

DIGITAL MARKETING ALLIANCE ON SMALL MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SMES): A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract: The development of digital marketing continues to grow and increase rapidly. Strengthening digital marketing by SMEs encourages marketing alliances with other parties. Simultaneously, the digital marketing alliance literature accumulated with this growth, but research is still few and not consistently integrated. SMEs are widely regarded as engines of economic growth and a vital contributor to a country's GDP. A brief comprehensive review is needed to help researchers and practitioners understand the adoption of digital marketing alliance systems. This study aims to analyze and classify the literature on digital marketing alliances in SMEs. Design/methodology by conducting literature studies published between 2016-2021 in the journal listed in the Journal Citation Report. It is then analyzed according to a systematic literature review approach involving interpretation-based assessments of research methodologies and critical findings in the study. The direction of this research is expected in the future to have implications for academics and practitioners. The authors' conclusions develop a theoretical model of digital marketing alliance between government and private that is applied to SMEs, impacting to create excellence in the era of digitalization. The originality /value of this research is the first expected to take a holistically integrated approach to study the digital marketing alliance of SMEs.

Keywords: digital marketing, marketing alliance, small medium enterprises (smes), literature studies

Abstrak: Perkembangan digital marketing terus berkembang dan meningkat pesat. Penguatan pemasaran digital oleh UKM mendorong aliansi pemasaran dengan pihak lain. Bersamaan dengan itu, literatur aliansi pemasaran digital terakumulasi dengan pertumbuhan ini, tetapi penelitian masih sedikit dan tidak terintegrasi secara konsisten. UKM secara luas dianggap sebagai mesin pertumbuhan ekonomi dan kontributor penting bagi PDB suatu negara. Tinjauan komprehensif singkat diperlukan untuk membantu peneliti dan praktisi memahami penerapan sistem aliansi pemasaran digital. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis dan mengklasifikasi literatur tentang aliansi pemasaran digital di UKM. Desain/metodologi dengan melakukan studi literatur yang dipublikasikan antara tahun 2016-2021 pada jurnal yang tercantum dalam Journal Citation Report. Ini kemudian dianalisis menurut pendekatan tinjauan literatur sistematis yang melibatkan penilaian berbasis interpretasi metodologi penelitian dan temuan kritis dalam penelitian ini. Arah penelitian ini diharapkan kedepannya dapat berimplikasi bagi akademisi dan praktisi. Kesimpulan penulis mengembangkan model teoritis aliansi pemasaran digital antara pemerintah dan swasta yang diterapkan pada UKM, berdampak pada terciptanya keunggulan di era digitalisasi. Orisinalitas/nilai dari penelitian ini adalah yang pertama diharapkan dapat mengambil pendekatan yang terintegrasi secara holistik untuk mempelajari aliansi pemasaran digital UKM.

Kata kunci: pemasaran digital, aliansi pemasaran, usaha kecil menengah (ukm), studi literatur

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INTRODUCTION

Today is the era where the global economic network continues to grow through a collaborative process (alliance). Cooperation that creates collaborative business relationships is unavoidable if the business is to survive and thrive in today's era of global competition. Where alliances are an essential organizational form for knowledge transfer (Adler and Kwon, 2002; Martinkenaite, 2011; Dia et al. 2013; Li et al. 2013), access to knowledge (Grant and Baden-Fuller, 2004) and learning (Meier, 2011; Friesl, 2012). According to Teece (1992), a marketing alliance is a relationship in which two or more partners share a commitment to achieve a common strategic goal, combine all their capacities and resources, and coordinate marketing activities. In terms of business, micro, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which are generally characterized by a lack of resources (Pett and Wolff, 2007; Kipley and Lewis, 2009; Mukherjee et al. 2013; Sefiani et al. 2018), thus doing marketing This alliance is increasingly relevant in today's conditions. In recent developments, the study of marketing alliances has found room for academic discussion, primarily when it is directed at the SMEs situation (Martins and Sole, 2013; Sanches and Moisés, 2019).

Marketing alliances are also voluntary cooperation agreements between companies or SMEs, with partners (stakeholders) that are used to achieve competitive advantage (Hoffman, 2007; Kiesling & Harvey, 2004). In order to cope with the ever-changing environmental conditions, alliance cooperation has long been considered an effective competitive strategy and has been widely recognized as a vital source of excellence, especially in today's increasingly competitive global market (Teng, 2008). Since the value of marketing alliances is to produce win-win solutions (Sarkar et al. 2009), in this case, marketing alliances are not limited to intra-industry alliances. Many SMEs have understood that, through various types of marketing alliances, SMEs can increase their strengths and reduce their weaknesses (Sirmon et al. 2004). Greve et al. (2010) and Lazzarini (2007) show that marketing alliances can provide more excellent marketing capabilities and achieve performance that surpasses their competitors. In academic research, it is stated that SMEs can use marketing alliances to increase their competitive advantage, reduce operating risk, improve business efficiency, gain market share, increase product competitiveness and attractiveness, increase customer

value, and increase brand equity (Goerzen, 2007; Heimeriks, 2007; Judge, 2005; Kandemir, 2006; Lane, 2001).

Various organizations have widely used many forms of marketing alliances and cooperation models and have received considerable attention from academia and industry in general (Shah, 2008). However, these conditions are not always going well, and many factors influence the success of marketing alliances. Still, academic research has not reached a consensus on corporate culture, marketing alliance capabilities, investment resources, management model, trust, commitment, experience, and evaluation of performance time, standards, and weights (Chand, 2012; Franco, 2012; Solesvik, 2010). Once a strategic alliance or marketing alliance has been in operation for a particular time, there should be some recognized performance evaluation indicators for the post-alliance strategy or marketing performance evaluation. According to (Craven and Piercy, 2000), for a successful alliance to work together, it is necessary to use appropriate indicators to assess performance.

This study is expected to contribute to SMEs by strengthening the knowledge needed by SMES practitioners in taking their initial actions or maintaining their path to marketing alliances for more strategic goals. RQ 1. Given the importance of creating and configuring beneficial alliances for SMEs, this systematic literature review aims to analyze and classify the literature on digital marketing alliances in SMEs. Moreover, this research must answer the research question, RQ2: what are the main drivers and reasons for SMEs to enter into digital marketing alliances?

Several works of literature have mentioned the definition of marketing alliance, wherein the context of the literature review this time the author sees the importance of both quantity and quality. This marketing alliance focuses on the process of two or more partners jointly developing an analysis of the initiative, strategy, and operations level to meet marketing objectives through customer satisfaction (Cherubini, 1999). However, there are several obstacles in defining marketing alliances due to overlapping terms with several other more or less similar phenomena, making it challenging to identify related concepts and their precise boundaries. This is because it refers to marketing activities at all levels; the term co-marketing can include several different alliance typologies, such as

brand alliances, advertising alliances, joint promotions, new product co-development, brand-cause alliances, and online (marketplace) marketing alliances.

For companies involved in marketing alliances, there are so many benefits of having marketing alliances because they can be considered as a critical component of marketing strategy (Li et al. 2010). These collaborative processes and initiatives can increase a company's value in several ways: by giving the company or its partners' access to markets or channels; providing the company with access to all products, product features, brands, or services; or supplying firms with access to new knowledge and skills (Swamanathan and Moorman, 2009). Besides that, several methods have been carried out that encourage an analytical approach to this topic. By trying to classify this method previously, it has not been fully explored and systematized.

In the concept of marketing alliances starting from the idea of marketing symbiosis developed by Adler (1996), he was one of the first scholars to analyze the benefits that companies can get from cooperation in marketing. This definition takes from symbiosis in nature which refers to the harmonious coexistence of different organisms in a mutually beneficial relationship. Adler (1996) illustrated that the phenomenon of companies developing their joint marketing activities as well as strategies for overcoming the barriers that arise from the current state of business operations reveals for the first time that marketing alliances go far beyond traditional trade agreement business. Adler's research is now 55 years old, but the concepts he outlines continue to grow in the relevance and frequency of applying marketing alliances.

Chaston and Mangles (2000) observed that SMEs are advised to form marketing alliances as a strategy in obtaining the knowledge needed to survive in the rapidly changing information technology and competitive modern market conditions. According to Muhammad et al. (2011), SMEs need to form marketing alliances and virtual relationships with other companies operating in the same sector to ensure these SMEs' market strength and competitiveness while maintaining their internal autonomy.

Digital marketing is defined as marketing activities, including branding using various web-based media (Sanjaya & Tarigan, 2009). E-Marketing or digital marketing is defined as using digital technology to

achieve marketing goals and efforts to develop or adapt the marketing concept itself, communicate on a global scale, and change the way companies do business with customers (Ali, 2013). Digital marketing is a marketing activity including branding that uses various web-based media such as blogs, websites, e-mail, google ads, or social networks (Sanjaya & Tarigan, 2009).

The definition of a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) is an example of a collaborative effort in which private actors pool their resources with public sector organizations, such as government agencies and universities, in long-term collaborative engagements, intending to provide added value for all parties involved (Hermans et al. 2019). The lack of informed choice of the best PPP model in dealing with risk is one of the challenges in analyzing and predicting between the government and the private sector (Anopchenko et al. 2019). Xiong et al. (2019) add that governance plays an important role in determining the success and failure of public-private partnerships (PPP).

METHODS

In this literature study, the method used is the PRISMA method. Where PRISMA stands for Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. The PRISMA diagram can be seen in Figure 1. A systematic literature review was developed using the PRISMA flow method. PRISMA stands for Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. The purpose of this PRISMA Flowchart is to assist authors in improving the systematic reporting of reviews. According to Figure 1, at the identification stage, article searches through the Google Scholar search engine by entering search keywords obtained 1,879 articles. Then at the screening stage, the author detected 209 duplicate documents, so then selected the remaining 1,670 articles based on the suitability of the abstract content with the topic, of which the remaining 470 abstract documents were selected. At the feasibility stage, the search continues on the availability of full-text articles, which will then be used as material for analysis in this study. At this stage, 20 full-text papers were selected, 20 of which discussed Marketing Alliances on SMEs. Until the final step, 20 articles were declared eligible for analysis because they had topics that matched the research objectives.

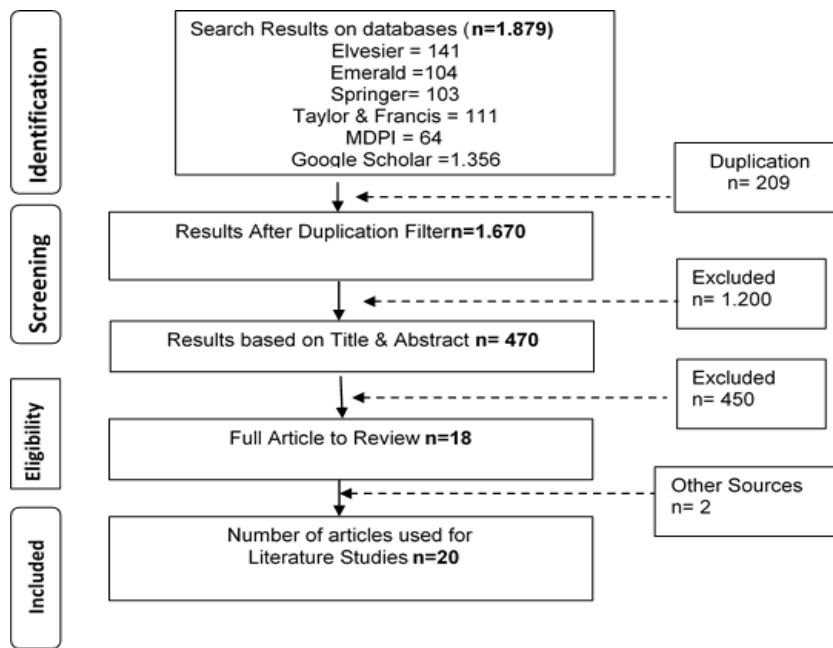


Figure 1. Diagram PRISMA Digital Marketing Alliance on SMEs

The main topics in the digital marketing alliance in Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

From the Table 1, the countries that do a lot of research on digital marketing alliances is India. India has many SMEs that need development through the digital marketing alliance (Syamsari et al. 2022). This condition shows that in a densely populated country and economically including developing countries, the increase in SMEs urgently requires an alliance between SMEs and the government and private sector to impact the development of SMEs themselves positively. India geographically and economically has similarities with Indonesia, so developing SMEs and marketing alliances is relatively not much different. While in other developed countries, there are differences in levels in SMEs, and SMEs have a speed of accessing technology and information compared to developing countries. Adler (1966) built the basic concept of marketing alliance from developed countries with case studies in large companies, where the latest developments were adopted in SMEs in developing countries (Syamsari et al. 2022). SMEs in India can be considered to have emerged as a dynamic economic growth sector (Das, 2007; Srinivasan, Rutz, & Pauwels, 2015). SMEs contribute to improving the economic health of the nation. It enriches invention as well as innovation (Massey et al. 2004). SMEs in India contribute 40% to total exports, 45% to output manufacturing, and contribute 8% of GDP (Srinivasan et al. 2015). However, ironically, in India, SMEs have technological

competence with limited resources. Thus, to increase the growth of SMEs in all sectors such as effectiveness, efficiency, competitive advantage; Modern information and communication technology applications (digital marketing alliance) are considered necessary (Consoli, 2012; Ongori & Migiro, 2010). This study has highlighted that SMEs' recent use of digital marketing alliances can improve their business objectives. The digital marketing alliance contributes to the growth of SMEs businesses in India.

RESULTS

In carrying out the identification search of this paper, it caused some gaps in the scientific literature. The gaps that the authors found became the basis for conducting appropriate research directions. An interesting finding in this literature review is that there are particular challenges related to the quality of marketing alliances between SMEs and large companies or with the relevant government. The resource dependence theory views the company as an open entity that depends on its external environment to obtain valuable resources (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978). In addition, Daso and Teng (2000) see alliances as enablers of resource exchange between SMEs. Therefore, the survival of SMEs is highly dependent on the ability of their top managers to gain access to critical resources by cultivating their relationships with alliance partners (Dickson et al. 2006). Hence this literature study adopts resource

dependence as an overarching theory to explain the differences in functional diversity between SMES marketing alliance portfolios.

In addition, the author develops a theoretical model of the digital marketing alliance between the government and the private sector, which is applied to SMEs, which has an impact on creating excellence in the era of digitalization. As for the alliance between companies or business relationships between SMEs and large companies produces a lot of benefits for both parties (i.e., SMEs and large companies or the government) (Jenkins et al. 2007). One of the many benefits that

SMEs derive from this alliance is risk-sharing through co-financing, operations, and facilitating access to finance (Jenkins et al. 2007). However, the literature on intercompany alliances between SMEs and large companies has not focused on this aspect. In contrast, the literature published in leading management journals over the past 22 years has mainly focused on strategic factors, alliance management, alliance form and design, and specialized areas such as alliance performance, issues, organizational justice, leadership, and decision-making knowledge and experience transfer learning (Gomes et al. 2016; Ramaditya et al. 2022).

Table 1. The main topics in Digital Marketing Alliance on SMEs from 2016 to 2021

Author and Year	Topics	Description	Country
(Jui-Te Chiang et al. 2020)	Construction of Performance Indicators for the Marketing Alliance	the establishment of performance evaluation indicators for marketing alliance between the catering industry and credit card issuing banks by using expert Delphi, fuzzy analytic hierarchy process and balanced scorecard methods.	Taiwan
(Tokman et al. 2019)	The link between SMEs alliance portfolio	the link between the SMEs' top management's strategic orientations and the diversity of their alliance portfolios.	USA
(PK Kannan et al. 2017)	Framework Digital Marketing	develop and describe a framework for research in digital marketing that highlights	India
(S Chatterjee et al. 2020)	Impact Digital Marketing alliance	increasingly firms are looking to use social media to connect with different stakeholders as plans on building a presence on such platforms are becoming part of the top-level strategy.	India
(Scuotto et al. 2016)	Quantitative research on fashion SMEs	introduce a new perspective on ambidextrous innovation orientation looking at how the current digital transformation is accepted in the fashion industry in Italy	Italia
(Pelletier et al. 2019)	a service ecosystem that is increasingly immersed into digital transformation, small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)	to explore a group conceptualization and associated perceptions of IT issues within an ecosystem	USA
(Brunetti et al. 2017)	Digital marketing alliance challenges	strategies that companies, public administrators, and organizations in the education industry	Italia
(Barnes et al. 2017)	Perceptual gaps and similarities in buyer-seller dyadic relationships	How to find similarities buyer-seller relationship	Inggris
(Cacciolatti et al, 2020)	Performance strategic alianace	The strategic alliance to examine key factors that influence firm performance in startups	UK
(Sakhdari et al. 2020)	Alliance Portofolio in SMES	Management concerned about alliance portfolio in SMEs for management capabilities	Vietnam
(Moi et al. 2020)	Crucial in leading a digital transformation effort	important implications for international marketing managers	Inggris
(Moreno et al. 2016)	differential effect	Effective differential Effect on development speed and launching speed on new product performance in SMEs	UK
(Sawaeen & Ali, 2020)	impact of entrepreneurial leadership in SMEs	several performance indicators, such as financial performance, increasing market share, effective marketing, innovation process	India

Table 1. The main topics in Digital Marketing Alliance on SMEs from 2016 to 2021 (continue)

Author and Year	Topics	Description	Country
(Obadia et al. 2017)	effects of bilateral norms on SMEs	The applied of export relationships in SMEs	French
(Isma'ili et al. 2016)	Cloud computing adoption determinants SMEs	How the Computing Adoption In SMEs	Australia
(Ocloo et al. 2018)	B2B E-commerce Adoption in SMEs	Identified factors encourage switching intention to adoption amongst manufacturing SMEs.	Ghana
(Lee & Hallak, 2020)	Investigating the effects of offline and online on SMEs	How actual networking behaviors and business relationships on SMEs	New Zealand
(Begonja et al. 2016)	Innovation and business performance determinants of SMEs	The importance of Innovation from performance SMEs	Kroasia
(Zhao, 2014)	Strategic alliance for SMEs	An integrated conceptual model of SME strategic alliances	General
(Grieco & Lasevoli, 2009)	Co-marketing alliance	the analysis of the typologies of studies on co-marketing alliances	General

There is an implication of the Digital Marketing Alliance for SMEs, namely marketing alliances, that encourage the critical strengthening of the marketing strategy elements for the companies involved (Li et al. 2010). The benefits of the marketing alliance are in the flexibility of market access or marketing channels, products, brands, services, training, and managerial skills (Swamanathan and Moorman, 2009; Ramaditya et al. 2022). Alliance marketing is a cooperative business behavior. The impact of the digital marketing alliance is the satisfaction of both parties in the alliance. It will affect decision-making, and subsequent performance is the most critical variable that affects satisfaction. Tomlinson (1970) and Pekar (1989) believe that the performance of marketing alliances should be based on objective financial indicators such as profit, level of sales, and return on investment. Moreover, the significant positive effect of natural resource sharing on SMES access to finance confirmed the argument with Lavie (2006) that marketing alliances can be extended to partnership alliances, i.e., firms can gain a competitive advantage not only through ownership and control over resources but also the right to use and use the resources shared with them in the alliance.

Managerial Implication

Digital marketing is one way to increase the competitiveness of MSMEs, and has proven to have a positive impact on MSME business development compared to conventional marketing. Marketing

alliances need to be carried out by MSMEs to further strengthen their digital marketing strategy. Furthermore, policy recommendations resulting from collaboration between the private sector and the government can be used as a reference for the development of MSMEs from a practitioner and academic standpoint. It is hoped that this research will encourage the creation of an MSME institutional model that can improve the performance, benefits and services of MSMEs.

Various organizations have used many forms of marketing alliances and partnership models and have received considerable attention from academia and industry in general. However, these conditions do not always work out well, and many factors influence the success of alliance marketing. After a strategic alliance or marketing alliance has been in operation for a certain time, there must be some recognized performance evaluation indicators for post-alliance strategy or marketing performance evaluation. This study contribute to MSMEs by strengthening the knowledge needed by policy-making stakeholders, SME stakeholders and actors to take early action and maintain collaboration and marketing alliances for more strategic goals with the government. The limited ability of MSMEs to provide business resources is a problem for MSMEs where the large number of MSMEs are still unable to develop product quality and marketing. Not a few of SMEs experience a lack of funds and incentives to develop their business, especially SMEs which are still classified as having low credibility.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Based on the review of articles conducted, the digital marketing alliance for SMEs is an effective collaboration between SMEs and large companies or the government, where this collaboration is related to the marketing of SMES products. The marketing alliances carried out include branding products based on digital technology so that from this collaboration, they can see and access finance, operational activities, and organizational efficiency. On the other hand, when this marketing alliance collaborates with the government, it can provide added value for all parties and expand the SMES marketing alliance partners, which have an impact on the provision and funding of public services.

As objects, SMEs receive benefits from digital marketing alliances implemented by the government and the private sector. At the same time, as subjects, SMEs can use resources from digital marketing alliances for SMES development to have a positive impact on state income and provide a multiplier effect in improving the welfare of the surrounding community. Therefore, it is recommended that SMEs strengthen their role in digital marketing alliances with the government and other large companies, thereby facilitating access to marketing, capital, managerial, and additional accesses.

Recomendations

The limitation of this systematic literature review is that the articles reviewed are only about digital marketing alliances in SMEs published between 2016 and 2021, which the authors found through the Google Scholar search engine with specific keywords. While the literature review carried out is the result of the author's critical review by reading the literature and drawing conclusions, comparing the findings between articles, and synthesizing them. Thus, further research is an opportunity to examine the literature in the broader period and various digital search sources so that an overview of the development of research topic trends regarding digital marketing alliances in SMEs is more comprehensive as a guide for future research.

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