

Digital Marketing Adaptation of Market-ready Local Producers in Sorsogon

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Abstract— Technological advances affect business operations. Digital revolution has reached manufacturing, finance, and most especially, marketing. Online shopping is common, but not all businesses are using this to their advantage to improve their branding and connection with their target market groups. This research examines Sorsogon's market-ready local producers' digital marketing adaptation. Twenty-five market-ready local producers serve as respondents through purposive sampling. The study used survey-questionnaire to collect data. The results indicated that market-ready local producers employed Meta Business Suite/Facebook as their primary digital marketing tool and platform. Shopee and Lazada were also utilized. Social influence was a substantial factor in the respondents' decision regarding the adaptation of digital marketing. Increase in sales growth and customer referral and retention were the major impacts of the adaptation in terms of sales while brand image enhancement, diversified domestic markets and guided product improvement needs in terms of market reach. Nevertheless, market-ready local producers perceive this undertaking as an additional burden or source of stress in the absence of a manager or staff to oversee it. Moreover, limited budget for sponsored advertising was also a significant challenge. The research was constrained by the time allotment for data collection and the absence of more precise categorizations according to asset size and industry. Further investigation might be directed towards the attitude or behavior of micro-business proprietors towards digitalization as the principal determinant in the adaptation to digital marketing.

Keywords— Digital Marketing, Local Producers, Adaptation

I. INTRODUCTION

Today, business organizations must have an institutional website or online store to expand their product or service market. To maximize this online business strategy, methods have been created to attract end consumers to digital platforms and activate their purchasing patterns. These "digital marketing" strategies analyze, plan, develop, and control projects to meet consumers' demands and needs with quality, generating profit for the firm. Thus, digital marketing helps small and new businesses survive, grow, and succeed.

The digital market is characterized by its limitless nature. Creative promotional strategies are implemented to increase their business's popularity and market penetration, including smartphones, tablets, computers, digital billboards, and multiple social media platforms.

There is a discernible surge in the global population of internet consumers, as evidenced by an annual growth rate of 3.7 percent. Nevertheless, it is significant to acknowledge that the rate of progress in emerging economies still exceeds this.

The average daily internet usage time for individuals across the globe has increased marginally to six (6)

hours and forty-one (41) minutes in 2022, (Datareportal, 2022). Businesses now have a limitless opportunity to communicate with their target demographic because of the growing number of people with internet access and the amount of time those consumers spend online. An abundance of information and profitable strategies can be easily accessed, enabling users to increase their capacity and enhance their abilities in creating material and connecting with their target market.

Moreover, digital marketing significantly plays a vital role in enabling businesses to adapt effectively to the challenges posed by globalization. E-commerce platforms and online advertising have demonstrated their efficacy in accessing global consumers, eliminating the necessity for physical establishments in certain areas.

Using digital marketing strategies allows businesses to expand their reach to a diverse and vast worldwide market. By leveraging various internet platforms, companies may readily and efficiently establish connections with prospective customers, extending well beyond their physical geographic boundaries and gathering market data and analytics.

In addition, a wide range of digital marketing tools offers advanced analytical capabilities, enabling businesses to assess the efficacy of their campaigns in real-time and at any point in time. Metrics like website traffic, sales conversion rates, and return on investment (ROI) are real-time and easily accessible, facilitating decision-making based on actual data, (Lee & Cho, 2020).

One of the digital marketing platforms is social media. It offers immediate and direct client interaction. Brands retain the ability to engage with customers by promptly addressing inquiries, resolving complaints, and cultivating connections, thus building trust and promoting long-term loyalty. By employing customized marketing communications, organizations have gained the ability to efficiently engage with and collect feedback from verified customers and target markets. The data mentioned above can be effectively utilized to segment the consumer base and develop content suitable for each section, enhancing the chance of successful sales conversions.

The influence of digital marketing on businesses is extensive and transformative. Utilizing this technology improves the extent of coverage, effectiveness, and interaction with customers, consequently generating vital data to support well-informed decision-making processes. Adopting digital marketing has become imperative for firms seeking to thrive in the digital age. Businesses that adopt digital marketing strategies can maintain a competitive edge within their respective industries. Individuals hesitant to adopt these techniques risk falling behind since consumers progressively shift towards digital platforms for information and purchases.

The Province of Sorsogon holds a strategic location, serving as a pivotal point connecting Luzon to the regions of Visayas and Mindanao. In addition to its advantageous geographical position, Sorsogon boasts a diverse array of raw material resources processed afterward to foster the province's economic growth and development.

Sorsogon offers a variety of local products that showcase the province's unique flavors and craftsmanship. Most of these products are made of endemic raw materials such as pili, coconut, cassava, cacao, banana, fish, abaca, karagumoy, nito, buri, bankuan, bariw, among others. Sorsogon major industries are Pili Nuts Processing, Fish Processing,

Meat Processing, Rootcrops-based Food Processing, Ginger/Turmeric Food Processing, Coconut Processing, Handcrafted Gifts Making, Fashion Accessories Making, Home Furnishings and Decors Production, and Packaging Materials Production, among others.

The continued growth of the province's economy is mainly due to the contributions made by these various industries. For example, a bag producer will typically employ between 50 and 100 local weavers, both directly and indirectly, depending on the size of its operation. These industries must continue to exist so the community can exploit their opportunities.

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are acknowledged as the fundamental drivers of a nation's entrepreneurial spirit and economic resilience. Many Sorsogon MSMEs are involved in the industries above, contributing to generating revenue and employment opportunities in rural areas. These local producers, often characterized by their limited asset size and reliance on local resources, have encountered many challenges over the years, including regulatory compliance, economic fluctuations, and the unforeseen adverse impacts of the pandemic on most businesses. Moreover, despite their innate ability to adapt, these entities have historically faced obstacles, particularly in accessing markets, gaining exposure, and competing globally.

Despite facing many obstacles, local producers have continually exhibited their dedication to innovation, growth, and continued product development initiatives to meet the market's demands.

Most of the local producers are seen to participate in traditional marketing events such as bazaars, trade fairs, selling missions, and exhibits. They rely on them to secure institutional buyers who will order from them all year round. Their products are also sold at souvenir shops at popular tourist spots, airports, malls, and other shopping centers. Aside from local retail stores, trade exhibits only happen seldom within the year,

Some local producers with the capacity to export their goods have already begun direct exporting - transporting containers of goods to various international markets. It remains challenging for most industry players because of its tedious documentary requirements and certifications.

In its continued efforts to support these sectors, the government assists local producers by identifying, developing, and implementing training programs in marketing, production, finance, general management, and e-commerce. These open opportunities to develop and innovate their products and services.

Then again, the digital age represents an era of change for Filipinos, especially Sorsoganon local producers, considering its revolutionary potential and continuous pace. This allows them to reach broader markets and access information to innovate further.

The world's transition to a digitally connected one requires a matching change in business practices. This need is driven by the ability to level the playing field, carve out niches in international marketplaces, and generate new potential for customer involvement.

II. OBJECTIVES

This study assessed the digital marketing adaptation of market-ready local producers in the Province of Sorsogon.

Specifically, it identified the current digital marketing adaptation tools and platforms utilized by market-ready local producers; the factors influencing their decisions to embrace digital marketing strategies; the impacts of digital marketing adaptation in terms of sales and market reach; the challenges associated with adapting digital marketing to their operations; and propose sustainability action plan to maximize digital marketing adaptation.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study utilized the descriptive survey method in which a survey questionnaire was used. The respondents

of this study were twenty-five (25) market-ready local producers (food processors and handicraft producers) in Sorsogon. The said samples were taken using a purposive sampling technique.

The researcher utilized frequency and rank as statistical measures to analyze the data acquired in this study. From an extensive standpoint, these statistical tools indicate the percentage of observations for each data point or set of data points. The approach is frequently employed to convey the relative frequency of survey responses and other data.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following results were gathered, analyzed and interpreted by the researcher based from the objectives of the study. Tabular presentation and textual analysis and interpretation were also used.

1. Current Digital Marketing Adaptation Tools and Platforms Used by Market-ready Local Producers

Nowadays, the choices are vast regarding what and when to use specific digital marketing platforms. As seen in Table 1.0 below, Meta Business Suite/Facebook, a social media platform, has a frequency of 22 and ranked 1.

Meta Business Suite/Facebook remains free to be accessed by citizens. With the different tools this application offers (Online Philippines, 2022), local producers may easily create their business pages and store promotional content for free, or the option to pay for advertisements to targeted audiences specified as to their age, gender, and preferences is also available for them.

Table 1. Current Digital Marketing Adaptation Tools and Platforms Used by Market-ready Local Producers

Digital Marketing Adaptation Tool and Platforms	Frequency	Rank
Meta Business Suite/Facebook	22	1
Shopee	7	2
Lazada	5	3
Instagram	4	4.5
Canva	4	4.5
Youtube	3	6.5
Tiktok	3	6.5
GlobalLinker	2	8
Twitter	1	9.5
Google Analytics	1	9.5

According to a recent survey, Meta Business Suite/Facebook was the top choice for digital marketing among the twenty-five respondents (Dencheva, 2023).

With Meta Business Suite/Facebook, local producers can create their business page and store promotional content for free. Meta Business Suite/Facebook constantly updates its features and functionality to keep up with the rapidly changing digital landscape.

The Philippines is an emerging e-commerce market, with two primary marketplaces, Shopee and Lazada (Unicommerce, 2023), Shopee has a frequency of 7 and ranked 2 and Lazada has a frequency of 5 and ranked 3. Due to its vast user base, straightforward interface, and cooperation with various logistics providers, sellers may perceive a greater degree of benefit, security, and convenience while engaging in transactions with buyers. As the population of online shoppers grows, these two platforms continue to expand their user base and create a dynamic digital environment for sellers and buyers to engage in transactions. They assure customers concerned about their payment security (Huq, 2015).

As the Philippines continues to embrace e-commerce, these two platforms will remain essential tools for sellers in the digital market. The rise of e-commerce has allowed people to shop and sell online with ease. Two of the most popular online shopping platforms, Shopee and Lazada, have become essential for many consumers. Both sites offer user-friendly interfaces for buyers and sellers to engage in transactions.

Instagram, with a frequency of 4 and a rank of 4.5, is one of the widely utilized social media networks that facilitates the sharing of visually engaging photographs and videos. However, only a few now use it as a digital marketing platform. The system interface places a strong emphasis on visual elements. The primary focus of this platform lies in the sharing of photographs and videos, frequently with an emphasis on creativity and aesthetics. It is critical to master the fundamentals of picture and video editing while utilizing Instagram as a digital marketing platform. This might be a problem for local producers who are unfamiliar with the platform. Anyone, with the correct advice and tips, can learn how to utilize Instagram as an efficient marketing tool.

Canva, a renowned content generator and editor, has a frequency of 4 and ranked 4.5 alongside Instagram. This ranking is based on the preferences of 4 out of 25

respondents. Canva offers both free and premium versions of its platform. While the paid version provides enhanced customization options for its customers, the free version already includes fundamental tools for editing purposes. Nevertheless, it should be noted that both versions need internet access, which might pose a difficulty for individuals utilizing the application.

With a frequency of 3 and a rank of 6.5, market-ready local producers also considered YouTube and TikTok as part of their digital marketing strategies. Both platforms may be classified as social networking sites with similar groups of users. Both YouTube and TikTok are platforms for sharing videos as their primary form of content. They can be used to disseminate awareness and information on products and services and engage with potential customers in creative and exciting ways.

GlobalLinker, with a frequency of 2 and ranked 8, allows businesses to establish their website, complete with integrated digital payment channels for seamless consumer transactions throughout the checkout process. Among the sample of 25 respondents, 2 of them shared that they used the website above. This may indicate that they possess a level of website development expertise, often recognized as an advanced ability.

Twitter and Google Analytics ranked equally at 9.5 with a frequency of 1. Twitter is predominantly utilized to disseminate information, provide real-time updates, and engage in concise conversations. Google Analytics enables users to monitor and evaluate their website's performance. This low utilization rate presents a potential opportunity for market-ready local producers, allowing them to gain a deeper understanding of their target customers.

Social media marketing (SMM) solutions enable organizations to connect with their target audience and expand their presence across social media platforms. These technologies enable businesses to generate interesting content, target specific audiences, monitor conversations, and track campaign results.

Businesses must use digital marketing tools to effectively navigate the extremely competitive and dynamic commercial climate. The key to success in digital marketing is evaluating the numerous platforms accessible and picking the best option for company use. Businesses can easily contact, connect, and convert their intended audience with the correct tools, leading to

better success in the digital era. Based on the findings shown in Table 1.0, it is apparent that there is a significant potential for market-ready local producers in the Province of Sorsogon to enhance their knowledge and utilization of digital tools and platforms.

2. Factors Influencing the Decisions of Market-ready Local Producers to Embrace Digital Marketing Strategies

Entrepreneurs make strategic decisions usually strengthened when they clearly understand the influencing elements and the interactions between them that lead to improved performance (Feng et al., 2022).

Table 2. Factors Influencing the Decisions of Market-ready Local Producers to Embrace Digital Marketing Strategies

Factors Influencing Digital Marketing Adaptation	Frequency	Rank
Social Influence	15	1
Market Reach and Accessibility	12	3
Perceived Industry Pressure	12	3
Compatibility to Market Goals	12	3
Cost-Effectiveness	11	5.5
Innovativeness	11	5.5
Perceived Benefits	8	8.5
Customer Power/Pressure	8	8.5
Relative Advantage	8	8.5
Readiness	8	8.5
Business Dependence on Information Technology	7	12
Trustworthiness of Online Applications	7	12
Company Size	7	12
Technological Infrastructure and Support	6	14.5
Strategic Complexity	6	14.5
External Pressure from Competitors	5	16.5
Expectable Effort/Organizational Readiness	5	16.5
Availability/Manager Attributes	4	18
Top Management Support	3	19.5
Government Pressure	3	19.5
Expectable Performance	2	21

As seen in Table 2.0 on the Factors Influencing the Decisions of Market-ready Local Producers to Embrace Digital Marketing Strategies, Social influence has a frequency of 15 and ranked 1. Given the vast number of internet users worldwide, local producers have become increasingly aware of the potential of digital marketing to overcome geographical limitations. As a typical Filipino, considered the most active social media user in the world according to Eight Media (2021), market-ready local producers may have seen the opportunities for brand promotion via social media. They may also have experienced transacting with other brands via this platform.

Consequently, market reach and accessibility, alongside perceived industry pressure and compatibility with market goals, had a frequency of 12 and ranked 3. Continued and consistent brand promotion and marketing of different industry players or businesses may have influenced these market-ready local producers to remain relevant. It was also observed in Ochoa and Paragas's (2015) research that even corporations in the

Philippines have seen the opportunity to utilize social media to engage with their audience.

Complementary, cost-effectiveness of the strategy used, and the ability to exercise innovativeness in the process equally have a frequency of 11 and ranked 5.5. Market-ready local producers prioritize cost-benefit analysis as a significant factor in their decision-making process.

The level of customer power/pressure gained a frequency of 8 and a rank of 8.5, along with the perceived benefits, relative advantage, and the local producers' readiness to respond to the strategy. This rating indicates that market-ready local producers evaluate the advantages and their ability to respond to market demands. Based on a study by Narrea et al. (2019), consumers follow a purchase decision-making process. They determined that a significant relationship exists between variables in online purchasing and actual consumer purchases. These market-ready producers may have recognized that they needed to prepare their

organization to meet the market's demands to generate all its benefits and advantages.

Additionally, business dependence on information technology, the trustworthiness of the online applications, and company size all ranked has a frequency of 7 and ranked 12. It may be inferred that those with the means to make supplementary expenditures are more inclined to use digital marketing methods. This can be further shown by the factors with a frequency of 6 and ranked 14.5: technological infrastructure and strategic complexity. These indicate the adaptive capacity of the local producers. They are seeking assurance that their investments will eventually generate gains or returns. Wamba and Carter (2016) also found that firm size significantly impacts social media adoption by SMEs.

Competition among businesses often involves strategies to differentiate products and services, pricing strategies, marketing efforts, and innovations to gain a competitive edge. External Pressure from Competitors and Expectable Effort/Organization Readiness are evaluated at 16.5 with a frequency of 5, indicating that market-ready local producers acknowledge the significant opportunities in the industry.

With a frequency of 4 and a rank of 18, Manager Attributes affect their decision to embrace digital marketing strategies. This observation suggests that the employment of managers is intended to support the implementation of digital marketing strategies on behalf of market-ready local producers. This might further indicate that only a few producers hire staff or managers.

A governing body or a higher authority that may influence the decision of market-ready local producers is least recognized as having the Top Management Support and Government Pressure, both at rank 19.5 with a frequency of 3. This suggests that the efforts made by these institutions have not yet had a noticeable impact on the respondents.

There is a notable indication that market-ready local producers do not give priority or recognition to analyzing the data collected from their digital marketing endeavors to develop a proficient and impactful digital marketing plan that yields satisfactory results, as seen by expectable performance with a frequency of 2 and ranked 21.

Embracing change is of utmost importance for fostering growth and enhancing the adaptability of market-ready local producers and business owners. Digital marketing has several advantages for both local producers and customers. Therefore, the benefits, preparedness, and capacity to adapt to this dynamic environment remain steadfast.

3. Impacts of Digital Marketing Adaptation of Market-ready Local Producers

The adaptation of digital marketing has profound and far-reaching impacts on businesses, consumers, and the overall landscape of commerce. It has brought about transformative changes, reshaping how businesses connect with consumers and how marketing strategies are conceived and executed (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

Table 3.1. Impacts of Digital Marketing Adaptation of Market-ready Local Producers in terms of Sales

Impacts of Digital Marketing Adaptation in terms of Sales	Frequency	Rank
Increase in Sales Growth	18	1
Increase in New Customer Referrals	14	2
Increase in Customer Retention	13	3
Increase in Customer Satisfaction	12	4
Increase Sales per Product Category	10	5
Increase in Gross Profit Margin	8	6
Decrease in Marketing Cost	7	7
Higher Lead Conversion Rate	5	9
Increase Sales Per Region in the Domestic Market	5	9
Creation of New Leads in Pipeline	5	9
Increase in Global Market Penetration	3	11.5
Increase in Win Rate (number of sales generated vs number of sales opportunities)	3	11.5

According to the data shown in Table 3.1, it can be observed that with a frequency of 18 and ranked 1, respondents reported that they had seen an increase in sales growth after their digital marketing adaptation. This may also be a result of creating appropriate and engaging product promotion. Not all marketing efforts may lead to actual sales. This needs an effective marketing strategy (Riserbato, 2021). This further underscores the need for digital marketing adaptation as an effective method for generating sales and promoting products or services.

In a study by Mokhtar (2015), internet marketing helped respondents have more comprehensive market coverage, identify new market segments, create customer awareness, and provide more customer access to the latest information. The present study also found an increase in New Customer Referrals, Customer Retention, and Satisfaction at rank 2, 3, and 4 with 14, 13, and 12 frequencies, respectively. With the ability to communicate and analyze how the audience responds to digital marketing content, local producers may have quickly responded to inquiries and addressed complaints, if any. Overall, these lead to increased customer satisfaction.

Market-ready local producers could also deduce the impact of the increase in sales per product category with a frequency of 10 and ranked 5. Both local food and non-food producers have a wide array of product lines. Promoting and ultimately maintaining market share for all these products is a struggle. Digital marketing can be

strategically used to create appropriate content to feature a specific item at a certain period.

An Increase in Gross Profit Margin with a frequency of 8 and ranked 6 was also reported. This may be a result of a decrease in advertising expenses. Nonetheless, an effective marketing strategy must be utilized for this gain. This is evidenced by the respondents' responses of a decrease in marketing cost at rank 7 with a frequency of 7.

Higher Lead Conversion rate, Increase in Sales per Region in the Domestic Market, and Creation of New Leads in the Pipeline can directly be linked to increased sales growth. However, with a frequency of 5 and ranked 9, respondents could affirm that an increase in sales can be further evaluated using several other factors that can help them adapt and implement digital marketing. Only a few of the market-ready local producers were able to assess these impacts on their businesses.

There is a vast opportunity in the global market since with a frequency of 3 and ranked 11.5, respondents noted an increase in global market penetration and win rate. Even during the global crisis, MSMEs continued to thrive to survive. The study by Kalaw and Rayala (2022) described the changes in the business operations of MSMEs before, during, and after the pandemic. Some of the local producers are hesitant to engage in exporting. However, a few recognize the risk and the vast opportunities it will provide their businesses.

Table 3.2 Impacts of Digital Marketing Adaptation of Market-ready Local Producers in terms of Market Reach

Impacts of Digital Marketing Adaptation in terms of Market Reach	Frequency	Rank
Brand Image Enhancement	17	1
Diversified Domestic Markets	14	2
Guided Product Improvement Needs	12	3
Customers pay using different online payment channels	11	4
Aided Brand Awareness	10	5
Unaided Brand Awareness	8	6.5
Expanded to International Markets	8	6.5
Catered to varied customer groups	6	8.5
Identified Customer Purchase Intention	6	8.5
Identified Customer Usage Intention	5	10.5
Data-driven Market Analytics	5	10.5

At rank 1 with a frequency of 17, respondents relate the digital marketing adaptation to brand image enhancement with increased digital presence. The local producers promoted their brands, making them accessible and visible to new markets. The respondents

have seen domestic market diversification, with a frequency of 14 and ranked 2. According to a study by Brosas et al. (2022), online branding, especially free and low-cost platforms like social media, builds market resonance and expands market reach.

Digital marketing assisted in guided product improvement needs identification with a frequency of 14 and ranked 2. The process of product development encompasses the incorporation of feedback methods from various markets and client segments.

Since digital marketing opened opportunities beyond geographical limitations, this has also allowed local producers and customers to adapt to digital payment options or channels. With a frequency of 11 and ranked 4, they affirmed that they received payments through the mentioned payment channels. In partnership with banking institutions, the government ensures these methods are safe for public use. The Department of Trade and Industry, through the Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028, shall continue to promote digital marketing and payments among MSMEs.

Consequently, aided brand awareness is at rank 5 with a frequency of 10. As mentioned above, brand image enhancement was considered the top-most digital marketing impact on market reach.

Interestingly, unaided brand awareness and expanded to international markets both have a frequency of 8 and ranked 6.5. Digital marketing may have allowed the local producers to interact with foreign customers with or without the clear intention to do so. Since digital marketing enables customers to share feedback among family, friends, and what is commonly known as “followers,” business transactions and experiences are

now easily shared whenever and wherever. The local producers felt comparable experiences.

Catered to varied customer groups and Identified purchase intentions ranked 8.5 with a frequency of 6. Since Internet marketing helps MSMEs identify new markets and provides more customer access to the latest information, according to Mokhtar (2015), it is easier to cater to varied customer groups and verify their purchase intentions.

Identified Customer Usage Intention and Data-driven market analytics, both ranked 10.5 with a frequency of 5. This may be considered as a post-sales assessment. Local producers may have utilized a feedback mechanism or encouraged customer reviews, which gave them data on the market reception of their products and services. Feedback and logistics are vital in consumer purchase decision-making, Nartea et al. (2019).

4. Challenges Associated with Digital Marketing Adaptation of Market-ready Local Producers

Digital marketing significantly expands market reach by leveraging online channels to connect with a broader and more diverse audience (Alexander, 2022). Local producers must appropriately utilize effective marketing strategies to maximize the benefits of digital marketing adaptation. Nonetheless, challenges are still inevitable, as seen in Table 4.0.

Table 4. Challenges Associated with Digital Marketing Adaptation of Market-ready Local Producers

Challenges in Digital Marketing Adaptation	Frequency	Rank
Lack of social media manager's staff	13	1
Increased workload and stress	12	2
Limited Budget on Paid Online Advertisements	10	4
Lack of training in digital marketing adaptation	10	4
Unreliable Internet Connectivity	10	4
High Logistics Cost	8	7.5
Fast-changing Trends and Updates	8	7.5
Lack of knowledge in the consumer-centric market	8	7.5
Confusing Digital Marketing tools	8	7.5
Dynamic Platforms	7	11
Unpredictable consumer buying behavior	7	11
Growing Costs of Digital Marketing Tools	7	11
Heightened Competition with big brands and companies	6	13.5
Limited Budget on App Subscriptions	6	13.5
Limited knowledge of the Creation of fresh, engaging content	5	16
Data Security threats/issues	5	16
Limited knowledge and skills in content strategy	5	16
Unreliable logistics provider	4	18
Technological Complexity	3	19.5
Discomfort in becoming more mobile-friendly	3	19.5

The primary challenge identified by local producers is the lack of social media managers/staff. The respondents shared that this lack of staffing hinders them from maximizing the adaptation of digital marketing with a frequency of 13 and ranked 1. The local producers bear the tasks and responsibilities associated with its implementation. According to them, it increased workload and stress among them with a frequency of 12 and ranked 2. Market-ready local producers play various roles and responsibilities as the owner, general manager, marketing officer, and production supervisor. They still participate in trade fairs, both domestic and international. Indeed, Durmaz et al. (2023) found that traditional marketing approaches remain relevant but are seen as inadequate. Hence, these local producers need to adapt to these significant changes due to the advent of the digital marketing era (Hagberg et al., 2015). A famous saying is that change is constant. People react uniquely to change in different circumstances (Noori, 2015). Local producers may have found this multitasking stressful. A lack of expertise may also cause this reaction.

The following results may further support this. Aside from the human resource requirement, the local producers are also challenged by a limited budget for paid online advertisements with the most reliance on free content and features. Lack of training on the subject matter and doubtful internet connectivity were both at rank 4, with a frequency of 10. The limited budget for paid online advertisements and lack of training may be interpreted in a way that makes them unaware of how much they should invest initially in digital advertisements caused by their lack of training. The unstable internet connectivity added to this problem.

High logistics costs, fast-changing trends and updates, lack of knowledge of a consumer-centric market, and confusing digital marketing tools equally had a frequency of 8 and ranked 7.5. Biliavska and Mykytenko (2023) underlined the importance of understanding consumer behavior as a driver for retail trends. However, local producers affirmed that they do not have this level of awareness, which may support and improve how they utilize different marketing tools and platforms. Hence, the results. High logistics costs might be a problem in effective target marketing. This enables effective resource management. They may have spent more on logistics than the actual marketing process. This knowledge and information can significantly help local

producers match digital marketing efforts with what is needed or required by the market segment.

With a frequency of 7 and ranked 11, local producers consider dynamic platforms and unpredictable consumer buying behavior as added challenges. Opportunities flood worldwide, and human endeavors are exponentially immersed in the digital dimension of business (Bentley University, 2021). This demand resulted in constant updates on different digital platforms to match the ever-changing needs of its clients. Local producers might have difficulty coping with these changes.

Equally ranked at 11 with a frequency of 7, local producers also observed the growing costs of digital marketing tools. With added features comes added cost. The development of these tools also entails costs to remain up-to-date and competitive. Local producers may opt to avail only the accessible features of specific tools, but they may be limited and will not provide the targeted market goals.

Heightened competition with big brands and companies and limited budget on application subscriptions have a frequency of 6 and ranked 13.5. According to Ochoa and Paragas's (2015) research, corporations also engaged in social media marketing even at the early stages of their adaptation to digital marketing.

The following challenges ranked 16, each with a frequency of 5: Limited knowledge of creating fresh, engaging content, data security threats/issues, and limited knowledge and skills in content strategy. Content marketing is a digital marketing scheme in the Philippines (Sigil Digital Marketing, 2018). This attracts, engages, and retains an audience by creating and sharing relevant articles, videos, podcasts, and other media. This gives the business leverage among other brands. To achieve this, different digital tools and platforms must be used. However, local producers use a limited range of digital tools and platforms. Hence, the challenge. Data security threats are rampant in different platforms as data are shared publicly. Some local producers find it alarming, for they have yet to know how to protect themselves against this scheme.

Digital marketing enables local producers to expand their market reach, defying geographical limitations. A reliable logistics provider is a necessity. However, with a frequency of 4 and ranked 18, respondents reported

that one of their identified challenges is unreliable logistics providers. This may result from customer complaints about delayed shipments or deliveries. This can also be further interpreted as no logistics partner for potential customers.

Still, at rank 19.5 with a frequency of 3, respondents shared that technological complexity and discomfort in becoming more mobile-friendly remain challenges. This may result from constant updates on mobile phone applications and features.

By systematically addressing each issue, maximizing the beneficial impacts of digital marketing adaptation of market-ready local producers is achievable. This approach aligns with the strategies outlined in the proposed Sustainability Action Plan.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the preceding findings, the researcher concludes that the top three (3) current digital marketing adaptation tools and platforms used by market-ready local producers are Meta Business Suite/Facebook, Shopee, and Lazada. The significant factors influencing the decisions of market-ready local producers to embrace digital marketing strategies are social influence, market reach and accessibility, and perceived industry pressure. The following are the top 3 impacts of digital marketing adaptation of market-ready local producers in terms of sales, Increase in Sales Growth, New Customer Referrals, and Customer Retention. Likewise, the following are the top 3 impacts of digital marketing adaptation of the market-ready local producers regarding market reach, Brand Image Enhancement, Diversified Domestic Markets, and Guided Product Improvement Needs. Furthermore, the significant challenges identified by market-ready local producers are the lack of social media managers/staff, increased workload and stress, limited budget for paid online advertisements, lack of training in digital marketing adaptation, and unreliable internet connectivity.

From the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are forwarded as follows: (1) different orientations and workshops on the unexplored or unfamiliar digital market tools and platforms to be utilized; (2) digitalization pathways be incorporated into various industry development plans and programs by which the market-ready local producers may benefit; (3) an Innovation Hub be created by the LGU or academic

institutions, which will serve as an incubation center for digitization initiatives, including strategic marketing planning; (4) Local producers and staff be capacitated on digital marketing adaptation, including programmed activities and outputs; and (5) different microfinance institutions be advised to create loan programs to assist clients' digital marketing initiatives.

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