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# THE ROLE OF DIGITAL MARKETING TO CREATE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE TO IMPROVE MICRO BUSINESS PERFORMANCE

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## ABSTRACT

UMKM has an important role to play in creating jobs and driving innovation. However, UMKM still faces the challenge of understanding the ever-expanding information technology. The government has issued regulations to protect UMKM, but they still need enhanced capabilities in digital marketing. Entrepreneurs need to leverage digital technology and social media to create a competitive edge through design, production, marketing, delivery, and sales support. The research aims to understand the role of digital marketing in creating a competitive advantage for improving the performance of micro-enterprises in Indonesia, in West Java. This research uses quantitative methods. The population used in this study is the entire buyer of the culinary UMKM in the City of Cirebon. The number of samples taken using the formula Lemeshow obtained the calculation of 250 respondents. Sampling technique using incidental sampling. Data analysis technique using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS). Research results show that competitive advantage is partially influenced by marketing performance of 43% and digital marketing of 30%. This is due to the importance of the role of Digital Marketing in improving UMKM performance and creating Competitive Advantage.

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## Introduction.

Indonesia has micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) with a workforce, most of which are still family members, besides that MSMEs can also absorb a lot of labor, this is evident from 2019 until MSMEs amounted to 65.4 million MSMEs in Indonesia with a total absorbed workforce of 123.3 thousand workers. With the absorption of a lot of labor, MSMEs contribute to reducing unemployment and contribute to the development of the Indonesian economy by increasing the country's GDP by 6.5%. MSMEs in Indonesia in their development still face various challenges apart from capital, the challenge that must be faced is the growing understanding of information technology to protect MSMEs in overcoming these challenges according to PP. NO 7 YEAR 2021 concerning Ease, Protection, and Empowerment of Cooperatives and Micro, Small and

Medium Enterprises (PP UMKM). With this government regulation, MSME players can develop their businesses and can face the challenges that exist today.

In recent years, the data below shows that MSMEs have a significant role in creating jobs, driving local economic growth, and encouraging innovation. To increase the role of MSMEs, it is supported by data on the number of MSMEs in Indonesia, especially West Java, in order to identify opportunities and build an ecosystem that supports sustainable development. Data on the number of MSMEs in West Java can be seen in the table below:

Table 1. Data of West Java MSMEs in 2019-2023.

Region	Region Name	Year 2023
1	Bodek Bunjur	1.440.696
2	Purwasuka	1.371.732
3	Ciyumajakuning	1.119.818
4	Cekungan bandung	1.844.119
5	PrianganTimur Pangandaran	790.336
6	Sukabumi City and Surroundings	360.174

Source: Office of Cooperatives and Small Businesses, 2023.

From table 1 above, it can be seen that of the 6 regions of West Java, the largest number of MSMEs is in the Bandung Basin area and the smallest is Sukabumi and its surroundings, for the number of Ciyumajakuning areas including the largest number of MSMEs. This is because Ciyumajakuning is one of the agglomeration areas in West Java where the growth in the number of MSME players is still lagging behind other regions, namely the Bandung Basin area. The growing number of MSMEs is divided into several types of business fields, namely batik, embroidery, craft, fashion, convection, culinary, and other services. Of all these business fields, the largest business field is the culinary business field, as can be seen from this table.

Table 2. Data of Ciyumajakuning Micro Business Sub Sector 2019-2023.

District/City	Number of MSMEs Business Sector					
	Batik	Embroidery	Craft	Fashion	Convection	Culinary
Cirebon District	1	0	47	49	9	245
Indramayu District	0	0	32	9	7	210
Majalengka District	2	0	44	38	6	345
Kuningan District	0	0	8	5	3	229
Cirebon City	5	0	34	27	1	303

Source: (Jabar Open Data, 2023).

From table 2 above, culinary occupies the largest position run by business actors in the culinary business sector. This is because the culinary business, the business that is most resistant to crisis conditions because food and drink are the basic needs that must be met from everyone. For this reason, the culinary business requires a high level of creativity. However, Ciyumajakuning culinary business actors are still limited in their business creativity, this is because the ability of MSME actors does not have more knowledge. The ability of MSME knowledge must continue to be improved along with technological developments so that MSME actors have the ability to apply digital marketing which can expand the reach of promotions and markets. Increasing digital marketing capabilities will not be maximally successful without being accompanied by the ability of business actors to create creativity to create competitive advantages. The ability to use digital marketing to create a competitive advantage, which is in an effort to improve marketing performance.

Businesses must continue to improve their digital capabilities in order to expand their promotional and market reach. It is digital, promotions, services, processes and overall business models

that have undergone a significant transformation due to the technological advancements brought about by the Fourth Industrial Revolution, also known as "Industry 4.0", organizations from various sectors have leveraged digital technologies to revolutionize their processes. Businesses are investing heavily in the development of digital capabilities to uncover innovative insights and implications that can create their competitive advantage, which may make them more inventive (Alghamdi & Agag, 2024). Many businesses face intense competition in a fast-changing business environment characterized by high uncertainty and complexity.

Therefore, businesses need to make changes and make new innovations in response to changes in the business environment (Cadden et al., 2023). In addition, in today's digital era, the ability to utilize technology is not just an asset but a necessity. Businesses can develop better technological proficiency to more easily adapt to digital platforms, and can also utilize their potential to improve business operations and interact with customers. This can improve marketing performance in digital marketing (Salah & Ayyash, 2024). Marketing performance as the contribution of strategic marketing activities to overall marketing performance captured through sales performance, new customer acquisition, and increased market share (Cao & Weerawardena, 2023).

Of the many who examined using digital marketing research variables, Cao & Weerawardena (2023) showed that media use affects marketing performance by increasing sales targets by influencing information gathering and adaptive sales in media use improves business communication with customers and adaptability behavior. It is, that the use of media by salespeople improves their performance indirectly by supporting their sales activities in the film industry, consumer digital engagement intervenes in the relationship between corporate media messages and corporate performance. And from the research variables of competitive advantage Pambudi (2017) which distinguishes that when the complexity, dynamics, and intensity of competition are in the macro environment, business increases. This means that companies are encouraged to further strengthen their strategic base, in order to ensure sustainable growth, especially in the long term. This is expected to be market performance. The advantage has the dual role of being a tool to generate performance, and a tool to neutralize the competitive assets and competencies possessed by competitors. By doing careful innovation, companies can create products that improve their business performance (Pambudi, 2017). As in other studies, it is found that the average respondent in this study gave an agreed response in determining and considering the competitive advantage factors of donut MSMEs in Tanggul District. competitive advantage is an advantage over competitors that is obtained by delivering greater customer value, through lower prices or by providing more benefits that match higher pricing. Therefore, the results of the research above underline that competitive advantage has a partial effect on marketing performance. And in research getting the results Competitive advantage has a positive and significant effect on the performance of MSMEs (Yulianti, 2023).

## **Literature Review.**

### **Digital Marketing.**

In recent years, the Internet has emerged and developed rapidly. Currently, many companies are utilizing the Internet to market their products (Fandy Tjiptn, 2020). Along with technological advances (the development of the Internet and World Wide Web and other digital technologies), trends in the business world are also increasingly varied and developing, one of these trends is digital marketing or Digital Marketing (Rizvanović et al., 2023). Digital Marketing is a complex concept used to create a comprehensive action plan to create awareness about the business, increase the customer base, increase sales and can promote products or brands, and build brands (Komalasari et al., 2021).

More and more business people are utilizing social media as a marketing tool. Both businesses that are just starting out and businesses that have developed, namely by complementing conventional marketing media using social media (Naninsih et al., 2022). Sekardwiwangi & Graciafernandy (2023) Stating that digital marketing, competitive advantage, and business success in a good category affect business success. Fitriani et al (2023) Stating that digital marketing has a positive impact on the company by increasing customer satisfaction proves that if the company works hard in managing social media, the company can achieve financial performance. In addition, if companies with a high level of marketing innovation can achieve high performance because marketing becomes more effective in reaching the company's target audience (Sedalo et al., 2022).

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is a positive relationship between digital marketing and marketing performance in micro businesses in West Java.

### **Competitive Advantage.**

Competitive advantage is the value of a company from the results of implementing its strategy so that the company has more value than its competitors (Algarni et al., 2023). Competitive advantage has a positive and significant effect on marketing performance, this means that the better the competitive advantage owned by SMEs, the better the marketing performance obtained by SMEs (Naninsih et al., 2022). Competitive advantage is the core of company performance in the market (Alghamdi & Agag, 2024). The advantage of a company grows from the value or benefits that the company can create for its buyers (Tajeddini et al., 2023). Competitive advantage can also be defined as the application of value-added strategies that are not simultaneously applied by current or potential competitors (Rua & Santos, 2022).

If a company can create an advantage over one of these three advantage strategies, it will gain a competitive advantage (Del-Castillo-Feito et al., 2022). Competitive advantage can be understood by looking at the company that comes from the many activities the company performs in designing, producing, marketing, delivering, and supporting sales. Thus, competitive advantage is a position where the organization continues to strive to beat competitors (Pambudi, 2017).

**H<sub>2</sub>:** There is a positive relationship between competitive advantage and marketing performance in micro businesses in West Java.

### **Marketing Performance.**

Marketing performance is a concept used to measure a company's performance in marketing its products. The company's marketing performance measurement uses units such as sales, customer growth, and customer turnover to better describe marketing performance and competition (Lee, 2023). Meanwhile, according to Jing et al (2023) marketing performance can be measured from an emphasis on subjective measures, such as brand loyalty and customer satisfaction, which are difficult to link to financial metrics that mainly concern upper management, arguing that in addition to dissatisfaction with subjective marketing measures, it can provide Internet power and will reduce the importance of subjective measures and increase the importance of objective measures. It can be concluded that marketing performance is a measure of the success of the product marketing process carried out by the company to obtain superior marketing performance, then the name is the use of technology used by a group of organizations or businesses. The utilization of technology that can be used by MSME players in Indonesia is the implementation of digital marketing strategies (Sekardwiwangi & Graciafernandy, 2023).

Marketing performance is becoming increasingly important in determining business success. In a highly competitive environment, companies need to understand and evaluate their marketing performance continuously to ensure their strategies remain effective (Fernández et al., 2022). Digital technology and social media have opened up new opportunities for marketing, but also added complexity and challenges (Yanine & Campos, 2023). Therefore, to achieve good marketing performance, companies must be able to adapt and innovate, and understand the changing needs and behaviors of consumers. Marketing performance is a measure of achievement obtained from the overall marketing process activities of a company (Irawan & Arsyelan, 2023).

### **Method.**

This research is a study using quantitative methods. quantitative research is a type of research that produces findings that can be achieved (obtained) using statistical procedures or other means of quantification or measurement (Dr. Ir. Priyono, 2021).

The population is all buyers at culinary MSMEs in the city of Cirebon. Sample withdrawal in this population uses the probability sampling method with the lemeshow formula so that the sample results are 250 respondents. The sampling technique used incidental sampling. Data collection methods through questionnaires distributed to respondents. The data analysis technique uses Structural Equation Modeling - Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) (Sarstedt et al., 2021).

**Result and Discussion.**

**Respondent Demographics.**

The profile of the research respondents can be seen below:

Table 3. Respondent Demographics.

Category	Description	Total	Persen%
Age	17-20 years	63	125,5%
	21-25 years	183	73,2%
	26-30 years	4	1,6%
Education	Student	23	2,3%
	Collage	227	80,6%

Source: primary data processed, 2024.

Table 3 shows that SME consumer respondents who use social are dominated by ages 21-25 with the education level being university students. This may be due to the culinary business is also a business that is in demand by graduate students who want to do entrepreneurship.

**Validity and Reliability Test.**

Validity analysis is conducted to describe the relationship between indicators and their latent variables.

Table 4. Validity and Reliability Test.

Construct	Measurement Item	Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Digital Marketing (DM)	DM1	0,954	0,979	0,980	0,903
	DM2	0,970			
	DM3	0,922			
	DM4	0,930			
	DM5	0,972			
	DM6	0,954			
Competitive Advantage (KB)	KB1	0,954	0,969	0,970	0,869
	KB2	0,955			
	KB3	0,912			
	KB4	0,872			
	KB5	0,966			
	KB6	0,930			
Marketing Performance (KP)	KP1	0,944	0,988	0,989	0,955
	KP2	0,985			
	KP3	0,984			
	KP4	0,989			
	KP5	0,984			

Source: primary data processed, 2024.

From table 4 above, it can be seen that for all statement items in this study, the Loading Factor value is > 0.05. It is said to be valid if the loading factor value has a value > 0.05 for each variable indicator. So that the calculation results in table 4 for all statement items in this study are valid.

To determine the reliability of research using SEM PLS analysis. If it is said to be reliable if the composite reliability value has a value > 0.07 for the research variable. It can be seen in column 5 that the composite reliability value for all variables is > 0.07. Therefore, this research variable is declared reliable. So that the variables in this study are suitable for the next analysis process.

**Evaluation of Measurement Model (Iner Model - Structural Model).**

The results of the measurement model evaluation can be seen in Table 5 which shows the magnitude of the influence of each dependent variable on the independent variable. The results of the calculation of the total influence between variables can be seen below:

Table 4. Total Effect.

	<b>KP</b>
DM	0,309
KB	0,439

Source: primary data processed, 2024.

From Table 5, it can be seen that marketing performance is partially influenced by 17% digital marketing and competitive advantage affects marketing performance by 81%.

The structural model is evaluated using R-Square (R2) for the dependent and independent constructs, with the criteria for limiting the value there are three classifications, namely 0.67; 0.33; and 0.19. The results of the total effect calculation can be seen below:

Table 5. R-Square Value.

	<b>R-Square</b>
KP	0,463

Source: primary data processed, 2024.

From table 6 below there is an R-square value of 0.46 or 46%, which means that the success of competitive advantage can be explained simultaneously through digital marketing and marketing performance.

Square Root Mean Residual (SRMR) is useful for comparing multiple models. The SRMR index is based on additional covalerians when the value is smaller it indicates that the model is a better fit. SRMR is an inference of how much of a difference there is between the data under test and the model. A correlation whose temperature is greater than the model is indirectly an error. SRMR is the average of all the differences between the tested data and the indirectly correlated modal. An average value of 0 indicates there is no difference between the data tested and the correlation states indirectly a model so the SRMR value is 0.026. This indicates a perfect fit. The SRMR value accepted as a transport model is with a value of less than 10. According to Weston et all  $SRMR \leq 0.08$  is accepted as an acceptable capital or fit (Solichin, 2024).

NFI is a measure of the comparison between the proposed model and the null model. The NFI value will vary from 0 (no fit at all) to 1.0 (perfect fit). A model is said to be a good fit if it has an NFI value  $\geq 0.9$  and is said to be a marginal fit if it has an NFI value of  $0.8 \leq NFI \leq 0.9$  (Solichin, 2024). The results of the calculation of the fit model in this study are:

Table 7. Goodness of Fit (GoF).

	<b>Saturated Model</b>	<b>Estimated Model</b>
SRMR	0,026	0,026
d ULS	0,103	0,103
d G	0,394	0,394
Chi-square	520,040	520,040
NFI	0,935	0,935

Source: primary data processed, 2024.

The Structural Model of the path diagram can be seen in Figure 1 below:

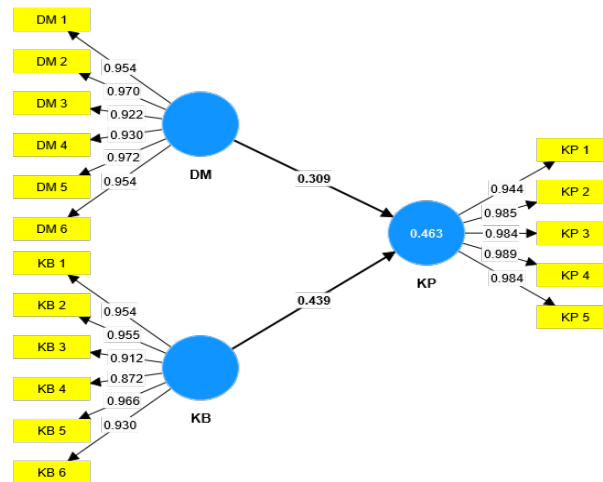


Figure 2 Evaluation of the Measurement Model (Outer Model - Measurement Model).

**Hypothesis Test.**

Hypothesis testing is intended as a way to determine whether an alleged hypothesis should be accepted or rejected. As explained above, hypothesis testing aims to determine the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable that we will examine is accepted or rejected (Mayasari & Safina, 2021).

Table 8. Path Coefficient and Hypothesis Testing.

	H	t-statistic	Result	P Values
DM-> KP	H1	4.302	Accepted	0.000
KB ->KP	H2	5.698	Accepted	0.000

Source: primary data processed, 2024.

Based on the calculation using bootstrapping, where the test results of the DM estimation coefficient on KP with a t value of 4,302 > t table value 1.9 and a p value of 0.000 < 0.05 so that H1 is accepted, which means that the direct effect of DM on KP is statistically significant. Furthermore, the test results of the coefficient estimate of family planning on KP with a t value of 5.698 > t table value 1.9 and a p value of 0.000 < 0.05 so that H2 is accepted, meaning that the direct effect of family planning on KP is statistically significant.

**Discussion.**

**Digital Marketing has a direct effect on Marketing Performance.**

The results of this research analysis show that digital marketing (X1) can be described that the more the use of media in marketing can improve business communication with customers, it will improve marketing performance to achieve its sales targets. Digital marketing is: an advertising component that can be described as an advertising activity to offer products or services through social media, which aims to benefit from sales activities other than advertising, as for content which is a marketing strategy that focuses on creating and disseminating valuable content to attract audiences and benefit businesses.

From research (Cao & Weerawardena, 2023) shows that the use of media affects marketing performance by increasing sales targets by influencing information gathering and adaptive sales in the use of media improves business communication with customers and adaptability behavior. It is, that the use of media by salespeople improves their performance indirectly by supporting their sales activities



in the movie industry, consumer digital engagement intervenes in the relationship between corporate media messages and corporate performance. In addition, from previous research Salah & Ayyash (2024) found that social media has a positive and significant effect on the marketing performance of SMEs. However, the types of goods provided by SMEs affect the customer satisfaction of these goods. In this context, the effectiveness of SMEs' social media in improving marketing performance depends on the suitability of the product for online sales and the organization's ability to manage logistical challenges. Therefore, although social media provides many opportunities to improve marketing performance, SMEs should carefully consider its factors as a marketing strategy.

### **Competitive Advantage has a direct effect on Marketing Performance**

The results of hypothesis testing can be seen from table 8, the results of this study indicate that competitive advantage can affect marketing performance. Evidenced in table 8 column t-statistic which means positive and significant. This makes competitive advantage have a link that can improve marketing performance. Competitive advantage is something that has a positive and significant effect on marketing performance, which means that the better the competitive advantage of culinary SMEs, the better the marketing performance of culinary SMEs. Competitive advantage is the core of a company's performance in a competitive market. The advantage of a company grows from the value or benefits that the company can create for its buyers. If business actors can create excellence from one of these indicators. So this is a competitive advantage that can be applied by sales from competitive advantage indicators, namely differentiating superior products, innovating, improving service quality and conducting appropriate market segmentation, because the success of marketing performance achieved by a business is in one of the indicators of competitive advantage. This can improve marketing performance.

What distinguishes it from previous research is that when the complexity, dynamics, and intensity of competition are in the macro environment, business increases. This means that companies are encouraged to further strengthen their strategic base, in order to ensure sustainable growth, especially in the long term. This is expected to be market performance. The advantage has the dual role of being a tool to generate performance, and a tool to neutralize the competitive assets and competencies possessed by competitors. By doing careful innovation, companies can create products that improve their business performance (Pambudi, 2017). As in other studies, it is found that the average respondent in this study gave an agreed response in determining and considering the competitive advantage factors of donut MSMEs in Tanggul District. competitive advantage is an advantage over competitors that is obtained by delivering greater customer value, through lower prices or by providing more benefits that match higher pricing. Therefore, the results of the research above underline that competitive advantage has a partial effect on marketing performance. And in research getting the results Competitive advantage has a positive and significant effect on the performance of MSMEs (Yulianti, 2023).

### **Conclusion.**

In the face of an increasingly digitally connected market, this research offers a marketing strategy through digital marketing as a solution for micro businesses in Indonesia, especially in West Java. In an increasingly digitally-connected era of globalization, where information and interactions between customers and merchants can happen quickly, it is important for micro businesses to deeply understand the important role that digital marketing plays in creating a competitive advantage.

Supporting Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), the government has issued regulations that aim to continue to encourage the improvement of capabilities in the field of digital marketing to expand promotion and market reach. Meanwhile, businesses need to use digital technology and utilize social media as a marketing tool in order to create a sustainable competitive advantage. By continuing to innovate and improve digital capabilities, MSMEs can significantly improve their marketing performance and expand their business to a wider level.

The results show that digital marketing has a positive effect on the competitive advantage of micro enterprises, especially in West Java, indicating that micro enterprises should improve their capabilities in digital marketing to expand their promotional and market reach and create a competitive advantage. In addition, it is expected that micro businesses will continue to improve their digital marketing skills. To gain a sustainable competitive advantage, creativity in microbusinesses must be continuously developed. In addition, businesses should use social media as an effective marketing strategy.

Micro businesses must continue to learn about digital marketing in this context. To meet the changing needs and tastes of the market, they should concentrate on creating new products or services. In addition, to improve the overall micro-enterprise ecosystem, micro-enterprise actors must cooperate and share information with each other. Micro enterprises in Indonesia, especially in West Java, are expected to improve their performance and competitiveness in an increasingly diverse and competitive market by continuously improving their digital marketing capabilities, creating innovations, and cooperating with other micro enterprises.

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