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## Digital Marketing Competence and Continuance Intention: Marketing Performance Mediates; Top Management Support Moderates Relationship

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### **Abstract**

*This study aims to analyze the influence of Digital Marketing Competence on Marketing Performance and Continuance Intention, the influence of Marketing Performance on Continuance Intention, and the role of Marketing Performance as a mediation variable and Top Management Support as a moderation variable in salespeople who operate MSME stores on the Shopee platform. The research uses a quantitative approach with a survey method. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire that was distributed online to respondents who actively manage MSME stores on Shopee and were directly involved in digital marketing activities, such as content creation, promotion, and utilization of Shopee's marketing features. Variable measurements use a five-point Likert scale. Data analysis was carried out using the Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) method which included the evaluation of measurement models and structural models, including mediation and moderation testing. The results of the study show that Digital Marketing Competence has a positive effect on Continuance Intention and has a strong influence on Marketing Performance. Marketing Performance has also been shown to have a positive effect on Continuance Intention and acts as a mediator in the relationship between Digital Marketing Competence and Continuance Intention. These findings indicate that digital marketing competencies not only increase the sustainability intention of using the platform directly, but also through improved marketing performance. In addition, Top Management Support does not have a direct effect on Continuance Intention, but is proven to strengthen the influence of Digital Marketing Competence on Continuance Intention.*

*Keywords: Digital Marketing Competence; Marketing Performance; Continuance Intention; Top Management Support*

### **1. Introduction**

Digital transformation has become a strategic issue in the development of MSMEs, especially in marketing activities [1]. The use of digital marketing through e-commerce platforms allows MSMEs to reach a wider market, increase cost efficiency, and accelerate interaction with customers [2]. The popularity of marketplace platforms such as Shopee shows that the adoption of digital marketing is no longer optional, but rather a primary need to maintain business competitiveness, especially in a dynamic and competitive digital business environment [3, 4]. However, the success of MSME digital marketing is not only determined by the use of the platform, but also depends on the digital marketing competence of salespeople who operate online stores. The digital competency gap can hinder the effective implementation of digital marketing strategies, thereby reducing marketing performance and weakening the sustainability of technology use [4, 5]. This condition shows the urgency to research the role of digital marketing competencies in improving marketing performance and encouraging continuance intention in MSME salespeople in the marketplace.

Digital marketing competence refers to the ability of individuals to manage digital technology-based marketing activities, including content creation, use of digital channels, use of platform features, and understanding data for decision-making [6]. The literature confirms that mastering digital marketing capabilities can create a competitive advantage and encourage the achievement of better marketing performance [3]. In addition, creativity in digital marketing and the ability to articulate brand value through digital strategies are also seen as competencies that contribute to improving marketing performance [7]. In the context of MSMEs, increasing digital marketing literacy and market orientation is an important prerequisite for actors to be able to meet customer expectations and maintain marketing performance [8].

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Furthermore, marketing performance is often used as an indicator of digital marketing success, which includes increased sales, customer growth, and promotional effectiveness. The achievement of positive marketing performance has the potential to form a continuance intention, which is the intention of individuals to continue to use and develop digital technology after experiencing its benefits [9, 10]. In the continuance intention literature, satisfaction and perceived value are often the mechanisms that explain why performance drives sustainable use [11]. In other words, good digital competencies will be more meaningful for the sustainability of platform use when these competencies are converted into real and perceived marketing results.

In addition, top management support is recognized as a crucial organizational factor in ensuring the sustainability of technology adoption through the provision of resources, training, and policy support [12]. In the context of implementing digital initiatives, top management support can increase the effectiveness of digital capabilities and encourage employee engagement in executing strategies. Therefore, top management support has the potential to play a role not only as a direct factor, but also as a reinforcer (moderator) that strengthens the impact of digital competence on the intention of sustainable use of technology.

Although research on digital marketing competence and marketing performance has grown, most studies still focus on large companies or at the organizational level in the aggregate [3]. Studies that place MSME salespeople as individual units of analysis, especially in the context of marketplaces such as Shopee, are still relatively limited. In addition, the relationship between digital competencies and sustainability intentions is often explained through perceived perception, satisfaction, and value, while studies that emphasize actual competencies as individual strategic capital still need to be strengthened [13]. On the other hand, a number of studies show that the value and satisfaction formed from digital marketing experiences can contribute to loyalty and sustainability intentions. From a theoretical perspective, many technology adoption studies rely on TAM and ECM frameworks that emphasize user perception, but relatively lack the actual competencies of individuals as resources [14]. In addition, top management support is more often tested as an independent variable, rather than as a moderation variable that can affect the strength of the relationship between digital competencies and sustainability intentions. In fact, the organizational literature emphasizes the role of management support as an enabler that can strengthen the relationship between capability/implementation and outcomes. Thus, there is a theoretical gap related to the interaction of individual factors (competencies) and organizational factors (management support) in explaining the sustainability of MSME digital marketing.

Based on these arguments, this study proposes a conceptual model that places marketing performance as a mediating variable between digital marketing competence and continuance intention. This approach departs from the view that digital competence does not automatically produce sustainability intentions, but needs to be realized first in marketing performance that is perceived by salespeople [9, 10]. In addition, this study integrates top management support as a moderation variable that strengthens the influence of digital marketing competence on continuance intention, as management support helps provide conditions that allow these competencies to be practiced consistently [15]. The research was conducted on MSME salespeople who operate stores on Shopee, one of the e-commerce platforms that provides various digital marketing features such as advertising, promotions, and analytics. The complexity of features and the level of competition in the marketplace require high digital competence so that marketing strategies run effectively and sustainably [16]. Thus, this context is relevant to examine how individual competencies, marketing performance, and managerial support interact in forming continuance intention.

This study aims to analyze the influence of digital marketing competence on marketing performance and continuance intention, examine the role of marketing performance mediation, and test the role of top management support moderation in the relationship between digital marketing competence and continuance intention in MSME salespeople at Shopee. Theoretically, this study contributes to the digital marketing literature and the sustainability of technology adoption by emphasizing individual competencies and reinforcement of management support. Practically, the results of the research are expected to be the basis for MSMEs in designing digital competency development programs and managerial support systems to improve marketing performance and digital business sustainability.

## 2. Research Methods

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method to test the influence of Digital Marketing Competence on Marketing Performance, the influence of Digital Marketing Competence on Continuance Intention, and the effect of Marketing Performance on Continuance Intention in salespeople who operate MSME

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stores at Shopee. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire that was distributed online to respondents who met the criteria, namely actively managing MSME stores on Shopee and being directly involved in digital marketing activities (for example, content creation, promotion, and use of Shopee marketing features). The measurement technique used a Likert scale of 1–5 (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) to capture respondents' perception of the indicators of each research variable. Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) because it is suitable for predictive model testing and causal relationships with latent constructs, including moderation effect testing. The analysis stage includes external model evaluation and inner model evaluation. To test the moderation of Top Management Support, an interaction construct (DMC × TMS) was created in the PLS model to see if the support of MSME management/owners strengthens or weakens the influence of Digital Marketing Competence on Continuance Intention.

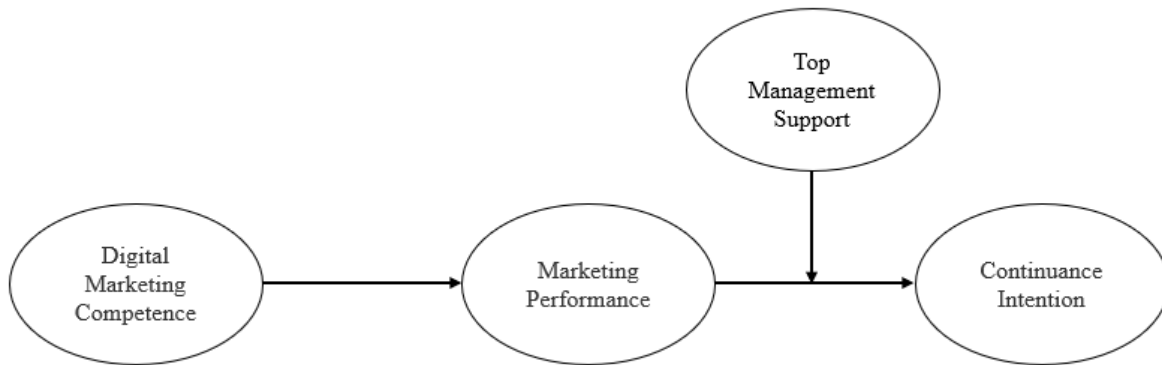


Figure. Conceptual framework

3. Results and Discussions

Results

Table 1. Variables in Demographics

Attributes	Items	Frequency	%
Gender	Man	160	64
	Woman	90	36
Age	< 30	70	28
	30–37	45	18
	38–45	80	32
Education	> 45	55	22
	Master’s Degree	215	86
	Doctor	35	14
Work experience	< 8	65	26
	8–13	170	68
	14–19	15	6
Marital status	Married	200	80
	Single	50	20

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the respondents involved in this study. Based on gender, the majority of respondents are men (160 respondents or 64%), while women account for 90 respondents (36%). In terms of age, most respondents are between 38–45 years old (80 respondents or 32%), followed by those under 30 years (28%), those aged over 45 years (22%), and respondents aged 30–37 years (18%). Regarding education level, most respondents hold a Master's degree (215 respondents or 86%), while 35 respondents (14%) have a Doctoral degree. Concerning work experience, the majority have 8–13 years of experience (170 respondents or 68%), followed by those with less than 8 years (26%) and 14–19 years (6%). Finally, in terms of marital status, most respondents are married (200 respondents or 80%), while 50 respondents (20%) are single.

Table 2. Validity and Reliability Test

	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted
Digital Marketing Competence (DMC)	DMC1	0,938	0,955	0,965	0,847
	DMC2	0,926			
	DMC3	0,902			
	DMC4	0,923			
	DMC5	0,912			
Marketing Performance (MP)	MP1	0,937	0,970	0,970	0,867
	MP2	0,925			
	MP3	0,907			
	MP4	0,945			
	MP5	0,941			
Continuance Intention (CI)	CI1	0,914	0,966	0,974	0,882
	CI2	0,940			
	CI3	0,956			
	CI4	0,932			
	CI5	0,952			
Top Management Support (TMS)	TMS1	0,922	0,946	0,958	0,821
	TMS2	0,897			
	TMS3	0,922			
	TMS4	0,877			
	TMS5	0,911			

Table 2 presents the results of the validity and reliability testing for all constructs in this study. Overall, the outer loadings of all measurement items are high (ranging from 0.877 to 0.956), indicating strong indicator reliability and supporting convergent validity. The reliability assessment also shows excellent internal consistency, where Cronbach's Alpha values for Digital Marketing Competence (0.955), Marketing Performance (0.970), Continuance Intention (0.966), and Top Management Support (0.946) all exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, and are further confirmed by high Composite Reliability values (0.965–0.974). In addition, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for DMC (0.847), MP (0.867), CI (0.882), and TMS (0.821) are all above 0.50, confirming that each construct explains a substantial proportion of variance in its indicators; therefore, the measurement model is considered valid and reliable for further SEM-PLS analysis.

Table 3. Discriminant validity test results HTMT

	1	2	3	4
1 Top management support				
2 Digital Marketing Competence	0,397			
3 Continuity Intention	0,364	0,792		
4 Marketing Performance	0,438	0,833	0,832	

Table 3 reports the discriminant validity assessment using the HTMT criterion. The HTMT values among the constructs range from 0.364 to 0.833, specifically between Top Management Support and Digital Marketing Competence (0.397), Top Management Support and Continuance Intention (0.364), Top Management Support and Marketing Performance (0.438), Digital Marketing Competence and Continuance Intention (0.792), Digital Marketing Competence and Marketing Performance (0.833), and Continuance Intention and Marketing Performance (0.832). Since all HTMT values are below the recommended threshold of 0.85, the results confirm that each construct is empirically distinct and the measurement model satisfies discriminant validity, indicating that the indicators measure their intended constructs without excessive overlap.

Table 4. R-squared and Q<sup>2</sup>

	R Square	Q <sup>2</sup>
Continuity Intention	0,705	0,894
Marketing Performance	0,642	

Table 4 presents the results of the coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) and predictive relevance (Q<sup>2</sup>) for the endogenous constructs. The R<sup>2</sup> value for Continuance Intention is 0.705, indicating that 70.5% of the variance in continuance intention is explained by Digital Marketing Competence, Marketing Performance, and Top Management Support, which reflects a strong explanatory power. Similarly, Marketing Performance has an R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.642, meaning that 64.2% of its variance is explained by Digital Marketing Competence, demonstrating substantial model fit. Furthermore, the Q<sup>2</sup> value of 0.894 for Continuance Intention is well above zero, confirming that the structural model has high predictive relevance and is capable of accurately predicting the endogenous construct.

Table 5. Hypothesis testing

Path	Original Sample	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values
Digital Marketing Competence > Continuity Intention	0,300	0,119	2,525	0,012
Career Satisfaction > Continuity Intention	0,482	0,117	4,104	0,000
Relationship Management > Marketing Performance	0,802	0,046	17,466	0,000
Perceived Organizational Support -> Continuance Intention	0,082	0,055	1,500	0,134
Relationship Management > Marketing Performance > Continuity Intention	0,386	0,095	4,069	0,000
Moderating Effect > Continuance Intention	0,143	0,052	2,744	0,006

The findings indicate that Digital Marketing Competence has a positive and significant effect on Continuance Intention ( $\beta = 0.300$ ;  $t = 2.525$ ;  $p = 0.012$ ). This result implies that higher competence in utilizing digital marketing tools and features on Shopee, such as managing promotional content, advertising, and customer engagement, increases sellers' intention to continue using the platform. When MSME sales operators possess strong digital marketing skills, they are more confident in managing their online stores and perceive Shopee as a platform that supports the sustainability of their business.

Furthermore, the results show that Marketing Performance has a positive and significant effect on Continuance Intention ( $\beta = 0.482$ ;  $t = 4.104$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). This indicates that better marketing outcomes, including increased sales, customer growth, and improved store visibility, encourage sellers to continue operating their MSME stores on Shopee. The analysis also confirms that Digital Marketing Competence has a strong and significant effect on Marketing Performance ( $\beta = 0.802$ ;  $t = 17.466$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), demonstrating that digital marketing skills play a crucial role in enhancing MSME performance. In addition, the mediation analysis shows that Marketing Performance significantly mediates the relationship between Digital Marketing Competence and Continuance Intention ( $\beta = 0.386$ ;  $t = 4.069$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), meaning that digital competence increases continuance intention not only directly but also indirectly through improved performance.

Regarding Top Management Support, the findings reveal that it does not have a significant direct effect on Continuance Intention ( $\beta = 0.082$ ;  $t = 1.500$ ;  $p = 0.134$ ). This suggests that managerial or owner support alone is insufficient to directly influence sellers' intention to continue using Shopee. However, the moderating analysis shows that Top Management Support significantly strengthens the relationship between Digital Marketing Competence and Continuance Intention ( $\beta = 0.143$ ;  $t = 2.744$ ;  $p = 0.006$ ). This indicates that when MSME owners or top management provide adequate support, such as resources, encouragement, and strategic direction, the

positive impact of digital marketing competence on sellers' intention to continue operating their Shopee stores becomes stronger.

## Discussion

Digital marketing competence has a positive effect on marketing performance in micro, small, and medium businesses, including salespeople who operate MSME stores on Shopee. Maximizing digital marketing capabilities can build a competitive advantage which ultimately improves marketing results, so that business actors who are more digitally competent tend to have higher marketing performance [17]. Creative and innovative digital marketing, especially in articulating brand values and communication strategies, contributes to improved marketing performance through customer engagement and sales growth [18]. Digital marketing competence is also related to the intention of sustainable use, namely the tendency of MSME salespeople to continue to use Shopee as the main platform [19]. The ability to utilize digital channels effectively improves the visibility and quality of interactions with customers, which drives loyalty and the tendency to continue using services [20]. Thus, when MSME sellers are able to run proper digital marketing, they are more likely to retain customers, feel the benefits of the platform, and have a stronger drive to continue using Shopee.

Marketing performance acts as an important driver for sustainable use intent because marketing performance reflects the tangible benefits felt from the marketing activities carried out [21]. User satisfaction is influenced by the perceived benefits of marketing activities, and that satisfaction then increases the intention to stay engaged or use the service on an ongoing basis [22, 23]. In the context of Shopee MSMEs, when marketing performance increases such as sales increase and customer reach expands, salespeople will be more confident that the use of Shopee is worth maintaining so that the intention of sustainable use also increases

## 4. Conclusion

This research shows that Digital Marketing Competence has an important role in increasing the Continuance Intention of MSME salespeople who operate stores on Shopee, either directly or indirectly through Marketing Performance. These findings confirm that the ability to manage digital marketing activities, such as content creation, promotion, and interaction with customers, contributes to improved marketing performance which ultimately drives the sustainability of the use of e-commerce platforms. In addition, Top Management Support has been proven to strengthen the relationship between Digital Marketing Competence and Continuance Intention, which shows that the support of MSME owners or management plays an important role in maximizing the impact of digital competencies on the sustainability of business operations on digital platforms. Although it provides theoretical and practical contributions, this study has several limitations, including the use of data based on respondents' perceptions and the cross-sectional design that has not been able to capture the dynamics of changes over time. The practical implications of this study emphasize the importance of developing digital marketing competencies through continuous training and active managerial support in the management of MSME stores in e-commerce. The next research is suggested to use a longitudinal approach, expand the research context to other platforms or sectors, and add additional relevant variables to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that affect continuance intention in the context of digital MSMEs.

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