Designing a Digital Marketing Maturity Model with a Corporate Social Responsibility Approach in Modiran Khodro Company

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to design a digital marketing maturity model with a corporate social responsibility approach in the automotive industry, with a focus on Modiran Khodro Company. Using the thematic analysis method, this study identified and categorized the key components of the digital marketing maturity model. The results indicated that this model consists of six main categories: development of organizational capabilities and culture, digital technology and innovation, corporate social responsibility and sustainability in digital marketing, responsible digital marketing strategy and vision, data management and marketing intelligence, and customer interaction and engagement in digital platforms. These components highlight the importance of aligning modern digital technologies with corporate social responsibility values to achieve sustainable and effective marketing. The findings also align with previous research in the field of digital marketing and corporate social responsibility and provide a practical framework for companies operating in the automotive industry. This study assists managers and decision-makers in evaluating their level of digital maturity and formulating responsible strategies to enhance customer engagement, build trust, and promote sustainable development.

Keywords: Digital marketing maturity, corporate social responsibility, Modiran Khodro

1. Introduction

In the contemporary era, digital marketing has been recognized as one of the primary tools for business development and value creation for customers. With the advancement of digital technologies, companies are increasingly seeking to leverage these tools to enhance customer engagement, increase sales, and strengthen their brand presence (Abid & Roy, 2024; Moedeen et al., 2024). Meanwhile, corporate social responsibility (CSR) has gained prominence as a key approach to generating social and sustainable value (Kotler & Keller, 2021; Kotler & Lee, 2021). Integrating digital marketing with CSR principles presents a unique opportunity for companies to achieve economic objectives while reinforcing their social values .

The automotive industry, due to its significant environmental and social impacts, has consistently faced regulatory pressures and public expectations to uphold corporate social responsibility. These pressures include reducing greenhouse gas emissions, utilizing sustainable materials, and contributing to social development (Vial, 2021). In Iran, Modiran Khodro Company, as one of the key players in this industry, encounters both challenges and opportunities in the realm of digital marketing and corporate social responsibility (Babaei Zeklikli, 2007; Noursina & Ghafoorian Balouri, 2016; Safdari & Rostamzadeh, 2018;

Sheikh Rabii et al., 2023). Designing a digital marketing maturity model with a CSR-oriented approach can assist this company in assessing its current status and defining a pathway for improvement and sustainable development.

Digital marketing maturity models are tools that enable organizations to evaluate and plan their progress in adopting digital technologies. These models typically encompass various dimensions such as digital strategy, customer engagement, innovation, and performance assessment (Chaffey, 2020). By incorporating a corporate social responsibility dimension into these models, organizations can also assess the social and environmental impacts of their digital marketing activities. This approach not only enhances brand reputation and customer trust but also enables companies to take meaningful steps toward sustainable development.

In an era of rapid digitalization, the automotive industry is experiencing extensive transformations in marketing and corporate responsibility. The emergence of novel communication technologies and changing stakeholder expectations have compelled organizations to integrate corporate social responsibility (CSR) principles into their digital marketing strategies (Kumar & Reinartz, 2022; Saura, 2021; Verma, 2022; Vial, 2021). However, the lack of comprehensive maturity models that simultaneously evaluate digital capabilities and CSR commitments has been identified as a research gap in the literature (Chaffey, 2020; Chen, 2020; Davenport & Prusak, 2021). This challenge is particularly pronounced in the automotive industry, especially in emerging markets like Iran, where companies such as Modiran Khodro must balance digital innovation with ethical obligations in the value chain.

Recent studies indicate that integrating CSR into digital marketing not only strengthens customer trust but also helps mitigate risks associated with emerging technologies, such as the use of consumer data (Fatma et al., 2020). However, existing digital marketing maturity models (DMMMs) predominantly focus on performance metrics such as conversion rates or audience reach, often neglecting ethical and social dimensions (Kotler & Lee, 2021). This issue underscores the need for a framework that evaluates organizational maturity across three levels: "technology," "strategy," and "social effectiveness," with a responsibility-oriented approach.

The objective of this study is to design a digital marketing maturity model with a corporate social responsibility approach for Modiran Khodro Company. This model will be developed through a review of scientific literature and an analysis of data obtained from interviews, assisting companies in aligning their digital marketing strategies with CSR principles. The findings of this research can serve as a practical framework for other companies operating in the automotive industry as well.

2.   Methods and Materials

Considering the objective and nature of the study, this research employed a qualitative method and was conducted through expert interviews. The study adopted a thematic analysis approach. The statistical population consisted of experts in the fields of marketing and corporate social responsibility at Modiran Khodro Company. In this section, sampling was conducted using the theoretical sampling method. In theoretical sampling, events are sampled rather than individuals, and if individuals are included, the primary goal is to explore events. While there is no fixed rule for sample size in qualitative research strategies, it has been suggested that homogeneous groups should consist of 6 to 8 units, whereas heterogeneous groups should include 12 to 20 units. The interviews continued until theoretical saturation was achieved. In this study, theoretical saturation occurred after conducting interviews with 12 experts (specialists in marketing and corporate social responsibility at Modiran Khodro Company).

Sampling was conducted within the logical framework of the qualitative method and was performed purposefully. Two sampling techniques were used: purposive sampling and snowball sampling. In qualitative research, purposive sampling is typically employed to obtain the most comprehensive information. Accordingly, the researcher selected participants who were considered "information-rich" cases, meaning that, based on the principles of qualitative research, the selected samples provided a strong representation of the phenomenon under study. The qualitative component of this study was based on thematic analysis, which was conducted using MAXQDA software.

3. Findings and Results

Table 1 presents the initial themes, secondary themes, and main categories derived from the thematic analysis of the interviews.

Table 1. Initial Themes, Secondary Themes, and Main Categories from Thematic Analysis of Interviews

Initial Themes	Secondary Themes	Main Categories
Aligning digital marketing strategy with the organization's macro goals	Developing an integrated digital marketing strategy	Responsible Digital Marketing Strategy and Vision
Defining key performance indicators for CSR in digital marketing		
Developing a roadmap for responsible digital marketing		
Competitor analysis and benchmarking digital marketing activities in the automotive industry		
Identifying digital touchpoints with customers in the car purchasing journey		
Optimizing digital marketing budget allocation with a CSR approach		
Establishing an organizational structure to support digital marketing		
Developing a digital marketing code of ethics		
Designing mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies		
Developing risk management programs in digital marketing		
Establishing processes for continuous review and improvement of strategies		
Defining a digital brand identity with an emphasis on CSR values	Responsible Digital Brand Management	
Developing a digital content strategy aligned with brand values		
Designing an integrated brand experience across digital channels		
Creating a distinct and authentic brand voice in the digital space		
Managing online reputation and responding to digital crises		
Measuring and monitoring brand equity in the digital space		
Developing brand ambassadors on social media		
Creating online communities centered around shared brand values		
Highlighting CSR initiatives in digital communications		
Designing digital campaigns with a CSR focus		
Aligning online and offline brand images		
Developing innovative digital business models	Innovation in Digital Marketing Models	
Implementing agile marketing approaches		
Using design thinking methods for marketing solutions development		
Establishing a digital marketing innovation lab		
Leveraging emerging technologies in automotive marketing		
Developing interactive platforms for customer engagement		
Designing new models of customer interaction in the digital space		
Utilizing the sharing economy in automotive marketing		
Developing content marketing models with a CSR approach		
Creating an open innovation ecosystem with stakeholder participation		
Designing reward systems for innovative marketing ideas		
Building data collection infrastructure from digital channels	Data Collection and Integration	Data Management and Marketing Intelligence
Developing a Customer Data Platform (CDP)		
Integrating online and offline customer data		
Implementing advanced tracking and analytics systems		
Standardizing data collection processes		
Developing mechanisms for data privacy and security		

Implementing automated data collection systems		
Designing a data architecture for digital marketing		
Managing data quality and cleansing processes		
Developing customer satisfaction management systems for data collection		
Creating an integrated data repository for marketing analytics		
Implementing advanced customer analytics systems	Data-Driven Analysis and Insights	
Developing predictive models of customer behavior		
Smart segmentation of customers based on digital behavior		
Analyzing customer journeys across digital channels		
Creating intelligent dashboards for marketing decision-making		
Sentiment analysis and customer feedback analysis in digital space		
Using artificial intelligence for marketing data analysis		
Evaluating the effectiveness of digital campaigns		
Implementing competitor analysis systems in digital space		
Developing customer valuation algorithms		
Analyzing market trends and demand forecasting		
Implementing data-driven automated marketing systems	Data-Driven Action and Optimization	
Personalizing customer experiences based on behavioral data		
Continuous campaign optimization based on analytical results		
Developing smart product recommendation systems		
Implementing A/B testing and optimizing user experience		
Managing digital marketing budget based on return on investment		
Optimizing pricing strategies based on data		
Developing alert and proactive action systems		
Content optimization based on performance analysis		
Data-driven customer relationship management		
Implementing machine learning systems for continuous improvement		
Mapping customer journeys across digital channels	Designing Digital Customer Experience	Customer Interaction and Engagement in Digital Platforms
Designing customer-centric user interfaces on digital platforms		
Optimizing mobile experience in the car buying process		
Creating seamless experiences across online and offline touchpoints		
Personalizing digital interactions based on customer needs		
Designing simple and smooth online purchasing processes		
Developing interactive tools for vehicle selection and customization		
Creating experiential and educational content for customers		
Designing customer support systems in digital platforms		
Optimizing speed and efficiency of digital platforms		
Creating feedback mechanisms for continuous user experience improvement		
Integrating digital communication channels	Omnichannel Customer Relationship Management	
Developing content marketing strategies for different channels		
Implementing smart messaging systems		
Establishing fast response processes in social media		
Developing digital loyalty programs		
Designing personalized email marketing campaigns		
Implementing chatbots and intelligent virtual assistants		
Creating integrated contact centers with digital capabilities		
Developing mobile applications for continuous customer engagement		
Managing online customer communities		
Designing social CRM systems		

Creating co-design platforms for products	Customer Collaboration and Participation	
Developing crowdsourcing programs for new product ideas		
Designing customer feedback mechanisms in product development		
Creating discussion and knowledge-sharing spaces among customers		
Developing collaborative CSR programs with customers		
Designing participatory reporting systems for product issues		
Establishing brand ambassador programs among loyal customers		
Organizing interactive digital events with customers		
Designing customer participation mechanisms in marketing campaigns		
Creating reward systems for customer engagement		
Developing collaborative educational programs for customers		
Providing accurate and transparent product information in digital channels	Transparency and Honesty in Digital Marketing	Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability in Digital Marketing
Full disclosure of pricing and additional costs		
Providing transparent reports on the environmental performance of vehicles		
Developing supply chain tracking systems		
Clarifying policies on customer data collection and usage		
Presenting uncensored real customer feedback		
Disclosing relationships with influencers and advertising partners		
Providing certified product documentation and credentials		
Creating communication channels for answering customer inquiries		
Regular reporting on corporate social responsibility initiatives		
Transparency regarding errors and corrective actions		
Highlighting environmental features of products in digital marketing	Environmental Impact and Sustainability	
Developing educational content on eco-friendly driving		
Creating digital campaigns focused on environmental awareness		
Designing online tools for calculating vehicle carbon footprint		
Developing collaborative tree-planting programs with customers		
Establishing car-sharing and sustainable transportation platforms		
Reducing the carbon footprint of digital marketing activities		
Supporting environmental projects through digital campaigns		
Providing transparent information about recycling and vehicle end-of-life processes		
Developing loyalty programs with environmental rewards		
Creating interactive content for environmental awareness		
Developing digital campaigns focused on driving safety	Social Responsibility and Community Impact	
Supporting social projects through digital marketing		
Creating online educational programs for local communities		
Designing crowdfunding campaigns for the underprivileged		
Participating in digital infrastructure development projects in underserved areas		
Developing educational content on traffic culture		
Supporting local businesses through digital networks		
Creating digital employment opportunities for disadvantaged groups		
Designing digital volunteering programs for employees and customers		
Developing accessible platforms for people with disabilities		
Running awareness campaigns on social issues		

Developing integrated digital marketing platforms	Marketing Technology Infrastructure	Digital Technology and Innovation
Implementing advanced content management systems		
Establishing big data processing infrastructure		
Developing API architecture for system integration		
Implementing cloud computing infrastructure		
Creating cybersecurity and data protection systems		
Developing mobile and app infrastructure		
Implementing automated marketing systems		
Establishing e-commerce infrastructure		
Developing decision-support systems for marketing		
Implementing AI and machine learning infrastructure		
Implementing augmented reality for product experience	Emerging Technologies in Automotive Marketing	
Developing virtual reality for vehicle demonstration		
Using IoT for customer interaction		
Implementing AI in personalized marketing		
Developing intelligent chatbots based on natural language processing		
Creating blockchain-based marketing systems		
Utilizing voice and image recognition technologies		
Developing advanced recommendation engines		
Implementing biometric technologies in customer experience		
Using robotic automation in marketing processes		
Developing digital twin technologies for products		
Creating an integrated marketing technology stack	Marketing Technology Integration	
Developing data exchange systems between platforms		
Implementing microservices architecture for flexibility		
Creating integrated marketing management dashboards		
Developing open APIs for collaboration with business partners		
Implementing tag management and tracking systems		
Integrating CRM systems with marketing platforms		
Developing customer data management systems (CDPs)		
Establishing an integrated data analytics infrastructure		
Implementing unified content management systems		
Developing a consistent information architecture across all channels		
Identifying skill gaps in digital marketing	Digital Skills and Talent Development	Organizational Capabilities and Culture
Designing specialized digital marketing training programs		
Recruiting and retaining digital marketing specialists		
Creating professional development pathways for marketing teams		
Developing mentoring and coaching programs		
Establishing partnerships with universities and educational institutions		
Organizing hands-on workshops and experience-sharing sessions		
Developing continuous learning and self-education programs		
Creating evaluation and feedback systems for skill assessment		
Designing job rotation programs to develop diverse skills		
Organizing hackathons and innovation challenges		
Redesigning organizational structure to align with digital marketing	Agile Organizational Structure and Processes	
Implementing agile methodologies in marketing teams		
Creating cross-functional teams		
Developing rapid and flexible decision-making processes		
Implementing agile project management systems		
Establishing fast feedback and continuous improvement mechanisms		
Designing collaborative and creative workspaces		
Developing horizontal and vertical communication systems		

Reducing bureaucracy and organizational layers	
Creating delegation and empowerment mechanisms	
Designing performance-based rewards and recognition systems	
Promoting a data-driven decision-making culture	Digital Culture and Innovation
Creating a safe space for experimentation	
Encouraging innovative thinking and creativity	
Developing a continuous learning and knowledge-sharing culture	
Promoting individual and team accountability	
Embedding customer-centricity across all organizational levels	
Strengthening cross-departmental collaboration and breaking organizational silos	
Fostering transparency and honesty in communication	
Encouraging critical thinking and challenging the status quo	
Cultivating adaptability and openness to change	
Promoting corporate social responsibility values in organizational culture	

The main category of "Responsible Digital Marketing Strategy and Vision" includes the secondary themes of "Developing an Integrated Digital Marketing Strategy," "Responsible Digital Brand Management," and "Innovation in Digital Marketing Models." This category highlights the importance of aligning digital marketing strategy with the organization's macro objectives and corporate social responsibility (CSR) values. The findings indicate that automotive companies need to develop a clear roadmap for responsible digital marketing, define key performance indicators, conduct competitor analysis, and identify customer touchpoints. Furthermore, key aspects of this category include establishing a digital brand identity with an emphasis on CSR values, developing a digital content strategy aligned with brand values, and designing CSR-focused digital campaigns. Innovation in digital marketing models is also covered under this category through the development of innovative digital business models, the implementation of agile marketing approaches, and the utilization of emerging technologies.

The main category of "Data Management and Marketing Intelligence" encompasses the secondary themes of "Data Collection and Integration," "Data-Driven Analysis and Insights," and "Data-Based Action and Optimization." This category underscores the importance of establishing data collection infrastructures from digital channels, developing a Customer Data Platform (CDP), and integrating online and offline customer data. Data-driven analysis and insights involve the implementation of advanced customer analytics systems, the development of predictive behavioral models, and intelligent customer segmentation. Additionally, data-based action highlights the significance of implementing automated marketing systems, personalizing customer experiences based on behavioral data, and continuously optimizing campaigns. The findings suggest that data management is a critical capability for success in responsible digital marketing within the automotive industry. Companies must adopt a systematic and ethical approach across all stages, from data collection to action based on insights.

The main category of "Customer Interaction and Engagement in Digital Platforms" includes the secondary themes of "Designing Digital Customer Experience," "Omnichannel Customer Relationship Management," and "Customer Collaboration and Participation." This category emphasizes the importance of mapping the customer journey across digital channels, designing user-centered interfaces, and creating seamless experiences across online and offline touchpoints. Omnichannel customer relationship management involves integrating digital communication channels, developing a content marketing strategy for different channels, and implementing intelligent messaging systems. Additionally, customer collaboration and participation refer to the creation of co-design platforms for products, the development of crowdsourcing programs for idea generation, and the establishment of discussion and knowledge-sharing spaces among customers. The findings indicate that effective digital customer engagement requires an integrated, personalized, and participatory approach that not only enhances customer experience but also involves them in product development and CSR initiatives.

The main category of "Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability in Digital Marketing" consists of the secondary themes "Transparency and Honesty in Digital Marketing," "Environmental Impact and Sustainability," and "Social Responsibility and Community Impact." This category underscores the importance of providing accurate and transparent product information in digital channels, fully disclosing pricing and additional costs, and offering transparent reports on the environmental performance of vehicles. Environmental impact and sustainability include highlighting the environmental

features of products, developing educational content on eco-friendly driving, and creating digital campaigns focused on environmental awareness. Additionally, social responsibility and community impact involve developing digital campaigns focused on driving safety, supporting social projects, and creating online educational programs for local communities. The findings suggest that responsible digital marketing in the automotive industry should extend beyond commercial objectives to consider environmental and social issues, with transparency and honesty at the core of its initiatives.

The main category of "Digital Technology and Innovation" comprises the secondary themes "Marketing Technology Infrastructure," "Emerging Technologies in Automotive Marketing," and "Marketing Technology Integration." This category highlights the importance of developing integrated digital marketing platforms, implementing advanced content management systems, and establishing big data processing infrastructures. Emerging technologies in automotive marketing include the implementation of augmented reality for product experience, the development of virtual reality for vehicle demonstrations, and the use of the Internet of Things (IoT) for customer interaction. Furthermore, marketing technology integration involves creating an integrated marketing technology stack, developing data exchange systems between platforms, and implementing microservices architecture for enhanced flexibility. The findings indicate that leveraging advanced and emerging technologies, along with their seamless integration, plays a crucial role in the success of digital marketing in the automotive industry. Companies must develop their technology infrastructure in alignment with the requirements of responsible digital marketing.

The main category of "Organizational Capabilities and Culture Development" includes the secondary themes "Digital Skills and Talent Development," "Agile Organizational Structure and Processes," and "Digital Culture and Innovation." This category emphasizes the importance of identifying skill gaps in digital marketing, designing specialized training programs, and attracting and retaining digital marketing experts. Agile organizational structure and processes involve redesigning organizational structures to align with digital marketing, implementing agile methodologies, and creating cross-functional teams. Additionally, digital culture and innovation focus on promoting a data-driven decision-making culture, creating a safe space for experimentation, and encouraging innovative thinking and creativity. The findings suggest that success in responsible digital marketing requires not only technical capabilities but also the development of human competencies, the establishment of flexible organizational structures, and the promotion of an innovation-driven and responsibility-oriented corporate culture. Automotive companies must pay equal attention to these soft aspects alongside technical and technological dimensions.
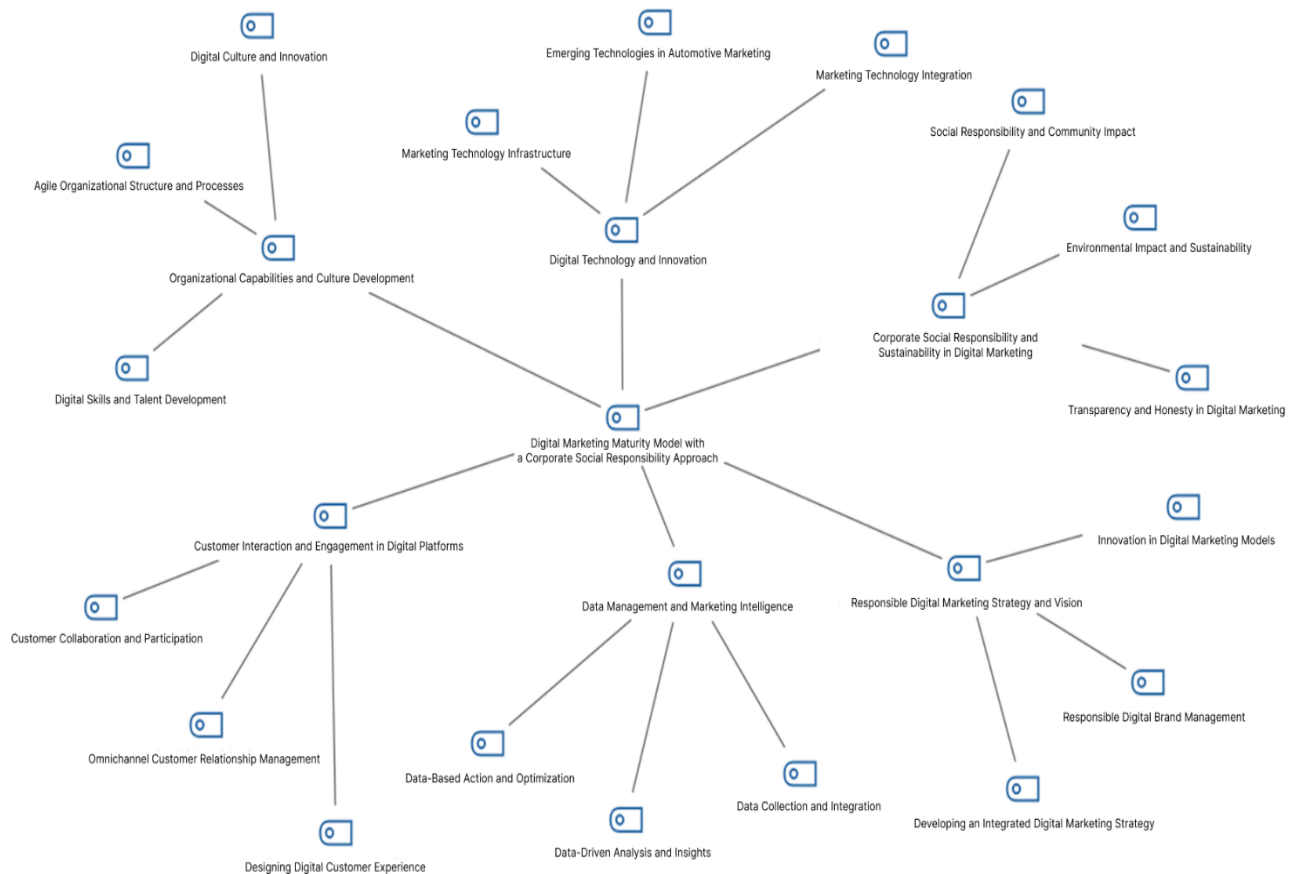
Figure 1. Final Research Model

4.   Discussion and Conclusion

The results indicate that the Digital Marketing Maturity Model with a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Approach in Modiran Khodro Company comprises the main categories of Organizational Capabilities and Culture Development, Digital Technology and Innovation, Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability in Digital Marketing, Responsible Digital Marketing Strategy and Vision, Data Management and Marketing Intelligence, and Customer Interaction and Engagement in Digital Platforms. In the present era, rapid digital transformations have profoundly reshaped the business environment, impacting various industries, including the automotive sector. Digital marketing has emerged as a strategic approach playing a pivotal role in organizational success, while corporate social responsibility has been established as a fundamental principle in corporate strategies (Chen, 2020).

The automotive industry, as one of the leading sectors in the global economy, faces multiple challenges in digital marketing and corporate social responsibility. Modiran Khodro Company, as a key player in the Iranian market, requires a comprehensive model to enhance its digital marketing maturity with a CSR-oriented approach (Saura, 2021). Studies suggest that integrating digital marketing with corporate social responsibility can provide significant competitive advantages for organizations. Recent research has emphasized the need to develop integrated maturity models that encompass both digital capabilities and social commitments (Verma, 2022).

Organizational culture and employee capabilities play a key role in achieving digital marketing maturity. Research has demonstrated that organizations fostering a culture of innovation and continuous learning are more effective in leveraging digital technologies (Chaffey, 2020). Additionally, empowering employees to effectively utilize digital marketing tools is a critical success factor in this domain. According to Kotler and Keller (2021), establishing an organizational culture based on

corporate social responsibility positively influences the adoption of digital tools and their alignment with social objectives (Kotler & Keller, 2021).

Digital technology and innovation are recognized as essential components for advancing toward responsible digital marketing. Recent studies emphasize that adopting advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data analytics, and marketing automation enhances the efficiency and accuracy of marketing strategies (Kotler & Keller, 2021). Moreover, research highlights that innovation in digital technologies can support corporate social responsibility, particularly in areas such as reducing environmental impact and optimizing resource usage (Kumar & Reinartz, 2022).

Corporate social responsibility and sustainability in digital marketing are widely emphasized in the scientific literature. According to Porter and Kramer (2011), corporate social responsibility is most effective when it is strategically integrated into a company's core activities, including digital marketing (Porter & Kramer, 2011). Additionally, research such as Kotler and Lee (2021) has demonstrated that consumers are increasingly attentive to corporate social responsibility practices, which significantly influence their purchasing decisions (Kotler & Lee, 2021). Consequently, this component aligns with well-established scientific findings.

Responsible digital marketing strategy and vision are critical elements for success in this field. Research by Chaffey (2020) indicates that organizations that align their digital marketing strategies with corporate social responsibility principles not only achieve greater customer acquisition success but also enhance customer trust and loyalty. Furthermore, developing a clear vision for responsible digital marketing enables organizations to set priorities effectively and allocate resources optimally.

Data management and marketing intelligence constitute a key component for attaining digital maturity. According to Davenport and Prusak (2021), utilizing accurate data and advanced analytics allows organizations to better understand customer needs and behaviors, facilitating the implementation of targeted marketing strategies (Davenport & Prusak, 2021). Additionally, research by Kumar et al. (2022) suggests that marketing data can serve as a tool for evaluating the social and environmental impact of marketing activities (Kumar & Reinartz, 2022).

Customer interaction and engagement in digital platforms are crucial not only for attracting new customers but also for retaining existing ones. Studies have shown that leveraging digital communication channels, including social media and online engagement platforms, enhances customer satisfaction and strengthens brand trust (Parsakia & Jafari, 2023). Moreover, Kotler and Keller (2021) emphasize that effective customer engagement in digital platforms should be ethically driven and aligned with corporate social responsibility principles to maximize its positive impact (Kotler & Keller, 2021).

Ethical Considerations

All procedures performed in this study were under the ethical standards.

Acknowledgments

Authors thank all participants who participate in this study.

Conflict of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

Funding/Financial Support

According to the authors, this article has no financial support.

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