SWOT Analysis of Digital Marketing in Turkey 🔴

Türkiye'de Dijital Pazarlama Uygulamalarının SWOT Analizi

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Abstract

Digital marketing has become a critical strategy for modern businesses, and Turkey is rapidly developing in this field. With the widespread use of the internet and technological advancements, Turkey's digital marketing environment holds significant potential. However, along with challenges, there are also opportunities in this area. This paper aims to evaluate the SWOT analysis of digital marketing in Turkey, highlighting the sector's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. To support the SWOT analysis, various academic studies have been reviewed. The relevant studies are listed under the sections of SWOT analysis and methodology. Secondary data has been used based on selected studies directly related to the topic. In this context, databases such as Web of Science, Scopus and ULAKBIM were scanned to access sufficient literature on the subject. The findings include that Turkey, as an emerging country in digital marketing, has strengths; areas with low-skilled labor and inadequate infrastructure represent weaknesses; a young and open population presents opportunities; and a highly competitive market poses threats. Based on the findings, recommendations have been made for businesses and decision-makers. Additionally, a review of the literature reveals that there is no study specifically focused on the SWOT analysis of digital marketing in Turkey. This study is expected to fill a significant gap in the literature in this regard.

Keywords: Marketing, Digital Marketing, SWOT, Strategic Management.
JEL Codes: M31,M39,O32

Özet

Dijital pazarlama, modern işletmeler için kritik bir strateji haline gelmiştir ve Türkiye bu alanda hızla gelişmektedir. İnternetin yaygın kullanımı ve teknolojik gelişmeler sayesinde Türkiye'nin dijital pazarlama ortamı büyük bir potansiyele sahiptir. Ancak bu alanda zorlukların yanı sıra fırsatlar da bulunmaktadır. Bu makale, dijital pazarlamaya yönelik Türkiye'nin SWOT analizini değerlendirmeyi ve sektördeki güçlü, zayıf yönleri, fırsatları ve tehditleri ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışma yürütülürken, SWOT analizini desteklemek için birçok akademik çalışma taranmıştır. İncelenen söz konusu çalışmalar, SWOT analizi ve yöntem başlıkları altında belirtilmiştir. Konuyla doğrudan ilgili seçilmiş çalışmalardan yararlanılarak ikincil veriler kullanılmıştır. Bu doğrultuda konu ile ilgili yeterli literatüre ulaşmak için Web of Science, Scopus ve ULAKBIM gibi veri tabanları taranmıştır. Elde edilen bulgular arasında; Türkiye'nin dijital pazarlama açısından gelişmekte olan bir ülke olması güçlü yönler, düşük eğitimli iş gücüne ve yetersiz altyapıya sahip bölgelere sahip olması zayıf yönler, genç ve açık bir nüfusa sahip olması fırsat, yüksek rekabete maruz bir pazar olması tehdit olarak yer almaktadır. Elde edilen bulgulara dayanarak işletmelere ve karar vericilere önerilerde bulunulmuştur. Ayrıca literatür incelendiğinde, doğrudan Türkiye'nin dijital pazarlama SWOT analizi içeren bir çalışmaya rastlanmamıştır. Çalışmanın bu boyutunun literatürde önemli bir boşluğu dolduracağı düşünülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Pazarlama, Dijital Pazarlama, SWOT, Stratejik Yönetim.
JEL Kodları: M31,M39,O32

Introduction

Türkiye, The concept of digital marketing has gained increasing importance since the 2000s, especially in helping businesses develop new market strategies. It is stated that digital marketing is used as a tool particularly in determining management strategies and has many impacts on maintaining and growing a company's presence in the market. Today, managers or decision-makers want to understand the strengths and weaknesses of their organizations and be prepared for the opportunities and threats emerging in their environment. Conducting a SWOT analysis plays a significant role in observing current realities objectively and developing new strategies when necessary. In fact, evaluating the organization impartially from within, especially identifying and addressing weaknesses, can be quite challenging. Therefore, businesses that aim to maintain their current position in the market or expand their market share must identify the advantages and disadvantages that digital marketing brings to them, considering the rapid pace of technological development. In this context, performing a SWOT analysis of digital marketing and clearly revealing the contributions or challenges it brings to businesses is of great importance.

In 2024, the fact that 86.5% of Turkey's population are internet users, placing the country 36th in the world in terms of penetration and 3rd globally in e-commerce with a rate of 64.6%, shows that Turkey is still developing in this area and that the number of users is increasing rapidly (Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure of the Republic of Turkey, 2024). The internet appears as a method that consumers use as a secondary data source for various purposes (such as purchasing, acquiring information, and communication).

This study aims to perform a SWOT analysis of digital marketing in Turkey by utilizing secondary data from national and international literature. Additionally, the goal is to help businesses identify the strengths and weaknesses of digital marketing during their decision-making and strategic management processes and develop plans for the opportunities or threats they may face in the future. Although the literature review referred to studies supporting SWOT analysis, there is a significant lack of studies specifically focusing on SWOT analysis of digital marketing in Turkey. This aspect of the study is expected to contribute to the national literature and the field as a whole, providing valuable insights and recommendations for both businesses and public sector decision-makers in developing digital marketing strategies, particularly regarding opportunities and threats.

The Concept of Digital Marketing and Its Historical Process

When discussing digital marketing, the first things that come to mind are technologies used in media tools such as email campaigns, websites, smart TVs, and Wi-Fi. Digital marketing is often confused with online marketing. However, digital marketing encompasses all marketing efforts that use an electronic device or the internet. Businesses leverage digital channels such as search engines, social media, email, and websites to connect with current and potential customers. It is also referred to as "internet marketing" or "web marketing." Digital marketing is defined using various digital tactics and channels to connect with customers online, where they spend most of their time (Desai & Vidyapeeth, 2019).

The first signs of digitalization were heard in 1969 when the first message was sent over the internet at the University of California, Los Angeles. The primary goal was merely to communicate in a digital environment. No one could have predicted that such technology would one day be used as a marketing tool. The concept of "digital marketing" first entered our lives in the 1990s with the spread of personal computers into homes and the increased use of the internet, applied through Web 1.0 platforms, the earliest web-based applications. The digital transformation in marketing strategies began with the first clickable banner ad on the Hotwired.com website in October 1994 (The First Banner Ad, 2024).

Simultaneously, while search engine companies like Yahoo, HotBot, and LookSmart were gradually entering the market; Google, now one of the most influential players, emerged in 1998. After Google's introduction, marketers aiming to appear in search engine results quickly realized the potential of search engine optimization (SEO) even at that time. Another significant digital advancement in this period was the introduction and use of browser-based cookies. From a marketing perspective, cookies allowed businesses to track and record information about users who left their websites. Even today, cookie technology is regarded as a critical tool in marketing. During the same years, with the rise of the internet sector, many websites, especially e-commerce sites (such as Amazon, Google, eBay), received investments far exceeding their value. The failure of these investments to turn into profitability and the fact that users were not yet ready for online shopping were seen as major reasons for the Internet Bubble crisis (Dot-Com Bubble Burst) of 2000. As a result of the crisis, many small-scale internet companies went out of business. For example, Cisco's NASDAQ shares fell by 86%, and even large firms like Amazon saw their shares drop from $107 to

$7. During this period, Google, recognizing the increasing volume of search engines as an opportunity, introduced its AdWords product, which displayed ads in search results by targeting user queries. This innovation marked a new era in digital marketing, allowing brands to effectively market their products or services in the digital space through AdWords advertisements. Later, with the advent of Web 2.0 technology, the ability for users to create content became one of the most significant milestones in the historical development of digital marketing. While Web 1.0 internet sites hosted only static, readable content, Web 2.0 technology introduced the era of dynamic content. This technology allowed users to upload their desired content to websites and interact with other users. This content-sharing approach led to the emergence of social media, with platforms like Facebook and Twitter (now known as X) becoming significant marketing channels due to their widespread usage (Ünvan and Badlo, 2021; Terziu, 2020; DeLong and Magin, 2006).

In recent history, as the 21st century began, many businesses developed or were in the final stages of developing web-based marketing strategies. During this period, email communication became widespread, and technologies emerged that made managing communication through this medium quite eaz Additionally, businesses started utilizing Customer Relationship Management (CRM) concepts through databases as part of their digitalization processes. Some businesses (in sectors such as furniture, automotive, healthcare, education, food, etc.) changed their advertising strategies from print and visual media to web presence. More visionary businesses during this period appeared on search engines within their websites and added online marketing to their overall marketing processes. They began to change their organizational and managerial approaches to find or train experts in this area. However, this process, which may seem like a distant past but is quite recent, has been revolutionized by the significant role of social media today. The data shared by We are Social (WAS) in February 2024 is quite striking. The digital journey that began at the start of the 21st century saw the number of users in Turkey increase from 39.4 million in 2014 to 74.4 million in January 2024, representing 86.5% of the total population (WAS, 2024). This rapid development is altering consumer behaviours and prompting businesses to establish new marketing strategies. The broad bandwidth penetration provided by infrastructure increases internet usage and user expectations, leading to more than 66% of the world being online and over 90% online activity in many developed countries (such as the UK, Canada, South Korea, the Netherlands, Japan, etc.) (Statista, 2024).

Of course, consumers are not limited to just web pages; with technological and digital advancements, the use of mobile devices, smart tablets, and smart TVs is also increasing. Particularly in the last two years, the rise in artificial intelligence has created opportunities for information retrieval supported by ChatGPT. This digital transformation is pushing businesses to become part of the digital transformation and develop new learning and action plans. However, it is also important to mention that there is a small portion of the population, which is somewhat technophobic and aging, that is hesitant towards new learning practices. Many reasons contribute to their reluctance (such as consumer cynicism, distrust, resistance to learning, underdeveloped legal regulations, etc.). Nevertheless, businesses aim to spread their digital marketing strategies across a broad market base to take advantage of the benefits offered (Kingsnorth, 2022: 20-21).

The Importance of Digital Marketing

Sommarberg and Mäkinen (2019) define digital technology as "corporate marketing programs that can communicate with partners and customers on an integrated platform or system to create new value." Furthermore, these strategies enable the use of business intelligence to collect customer data and implement multiple strategies to encourage interaction with customers. Today, businesses face significant challenges in collecting, storing, and interacting with current customer data. One major reason for these difficulties is being restricted by legal regulations, and another is customers' reluctance to share their data (Bhimani et al., 2019).

The rapid development of the digital economy is recognized as a driving force for high-quality economic growth plans. Today, transactions between businesses and customers are increasingly conducted through web-based access. This development influences not only the growth of the internet but also the advancements in digital technologies such as big data, blockchain, and digital currencies, ultimately transforming consumer purchasing behaviours. The evolution of the digital economy strengthens the connection between businesses and consumers, affecting marketing strategies as businesses respond to changing consumer behaviour (Cheng et al., 2023; Brock and Kohli, 2023; Tabares et al., 2023). Traditional marketing is seen to adapt to shifts in consumer behaviour by combining with digital technology to optimize the sales process and improve the user experience, which further enhances business performance. With new management approaches, new marketing strategies are evolving, enabling businesses to adapt to the changing global order. One of the key advantages of digital marketing is its ability to facilitate rapid adaptation to change (Du et al., 2024).

As the use of internet platforms and technology spreads across a wider foundation, digital marketing is becoming an increasingly important component

of modern business operations. Chatbots, used for customer communication, offer businesses a simple and personalized approach to interacting with consumers, thus contributing to the improvement of the customer experience. Customer experience refers to the overall perception that develops through interactions throughout the customer journey and is a crucial factor in creating customer loyalty. This digital method (Chatbot), which can be programmed to perform various tasks such as answering consumer questions, offering recommendations, and assisting with transactions, enhances the effectiveness of customer relationship management processes (Abdelkader, 2023: 1-2).

Another significant aspect of digital marketing is its measurability through digital media tools. The ability to measure digital media tools has been touted as one of the greatest advantages over other media since the mid-1990s when what was then known as internet marketing was first implemented. Many marketers have stated that the ability to measure website visitors' interactions through log files has provided unprecedented insights into the effectiveness of marketing communications (Chaffey and Patron, 2012: 30-31).

Digital marketing is also known to provide significant contributions to businesses in the establishment phase, often referred to as start-ups. Start-up companies, by their nature, are businesses designed to respond to specific problems for their customers. One of the most challenging aspects for start-ups is to take solid steps in the early stages to establish their presence in the market. According to Giardino et al. (2015), solely focusing on technological solutions does not guarantee survival for early-stage start-ups. However, new companies face a high level of resource constraints and time pressure to solve customer problems (Conway and Hemphill, 2019).

Businesses that can access customer data through digital marketing applications gain a significant advantage in enhancing their marketing capabilities. Utilizing digital marketing platforms provides a crucial advantage for forecasting market trends, tracking new business opportunities, and understanding customer expectations and needs. In this context, businesses use digital marketing platforms to predict market trends and assess consumer preferences or forecasts to monitor business opportunities (Mention et al., 2019).

For early-stage businesses, digital marketing offers a valuable opportunity not only to announce their existence but also to conduct initial market tests. During these trial processes, by combining data obtained from the market with insights gained from digital marketing, an expanded impact can be created, leading to more accurate decision-making (Bland and Osterwalder, 2020). One of the most important advantages that digital marketing offers in terms of

gathering market information is the ability to collect data from a broader market base at a lower cost. It also provides the ability to interact at low costs, measure consumer trust through trust questions, and test working prototypes (Giardino et al., 2015). Additionally, according to Bland and Osterwalder (2020), digital marketing applications allow businesses to optimize and understand customer behaviour by analysing traffic data from websites.

Another advantage of digital marketing is the contribution it provides to branding. By leveraging the power of digital marketing, brands can identify their target audience and manage their advertising strategies by using scarce resources in the most effective way. To achieve and maintain competitive advantage, it is essential to implement steps such as speed, engagement, targeting, measurement, and optimization. Digital marketing strategies enable advertisements on social media and web pages to reach the target audience quickly. Additionally, flexible and low-cost advertising strategies make it easier for businesses to manage their marketing strategies. Digital interactions that reach the desired audience at the desired time enable a two-way flow of interactive information. For example, digital advertising strategies allow businesses to instantly learn the opinions and suggestions of consumers about a launched advertising campaign. Furthermore, digital tools make it easy to reach consumers on either national or international platforms. Some search engines (Google, Yandex, Yahoo, Microsoft Bing) can narrow the target audience to a specific city, district, or even neighbourhood. Measurement processes provide detailed and rapid feedback on metrics such as clicks, display time, and viewing periods. When comparing the number of people reached to the total cost, the cost per person remains more optimal than with traditional tools. For instance, the number of people reached through a newspaper ad is limited to those who read that particular newspaper, whereas the number of people reached via social media platforms or web-based news sites can be much higher. In this context, the optimization step also allows for the freedom to make instant decisions, and the process can continue flexibly according to desired decisions (Gökşin, 2018: 7-8).

However, there are also critical views on digital marketing. One such view is that new technologies represent significant challenges for organizational development. Another criticism is that digitization increases the distance between businesses and customers, making interactions more virtual (Wu et al., 2024).

To improve digital marketing and ensure that processes are conducted more effectively and efficiently, it is necessary to review key performance indicators (KPIs). Along with working with the right people and using the right tools, it is crucial to outline a

framework for KPIs that enhance the digital marketing strategy. In summary, for those responsible in any area, it is necessary to make a clear distinction between the evaluation of customer acquisition, conversion, and retention for reporting and analysing the effectiveness of marketing activities. Chaffey and Bosomworth (2013) state that businesses that have adopted digital marketing strategies often lack proper planning. To conduct this planning process more effectively, they have developed the RACE model, which outlines the steps to be taken after planning. The RACE model consists of four steps: Reach, Act, Convert, and Engage. Reach aims to increase traffic by directing visits to websites and creating brand, product, and service awareness and visibility on other websites and offline media. The goal of the Act step is to generate online potential customers that can later be "nurtured towards purchase" for most businesses. It involves persuading visitors or potential customers to take the next step in their customer journey, namely action. Convert is a vital step that transforms the target audience into paying customers through online or e-commerce transactions. Finally, Engage focuses on long-term customer engagement and communication, aiming to develop customer loyalty by using communications, social presence, email, and direct interactions on the website to enhance customer lifetime value (Chaffey and Patron, 2012).

Method

By examining the SWOT analysis of digital marketing in Turkey, this study aims to provide an in-depth analysis by identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to the subject. This analysis is designed to help the reader understand both the positive and negative aspects of the topic. SWOT analysis plays a critical role in the strategic planning processes of organizations. SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (Suguna and Selladurai, 2017). This analysis allows organizations to evaluate internal and external factors and is used to guide strategic decisions. As stated below, SWOT analysis consists of four main components (Kumar and Praveena, 2023; Kotler and Keller, 2016; Mintzberg et al., 1998; Wheelen and Hunger, 2017; Barney, 2007; Puyt et al., 2023; Helms and Nixon, 2010).

Strengths: Strengths are internal characteristics of the organization that provide a competitive advantage. Strengths are often defined as the things the organization does well, as well as its resources and capabilities. In this context, a strong brand image or innovative product development capacity is considered a strength.

Weaknesses: Weaknesses are internal areas that

the organization needs to improve. These weaknesses can negatively affect the organization's performance. For example, inadequate financial resources or low employee motivation can be considered weaknesses.

Opportunities: Opportunities are external areas where the organization can benefit from positive developments in its environment. Opportunities may include factors such as market trends, technological innovations, or economic growth.

Threats: Threats are risks arising from negative external factors that can affect the organization. These threats and risks may include elements such as competition, economic downturns, or regulatory practices.

SWOT analysis offers several advantages. The most notable advantages include helping organizations systematically evaluate internal and external factors and providing crucial information for strategic planning. According to Johnson et al. (2008), strategic opportunities can be identified by focusing on strengths and opportunities, while risks can be mitigated by considering weaknesses and threats. However, SWOT analysis also has some limitations. It can often be subjective and may not accurately reflect the true situation. Additionally, SWOT analysis may frequently remain superficial and require more in-depth analysis (Thompson et al., 2022).

In general, SWOT analysis functions as an effective tool in the strategic planning processes of organizations. The systematic evaluation of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats enables organizations to make more informed strategic decisions. However, it is important to consider the limitations of SWOT analysis and to support it with other strategic analysis tools (Porter, 1998).

SWOT Analysis

When the literature is examined, it can be said that there are significant deficiencies in studies focusing on the SWOT analysis of digital marketing in Turkey. To support the SWOT analysis in this study, a comprehensive review of both national and international literature on the topic was conducted. Expressions to be used for the SWOT analysis of digital marketing in Turkey were identified based on relevant research (Keke, 2022; Karaoğlan and Durukan, 2020; Saçan and Eren, 2021; Geçit and Taşkın, 2018; Şahin, 2023; TÜİK, 2023; Bulunmaz, 2016; Çayırağası and Sakıcı, 2021; Ministry of Commerce of the Republic of Turkey, 2024; Suguna and Selladurai, 2017; Güzel, 2015; TÜBİSAD, 2020; Pratiwi and Rohman, 2023; Hanis and Yusuf, 2022; Rifai and Witriantino, 2022; Kahraman et al., 2007). In this regard, the study fills a significant gap in the literature.

Strengths

• Turkey's e-commerce sector has been growing rapidly in recent years. According to the "Overview of E-Commerce in Turkey" report by the Ministry of Trade, "Turkey's e-commerce volume in 2023 reached 1.85 trillion Turkish lira. In 2023, the volume of e-commerce in Turkey increased by 115.15% compared to the previous year, reaching 1.85 trillion Turkish lira (77.89 billion USD), with the number of transactions rising by 22.25% to 5.87 billion transactions. The Ministry of Trade predicts that the e-commerce volume in 2024 will reach 3.4 trillion Turkish lira with 6.67 billion transactions". This growth increases the importance of digital marketing strategies and supports the effectiveness of online sales channels.

• According to the Household Information Technologies Usage Survey, the rate of households with internet access was 95.5%. In 2023, the proportion of households with internet access from home increased by 1.4 percentage points from the previous year to 95.5%. The proportion of individuals using the internet reached 87.1%. In the 16-74 age group, the rate of internet usage was 85.0% in 2022 and rose to 87.1% in 2023. This high internet penetration ensures that digital marketing campaigns can reach a broad audience.

• Turkey has shown significant progress in digital infrastructure and technological investments. The spread of fiber internet infrastructure and digital transformation projects enhances the effectiveness of digital marketing activities.

• The strengthening of technological infrastructure enables more efficient use of digital marketing tools such as data analysis, automation, and artificial intelligence. Moreover, investments in digital marketing allow brands to quickly adapt to technological innovations.

• Turkey's young population quickly adapts to digital technologies. Younger age groups heavily use digital and social media platforms, offering effective targeting opportunities for brands. Social media is a powerful tool for brands to reach consumers directly, and a significant portion of social media users in Turkey actively engage with brands.

• Digital marketing campaigns can be easily customized and tailored to meet specific business needs, making them more targeted.

• Unlike traditional methods, digital marketing campaigns do not require a large team, saving money, time, and effort while also increasing return on investment.

• As statistical reviews have shown, Turkey's e-commerce platforms demonstrated notable resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Weaknesses

• In some sectors in Turkey (such as food, cosmetics, home cleaning products, personal care, construction, etc.), digital marketing investments are insufficient. Especially, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) tend to keep their digital marketing budgets limited, which reduces their competitive advantage. According to the Advertisers Association Report (2024) prepared at the end of 2023, despite a technological transformation brought about by the internet, traditional media still maintains its effectiveness in Turkey amid changing media processes.

• There is a limited number of skilled professionals capable of effectively implementing digital marketing strategies. The lack of experts with digital marketing skills can restrict the effectiveness of campaigns.

• Data security and privacy issues on digital platforms present significant challenges for brands. In Turkey, legal regulations and practices concerning data security and personal information protection can affect user trust.

• In Turkey, some brands face challenges in rapidly adapting to technological innovations in digital marketing. Examples include those in the food sector that adhere to traditional production and distribution methods and SMEs in the industrial sector. The fast-evolving nature of technology and digital trends can make it difficult for brands to keep their strategies updated. Slow technological adaptation can limit the effectiveness of digital campaigns and cause brands to lose their competitive edge. Transitioning to innovative technologies such as artificial intelligence, data analytics, and automation can be costly and complex for some businesses.

• Problems caused by high commission rates of marketplaces. E-commerce operates on a dual-sided structure that connects sellers and buyers. Sellers aim to create a sustainable business model on online platforms and maintain long-term relationships with customers under a strong brand name. Especially in Turkey, marketplace commission fees typically include both platform usage fees and a fee for each sales transaction. Commission rates vary by product segment, but on average, they are around 10-15%, pushing new entrants to online stores. Digital advertisements, which sellers must use, further increase operational costs.

• Legal and regulatory challenges encountered during digital marketing activities can impact brands' strategic plans. Some businesses in Turkey may lack sufficient knowledge of legal regulations related to digital advertising and data protection. Non-compliance with legal requirements can lead to legal issues and penalties. Additionally, keeping up with and implementing regulatory changes poses an additional burden for businesses.

SWOT Analysis of Digital Marketing in Turkey

- There is a lack of academic studies on this subject. As of August 15, 2024, a search of the "Scopus" database for publications with "digital marketing" in the title yielded a total of "1559" publications, of which only "46" were from Turkey. Similarly, a search of the "Web of Science" database produced "714" publications, but only "7" were Turkish based.

- The legal system is not highly effective in resolving disputes. The enforcement power of the laws is weak, and intellectual property rights are not adequately protected.

- Restrictions on internet access negatively impact access to information, originality, and creativity, which are critical elements of this ecosystem. The prevalence of personal entrepreneurship over corporate entrepreneurship hinders the use of economies of scale.

- University graduates do not possess the qualifications required by the industry. Additionally, in terms of skilled labor, data analysis remains a significant concern, and very few people are professionals in this area.

- There is a need for a clear vision for information and communication technologies. Low societal awareness of digital transformation negatively affects the development of digital marketing. Since digitalization policies are not created with a holistic approach, resources are utilized inefficiently.

- It is challenging to reach certain populations, particularly rural and elderly individuals, who still do not use the internet.

- There is a need for a deep understanding of changing human behaviours and needs.

- Barriers exist to the adoption of digital payment methods.

Opportunities

- The e-commerce sector in Turkey is rapidly growing. The expansion of e-commerce broadens digital marketing opportunities for brands and encourages the adoption of strategic steps to increase online sales.

- The impact of significant developments in technological innovations is important. Technological advancements such as artificial intelligence, big data analytics, and automation enhance the personalization and effectiveness of digital marketing campaigns. These technologies enable brands to better understand consumer behaviour and create targeted campaigns.

- Digital marketing offers opportunities for Turkish brands to enter international markets. Turkey's strategic location and digital infrastructure support the competitiveness of Turkish brands in global markets.

- Increasing employment opportunities for young people are emerging, as this field is growing, and the number of professionals is limited.

- The comprehensive adoption of digital marketing across all sectors could assist the country's overall digitalization, leading to a smarter lifestyle for a large portion of the population.

- Digital marketing can assist the digitalization of governmental institutions in Turkey. Operations from sectors like railways, municipal organizations, and others could become faster and more efficient.

- The promotion of small businesses is becoming easier during this process since digital marketing is cost-effective.

Threats

- The high level of competition in the digital marketing field can make it difficult for brands to stand out. The presence of numerous players in the market requires brands to constantly update their marketing strategies and remain innovative.

- The speed of technological advancements can make it challenging to keep digital marketing strategies up to date. Brands need to quickly adapt to technological innovations.

- Legal regulations related to digital advertising and data protection may affect the feasibility of strategies. Data protection laws and regulations in Turkey could limit brands' digital marketing strategies or complicate their compliance processes.

- Constant awareness and adaptation are required due to continuously changing marketing trends and the ever-evolving rules of search engine optimization, making it difficult to keep up.

- The full security of data storage remains a significant concern.

- Misinterpreting data can lead to negative outcomes for many companies.

- The confusion arising from the numerous marketing options available (such as face-to-face sales, referral sales, TV and newspaper advertisements, etc.) can contribute to the potential failure of digital marketing campaigns.

- Damage control for negative reviews or complaints on social media or digital platforms is crucial. This issue could even lead to the closure of businesses.

- Challenges related to logistics and delivery, along with their negative impacts on other areas.

- The potential adverse effects of a global economic recession.

- Issues arising in the digital marketing landscape can harm brands.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Marketing management is one of the most important management strategies that determines the future position of businesses in the market. In the transformative developments of the changing world, the role of digital transformation is substantial. Particularly, the increase in technological investments has led to a global transformation, thus introducing a digital dimension to marketing. Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of digital marketing is as crucial as being able to foresee the opportunities and threats in the immediate and distant environment that the business cannot change. Developments occurring outside of businesses, which may sometimes be perceived as threats, can unexpectedly turn into opportunities. A prime example of this is the significant growth in e-commerce during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown, which resulted in record revenues. While this situation posed a threat to many sectors (such as tourism, travel, restaurants, gyms, hairdressers, etc.), it created opportunities for businesses selling digital-based services/products.

Digital literacy in Turkey is increasing each year, and as seen in TÜİK data, the number of users has exceeded 87% of the population. This transformation clearly indicates that businesses need to increase their digital-based investments. Moreover, a SWOT analysis of the situation in Turkey reveals the following findings:

Regarding strengths: The e-commerce volume is projected to reach 3.4 trillion TL, internet access has reached 95.5% of households, and developments such as the increase in fiber internet infrastructure and general growth in businesses' digital infrastructure investments present advantages for all businesses in terms of digital marketing strategies.

On the other hand, weaknesses include insufficient budgets for digital investments by especially medium-sized enterprises in Turkey, the still limited number of skilled professionals nationwide, difficulties faced by businesses in adopting innovative technologies like artificial intelligence, data analytics, and automation, legal and regulatory challenges encountered during digital marketing activities, and the inadequacy of academic research in Turkey are areas that need improvement. Additionally, resistance to change and a reluctance to digital payment methods and purchasing behaviour are also considered weaknesses.

When evaluating opportunities, the most significant opportunity is the rapid growth of the e-commerce sector in Turkey. Other opportunities include digital marketing offering Turkish brands a chance to enter international markets, its appeal to the young population, and the role of government institutions in leading digital transformation in Turkey.

Finally, regarding threats: Businesses in Turkey need to develop strategies to compete with strong brands in digital marketing, address the threats posed by data protection laws and regulations, and manage the impact of negative reviews or complaints on social media or digital platforms. Based on these findings, recommendations for businesses and public decision-makers include:

• Digital marketing is an effective way to reach consumers and the public online (Suguna & Selladurai, 2017). It makes it easier to reach and target a larger audience at a lower cost, providing significant savings compared to traditional marketing strategies. Small businesses can promote themselves more easily and conduct marketing activities at more affordable costs. Digital marketing is a 24/7 global marketplace (Okay, 2023). Therefore, especially small businesses and startups should leverage the advantages offered by digital marketing.

• The advancements in digitalization and digital transformation in the Turkish market are also driving the development of information and communication technologies. Therefore, digital marketing should be expanded and developed to encompass not only businesses but also public institutions and even entire countries. With the impact of globalization, businesses in the global market should utilize the benefits of digital marketing to gain an advantage in the face of intense and disruptive competition. Businesses should also adapt to international standards and innovative developments. To improve resource efficiency or use existing resources most effectively, public institutions should develop integrative policies with digitalization practices. This will make workflow processes faster and more efficient. A more liberal approach to internet accessibility should be adopted in public institutions (TÜBİSAD, 2020).

• In Turkey, incentives and legal regulations should be developed to promote the widespread adoption of digitalization and digital marketing policies in the business world. This will improve the competitive environment and pave the way for the institutionalization of both public institutions and businesses. In the market where the public sector and the private sector face each other, the public sector should focus on activities that enhance the competitive environment rather than competing directly with the private sector (TÜBİSAD, 2020).

• Firms should consider the social media practices of competing firms when determining future strategies, and develop advertising campaigns, discounts, and contests to engage customers and enhance brand image (Saçan & Eren, 2021).

• Another crucial aspect of digitalization is skilled workforce. It is essential to remember that qualified workforce is needed to utilize, develop, and monitor digital marketing practices. In Turkey, the development of a skilled workforce requires

support from both public institutions and organizations as well as practitioners in the private sector. The education system should be revised from basic education to university education to support and expand digital literacy. When planning university education programs, digital competencies should be increased according to sector requirements (Yalap & Gazioğlu, 2023).

Finally, recommendations for future academic studies can be summarized as follows: The SWOT analysis of digital marketing specific to Turkey could be compared with that of another country. Data collection through interviews could be conducted to address the improvement of weaknesses and measures against threats in specific sectors (such as automotive, textiles, tourism, etc.). Field studies could be carried out to reinforce strengths and forecast opportunities. Additionally, different research techniques or methods accompanying SWOT analysis could be applied to address the limitations observed in this study.

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