

Digital Marketing Strategies, Consumer Behavior, and Competitive Advantage in the Global Business Environment

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ABSTRACT

In the era of globalization and digital transformation, digital marketing strategies have become a crucial factor in shaping consumer behavior and creating competitive advantage for companies. The development of digital technology has transformed the way companies interact with consumers and create value in an increasingly dynamic global marketplace. This study aims to analyze the relationship between digital marketing strategies, consumer behavior, and competitive advantage in the context of global business. The research method used is a descriptive qualitative approach through library research, reinforced by conceptual and comparative analysis of various academic sources and relevant industry publications. The study results indicate that effective digital marketing strategies, through the use of social media, e-commerce, data analytics, artificial intelligence and big data technologies, can increase consumer personalization, engagement, and trust. The research findings also reveal that a company's ability to adapt to increasingly data-driven changes in consumer behavior is key to building a sustainable competitive advantage. Therefore, optimizing an integrated digital marketing strategy plays a crucial role in strengthening a company's position in a competitive and evolving global marketplace.

Keywords: *Competitive Advantage, Consumer Behavior, Digital Marketing, Global Business, Technological Innovation.*

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INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology has fundamentally changed the way companies operate, communicate, and interact with consumers. Digitalization and globalization have created a business environment that is more open, dynamic, and highly competitive. In this global business context, digital marketing has become a key strategy not only for promoting products and services but also for building long-term relationships with consumers and strengthening a company's position in international markets. Digital transformation has reshaped market structures, competitive dynamics, and consumer expectations regarding the value offered by companies (Aaker & McLoughlin, 2010; Kotler et al., 2021).

Digital transformation not only affects marketing activities but also significantly influences consumer mindset and behavior in the purchasing decision process. Easy access to information, the rapid growth of social media, and the expansion of e-commerce platforms have made consumers more critical, selective, and experience-oriented (Kobets et al., 2024; Braun & Osman, 2024; Prihatmadji et al., 2025). Modern consumers increasingly value not only functional benefits but also emotional experiences, trust, and meaningful interactions with brands (Dessart et al., 2015; Shahid et al., 2022; Ahmad et al., 2024). These changes require companies to develop a deeper understanding of digital consumer behavior and to adjust their marketing strategies accordingly.

This situation encourages companies to move beyond traditional marketing approaches and adopt digital marketing strategies that emphasize data-driven decision-

making, personalization, and interactivity. Digital marketing strategies today involve the use of various channels such as social media, search engines, e-commerce platforms, and analytical technologies to gain more detailed insights into consumer behavior. Through these tools, companies can perform more precise market segmentation, design relevant communication strategies, and create consistent, high-value customer experiences that strengthen customer loyalty (Abdullah & Hasan, 2023; Oumaima, 2024). As a result, digital marketing functions not only as a promotional tool but also as a strategic system for value creation.

In the context of global competition, a company's ability to understand and adapt to digital consumer behavior is crucial to achieving a competitive advantage (Keller, 2013; Kumar et al., 2020). Companies are required to respond quickly to changing consumer preferences, especially as consumers increasingly demand speed, transparency, and convenience throughout the purchasing process (Aslam, 2023; Sagar, 2024). Therefore, marketing strategies that focus solely on products are no longer sufficient. Firms need to adopt customer-centric approaches that prioritize consumer needs and experiences, enabling the creation of sustainable value and differentiation from competitors (Kotler & Keller, 2009; Akbar, 2024).

Furthermore, technological advancements such as artificial intelligence, big data analytics, and machine learning have opened new opportunities in modern marketing practices. These technologies allow companies to collect, analyze, and use consumer data in real time to develop more adaptive and predictive marketing strategies (Ryan, 2016; Teece, 2018; Zeng & Reinartz, 2021). However, the increasing use of digital technologies also presents challenges, including data privacy concerns, digital ethics, and intensified competition in digital markets (Porter, 2008). Consequently, companies must implement digital marketing strategies that are not only innovative but also ethically responsible and long-term sustainable (Rogers, 2016).

Although many studies have discussed digital marketing, consumer behavior, and competitive advantage separately, there is still limited research that integrates these three variables into one comprehensive analytical framework, especially in the global business context. In addition, previous studies show mixed findings regarding the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies in shaping consumer behavior and competitive advantage. Therefore, further research is needed to clarify the relationships among these variables.

Based on this background, this study aims to examine the relationship between digital marketing strategies, consumer behavior, and competitive advantage within the global business context. By reviewing relevant literature and theoretical perspectives, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how companies can optimize the use of digital technologies to strengthen their competitive position in international markets. In addition, this research contributes to the development of modern marketing knowledge by highlighting the importance of innovation, adaptability, and consumer orientation in the digital economy era. This study is expected to make theoretical contributions by enriching the digital marketing literature by integrating digital marketing strategies, consumer behavior, and competitive advantage into a single model.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital Marketing Strategies in the Global Business Environment

Digital marketing strategies have become a key element for companies competing in an increasingly globalized and dynamic business environment. Digital marketing is no longer limited to online promotional activities but has evolved into a strategic approach that supports long-term business objectives. According to Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2022), digital marketing enables firms to reach international markets more efficiently while allowing better measurement of marketing performance compared to traditional marketing methods. This capability is particularly important in global markets where competition is intense, and consumer preferences change rapidly.

Several studies highlight the strategic role of digital marketing channels such as social media, e-commerce platforms, and search engines. Dwivedi et al. (2021) found that the

integration of social media and digital platforms significantly improves brand visibility and customer engagement. Similarly, Armstrong et al. (2014) argue that digital marketing allows firms to create interactive, two-way communication with consumers, which strengthens relationships and builds trust. These interactions are essential for companies operating across different countries and cultural contexts.

Furthermore, Aramita et al. (2024) and Octavian et al. (2025) emphasize that successful digital marketing strategies depend on a firm's ability to adopt new technologies and align them with market needs. Empirical research by Saura et al. (2023) and Ramdan et al. (2025) supports this view, showing that companies using data-driven digital marketing strategies achieve better market performance and competitiveness. Therefore, digital marketing strategies serve as a foundation for creating value and maintaining a strong position in the global business environment.

Digital Consumer Behavior in Global Markets

Digital transformation has significantly changed consumer behavior, especially in the global marketplace. Modern consumers have easy access to information, can compare products quickly, and expect fast and personalized services. Kotler et al. (2021) and Fadilah et al. (2025) explain that digital consumer behavior is strongly influenced by social media, online reviews, and algorithm-based recommendations, which play an important role in purchase decisions. As a result, companies must better understand consumer behavior to remain competitive. Dessart et al. (2015) and Maslowska (2022) highlight that consumer engagement in digital platforms is an important factor in building long-term relationships between consumers and brands. Consumers are no longer passive recipients of marketing messages but active participants who share opinions and experiences online. This finding is supported by Zeng and Reinartz (2021), who show that real-time consumer data allows companies to predict preferences and adjust marketing strategies more effectively.

In the global context, consumer behavior is also shaped by cultural differences, social values, and levels of technological adoption. Melewar and Nguyen (2014) argue that global companies need to adapt their digital strategies to local consumer characteristics in order to build trust and loyalty. Therefore, understanding digital consumer behavior is not only an operational issue but also a strategic requirement for companies seeking success in international markets.

Digital Marketing and Competitive Advantage

Competitive advantage in the digital era is increasingly influenced by how well companies use digital technologies to create unique value. Porter (2008) and Agustian et al. (2023) state that digital technology can be a source of competitive advantage when it is strategically integrated into core business activities. In marketing, digital strategies allow companies to differentiate themselves through personalization, speed, and superior customer experiences. The concept of dynamic capabilities, introduced by Teece (2018), emphasizes the importance of adaptability in a rapidly changing business environment. Digital marketing supported by big data analytics and artificial intelligence enables companies to respond quickly to changes in consumer behavior. Day and Moorman (2010) found that market-oriented companies that effectively use customer information tend to achieve stronger competitive performance.

In addition, Narver and Slater (1990) argue that customer orientation is essential for building sustainable competitive advantage. In the digital context, this orientation is reflected in data-driven and customer-focused marketing strategies. Rogers (2016) also supports this perspective, showing that customer-centered digital transformation improves business competitiveness. Thus, digital marketing functions not only as a promotional tool but also as a strategic resource for achieving long-term competitive advantage in the global business environment.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach using the library research method, supported by conceptual and comparative analysis. This approach is appropriate because the research focuses on examining the conceptual relationship between digital marketing strategies, consumer behavior, and competitive advantage within a dynamic global business environment. A qualitative descriptive design enables an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon based on theories, empirical insights, and relevant previous studies. The study is not hypothesis-driven but aims to provide a holistic and interpretative explanation of how digital marketing contributes to competitive advantage through changes in consumer behavior.

The scope of this research is global, incorporating literature that examines digital marketing practices across various regions, including Southeast Asia, Europe, and North America. A global perspective is essential because digital marketing is inherently cross-border and influenced by differences in strategies, consumer behavior, and cultural contexts. Table 1 shows the data used in this study are secondary data obtained from credible academic and professional sources, including scholarly publications, industry reports, global consumer surveys, and digital economy policy documents. All sources were selected systematically based on their reliability, relevance, and timeliness.

Table 1. Data Types and Sources Used in Research

Data Category	Main Source	Type of Information Analyzed	Purpose of Use
Academic Data	Scholarly journals (Scopus, WoS, Sinta 1-2), textbooks	Digital marketing theory, consumer behavior, and competitive strategies	Conceptual and theoretical foundation
Industry Data	Reports from McKinsey, Deloitte, PwC, Google Marketing, and Meta Insight	Technology adoption trends, digital consumption patterns, and global digital investments	Building a global empirical context
Secondary Statistical Data	OECD, Statista (Department, 2024), World Economic Forum, UNCTAD	Quantitative data on internet usage, e-commerce, and digital spending	Supporting data-based arguments
Policy and Regulatory Data	Government reports, ASEAN digital economy policy, EU Digital Market Act	Regulation, ethics, and consumer data protection	Analysis of challenges and opportunities

Data collection was conducted through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR). Relevant literature was identified using scientific databases such as Scopus, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis, and Google Scholar. Keywords included digital marketing strategies, consumer behavior, competitive advantage, global business, digital transformation, and technological innovation in marketing. The selected literature met specific inclusion criteria: publication between 2015 and 2025, a focus on strategic digital marketing issues, a global research context, and a strong academic reputation. The selected studies were then examined using thematic coding to identify dominant themes such as digital consumer behavior, technology integration in marketing, customer loyalty, and innovation-based competitive strategies. The findings were synthesized to identify recurring patterns and to develop a conceptual framework explaining the interrelationship between digital marketing, consumer behavior, and competitive advantage.

Table 2 shows the data analysis was carried out using content analysis and thematic analysis. This process involved grouping literature according to key themes, presenting findings through tables and conceptual narratives, and drawing conclusions regarding the relationship between digital technology adoption and competitive advantage through changes in consumer behavior.

Table 2. Analysis Matrix of the Relationship Between Research Variables

Main Variable	Sub-variable	Key Indicators	Dominant Literature Sources
Digital Marketing Strategies	Social media, e-commerce, content marketing, and digital analytics	Frequency of interaction, personalization level, digital ROI	Kotler et al. (2021) and Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2022)
Consumer Behavior	Loyalty, trust, value perception, purchase intentions	Engagement rate, sentiment analysis, purchase conversion	Solomon et al. (2014) and Kumar et al. (2020)
Competitive Advantage	Differentiation, efficiency, technological innovation, brand positioning	Market share growth, customer retention, brand equity	Barney (1991) and Porter and Heppelmann (2014)

To ensure validity and reliability, the study applied source triangulation by comparing academic literature, industry reports, and statistical data. Credibility was assessed based on journal reputation, publisher quality, and relevance to the research topic. A conceptual audit was conducted by aligning the synthesis results with established theories such as Porter’s Competitive Advantage Framework, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), and consumer decision-making theory. As this study is library-based and relies on secondary data, no direct involvement of human participants occurred. Nevertheless, academic ethical standards were strictly observed through proper citation, respect for intellectual property, and methodological transparency.

Table 3. Research Phases and Outputs Produced

Main Activity	Output Produced
Problem formulation and objectives	Identification of research focus
Literature collection and secondary data	Selected library databases
Content and thematic analysis	Initial findings on conceptual relationships
Conceptual synthesis	Conceptual model of variable interrelationships
Report writing	Scientific article with theoretical conclusions

Table 3 shows that this research was conducted systematically through several interrelated stages, from problem formulation to report writing. Each stage produced specific outputs, ensuring a structured research process and producing a conceptual model and theoretical conclusions that are scientifically sound.

RESULTS

The Role of Digital Marketing Strategies on Consumer

Based on the literature review and thematic analysis of various academic and industry sources, it was found that digital marketing strategies, consumer behavior, and competitive advantage are closely related and mutually influence each other in the context of modern global business. Digital transformation has changed almost all aspects of marketing activities, from promotional strategies, brand communication, to consumer experience. Companies that effectively leverage digital technologies have proven to be more adaptive in responding to market changes and demonstrate higher competitiveness compared to companies that still rely on traditional methods (Dessart et al., 2015; Asikin et al., 2024).

The research findings suggest that the implementation of effective digital marketing strategies not only enhances brand visibility but also creates added value through more personalized interactions with consumers. Moreover, adapting to the increasingly dynamic digital consumer behavior is a key factor in maintaining customer loyalty and trust (Treem & Leonardi, 2013; Kumar et al., 2020).

Digitalization has driven a paradigm shift from conventional marketing to technology-based marketing. Social media, content marketing, e-commerce, and data analytics have become core elements in modern marketing strategies. According to the literature

findings, companies that actively invest in digital innovation show significant improvement in consumer engagement and cross-border sales growth (Rowles & Brown, 2017; Zeng & Reinartz, 2021). The role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and big data analytics is also highlighted. These technologies enable companies to predict consumer needs and preferences through online behavior analysis, buying patterns, and social media interactions. Thus, marketing decision-making becomes faster, more efficient, and data driven.

Table 4. Types of Digital Marketing Strategies and Their Impact on Company Performance

Type of Digital Strategy	Brief Description	Impact on Performance
Social Media Marketing	Using platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and LinkedIn to build brand awareness and two-way interaction	Increases customer engagement, expands market reach
Search Engine Optimization (SEO)	Optimizing website visibility in search engines	Increases organic traffic and consumer trust
Content Marketing	Providing informative and educational content relevant to consumer needs	Increases loyalty and brand value perception
Email & Automation Marketing	Sending personalized automated messages based on customer profiles and behavior	Increases customer retention and promotional effectiveness
Influencer Collaboration	Collaborating with digital personalities or brand ambassadors to enhance brand image	Increases brand appeal among younger demographics
AI-Based Personalization	Using AI to recommend products and personalize user experience	Increases conversion rates and customer satisfaction

Table 4 illustrates that various digital marketing strategies play an important role in improving company performance. Each strategy contributes in a different way, but together they support the creation of sustainable competitive advantage. Social media marketing serves as a key tool for building brand awareness and enabling two-way interaction between companies and consumers. The use of platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and LinkedIn allows companies to reach wider audiences and increase consumer engagement, which ultimately expands market reach. Search Engine Optimization (SEO) focuses on improving a company's website visibility in search engines. This strategy contributes to higher organic traffic and strengthens consumer trust, as brands that appear prominently in search results are often perceived as more credible and reliable (Zeng & Reinartz, 2021).

Content marketing emphasizes the delivery of informative and educational content that matches consumer needs. By providing valuable content, companies can support consumer decision-making while enhancing brand value perception and long-term customer loyalty. Email and automation marketing enable companies to deliver personalized messages based on customer profiles and behavior. This targeted approach increases customer retention and improves the effectiveness of promotional activities. Influencer collaboration helps strengthen brand image, particularly among younger consumer segments. Endorsements from digital influencers can increase brand attractiveness and credibility due to their strong social influence. Finally, AI-based personalization enhances the user experience through tailored product recommendations. This strategy directly contributes to higher conversion rates and improved customer satisfaction (Kumar et al., 2020). Thus, Table 4 highlights that the integration of digital technologies not only increases promotional effectiveness but also expands the organization's capacity to understand consumers in real time. This makes digital marketing a key determinant of long-term competitive advantage.

The Role of Consumer Behavior in the Digital Era

Global consumer behavior has undergone a significant transformation due to advances in information technology, leading to a shift where consumers actively participate in shaping brand perceptions rather than merely receiving marketing messages (Kotler et al., 2021). Consumers are no longer just passive recipients of marketing messages but active participants who influence brand image through reviews, recommendations, and social media interactions, a phenomenon known as consumer empowerment where power partially shifts from companies to consumers (Dessart et al., 2015).

The analysis of digital consumer behavior reveals several key findings, with the first being that consumers increasingly expect personalized experiences tailored to their individual needs and preferences, making generic marketing approaches less effective (Kumar et al., 2020). Second, transparency and trust play a crucial role in shaping purchase decisions, as consumers are more likely to engage with brands that demonstrate honesty, reliability, and strong data security practices, especially when personal information is frequently shared online (Treem & Leonardi, 2013). Third, emotional value and experience have become central to consumer preferences, with consumers favoring brands that build emotional connections and deliver meaningful experiences over those focusing solely on product quality (Shahid et al., 2022). Finally, social engagement has become a significant aspect of digital consumer behavior, as consumers actively share experiences, write reviews, and influence the purchasing decisions of others through social media and online platforms (Maslowska et al., 2022).

Table 5. Key Changes in Digital Consumer Behavior

Consumer Behavior Aspect	Conventional Era	Digital Era
Purchase Orientation	Based on needs and physical promotions	Based on experiences, recommendations, and digital personalization
Access to Information	Limited to print media and television	Unlimited access via the internet and social media
Communication Pattern	One-way (from producers to consumers)	Two-way (interactive and participatory)
Brand Loyalty	Based on habit	Based on values, experiences, and trust
Decision-Making Process	Rational and structured	Emotional, quick, and data-driven

Based on Table 5, the analysis clearly shows that the shift in consumer behavior demands companies to be more responsive, adaptive, and data-driven in designing their marketing strategies. Companies that fail to understand this behavioral shift risk losing relevance amidst global competition.

Competitive Advantage through Digital Innovation

The research findings indicate that companies that have achieved competitive advantage in the digital era generally possess strong strategic characteristics, such as the ability to adapt to technological changes and a focus on continuous innovation. According to Porter's (2014) theory of competitive advantage, this can be achieved through differentiation, cost efficiency, or market focus. In the digital context, differentiation is achieved through technological service innovation and unique user experiences. Companies like Amazon, Shopee, and Netflix are concrete examples of how digitalization creates competitive advantage through recommendation systems, artificial intelligence, and immersive customer experiences. Digital strategies not only improve operational efficiency but also strengthen brand positioning by leveraging customer data to create value that competitors find difficult to replicate.

The analysis highlights several important strategic implications for global companies. First, cross-functional integration is essential, as digital strategies should not be limited to the marketing function but integrated across all business units to ensure consistency and effectiveness (Dessart et al., 2015; Maslowska, 2022). Second, investment in data and

analytics is critical, since data-driven decision-making enables companies to better understand market changes, consumer preferences, and competitive dynamics. Third, strong consumer orientation is required, meaning that companies must place customer satisfaction and customer experience at the center of all digital initiatives. Fourth, flexibility and adaptability are necessary because the rapid pace of digital change requires companies to respond quickly to emerging trends and technological developments. Finally, digital ethics plays a vital role in sustaining long-term success, as responsible management of consumer data, including transparency and privacy protection, is essential for maintaining public trust and brand credibility (Treem & Leonardi, 2013).

From a theoretical perspective, this research strengthens the relevance of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Porter's Competitive Advantage Theory in the context of digital business. Effective technology has been shown to drive efficiency and innovation, while understanding consumer behavior remains a cornerstone for designing differentiation strategies. However, it is important to note that the implementation of digital strategies also faces challenges, such as information overload, shifting social media algorithms, and increasingly complex global competition (Zeng & Reinartz, 2021). Therefore, sustainable competitive advantage can only be achieved if companies are able to combine technology with creativity, deep market analysis, and a long-term value orientation.

DISCUSSION

These findings support previous studies showing that digital transformation has fundamentally changed marketing activities, consumer interactions, and value creation processes. Companies that successfully integrate digital technologies into their marketing strategies tend to be more adaptive to market changes and demonstrate higher competitiveness than companies that still rely on traditional marketing approaches. This result is consistent with the studies of Dessart et al. (2015) and Asikin et al. (2024), which emphasize the importance of digital engagement and technological responsiveness as key drivers of modern business performance.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that the implementation of effective digital marketing strategies not only increases brand visibility but also creates added value through more personalized and interactive consumer experiences. This supports the findings of Kumar et al. (2020), who argue that data analytics-based personalization strengthens customer relationships and increases loyalty. In addition, Treem and Leonardi (2013) highlight that digital platforms enable greater transparency and more intensive interaction, allowing companies to build trust and long-term engagement with consumers. Therefore, the success of digital marketing depends not only on technology adoption but also on how well companies align digital tools with consumer expectations.

The transformation of digital marketing strategies identified in this study highlights the growing importance of social media, content marketing, artificial intelligence, and big data analytics. The empirical patterns found support the conclusions of Rowles and Brown (2017) and Zeng and Reinartz (2021), who suggest that companies investing in digital innovation experience higher consumer engagement and stronger international market growth. AI-based personalization, in particular, enables companies to anticipate consumer needs and make faster, data-driven marketing decisions, thereby strengthening the strategic value of digital marketing. From the consumer behavior perspective, the results show a clear shift from passive consumers to active participants who shape brand perceptions through reviews, social interactions, and shared experiences. This consumer empowerment supports the view of Kotler et al. (2021), who state that digital consumers are more informed, emotionally oriented, and experience-focused. The demand for personalization, transparency, and emotional value identified in this study reflects global changes in consumer behavior and emphasizes the importance of customer-oriented marketing strategies.

Regarding competitive advantage, the findings demonstrate that digital innovation plays a critical role in differentiation and value creation. This result is consistent with

Porter's (1998) competitive advantage framework, particularly the differentiation strategy, which in the digital era is achieved through superior customer experiences and technological innovation. Companies such as Amazon and Netflix illustrate how data-driven personalization and digital platforms create value that is difficult for competitors to imitate. This also supports Teece's (2018) dynamic capabilities perspective, which highlights adaptability and continuous innovation as sources of long-term competitive advantage. Thus, this discussion confirms that sustainable competitive advantage in the global digital era can be achieved through the strategic integration of digital marketing, deep understanding of consumer behavior, and continuous innovation. These findings strengthen existing marketing and strategic management theories and provide empirical support for the growing importance of data-driven and consumer-oriented digital strategies in global business.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that digital marketing strategies play a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior and in creating and sustaining competitive advantage within the dynamic global business environment. The main findings indicate that the effective use of digital technologies, such as social media, data analytics, artificial intelligence, and data-driven personalization, enhances the quality of company consumer interactions, strengthens customer loyalty, and supports value differentiation that is difficult for competitors to imitate. In addition, the increasingly active, emotional, and experience-oriented behavior of digital consumers requires companies to adopt more adaptive, transparent, and value-driven marketing approaches.

The implications of this study highlight that global companies need to integrate digital marketing strategies across business functions, treat data as a strategic asset, and place customer experience and trust at the center of decision-making. Competitive advantages in the digital era depend not only on technological adoption but also on organizational capabilities and continuous innovation. However, this research has limitations, as it relies on a qualitative descriptive approach based on literature review and conceptual analysis, without empirical testing of relationships between variables. As a result, the findings are interpretative rather than statistically validated. Future research is therefore recommended to apply quantitative or mixed method approaches to empirically test the proposed conceptual relationships. Further studies may also focus on specific industries or noted geographical contexts, particularly in developing markets, to provide more contextual and practical insights into the implementation of digital marketing strategies and their impact on consumer behavior and competitive advantage.

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*Digital Marketing,
Consumer Behavior,
Competitive Advantage*

190
