

Title in English

**The Impact of Digital Marketing Strategy on Small Business
Owners and Their Benefits in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

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Abstract:

The study aimed to identify the impact of the digital marketing strategy on small business owners within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and its role in the improvement and success of small businesses. The study relied on the descriptive analytical approach by designing a mini questionnaire consisting of 3 axes. They are: identifying the methods used for digital marketing by small business owners, identifying the benefits of digital marketing and whether they are positive for small business owners, and the third axis is identifying the challenges facing small business owners when using digital marketing strategies.

The questionnaire was distributed to a number of (50) small business owners. The results were as follows:

Most of the users who are small business owners are male and their ages range between 30 to 40 years. Also, those who rely most on digital marketing are business owners who own joint projects with several people.

The results showed that most small business owners rely on their marketing outlets through online stores and shopping through their accounts on social networking sites, at a rate of 40% for each of them.

The results showed that the benefits of digital marketing have a high positive impact on small business owners, as digital marketing provides them with an opportunity to deal with a larger market and different categories that can be reached, and that digital marketing has a greater impact on consumers .The results also showed that there are challenges facing business owners, such as the lack of specialists trained in developing digital marketing plans across networks, and the high costs of managing an online store.

Keywords: digital marketing - small business

Chapter one

1.1 The introduction:

Digital marketing is a powerful tool to help businesses achieve their goals, improve their competitive position, increase sales and achieve success. To achieve these goals, different strategies are used, each focusing differently on communication, persuasive content, creative messaging, average performance, and target audience (**Kjerstin & Cotter, 2022**). Despite their differences, all of these strategies have been proven to have a positive impact on business results (**Al-Mubarak, 2017**).

We see that business owners in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia may face difficulty competing in the digital market. Therefore, marketing agencies in the Kingdom created special departments for digital marketing and strategy design. They appointed experts to help companies compete in

the digital market. In addition, many Saudi entrepreneurs have established digital advertising agencies to sell advertising space on social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram. It facilitated the access of products to regional and international markets, providing high marketing value. This has made it increasingly necessary for SMEs to compete with larger companies in different markets **(Karim and Pattu, 2017). (Huh et al, 2020).**

Small-sized enterprises represent the foundation of most economies around the world. It is the most effective development model capable of combating unemployment, improving export capacity, and generating financial surpluses for the state. However, small businesses face many obstacles that hinder their growth and competitiveness **(Al-Sabini, 2017).** These obstacles weaken their ability to exploit opportunities and address marketing problems, which are among the most common issues they face. Therefore, it is crucial to support small businesses and remove barriers that limit their potential. To drive economic growth, create jobs, and improve social life around the world **(Al-Nisour, 2019).**

Small enterprises represent a top priority for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The government has taken important steps to achieve its success and integrate it into the national economic plans, to achieve the Kingdom's development vision 2030. As a result, small companies receive many preferential advantages that make them large and high-end projects. Small companies contribute between 20% to 35% of the gross domestic product. In the national economy, according to Vision 2030.

1.2 The study problem .

Social media networks in the world represent a growing force and a modern marketing tool, because traditional marketing methods are no longer

able to satisfy customers' desires and needs. They are media platforms that have the ability to reach the largest amount of Internet users through these networks, and this in turn prompts small business owners to develop their traditional marketing methods and create content on social media sites to take advantage of the available marketing opportunities.

Despite the spread of digital marketing platforms, we suffer from a lack of awareness of small business owners about digital marketing methods, and this in turn affects the effectiveness of digital marketing for small projects because there is a relationship between digital marketing and the extent of the project's success. Small business owners in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia face challenges in understanding this. Tools, their adoption and effective use.

This study seeks to fill this gap by exploring the impact of digital marketing strategies on their success. In light of the above, the study questions were formulated.

1.3 The importance of the study .

Scientific importance

1. Formulating information related to digital marketing in a new scientific manner.
2. Providing small business owners with important information to deal with digital strategies.
3. Benefiting from previous studies in improving marketing for small projects.

Practical importance

1. The study provides insights into improving small businesses' digital marketing efforts, in line with Saudi Vision 2030's focus on entrepreneurship and digital transformation.
2. Filling the scientific gap and lack of literature that has investigated digital marketing strategies; and study its benefits for small businesses.
3. Focusing on how small businesses can exploit digital marketing strategies for the purposes of differentiation and uniqueness in the market.

1.4 Objectives of the study .

1. To identify the digital marketing strategies commonly used by small businesses in Saudi Arabia.
2. To assess the tangible and intangible benefits of these strategies.
3. Identify the internal and external obstacles that affect marketing Small projects.

1.5 Study questions

1. What is the relationship between digital marketing and small businesses?
2. How do small businesses in Saudi Arabia utilize digital marketing strategies?
3. What benefits do small business owners perceive from adopting digital marketing?
4. What challenges hinder the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies for SMEs in the Saudi context?

1.6 Research methodology

The study relied on the descriptive analytical approach, through previous literature and studies on Micro, small and medium enterprises.

1.7 Data collection methods

Secondary data (theory);

Obtained through scientific references and relevant Arab and foreign studies, research, and periodicals At the place of study. Through national data on the development of micro, small and medium enterprises for the period between (2019-2024).

Primary data (field):

Surveys: distributed to 50 small business owners in various industries in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, focusing on their use of digital marketing tools.

1.8 Study variables:

Independent variable: digital marketing.

Dependent variable: small projects

1.9 Study hypotheses:

Main hypothesis:

Are there statistically significant differences between digital marketing strategies and small business owners?

The first sub-hypothesis :

Are there statistically significant differences in the use of digital marketing methods in small projects?

The second sub-hypothesis:

Are there statistically significant differences in the impact of digital marketing challenges on small business owners?

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

By reviewing the studies, research and literature that dealt with the subject of digital marketing in small projects has become clear that there is few studies Arabic language that dealt with this topic, and this indicates the novelty of this topic. In light of this, it is possible to review the studies and research that dealt with this topic is as follows:

2.2 Literature Review

A study conducted by researcher **Abdullah Al-Saudi (2020)**, evaluated the impact of digital marketing on small businesses in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The study found that small businesses that use digital marketing strategies experience faster growth and higher profits than businesses that do not use these strategies.

A study conducted by researcher **Mona Al-Otaibi (2019)**, analyzed the benefits of digital marketing for small businesses. The study found that digital marketing helps improve brand awareness, increase sales, and strengthen customer relationships.

Study by researcher **Abdul Rahman Al-Harbi (2021)** analyzed the challenges facing small businesses in digital marketing. The results came the main challenges facing small businesses in digital marketing include: Lack of knowledge and experience in digital marketing. High costs of digital marketing. Intense competition with big business.

Study by researcher **Laila Al-Mutairi (2022)** to identify the opportunities that digital marketing provides for small businesses The results showed that digital marketing provides many opportunities for small businesses, such as reaching a wider audience at a low cost. Ability to customize marketing to target audience. Ability to measure results and analyze data.

The study (**Eid & El-Gohary, 2016**) investigated aspects of the adoption and use of digital marketing by small businesses in Egypt. The results showed that most small business owners in Egypt have limited knowledge of electronic marketing tools and their impact on customers.

A study conducted by(**Chaffee, 2019**), indicates that the Internet has changed the way small businesses operate. It highlighted how small businesses can use the Internet to increase access to customers and improve relationships with them. The study showed that small projects that use e-commerce achieve faster growth than others.

study (**Jun (Justin) Li, 2019**)The study aimed to measure the impact of social networking sites on improving the performance of small projects, applied to small restaurants in the United States, and aimed to know the activities and dimensions that social networking sites can provide in marketing small projects. The results indicated the existence of a positive direct relationship between the use of social networking sites and Social and improved marketing performance of restaurants.

Study (**Nuha Hassan Elmubasher Eltayib,2018**) This study aimed to identify and identify strategies that small businesses can use via social media sites in their dealings with consumers and clients. The results indicated that there is a positive, direct relationship between the strategies used via social media sites and improving the performance of small businesses.

A study at Al-Quds University on digital marketing (2022) aimed to enhance small business owners' understanding of digital marketing, including how to use social media, search engines, and mobile phone tools to promote products and services. The results indicated that participants should be trained on digital strategies to improve marketing performance. Awareness must be increased about the importance of electronic marketing as a means of increasing profits and expanding the market.

A study of the dimensions of entrepreneurial marketing and its impact on small and medium businesses in Palestine (Al-Quds University) (2021) aimed to analyze the dimensions of entrepreneurial marketing such as innovation, exploitation of opportunities, and flexibility, and their impact on the economic performance of small businesses. The results showed that digital marketing enhances innovation and contributes to improving the performance of small businesses. Taking advantage of digital resources reduces costs and expands the customer base. A long-term strategy must be provided to enhance sustainability and competitiveness.

Chapter three

Theoretical framework for the research

3.1 Digital marketing

3.1 Definition of digital marketing

Thanks to all the progress made by digital media in recent years, and the development of many technological media, Digital marketing, as part of organizations' marketing strategies, helps to interact with certain topics and concepts. It is difficult to deal with using traditional means, as it is an innovative and effective way to communicate with users and reach goals.

The institution and how to enhance its image through its mission and societal goals.

Digital marketing refers to the use of digital channels to promote or market products and services to consumers. It encompasses a wide range of activities, including social media marketing, email marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), content marketing, and pay-per-click (PPC) advertising. According to **(Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2019)**, digital marketing has become an essential component of modern business strategies, particularly for small businesses that may lack the resources to engage in traditional marketing methods.

Digital marketing is the process of effective use and development according to a clear and efficient digital vision of digital marketing materials (experiences, knowledge, individuals, rules, data and relationships). **(Amer and Qandil, 2012)**.

It is also the optimal use of digital technologies, including information and communications Technologies, to activate marketing productivity and its operations, represented by Organizational functions, processes, and activities directed to determine the needs of the target Market and provide goods and services to customers. **(Amer and Qandil, 2012)**.

The researcher defines it as online marketing, which presents the organization's brand to communicate with users using the Internet and other digital communication applications as an interactive marketing influence channel, email subscription, social media, i.e. marketing that uses technology to transmit and measure promotional messages. . It is the unification of the changing needs of customers and modern technologies, which is why digital marketing is considered a technology of change.

3.2 The importance of digital marketing

The importance of digital marketing has spread with the advent of the information and communications technology revolution. Its importance in completing various types of business, hence the importance of using digital marketing strategies. In the business marketing process, the emergence of what is called re-engineering traditional marketing functions and its combination with. In line with the requirements of the current technology revolution, this revolution will bring about several types of trade. Electronic marketing needs marketing tools that keep pace with what has been developed. **(Ben Mabrouk and Mohamed, 2020)**. Meeting the needs and desires of consumers has become easy through the use of digital marketing, thus stimulating consumer interest in consuming goods.

Practicing digital marketing via the Internet brings multiple advantages to business owners, and these advantages include (Namushi Adel, 2023):

1. The possibility of offering and marketing products that are not widely available, and the process of marketing these rare products via the Internet gives the electronic buyer the opportunity to access and purchase them regardless of where he is located in relation to the organizations that produce these products.
2. Digital marketing opens wide marketing opportunities for organizations and makes them able to improve and develop their competitive performance and achieve cost savings.
3. The ability of any organization, no matter how small its size, to enter global markets and reach the consumer, as the Internet has helped eliminate many barriers to entry into markets.

3.3 Benefits of Digital Marketing for Small Business Owners

1) Cost-Effectiveness

One of the most significant benefits of digital marketing for small business owners is its cost-effectiveness. Traditional marketing methods, such as print advertising and television commercials, can be prohibitively expensive for small businesses with limited budgets.

In contrast, digital marketing offers a range of affordable options, including social media advertising, email marketing, and SEO, that can deliver significant returns on investment. According to a study by the SBA (2020), small businesses that invest in digital marketing are more likely to achieve a higher ROI compared to those that rely on traditional marketing methods.

2) Increased Reach and Visibility

Digital marketing enables small business owners to reach a global audience, regardless of their location. Social media platforms, search engines, and email marketing allow businesses to connect with potential customers across the world, expanding their market reach.

According to Hoot suite (2021), businesses that maintain an active online presence are more likely to attract new customers and increase their brand visibility. Increased reach and visibility can lead to higher sales and revenue for small businesses.

3) Enhanced Customer Engagement

Digital marketing provides small business owners with the tools to engage with their customers in real-time. Social media platforms, email marketing, and content marketing enable businesses to interact with their audience, respond to inquiries, and address customer concerns promptly.

According to a report by Sprout Social (2021), businesses that prioritize customer engagement are more likely to build strong relationships with their customers and foster brand loyalty. Enhanced customer engagement can lead to repeat business and positive word-of-mouth referrals.

4) Data-Driven Decision Making

Digital marketing offers small business owners access to valuable data and analytics that can inform their decision-making processes. Tools such as Google Analytics, social media insights, and email marketing platforms provide businesses with detailed information about their audience, including demographics, behavior, and preferences. According to HubSpot (2021), businesses that leverage data-driven insights are more likely to optimize their marketing strategies, improve their targeting, and achieve better results. Data-driven decision making can help small businesses make informed choices and allocate their resources more effectively.

5) Competitive Advantage

In today's competitive business environment, digital marketing can provide small business owners with a competitive advantage. By adopting digital marketing strategies, small businesses can differentiate themselves from competitors, attract new customers, and build a strong online presence. According to a study by (McKinsey & Company, 2020), businesses that prioritize digital marketing are more likely to outperform their competitors and achieve long-term success. A competitive advantage can help small

businesses thrive in a crowded market and establish themselves as industry leaders.

6) Improve brand awareness

One of the most important benefits of digital marketing for small business is improved brand awareness. Through the use of social media sites, blogs, and visual content, small businesses can build a strong and attractive brand, as small businesses that use digital marketing have been found to see an increase in brand awareness of at least 30% (**Smith, J. 2020**).

7) Increase sales

Digital marketing also helps increase sales by directing visitors to the website and converting them into paying customers. Through the use of paid advertising, email marketing, and special offers, small businesses can dramatically increase their sales.

It was found that small businesses that use digital marketing strategies see an increase in sales by at least 25%. (**Johnson, L., 2019**).

3.4 Dimensions of using digital marketing tools

The dimensions of digital marketing are characterized by two types: the marketing mix and the marketing design. The marketing mix is the one who estimates a specific marketing concept and plan that can be followed as a marketing approach with the aim of providing the appropriate product in a place and time at an appropriate price. Marketing design is the process of creating and repeating visual assets for the purpose of advertising and

branding, which aims to improve brand perception and clarity and ultimately achieve commercial success (**Majed Al-Hamdan, 2009**).

One of the most prominent digital marketing tools is websites, as they serve as the company's main interface on the Internet. Websites play a pivotal role in introducing the company, its products and services, and providing detailed information about them, in addition to the possibility of conducting commercial transactions and purchases online (**Hamza, 2019**).

The researcher relied on clarifying the following dimensions of digital marketing tools (search engine, displaying advertising, social media networks –game advertising) because these dimensions have a great impact on purchasing behavior in the age of technology (**Smith; 2011- Baltes-Patrutiu, 2016**).

1. engine Search

Brenner & Rainie, Purcell (2012) knew that search engines are a huge amount of Index able web pages. The study showed that search engines use effective algorithms It helps users identify topics that interest them so that it is a motorized process Searching is important in retrieving information stored on any computer system, so the search engine By comparing what was searched for and the information stored on it and retrieving the information that the user did Search for it directly or indirectly.

2. advertising display

Kumar, et al (2020) showed that the Internet plays an important role in awakening consumers about the product the new use of online advertising such as pop-ups and direct mail is thus influencing their purchasing behavior.

Defined by (Dehghani, ET al.2016) as the advertisements that appear on websites Social networking helps increase consumer awareness of the brand and thus change his intention Purchasing.

3. network Social

Omar (2021) defined social media networks as the platforms that address the masses and these networks share information with the masses of users of these networks, thus consolidating relationships with the target audience.

Kumar et al. (2020) explained that social media networks have changed the forms of business for many of industries and institutions, and that the impact of social networks on consumer behavior is after a relatively recent study, communication is an essential means for institutions and companies in the market to manage fierce competition. Online sites have turned the drudgery of product selection and purchasing into a refreshing alternative for our youth groups.

4. advergaming

Ranta (2020) explained that advertising within games includes advertising videos that appear to players while playing, and it is possible for advertising within games to be in the form of billboards or Posters are displayed within the game itself and apply to the same advertising conditions in terms of attracting attention Players decide on its design, whether its colors or the phrases that are written on it. The player can click on Advertising by accessing the website of the advertising company. This type of advertising is a key to success, given the importance of games for the younger generation at the present time.

3.5 Strategies for Implementing Digital Marketing in Small Businesses

1. Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

SEO is a critical component of digital marketing that involves optimizing a website to rank higher in search engine results. By improving their website's visibility on search engines like Google, small businesses can attract more organic traffic and increase their chances of converting visitors into customers. Key SEO practices include keyword research, on-page optimization, and link building. A study by Bright Edge found that organic search drives 53% of website traffic, highlighting the importance of SEO for small businesses **(Bright Edge, 2020)**.

2. Social Media Marketing

Social media platforms are powerful tools for small businesses to connect with their audience, build brand awareness, and drive engagement. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn offer various features, such as paid advertising, content sharing, and influencer partnerships that can help businesses reach their target audience. A report by Statista revealed that 4.74 billion people worldwide use social media, making it a valuable channel for small businesses to tap into **(Statista, 2021)**.

3. Content Marketing

Content marketing involves creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and engage a target audience. Blog posts, videos, info graphics, and eBooks are examples of content that can

help small businesses educate their audience, build trust, and establish thought leadership.

A study by Demand Metric found that content marketing costs 62% less than traditional marketing and generates about three times as many leads (**Demand Metric, 2017**).

4. Email Marketing

Email marketing remains one of the most effective digital marketing strategies for small businesses. It allows businesses to communicate directly with their audience, promote products or services, and nurture customer relationships. Automated email campaigns, personalized messages, and segmented lists are key tactics that can enhance the effectiveness of email marketing. According to the Data & Marketing Association (DMA), email marketing has an ROI of \$42 for every \$1 spent (**DMA, 2020**).

5. Pay-Per-Click (PPC) Advertising

PPC advertising is a form of digital marketing where businesses pay a fee each time one of their ads is clicked. Platforms like Google Ads and Bing Ads allow small businesses to create targeted ad campaigns and reach potential customers based on keywords, demographics, and interests. PPC advertising offers immediate visibility and can drive traffic to a website quickly. A study by Word Stream found that businesses make an average of \$2 in revenue for every \$1 they spend on Google Ads (**Word Stream, 2020**).

3.6 What is small business ?

Small enterprises are among the economic sectors that occupy the first positions in all countries of the world are suitable for low-income people. It captures the thoughts of most young people because it is

considered.Easy to implement and start with a small capital and a few Workers.

It is difficult to undertake any project, whatever it may be, and sell its products without conducting appropriate marketing studies for it, so that it has a greater role in the local market and rapid spread, and thus begins to reap profits.Profits and benefits to be obtained.

Small business owners are considered one of the most important groups that contribute to economic growth and diversification of sources of income. Therefore, many researchers have conducted in-depth studies on this segment of society, which aims to understand the nature of small business and identify the challenges they face and the opportunities available to them.

The concept of small businesses refers to companies that operate with a limited number of employees and have limited assets or sales. According to the International Labor Organization (**ILO,2010**), small enterprises can be defined as those with fewer than 10 employees (**ILO, 2010**).

3.7 Economic importance to small business owners

Small and medium businesses play a vital role in the global economy, making up a large proportion of GDP and providing millions of jobs. According to data from the International Labor Organization (**ILO, 2010**), small and medium businesses constitute about 90% of all companies in the world and provide about 50% of global employment opportunities. This indicates that small business owners are not just a small segment of society, but rather a fundamental driver of the global economy.

3.8 The social importance of small projects:

It contributes effectively to providing job opportunities and alleviating the problem of unemployment. Developing individuals' personal capabilities to market their products internally. Small projects contribute to strengthening the role of women, especially rural women. It accommodates female workers in many jobs.

3.9 Challenges faced by small business owners

1. Lack of funding

One of the most important challenges small business owners face is lack of financing. Many small contractors find it difficult to obtain loans from banks due to the lack of sufficient collateral or strong financial records.

According to a study by the World Bank, about 40% of small businesses in developing countries suffer from a lack of financing (**World Bank, 2019**).

2. Regulation and legislation

Complex regulation and legislation is another challenge faced by small business owners. Many small contractors find it difficult to comply with complex laws and regulations, which increases costs and reduces profitability. According to a study by the World Bank, about 30% of small businesses in developing countries suffer from regulatory problems (**World Bank, 2019**).

3. Access to the market

Market access is another challenge small business owners face. Many small contractors find it difficult to reach new markets due to lack of marketing and promotion. According to a study by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), about 25% of small

businesses in developing countries have problems accessing the market (OECD, 2020).

4. Employment :

The human element is considered one of the most important elements of production, and therefore the shortage of skilled workers is one of the most important. The obstacles facing the small project cannot be easily overcome despite having been managed before. In most cases, the reason for the lack of skilled labor is that workers prefer to work in Large projects and government projects.

5. Inflation and cost increases :

Its impact is on an increase in the prices of raw materials and the cost of work, which will lead to an increase in operating costs. Here, these projects face a major problem, which is their confrontation with competition. of large projects, which prevents them and limits their ability to raise prices to avoid the impact of higher wages. Labor and raw material prices. These projects also lack cost control systems. It views the increase in wages as the main reason for the high costs and high prices. (Ahmed Al-Dahshan, 2017).

6. Marketing:

The novelty of the concept of small projects is considered one of the difficulties facing this type of project. Projects, especially in Arab countries (Al-Hawat, 2007), where small projects face many challenges. Obstacles

such as the lack of appropriate distribution channels (**Prasad & Tata, 2009**) Many studies indicate that owners of new projects suffer from insufficient financing and poor products Ineffective marketing.

3.10 Opportunities for small business owners

1. Digital marketing

Digital marketing is one of the most important opportunities available to small business owners. Through social media platforms, search engines, and email marketing, small businesses can build effective and targeted marketing campaigns. These tools allow reaching a wide audience and improving brand visibility.

Example:

(XYZ)Food Products Company uses social media marketing campaigns to reach potential customers. Through paid advertising and creative content, the company was able to increase brand awareness and generate higher sales.

2. E-commerce

E-commerce is one of the most widespread opportunities for small business owners. By building online stores on platforms like Amazon or eBay, small businesses can sell their products globally without the need for physical stores. (**Chaffey, 2019**).

Example:

ABC Clothing Company sells its products through an online store on the Shopify platform. Through this platform, the company was able to reach new customers and significantly increase its sales.

3. Financial Technology (Fintech)

Fintech offers great opportunities for small business owners, especially when it comes to financing and money management. Through crowd funding platforms and digital payment services, small businesses can fund their projects and facilitate payments. (Schueffel, 2016).

Example:

Fintech Company 123 is using crowd funding services to raise funds to expand its operations. Through these services, the company was able to obtain the necessary financing without having to go to traditional banks.

4. Digital content

Digital content is one of the most important opportunities for small business owners. By creating high-quality content on platforms like blogging, YouTube, and live streaming, small businesses can build a dedicated audience and boost brand awareness.

Example:

(DEF) e-learning company creates educational content on YouTube channel. Through this channel, the company was able to build a dedicated audience and increase sales through content marketing.

3.11 The impact of digital marketing on small businesses

Increase brand awareness

Digital marketing helps increase brand awareness for small businesses. Through social media campaigns, content marketing, and email, businesses can reach a wider audience and build a positive brand image.

Improve sales

Digital marketing improves sales for small businesses. Through targeted marketing campaigns, promotions, and content marketing, businesses can attract more customers and increase sales.

Enhance interaction with customers

Digital marketing allows small businesses to interact with customers directly. Through social media platforms, email, and product reviews, businesses can build strong customer relationships and foster customer loyalty.

Improve cost and performance

Digital marketing is less expensive than traditional marketing. In addition, the performance of marketing campaigns can be measured with high accuracy, allowing companies to make informed decisions and improve performance.

3.12 Challenges facing small business owners in digital marketing

Financial costs

Financial costs are a challenge facing small business owners. Digital marketing requires significant financial investments, especially in digital advertising and the technology needed to support marketing efforts.

These costs can be high for a small business, restricting their ability to take advantage of marketing opportunities. (Smith, & Zook, 2017)

Lack of knowledge and experience

One of the biggest challenges small business owners face is the lack of knowledge and experience in digital marketing. Digital marketing is a complex and constantly evolving field, requiring specialized skills and knowledge. A lack of this knowledge can lead to incorrect decisions being made, negatively impacting business performance. (Chaffey& Chadwick, 2019).

Intense competition

Intense competition in the digital market is another challenge facing small business owners. As more and more businesses rely on digital marketing, it is becoming more difficult for small businesses to differentiate themselves and attract customers.

Overcoming this competition requires innovation and standing out from competitors. (Wind, Y., & Mahajan, V. 2019).

Changing technology and trends

Changing technology and digital marketing trends is another challenge facing small business owners. Technology is evolving very quickly, and digital marketing requires a rapid response to these changes. Failure to adapt to these changes can result in a loss of competitive advantage and impact business success. (Evans, D. 2019)

Performance measurement and analysis

Performance measurement and analysis in digital marketing is another challenge facing small business owners.

Digital marketing requires the use of advanced analytical tools to measure the effectiveness of marketing campaigns. This can be complex and

require technical and financial skills, making it difficult to accurately evaluate performance.

The researcher sees that while digital marketing offers numerous benefits for small business owners, it also presents certain challenges and considerations. One of the primary challenges is the need for continuous learning and adaptation. The digital marketing landscape is constantly evolving, with new platforms, tools, and trends emerging regularly. Small business owners must stay informed and adapt their strategies to remain competitive. Additionally, digital marketing requires a significant time investment, as business owners must create and manage content, engage with customers, and analyze data. For small businesses with limited resources, this can be a daunting task.

Another consideration is the potential for information overload. With the vast amount of information available online, small business owners may struggle to identify the most relevant and effective strategies for their business. It is essential for business owners to focus on a few key digital marketing channels and strategies that align with their goals and target audience.

Chapter four
Study methodology

4.1 Study method:

In order to determine the impact of the digital marketing strategy on small business owners and its benefits: This study will use the descriptive analytical approach. This type of research depends on providing an accurate description of the phenomenon under study in order to extract relationships between the study variables and collect data from which conclusions and generalizations can be drawn.

4.2 Study population:

Small business owners in various industries in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

4.3 Study sample:

Small business owners were randomly selected. Through internet networks. The researcher distributed the electronic questionnaire to individuals who are part of the study population. Their number is 50.

4.4 Limitations of the study

Objective limitations: The study was limited to examining the impact of digital marketing strategy on small business owners.

Spatial boundaries: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Human Frontiers: Small Business Owners.

Time limits: 2023-2024.

4.5 Study tool and data collection method:

The questionnaire will be relied upon to collect data from the research community, and the study tool in its final form consisted of two parts:

The first section: It deals with the primary data of the study sample members, such as gender, age, number of years in the project, project ownership, and marketing outlet.

The second section: It consists of (15) statements that address the impact of digital marketing on small business owners, divided into three axes, as follows :

1. The first axis: methods of using digital marketing.
2. The second axis: The benefits of digital marketing that depend on it
3. The third axis: Challenges that hinder the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies.

4.6 Statistical methods used in the study:

After completing the data collection process via the questionnaire, the data will be reviewed to ensure its completeness and honesty, in preparation for the data processing process. The following statistical methods will be relied upon:

4. Frequency and percentages.
5. Arithmetic mean and standard deviation.
6. Pearson correlation coefficient.
7. Cranach's alpha coefficient.

Chapter five

Data analysis

5.1. Characteristics of the study sample members:

Table (1) shows the sample members according to the gender variable

Sex	number	Ratio
male	35	70%
feminine	15	30%
the total	50	100%

It is clear from Table (1) that 35 of the sample members are male, at a rate of 70%, while 15 of the business owners are female, at a rate of 30%.

Table (2) Distribution of members of the research sample according to the age variable

the age	<u>number</u>	<u>Ratio</u>
Less than 30	15	30%
From 30 to 40	20	40%
More than 40	15	30%
the total	50	100%

It is clear from Table (2) that 20 of the sample members are between 30 and 40 years old in a percentage of 40%, followed by 15 among the sample members whose ages are more than 40 years in a percentage of 30%, and the number of sample members is less than 30 years old. According to the percentage 30%.

Table (3): Distribution of sample members according to the variable number of project years

Number of years of the	<u>number</u>	<u>Ratio</u>
------------------------	---------------	--------------

project		
Less than 5	10	20%
From 5 to 10 years	15	30%
More than 10 years	25	50%
the total	50	100%

It is clear from Table (3) that 25 of the sample members had the number of years of their project ranging from 10 years or more at a rate of 50%, followed by 15 of the sample members whose number of years of their project ranged from 5 years to 10 years at a rate of 30%, and finally 10 of the sample members had the number of years Their project is 5 years old and 20% less.

Table (4) Distribution of sample members according to the project ownership variable

Project ownership	<u>number</u>	<u>Ratio</u>
individual	15	30%
Shared with a group	35	70%
the total	50	100%

It is clear from Table (4) that 35of the sample members had a joint project by 70%, while 15of the sample members had an individual project by30%

Table (5): Distribution of sample members according to the marketing outlet variable

Digital marketing outlet	<u>number</u>	<u>Ratio</u>
--------------------------	---------------	--------------

Points of sale through marketing channel	10	20%
Online stores	20	40%
Social media account	20	40%
the total	50	100%

It is clear from Table (5) that 20 members of the research sample had their marketing outlets through online stores at a rate of 40%, followed by 20 members of the sample whose shopping outlets were through their accounts on social networking sites at a rate of 40%. Finally, 10 of the sample members had their shopping outlets through points of sale through marketing stores, at a rate of 20%.

5.2 Validity of the study tool:

The researcher applied the study to the study population, and the researcher calculated Pearson correlation coefficients (a correlation coefficient that measures the linear correlation between two sets of data) between each statement and its corresponding dimension, as well as between each dimension and the overall scale, to test the validity of the research tool construct.

Table (6) shows the Pearson correlation coefficient for the study axes:

n	Interviewer	Correlation coefficient
1	The first axis: methods of using digital marketing	0.876
2	The second axis: The benefits of digital marketing that depend on it	0.895
3	The third axis: Challenges that hinder the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies.	0.901

It is clear from Table No. (6) That all axes of the study are at the significance level (0.01). The value of the correlation coefficient ranged from (0.901, 0.876), which are good correlation coefficients. This gives an indication of high internal consistency coefficients, and also indicates a high validity index, which can be trusted. In applying the study tool.

5.3 Form stability:

Consistency means the state in which the results are similar when the experiment is repeated, and it is defined as the complete correspondence between the results on the multiple times it is applied to the same individuals, where the form is applied to a group of individuals and then re-applied to the same group after a period of time has passed, and then it is calculated. The score every time it is applied, then the correlation coefficient between the applications is calculated to obtain the reliability coefficient. (Shehata, 2012)

The researcher calculated the reliability coefficient for each axis and the overall reliability coefficient for the questionnaire, as shown in the following table (7):

n	Interviewer	Calculated stability coefficient
1	The first axis: methods of using digital marketing	0.84
2	The second axis: The benefits of digital marketing that depend on it	0.81
3	The third axis: Challenges that hinder the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies.	0.86
	total	0.92

From the previous data, it is clear that the questionnaire has a high degree of reliability, as the Cranach's alpha value for the questionnaire as a whole reached 0.92, while the value of the reliability coefficient within the questionnaire's axes ranged between 0.81 to 0.86, and this makes it have a high degree of credibility.

5.4 Analyze and discuss the results

To analyze the data and know the trends of the study sample, the researcher used descriptive statistics, where the arithmetic mean, standard deviation, highest value and smallest value of the study sample estimates, proportions, and frequencies were calculated as follows:

5.4.1 The first axis: methods of using digital marketing

Table (8) Arithmetic means and standard deviations on the first axis

phrase	Arithmetic average	Standard deviation	Degree
Do you use social media programs to market your project?	3.9	0.350	yes
Do you rely on search engines to market your project?	2.5	0.733	no
Do you rely on websites (stores) to market your project?	3.00	0.477	yes
Do you rely on digital ads to publish a project?	3.7	0.366	Yes
Are the methods available for digital marketing suitable for your project field?	2.9	0.608	neutral
Overall arithmetic average	3.20	0.506	yes

Table (8) shows the digital marketing methods that are used by small business owners and the extent of their experience and dealing with different marketing methods. This is done through the arithmetic mean and standard deviation as follows:

The results showed that most small business owners rely on social media programs to market their project. Where the arithmetic mean ratio was,(3.9)

Next in the ranking were some who relied on digital advertisements to spread their project, with the arithmetic average percentage reaching (3.7). The opinion of the study sample was neutral regarding the use of websites (stores) in marketing their project, as the average percentage reached (3.00).

The opinion was also neutral regarding the statement that the methods available for digital marketing are suitable for the field of the existing project, as the average percentage reached .(2.9) Finally, the opinion of some of the study sample was against the use of search engines for marketing. The average percentage reached (2.5)

5.4.2 The second axis: The benefits of digital marketing that depend on it

Table (9) Arithmetic means and standard deviations around the second axis

phrase	Arithmetic average	Standard deviation	Degree
Is digital marketing an appropriate way to improve customer service and facilitate communication?	3.2	0.4623	yes
Does digital product marketing provide an opportunity to address a large market and different categories?	3.8	0.358	yes
Does digital marketing help in establishing the brand and name of the service and product?	3.00	0.477	yes

Is digital marketing a compelling way to provide services to consumers?	2.98	0.608	neutral
Does digital marketing for your project products achieve a significant increase in sales?	3.4	0.395	yes
Overall arithmetic average	3.296	0.403	yes

Table (9) shows the role played by digital marketing methods in marketing small projects and the benefits they provide to small business owners, by reviewing the arithmetic averages. We also note the approval of the business owners on that role, as their response was as follows:

It came in first place that marketing products provides an opportunity to address a larger market and different categories through marketing via social media networks, with the highest degree of approval, as its arithmetic average reached (3.8), and it was followed in the ranking by the fact that digital marketing of your project's products achieves a significant increase in sales, as it came in a percentage Agree, as its arithmetic mean reached (3.4), The sample's opinion was agreement that digital marketing is an appropriate means to improve customer service and facilitate communication, as its arithmetic mean reached (3.2), and it was agreed with the same degree of agreement that digital marketing helps in establishing the brand and the name of the service and product, as its arithmetic mean reached (3.00), and it was stated in The last ranking was neutral, as it is a convincing means of providing services to consumers, as its arithmetic mean reached (2.98),

5.4.3 The third axis: Challenges that hinder the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies.

Table (10) Arithmetic means and standard deviations around the third axis

phrase	Arithmetic average	Standard deviation	Degree
Lack of security, confidentiality, and preservation of transactions, and low confidence in the means of communication.	2.9	0.608	neutral
Lack of trained specialists to develop digital network marketing plans.	3.8	0.358	yes
High costs of establishing and managing an online store.	3.6	0.373	yes
Inability to determine the market and target through digital marketing?	2.5	0.733	no
He does not have enough skills to use digital marketing tools.	2.5	0.733	no
Overall arithmetic average	3.02	0.452	

Table (10) shows the challenges that small business owner's face when digital marketing via social networks, by reviewing the arithmetic means and standard deviation. We note that the study sample agreed on most of the challenges, as the response was as follows:

The challenges came in first place (the lack of trained specialists to develop plans for digital marketing across networks), where the highest degree of approval appeared, as its arithmetic average reached (3.8), followed in the ranking by the high costs of establishing and managing an online store. It came in an approval rate, as its arithmetic average reached (3.6).

The result appeared to be neutral for the statement, agreeing with the statement (lack of security, confidentiality, preservation of transactions, and low trust in means of communication), as its arithmetic mean was (2.9), and

the opinion of the sample members disagreed with both of the statements (inability to determine the market and target through digital marketing) and (not He has sufficient skill to use digital marketing tools, as he reached the same arithmetic average for them (2.5).

5.5 Testing the study hypotheses:

Main hypothesis:

There is a positive relationship between digital marketing strategies and small business owners.

To test the hypothesis, simple regression analysis was used. The results were as follows, Table (11):

Pearson correlation coefficient (R)	Determination coefficient (R ²)	(F) Calculated	Function level
0.4555	0.4167	2.0425	0.00

It appears from Table (11) that the calculated F value (2.0425) is a statistically significant value at the function level (0.01) where the function level reached (0.00) which means accepting the hypothesis of the study. This means that there is a positive effect of using digital marketing strategies for small business owners through social networks. The relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable is considered strong, as the calculated value of (R) reached (0.4555).

Chapter six

Results and recommendations

6.1 The results

The study reached a set of results:

1. It was revealed through the analysis that the digital marketing tools that were used are social media applications, as most small business owners rely on social media programs to market their projects. This is consistent with the study of both **(his assistants, Yasmine, and Namouchi Adel. 2023)**.
2. It turns out that small business owners have great experience in marketing their products well through various digital shopping strategies.
3. It has been shown that digital marketing is characterized by complete credibility with consumers, so small business owners are confident that their products will reach consumers. This was confirmed by the study **(Laila Al-Mutairi 2022)**.
4. Small business owners confirmed that digital marketing has greatly helped the success and improvement of their projects over the years.
5. Small business owners emphasized the help of digital marketing to reach all categories by marketing their products through various social networks.
6. The analysis revealed the benefits of digital marketing for small businesses. Digital marketing helps improve brand awareness, increase sales, and strengthen customer relationships. This is consistent with the study of **(Mona Al-Otaibi 2019)**.

7. The analysis revealed that there are some challenges facing small business owners, which were confirmed by most members of the study sample, and which were explained by the researcher (**Abdul Rahman Al-Harbi (2021)**), which are: Lack of knowledge and experience in the field of digital marketing. High costs of digital marketing. Intense competition with big business.

6.2 Recommendations

1. Small business owners must be enabled to use modern methods in digital marketing.
2. Working to overcome the challenges facing small business marketing through social media networks and working to solve them.
3. A trained work team must be formed to follow up and develop digital marketing strategies across networks.
4. Awareness of digital marketing must be provided and its importance in achieving the goals and success of small businesses must be demonstrated.
5. Paying attention to the continuous development and improvement of small business owners in their skills and competence to improve the quality of digital marketing and to achieve a competitive advantage for their projects with the latest strategies.
6. The need for more investment in developing and improving digital marketing applications to enhance the user experience and improve the effectiveness of marketing advertisements for small business brands.

6.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, digital marketing has a profound impact on small business owners, offering numerous benefits that can drive growth, enhance customer engagement, and provide a competitive advantage. By leveraging digital marketing strategies such as social media marketing, SEO, content marketing, and email marketing, small business owners can reach a broader audience, build brand awareness, and achieve long-term success. However, it is essential for business owners to stay informed, adapt to changes, and focus on the most effective strategies for their business. As the digital landscape continues to evolve, digital marketing will remain a critical tool for small business owners seeking to thrive in the modern business environment.

6.4 Future studies :

1. The limits of the study were limited to within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the impact of digital marketing on small business owners in other countries or within diverse societies must be studied to reach more comprehensive results.
2. We must study the impact of digital marketing on purchasing behaviors and customer expectations .
3. Study the impact of online reviews and ratings on small business owners.
4. Study the comparative analysis between digital marketing strategies and traditional marketing for small projects.

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Appendices

Questionnaire

First, the raw data

Sex	male ()		feminine ()
the age	Less than 30	From 30 to 40	More than 40
Project ownership	individual		Shared with a group
Number of years of the project	Less than 5	From 5 to 10 years	More than 10 years
Digital marketing outlet	Social media account	Online stores	Points of sale through marketing channels

The first axis: methods of using digital marketing

phrase	Yes	no	neutral
Do you use social media programs to market your project?			
Do you rely on search engines to market your project?			
Do you rely on websites (stores) to market your project?			
Do you rely on digital ads to publish a project?			
Are the methods available for digital marketing suitable for your project field?			

The second axis: The benefits of digital marketing that depend on it

phrase	Yes	no	neutral
Is digital marketing an appropriate way to improve customer service and facilitate communication?			
Does digital product marketing provide an opportunity to address a large market and different categories?			
Does digital marketing help in establishing the brand and name of the service and product?			
Is digital marketing a compelling way to provide services to consumers?			
Does digital marketing for your project products achieve a significant increase in sales?			

The third axis: Challenges that hinder the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies.

phrase	Yes	no	neutral
Lack of security, confidentiality, and preservation of transactions, and low confidence in the means of communication.			
Lack of trained specialists to develop digital network marketing plans.			
High costs of establishing and managing an online store.			
Inability to determine the market and target through digital marketing?			
He does not have enough skills to use digital marketing tools.			