

THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL MARKETING BARRIERS ON THE PERFORMANCE OF MICRO AND SMALL ONLINE BUSINESSES

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Abstract: The study is designed to determine the impact of digital marketing barriers on the performance of micro and small online businesses. The hypotheses that were proposed were: access to digital marketing has a significant impact on the performance of micro and small online businesses; the business' digital marketing knowledge and skills have a significant impact on the performance of micro and small online businesses; and the budget allocated for digital marketing has a significant impact on the performance of micro and small online businesses. The study was done using descriptive research design and employed quantitative research method. The survey was conducted among 60 online business owners who were selected using convenience sampling; however, only 42 questionnaires were used to analyze the results. The Cronbach's alpha was used to check the reliability of the research instrument. The data gathered were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, standard error, R square, and beta were shown to better analyze the results of the survey that was conducted. The result shows that access to digital marketing, the business' digital marketing knowledge and skills, and the budget allocated for digital marketing have a positive significant impact on the performance of micro and small online businesses.

Keywords: online shopping, online marketing, search engine optimization, social media, email marketing.

1. INTRODUCTION

The internet and technology have fundamentally changed how businesses operate nowadays (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Prasad, 2018; Rigdon, 2023; Vitez, 2019). Digital marketing has become the standard for growing and successful organizations (FutureLearn, 2023; Ocampos, 2020). It has brought a lot of development to companies and even increased sales (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Storm, n.d.). The change does not exempt the Philippines, where online shopping has become increasingly popular (Sih, 2023; Zhenhub, 2023).

Digital marketing is also called as online marketing (Alexander, 2022;). The activity refers to all the marketing efforts that is done by organizations through the internet (Alexander, 2022; FutureLearn, 2023; Monnappa, 2023; Shyam, n.d.). It is a way of connecting to possible consumers using the internet and other forms of digital communication with the aim of promoting the brands that the business offers (FutureLearn, 2023; Gustavsen, 2023).

The growth of online businesses in the Philippines has been very significant (Sih, 2023; Zhenhub, 2023). The online businesses, including MSMEs (Shyam, n.d.), were able to amplify their market and expand their customer base (Rigdon, 2023). The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in the Philippines, which are considered as the backbone of the economy, has benefited from digital marketing (Eight Media, 2018). They were able to identify what their target market wants, reach out to anyone anywhere in the Philippines with no geographical boundaries, communicate with the customers, save money from engaging in traditional advertising, and even create brand loyalty (Chaudhary, 2023; Eight Media, 2018).

Digital marketing has been favorable so far (Shyam, n.d.); however, some of the online business owners are still in the early stages of using digital marketing to its full potential. Online businesses had to deal with different digital marketing barriers that had a significant negative impact on their growth and success. These barriers include a lack of access to digital marketing, a lack of digital marketing knowledge and skills, and limited budgets for digital marketing (Chaudhary, 2023).

Without digital marketing, it is a struggle for organizations to connect with their prospective consumers beyond the business' physical location (Chaudhary, 2023; Ought Right, 2023). Ought Right (2023) added that in order to expand and reach new customers, the use of different digital channels like search engine optimization (SEO), social media, and email marketing will be of great help. Different businesses will miss out on significant opportunities to create better engagement with their audience and build brand loyalty if there is a lack of access to digital marketing. Using social media is a new trend that has helped businesses promote their products and services and reach consumers in a short period of time (Rajagopal, 2022).

Businesses are now becoming more dependent on digital marketing; however, not a lot of them are competent enough to figure out the best digital strategy for them. Electronic commerce should update their proficiency in relation to the usage of digital marketing as well as their ability to adapt to the different current practices of today's digital marketing trend (Jarvinen et al., 2012). Most people think that they can already master the ins and outs of digital marketing by just watching random videos on the internet (Dhaliwal, 2021). This topic should be taken more seriously as one of the priority strategies that businesses use is digital marketing (Qodriah, 2022).

Digital marketing is less expensive than traditional marketing; however, it was never said that it was free (Goel, 2016). Enterprises with limited budgets for marketing might end up skipping this activity altogether with digital marketing for fear of additional expense (Brookins, 2023). Enterprises can consider that they do not have the resources, including time and money, to participate online (Digital Marketing Institute, 2021). On top of this, businesses also need to invest in different assets and services relevant to implementing their digital marketing plan.

This research is conducted to examine the impact of digital marketing barriers on online businesses and, when applicable, provide recommendations for overcoming these barriers. The study will dive into the types of barriers that are encountered by micro and small online businesses in Taytay, Rizal, Philippines, the impact of the barriers on the business' success, and the approach to overcome these digital marketing barriers.

The conceptual framework of the study is as shown in Figure 1 (Conceptual Framework).

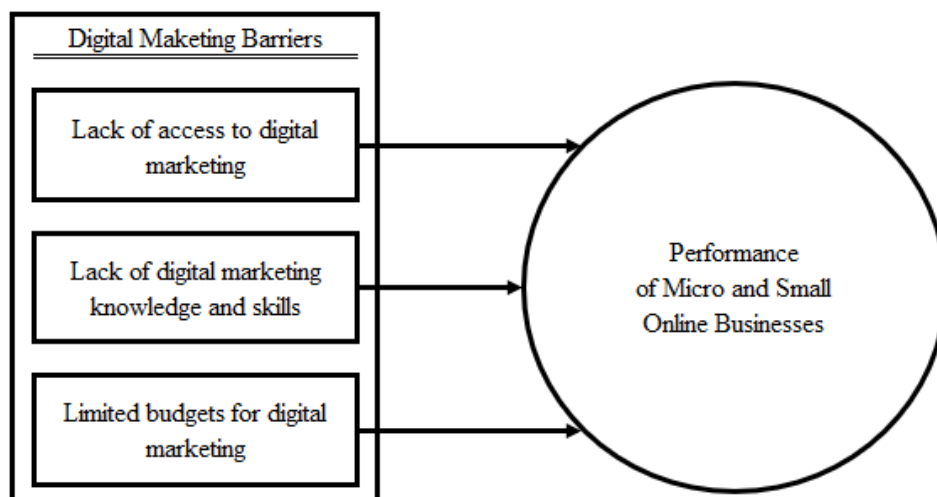


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

The study used the marketing mix theory by E. Jerome McCarthy. He defined the 4Ps conceptual framework for marketing decision-making, which includes product, price, place, and promotion (Wikipedia, 2023). As marketing is a continually evolving discipline, the four classic Ps have now become the 7Ps in the marketing mix. The four primary elements that were designed to create a comprehensive plan to create value for the customers have now included people, processes, and physical evidence (Kenton, 2023). The 7Ps of digital marketing mix help organizations define and review issues that affect the company's services or products (Hanlon, 2023) and help the business generate revenue by integrating marketing strategies that will create brand awareness, build loyalty from customers, and drive sales (Kenton, 2023).

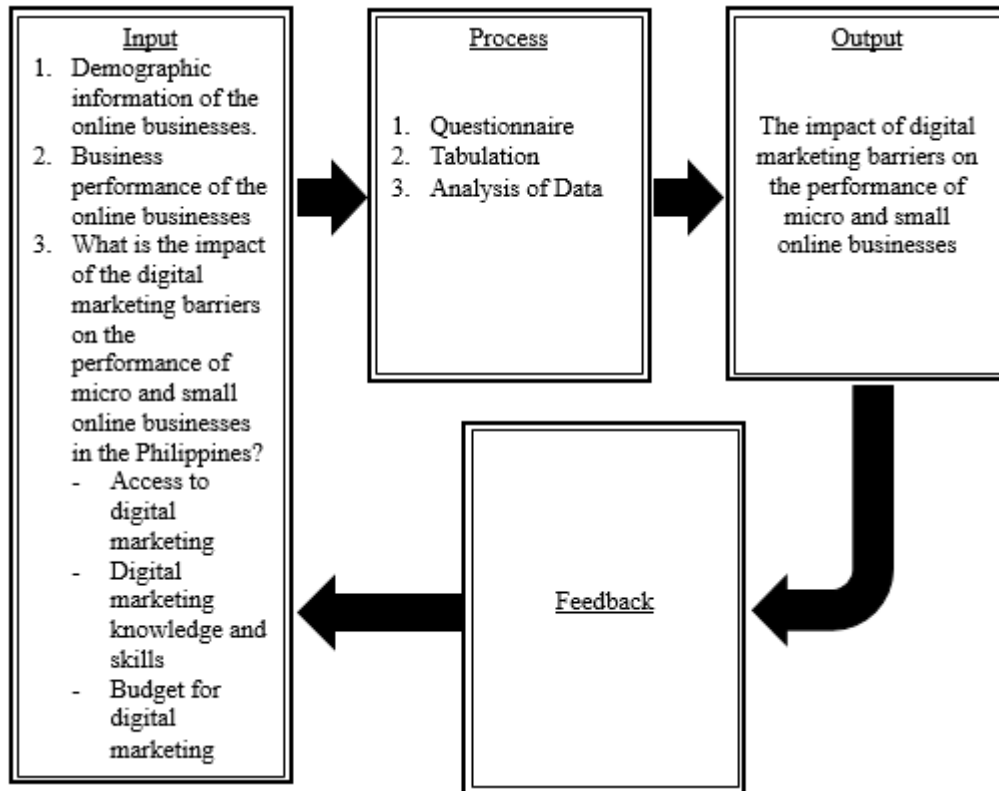


Figure 2. Research Paradigm

The research aims to study the impact of digital marketing on the performance of micro- and small-scale online businesses. Specifically, this is intended to answer the following questions:

1. What is the current performance of online businesses?
2. How does access to digital marketing affect the performance of micro- and small-scale online businesses?
3. What is the impact of digital marketing knowledge and skills on the performance of online businesses?
4. How does the budget allocated for digital marketing impact the performance of micro and small online businesses?

The following hypotheses are formulated:

- H1. The micro and small online businesses are not doing too well in terms of its performance.
- H2. Access to digital marketing has a significant impact on the performance of micro and small online businesses.
- H3. The business' digital marketing knowledge and skills have a significant impact on the performance of micro and small online businesses.
- H4. The budget allocated for digital marketing has a significant impact on the performance of micro and small online businesses.

2. METHOD

The study aims to identify the impact of digital marketing barriers on the performance of online businesses. The study was conducted using the descriptive research design and employed quantitative research method. The researcher aimed to collect information relevant to the micro and small enterprises in Taytay, Rizal, Philippines. A questionnaire with two sections was used: part 1 was for the demographic information of the micro and small enterprises, and part 2 was a five-point Likert scale series of items. Table 1 (Likert Scale Interpretation) will be used to interpret the results of the Likert scale items. The questionnaires were distributed to the enterprises in Taytay, Rizal, Philippines, that are doing business online. The respondents to the study were chosen using convenience sampling. All information gathered were only used for research purposes to protect the anonymity, confidentiality, and security of the respondents' data.

Table 1. Likert Scale Interpretation

Interval	Interpretation
4.21 – 5.00	Strongly Agree
3.41 – 4.20	Agree
2.61 – 3.40	Neutral
1.81 – 2.60	Disagree
1.00 – 1.80	Strongly Disagree

A pilot test was conducted to test the validity of the instrument that was used. It was carried out with 15 respondents. The data that was gathered was analyzed to test the internal validity of the method. To assert the reliability of the research instrument, Cronbach’s alpha was computed. The result was 0.90932, which means that the internal consistency is excellent. Amendments were applied to the demographic questions as deemed appropriate.

The results gathered were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The frequencies and percentages were computed to give a better understanding of the sample population. The mean and the standard deviation were also computed to identify the average responses and the variation from the mean. Tables were also provided for better presentation and comparison of the results on the information gathered about the impact of the digital marketing barriers to the performance of online businesses in Taytay, Rizal.

The correlation analysis and the regression analysis were conducted to check whether there is a relationship between the variables and check the impact of lack of access to digital marketing, lack of digital marketing knowledge and skills, and limited budgets for digital marketing to the performance of online businesses.

Table 2. Cronbach’s Alpha Result

Respondent	Total Score	Question/Item	Variance
R1	62	OBP1	0.329
R2	55	OBP2	0.96
R3	52	OBP3	0.507
R4	62	OBP4	0.462
R5	48	ADM1	0.373
R6	48	ADM2	0.249
R7	46	ADM3	0.249
R8	59	ADM4	0.356
R9	60	DMK1	0.249
R10	59	DMK2	0.382
R11	58	BDM1	0.382
R12	52	BDM2	0.373
R13	63	BDM3	0.373
R14	63		
R15	61		
Var. of Total Score	32.6489	Sum	5.24444

$$\alpha = \frac{k}{k - 1} \left(1 - \frac{\sum V_i}{V_t} \right)$$

$$\alpha = \frac{13 - 1}{13} \left(1 - \frac{5.24444}{32.6489} \right)$$

$$\alpha = 0.90932$$

The procedures and methods were employed based on the assumptions that there is a causal relationship among the variables that were studied, and that the sample population used is the representation of the entire population.

3. FINDINGS

The survey was distributed among 60 business owners of micro and small enterprises engaged in online business in Taytay, Rizal, Philippines. Among the 60 questionnaires that were filled out, only 42 were used, as some items were not answered.

The demographic information that was gathered in the survey includes gender, age of the business owner, educational level, previous entrepreneurial experience, leadership experience, attended training related to the business, number of employees, age of the business, distribution of sales, MSME sector, and classification of digital marketing channels. The results are shown in table 3 (Distribution of Demographic Information).

Table 3. Distribution of Demographic Information

Item	Frequency	Percentage
DI1. Gender		
Male	14	33%
Female	28	67%
DI2. Age of the business owner		
18 - 26 years of age	17	41%
27 - 42 years of age	22	52%
43 - 58 years of age	3	7%
59 years of age and above	0	0%
DI3. Educational level		
Elementary	2	5%
High School	23	55%
Vocational	9	21%
College	8	19%
Post-baccalaureate	0	0%
DI4. Previous entrepreneurial experience		
No experience	19	45%
Average	22	53%
Adequate experience	1	2%
DI5. Leadership experience		
Yes	14	33%
No	28	67%
DI6. Attended training related to the business		
Yes	18	43%
No	24	57%
DI7. Number of employees		
Less than 10 employees	39	93%
10 - 99 employees	3	7%
DI8. Age of the business		
00 - 12 months	11	26%
13 - 24 months	11	26%
25 - 36 months	10	24%
37 - 48 months	10	24%
49 - 60 months	0	0%
61 months and above	0	0%
DI9. Distribution of sales		
NCR	24	
Northern Luzon	9	
Central Luzon	9	
Southern Luzon	15	
Visayas	5	
Mindanao	5	
International	9	

Item	Frequency	Percentage
DI10. MSME Sector		
Electronics	2	5%
Fashion	28	67%
Furniture	2	5%
Food and drinks	6	14%
Other	4	9%
DI11. Classification of digital marketing channels		
Social media	38	91%
Website	3	7%
Other channels	1	2%

The table shows that 67% (28) of the business owners were male and 33% (14) were female. Most of the online business owners are millennials (27 - 42 years of age) at 52% (22), followed by generation Z (18 - 26 years of age) at 41% (17). They were then followed by generation X (43 - 58 years old) at 7% (3). None of the business owners were boomers. As for the educational level, 55% (23) of the business owners were high school graduates, 21% (9) had taken vocational courses, 19% (8) were college graduates, and 5% (2) finished elementary. 53% (22) have average entrepreneurial experience, followed by business owners with no experience at 45% (19). Only 2% (1) have adequate experience. MSMEs owners who have leadership experience were 67% (28) while 33% (14) have no leadership experience. 57% (24) of them attended training related to the business they were involved in, while 43% (18) did not. Among those who have answered the survey, 93% (29) were microenterprises owners, while the rest were small enterprises owners at 7% (3). Businesses who are 00 - 12 months and 13 - 24 months old were at 26% (11) each and followed at 24% (10) each by those who are 25 - 36 months and 37 - 48 months. 24 of the businesses distributes in NCR followed by 15 enterprises who distribute sales in Southern Luzon. These are followed by those enterprises who distribute sales in Northern Luzon, Central Luzon and internationally. Only 5 of the enterprises distribute sales in Visayas and Mindanao. Most of the enterprises are in doing businesses relating to fashion (67% - 28), followed by those who are involved with food and drinks (14% - 6). Only 5% (2) were involved in electronics and furniture and the rest are involved in other industries at 9% (4). 91% (38) are using social media platforms to do digital marketing, 7% (3) have their own websites, and only 2% (1) are using other channels.

The mean for each item is shown in table 4 (Mean and Interpretation of Each Item). The interpretations were based on table 1 (Likert Scale Interpretation).

As shown in table 4 (Mean and Interpretation of Each Item), item OBP2 (the business effectively matches the products/services that the customer needs) has the highest mean of 4.071 for the online business performance variable, followed by item OBP3 (the customers are giving good feedback on the business' performance) and OBP4 (the business is performing better than its competitors) at 3.939 and 3.905, respectively. The least mean is item OBP1 (the business' profit is outstanding and is growing fast) at 3.881.

For access to digital marketing, the item "the use of digital marketing has helped the business build brand loyalty (ADM4)" has the highest mean of 4.381, followed by the item "digital marketing has helped the business promote its product/services (ADM3)" at 4.095. The items "access to digital marketing has helped the business connect with consumers easily and in a short period of time (ADM1)" and "the use of digital marketing channels has helped in expanding and reaching new customers (ADM2)" have a mean of 4.071.

The items for digital marketing knowledge and skills, item DMK1 (my knowledge and skills in digital marketing have helped the business improve its performance) and item DMK2 (my competence in digital marketing is enough and has helped the business figure out the best digital marketing strategy), have the same mean of 4.262.

For the budget for digital marketing, items BDM2 (investing in different assets and services relevant to implementing a digital marketing plan has been beneficial to the business) and BDM3 (allocating finances for the training of employees for digital marketing training has helped the business have better performance) have a mean of 4.310, while item BDM1 (allocating a budget for digital marketing has helped the business improve its performance) has a mean of 4.095.

Table 4. Mean and Interpretation of each Item

Item	Mean	Std. Dev.	Interpretation
Online business performance			
OBP1. The business' profit is outstanding and is growing fast.	3.881	0.832	Agree
OBP2. The business effectively matches the products/services that the customers need.	4.071	0.838	Agree
OBP3. The customers are giving good feedback on the business' performance.	3.929	0.947	Agree
OBP4. The business is performing better than its competitors.	3..905	0.906	Agree
Access to digital marketing			
ADM1. Access to digital marketing has helped the business connect with consumers easily and in a short period of time.	4.071	0.973	Agree
ADM2. The use of digital marketing channels has helped in expanding and reaching new customers.	4.071	1.045	Agree
ADM3. Digital marketing has helped the business promote its products/services.	4.095	0.957	Agree
ADM4. The use of digital marketing has helped the business build brand loyalty.	4.381	0.731	Strongly Agree
Digital marketing knowledge and skills			
DMK1. My knowledge and skills in digital marketing have helped the business improve its performance.	4.262	0.885	Strongly Agree
DMK2. My competence in digital marketing is enough and has helped the business figure out the best digital marketing strategy.	4.262	0.885	Strongly Agree
Budget for digital marketing			
BDM1. Allocating a budget for digital marketing has helped the business improve its performance.	4.095	1.144	Agree
Item			
Mean			
Std. Dev.			
Interpretation			
BDM2. Investing in different assets and services relevant to implementing a digital marketing plan has been beneficial to the business.	4.310	0.924	Strongly Agree
BDM3. Allocating finances for trainings of employees for digital marketing training has helped the business to have better performance.	4.310	1.047	Strongly Agree

Table 5. Relationship Between the Dependent and Independent Variables

Independent Variables	Std. Error	Beta	Rank
Access to digital marketing	0.17327	0.94001	1
Digital marketing knowledge and skills	0.14640	0.41516	3
Budget for digital marketing	0.12542	0.76100	2
Multiple R		0.86890	
R Square		0.75499	
Adjusted R Square		0.73565	

The table shows the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables. The multiple regression of 0.86890 suggests a strong positive correlation between the dependent variable and independent variables. Based on the R square result, approximately 75% of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables. These suggest that the independent variables have a significant impact on the online business performance of the micro and small online businesses.

The beta results show the positive impact of access to digital marketing, digital marketing knowledge and skills, and a budget for digital marketing on the performance of the online businesses in Taytay, Rizal, Philippines. Access to digital marketing has the strongest positive relationship with a beta of 0.94001, followed by budget for digital marketing with a beta of 0.76100. On the 3rd place is digital marketing knowledge skills, with a beta of 0.41516.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, the barriers to digital marketing affect the performance of online businesses. Access to digital marketing, the business' digital marketing knowledge and skills, and the budget allocated for digital marketing have a significant positive impact on how online businesses perform.

Access to digital marketing has a significant positive impact on the performance of online businesses. This has greatly helped the enterprises in terms of promoting its products and services to new and existing customers and has helped build brand loyalty. MSMEs should actively consider strategies on how to connect with their target audience through digital marketing.

MSMEs should invest in improving their knowledge and skills when it comes to digital marketing. With this aspect, online businesses are able to improve their performances, and has helped enterprises figure out the best digital marketing strategies for their sector. Acquiring knowledge and skills in digital marketing will greatly improve the performance of online businesses.

Allocating a budget for the digital marketing of businesses has a significant positive impact on their performance. It has helped implement a digital marketing plan that has been beneficial to the enterprise and has helped the business have an overall better performance. MSMEs should adopt strategies to improve their products, services, and technology.

Micro and small online businesses should consider adopting strategies in relation to access to digital marketing, the business' digital marketing knowledge and skills, and the budget allocation for digital marketing to better improve their performances.

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