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*Literature Review*

## **Digital Marketing in Developing and Emerging Economies: A Systematic Review of Introductory Phase Features**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Internet and social media offered a different arena of how marketing was done internationally. Its usage was still in infancy and available research was in embryonic stage to address the realities in developing nations, however. Therefore, this systematic review was done to identify contextual factors impacting digital marketing, dominant marketing practices over digital channels, and the consequences of adopting digital marketing. The study adopted the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) 2020 to collect evidence. Thematic content analysis was performed to extract pertinent information from 35 eligible studies included in the study. From obtainable digital channels; social media, m-marketing and e-commerce platforms are familiar in emerging markets. The findings revealed that demographics, psychological factors such as perception of medium trust, usability, enjoyment, satisfaction, risk, etc., at customer level and dynamic digital capabilities, management openness, collaborative digitalization, social networking ability, knowledge, and financial resources, etc., of firms were contingency factors impacting digital marketing. Evidence showed that marketing communication was principally accomplished online and doing marketing digitally enhanced marketing capacity, efficiency, and performance.

**Keywords:** Consequences, Developing Economies, Digital Marketing, Emerging, Systematic Review

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Internet and social media presented a virtual space that renovated the market from quiet, isolated and invisible individuals to a noisy, community and even more out of control collective (Abreu & Antonio, 2017). Therefore, organizations of all kinds are beginning to emphasize the use of digital media to facilitate the success of their marketing goals. Digitalization started to completely transform how marketing is going to be done and shaping the customary ways in which consumers and businesses interact with each other (Maarit et al., 2015).

Digitally enabled marketing and marketing communication is becoming the necessity of all business (Dumitriu et al., 2019). That means, marketing without digital tools will be unthinkable therefore (Kuchta & Stankova, 2020). It became managerial imperative to cope up with these all set of available alternatives and associated issues of marketing in contemporary period (Leeflang et al., 2014). Digital marketing was a new stage in the evolution of marketing (Madan, 2021) and exists at its embryonic theoretical framing (Novytska et al., 2021). Therefore, different scholars approached it differently (Obitovich, 2022).

The term digital marketing become popular over time, particularly in developed countries and is often referred to as online marketing, internet marketing or web marketing (Kaur & Sandhu, 2017). It is an umbrella term for the marketing of products or services using digital technologies, mainly on the internet, but also including mobile phones, display advertisings and any other digital platforms (Desai & Vidyapeeth, 2019). This is because in its most basic form digital marketing can be said to involve the use of networks created for the process of marketing (Zahay, 2021).

The fast improvements in the trend provided a variety of marketing alternative technologies that are used in the marketplace (Vlasova et al., 2019). As the proliferation of digital marketing tools seems explosive with the dynamism of the communication technologies (Graesch et al., 2021), different authors tried to categorize differently. Though it was not mutually exclusive and exhaustive list, the identified channels of digital marketing fall in one of the following categories: *email marketing*; *search engine marketing (SEM)*; *search engine optimization (SEO)*; *affiliate*

*marketing; influencer marketing; social media marketing; pay per click (PPC); online advertising; and web analytics* (Dash, 2019; Madan, 2021; Malik, 2017; Verma, 2018).

Digital marketing has universal applicability and boost the capability of businesses (Desai & Vidyapeeth, 2019). It enables firms to become industry leaders in the marketplace in which they cater their prospective customers (Vlasova et al., 2019). The advantages it has over the traditional marketing involves *cost-efficiency, better exposure/reach* by enabling 24/7 online shopping and convenience for consumers anywhere any time, *increased speed, greater customer engagement, enabling personalized service* based on customer database, and *brand building* by promoting it on multiple platforms (Madan, 2021; Sinha et al., 2020; Verma, 2018). Moreover, digitalization by itself becomes an increasingly important source of competitive advantage (Leeftang et al., 2014). Firms everywhere currently are not shielded from the effects of digitalization related severe than ever competition (Mago et al., 2013). However in emerging and developing countries, its practice as well as utilization were observed slow as well as very limited in its scope (Abreu & Antonio, 2017) as compared to industrialized nations (Vieira et al., 2019).

Therefore, this study focused on identifying the consequences of adopting digital marketing alternatives in emerging and developing economies to sort out scholarly and practitioner implications to bridge this gap in the literature. More specifically, the review tried to identify the contextual factors impacting digital marketing; the dominant marketing practices performed over the digital channels; and the consequences of adopting digital marketing.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

Systematic review is a comprehensive review that enables understanding of topics of interest through retrieval, appraisal and summary of all the available evidences on specific topic of inquiry (Mohamed Shaffril et al., 2021). Thus, this study adopted the PRISMA 2020 guidelines of systematic reviews that was employed in this study (Hiebl, 2021). Adequate empirical studies about the topic “*digital marketing in emerging and developing economies*” were searched using *Boolean operators, “AND” & “OR”* and filters as recommended in (Al-Tabbaa et al., 2019). In order to identify relevant peer reviewed articles the reviewers used highly qualified peer reviewed data bases of *Emerald Insights, Sage journals, Science Direct* and *Springer Link*. The articles in the review were those articles that took any of the digital marketing tools and practices done by firms found in emerging and less developing countries categorized as developing recently (UN,

2020). Inclusion criteria of the literature to be considered as eligible to the review involves *language* (English); *type of article* (empirical); *sources* (peer-reviewed openly accessed journals) and *time frame* (Jan 1, 2015 – June 2022). The selection of final papers followed the objective of study besides the inclusion criteria (Hiebl, 2021). The review extracted pertinent information using tabulation techniques applicable in thematic analysis (Al-Tabbaa et al., 2019; Pahlevan Sharif et al., 2019). Synthesis was performed based on the aim of present review; the contextual factors impacting digital marketing; the digital marketing tools and marketing processes and tasks performed over digital media; and consequences of digital marketing (Adeyinka-Ojo, 2021).

### **3. RESULTS**

The primary search with relevant filters based on the exclusion and inclusion criteria provided us with 2313 scholarly works (Emerald Insights = 563, Sage journals = 347, Science Direct = 616 and Springer Link = 787). Out of which, 56 duplicates were removed from the search result in the preliminary screening. Title and abstract screening eliminated 2182 records from the list of documents that do not meet the eligibility criteria of the review. And only 75 articles were sought for full text access from which 40 of those documents were seen in the review process due to so many reasons like subscription. Finally 5 articles that are unrelated to the scope and topic of interest of the present review were eliminated after assessing full text and finally the review considered 35 empirical papers. The search and selection process of the articles in the review indicted hereunder using PRISMA-Flow Diagram in figure 1.

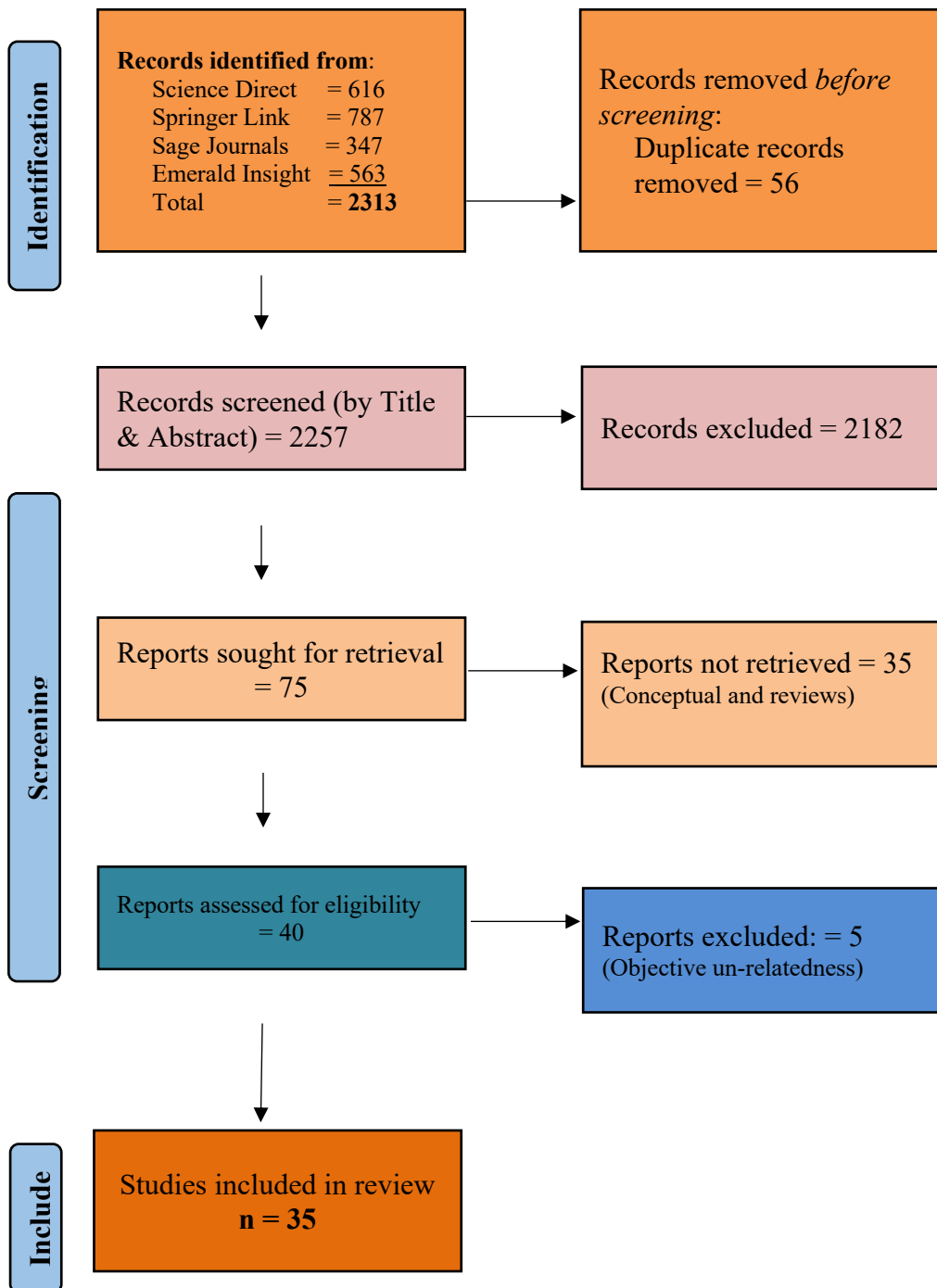
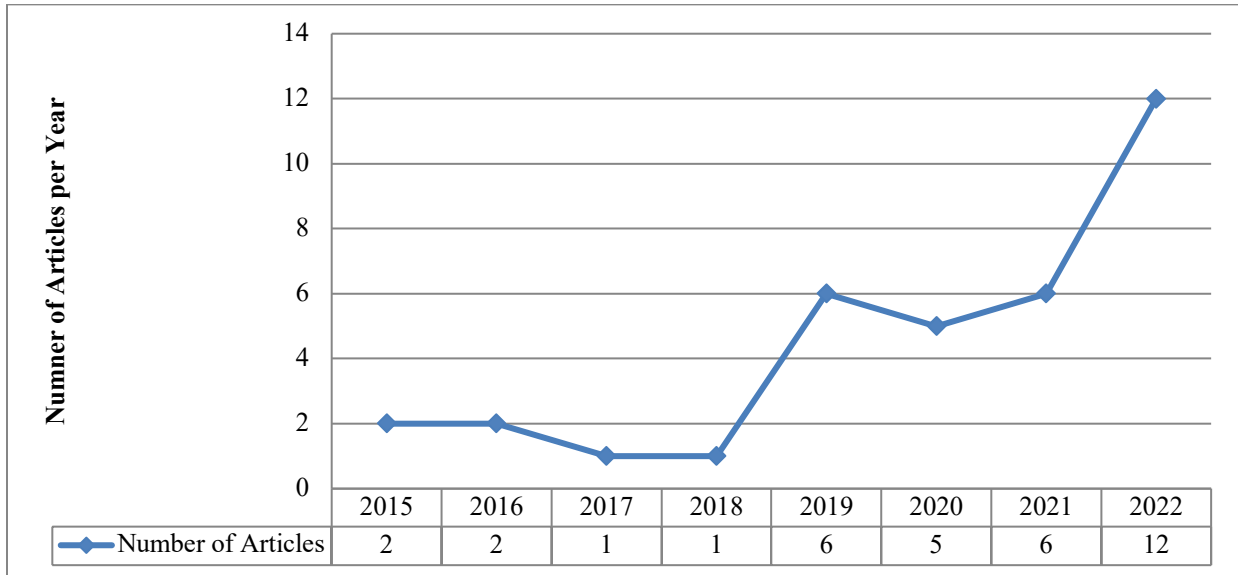


Figure 1. PRISM Flow Diagram for the Systematic Review

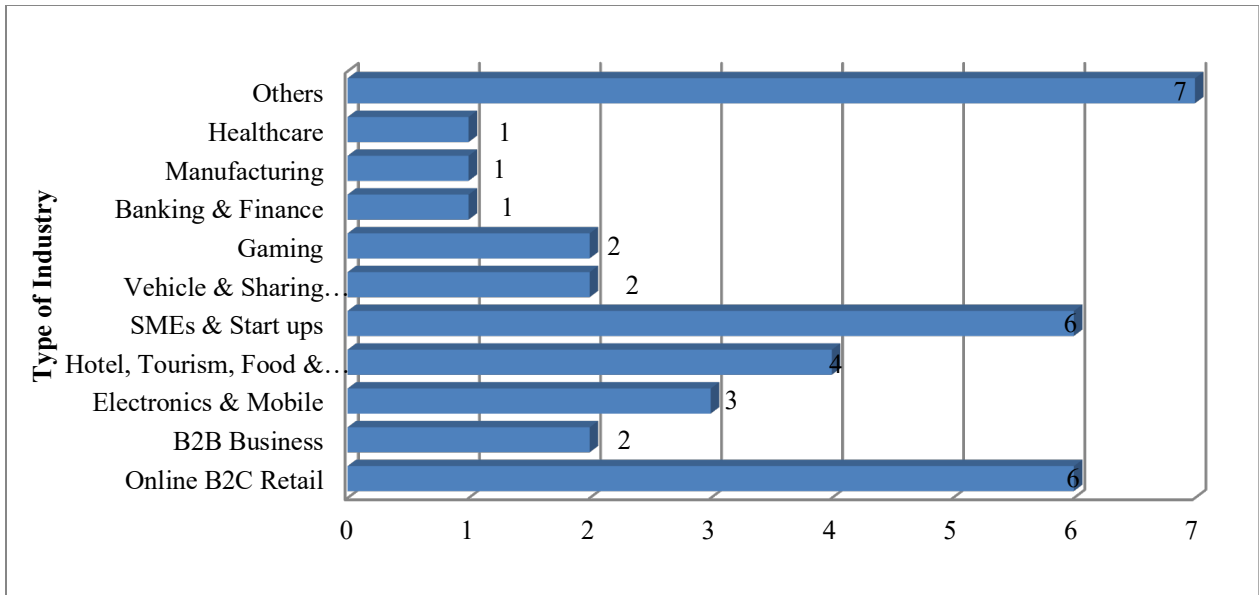
### 3.1 Distribution of Reviewed Papers

As the trend given in the following graph (fig. 2) the number of publications were increasing on the issue indicating that it gains attention of scholars more recently, specifically from 2019 onwards in emerging economies and less-developed countries.



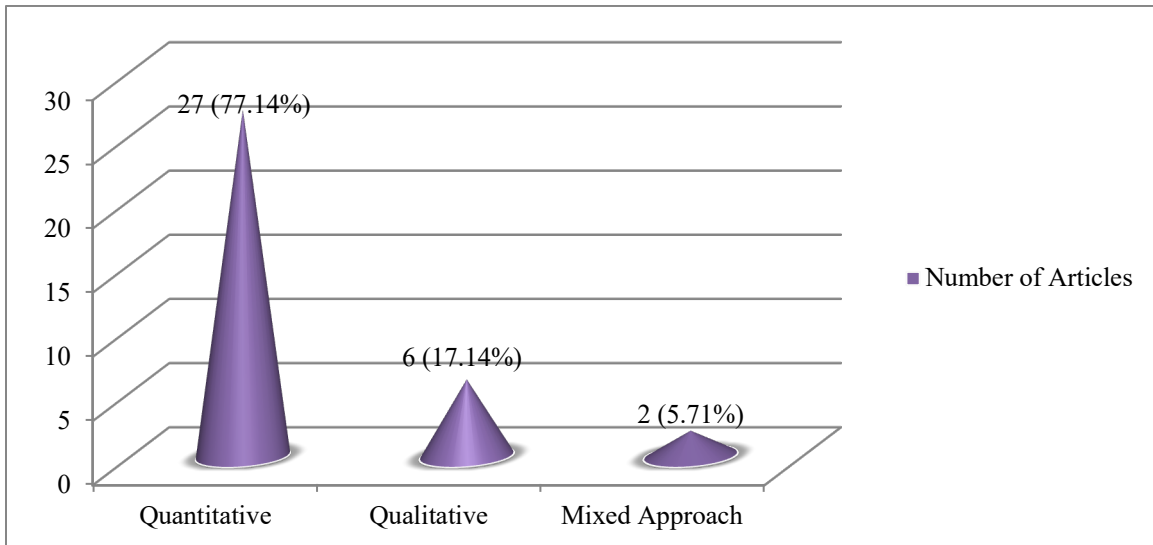
**Figure 2.** Publication trend over the years included in the review

The distribution of the studies reviewed depending on the industry in which the studies were conducted shows that the studies were inclined to business-to-customers (B2C) online retailing and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) startups using digital marketing followed by hotel and hospitality as well as electronics including mobile phone device industries as indicated in fig.3.



**Figure 3.** Distributions of Articles by Industries Involved in the Studies

With regard to the research approach applied in the studies displayed in fig.4, out of the 35 papers reviewed majority or 27 (77.14%) used quantitative approach while 6 (17.14%) employed qualitative method and the remaining 2 (5.71%) done by mixed approach.



**Figure 4.** Distributions of Articles by Research Approach Used

### 3.2 Conceptualization of Digital Marketing in Reviewed Studies

Systematic review is the process of collecting evidence, revising established theories, etc., as a basis of knowledge synthesis (Okoli, 2015). Therefore, it will be necessary to see the underpinning theories used as a theoretical lens in studies included in the systematic review. Gabriel (2008) contended that a theory is a generalized statement of abstractions or ideas that explains relationships or connections between or among phenomena, within the limits of critical bounding assumptions that the theory explicitly makes as cited in (Kivunja, 2018). While conceptual frameworks are also helps in guiding the study process and affect the results found in each inquiry also (Kivunja, 2018).

The dominant theoretical lenses and conceptual models used in reviewed studies involve; models of technology adoption such as technology acceptance model (TAM) (Dakduk et al., 2020; Daum et al., 2021; Soluk et al., 2022); technology-organization-environment (TOE) (Khwaldeh, 2020); open innovation in times of crisis (Markovic et al., 2021); and theory of planned behavior (TPB) (Pratesi et al., 2021). Others tried to see and ground their data in theories of digitalization, digital transformation or servitization using Industry 4.0 literatures (Gaglio et al., 2022; Kunkel et al., 2022; Melović et al., 2020). The literature on variants of digital marketing tools such as SEM and SEO were also used in some empirical works (Yang et al., 2015). Social marketing communication like word of mouth (WoM) (Boon-long & Wongsurawat, 2015; Duffett, 2017; Noh et al., 2016); ehcoverse for customer engagement and co-creation of the content (Vieira et al., 2019; Yadav et al., 2016); speech act theory (SAT) (Huang & Liu, 2022); and transportation imagery model (TIM) (Xu et al., 2022) were also employed. Online brand communities and their engagement was appreciated and used as theoretical framework in the studies of (Ordovás et al., 2018; Yadav et al., 2016). Strategic marketing related concepts such as unique selling proposition (USP) (Kumar et al., 2019); positioning in target market using online channels (S. Zhang et al., 2019); strategic marketing orientations (Goldman, 2021); composition based-view (CBV) (Xie et al., 2021); dynamic digital capabilities (Heredia et al., 2022) were highly advocated theories. Some studies were grounded on the various approaches to marketing performance measurements by using different metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of digital marketing. For instance Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action (AIDA) model of market response to online advertising was adopted by (Dash, 2019); whereas marketing accountability theory (MAT) (Rakshit et al., 2022a) and Strategies to analyze the Challenges, Opportunities and Problems to succeed in Exporting (SCOPE) framework



of Paul (2020) as employed in (Rakshit et al., 2022b) were used to measure the results of digital marketing.

### 3.3 Contextual Factors Impacting Digital Marketing

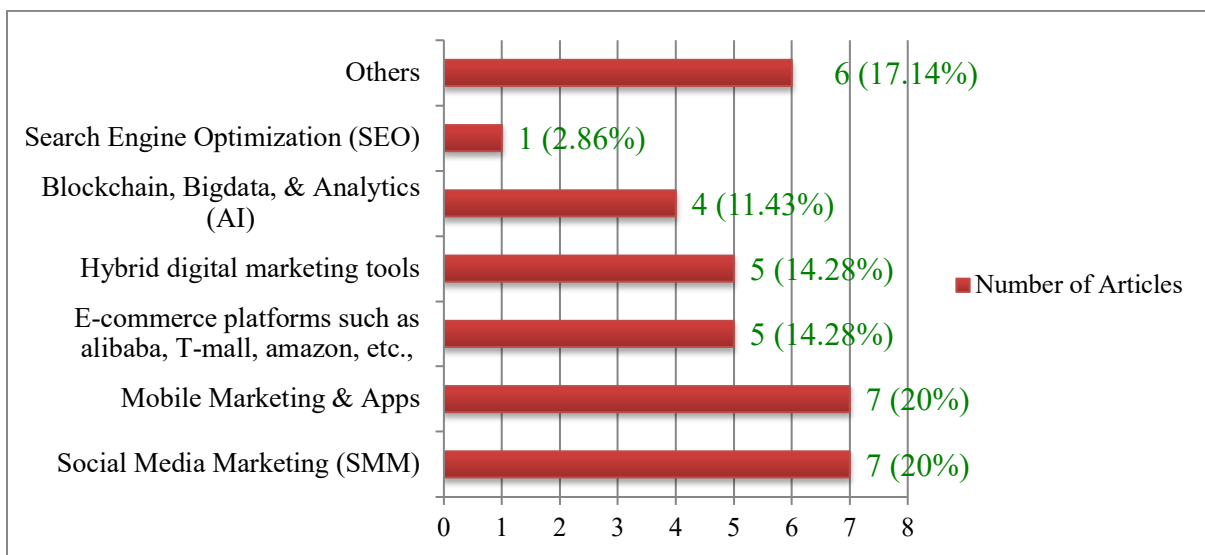
The first category of factors pertains to the individual customer level determinants that drive the digitalization of firms involve individual's demographic characteristics including age, population group and generation (Duffett, 2017; Khwaldeh, 2020; Mahmoud et al., 2021); gender and personal income (Khwaldeh, 2020) increase the cognitive, affective and behavioral inclinations to use e-commerce. Other relevant factors consisting of skills and expertise in technology usage (Ordovás et al., 2018); digital channels usage levels such as access, duration & frequency of use, and profile updating incidences (Duffett, 2017); hedonic motivation and habit (Dakduk et al., 2020); entrepreneurial vision and personal commitment (Ordovás et al., 2018) also regulate the behavioral intentions to use digital medium. Moreover, perceptions of medium trust (Dakduk et al., 2020; Pratesi et al., 2021); usability (Mahmoud et al., 2021; Pratesi et al., 2021); enjoyment and satisfaction (Mahmoud et al., 2021); and risk (Pratesi et al., 2021) affect the customers willingness to use digital channels.

Secondly, firms themselves need to be encouraged by both internal and external resources and factors that push members of the organization to engage in digital marketing. In this vein, management openness (Markovic et al., 2021); collaborative digitalization and social networking ability (Kunkel et al., 2022; Rakshit et al., 2022a; Soluk et al., 2022); rebound effects (Kunkel et al., 2022); time, knowledge and financial resources (Rakshit et al., 2022a); organizational processes to strategize, synergize and standardize (Rakshit et al., 2022b) are another important factors considered internally to firms. Among external motivating factors; consumers browse and switch behavior (Shi et al., 2019), the positive effect of relative advantage and information density of digital marketing (Khwaldeh, 2020) and exposure to the digital channels and data analytics (Sadeghiani et al., 2022) were found to be important in the reviewed studies.

Thirdly, the macro level environmental conditions created imperatives to marketers to engage in online marketing practices. These are mainly facilitating conditions such as digital literacy, network coverage and conditions (Dakduk et al., 2020; Daum et al., 2021); national culture based on *Hofstede* dimensions (Pratesi et al., 2021); and Human Development Index (**HDI**) (Heredia et al., 2022) given emphasis in reviewed studies as determinant contextual factors.

### 3.4 Familiar Media Channels in Reviewed Studies

As raised in brief background discussions made in introductory sections, we have different alternatives to go digital marketing. Social media and social networking is dominant in the reviewed articles (Boon-long & Wongsurawat, 2015; Duffett, 2017; Mahmoud et al., 2021; Melović et al., 2020; Men, 2022; Noh et al., 2016; Ordovás et al., 2018; Rakshit et al., 2022a; Yadav et al., 2016; L. Zhang & Erturk, 2022). The use of mobile devices as a channel via smartphones and *apps* were another prominently used as indicated in the studies (Dakduk et al., 2020; Dash, 2019; Gaglio et al., 2022; Huang & Liu, 2022; Khwaldeh, 2020; Kumar et al., 2019; Men, 2022; Soluk et al., 2022; S. Zhang et al., 2019). Online e-commerce platforms (Jin, Zhangwen and Naichen, 2019; Zhang, Pauwels and Peng, 2019; Li, Ma and Bai, 2020; Ogbonnaya, Ogba and Emeka, 2020; Goldman, 2021; Pratesi *et al.*, 2021; Rakshit *et al.*, 2022b; (Xu et al., 2022) like *alibaba*, *T-mall*, *amazon*, etc., were another significantly raised channels discussed in the studies reviewed. Some studies specifically emphasized only on single channel for instance; SEM (Yang et al., 2015), online-offline integration by adding online-to-offline service platform (O2OSP) channels (Zhang et al., 2019), big data (Kunkel et al., 2022; Xie et al., 2021), block chain (Rakshit et al., 2022b), analytical artificial intelligence tools like *Google Analytics* (Melović et al., 2020). However, Gaglio et al (2022), Goldman (2021), Heredia et al (2022), and Pratesi et al (2021) tried to compare having a bundle of two or more channels as an alternative route for their marketing offer to see the use of hybrid system (Shi et al., 2019). The distribution of digital channels used in the studies reviewed indicated below (see fig.5).



**Figure 5.** Distribution of Articles by Digital Marketing Tools in the Reviewed Studies

### **3.5 Dominant Marketing Activities Done by Digital Marketing**

The purpose of digitalization of marketing was to facilitate the tasks of marketing function of a given firm and enhance its effectiveness (Melović et al., 2020). Among the multitude of marketing responsibilities, digital marketing primarily used in integrated marketing communication in emerging and developing economies. Customer information requests (Boon-long & Wongsurawat, 2015); offering requested information, self and positive emotions-expression (Noh et al., 2016); and marketing communication strategies (advertising, sales promotion, personal selling and public relations) as indicated in Ogbonnaya et al (2020) done easily by digital. Even though it needs cautious content creation mainly in topic and context relativity (Jin et al., 2019), the appropriate mix of advertising text presentation in expressive and directive (personalized subjective type) and assertive (objective type) (Huang & Liu, 2022) as well as the reply modality for online customer reviews either sincerely gratitude or promotional information (Li et al., 2020); the information density and intensity (Khwaldah, 2020) of digital medium enriches organizations information disseminations, interpersonal communication and two-way symmetrical communication strategies (Men, 2022). Moreover, the reactance or interactivity of the firm with its online customers mediates the narrative information reach in e-commerce (Noh et al., 2016; Xu et al., 2022).

Online communities are also helpful to pursue marketing strategies as viral marketing (Yadav et al., 2016); and to go global by removing locations barriers (Xie et al., 2021). Collecting customer feedbacks of product development and their launch (Boon-long & Wongsurawat, 2015); business model innovation (Yang et al., 2015) and customer records and data storage (Noh et al., 2016) were the activities seen in the studies. However, the effectiveness of such tasks and practices were found to be affected by usage experience (Boon-long & Wongsurawat, 2015); the art of reply to customer requests and reviews (Huang & Liu, 2022; Jin et al., 2019; Li et al., 2020); and interactivity (Noh et al., 2016; Xu et al., 2022).

### **3.6 The Consequences of Adopting Digital Marketing**

Given the connectivity we live in digital era, the weight of social conformity is increasingly higher in influencing consumer behavior (Kotler et al., 2017). As indicated in the reviewed papers in the present study, the customers attitude mainly their cognitive, affective and behavioral attitude components were improved on a declining scale due to the use of digital marketing (Duffett, 2017). This is also evidenced in the study of Khwaldah (2020) as the perceived usefulness of the

digital marketing was higher and similarly customers shown continuous intention to use m-commerce (Dakduk et al., 2020). Consumer purchasing decisions were also highly affected by digital channels (Boon-long & Wongsurawat, 2015); the evidence from Pratesi et al (2021) found online purchase behavior has indicated similar results. When the perceived persuasiveness of digital marketing communication was higher and mediated by appropriate reactance (Xu et al., 2022) it yields good marketing results. Such channels provide actual users with a desirable review subset in an effective way by being adopted by *T-mall* and *amazon* (Jin et al., 2019), for instance. Customers tempted to write reviews on social networking sites about their experience with the product or services they used (Noh et al., 2016). This as result intensifies their intentions to follow and recommend brands to others (Mahmoud et al., 2021; Pratesi et al., 2021); as well as it motivates consumers to deepen their relationship and engagement and in most extreme scenarios customers will become the managers of or launching an online brand community (Ordovás et al., 2018) to identify themselves with the brand to which they are satisfied with.

Different digital tools for marketing have different advantages for the firms. However, companies that have a successful approach to online marketing often seem to share common characteristics (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016). One of the primary objectives of marketing is attaining customers that prefer to use our product to competitors. In this vein digital marketing helps customer acquisition, to generate impressions and sales enhancement, it also enables to respond to customer queries at its showrooms and hence builds customer loyalty (Dash, 2019). In studies reviewed, digital channels of marketing boosts integrated business efficiency especially with regards to marketing capacity, scale, scope, and financial performance (Rakshit et al., 2022b). Marketing activities that are helpful in improving customer perception are simply performed over online channels of marketing. For instance promotion and brand positioning could be done simply (Melović et al., 2020). This kind of online marketing promotion attract online traffic to the company site (L. Zhang & Erturk, 2022) and enhance click-through rate (CTR) which is the rate of click per impression and the conversion rate (CVR), rate of conversion per click (Huang & Liu, 2022) which are the very important digital marketing performance indicators. This in turn results in enhanced e-commerce firm performances and strengthen financial ability (Yang et al., 2015); (Peng & Tao, 2022) through superior firm performance, sales, profit & competitive advantage (Yadav et al., 2016). Growth in average monthly revenue, monthly order value (AOV), and items per order (IPO) (Kumar et al., 2019) were empirically evidenced. In the other side it also reduce

costs, increasing revenue, improving efficiency, stimulation innovation momentum (Daum et al., 2021; Peng & Tao, 2022). Ultimately such performance improvements yield improvements in offline and total profits in the long run (S. Zhang et al., 2019).

Gradually, such enhanced performance and productivity (Gaglio et al., 2022; Heredia et al., 2022) results in changes in the founders attitudes toward their business models and pivot their business models (Sadeghiani et al., 2022). In other words it positively improves firm's innovative performance if linked with international and related diversification (Xie et al., 2021). Sometimes innovation come out as the mediator between digital marketing adoption and firm performance (Gaglio et al., 2022). However, it was found to negatively impact firm's innovation when linked with overall business diversification (Xie et al., 2021); in some instances it results in intensification of competition retailers price and hence decline in profit (Shi et al., 2019); and hurts offline and total profits in the short run (Zhang et al., 2019).

On the other hand, the reduction of costs of transactions of service provider (Daum et al., 2021; Peng & Tao, 2022) effectively drive public engagement and nurtures quality organization-public relationships (Men, 2022). Some online platforms allow monitoring of services (tractors in sharing economy for instance) (Daum et al., 2021). Such close customer relationship management (CRM) helps firms to simply obtain support from business partners strengthened entrepreneurship and vice versa (Markovic et al., 2021; Soluk et al., 2022). Broadly speaking, digital marketing positively affects international business performance (Goldman, 2021). Such effects are assisting SMEs performance and success (Rakshit et al., 2022a) as well as the enable digitalization related sustainability in different businesses in emerging economies (Kunkel et al., 2022). However, the negative effects on business performance was seen in developing countries as evidenced by the findings of the study done in different locations (Goldman, 2021).

#### **4. DISCUSSION**

As digital marketing field of study was at its infancy stage in emerging and less developed nations generally, the theoretical framing and conceptualization was mainly skewed towards the literature in TAM (Dakduk et al., 2020); TOE (Khwaldeh, 2020); and unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT 2) model (Dakduk et al., 2020). However, none of them seems conclusive to see the maturity level as well as the complex relationships among the marketing factors in emerging economies in the digital era.

The contextual factors impacting digital marketing identified by the present review involves consumer's demographic characteristics (Duffett, 2017; Khwaldeh, 2020; Mahmoud et al., 2021); technology related skills and expertise (Ordovás et al., 2018); and experience (Duffett, 2017); behavioral factors and habit (Dakduk et al., 2020); entrepreneurial vision and personal commitment (Ordovás et al., 2018); perceptions of medium trust (Dakduk et al., 2020; Pratesi et al., 2021); usability (Mahmoud et al., 2021; Pratesi et al., 2021); enjoyment and satisfaction (Mahmoud et al., 2021); and perceived risk (Pratesi et al., 2021) affects use of digital channels at individual customer level. Dynamic digital capabilities (Heredia et al., 2022); management openness (Markovic et al., 2021); collaborative digitalization and networking ability (Kunkel et al., 2022; Rakshit et al., 2022a; Soluk et al., 2022); rebound effects (Kunkel et al., 2022); organizational resources (Rakshit et al., 2022a); organizational processes (Rakshit et al., 2022b); consumers browse behavior (Shi et al., 2019), information density (Khwaldeh, 2020) and exposure to the digital channels and data analytics (Sadeghiani et al., 2022) affected digital marketing.

Social media and social networking (Boon-long & Wongsurawat, 2015; Duffett, 2017; Mahmoud et al., 2021; Melović et al., 2020; Men, 2022; Noh et al., 2016; Ordovás et al., 2018; Rakshit et al., 2022a; Yadav et al., 2016; Zhang & Erturk, 2022); mobile marketing (Dakduk et al., 2020; Dash, 2019; Gaglio et al., 2022; Huang & Liu, 2022; Khwaldeh, 2020; Kumar et al., 2019; Men, 2022; Soluk et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2019); and use of online e-commerce platforms (*alibaba, T-mall, amazon, etc.*) (Jin, Zhangwen and Naichen, 2019; Zhang, Pauwels and Peng, 2019; Li, Ma and Bai, 2020; Ogbonnaya, Ogba and Emeka, 2020; Goldman, 2021; Pratesi *et al.*, 2021; Rakshit *et al.*, 2022b; Xu et al., 2022) are the main digital marketing tools emphasized in emerging and less developed nations.

As seen in the empirical evidences reviewed digital marketing primarily used for integrated marketing communication in emerging and developing economies firms (Boon-long & Wongsurawat, 2015; Huang & Liu, 2022; Jin et al., 2019; Khwaldeh, 2020; Li et al., 2020; Men, 2022; Noh et al., 2016; Ogbonnaya et al., 2020; Xu et al., 2022). Similarly, conventional marketing involves marketing mix elements starting from conceiving products and service and hence electronic products are the new normal besides digital pricing, promotion and online distribution (Marušić, 2019; Wang et al., 2009).

Consumer purchasing decisions were highly affected due to the use of digital marketing (Boon-long & Wongsurawat, 2015; Pratesi et al., 2021). However some of the studies try to see the gaps

in customer acceptance and satisfaction results of digital marketing in relation to age variation (Nunan & Di Domenico, 2019; Sivasankaran, 2017). Therefore, it will be very indispensable to know to whom to target using digital marketing.

Using digital marketing effectively drive public engagement and nurtures quality organization-public relationships (Men, 2022). This helps firms in customer acquisition, gaining favorable impressions and sales enhancement (Vieira et al., 2019) and helps to promptly respond to customer requests (Dash, 2019) as well as allow monitoring of services and collaborations with business partners and competitors (Daum et al., 2021; Markovic et al., 2021; Soluk et al., 2022). From the benefits of improved CRM, firms enjoy the advantages of improved customer perception /brand positioning & perception/ (Melović et al., 2020); customer loyalty and recommendations (Ogbonnaya et al., 2020); which attract online traffic to the company site (L. Zhang & Erturk, 2022); and enhance CTR and CVR (Huang & Liu, 2022). This further strengthen financial ability of the firm as empirically evidenced in recent studies (Peng & Tao, 2022).

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The main digital marketing tools emphasized and deployed in emerging and less developed countries are social media, mobile marketing, and use of online e-commerce platforms. But limited attention was given to other digital tools such as SEM, SEO, and PPC. Similarly, integrated marketing communication was mainly emphasized marketing task digitally performed in emerging and developing economies firms as evidenced in the reviewed studies though digital marketing channels have wider applicability to do marketing online. Due to internal contextual factors and specifically dynamic capabilities, management openness and the skill gap of the marketing managers the negative effects on business performance seen in developing countries in reviewed empirical evidences (Goldman, 2021) besides so many advantages. Digital marketing tasks when linked with overall business diversification were found to negatively impact firm's innovation (Xie et al., 2021). In some instances the intensification of online competition with the online market brings in decline of product price and profit (Shi et al., 2019); and hurts offline and total profits in the short run (S. Zhang et al., 2019). This might be as a result of the paucity of professionally designed specific actions and solutions that must be carried out to attract and retain users (García et al., 2019). Therefore, a priory market research is extremely desirable to adopt any digital marketing channel or tool to ensure its success (Makrides et al., 2020). Moreover the marketing

education needed to respond sharply to shifting capabilities and practices of digital marketing (Langan et al., 2019).

## 5.1 Limitations

The first limitation of this study pertains to the study objectives. This study aimed at identifying the contextual factors impacting digital marketing, the dominant familiar marketing practices over the digital channels and the consequences of adopting digital marketing in emerging and developing economies. Secondly, the studies included in the review are confined to four databases from which only open accessed empirical studies were included. Finally, the review was limited to thematic content analysis to organize the evidence from each study involved in this review.

## 5.2 Future Research Directions

Using digital marketing boosts integrated business efficiency especially with regards to marketing capacity, scale, scope, and financial performance. However, businesses in developing and emerging countries in empirical evidences such as Goldman (2021) indicated that they have not been fully enjoying the potential advantages. The reasons for such disparity were not adequately explored. Similarly, due to the dynamic nurture of the field of marketing in general and digital marketing specifically (Kannan & Li, 2017) the complex relationships among the marketing factors impacting digital marketing were not fully addressed in emerging and developing countries. Different authors borrowed underpinning theories and conceptual models from other fields to marketing management also. This implies redefining and re-conceptualization of digital marketing was needed for emerging and developing nation's contexts.

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