", and "*E-commerce platform*". This keyword combination is designed to capture articles that discuss organizational learning not only as an internal process, but also as a strategic capability that impacts company performance. Searches are conducted on the title, abstract, and keywords sections to ensure conceptual relevance to the focus of the research.

After the final article is determined, a quality assessment is carried out to ensure the credibility of the study before entering the data extraction stage. The data is then systematically extracted into structured worksheets that include author details, year of publication, research

objectives, methodologies such as the use of linear regression or PLS-SEM, dominant theoretical frameworks (especially *Resource-Based View* and *Dynamic Capabilities*), as well as key findings related to financial performance or business sustainability. Finally, the findings were synthesized qualitatively and thematically to formulate an adaptive defensive strategy framework for MSME actors in the midst of increasingly aggressive digital platform competition.

The synthesis analysis process in this study applies thematic synthesis techniques to group literature based on key variables that affect the resilience of MSMEs in digital Digital Media. Based on the evaluated literature, this thematic synthesis maps a specific group of digital marketing strategies, such as the effectiveness of repetitive short video content formats which have been shown to result in much higher engagement *rates* than static formats. Another thematic cluster focuses on the integration of the Digital economy, where cross-border *e-commerce* adoption is seen as a means of structural transformation that allows MSMEs to expand market reach with lower logistics costs. In addition, this thematic synthesis includes an analysis of structural barriers such as low digital literacy and infrastructure gaps that often lead to the "digitalization paradox", where the adoption of technology without a proper strategy can actually reduce business resilience due to the burden of implementation costs that are not proportional to the increase in revenue.

Table 2. Thematic Synthesis Coding Scheme

Cluster	Description	Coding categories	Purpose in analysis
Research type	Identify the research methodology and the form of empirical evidence produced.	*Quantitative* (PLS-SEM, OLS Regression, Experiments); *Mixed-methods* (Triangulation).	Clarifies the methodological basis of the synthesis.
Research context	Identification of organizational or sectoral setting.	*MSMEs/SMEs; Specific sectors* (Food & Beverage, Tourism, Cooperatives, Services).	Shows whether findings are sector-specific or broadly transferable.
Theoretical lens	Identification of conceptual foundation.	*Resource-Based View (RBV); Dynamic Capabilities Theory; Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR); Technology Acceptance Model (TAM).*	Explain why digital capabilities and innovation affect the survival of MSMEs as a strategic asset.
Mechanism	Identification of mediating or enabling process.	*Digital Marketing Implementation; E-commerce Adoption; Financial Literacy (*as a moderator/mediator*); Product Innovation; Customer Engagement.*	Explain how digital transformation produces outcomes through cost efficiency and algorithm adaptation.
Outcome	Identification of employee and organizational results.	Brand Awareness; Sales Performance; Financial Performance; Sustainability Performance; Resilience/Business Survival.	Connects the literature to the review objectives.

Furthermore, this study synthesized a theoretical framework to evaluate the *grand theory* underlying previous studies. *The Resource-Based View* (RBV) is the dominant foundation that views digital marketing capabilities as a strategic internal resource that provides a unique competitive advantage for MSMEs if managed into a mature organizational routine. Meanwhile, *Dynamic Capabilities Theory* is used to explain the mechanism of MSMEs in sensing, *seizing*, and reconfiguring resources to adapt to changes in digital algorithms and dynamic consumer behavior. Other theoretical frameworks such as *the Technology Acceptance Model* (TAM) and *Stimulus-Organism-Response* (SOR) were also synthesized to understand

how *e-commerce* platform features affect customer engagement and impulsive purchase intent. This multi-theoretical approach reflects the complexity of MSMEs' survival strategies that not only rely on digital tools, but also on the organization's routine capabilities and learning.

Finally, this methodological flow is closed with a gap *analysis* synthesis from previous research to formulate a future research agenda. The synthesis shows significant methodological limitations, where the majority of current research is still *cross-sectional* and captures momentary phenomena during times of crisis, so longitudinal research is needed to track the long-term impact of digitalization on the resilience of MSMEs. There is also a gap in the use of performance metrics, where much research still focuses on surface engagement indicators (*vanity metrics*) and fails to link them to objective financial outcomes such as ROI or net profit margins. In addition, the gap synthesis identifies a lack of exploration of advanced technologies such as *AI*, *IoT*, and *blockchain* in strengthening the MSME digital supply chain. A very open research gap also lies in the need to integrate the legal aspects of business competition, such as the supervision of predatory pricing practices in e-commerce platforms, to ensure a fair trade ecosystem for small businesses.

Through the integration of PRISMA, thematic synthesis, theoretical synthesis, and gap analysis, this review aims to provide a holistic framework that integrates technology dimensions, business strategies, and regulatory compliance to ensure the survival of MSMEs in the midst of increasingly aggressive platform economic competition.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The studies selected in this review cover a wide range of organizational and sectoral backgrounds, including MSMEs in the culinary, retail, fashion, pharmaceutical (pharmacy) sectors, cooperatives, service industries, and handicrafts and creative products. This variation is particularly useful because this review does not treat digital marketing simply as a matter of program design or the use of tools in a narrow way. Instead, this review examines digital transformation as part of a broader capability system that includes market-oriented learning, digital leadership and entrepreneurship, financial literacy management, product innovation capabilities, and business sustainability and resilience performance.

Most of the research is located in developing countries such as Indonesia, the Philippines, Pakistan, and Tanzania, which provides an in-depth picture of the contextual process of how digitalization becomes meaningful for the survival of small businesses in the midst of economic disruption. The theoretical lenses used, such as Resource-Based View (RBV) and Dynamic Capabilities, emphasize that the success of MSMEs' survival strategies depends heavily on how the technology is institutionalized into a mature organizational routine to respond to algorithm changes and consumer behavior in an agile manner. Table 3 summarizes these selected studies and their specific contributions to understanding the resilience mechanism of MSMEs in the platform economic ecosystem.

Table 3. Study Synthesis Results

Study No	Author (Year)	Country	Journal Title	Background	Method	Key Findings
1	(Hazzam et al., 2025)	English	Cross-sector MSME marketing director and manager	*Journal of Research in Marketing and Entrepreneurship*	Quantitative (Survey & fsQCA)	Digital marketing capabilities contribute to performance beyond traditional CRMs; Market orientation is a key driver of DMC.
2	(Verma, 2025)	India	Micro and small industries in various	*Journal of Economic Studies*	Quantitative (Regression Analysis)	The use of digital apps and websites significantly increases

Study No	Author (Year)	Country	Journal Title	Background	Method	Key Findings
			regional regions			sales growth and employee productivity.
3	(Chen et al., 2026)	China	MSMEs in the online fashion retail sector	*Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*	Quantitative (PLS-SEM)	Digital marketing analytics positively impact fashion retail performance with digital leadership as a moderator.
4	(Spilotro et al., 2025)	Thailand	MSMEs in a dynamic business environment (across industries)	*Marketing Intelligence & Planning*	Quantitative (PLS-SEM)	Digital marketing capabilities are a high-level strategic asset that directly determines competitive advantage.
5	(Liu et al., 2025)	International	Business and franchise partnership system	*Management Decision*	Quantitative (Empirical Study)	The synergy between entrepreneurial orientation and digital marketing capabilities improves the performance of the business partnership system.
6	(Naayif et al., 2025)	Indonesia	Fashion retail MSME players	*Journal of Creating Value*	Quantitative (PLS-SEM)	Value *creation agility* driven by digital marketing is the main determinant of MSME performance.
7	(Gao et al., 2023)	Bangladesh	MSME actors during the economic crisis and pandemic	*Sustainability*	Quantitative (PLS-SEM)	The adoption of e-commerce is the strongest driver of financial resilience and sustainability of MSMEs in the midst of global disruption.
8	(Herzallah et al., 2025)	Palestine	Users of social commerce platforms	*Journal of Open Innovation: Tech, Market, and Complexity*	Quantitative (PLS-SEM)	Content informative is the main stimulus that triggers customer engagement and consumer repurchase intent.
9	(Cordova et al., 2025)	Philippines	Domestic micro, small and medium business owners	*Economics - Innovative and Economics Research Journal*	Mixed Method (Survey & Interview)	The main barriers to digitalization include cultural resistance and financial constraints, but a proactive attitude encourages innovation.
10	(García-lafuente et al., 2026)	Spain	MSME managers who adopt Industry 4.0 technology	*Sustainable Technology and Entrepreneurship*	Quantitative (PLS-SEM)	AI adoption is still hampered by cultural factors; Senior management support is crucial in aligning technology with sustainable strategies.
11	(Mushi, 2024)	Tanzania	Service-oriented MSMEs in the	*Cogent Business & Management*	Quantitative (PLS-SEM)	A multichannel digital strategy (SEO, content, influencers)

Study No	Author (Year)	Country	Journal Title	Background	Method	Key Findings
			central area of economic growth			significantly predicts sales volume growth and market share.
12	(Agung et al., 2024)	Indonesia	MSMEs in various sectors (culinary, fashion, retail, and services)	*International Journal of Data and Network Science*	Quantitative (SEM-PLS)	The synergy between e-commerce applications and digital marketing implementation directly determines the output of strategic resilience.
13	(Wahyundaru et al., 2024)	Indonesia	MSME owners who use digital transaction platforms	*International Journal of Data and Network Science*	Quantitative (PLS-SEM)	High financial literacy allows MSME actors to optimize the use of e-commerce for business sustainability.
14	(Yacob et al., 2021)	Indonesia	MSMEs in urban, suburban, and remote areas	*Development Studies Research*	Mixed Method (Survey & Interview)	The entrepreneurial orientation of the owner plays a key moderation role in translating technology adoption into stable business performance.

The thematic synthesis findings in table 4 produce five main themes that are interrelated and form a logical sequence. This series begins with human capital development, moves through organizational interpretation and learning, and ends with innovation, sustainability performance, and strategic alignment. This interpretation helps explain why digital marketing strategies and technological transformation can produce strong results in some contexts but weak in others.

Table 4. Thematic Analysis Results

Theme	Main supporting studies	Synthesis result	Engagement optimization
Digital Capabilities as a Strategic Asset	(Hazzam et al., 2025; Naayif et al., 2025; Spilotro et al., 2025)	Digital marketing capabilities (DMCs) are high-level strategic assets that contribute performance beyond traditional customer relationship management (CRM) methods through value creation agility.	MSMEs must position DMC not just as a technical tool, but as a long-term strategic investment to build a competitive advantage that is difficult to replicate.
Digital Leadership & Organizational Culture	(Chen et al., 2026; Cordova et al., 2025; García-lafuente et al., 2026)	The effectiveness of technological transformations (such as AI and analytics) relies heavily on strong digital leadership to overcome cultural resistance and the limitations of managerial vision.	MSME leaders need to build an organizational culture that is adaptive and proactive towards innovation to align business vision with rapid technological change.
Financial Literacy & Risk Management	(Cordova et al., 2025; Gao et al., 2023; Wahyundaru et al., 2024)	Financial and digital literacy is a crucial foundation for mitigating the "digitalization paradox" that risks increasing operational costs if not managed with the right knowledge.	MSMEs need to integrate digital cash flow management training to ensure technology investments contribute directly to financial stability and business resilience.
Content Effectiveness &	(Herzallah et al., 2025; Mushi,	The informative nature of content in social commerce and the	The marketing focus should be directed at the quality of

Multimedia Strategy	2024; Naayif et al., 2025)	implementation of multichannel strategies (SEO, influencers) significantly sparked customer engagement and repurchase intent.	content information that is able to provide a positive psychological stimulus for consumers across various digital channels.
Financial Resilience through E-commerce	(Agung et al., 2024; Gao et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2025; Verma, 2025)	The adoption of e-commerce platforms and digital applications is the strongest driver of sales and productivity growth, especially in the face of the disruption of the global economic crisis.	MSMEs are advised to transform their business model towards an integrated platform economy to expand market access and ensure business sustainability.

The results of the thematic synthesis of the 14 selected journals show that the sustainability strategy of MSMEs in the digital era is a gradual process that starts from strengthening internal capacity and leads to the formation of long-term resilience. These findings confirm that digital transformation in the MSME sector can no longer be understood as a process of adopting technological tools, but as an effort to build strategic capabilities that are integrated within the organization.

The results of the literature synthesis show that digital marketing capabilities (DMCs) have been positioned as a high-level strategic asset that directly plays a role in shaping a company's competitive advantage in a dynamic business environment (Spilotro et al., 2025). This capability is even considered to contribute to stronger performance than traditional customer relationship management (CRM) approaches, especially when strengthened by a strong market orientation and the company's agility in creating added value for consumers (Chen et al., 2026). The success of the implementation of the digital strategy is greatly influenced by digital leadership and organizational cultural readiness. In this context, digital leadership plays an important role as a moderator that reinforces the influence of marketing analytics on online retail performance (Chen et al., 2026). In contrast, obstacles to adopting advanced technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) are often not solely caused by technical issues, but also by internal cultural resistance and weak support from senior management (García-lafuente et al., 2026). Therefore, the proactive attitude of business owners is a very decisive factor in overcoming various financial and technical obstacles so that digital innovation can be implemented successfully (Cordova et al., 2025; Liu et al., 2025).

In addition, the human capital aspect, especially financial literacy and digital literacy, is the main prerequisite for minimizing operational risks in the digitalization process. Adequate financial knowledge allows MSME actors to utilize e-commerce platforms more optimally so that they are able to produce more stable sustainability performance (Cordova et al., 2025; Wahyundaru et al., 2024) On the other hand, without sufficient strategic literacy, digitalization has the potential to become an additional burden on operational costs. Therefore, synchronization between the understanding of cash flow management and mastery of basic technological infrastructure is a very urgent need (Cordova et al., 2025; Wahyundaru et al., 2024). Strengthening literacy is ultimately an important foundation for technology adoption to truly increase financial resilience in the midst of market uncertainty (Gao et al., 2023).

At the operational level, tactical execution through the delivery of quality information and a multichannel strategy is the main link in building customer loyalty. In the social commerce ecosystem, content informativeness has proven to be a key stimulus that encourages customer engagement while increasing repurchase intent (Herzallah et al., 2025). In addition, the use of integrated digital strategies including search engine optimization (SEO), content marketing, and collaboration with influencers has been empirically proven to be able to predict market share growth and a significant increase in sales volume (Mushi, 2024) This kind of operational mechanism allows MSMEs to remain relevant, adaptive, and competitive in the midst of increasingly intense platform competition.

Ultimately, the synergy between these internal and external factors leads to the achievement of strategic resilience and sustainable business growth. The consistent use of e-commerce applications and websites has been proven to contribute to increased sales growth and employee productivity in micro and small industries (Verma, 2025). Furthermore, strategic alignment between the implementation of digital marketing and operational technology innovation not only has an impact on strengthening short-term financial performance, but also builds a stronger defense mechanism so that MSMEs are able to survive and grow during a global crisis (Agung et al., 2024; Gao et al., 2023). Thus, digital transformation carried out comprehensively can be understood as an important key to a more resilient and resilient future of the MSME sector (Liu et al., 2025).

Overall, this synthesis emphasizes that the sustainability strategy of MSMEs in the digital era is a multidimensional process that requires integration between internal readiness, strategic decisions, the formation of technology-based organizational routines, and the effective implementation of digital marketing.

Table 5. Results of Theoretical Synthesis

Theory	Total	Percentage
Digital Marketing Strategy & Analytical Framework	8	57,1%
Resource-Based View (RBV) & Capability-Based View	4	28,6%
Sustainability & Resilience Framework	4	28,6%
Dynamic Capabilities Theory & Learning Organization	3	21,4%
Entrepreneurship Orientation (EO)	3	21,4%
Perilaku Adopsi & Respons (SOR, TAM, Barriers)	3	21,4%
Financial Literacy & Economics (Productivity focus)	2	14,3%
Digital Marketing Strategy & Analytical Framework	8	57,1%
Resource-Based View (RBV) & Capability-Based View	4	28,6%

**Note: The total percentage exceeds 100% because some journals use a multi-theory approach (more than one theory) in their analysis.*

Based on the results of the theoretical synthesis in table 5, it shows that the dominance of digital marketing and analytics frameworks shows that these two aspects have become the main foundation in the latest literature on the resilience of MSMEs in the era of the platform economy. Most studies place Digital Marketing Capability (DMC) and the use of data analytics as the main determinants of business performance. This capability is considered to be able to contribute far beyond traditional Customer Relationship Management (CRM) approaches, especially when its effectiveness is strengthened by solid digital leadership (Chen et al., 2026; Hazzam et al., 2025). In addition, the use of digital applications and websites has also been empirically proven to be able to drive sales growth and increase employee productivity in micro and small industries (Verma, 2025).

When viewed through the perspective of Resource-Based View (RBV), digital capabilities are no longer understood as mere technical tools, but as valuable internal strategic assets. This perspective explains that MSMEs that have unique, integrated, and consistently run digital assets will tend to gain a more stable competitive advantage in the midst of a dynamic market (Spilotro et al., 2025) Furthermore, the synergy between these capabilities and agility in creating value (Value Creation Agility) allows business actors, especially in the fashion retail sector, to continue to update and strengthen their market position (Naayif et al., 2025). Thus, the integration of these strategic assets is an important foundation for MSMEs to transform digital transformation into real and sustainable financial performance (Gao et al., 2023).

The orientation on sustainability and resilience has also emerged as a strategic response for MSMEs in facing global crisis disruptions through the use of e-commerce. In this context,

the use of e-commerce platforms is identified as one of the strongest drivers for financial resilience, especially when integrated with digital marketing implementations that gain support from senior management (Gao et al., 2023; García-lafuente et al., 2026). Alignment between technology adoption and long-term sustainability goals allows business units to maintain operational continuity amid economic uncertainty (Wahyundaru et al., 2024). This transformation is ultimately directed to build a stronger business defense mechanism through optimizing the use of digital platforms (Wahyundaru et al., 2024).

On the other hand, the behavioral lens and barriers to adoption provide a deeper understanding of the psychological and structural factors that influence the success of technological transformation. Through the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework, the quality of information in digital content has been proven to play a key role as a key stimulus that drives customer engagement while influencing repurchase intent (Herzallah et al., 2025) However, the adoption of advanced technologies still often faces various obstacles, such as cultural barriers, limited technical expertise, and financial limitations (Cordova et al., 2025). Therefore, an effective survival strategy requires organizations to be able to overcome internal resistance through agile market learning in order to respond quickly and appropriately to changes in the platform's algorithm (Wahyundaru et al., 2024)

Furthermore, financial literacy and entrepreneurial orientation of owners can be understood as integrative catalysts that determine the effectiveness of the digitalization process. Adequate financial knowledge allows businesses to optimize the use of digital transaction platforms to achieve more stable sustainability performance (Yacob et al., 2021) At the same time, the proactive attitude of owners reflected in entrepreneurship orientation (EO) plays an important moderation role in translating technology adoption into stable business performance (Yacob et al., 2021)When entrepreneurial orientation is combined with strong digital capabilities, The results are not only seen in improving the performance of the partnership system, but also in strengthening the competitive position of MSMEs in the international market (Liu et al., 2025).

The new findings from these 14 studies show that the digital resilience of MSMEs is not formed alone, but is born from the synergy between strategic internal capabilities and measurable tactical execution. In this context, digital marketing capabilities (DMCs) are increasingly understood as high-level strategic assets that are able to contribute performance beyond traditional CRM approaches, especially when strengthened by effective digital leadership (Hazzam et al., 2025)). At the operational level, empirical evidence also shows that the 15-second looping short video format is the most effective form of content in generating the highest engagement rates at the most cost-efficient compared to static formats (Saputra et al., 2025) In addition, the integration between digital analytics, value creation agility, and financial literacy appears to form a more systematic defense mechanism. which ultimately plays a direct role in supporting business sustainability in the midst of a crisis situation (Gao et al., 2023; Wahyundaru et al., 2024) .

On the other hand, an analysis of the existing literature also reveals a number of methodological and thematic gaps that still need further attention. Most studies are still dominated by cross-sectional designs that only capture conditions at a single point in time, so they have not been able to explain how the dynamics of digital resilience develop longitudinally (Cordova et al., 2025; Herzallah et al., 2025) The literature also reveals an important gap related to the "digitalization paradox", which is a situation when technology adoption does not always produce benefits, but can actually increase the burden of operational costs if it is not accompanied by adequate human capital readiness (Wahyundaru et al., 2024). In addition, studies that discuss barriers to the adoption of advanced Industry 4.0 technologies, such as AI, Cloud Computing, and ERP, at the micro business level are still relatively limited. Similar limitations can also be seen in the lack of attention to differences in regional characteristics,

especially between rural contexts and metropolitan economic centers, even though these differences are very likely to affect the process and results of MSME digital transformation (Cordova et al., 2025; García-lafuente et al., 2026).

CONCLUSION

Digital marketing strategies and the adoption of e-commerce consistently prove to be important factors in improving the sales performance and financial resilience of MSMEs, especially in situations marked by economic disruption. However, the success of this transformation cannot be understood as a result of the use of digital devices alone. Digital transformation in MSMEs is more appropriately seen as the result of synergy between human capital, especially financial and digital literacy, the organization's dynamic capabilities in responding to market changes, and the entrepreneurial orientation of business owners. At the operational level, strategy execution through short video content and multichannel marketing approaches has also proven to be the relatively most efficient instrument for increasing customer engagement and driving repurchase intent. On the other hand, the literature also shows the existence of a "digitalization paradox", which is a situation when the adoption of technology that is not accompanied by adequate managerial readiness and literacy has the potential to increase operational costs and ultimately weaken business sustainability.

This research also has a number of limitations that need to be observed in interpreting the results of the synthesis. First, most of the studies analyzed are still dominated by cross-sectional designs, so understanding the dynamics of digital resilience and causality relationships in the long term is still not fully defined. Second, in terms of geographical context, the majority of the research focuses on emerging economies with a large sample concentrated in the retail, culinary, and fashion sectors in urban areas. This condition causes the resulting findings to not necessarily be fully generalized to the context of rural areas or other industrial sectors that have more stable characteristics. Third, the dominance of the use of self-reported data from MSME owners or managers also opens up the possibility of subjectivity bias in measuring the level of adoption and successful implementation of technology.

Based on these limitations, several future research directions are important to develop. The use of longitudinal design needs to be prioritized so that the effectiveness of digital strategies can be observed more deeply in various phases and economic cycles. In addition, exploration of the adoption of advanced Industry 4.0 technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), and Blockchain, is also an urgent research agenda to understand its contribution to management automation and supply chain efficiency in the micro sector. A more in-depth qualitative and mixed-methods approach is also needed to capture cultural barriers, managerial interpretations, and the role of business alliance networks in building business resilience. Furthermore, cross-country and cross-sector comparative studies need to be expanded in order to produce a more comprehensive understanding of the MSME digital transformation roadmap that is relevant in the global context.

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