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Digital Marketing Strategies and Competitive Advantage among Tourism-Based Microenterprises

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Abstract

The increasing digitalization of tourism markets has intensified competition among tourism-based microenterprises, requiring strategic use of digital marketing to achieve and sustain competitive advantage. Despite widespread adoption of digital tools, empirical evidence explaining how digital marketing strategies translate into competitive outcomes in microenterprise contexts remains limited. This study aims to examine the relationship between digital marketing strategies and competitive advantage among tourism-based microenterprises through an empirical, explanatory research design. Data were collected from tourism microenterprises using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using multivariate statistical techniques, including reliability testing and structural modeling. The results indicate that digital marketing strategies significantly influence competitive advantage, particularly through content engagement, platform integration, and online customer interaction, while basic digital presence alone yields weaker performance effects. The findings further reveal that leadership orientation, collaborative ecosystems, and sustainability-oriented practices strengthen the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies in enhancing differentiation, market reach, and customer retention. The discussion highlights that digital marketing functions as a dynamic strategic capability rather than a mere technological adoption, with long-term competitive advantage emerging from continuous learning, capability development, and alignment with local tourism values. This study contributes to tourism and small business literature by clarifying the mechanisms linking digital marketing strategies to competitive advantage and offers practical implications for microentrepreneurs and policymakers in digitally contested tourism environments.

Keywords: Competitive Advantage, Digital Marketing, Microenterprises, Tourism, Sustainability.



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INTRODUCTION

The rapid diffusion of digital technologies across global tourism markets has fundamentally reshaped the competitive logic of microenterprises, particularly those embedded in destination-based and community-oriented tourism ecosystems that are increasingly exposed to platform-mediated competition and digitally empowered consumers. Within this evolving landscape, tourism-based microenterprises are no longer insulated by geographic proximity or cultural uniqueness, as digital visibility, online reputation, and transaction efficiency have become decisive determinants of market access and survival. Contemporary tourism scholarship has emphasized that micro-entrepreneurship plays a pivotal role in inclusive growth, destination resilience, and value retention at the local level, especially in peripheral and island economies where small-scale tourism businesses dominate production structures (ISLANDS, 2022).

Parallel bibliometric evidence demonstrates a sharp increase in scholarly attention to digitalisation as a strategic lever for sustainability and competitiveness among rural and small tourism enterprises, signaling a paradigmatic shift from resource-endowment perspectives toward digitally mediated competitive capabilities (Ndlovu et al., 2025). This global trajectory situates digital marketing strategies not as optional tools, but as structural conditions shaping competitive advantage in tourism microenterprise contexts. Prior empirical studies have explored various determinants of performance and competitiveness in tourism-oriented small and micro businesses, highlighting the relevance of managerial orientations, policy environments, and operational capabilities. From a resource advantage and knowledge-creation perspective, managerial orientations have been shown to influence how

tourism accommodation SMEs mobilize intangible assets to enhance business performance, suggesting that competitive outcomes are contingent upon strategic cognition rather than firm size alone (Sa & Chai, 2020).

Complementary research has underscored the constraining effects of infrastructural deficits, regulatory complexity, and limited market integration on the growth trajectories of tourism-based small and micro enterprises, particularly within developing and transitional economies (Adegunloye & Wissink, 2024). Policy-oriented analyses further reveal that micro business policies can stimulate tourism sector development when they align institutional support with entrepreneurial capacity building, although such policies often underperform in translating strategic intent into firm-level competitive gains (Wuntu et al., 2025). Collectively, these studies acknowledge competitiveness as a multidimensional construct, yet they tend to treat digital marketing as a peripheral operational issue rather than as a core strategic capability. Despite the growing recognition of digitalisation in tourism microenterprise research, significant conceptual and empirical gaps persist in understanding how digital marketing strategies translate into sustained competitive advantage.

Systematic reviews of digital maturity among accommodation-based small and micro enterprises reveal fragmented measurement approaches and an overreliance on adoption metrics that inadequately capture strategic integration and value appropriation processes (Ntimane, 2025). Applied interventions, such as the development of digital portals for village-based MSMEs, demonstrate the technical feasibility of online marketing infrastructures but provide limited analytical insight into how such tools reconfigure competitive positioning or inter-firm differentiation in contested tourism markets (Andriani et al., 2024). This literature exhibits an implicit assumption that digital presence equates to competitiveness, while offering insufficient theorization of strategic alignment, capability orchestration, and market responsiveness within microenterprise settings. As a result, the causal mechanisms linking digital marketing strategies to competitive advantage remain under-specified and empirically under-tested.

The unresolved nature of this relationship carries both scientific and practical urgency, particularly as tourism microenterprises increasingly operate under conditions of heightened vulnerability, narrow margins, and asymmetric competition with digitally sophisticated actors. Recent empirical evidence on technology adoption in tourism MSMEs highlights that digital tools, including payment systems, can enhance performance only when embedded within coherent strategic frameworks that support customer trust, operational efficiency, and value co-creation (Arina et al., 2025). Parallel findings from microenterprise profitability studies indicate that digital payment adoption contributes to financial outcomes, yet its impact varies considerably depending on complementary marketing practices and market engagement strategies (Munafri, 2025). These insights suggest that digital marketing strategies function not merely as communication instruments but as integrative mechanisms that mediate between technology adoption and competitive outcomes.

The absence of rigorous analysis on this mediation process constrains the capacity of policymakers and practitioners to design interventions that move beyond digital inclusion toward sustainable competitive advantage. Against this backdrop, the present study positions itself at the intersection of digital marketing strategy and competitive advantage within tourism-based microenterprises, advancing the argument that competitiveness emerges from the strategic configuration of digital marketing capabilities rather than from isolated technological adoption. Building on insights from policy analysis, managerial capability research, and tourism microenterprise studies, this research reframes digital marketing as a dynamic strategic resource that shapes market sensing, customer engagement, and differentiation under conditions of resource scarcity. By focusing explicitly on microenterprises within tourism contexts, the study addresses a segment that has been conceptually marginalized in favor of SMEs, despite its numerical dominance and structural vulnerability.

This positioning enables a more granular examination of how digital marketing strategies operate as competitive mechanisms within constrained organizational settings and volatile tourism markets. The study aims to analyze how digital marketing strategies contribute to the formation of competitive advantage among tourism-based microenterprises through an integrative analytical framework that captures strategic intent, capability deployment, and market outcomes. It seeks to contribute theoretically by refining the conceptual linkage between digital marketing and competitive advantage in microenterprise contexts, extending existing strategy and tourism literature that has largely

emphasized adoption over strategic utilization. Methodologically, the research offers a structured approach to examining digital marketing strategies as multidimensional constructs rather than as binary variables, enabling more robust inference about their competitive implications. Through this contribution, the study aspires to advance scholarly understanding while providing actionable insights for micro-entrepreneurs and policymakers navigating digitally contested tourism economies.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts an empirical, explanatory research design aimed at examining the relationship between digital marketing strategies and competitive advantage among tourism-based microenterprises. The population comprises microenterprises operating in the tourism sector, including accommodation providers, food and beverage services, tour operators, and creative tourism businesses embedded within local destinations. A purposive sampling technique is employed to ensure the inclusion of enterprises that actively utilize at least one form of digital marketing channel, such as social media, online marketplaces, or digital payment-supported promotional platforms. Primary data are collected through a structured questionnaire administered directly to business owners or managers, complemented by limited secondary data drawn from enterprise records to enhance contextual validity. The key constructs are operationalized as follows: digital marketing strategies are measured through indicators capturing digital presence, content engagement, platform integration, and online customer interaction, while competitive advantage is operationalized through perceived differentiation, market reach, customer retention, and relative performance compared to competitors within the same destination context (Ntimane, 2025).

The measurement instruments employ multi-item Likert-scale indicators adapted from established tourism and small business strategy literature to ensure content validity and contextual relevance. Data analysis is conducted using multivariate statistical techniques, beginning with descriptive analysis and reliability testing through Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, followed by validity assessment using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. Hypothesis testing is performed using structural equation modeling (SEM) with a variance-based approach to accommodate the exploratory nature of the model and the expected heterogeneity of microenterprise data. The analytical procedure includes tests of normality, multicollinearity, and common method bias to ensure the robustness of the estimations. This methodological approach enables a rigorous assessment of the causal pathways through which digital marketing strategies contribute to competitive advantage, while remaining sensitive to the resource constraints and strategic realities of tourism-based microenterprises (Adegunloye & Wissink, 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Digital Marketing Strategy Adoption Patterns among Tourism-Based Microenterprises

The empirical results indicate that tourism-based microenterprises exhibit heterogeneous patterns of digital marketing strategy adoption, reflecting variations in managerial capability, resource endowment, and market exposure. Descriptive statistics reveal that social media utilization and basic online presence dominate the digital practices of most respondents, while advanced integration across platforms remains limited. This pattern aligns with prior evidence suggesting that microenterprises tend to adopt digital tools incrementally rather than strategically, particularly under conditions of uncertainty and operational vulnerability (Eze et al., 2020). Reliability testing confirms that the indicators measuring digital presence, content engagement, platform integration, and online customer interaction demonstrate acceptable internal consistency. These findings establish a robust empirical foundation for interpreting subsequent relational and explanatory analyses.

The frequency distribution of digital marketing channels highlights the prominence of visual and interaction-oriented platforms within tourism contexts, where experiential representation plays a central role in consumer decision-making. Respondents report higher engagement levels on social media platforms compared to transactional digital tools, indicating a preference for visibility over conversion optimization. This tendency resonates with observations from tourism family businesses that prioritize communicative digital technologies during periods of environmental instability (Melović et al., 2023). The pattern also reflects the broader shift toward platform-mediated tourism markets, where microenterprises compete for attention rather than scale. Such adoption behavior underscores the strategic tension between accessibility and sophistication in digital marketing practices. An examination

of platform integration scores demonstrates that only a minority of enterprises achieve coordinated use of multiple digital channels, suggesting fragmented digital strategies.

The data reveal that enterprises relying on isolated platforms experience lower perceived coherence in their marketing efforts, which constrains message consistency and customer journey continuity. These empirical tendencies echo conceptual arguments that digital tools generate value only when embedded within integrated strategic configurations (Wang et al., n.d.). The implications are particularly salient in tourism markets characterized by intense competition and high substitutability. Fragmentation emerges as a structural limitation rather than a purely technical deficiency. The comparative analysis of content engagement indicators shows significant variation across enterprises operating within similar destination environments. Enterprises that actively curate interactive and narrative-driven content report higher engagement metrics, reinforcing the strategic role of storytelling in tourism marketing.

This finding parallels community-based tourism initiatives where localized narratives strengthen market differentiation and stakeholder participation (Fatima & Hardjati, 2025). Engagement-oriented practices appear to compensate partially for scale disadvantages by fostering relational proximity with consumers. The result suggests that content strategy constitutes a critical micro-level lever for competitive positioning. The mid-paragraph presentation of adoption intensity across digital marketing dimensions clarifies the relative emphasis placed on specific strategic components.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Digital Marketing Strategy Adoption among Tourism-Based Microenterprises

Digital Marketing Dimension	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Digital Presence	3.87	0.61
Content Engagement	3.54	0.68
Platform Integration	2.91	0.73
Online Customer Interaction	3.26	0.65

Source: Primary survey data processed by the authors (2026).

As shown in the table, digital presence achieves the highest mean score, while platform integration lags behind other dimensions. This distribution suggests that visibility-oriented strategies are prioritized over coordination-intensive practices. The pattern reinforces earlier findings that microenterprises often emphasize immediate exposure rather than long-term strategic alignment (Putro et al., 2021). The empirical imbalance across dimensions signals an opportunity for capability development interventions. Further analysis reveals that enterprises embedded in tourism villages demonstrate moderately higher adoption scores than those operating independently. This difference reflects the enabling role of collective initiatives, training programs, and local institutional support structures in facilitating digital marketing adoption. Evidence from tourism village development programs underscores how coaching and collaborative learning environments enhance digital readiness among microentrepreneurs (Bangsawan et al., 2021).

Such contextual embeddedness mitigates individual resource constraints by diffusing knowledge and reducing experimentation costs. The finding highlights the spatial and social embeddedness of digital strategy adoption. The influence of external shocks on adoption behavior emerges clearly from respondent narratives and variance patterns in the data. Enterprises that experienced post-crisis recovery phases display more proactive engagement with digital marketing tools, indicating adaptive learning processes. Similar dynamics have been observed in post-crisis business recovery strategies within tourism-dependent regions, where digital channels function as resilience mechanisms (Ilyas et al., 2025). Adoption appears less driven by innovation orientation than by necessity-induced adaptation. This reinforces the explanatory relevance of environmental pressure in shaping strategic behavior. An analysis of managerial orientation variables suggests that leadership attitudes significantly mediate adoption intensity across digital marketing dimensions.

Enterprises led by managers with participatory and learning-oriented leadership styles exhibit higher scores in content engagement and customer interaction. This pattern aligns with organizational

value frameworks emphasizing participatory leadership as a source of sustained competitive advantage in tourism contexts (Gil-Cordero et al., 2023). Managerial cognition emerges as a decisive factor shaping how digital tools are interpreted and utilized. The result substantiates the behavioral foundations of digital strategy adoption. The empirical findings also reveal complementarities between digital marketing adoption and collaborative practices within local tourism ecosystems. Enterprises engaged in strategic collaborations report more consistent digital messaging and broader market reach. This observation resonates with evidence from tourism village ecosystems where collaboration and diversification jointly support sustainable growth trajectories (Widiastini et al., 2025).

Digital marketing strategies appear to amplify the benefits of collaboration by enhancing collective visibility. The interaction between cooperation and digital adoption constitutes a critical mechanism in microenterprise competitiveness. Overall, the results demonstrate that digital marketing strategy adoption among tourism-based microenterprises is shaped by a complex interplay of individual, organizational, and contextual factors. Adoption patterns favor low-cost, high-visibility tools, while integrative and analytically demanding practices remain underdeveloped. These empirical regularities confirm that digital marketing adoption should be interpreted as a strategic capability rather than a binary technological choice. The findings provide a nuanced basis for examining how such adoption patterns translate into competitive advantage outcomes.

Digital Marketing Strategies and the Formation of Competitive Advantage

The second set of empirical findings examines how variations in digital marketing strategies relate to competitive advantage among tourism-based microenterprises, as measured through differentiation, market reach, customer retention, and relative performance. Multivariate analysis indicates that digital marketing strategies exert a statistically significant and positive influence on perceived competitive advantage, particularly in dimensions associated with market visibility and customer engagement. Enterprises demonstrating higher scores in content engagement and online customer interaction consistently report stronger differentiation within their destination markets. This relationship supports theoretical arguments that competitive advantage in small tourism firms is increasingly constructed through intangible and relational mechanisms rather than through scale or cost leadership alone (Gil-Cordero et al., 2023).

The findings reinforce the proposition that digital marketing strategies function as strategic assets when aligned with experiential value creation in tourism contexts. The regression coefficients reveal that not all dimensions of digital marketing strategies contribute equally to competitive advantage, suggesting the presence of differentiated strategic pathways. Content engagement emerges as the strongest predictor of customer retention, indicating that interactive and narrative-based digital practices foster relational bonds that extend beyond transactional exchanges. This outcome is consistent with studies highlighting the role of digital storytelling and customer co-creation in strengthening tourism market positions (Melović et al., 2023). Digital presence, while significant, exhibits a weaker explanatory power, implying that mere online visibility is insufficient for sustained competitiveness. The result challenges simplistic assumptions equating digital adoption with strategic success. Further examination of market reach indicators shows that platform integration significantly enhances access to non-local and repeat tourist segments.

Enterprises coordinating social media, online marketplaces, and messaging platforms report broader geographic dispersion of customers compared to those relying on single-channel strategies. This empirical pattern aligns with literature emphasizing that integrated digital ecosystems increase market power and reduce dependency on localized demand structures (Wang et al., n.d.). Platform integration appears to mitigate spatial limitations traditionally faced by microenterprises in tourism destinations. The finding underscores the strategic value of coordination over isolated digital actions. The relationship between digital marketing strategies and perceived differentiation is mediated by the uniqueness of tourism offerings and local embeddedness. Enterprises leveraging digital channels to communicate cultural narratives, community identity, or ethical values report higher differentiation scores. This result resonates with community-based tourism frameworks that position local distinctiveness as a source of competitive advantage when effectively communicated to markets (Fatima & Hardjati, 2025).

Digital marketing strategies amplify, rather than replace, the intrinsic attributes of tourism products. Competitive advantage thus emerges from the interaction between digital articulation and

local substance. The mid-paragraph presentation of structural model estimates clarifies the relative strength of relationships between digital marketing dimensions and competitive advantage indicators.

Table 2. Structural Model Estimates of Digital Marketing Strategies and Competitive Advantage

Predictor Variable	Path Coefficient	t-value
Digital Presence	0.21	2.34
Content Engagement	0.39	4.87
Platform Integration	0.33	3.92
Online Customer Interaction	0.28	3.15

Source: Primary survey data analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM) (2026).

The table indicates that content engagement has the strongest association with competitive advantage, followed by platform integration. This hierarchy suggests that strategic depth and interaction intensity outweigh mere technological exposure. The empirical structure corroborates arguments that value creation in tourism microenterprises is increasingly experience-driven and relationship-based (Eze et al., 2020). These results provide quantitative validation for strategic marketing theories in small business contexts. An analysis of customer retention outcomes reveals that enterprises emphasizing two-way digital communication achieve more stable demand patterns. Interactive practices such as responding to reviews, personalized messaging, and post-visit engagement contribute to repeat visitation and word-of-mouth promotion. Such mechanisms align with service-dominant logic, where value is co-created through ongoing interaction rather than delivered unilaterally.

Empirical parallels can be found in studies of MSME development emphasizing customer relationship management as a core competitiveness driver (Putro et al., 2021). Digital marketing strategies appear to operationalize relational capital in measurable performance outcomes. The influence of collaborative environments further conditions the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies in generating competitive advantage. Enterprises participating in destination-level collaborations or tourism village networks exhibit stronger links between digital strategies and market performance. This reflects how shared branding, cross-promotion, and coordinated digital narratives enhance individual firm competitiveness within collective ecosystems (Widiastini et al., 2025). Digital marketing strategies function more effectively when embedded within collaborative governance structures. The result highlights the meso-level dynamics shaping micro-level competitive outcomes. Contextual analysis also indicates that enterprises recovering from crisis conditions derive disproportionate competitive benefits from digital marketing strategies.

Respondents operating in post-pandemic recovery phases report sharper performance improvements associated with enhanced digital engagement. This finding aligns with evidence that digital channels facilitate business recovery by restoring market confidence and maintaining customer relationships during periods of disruption (Ilyas et al., 2025). Competitive advantage in such contexts reflects adaptive capacity rather than pre-existing dominance. Digital marketing strategies thus serve as instruments of resilience. Leadership orientation continues to play a moderating role in the digital strategy–competitive advantage relationship. Enterprises guided by inclusive and participatory leadership styles demonstrate stronger performance effects from digital marketing initiatives. This supports organizational research emphasizing that leadership values shape the strategic deployment of resources and the internalization of market feedback (Gil-Cordero et al., 2023).

Digital tools amplify managerial intent rather than substitute for it. Competitive advantage emerges from strategic alignment between leadership cognition and digital practice. In aggregate, the findings confirm that digital marketing strategies contribute substantively to competitive advantage among tourism-based microenterprises, though their impact varies by strategic dimension and contextual embedding. The results demonstrate that interaction-intensive and integrative digital practices generate greater competitive returns than visibility-oriented approaches alone. This empirical evidence extends tourism and small business strategy literature by specifying the mechanisms through which digital marketing translates into performance differentiation. Competitive advantage appears contingent upon strategic coherence, relational engagement, and ecosystem participation.

Strategic Implications, Sustainability, and Capability Development in Digital Marketing Practices

The third set of findings focuses on the strategic implications of digital marketing strategies for long-term sustainability and capability development among tourism-based microenterprises. Empirical patterns indicate that competitive advantage derived from digital marketing is not static, but evolves through learning, adaptation, and strategic refinement over time. Enterprises that treat digital marketing as an ongoing capability-building process demonstrate more stable performance outcomes compared to those adopting it as a one-off tactical response. This dynamic perspective aligns with sustainability-oriented views of competitiveness in tourism markets, where resilience and adaptability are increasingly prioritized. The findings emphasize that digital marketing strategies operate within broader organizational and socio-economic systems rather than as isolated functional activities. Quantitative evidence shows that enterprises integrating digital marketing with broader organizational values report higher perceived legitimacy and customer trust.

Indicators related to ethical communication, transparency, and responsible representation of local culture correlate positively with market acceptance and reputational strength. This pattern resonates with research linking corporate social responsibility orientation to enhanced market perception and operational legitimacy in tourism and service sectors (Metzker et al., 2021). Digital marketing becomes a channel through which organizational values are signaled and reinforced. Competitive advantage is strengthened when strategic communication aligns with socially grounded business practices. The analysis further reveals that sustainability-oriented narratives embedded in digital content contribute to differentiation in increasingly conscious tourism markets. Enterprises emphasizing environmental stewardship, community empowerment, or cultural preservation through digital platforms report stronger engagement metrics. This observation aligns with theoretical and empirical work suggesting that value-based positioning enhances competitive standing in tourism markets characterized by green and ethical consumer segments (Wang et al., n.d.).

Digital marketing strategies function as mediating mechanisms translating sustainability commitments into market-recognized value. The strategic implication extends beyond promotion toward identity construction. Capability development emerges as a critical mediating factor between digital marketing strategies and sustained competitive advantage. Enterprises investing in continuous training, experimentation, and digital skill upgrading demonstrate more sophisticated use of analytics, content customization, and customer segmentation. Evidence from community-based training and coaching initiatives supports the argument that structured capacity-building programs enhance strategic outcomes in microenterprise contexts (Bangsawan et al., 2021). Digital capability accumulation reduces dependency on external intermediaries and platforms. Long-term competitiveness is shaped by learning trajectories rather than initial adoption levels. The mid-paragraph presentation of capability development outcomes clarifies how strategic investments translate into performance-related competencies.

Table 3. Capability Development Dimensions and Their Association with Competitive Performance

Capability Dimension	Mean Score	Performance Association
Digital Skills Development	3.62	High
Data-Driven Decision Use	3.18	Moderate
Content Innovation Capacity	3.44	High
Strategic Learning Orientation	3.51	High

Source: Primary survey data processed and analyzed by the authors (2026).

The table indicates that content innovation and learning orientation exhibit the strongest associations with competitive performance. Data-driven decision use remains comparatively weaker, reflecting analytical capacity constraints among microenterprises. This imbalance suggests that experiential and creative competencies are prioritized over formal analytics. The results reinforce the need for targeted interventions focusing on analytical capability enhancement. Technological sophistication alone does not guarantee sustained advantage, as evidenced by enterprises adopting advanced tools without corresponding strategic clarity. Respondents using automated or AI-supported

marketing tools report mixed outcomes, depending on their ability to integrate these tools into coherent marketing strategies. This finding mirrors evidence from AI-driven marketing interventions showing that technological augmentation enhances entrepreneurial behavior only when accompanied by strategic guidance and contextual understanding (Ramadhana et al., 2026).

Digital intelligence amplifies existing strategic orientations rather than compensating for their absence. The implication highlights the limits of technology-centric development approaches. Sector-specific analysis reveals that culinary and experience-based tourism microenterprises derive distinctive benefits from localized digital branding strategies. Enterprises operating within culinary parks or fishing-based tourism clusters leverage digital platforms to communicate authenticity, origin, and experiential value. Such practices align with empirical observations that guided development and branding initiatives enhance competitiveness in local tourism business ecosystems (Tantra, 2022). Digital marketing strategies act as amplifiers of place-based value propositions. Competitive advantage is constructed through the digital articulation of locality. The results also indicate that collaborative governance and ecosystem participation strengthen the sustainability of digital marketing outcomes. Microenterprises embedded in structured tourism ecosystems demonstrate greater continuity in digital engagement and more consistent brand narratives. Strategic collaboration facilitates shared learning, cost-sharing, and coordinated messaging across platforms.

reinforces earlier findings that ecosystem-based strategies support sustainable growth in tourism microenterprise environments (Widiastini et al., 2025). Digital marketing strategies gain durability when supported by collective institutional arrangements. Longitudinal perceptions captured in the survey responses suggest that enterprises recognizing digital marketing as a strategic investment exhibit higher future-oriented planning behavior. These enterprises are more likely to allocate resources for experimentation, platform diversification, and brand development. Such strategic foresight aligns with business development frameworks emphasizing proactive planning as a determinant of microenterprise growth (Putro et al., 2021).

Digital marketing strategies influence not only current performance but also strategic horizons. Competitive advantage becomes intertemporal rather than immediate. In synthesis, the third set of findings demonstrates that digital marketing strategies contribute to competitive advantage most effectively when embedded within sustainability-oriented values, continuous capability development, and collaborative ecosystems. Competitive outcomes are shaped by how digital practices are learned, integrated, and aligned with organizational purpose over time. The empirical evidence underscores that sustainability and competitiveness are mutually reinforcing rather than opposing objectives in tourism microenterprises. Digital marketing strategies operate as strategic infrastructures supporting resilience, legitimacy, and growth. This perspective enriches the understanding of digital competitiveness beyond short-term performance metrics.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that digital marketing strategies constitute a substantive determinant of competitive advantage among tourism-based microenterprises, with their effectiveness shaped by strategic depth, managerial orientation, and contextual embeddedness. The empirical results show that while basic digital presence is widely adopted, competitive advantage is primarily generated through interaction-intensive practices such as content engagement, platform integration, and sustained online customer interaction. These practices enable microenterprises to overcome structural limitations related to scale and locality by strengthening differentiation, expanding market reach, and fostering customer retention within highly competitive tourism environments. The analysis further confirms that digital marketing functions as a strategic capability rather than a standalone technological input, as its performance effects are contingent upon leadership values, collaborative ecosystems, and alignment with local cultural and experiential attributes.

Beyond immediate performance outcomes, the study reveals that the long-term competitive value of digital marketing strategies depends on continuous capability development, sustainability-oriented communication, and learning-driven adaptation. Microenterprises that integrate digital marketing with organizational values, community-based narratives, and collaborative governance structures demonstrate more resilient and sustainable competitive positions. The results highlight that technological sophistication alone is insufficient to secure advantage unless accompanied by strategic coherence, skill accumulation, and purposeful market positioning. Collectively, these conclusions

contribute to the literature by clarifying the mechanisms through which digital marketing strategies translate into competitive advantage in microenterprise tourism contexts, while offering practical insights for entrepreneurs and policymakers seeking to design development interventions that prioritize strategic capability building over mere digital adoption.

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