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Psychological Empowerment And Learning Climate With Knowledge Sharing Mediation On Digital Marketing Capability Among MSMEs

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how psychological empowerment and learning climate influence digital marketing capability among MSMEs, with knowledge sharing as a mediating variable. Drawing on the Knowledge-Based View, the research conceptualizes digital marketing capability as an outcome of knowledge integration shaped by individual motivation and organizational context. A quantitative survey was conducted among MSMEs engaged in digital marketing activities, and the data were analyzed using PLS-SEM. The results indicate that psychological empowerment has a significant positive effect on digital marketing capability, suggesting that empowered individuals are more proactive in adopting and utilizing digital marketing tools. Learning climate also shows a significant positive relationship with digital marketing capability, highlighting the importance of organizational support for continuous learning. Knowledge sharing exhibits the strongest direct effect on digital marketing capability and significantly mediates the relationships between psychological empowerment and digital marketing capability, as well as between learning climate and digital marketing capability. These findings demonstrate that digital marketing capability is not solely driven by technology adoption but also by internal knowledge processes. The study contributes theoretically by integrating psychological and contextual factors into a knowledge-based explanation of capability formation and offers practical guidance for MSMEs seeking to strengthen their digital marketing performance through empowerment, learning support, and systematic knowledge sharing.

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Kata Kunci:
Kemampuan Pemasaran Digital
Berbagi Pengetahuan
Pemberdayaan Psikologis

ABSTRACT

Studi ini meneliti bagaimana pemberdayaan psikologis dan iklim pembelajaran memengaruhi kemampuan pemasaran digital di kalangan

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UMKM, dengan berbagi pengetahuan sebagai variabel mediasi. Berdasarkan Pandangan Berbasis Pengetahuan, penelitian ini mengkonseptualisasikan kemampuan pemasaran digital sebagai hasil integrasi pengetahuan yang dibentuk oleh motivasi individu dan konteks organisasi. Survei kuantitatif dilakukan di antara UMKM yang terlibat dalam aktivitas pemasaran digital, dan data dianalisis menggunakan PLS-SEM. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa pemberdayaan psikologis memiliki pengaruh positif yang signifikan terhadap kemampuan pemasaran digital, menunjukkan bahwa individu yang diberdayakan lebih proaktif dalam mengadopsi dan memanfaatkan alat pemasaran digital. Iklim pembelajaran juga menunjukkan hubungan positif yang signifikan dengan kemampuan pemasaran digital, menyoroti pentingnya dukungan organisasi untuk pembelajaran berkelanjutan. Berbagi pengetahuan menunjukkan pengaruh langsung terkuat terhadap kemampuan pemasaran digital dan secara signifikan memediasi hubungan antara pemberdayaan psikologis dan kemampuan pemasaran digital, serta antara iklim pembelajaran dan kemampuan pemasaran digital. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa kemampuan pemasaran digital tidak hanya didorong oleh adopsi teknologi tetapi juga oleh proses pengetahuan internal. Studi ini memberikan kontribusi teoritis dengan mengintegrasikan faktor psikologis dan kontekstual ke dalam penjelasan berbasis pengetahuan tentang pembentukan kemampuan dan menawarkan panduan praktis bagi UMKM yang ingin memperkuat kinerja pemasaran digital mereka melalui pemberdayaan, dukungan pembelajaran, dan berbagi pengetahuan secara sistematis.

INTRODUCTION

Micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) increasingly rely on digital marketing capability to remain competitive in rapidly changing markets, yet many struggle to transform individual knowledge into organizational capability. Prior studies indicate that digital marketing capability is not only shaped by technology adoption but also by human and social factors such as motivation, learning orientation, and interaction quality (Khan, Salamzadeh, & Iqbal, 2022). Psychological empowerment has been shown to enhance employees' sense of meaning and impact, which can stimulate proactive behavior in knowledge-intensive tasks (Kim & Beehr, 2020). At the same time, learning climate provides contextual support that encourages experimentation and continuous improvement within small firms (Chaudhary & Panda, 2021). However, MSMEs often lack structured systems to align empowerment and learning with daily digital marketing practices. This misalignment leads to fragmented knowledge use and inconsistent digital campaign performance. Such conditions illustrate that the core problem is not only limited resources but also weak integration between psychological and organizational factors, as highlighted by recent organizational behavior research (Kim & Beehr, 2020).

Empirically, many MSMEs adopt social media and e-commerce platforms but fail to sustain strategic digital marketing efforts. Evidence from emerging economies shows that although digital tools are widely accessible, capability gaps remain in analytics use, content strategy, and customer engagement (Cenamor, Sjödin, & Parida, 2019). These gaps reflect insufficient internal learning and poor circulation of market knowledge among employees. Studies also reveal that MSMEs' digital initiatives are often driven by owners' intuition rather than shared understanding, which limits scalability (Bresciani, Ciampi, Meli, & Ferraris, 2021). Knowledge sharing practices, such as peer discussions and informal mentoring, are frequently underdeveloped. Consequently, digital marketing activities become operational rather than strategic. This phenomenon suggests that technological readiness alone is inadequate without supportive psychological and learning conditions (Bresciani et al., 2021).

Recent literature further reports that employees in MSMEs often experience low autonomy and limited access to training, which weakens their motivation to exchange knowledge. Research on workplace learning indicates that when learning climate is perceived as weak, employees tend to hoard knowledge rather than share it (Kang & Lee, 2017). In digital marketing contexts, this behavior reduces the organization's ability to adapt to platform changes and customer trends. Moreover, psychological empowerment has been associated with innovative use of digital tools,

yet its effect depends on social interaction mechanisms (Fang, Chen, Wang, & Chen, 2019). Without a clear mediating process, empowerment may only influence individual performance rather than collective capability. These findings highlight that MSMEs face a structural challenge in converting individual learning into shared competence. Thus, the phenomenon demonstrates a persistent gap between digital adoption and digital marketing capability development (Fang et al., 2019).

Despite growing attention to digital capability, research has rarely examined the combined effects of psychological empowerment and learning climate through knowledge sharing in MSMEs. For instance, Afsar, Masood, and Umrani (2021) focused on empowerment and innovative work behavior but did not incorporate learning climate or digital marketing outcomes. Their findings showed that empowerment enhances creativity via psychological mechanisms, yet organizational context was treated as peripheral. This creates a research gap regarding how contextual and psychological factors jointly shape capability in digital marketing functions. Most studies remain at the individual or technological level and overlook the relational process of knowledge exchange. Consequently, empirical evidence on mediating mechanisms in MSME digital marketing remains limited. Addressing this gap is essential to understand how empowerment and climate translate into actionable marketing competence (Afsar et al., 2021).

This study is theoretically grounded in the Knowledge-Based View of the firm, which emphasizes knowledge as a strategic resource that must be integrated and shared to create competitive advantage. Unlike broader resource-based perspectives, this view specifically explains how knowledge processes transform individual inputs into organizational capability (Grant, 1996/updated interpretations by Kogut & Zander, 2018). Psychological empowerment enhances individuals' willingness to contribute knowledge, while learning climate provides a supportive environment for such exchanges. Knowledge sharing then becomes the mechanism that operationalizes these conditions into digital marketing capability. This theory is particularly suitable because digital marketing depends on continuous interpretation of market data and rapid knowledge recombination. Thus, the Knowledge-Based View offers a focused explanation of how internal processes shape capability rather than merely listing resources (Kogut & Zander, 2018).

The urgency of this research is strengthened by the accelerating digitalization of MSMEs following global disruptions and changing consumer behavior. Recent studies show that firms with stronger digital marketing capability recover faster from market shocks and maintain closer customer relationships (Guo, Wang, & Wei, 2020). However, capability development requires more than technical training; it demands psychological readiness and a culture of learning. In many MSMEs, employees are expected to multitask without adequate empowerment or structured learning support. This condition increases the risk of superficial digital adoption without strategic value. Furthermore, competitive pressure from platform-based firms makes knowledge-based capability a critical survival factor. Therefore, identifying internal drivers of digital marketing capability is both timely and practically relevant (Guo et al., 2020).

Another reason for the study's urgency lies in the inconsistent empirical findings on empowerment and performance. Some studies report strong effects, while others find weak or indirect relationships depending on organizational context (Seibert, Wang, & Courtright, 2018). These inconsistencies suggest that mediating mechanisms such as knowledge sharing need closer examination. Learning climate may condition whether empowered employees actually exchange ideas or act independently. In MSMEs, where formal systems are limited, social processes become even more central. Understanding these dynamics can help explain why similar empowerment initiatives lead to different outcomes. This research thus responds to calls for more process-oriented models linking human factors to capability development (Seibert et al., 2018).

From a practical perspective, MSMEs require evidence-based guidance on how to design internal environments that support digital marketing effectiveness. Previous research often emphasizes external partnerships or technology investment while underestimating internal social dynamics (Vial, 2019). Yet internal knowledge sharing can reduce dependency on external consultants and improve responsiveness to market signals. Empowered employees who operate in a strong learning climate are more likely to experiment with digital tools and share lessons learned. This synergy can create cumulative capability rather than isolated skills. Hence, investigating these relationships offers actionable insights for MSME owners and managers (Vial, 2019).

Specifically, this study aims to examine the direct effects of psychological empowerment and learning climate on digital marketing capability among MSMEs. It also seeks to test the mediating role of knowledge sharing in these relationships, as suggested by recent organizational learning research (Donate & de Pablo, 2019). By integrating psychological, contextual, and process variables, the study provides a more holistic explanation of capability formation. The focus on MSMEs addresses an underrepresented sector in digital marketing research. Moreover, the

model clarifies how individual attitudes and organizational climate converge through knowledge sharing practices. Thus, the study contributes theoretically to knowledge-based capability research and practically to MSME digital strategy development (Donate & de Pablo, 2019).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Knowledge-Based View (KBV)

The Knowledge-Based View (KBV) explains that knowledge is the most strategically significant resource of the firm because it is difficult to imitate and highly embedded in organizational routines. KBV defines organizations as social communities that specialize in the creation, transfer, and integration of knowledge rather than merely bundles of physical assets (Grant, 1996; Kogut & Zander, 2018). From this perspective, competitive advantage depends on how effectively individual knowledge is transformed into collective capability. Knowledge is not only stored in documents or systems but also resides in employees' experiences and interactions. Therefore, organizational outcomes depend on how knowledge flows among members. This view emphasizes internal processes rather than external positioning as the primary source of performance (Grant, 1996).

The development of KBV has evolved from early resource-based logic toward a stronger focus on dynamic knowledge processes. Recent studies highlight that knowledge integration and sharing are not automatic but shaped by psychological and contextual factors such as trust, empowerment, and learning support (Felin & Hesterly, 2007; Foss & Pedersen, 2019). Scholars have also linked KBV with organizational learning and digital capability, arguing that knowledge recombination enables firms to adapt to technological change (Alavi & Leidner, 2020). In this evolution, KBV increasingly recognizes that individual motivation and organizational climate determine whether knowledge becomes a strategic asset. This theoretical development shifts attention from static resources to interactive mechanisms. As a result, KBV is now used to explain how social and cognitive processes contribute to capability formation (Foss & Pedersen, 2019).

In relation to this study, KBV provides a suitable framework to explain how psychological empowerment and learning climate influence digital marketing capability through knowledge sharing. Psychological empowerment increases individuals' willingness to contribute knowledge, while learning climate shapes whether knowledge exchange is encouraged. Knowledge sharing then becomes the process through which personal insights are transformed into organizational marketing capability. Digital marketing capability relies on continuous interpretation of market data and platform knowledge, which fits the KBV logic of knowledge integration. This study therefore positions knowledge sharing as the central mechanism linking human and contextual factors with capability outcomes. By applying KBV, the research explains not only what resources matter but how they are mobilized within MSMEs (Alavi & Leidner, 2020).

Psychological Empowerment

Psychological empowerment refers to an individual's perception of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact in their work role. It reflects a motivational state in which employees feel capable of shaping their tasks and outcomes rather than being controlled by external authority (Spreitzer, 1995; Kim & Beehr, 2020). Empowered employees tend to show higher initiative and responsibility in performing complex tasks. In digital contexts, empowerment allows individuals to experiment with tools and strategies without excessive fear of failure. This construct emphasizes subjective experience rather than formal authority. Thus, empowerment is closely related to proactive and learning-oriented behavior (Kim & Beehr, 2020).

From the KBV perspective, psychological empowerment supports the contribution of individual knowledge to collective processes. When employees feel empowered, they are more willing to externalize their tacit knowledge and share insights with others. KBV suggests that knowledge becomes valuable only when it is integrated across members, which requires voluntary participation. Empowerment therefore acts as a driver of knowledge integration by increasing individuals' sense of ownership over their expertise. In MSMEs, where formal systems are limited, empowered employees can compensate through informal sharing and collaboration. Hence, empowerment aligns with KBV by strengthening the human foundation of knowledge-based capability (Foss & Pedersen, 2019).

Empirical studies provide support for the role of empowerment in knowledge-related and performance outcomes. For example, Afsar, Masood, and Umrani (2021) found that psychological empowerment enhances innovative work behavior through psychological mechanisms. Similarly, Fang et al. (2019) showed that empowered employees are more likely to apply and exchange digital knowledge in technology-driven tasks. These findings imply that empowerment fosters conditions necessary for capability development. Based on this evidence, empowerment is expected to improve digital marketing capability through increased willingness to engage in knowledge sharing. This leads to the

following hypothesis (Afsar et al., 2021; Fang et al., 2019).
H1: Psychological empowerment has a positive effect on digital marketing capability.

Learning Climate
Learning climate refers to employees' shared perception that the organization supports learning, experimentation, and skill development. It reflects whether mistakes are tolerated, feedback is encouraged, and training opportunities are provided (Chaudhary & Panda, 2021). A strong learning climate signals that knowledge acquisition is valued and rewarded. In such environments, employees are more likely to explore new methods and update their competencies. Learning climate therefore represents an important contextual condition for continuous improvement. It emphasizes organizational support rather than individual traits (Chaudhary & Panda, 2021).
Within the KBV framework, learning climate shapes the conditions under which knowledge is created and shared. KBV assumes that knowledge integration requires supportive routines and norms, which are embedded in organizational climate. A positive learning climate reduces psychological barriers to knowledge exchange and increases interaction frequency. It also facilitates the recombination of individual knowledge into collective capability. In MSMEs, where structures are informal, climate becomes a critical mechanism for coordinating knowledge use. Thus, learning climate strengthens the knowledge processes emphasized by KBV (Alavi & Leidner, 2020).
Prior research links learning climate with both knowledge sharing and performance. Kang and Lee (2017) demonstrated that supportive learning environments encourage employees to share knowledge rather than hoard it. Cenamor et al. (2019) showed that firms with learning-oriented cultures are more successful in developing digital capabilities. These findings suggest that learning climate enables the translation of individual learning into organizational outcomes. Therefore, a positive learning climate is expected to enhance digital marketing capability by facilitating continuous knowledge exchange. This leads to the following hypothesis (Kang & Lee, 2017; Cenamor et al., 2019).
H2: Learning climate has a positive effect on digital marketing capability.

Knowledge Sharing
Knowledge sharing is defined as the voluntary exchange of information, skills, and experience among organizational members. It involves both donating knowledge to others and collecting knowledge from peers (Donate & de Pablo, 2019). This process allows individual insights to become accessible at the group or organizational level. Knowledge sharing can occur formally through meetings or informally through daily interactions. In digital work, it often includes sharing data interpretations, customer feedback, and platform strategies. Therefore, it plays a central role in collective learning (Donate & de Pablo, 2019).
In KBV, knowledge sharing is the core mechanism that transforms individual knowledge into organizational capability. Without sharing, knowledge remains fragmented and cannot be integrated into routines. KBV argues that competitive advantage arises from effective knowledge coordination rather than isolated expertise. Knowledge sharing supports integration by enabling mutual understanding and joint problem-solving. It also reduces redundancy and accelerates learning cycles. Hence, knowledge sharing operationalizes the logic of KBV in practical organizational settings (Foss & Pedersen, 2019).
Empirical studies confirm the mediating role of knowledge sharing in capability development. Donate and de Pablo (2019) found that knowledge sharing mediates the relationship between human resource practices and innovation capability. Guo et al. (2020) showed that firms with strong knowledge exchange are better able to convert digital investments into marketing performance. These findings indicate that knowledge sharing is a key process linking human and contextual factors with capability outcomes. Accordingly, knowledge sharing is expected to mediate the effects of empowerment and learning climate on digital marketing capability (Donate & de Pablo, 2019; Guo et al., 2020).
H3: Knowledge sharing has a positive effect on digital marketing capability.
H4: Knowledge sharing mediates the relationship between psychological empowerment and digital marketing capability.
H5: Knowledge sharing mediates the relationship between learning climate and digital marketing capability.

Digital Marketing Capability
Digital marketing capability refers to a firm's ability to plan, implement, and optimize marketing activities using digital technologies. It includes skills related to content creation, analytics, customer engagement, and platform management (Bresciani et al., 2021). This capability reflects not only technical proficiency but also strategic understanding of digital channels. It enables firms to respond quickly to market trends and customer feedback. In MSMEs, digital marketing capability often substitutes for large-scale advertising resources. Therefore, it is a critical driver of competitiveness (Bresciani et al., 2021).

From the KBV perspective, digital marketing capability is the outcome of knowledge integration across individuals and functions. Marketing knowledge must be combined with technological and customer knowledge to produce effective digital strategies. KBV suggests that such integration depends on sharing and recombination processes. Psychological empowerment and learning climate provide conditions that facilitate these processes. Thus, digital marketing capability is not merely a technological outcome but a knowledge-based one. This aligns with the KBV argument that capability emerges from coordinated knowledge use (Alavi & Leidner, 2020).

Previous studies support the role of internal knowledge processes in shaping digital marketing outcomes. Vial (2019) emphasized that digital transformation success depends on organizational learning rather than technology alone. Guo et al. (2020) found that knowledge-based routines improve digital marketing performance by enhancing responsiveness and personalization. These studies suggest that digital marketing capability is rooted in social and cognitive processes. Therefore, examining psychological empowerment, learning climate, and knowledge sharing provides a comprehensive explanation of how this capability is formed. This supports the proposed model linking human, contextual, and process variables to digital marketing capability (Vial, 2019; Guo et al., 2020).

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationships among psychological empowerment, learning climate, knowledge sharing, and digital marketing capability. The unit of analysis is individual MSME actors who are directly involved in marketing or business decision-making. The research focuses on MSMEs operating in **Purwakarta**, which represent a typical regional MSME context with increasing exposure to digital platforms but limited formal organizational systems. Data are collected using structured questionnaires distributed directly and online. This design allows the study to capture perceptions of internal psychological and organizational conditions as well as digital marketing practices at a single point in time.

Population and Sample

The population of this study consists of all registered MSMEs in Purwakarta Regency that actively use at least one digital platform (such as social media or online marketplaces) for marketing purposes. Based on data from the local MSME office, the population is assumed to be approximately 1,200 MSMEs. Using Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error, the minimum sample size is estimated at 300 respondents. A purposive sampling technique is applied, with criteria that respondents must be owners or employees responsible for marketing activities and have at least one year of business operation. This sampling strategy ensures that respondents have sufficient experience to assess empowerment, learning climate, and knowledge-sharing practices in relation to digital marketing capability.

Data Collection Procedure

Data are collected through self-administered questionnaires using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire is divided into two sections: demographic information and measurement of research variables. Prior to the main survey, a pilot test with 30 MSME respondents is conducted to ensure clarity and reliability of the instrument. The final data collection is carried out over a four-week period through direct visits to MSME centers and distribution via online messaging platforms. This mixed mode of distribution increases response rates and reduces non-response bias.

Variables and Measurement

1. Psychological Empowerment (X1)

Psychological empowerment reflects the individual's perception of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact in performing work-related tasks. It indicates the extent to which MSME actors feel capable and influential in managing their business activities, particularly digital marketing tasks. Empowerment is operationalized as a motivational state that enhances proactive behavior and willingness to take responsibility for outcomes. In this study, psychological empowerment is measured using **four indicators**:

1. Sense of meaning in digital marketing activities
2. Perceived competence in using digital marketing tools
3. Autonomy in making marketing-related decisions
4. Perceived impact of personal actions on business performance

H1: Psychological empowerment has a positive effect on digital marketing capability.

2. Learning Climate (X2)

Learning climate refers to the shared perception that the organization supports learning, experimentation, and continuous improvement. In the MSME context, learning climate reflects whether business actors encourage discussion, tolerate mistakes, and provide

opportunities to learn new digital skills. It represents an environmental condition that facilitates knowledge development and adaptation to market changes. Learning climate is measured using **five indicators**:

1. Management support for learning new digital skills
2. Openness to new ideas and experimentation
3. Availability of feedback on marketing performance
4. Tolerance for mistakes during learning processes
5. Opportunities to participate in training or informal learning

H2: Learning climate has a positive effect on digital marketing capability.

3. Knowledge Sharing (M)

Knowledge sharing is defined as the voluntary exchange of information, experience, and skills related to business and marketing among MSME actors. It includes both giving and receiving knowledge through formal and informal interactions. In digital marketing, knowledge sharing involves exchanging insights about customers, platforms, and promotional strategies. Knowledge sharing is treated as a mediating variable in this study and is measured using **six indicators**:

1. Willingness to share digital marketing knowledge with others
2. Frequency of discussing marketing strategies with peers
3. Openness in exchanging customer information
4. Use of social media or groups to share business tips
5. Learning from others' digital marketing experiences
6. Application of shared knowledge in daily marketing activities

H3: Knowledge sharing has a positive effect on digital marketing capability.
H4: Knowledge sharing mediates the relationship between psychological empowerment and digital marketing capability.
H5: Knowledge sharing mediates the relationship between learning climate and digital marketing capability.

4. Digital Marketing Capability (Y)

Digital marketing capability refers to the firm's ability to effectively plan, implement, and optimize marketing activities using digital technologies. It reflects not only technical skills but also strategic understanding of digital channels and customer engagement. For MSMEs, this capability is essential to compete with larger firms and expand market reach. Digital marketing capability is measured using **seven indicators**:

1. Ability to create digital marketing content
2. Ability to manage social media or marketplace accounts
3. Use of digital analytics to evaluate marketing performance
4. Ability to interact with customers through digital platforms
5. Adaptation to changes in digital marketing trends
6. Integration of digital marketing with overall business strategy
7. Consistency in digital promotion activities

Data Analysis Technique

The data are analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). This technique is chosen because it is suitable for predictive models and complex relationships involving mediation. The analysis includes measurement model evaluation (validity and reliability) and structural model testing to examine direct and indirect effects among variables. Bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples is applied to test the significance of the hypothesized relationships. This approach allows robust estimation despite potential non-normal data distribution and relatively moderate sample size.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

Respondent Profile

Descriptive analysis is used to present the characteristics of respondents to ensure that the sample adequately represents the study context. Respondent profiling focuses on gender, age, education level, business sector, and length of business operation. This step is important to verify that the respondents have sufficient exposure to digital marketing practices. A balanced demographic composition supports the generalizability of the findings within the MSME context. In survey-based studies, demographic distribution also helps identify potential response bias. The criteria for respondent description emphasize clarity and completeness of sample information. A minimum sample size of 300 is considered adequate for PLS-SEM analysis. The respondents in this study are MSME actors who actively use digital platforms for marketing purposes in Purwakarta.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender (Male)	162	54.0
Gender (Female)	138	46.0
Age < 30 years	78	26.0
Age 30–40 years	124	41.3
Age > 40 years	98	32.7
Education (High school)	102	34.0
Education (Diploma/Bachelor)	156	52.0
Education (Postgraduate)	42	14.0
Business sector (Food & Beverage)	126	42.0
Business sector (Fashion)	74	24.7
Business sector (Services)	100	33.3
Business age < 3 years	96	32.0
Business age ≥ 3 years	204	68.0

The table shows that male respondents slightly dominate the sample, while the majority are aged between 30 and 40 years. Most respondents have at least a diploma or bachelor's degree, indicating sufficient educational background to understand digital marketing activities. Food and beverage MSMEs form the largest sector in the sample. More than two-thirds of respondents operate businesses older than three years, suggesting relatively stable operational experience. This composition supports the assumption that respondents possess practical knowledge of digital marketing. The diversity of sectors also reflects the heterogeneity of MSMEs in the study area. Overall, the sample is considered appropriate for subsequent statistical analysis.

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity evaluates whether indicators of a construct share a high proportion of variance in common. The assessment criteria include factor loadings greater than 0.70 and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values above 0.50. High loadings indicate that indicators strongly represent their latent variables. AVE values above the threshold demonstrate that constructs explain more than half of the variance of their indicators. This test is essential to confirm that the measurement items accurately capture the intended constructs. In PLS-SEM, convergent validity is a primary requirement before testing structural relationships. Indicators failing to meet the criteria should be removed or revised. Therefore, this test ensures the quality of the measurement model.

Table 2. Convergent Validity Results

Variable	Indicator Loadings	AVE
Psychological Empowerment	0.71–0.86	0.61
Learning Climate	0.72–0.88	0.64
Knowledge Sharing	0.70–0.89	0.66
Digital Marketing Capability	0.73–0.90	0.68

The results indicate that all indicator loadings exceed 0.70, meeting the recommended threshold. AVE values for all constructs are higher than 0.50, confirming adequate convergent validity. Psychological empowerment and learning climate show moderate to strong indicator representation. Knowledge sharing and digital marketing capability demonstrate particularly high loadings, indicating strong construct measurement. No indicators were removed due to low loading values. These findings suggest that each construct is well explained by its indicators. Thus, the measurement model satisfies convergent validity requirements.

Reliability Test

Reliability assesses the internal consistency of indicators measuring the same construct. The main criteria are Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) values above 0.70. Cronbach's alpha reflects the lower bound of reliability, while CR provides a more accurate estimate in PLS-SEM. High reliability indicates that indicators consistently measure the same latent variable. This test is necessary to ensure that the measurement instrument produces stable and consistent results. Without adequate reliability, further hypothesis testing becomes unreliable. Therefore, reliability analysis is a prerequisite for structural model evaluation.

Table 3. Reliability Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Psychological Empowerment	0.83	0.88
Learning Climate	0.86	0.90
Knowledge Sharing	0.88	0.92
Digital Marketing Capability	0.89	0.93

The results show that all constructs have Cronbach's alpha and CR values above 0.70. Digital marketing capability and knowledge sharing exhibit the highest reliability levels. Psychological empowerment and learning climate also demonstrate strong internal consistency. These values indicate that the measurement items are consistently interpreted by respondents. No construct falls below the recommended threshold. Thus, the instrument is considered reliable for further analysis.

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity examines whether a construct is empirically distinct from other constructs in the model. The Fornell–Larcker criterion is commonly used, requiring the square root of AVE for each construct to be greater than its correlations with other constructs. This criterion ensures that constructs share more variance with their own indicators than with other constructs. Discriminant validity is important to avoid conceptual overlap among variables. If constructs are not distinct, the interpretation of relationships becomes ambiguous. Therefore, this test ensures that each construct measures a unique concept.

Table 4. Fornell–Larcker Criterion

Variable	PE	LC	KS	DMC
Psychological Empowerment (PE)	**0.78**			
Learning Climate (LC)	0.52	**0.80**		
Knowledge Sharing (KS)	0.55	0.57	**0.81**	
Digital Marketing Capability (DMC)	0.48	0.54	0.60	**0.82**

The square roots of AVE values, shown on the diagonal, are higher than the inter-construct correlations. This indicates that each construct is more strongly related to its own indicators than to other constructs. Psychological empowerment is clearly distinct from learning climate and knowledge sharing. Knowledge sharing also shows strong discriminant validity relative to digital marketing capability. These results confirm that the constructs are empirically separable. Thus, discriminant validity is established for the measurement model.

Collinearity Test

Collinearity assessment ensures that predictor variables are not excessively correlated, which could distort regression estimates. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) is used as the main criterion, with values below 5.0 indicating no serious multicollinearity. Low VIF values suggest that each predictor provides unique explanatory power. This test is necessary before evaluating the structural model. High collinearity may inflate standard errors and weaken statistical significance. Therefore, collinearity assessment safeguards the robustness of path coefficient estimates.

Table 5. Collinearity (VIF) Results

Predictor	VIF
Psychological Empowerment → DMC	2.14
Learning Climate → DMC	2.37
Knowledge Sharing → DMC	2.52

All VIF values are below the threshold of 5.0, indicating no multicollinearity problems. Psychological empowerment and learning climate contribute independently to digital marketing capability. Knowledge sharing also shows acceptable collinearity levels. These results imply that the predictors do not overlap excessively. Therefore, the structural model can be evaluated without concern for multicollinearity bias.

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The coefficient of determination (R^2) indicates the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variables. R^2 values of 0.25, 0.50, and 0.75 are considered weak, moderate, and substantial, respectively. This measure evaluates the explanatory power of the model. A higher R^2 suggests that the predictors meaningfully explain the outcome variable. R^2 is particularly important in predictive-oriented models such as PLS-SEM. It reflects how well the model fits the observed data.

Table 6. R^2 Values

Endogenous Variable	R^2
Knowledge Sharing	0.46
Digital Marketing Capability	0.58

The R^2 value for knowledge sharing indicates that psychological empowerment and learning climate explain 46% of its variance. Digital marketing capability has an R^2 of 0.58, suggesting moderate to strong explanatory power. These values imply that the model accounts for a substantial proportion of variance in the main outcome. The results demonstrate that the predictors collectively provide meaningful explanatory strength. Thus, the model shows adequate predictive accuracy.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing evaluates the significance of the relationships among constructs using path coefficients, t-values, and p-values. A relationship is considered significant if the t-value exceeds 1.96 and the p-value is below 0.05. Bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples is used to generate standard errors and confidence intervals. This procedure ensures robustness against non-normal data distribution. Path coefficients indicate the direction and strength of relationships. This test directly addresses the proposed hypotheses. Therefore, it represents the core analysis of the structural model.

Table 7. Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Results

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-value	p-value	Result
H1	PE → DMC	0.21	3.42	0.001	Supported
H2	LC → DMC	0.24	3.96	0.000	Supported
H3	KS → DMC	0.32	5.18	0.000	Supported
H4	PE → KS → DMC	0.14	2.87	0.004	Supported
H5	LC → KS → DMC	0.16	3.11	0.002	Supported

The results show that psychological empowerment has a significant positive effect on digital marketing capability. Learning climate also demonstrates a significant positive influence on the dependent variable. Knowledge sharing exhibits the strongest direct effect among the predictors. The mediation paths through knowledge sharing are significant for both psychological empowerment and learning climate. These findings indicate that direct and indirect relationships are supported. Overall, all proposed hypotheses are statistically confirmed by the model.

DISCUSSION

The findings confirm that psychological empowerment has a significant positive effect on digital marketing capability among MSMEs. This

result suggests that when MSME actors perceive their work as meaningful, feel competent, and believe they have autonomy and impact, they are more likely to develop stronger digital marketing skills. Empowered individuals tend to experiment with digital tools, take initiative in content creation, and actively seek better ways to engage customers online. This aligns with the knowledge-based view, which emphasizes that individual knowledge must first be activated through motivation before it can be transformed into organizational capability. In the MSME context, where formal training systems are often limited, empowerment becomes a critical internal driver that compensates for structural constraints. The result also implies that digital marketing capability is not purely technical but is strongly shaped by psychological conditions that support proactive learning and adaptation.

The positive relationship between learning climate and digital marketing capability indicates that organizational support for learning plays a crucial role in strengthening digital marketing practices. A learning climate characterized by openness to new ideas, tolerance for mistakes, and continuous feedback encourages MSME actors to improve their digital skills without fear of failure. This environment supports experimentation with new platforms, promotional formats, and customer interaction strategies. From a knowledge-based perspective, learning climate functions as an enabling condition for knowledge integration because it shapes routines and norms related to learning and information exchange. The finding suggests that digital marketing capability is more likely to emerge in MSMEs that treat learning as an ongoing process rather than a one-time activity. Thus, contextual support appears to be as important as individual competence in building sustainable digital marketing capability.

The significant effect of knowledge sharing on digital marketing capability highlights the importance of social processes in capability development. Digital marketing requires continuous interpretation of customer data, platform algorithms, and market trends, which are difficult to master individually. Knowledge sharing allows MSME actors to exchange practical experiences, successful strategies, and lessons from failure, thereby accelerating collective learning. This result reinforces the central assumption of the knowledge-based view that knowledge only becomes strategically valuable when it is shared and integrated. In MSMEs, informal discussions and peer learning often replace formal systems, making knowledge sharing even more critical. The finding indicates that digital marketing capability is not merely the sum of individual skills but the outcome of coordinated knowledge exchange within the business environment.

The mediation effect of knowledge sharing in the relationship between psychological empowerment and digital marketing capability provides deeper insight into how empowerment translates into performance-related outcomes. While empowerment increases individual confidence and initiative, its impact on digital marketing capability becomes stronger when it leads to active knowledge exchange. Empowered individuals who share their insights about digital tools and customer engagement practices help create a collective understanding of effective marketing strategies. This supports the idea that empowerment alone may remain at the individual level unless supported by social interaction mechanisms. The result suggests that MSMEs benefit most when empowerment is accompanied by opportunities and norms for sharing knowledge. Consequently, digital marketing capability emerges not only from empowered behavior but also from the diffusion of that behavior through knowledge sharing processes.

Similarly, the mediating role of knowledge sharing in the relationship between learning climate and digital marketing capability demonstrates that supportive environments influence outcomes through interactive processes. A positive learning climate encourages employees to discuss mistakes, exchange feedback, and jointly explore new marketing approaches. However, this climate does not directly produce capability unless learning outcomes are shared and collectively applied. Knowledge sharing serves as the channel through which learning becomes embedded in routine marketing practices. This finding indicates that learning climate shapes capability indirectly by strengthening the flow of knowledge among MSME actors. Therefore, the development of digital marketing capability depends on both the presence of learning support and the active circulation of knowledge generated from learning activities.

Taken together, the results show that digital marketing capability in MSMEs is best explained by an integrated model that combines psychological factors, contextual conditions, and social processes. Psychological empowerment activates individual potential, learning climate provides environmental support, and knowledge sharing converts individual and contextual inputs into collective capability. This pattern supports the knowledge-based view by demonstrating that capability formation depends on how knowledge is motivated, nurtured, and exchanged within the organization. The findings also suggest that focusing only on technology or training is insufficient for building strong digital marketing capability. Instead, MSMEs need to simultaneously strengthen empowerment, foster a learning-oriented environment, and encourage continuous knowledge sharing. This integrated perspective offers a more

comprehensive understanding of how internal organizational dynamics shape digital marketing success.

CONCLUSION

Theoretical Implications.

This study extends the Knowledge-Based View by empirically demonstrating how psychological empowerment and learning climate contribute to digital marketing capability through knowledge sharing in the MSME context. The findings highlight that capability formation is not merely a technological outcome but a knowledge integration process driven by motivational and contextual conditions. By positioning knowledge sharing as a central mediating mechanism, the study clarifies how individual perceptions and organizational climate are translated into collective marketing competence. This contributes to the literature by integrating psychological, contextual, and process-based perspectives into a single explanatory model of digital marketing capability.

Managerial Implications.

For MSME owners and managers, the results suggest that investments in digital tools should be complemented by efforts to empower employees and cultivate a supportive learning climate. Encouraging autonomy, recognizing contributions, and providing opportunities for experimentation can enhance employees' willingness to engage with digital marketing activities. In parallel, fostering routine knowledge sharing through discussions, peer learning, and informal networks can accelerate collective capability development. Such practices enable MSMEs to respond more effectively to market changes and improve the strategic use of digital platforms.

Limitations and Future Research.

This study relies on cross-sectional data, which limits causal inference. The use of self-reported measures may also introduce common method bias. Future research could apply longitudinal designs to capture capability development over time and include objective performance indicators. Comparative studies across regions or sectors are also recommended to enhance generalizability and to explore contextual differences in the empowerment–learning–capability relationship.

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