

MARKETING STRATEGIES IN IMPROVING THE PERFORMANCE OF CULINARY MSMEs: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

This study examines the role of marketing strategies in improving the performance of culinary MSMEs using a Systematic Literature Review approach. Scientific publications from 2020–2025 were collected through Publish or Perish and Google Scholar and analyzed using bibliometric methods and TF-IDF–based text mining. The findings indicate that marketing strategies, particularly digital marketing, marketing innovation, and market orientation, significantly enhance MSME competitiveness and performance. However, research linking marketing strategies to long-term business sustainability remains limited. This study provides a conceptual foundation for developing adaptive and sustainable marketing strategies for culinary MSMEs.

Keywords: *Marketing Strategy, Culinary MSMEs, MSME Performance, Digital Marketing, Systematic Literature Review*

1. Introduction

The increasingly competitive and digitalized global business environment has placed Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), particularly in the culinary subsector, under significant structural pressure to maintain business sustainability and performance. MSMEs play a strategic role in the economy through their contribution to job creation, income distribution, and the strengthening of national economic structures. However, the persistently high failure rate indicates that many MSMEs face serious challenges in sustaining their businesses. Approximately 50% of small enterprises reportedly fail to survive beyond their first five years of operation, reflecting weak strategic foundations in business management (Ogunmuyiwa, 2022). In this context, marketing strategies are regarded as a key instrument in enhancing MSME performance, competitiveness, and sustainability (Jummai, 2023); (Fajarika et al., 2024)).

A major issue highlighted in the literature is the disparity between the vast opportunities generated by digital transformation and the actual capacity of MSMEs to implement marketing strategies effectively and sustainably. Developments in information technology, the expansion of social media, and the adoption of e-commerce offer significant opportunities for culinary MSMEs to expand market reach, enhance customer interaction, and strengthen brand positioning. Numerous studies indicate that the use of digital media, marketing innovation, and market orientation are positively associated with improved MSME performance and competitiveness (Hussain et al., 2025); (Timsina, 2024)). Nevertheless, many MSME actors continue to face limitations in digital literacy, managerial capacity, and the ability to integrate marketing strategies into comprehensive business decision-making. This condition creates a paradox in which growth opportunities are widely available, yet performance improvements among culinary MSMEs remain inconsistent and

unsustainable (Pratama et al., 2024)(Insani et al., 2025)).

An analysis of literature from the past five years reveals several research gaps that underscore the urgency of conducting a systematic review. First, research on MSME marketing strategies remains fragmented and dominated by localized or sector-specific case studies, limiting the conceptual generalization of effective marketing strategy patterns, particularly for culinary MSMEs (Jummai, 2023)(Fajarika et al., 2024)). Second, although digitalization and marketing innovation are major research themes, most studies emphasize short-term outcomes and have yet to thoroughly examine the relationship between marketing strategies and long-term financial sustainability (Fajarika et al., 2024; Hussain et al., 2025). Third, studies that integrate business environment factors, organizational characteristics, and MSME adaptive capabilities into a holistic marketing strategy framework remain relatively limited, especially within the culinary subsector (Timsina, 2024)

Based on these issues and research gaps, this study aims to develop a comprehensive conceptual mapping of marketing strategies in improving the performance of culinary MSMEs through a Systematic Literature Review approach. The primary objective is to identify, classify, and synthesize concepts, approaches, and marketing strategy practices that have been proven to contribute to improved MSME performance. In addition, this study seeks to uncover unresolved research gaps, particularly regarding the relationship between marketing strategies and the financial sustainability of creative economy MSMEs in the culinary subsector. Furthermore, the study aims to formulate future research agendas relevant to the development of MSME marketing theory and the formulation of more adaptive, competitive, and sustainable managerial practices and policies.

Thus, this study is expected to make a significant scholarly contribution by enriching conceptual understanding of the strategic role of marketing in culinary MSMEs, while also providing a strong empirical and conceptual foundation for the formulation of more effective MSME development strategies amid the evolving digital economy.

2. Method

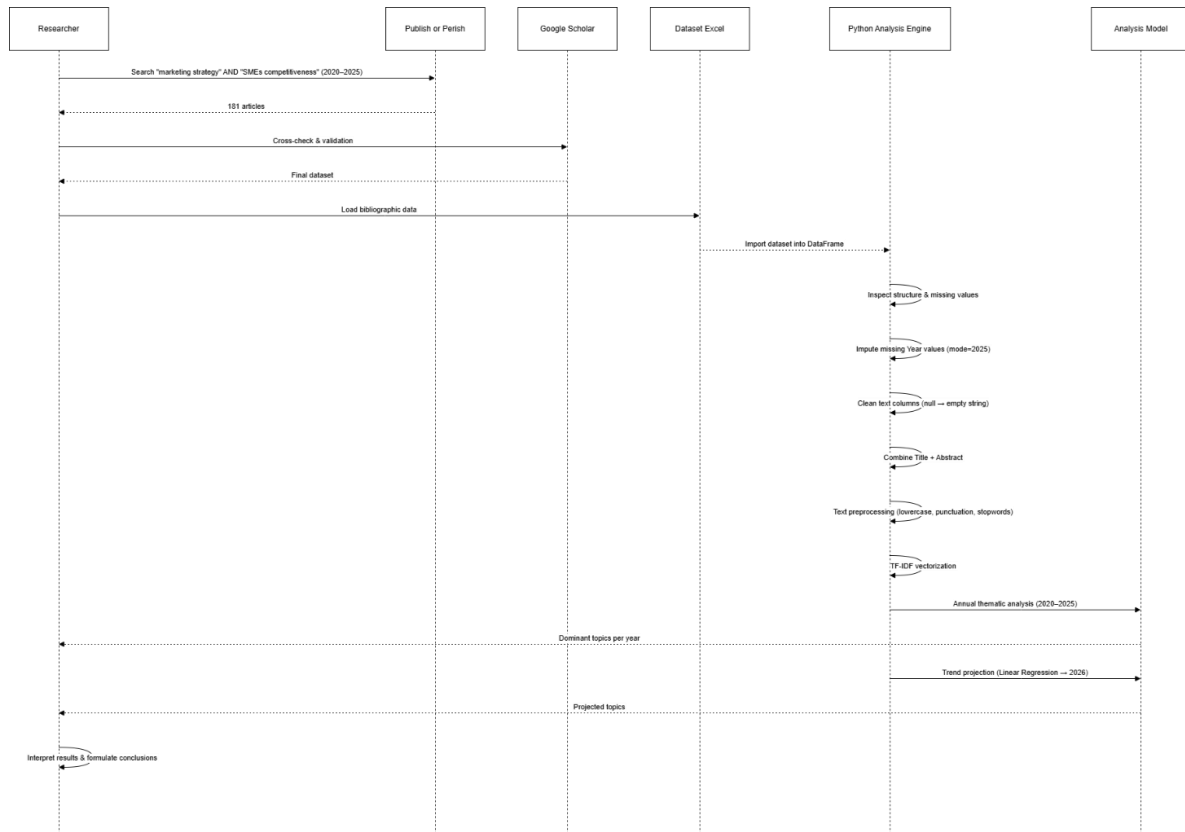
This study employs a bibliometric-based Systematic Literature Review approach combined with text analysis to map the development of research topics related to marketing strategy and MSME competitiveness. The research process began with data collection using the Publish or Perish application, applying the keywords “marketing strategy” AND “SMEs competitiveness” with a publication year range of 2020–2025, resulting in 181 scientific articles. These sources were subsequently validated through Google Scholar to ensure quality and relevance (Hussain et al., 2025; Pratama et al., 2024)

All metadata were organized in Excel format and imported into the Python environment using the pandas library for preliminary inspection. Data cleaning was conducted by examining dataset structure, data types, and missing values. The Year column, which contained 20 missing values, was imputed using the mode value (2025) to maintain temporal consistency, while text columns such as Abstract and Source were filled with empty strings to ensure compatibility with text processing (Fajarika et al., 2024)

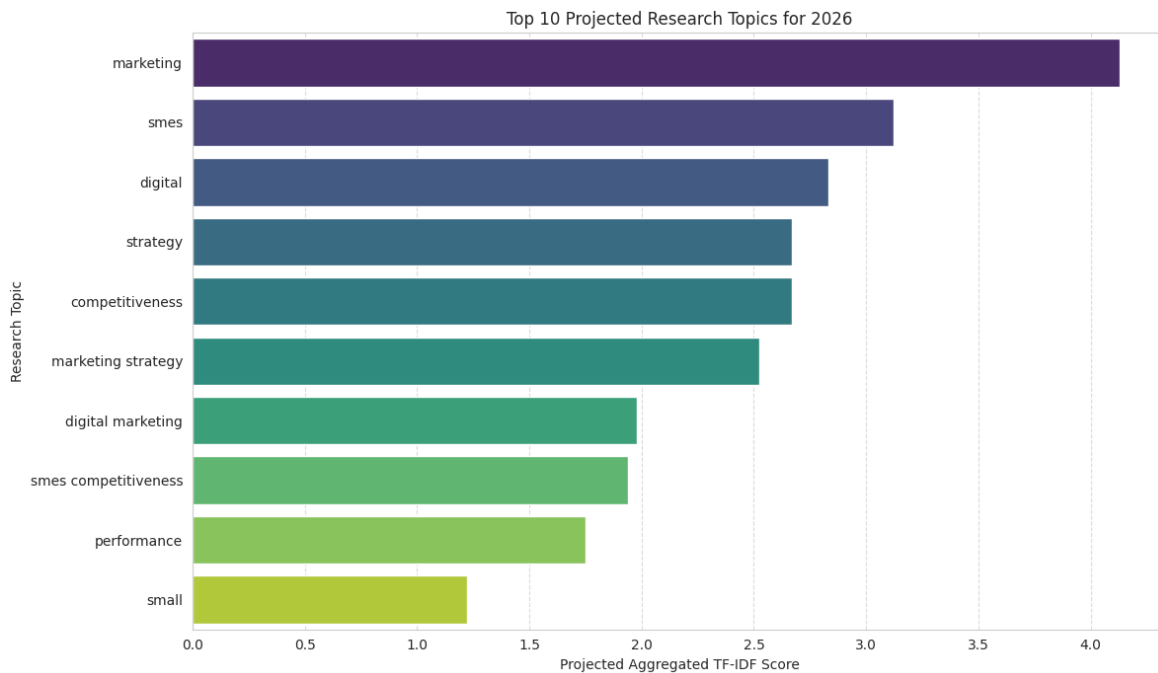
The next stage involved text extraction and preprocessing by merging the Title and Abstract columns, converting all text to lowercase, removing punctuation and stopwords, and applying TF-IDF vectorization to transform the text into numerical representations suitable for analysis (Timsina, 2024). These representations formed the basis for annual thematic analysis to identify dominant topics and the evolution of research trends.

To project future research topics, each main keyword was modeled using linear regression based on annual TF-IDF values, resulting in predictions of dominant topics for 2026. The results indicate sustained dominance of the terms marketing and SMEs, along

with an increasing focus on digital and digital marketing, highlighting the direction of contemporary research development (Hussain et al., 2025; Jummai, 2023). This methodology ensures the integration of bibliometric techniques, text analysis, and predictive modeling, thereby providing a comprehensive, objective, and replicable scientific mapping.



3. Results and Discussion

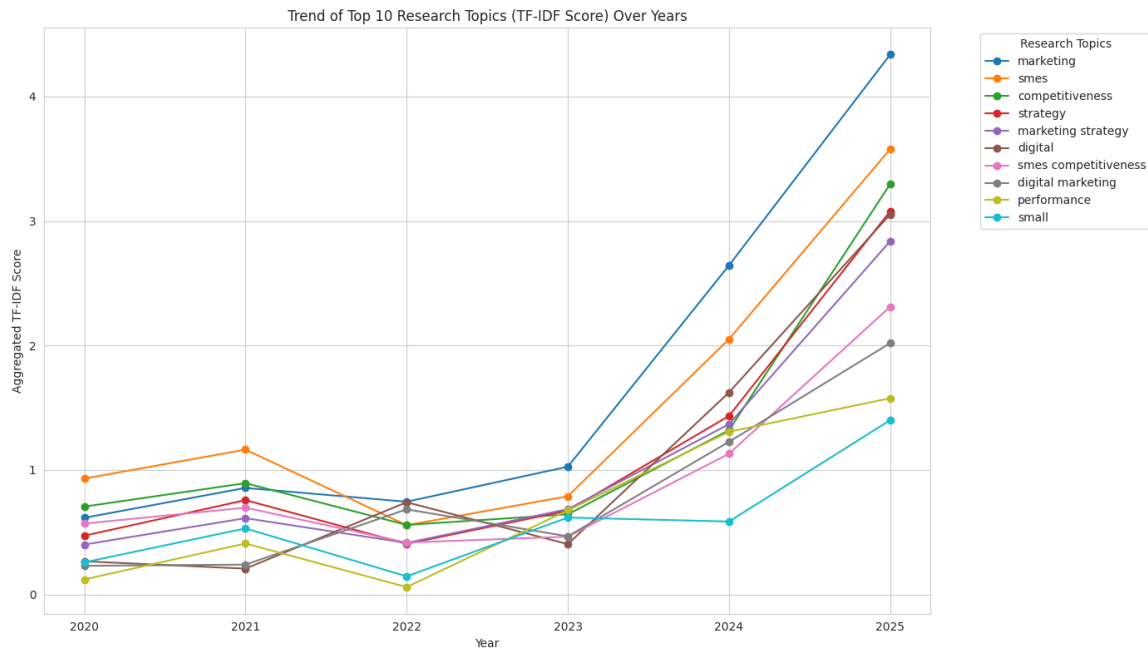


Source: Data processed using Python

The figure entitled “*Top 10 Projected Research Topics for 2026*” presents projections of the ten most dominant research topics based on aggregated TF-IDF values derived from text modeling and trend forecasting. This horizontal bar chart illustrates the relative strength of each topic within the analyzed literature, where the horizontal axis represents the Projected Aggregated TF-IDF Score and the vertical axis denotes research topic categories.

The visualization indicates that *marketing* occupies the highest position with a projected score of approximately 4.1, suggesting that marketing is expected to remain the primary focus of research in 2026. The second position is held by *SMEs* with a score of around 3.1, followed by *digital* (±2.9), which underscores the growing academic attention to MSME digitalization. Subsequently, *strategy* and *competitiveness* each record scores of approximately 2.7, reflecting the strengthening of research on business strategy and firm competitiveness. The topic *marketing strategy* also holds a significant position (±2.5), indicating the integration of marketing and organizational strategy formulation. Meanwhile, *digital marketing* and *SMEs competitiveness* appear at moderate levels with scores close to 2.0, while *performance* and *small* reflect a continued focus on business performance and firm scale.

Overall, the projected distribution of TF-IDF scores indicates a shift in research agendas toward strengthening marketing, digital transformation, and MSME competitiveness as key strategic issues in future research.



Source: Data processed using Python

The figure entitled “*Trend of Top 10 Research Topics (TF-IDF Score) Over Years*” illustrates the dynamic development of the ten main research topics during the period 2020–2025 based on aggregated TF-IDF values as indicators of the strength and intensity of topic occurrence in the literature. This line chart demonstrates a relatively stable evolutionary pattern in the early phase (2020–2022), followed by a significant surge in growth from 2023 to 2025.

The *marketing* topic exhibits the most prominent growth, increasing from approximately 0.6 in 2020 to over 4.3 in 2025, indicating an escalation of academic attention to marketing issues within business and MSME contexts. Similar trends are observed for *SMEs*, which rose from below 1.0 to around 3.6, as well as *competitiveness*, which increased from approximately 0.7 to over 3.3. The topics of *strategy* and *marketing strategy* also demonstrate strong acceleration since 2023, reflecting a shift in research focus toward strategic formulation and competitive advantage.

Meanwhile, technology-based topics such as *digital* and *digital marketing* show progressive and consistent growth, particularly after 2022, indicating the increasing importance of digital transformation in research agendas. Overall, this trend pattern confirms a reorientation of research focus from general themes toward the integration of marketing, strategy, competitiveness, and digitalization as central issues in contemporary business and MSME research.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the results of the Systematic Literature Review of scientific publications from 2020 to 2025, it can be concluded that marketing strategies play a significant role in supporting the development and performance improvement of creative economy MSMEs, particularly in the culinary subsector. The analyzed literature indicates that marketing functions not only as a promotional activity but also as a strategic element that contributes

to enhanced competitiveness, expanded market reach, strengthened branding, and MSME adaptation to an increasingly competitive and digitalized business environment. The dominance of marketing, MSMEs, and creative economy themes in research trends highlights the high relevance of marketing strategies as a key driver of business performance. Moreover, the growing research focus on digitalization and technology-based marketing reflects a paradigm shift toward more innovative and market-oriented MSME marketing approaches. Nevertheless, studies that explicitly link marketing strategies to long-term business sustainability remain limited, as most research emphasizes short-term performance outcomes.

Based on these findings, future research is recommended to further explore the relationship between marketing strategies and the long-term sustainability of creative economy MSMEs from financial, operational, and business model sustainability perspectives. Longitudinal and integrative approaches are necessary to comprehensively understand the strategic impact of marketing over time. Additionally, future studies should combine marketing strategies with internal MSME factors—such as managerial capabilities, digital literacy, and product innovation—as well as external factors including business environment dynamics and policy support. For practitioners and policymakers, these findings can serve as a foundation for designing mentoring programs, training initiatives, and MSME development policies that emphasize strengthening adaptive, digitally based marketing strategies. Consequently, marketing strategies can be directed not only toward short-term performance improvement but also toward sustaining the long-term competitiveness and sustainability of creative economy MSMEs.

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