

# DIGITAL MARKETING ADOPTION AMONG SMES IN JORDAN: A MIXED- METHOD APPROACH

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## ABSTRACT

This article aims at determining the level of digital marketing adoption and investigating the essential requirement of digital marketing adoption among Jordanian SMEs companies. A mix method approach was adopted to achieve the objectives of the study, consisted of an online survey questionnaire followed by semi-structured interviews. Two hundred seventy-nine questionnaires were collected, and fifteen interviews were conducted. The quantitative data from the questionnaire were analysed using SPSS 2.5 software and the qualitative data of each interview have been analysed using thematic and textual analysis. The finding revealed that digital marketing adoption is still in its early stage of adoption. The majority of SMEs are limited their usage to social media and email marketing as a common tool for digital marketing. Moreover, lack of human skills, awareness of what digital marketing and technological tools that drives digital marketing were found to be the dominant factors to adopt digital marketing among SMEs companies in Jordan.

**Keywords:** *Digital Marketing, Social Media, SMEs, Jordan, Mixed- Method Approach.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Digital marketing is new concept that attracts many businesses nowadays. Businesses shifted their focus to use the internet and electronic media to support their marketing activities and as a result digital marketing is growing rapidly. Therefore, digital marketing has shaped the way customers and business communicate, share information, buy, and sell from each other. Nowadays, with the increase number of internet users and availability of computer devices such as smartphones and usage of social platforms have been a useful means that influences customer behaviour and experience [28]. This phenomenon has unfolded the essential of online presence for companies to realise the importance of digital transformation and even for its survival in this digital era. According to [2] if a company cannot be found online, it does not exist. In fact [30] pointed out that 73 percent of search engine users never look beyond the first page of returned results. Therefore, establishing online presence have become a priority aspect for many businesses to consider in their

strategy. In fact, it is a significant factor that detainment the success of any business that wants to stay competitive, gain more customers and expand their market share [2]. Small business enterprises (SMEs) play a significant role in the global economic [1]. Digital marketing and social media provide opportunities for SMEs to expand their market share, attract new customers, retain existing customers more efficiently, building customer relationships, enhancing service quality delivery, reducing costs, and enhancing internal and external communication [2]. However, despite the opportunity's technology and digital marketing offer, SMEs is still lagging behind in adopting such technologies. Some are still at the initial staged adoption, and not yet progressing beyond email and simple informative websites [29]. In the Middle East generally and Jordan specifically, there are limited studies that investigated digital marketing adoption [1], [3], [4]. Therefore, there is a need to examine and explore the current adoption of digital marketing among SMEs in Jordan for future enhancement.

## 2. SIGNIFICANT OF THE STUDY

With the technology revolution and advent of internet, digital marketing is considered an important marketing tool. Firms and businesses around the world are adopting information technology and internet to market their products and adoption has gained the attention of researchers and practitioners [27]. Primarily, this study aims at capturing the level of digital marketing adoption among SMEs in Jordan. Digital marketing is still not well-established concept in Jordan and there are limited studies that investigated digital marketing practices and tools [1]. Therefore, there is a need for further studies that drawbacks the ambiguity of digital marketing practices. Achieving this requires an assessment of status of digital marketing practices among SMEs. In doing so this study takes into account the challenges and key drivers, which in turn provides a comprehensive understanding of digital marketing adoption among SMEs. Collectively, this study highlights the significance of digital marketing aspect on businesses marketing activities and relationships with customers, suggesting the need for additional attention being paid to this key research field of digital marketing in the future. Thus, this study seeks to answer the following questions: what are the main dimensions that form the concept of digital marketing? and what are the required steps companies should follow to successfully adopt digital marketing?

## 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Internet and information technology have created new opportunities for companies to adopt modern digital marketing tools way to promote their products through several marketing channels [5]. Digital marketing is defined as the marketing activities that are over the internet which aims to promote products and services to identified target customers [6]. [7] described digital marketing as digital technologies that form channels to market and to achieve corporate goals through meeting and exceeding customer. Furthermore, digital marketing refers to the new attitude and modern realistic involvement with the marketing of goods, services, information and even ideas via the internet and other electronic means [8].

Traditional marketing such as TV, Print, and Radio are expensive marketing tools that SMEs cannot usually afford whereas large businesses have a large marketing budget and they can easily invest in such marketing tools. Therefore, the characteristics of Digital Marketing including the ability to target right customers, cost efficiency and accessibility and affordability have attracted many small-medium enterprises companies (SMEs) to use several digital marketing channels to engage with their customers [9]. Moreover, digital marketing has become an important marketing tool to be considered in the organisations strategic marketing plan [10]. According to [8], digital marketing strategies include many benefits to create communication relationships between firms and their customers in online environments. Digital marketing has helped customers to engage and allowed them to interact with the organisation brand through servicing and delivery of digital channels. Furthermore, it helped companies to promote their products and services, generate sales, and increase the visibility of advertised products and services [11].

The previous assessment of technology adoption in Jordan has revealed that the country scores adequately high in terms of technical and professional preparedness. It, however, lacks the social impetus to match its actual adoption with its technical infrastructure [12]. In Arab countries including Jordan, the usage of digital marketing among customer and companies are very few [13]. Furthermore, [1] stated that SMEs in Jordan are still at lower stages of digital marketing adoption due to several factors such as a lack of top management support, lack of staff skills low perception of security and privacy, lack of trust, legal practices, slow site performance and lack of awareness amongst decision makers in Jordanian SMEs. Moreover, [14], claimed that Arab websites, including Jordanian websites, have a major problem in terms of design; most of the websites are misleading and important information is usually not displayed. Therefore, this will certainly negatively affect the customers to build relationships with companies. As simple as that information would be, their existence will be important for the companies to promote their brand and products.

According to [15], digital marketing includes many tools that are essential communication methods for both customers and companies. Companies are varying in adopting those tools depending on what is best fits their purpose and their business model. E-mail marketing is one of the common tools that digital marketing offer. According to [6], e-mail marketing is an essential and cost-effective tool that provide customers with relevant information about the company's products and brand. In Jordan, e-mail marketing was found the most commonly used digital marketing tool among SMEs [1]. Social media is another tool that allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content [16]. Customers adopting Social Media to communicate, search for products or brands and exchange ideas [17]. According to [18] and [19], In Jordan, the popularity of social media websites has grown enormously, and it has become the main purpose that Jordanians connect to the Internet. The average age of Facebook users in Jordan with over one million users is from 18-24, followed by 25-34 age brackets". Therefore, this would create a huge opportunity for many SMEs to target with these ages.

#### 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section provides the methodology applied in the current study. It consists of the two phase's quantities approach using online-based survey and qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews. Mixed method approach which is based on an explanatory or exploratory will use a sequential design which means that either the quantitative or qualitative data will be collected first then the other data will be collected [20]. The research design is a plan, structure, and procedures of investigation that used in data collecting to obtain answers to the research questions and to achieve the research aims and objectives [21]. This research used the explanatory design, the quantitative data are collected first, and the qualitative data are generally collected after the quantitative data and are meant to serve the purpose of providing explanations for the results of the quantitative data. The first phase used the explanatory to investigate the level of digital marketing adoption among SMEs in Jordan. In this phase, the researchers

adopted a descriptive research design using empirical data which was gathered using a questionnaire. The exploratory research design was used in the second phase to gain in-depth information on the problem understudy. Figure 1 illustrates the research design adopted in this research.

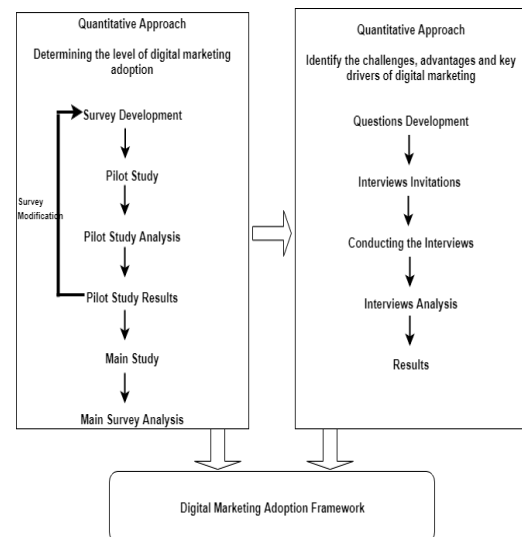


Figure 1: Research Design

#### 4.1 Population and Sampling

This study was divided into two sections. The first phase includes empirical data, which was collected through an online-based survey using Monkey Survey. Specifically, a survey questionnaire was used to gather data to explore the current adoption of digital marketing among SMEs in Jordan. Prior conducting the surveys, ten lecturers and professionals reviewed the questions who are specialized in digital marketing and e-business discipline in order to avoid any ambiguity in the questions and to make sure the questions are appropriate to meet the research objectives. Hence, a few changes were made based on their suggestions. A pilot survey was randomly conducted on five SMEs in Jordan. Based on the resulted obtained from the pilot study, the questions were found reliable to conduct the large-scale survey. The survey was sent to 500 companies that are registered on the Jordanian Ministry of Industry and Trade and Supply as SMEs. A total of 365 questionnaires were returned. Out of these 365 questionnaires, 86 were returned incomplete. Thus, 279 questionnaires were finally used for further analysis. This sample size is considered adequate for the analysis and is comparable to response

rates suggested by [22]. The demographic data of the respondents are reported in Table 1.

Table 1: Survey Demographic Data.

		Frequency	Percent
Industry	Manufacturing	32	11.5
	Retail/ Hospitality	29	10.4
	Retail/ FMCG	112	40.1
	IT/ Communication	43	15.4
	Professional/ Services	30	10.8
	Education/ Training	21	7.5
	Other	12	4.3
	Total	279	100.0
Company Size	Micro n <10	44	15.8
	Small 10< n>50	95	34.1
	Medium <50 n>250	110	39.4
	Large n>250	30	10.8
	Total	279	100.0
Years in Business	>1	35	12.5
	1 <5	99	35.5
	5 <10	93	33.3
	<10	52	18.6
	Total	279	100.0
Region	Amman	176	63.1
	Irbid	65	23.3
	Zarqa	38	13.6
	Total	279	100.0

A qualitative research approach was adopted in the second phase. This approach was used to provide a deep understanding and to identify the challenges, advantages and key drivers of digital marketing among SMEs in Jordanian. According to [20] and [26] qualitative approach was proved to be useful in obtaining valid data and providing a comprehensive and in- deep understanding of the phenomena. Therefore, the researcher used semi-structured interviews to collect data and used thematical analysis to analyse the data. A total of twenty-three interviews were conducted with SMEs managers. The researcher firstly contacted the targeted firms to obtain the required approval to conduct the study. At this stage, the researcher had to send

all the information about the study including the interview questions and information sheet. Hence, the contacted firm contacted the researcher to set the time, date, location of the interview, and the name of the participant who will be involved in the study. Finally, the researcher conducted the interviews on the participant's workplace at a specific time. Data Analysis and Results. Table 2 shows the interviews participants.

Table 2: Interviews Participants.

Number	Role	Interviewee code	Number of Interviewees
1	Marketing Manager	MM1	1
2	CEO	CO1	1
3	Marketing Manager	MM2	1
4	CEO	CEO2	1
5	CEO	CEO3	1
6	CEO	CEO4	1
7	IT Manager	ITM1	1
8	CEO	CEO5	1
9	Sales Manager	SM1	1
10	Export Manager	EM1	1
11	CEO	CEO6	1
12	IT Manager	ITM2	1
13	Marketing Manager	MM3	1
14	Marketing Manager	MM4	1
15	CEO	CEO7	1
16	Marketing Officer	MO1	1
17	Marketing Manager	MM5	1
18	Sales Manager	SM2	1
19	IT Manager	ITM3	1
20	IT Manager	ITM4	1
21	CEO	CEO8	1
22	Marketing Manager	MM6	1
23	Sales Manager	SM3	1

After obtaining the required approval, the researcher visited the participants in their

workplace at a specific time. Each of the participants was interviewed individually. The researcher started all interviews by introducing himself, his research, and the purpose of this interview. These were followed by asking the interviewees for personal information including their names, jobs, and experience. The interviewees were notified that the information that will be taken from these interviews would be handled confidentially. The duration of each interview conducted was half an hour and the questions were open-ended. All interviews were recorded. The analysis of the interviews involved various steps. Firstly, the recorded interviews were transcribed and typed. This step was achieved by listening to the recordings and produced a transcript.

## 4.2 Analysis and Results

### 4.2.1 Survey Analysis and Findings

#### 4.2.1.1 Online Presence

Based on the finding of the survey, the results on table 3 revealed that the most majority of participated companies own a website that represents them online. However, only 34 percent of those companies have an e-commerce website that enables them to sell their products and interact with their customers. This rate presents the level of e-commerce adoption among SMEs, where SMEs in Jordan are still at lower stages of e-commerce adoption due to several factors such as a lack of a legal framework and lack of awareness amongst decision makers in Jordanian SMEs [23],[12]. Despite having an e-commerce website, only 11 percent of those companies accept online payment with a majority form of cash on delivery oriented. While credit and debit cards were available in Jordan, people still considered to be cash driven [24],[18]. According to [7], a user-friendly informative and widely accessible website creation is one of the basic and foremost tasks in digital marketing.

Table 3: Online Presence

		Frequency	Percent
Do you own a company website	Yes	210	75.3
	No	69	24.7
	Total	279	100.0
Do you sell online using your website?	Yes	96	34.4
	No	183	65.6
	Total	279	100.0
Do you accept payment online?	Yes	32	11.5
	No	247	88.5
	Total	279	100.0
Model of Payments	Cash	61	21.9
	Credit and Debit Card	16	5.7
	Cash and debit or credit	19	6.8
	Not Applicable	183	65.6
	Total	279	100.0

#### 4.2.1.2 Digital Marketing Usage

In order to capture the current adoption of digital marketing tools among Jordanian SMEs, the participants were asked to demonstrate their use of most common digital marketing tools. The results in table 4 indicate that the vast majority of SMEs are using Email Advertisement to promote their products and services. In addition, Social Media Marketing (SMM) were also commonly used as a digital marketing tool. Due to the sudden increase in population in Jordan, and the high demand for the products and services, business in Jordan started to use technology, mainly social media, to facilitate and promote their products and services. According to [25] In online business, social commerce is the most recent advancement in terms of the innovation of information and communication technology. As a result, Jordanians have become more socially engaged. [19] and [12] stated that Jordanian online users are engaged in so-called social media e-commerce, where the main social media applications are used for the exchange of products and services. This perhaps explains the wide usage of social media marketing among SMEs. On the other hand, tools such as SEO, SEA, SMS, and mobile advertisement were received a lower percentage of usage. These tools are important

aspects when it comes to digital marketing, several researchers such as [31],[32],[33],[39] have proven that using digital marketing tools such as SEO AND SEA for the purpose of advertisement are getting more new customers than the companies using traditional marketing methods. However, these tools are associated with having an e-commerce website which the majority did not have. Furthermore, they require specific technical skills that most of SMEs are lack of.

Table 4: Digital Marketing Usage

		Frequency	Percent
Search Engine Optimization (SEO)	Yes	14	5.0
	No	265	95.0
	Total	279	100.0
Social Media Marketing (SMM)	Yes	193	69.2
	No	86	30.8
	Total	279	100.0
Search Engine Advertising (SEA)	Yes	11	3.9
	No	268	96.1
	Total	279	100.0
Mobile Advertisement	Yes	4	1.4
	No	275	98.6
	Total	279	100.0
Email Advertisement	Yes	263	94.3
	No	16	5.7
	Total	279	100.0
Email Newsletters	Yes	108	38.7
	No	171	61.3
	Total	279	100.0
SMS	Yes	40	14.3
	No	239	85.7
	Total	279	100.0

The results of the interviews have identified a key elements of digital marketing adoption. Therefore, three themes were identified and classified during the analysis. Those themes are challenges, advantages, and key drivers of

digital marketing adoption. Table 5 presents the captured themes.

Table 5: Interviews Captured Themes

Challenges	Advantages	Key Drivers
Lack of Management support	Minimizing the cost	Investment in Technology
Lack of staff skills	Time-Saving	Staff training
Security and Privacy	Instance Feedback	Awareness
Lack of Trust	Market Expansion	Budget Allocation
Legal Practices	New products launching	Strategy Planning
Email Spam		
Non-Applicable business model		

### 4.3.2 Interviews Analysis and Findings

#### 4.3.2.1 Challenges of Digital Marketing

Similar to any innovation, the adoption of digital marketing faces many challenges in most companies especially SMEs. The analysis of the interviews revealed that digital marketing still not taking off due to a number of challenges. Those challenges were captured and pointed out as shown in table 6. Lack of management support was noted to be a challenge for some SMEs. Despite the digital marketing advantages, Marketing and IT managers mostly claimed that the top management does not usually give a priority to digital marketing. As it can be seen in table 6 the SEO interviewee do not consider this issues as a challenge for digital marketing adoption. [34] argued companies adopt a new innovation only if it provides significantly better benefits than existing once. Furthermore, top managerial understanding of perceived benefits of a new technology increases the probability of the allocation of the managerial, financial, and technological resources necessary for adoption [35]. According to [36] the positive relationship between technology motivation and technology adoption is strengthened in the presence of a favorable management. Business owners with a solid knowledge of technology were better able to adopt new technology and implement it in ways that ensured the achievement of strategic goals [2]. However, a recent study conducted by [1]

found that lack of management support is still one of the major barriers for information technology adoption in Jordan. Furthermore, the majority of the participants believed that lack of staff skills to use such tool is a common challenge facing most of the companies. ITM2: *“even if we adopted digital marketing, we do not have the required skills to use it. As most of us don’t have a computer competency”*.

Except for IT managers who may have some knowledge of technology, the majority of participants still have an issue with security and trust when it comes to online services such as digital marketing. They believed using digital marketing will expose much information to the public and they will be vulnerable to fraud or trusting the competitors who may get access to their customer's database. [25] highlighted that trust is the foundation of successful long-term relationships, especially in online context where trust is important due to the considerable levels of uncertainty and risk associated with digital environments.

Therefore, raising awareness among customers and business is an important aspect to build a mutual trust between customers and business. CEO6: *“The problem with digital marketing is that our information will be published online, and we may not have a control over who may get access to this information”*

Moreover, email spam which was highlighted by mainly marketing manager and offers who think using email marketing as a digital tool is not often effective, as marketing or promotional emails sent to customers are usually considered as spam email. Through evolving technologies such as digital marketing, it will become increasingly possible to generate highly accurate, detailed, and relevant customer data for more effective targeting. However, many in the businesses believe that unless the spam problem is conquered, email marketing will never achieve its potential.

*“Although we are continuously using emails form marking purposes, but we found it a useful tool as the emails go directly to the junk”*.

Table 6: Challenges of Digital Marketing

Challenges	Interviewee Code																							
	MM1	CEO1	MM2	CEO2	CEO3	CEO4	ITM1	CEO5	SM1	EM1	CEO6	ITM2	MM3	MM4	CEO7	MO1	MM5	SM2	ITM3	ITM4	CEO8	MM6	SM3	
Lack of Management Support	x		x				x			X		x	x	X		x			x	x			x	
Lack of staff skills	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	X	x	x		X	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
Security and Privacy	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	X			x		x						x		x	x
Lack of Trust	x	x			x		x			X			x	X	x	x	x		x	x			x	x
Legal Practices		x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x	x			x		x		x				
Email Spam	x		x				x					x	x	X		x	x		x	x			x	
Non-Applicable business model						x									x					x				

4.3.2.2 Advantages of Digital Marketing

As technology continues to evolve, companies have become increasingly rely on digital transformation. The benefits of digital marketing also become more essential for many businesses. However, perceived benefits depends on the adoption motivation through strategic implementation of such new innovation, and it is often determined by companies understanding of how this technology can benefit them [37]. According to the interviews results, SMEs acknowledged the advantages of using digital marketing over traditional marketing. As illustrated in table 7 the majority of the participants believed that digital marketing is more cost effective as it replaced costly advertising channels such as television and radio. According to [6] the cost factor is the main reason for digital marketing adoption.

CEO3: *“We spend a lot on marketing activities, but most turned to big failure. And I think if we used digital marketing for our marketing we would get better results with less cost”*

Time-saving is another element that was highlighted by most of the interviewees as an advantage of using digital marketing. However, only 10 interviewees stated that instate feedback is an advantage. This shows that most of SMEs are not fully aware of what digital marketing may offer.

With Instance feedback companies do not have to wait for a long time before their

marketing campaign results start to turn up. Therefore, instance feedback gives the opportunity to take the quick action and necessary steps to improve any particular advertisement. [38] stated that the goal of midern marketing is to get direct feedback and reviews from customers. On the other hand, all participants have confirmed that digital marketing will give the opportunity to expand their market and market share.

MM5: *“Adopting digital marketing will definitely expand our market as it is accessible to the global customers”*.

EM1: *“I believe Digital marketing will give us higher exposure as our advertisement will reach to the entire world”*.

Unexpectedly, new products launching was stated by all interviewees as an important advantage that digital marketing offers. Launching a product to a global audience has become simple and cost-effective especially through social media. Customers can perceive the benefit of the new product and know everything about it before even they purchase it. According to MM2 *“We shifted our focus to use social media when it comes to new product launching, the more our customers share and like our new product we can estimate their acceptance and the sales we might have ”*. Another interviewee stated that

SM3: *“Using social media for the new product has helped us to promote and sell this new product to our clients easily, especially who flowed us on facebook as they knew about the product before we reached them”*.

Table 7: Advantages Of Digital Marketing

Advantages	Interviewee Code																							
	MM1	CEO1	MM2	CEO2	CEO3	CEO4	ITM1	CEO5	SM1	EM1	CEO6	ITM2	MM3	MM4	CEO7	MO1	MM5	SM2	ITM3	ITM4	CEO8	MM6	SM3	
Minimizing the cost	x		x		x	x	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	
Time Saving	x		x		x		x	x	x	X		x	x	X		x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
Instance Feedback	x		x				x				x	x		X			x		x	x		x		
Market Expansion	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
New products lunningg	x	x	x	x	x		x	x		X	x	x	x	X	x	x		x	x		x		x	x



**4.3.2.3 Digital Marketing Key Drivers**

The success of digital marketing is driven by the level of commitments that are given to invest in such technology. Therefore, it is important to understand the digital environment by acknowledging the benefits associated. Furthermore, analysis of capabilities such as existing systems and human resources are vital to ensure the success of digital marketing adoption. The results of the interviews analysis in table 8 revealed that investment in technology is a crucial element for digital marketing adoption. CEO8 stated, “to adopt digital marketing, we must have the appropriate systems that fit our business model in place”. Also, MM6 pointed out “It is important to use all marketing channels in our marketing activities, as the more we use the better sale we will have”. In light with the challenges results mentioned above, all interviewees believed that staff training will support the adoption of digital marketing.

CEO5: “Even if we adopted digital marketing, we still need to train our marketing and IT staff how to use this technology in effective way”.

ITM1: “Digital marketing involves many technical issues like using SEO and PPC. Therefore, we need skilled people who can manage this technology”

Moreover, it is important for any businesses to be aware of what is digital marketing is all about. Failing to do so might limit the level of adoption. Therefore, in order to effectively

adopt digital marketing, business should acknowledge the different tools digital marketing consists of, and the purpose of using each tool. This will help to determine what digital marketing channel will fit the business model. According to MM1 “digital marketing is complex technology, that’s why we need to be aware what exactly we need to know before we start jumping from one channel to another and in the end, we fail to achieve our goals”. Additionally, the majority of interviewees except some CEO’s highlighted that allocating an adequate budget for digital marketing will ensure the continuous adoption. According to [2] lack of financial resources is common issue that hinders the growth of SMEs, and therefore it is considered as a barrier to the adoption and use of digital marketing. Although digital marketing has no variable costs, the fixed costs may still be prohibitive for many companies. However, the results show most businesses do not have the budget to invest in digital marketing. Therefore, businesses need to allocate in their financial plan an adequate budget to spend on digital marketing activities. MM3 stated that “We normally don’t have a specific budget for our digital marketing activities, we sometimes request some fund for our social media promotions but most of the time it gets rejected”. Finally, the interview results pointed out that including digital marketing in business strategy is important to ensure its implementation and adoption.

Table 8: Digital Marketing Key Drivers

Key Drivers	Interviewee Code																							
	MM1	CEO1	MM2	CEO2	CEO3	CEO4	ITM1	CEO5	SM1	EM1	CEO6	ITM2	MM3	MM4	CEO7	MO1	MM5	SM2	ITM3	ITM4	CEO8	MM6	SM3	
Investment in Technology	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	X	x	X	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Staff training	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Awareness	x	x		x		x	x		x		x	x		X	x	x	x		x	x	x	x		
Budget Allocation	x	x	x				x		x	X	x	x	x	X		x	x		x	x		x		
Strategy Planning	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

## 5. DIGITAL MARKETING ADOPTION FRAMEWORK

The success of digital marketing adoption among SMEs in Jordan depends on many factors in which if implemented companies will gain many benefits. The

results of this research have helped to develop a digital marketing adoption framework that will provide SMEs with the essential requirements that are needed to successfully adopt digital marketing. The proposed framework is illustrated in figure 2.

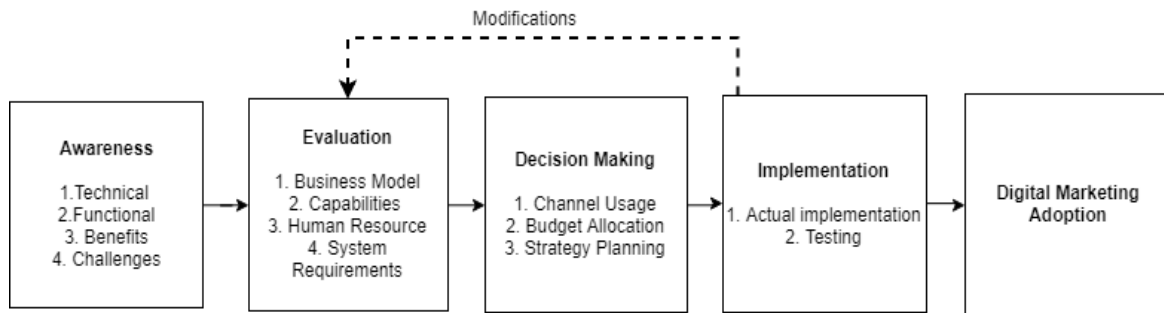


Figure 2: Digital Marketing Adoption Framework

Awareness is an important factor in digital marketing adoption, companies need to be aware of various elements before adopting digital marketing. Awareness of the benefits that digital marketing offers will help the choice of appropriate digital marketing channel that the company would like to invest in. Furthermore, being aware of the challenges associated will help to wave any challenges during implementation. In addition, awareness of technical and functional is also important for successful implementation. The next step SMEs need to evaluate their internal capabilities and systems requirements that fit their business model. Hence, decision-makers should include the digital marketing in their strategy and allocate a specific budget for adoption. Finally, implementing digital marketing and applying digital marketing tools such as PPC, SEO, and social media and make a required modification according to the business model.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This research investigated the current level of digital marketing adoption among SMEs in Jordan. Using a mixed method approach, data were collected from SMEs companies in Jordan. The analysis of the survey shows that the majority of the participant own an informative website and not using e-commerce in their business. Therefore, they are limited in using any online payment form.

Furthermore, the results indicate that digital marketing tools are not widely adopted by SMEs. Their adoption is limited to email marketing and social media.

The results of the interviews have emphasised common themes of digital marketing. Lack of training, security, and legal practices were found the most challenges that hurdle digital marketing adoption among SMEs in Jordan. On the other hand, the participants acknowledged that advantages of adopting digital marketing in their organisations. The interviewees believed that digital marketing will help to minimise the cost, save time, help to expand their mark and market share, and launching the new products easily. However, in order to ensure a successful adoption SMEs need to include digital marketing in their plan in advance by allocating adequate budget for digital marketing and investment in technology that facilitate their implementation. Finally, the framework proposed in this paper contributes to the IS body of research by providing guidance for SMEs to adopt digital marketing.

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