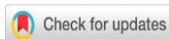


## Effectiveness of Digital Marketing Supporting SDGs in Indonesia: Study of the SMEs and Entrepreneurial Intention

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** This research is a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) that analyzes the effectiveness of digital marketing in supporting SDGs in Indonesia, with a specific focus on the Small Medium Enterprise (SMEs) sector and the fundamental role of the entrepreneurial intentions of SMEs actors. **Method:** Through a rigorous process of searching, filtering, and evaluating scientific publications from leading databases, this study identifies, synthesizes, and interprets key findings regarding how the adoption and implementation of digital marketing by SMEs contribute to business performance and, in aggregate, to national economic growth. The role of the intent to strive as an important antecedent in the success of the digital adaptation of SMEs will also be explored in depth. **Results:** The results of this SLR are expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the existing research conditions, highlighting success factors and challenges, as well as identifying research gaps for future study agendas. **Novelty:** The implications of the policy for the government and other stakeholders are recommended to support Indonesian MSMEs in maximizing their digital marketing potential for the development of an inclusive and sustainable economy as a form of implementing the SDGs program.

## INTRODUCTION

The Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) sector is the backbone of the Indonesian economy, contributing more than 60% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and absorbing over 97% of the national workforce (Aftitah et al., 2024). This important role positions SMEs as vital agents in inclusive and sustainable economic development as a way to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, SMEs often face various challenges, including limited access to markets, capital, technology, and marketing capacity (Aini et al., 2024).

In the last decade, the digital revolution has fundamentally changed the business landscape (Ramadhi et al., 2023). Digital marketing, which includes various strategies such as social media marketing, e-commerce, content marketing, and Search Engine Optimization (SEO), has emerged as a transformative tool for SMEs (Lindawati et al., 2020). These strategies enable SMEs to expand their market reach without geographical limitations, reduce promotional costs, and interact more effectively with consumers. Data shows that SMEs that adopt digital marketing tend to have higher growth rates and better business resilience amid economic turmoil. Digital marketing in Thailand shows significant growth, with the digital marketing sector expected to reach 34.5 billion baht by 2025, reflecting a 10% increase compared to the previous year (Nachayapat et al., 2024). In Brazil, 50% of SMEs using digital marketing report that they are able to develop new products as a result of customer feedback obtained through digital platforms (Prestes, 202).

The success of the adoption and implementation of digital marketing by SMEs does not solely depend on the availability of technology, but is also greatly influenced by the entrepreneurial intention of the SMEs themselves (Sutanto et al., 2024). Entrepreneurial intention reflects an individual's desire and commitment to start or grow a business, including the willingness to innovate, take risks, and adapt to change (Halim & Rodhiah, 2024). SMEs with strong entrepreneurial intention are more likely to be proactive in seeking and applying digital strategies to enhance their competitiveness. Although many studies have discussed digital marketing and SMEs separately, or entrepreneurial intentions in the context of entrepreneurship, there is still a need for a comprehensive synthesis that integrates these three elements: digital marketing, SMEs, and entrepreneurial intentions in the context of their impact on economic development in Indonesia.

Digital marketing strengthens entrepreneurial intention through information exposure, such as the ease of access to online training related to SDG 4, which focuses on ensuring inclusive and quality education. Additionally, digital marketing enhances entrepreneurial intention through cost efficiency provided by digital infrastructure, which relates to SDG 9, focusing on building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and fostering innovation. The improved performance of SMEs contributes to job creation, which is associated with SDG 8, focusing on sustainable and inclusive economic growth and productive employment, and impacts sustainable production and consumption outlined in SDG 12 (Ummah, 2019).

Previous studies often lack a comprehensive analysis of how digital marketing influences the achievement of the SDGs in SMEs and entrepreneurial intention, particularly in terms of measurable outcomes and strategies tailored to specific sectors. This research aims to fill that gap by focusing on two objectives. First, to evaluate the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies in enhancing the contribution of SMEs to the SDGs, and second, to identify best practices tailored to various SME sectors. This study is structured using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, which allows for the systematic and objective identification, evaluation, and interpretation of relevant scientific evidence, providing a holistic view of the researched topic and identifying areas for future research.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research adopts a structured and transparent Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology. The Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology is a structured and transparent approach to identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing all relevant research evidence related to a specific question (Saleh & Leuveano, 2021). The main purpose of

SLR is to provide a comprehensive and unbiased summary of the existing literature, while also identifying research gaps for future studies (Rachmawati, 2024).

As explained by Gough et al. (2020) in *The Nature of Evidence in Systematic Reviews*, SLR "provides a framework for systematically gathering, analyzing, and synthesizing evidence from various studies, ensuring objectivity and replicability". The stages of SLR generally involve formulating clear research questions, developing a comprehensive literature search strategy, establishing strict inclusion and exclusion criteria, extracting data from selected articles, and systematically synthesizing findings. This approach is crucial in producing a literature review that is evidence-based and accountable. As emphasized by Snyder et al. (2023) in their study on review methods, stating that "SLR is a powerful method for integrating research findings and identifying areas for further investigation, especially in multidisciplinary domains." Thus, SLR becomes an essential foundation for building strong scientific arguments and informing policy recommendations based on the latest empirical evidence.

This research following the principles recommended by leading guidelines such as PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses). The PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analyses) method is adopted in this research to ensure that the article selection process is conducted in an objective and clear manner (Handayani, 2021). The following is a table of the stages of data collection in SLR using the PRISMA method.

**Table 1.** The Stages Of Data Collection Using The Prisma Method

Step	Description
Identification	Identifying relevant articles from various sources
Screening	Screening articles based on inclusion and exclusion criteria.
Eligibility	Selecting articles that meet the criteria for review as established by the researchers.
Included	Extracting information related to the research and integrating it with other literature. This can be done through both quantitative and qualitative methods.

The keywords used in the literature search include a combination of Digital Marketing terms, MSMEs, SDGs, Entrepreneurial Intention, the Impact of Digital Marketing, Small Business Growth, and Sustainability in Business. The databases used to search for relevant literature include Google Scholar, Scopus, ScienceDirect, Research Gate, Emerald, and other supporting sources, followed by selecting literature relevant to the research. The inclusion criteria for this study include studies published in the last 5-10 years, research discussing the impact of digital marketing on MSMEs, as well as studies relating digital marketing to SDGs and entrepreneurial intention. The exclusion criteria for this study include research conducted outside the context of MSMEs or not focusing on the impact of digital marketing, as well as articles that are literature reviews without empirical data. The process is described in detail by the researchers through the Figure 1.

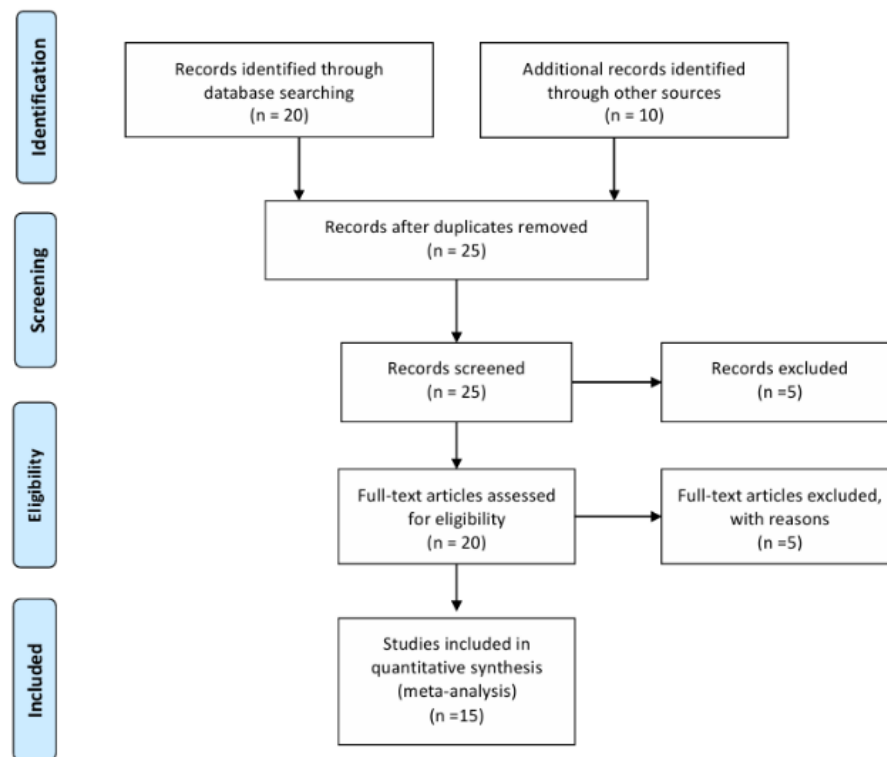


Figure 1. Prisma Flow

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

#### *Digital Marketing*

Digital marketing is a concept that continues to evolve alongside technological advancements and changes in consumer behavior. From the perspective of recent journals, the definition of digital marketing is no longer just about online presence, but rather more about integrated strategies that utilize various digital channels to interact with target audiences, build brand awareness, and achieve business goals (Mahwati, 2024). Iman et al. (2024) emphasize that digital marketing is increasingly involving artificial intelligence (AI). They define it as the use of digital technologies, including AI and machine learning, to analyze consumer data in large volumes, personalize marketing content, optimize ad placements, and predict purchasing behavior. This indicates a shift from merely being a tool to becoming a data- and algorithm-based ecosystem.

Furthermore, Lemon & Verhoef (2016) highlight that in a competitive digital landscape, digital marketing is about creating a superior customer experience (CX) throughout the customer journey. Their definition encompasses not only customer acquisition but also efforts to build loyalty through seamless and personalized interactions at various digital touchpoints, such as chatbots, interactive content, and personalized recommendations. This indicates that digital marketing is moving towards a more holistic and customer-centric approach. Meanwhile (Ramadhani et al., 2024) in the context of emerging markets, assert that digital marketing is the use of digital channels to reach a broader target market cost-effectively, especially through the

adoption of a mobile-first approach and the utilization of the dominance of social media platforms. Although challenges such as the digital literacy gap still exist, digital marketing remains key to enhancing the performance and innovation of SMEs.

In summary, digital marketing in recent literature can be understood as a dynamic, data-driven marketing strategy that leverages advanced digital technologies (including AI) to create personal and seamless customer experiences, with the goal of expanding market reach, enhancing engagement, and achieving business targets effectively and efficiently. This places technology adaptation, data analysis, and customer orientation at the core of modern digital marketing practices.

### **SMEs**

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) continue to be an important focus in the latest economic and management literature, recognized as the main driving force for economic growth and job creation in various countries, especially in emerging markets. According to (Brändle & Kuckertz, 2023), SMEs are now not only seen as economic entities but also as crucial agents of innovation and adaptation, especially in facing digital disruptions and global challenges such as pandemics. They emphasize that the ability of SMEs to innovate in products, processes, and business models is the key to their survival and competitiveness in the modern era.

Furthermore, recent research by (Ramadhi et al., 2023) specifically highlights that in emerging markets, SMEs face pressure to undergo digital transformations in order to maintain relevance and expand market reach. The journal indicates that the adoption of digital technology and online marketing has become essential for SMEs to overcome traditional resource limitations and achieve greater scale. However, challenges such as low digital literacy, limited access to capital, and a lack of adequate digital infrastructure remain significant barriers that require appropriate policy interventions. Therefore, the focus of current SMEs research is shifting to how they can be supported to effectively leverage digital opportunities while addressing existing constraints to ensure their ongoing contribution to inclusive economic development.

### **SDGs**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are 17 global goals with 169 measurable targets based on deadlines set by the United Nations as a global development agenda for peace and prosperity for humanity and the planet, both now and in the future (Rubio, 2022). Among the various SDGs, one of the goals is to maintain the sustainable improvement of economic well-being for communities and ensure the sustainability of social life within society (Bruce et al., 2023). Additionally, this program aims to preserve environmental quality and implement inclusive development and governance that can support the enhancement of quality of life from one generation to the next (Haas & Ivanovskis, 2022). Eradicating poverty is one of the primary goals of the SDG program. One of its targets is to eliminate extreme poverty, which refers to individuals living on

less than Rp 7,800 per day as a form of sustainable economic development (Amirya & Irianto, 2023).

Economic development in current academic discourse is no longer merely defined as the growth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), but rather as a multidimensional process that encompasses improvements in quality of life, income distribution, and environmental sustainability. (Lestari & Setiawan, 2021), for instance, in their latest work, continue to emphasize that inclusive institutions that guarantee property rights, the rule of law, and equal opportunities are crucial foundations for long-term economic development. They argue that without strong institutions, economic growth will only be temporary and will not be able to sustainably enhance the well-being of all segments of society.

In line with this perspective, (Banerjee & Duflo, 2025) in their follow-up research on poverty and development, highlight the importance of evidence-based approaches in development interventions. They assert that programs that successfully reduce poverty and enhance economic development are those based on rigorous evaluation and tailored to local contexts, rather than relying solely on general macroeconomic theories. This indicates a shift in the focus of economic development from broad assumptions to tested and specific solutions. Furthermore, the aspect of environmental sustainability is increasingly becoming central to modern economic development. (Rubio, 2022) consistently argues that achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a prerequisite for genuine economic growth in the era of climate crisis. This means that economic development must harmoniously integrate social, economic, and environmental dimensions to create well-being not only for the current generation but also for future generations.

Out of a total of 30 articles identified in the initial search phase, 15 articles met the inclusion criteria and were excluded after the title, abstract, and full-text reading screening process. The synthesized articles show a trend of increasing research on the topic of digital marketing for SMEs in Indonesia, especially since 2020 to the present, reflecting the relevance and urgency of the topic. The majority of studies use a quantitative approach with surveys as the data collection method, while the rest use qualitative or mixed approaches. Most research focuses on SMEs in Java and Bali, with limited representation from other regions in Indonesia. Accredited SINTA national journals dominate the publications, although there are a few studies that appear in reputable international journals. The sectors of SMEs that are most researched are fashion, culinary, and handicrafts. The 15 articles that have been obtained are outlined in the table 2.

**Table 2.** Previous Research

Author	Title	Research Results
(Yunarti et al., 2024)	Digital Marketing as a Powerful Tool to Improve MSMEs digital marketing	The research findings reveal a compelling and consistent pattern: digital marketing exerts a significant

Author	Title	Research Results
	Performance	and positive influence on MSMEs' performance
(Setiawan et al., 2025)	Digital Marketing Strategy for Sustainable Performance of MSMEs: Literature Review	The results advance our understanding of how digital marketing helps MSMEs sustainability, particularly in a market that is highly competitive
(Sharabati et al., 2024)	The Impact of Digital Marketing on the Performance of SMEs: An Analytical Study in Light of Modern Digital Transformations	The results revealed that digital marketing is essential for SMEs effectiveness, as a driver of digital transformation, leading to stronger economic results and an enlarged market presence
(Bruce et al., 2023)	The Effect of Digital Marketing Adoption on SMEs Sustainable Growth	the relationship between the actual use of digital marketing and SMEs' sustainable growth was also proven positive, affirming that digital marketing significantly improved the sustainable growth of SMEs in developing countries
(Payares et al., 2024)	Digital Marketing adoption in Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)	It was found that digital marketing strategies have a positive impact on the growth and development of businesses.
(Sudarsono & Yusuf, 2023)	The Importance of Digital Marketing As an MSME Marketing Strategy: A Literature Review	Digital marketing has proven to impact business growth and profitability significantly.
(Nofrisel et al., 2023)	The Role of Digital Marketing in Boosting Msme Marketing Performance	For MSMEs, as well as for policymakers and academics interested in promoting the growth and development of the MSME sector, these findings have significant ramifications.
(Iman et al., 2024)	Analysis of the Role of Digital Marketing in the Development of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Cibinong District	Overall, the role of digital marketing for MSMEs in Cibinong District is very significant in increasing competitiveness, efficiency, and market reach
(Hadi & Susilawati, 2021)	Adoption of E-commerce and Market Expansion for MSMEs in the Crafts	Found that the adoption of e-commerce significantly expanded the market for SMEs in the crafts sector, allowing them

Author	Title	Research Results
	Sector in Yogyakarta	to reach consumers beyond their city and even province.
(Setiadi and Cahyono, 2021)	The Impact of Digital Transformation of MSMEs on the Improvement of Local Economic Welfare	MSMEs in rural areas successfully uplift the living standards of the surrounding community by creating new economic opportunities
(Warda et al., 2023)	The Role Of Digital Marketing Strategy In MSMEs	Digital marketing has a positive impact on the development of MSMEs.
(Diventy et al., 2020)	The role of digital marketing on purchase intention and purchase decisions	The result shows that social media marketing has effect on purchase intention
(Umami & Darma, 2021)	Digital Marketing: Engaging Consumers With Smart Digital Marketing Content	The results stated that promotion using Instagram (IG) endorsement and paid promote could increase brand awareness and buying interest.
(Meidyasari, 2024)	Analysis Of The Impact Of Digitalization On The Economic Growth Of MSMEs In Indonesia	The results obtained explain that digitalisation has a positive impact on the economic growth of MSMEs in Indonesia
(Panggabean, 2025)	The Benefits of Digital Marketing in Developing SMEs Businesses	Digital marketing has a positive and Significant impact on the development of SMEs.

## Discussion

### *The Effectiveness of Digital Marketing on the Performance and Growth of SMEs*

The findings from the synthesized literature consistently show that digital marketing has effectiveness in improving the performance and growth of SMEs in Indonesia. Various digital marketing strategies have proven to positively contribute to key indicators. First, Increase in Sales and Market Access. Most studies report that the use of e-commerce platforms (e.g., Tokopedia, Shopee, Bukalapak) and social media (Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp Business) is directly correlated with an increase in sales volume and expansion of market reach for SMEs. For example, (Aftitah et al., 2024) found that the adoption of e-commerce significantly expanded the market for SMEs in the crafts sector, allowing them to reach consumers beyond their city and even province. Similarly (Saputra, 2022) highlighted how marketing through Instagram increased sales of SME fashion products by up to 30% within six months.

Second, Increased Brand Awareness and Visibility. Digital marketing, particularly through content marketing and social media promotion, is effective in building and

enhancing brand awareness for SMEs. An article by (Staciana, 2023) indicates that consistency in digital branding helps culinary SMEs become more recognized and remembered by consumers, thereby differentiating them from competitors. Third, Cost Efficiency in Marketing. Several studies highlight that digital marketing offers a more cost-effective alternative compared to traditional marketing methods, especially for SMEs with limited budgets. Andrikasmi et al. (2024) state that the customer acquisition cost through digital advertising is much lower than through print or television ads, enabling SMEs to compete more effectively. Fourth, Increased Consumer Engagement. Digital platforms enable SMEs to interact directly with consumers, receive feedback, and build loyalty. (Ferli et al., 2023) found that quick responses to comments and messages on social media enhance customer satisfaction and create a strong online community around the SME brand. However, this effectiveness is also colored by several challenges, such as the limited digital literacy of some SME actors, intense competition in the digital space, and the need for relevant and consistently engaging content.

### *The Role of Intent in the Adoption and Success of Digital Marketing*

The intention to strive (entrepreneurial intention) of SMEs has proven to be a crucial determining factor in the adoption and successful implementation of digital marketing. Findings from the synthesized study highlight several aspects. First, Technology Adoption Driver. SMEs with a strong entrepreneurial intent show higher proactivity in seeking, learning, and adopting digital technology. (Budianita et al., 2020) found that SMEs owners with high self-efficacy and good risk tolerance are quicker to integrate digital strategies into their business operations. They view digital marketing not just as a tool, but as an investment for growth. Second, Sustainability and Strategy Adaptation. A strong intention to strive is also correlated with the ability of SMEs to adapt and maintain their digital marketing strategies amidst changes in platform algorithms or market trends. (Wardana et al., 2020) explain that SMEs with a long-term vision and a strong desire to innovate tend to be more persistent in optimizing their digital campaigns, even when facing initial failures.

Third, Content and Offer Innovation. SMEs players with a high entrepreneurial intent tend to be more creative and innovative in creating digital marketing content and adjusting their products/services to better meet the needs of the digital market. This aligns with the findings of Aminah et al. (2024) which show that SMEs with high entrepreneurial spirit dare to experiment with new content formats (e.g., short videos, livestream shopping) to attract audience attention. Fourth, Risk Taking and Investment. Entrepreneurial intent also influences SMEs' willingness to take risks and allocate resources (time, effort, financial) for training and implementing digital marketing. They view these expenditures as a strategic investment rather than just a cost (Nazhifah et al., 2023). Overall, the intention to strive acts as a catalyst that transforms the potential of digital marketing into real success, motivating SMEs actors to overcome obstacles and seize existing opportunities.

### ***The Contribution of Digital Marketing Effectiveness and SMEs Intent to Entrepreneur towards Economic Development***

Literature synthesis shows that the combination of digital marketing effectiveness and the intent to strive of SMEs contributes substantially to economic development in Indonesia through several channels. First, Job Creation. The increase in sales and business growth of SMEs due to digital marketing directly drives the absorption of new labor. A study by (Harto et al., 2021) indicates that SMEs actively engaged in e-commerce tend to recruit more employees on average compared to those that are not. This occurs due to the increase in production volume and the demand for labor in areas of digital marketing, logistics, and customer service. Second, Increase in Community Income and Welfare. With business growth, the income of MSME actors and their employees rises, contributing to an increase in the purchasing power of the community and the economic welfare of the local area. (Budianita et al., 2020) highlight how digital SMEs in rural areas successfully uplift the living standards of the surrounding community by creating new economic opportunities.

Third, Contribution to GDP and Taxes. The scalability of SMEs through digital marketing collectively enhances their contribution to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP). (Nurhasanah, 2022) analyze that the increase in MSME transactions through digital platforms has the potential to significantly boost state tax revenue, which can be reallocated for development. Fourth, Economic Equalization and Gap Reduction. Digital marketing enables SMEs in remote or rural areas to compete in the national market, even globally, thus reducing the economic gap between urban and rural areas. (Kawira et al., 2019), in her research on rural SMEs, shows that access to online markets helps them sell regional specialty products without having to move to big cities, distributing wealth more evenly. Fifth, Innovation and Economic Diversification. The presence of digitally literate and enthusiastic SMEs drives product innovations and business models, which in turn strengthens the diversification of the national economic structure, reducing dependence on certain sectors. Overall, the effectiveness of digital marketing, supported by the intentions of SME actors, creates a positive domino effect that not only benefits the SMEs themselves but also provides a positive boost to more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable economic development in Indonesia.

Almost all findings indicate that digital marketing supports the enhancement of SMEs, entrepreneurial intentions, and contributes to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Research findings show that digital marketing can improve the competitiveness of MSMEs and contribute to the achievement of SDGs (Kirana, 2022). Therefore, the government needs to formulate policies that comprehensively support the digitalization of SMEs. Policies that provide incentives for MSMEs to invest in digital technology, such as tax reductions for investments in marketing software or e-commerce platforms, can encourage technology adoption (Kergroach, 2021). Research indicates that many SMEs still lack an understanding of how to effectively utilize digital marketing. Therefore, training programs should be designed to meet the specific needs

of SMEs, focusing on relevant digital skills. Training programs that involve a community-based approach can enhance participation and create support networks among SMEs.

Research highlights the need for policies that support digital transformation in SMEs, emphasizing the role of government in facilitating access to digital tools and infrastructure (Setiawan et al., 2025). Studies indicate that effective training programs should focus on enhancing digital skills among SMEs, addressing barriers to digital adoption, and fostering community-based learning (Sudarsono & Yusuf, 2023). The importance of investing in digital infrastructure is underscored, particularly in ensuring equitable access to technology for SMEs, which is crucial for their growth and competitiveness (Rubio, 2022).

## CONCLUSION

**Fundamental Finding:** Based on the literature review conducted, digital marketing has a positive impact on the performance of SMEs, enhancing visibility, market access, and economic growth potential. This aligns with the goals of the SDGs, which focus on poverty alleviation and inclusive economic growth. **Implication:** Despite the many benefits, this research also identifies challenges faced by SMEs in adopting digital marketing, including the digital divide, infrastructure limitations, and a lack of digital literacy. These challenges can hinder the overall achievement of the SDGs. To maximize the potential of digital marketing in supporting the SDGs, policies are needed to promote the development of digital infrastructure, provide digital literacy training, and improve access to technology for SMEs. This research emphasizes the importance of a sustainable approach to the implementation of digital marketing, ensuring that the focus is not solely on economic growth but also considers broader social and environmental impacts. **Limitation:** This research undoubtedly has its limitations, including a focus that remains centered on specific geographical or sectoral contexts, time constraints, a lack of longitudinal studies that track long-term impacts, and publication bias in the analyzed literature, where studies with positive outcomes are more likely to be published than those showing negative or insignificant results, thereby narrowing the scope of comparison in this research. Furthermore, this study relies on the available and relevant literature published up to this point, if there is limited research addressing the specific relationship between digital marketing, SMEs, and the SDGs, the results of the systematic literature review may not provide a comprehensive picture. **Future Research:** Researchers in the future could conduct case studies in various regions with differing characteristics, employing longitudinal designs to observe changes in entrepreneurial intentions and the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies over time. They could use quantitative approaches to collect data from SMEs before and after the implementation of specific policies, or adopt mixed methods that combine quantitative data on business performance with qualitative data on social and environmental impacts. Additionally, experimental approaches or case

studies could be utilized to explore how SMEs that adopt new technologies in their digital marketing strategies can achieve better outcomes compared to those that do not.

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