

Digital Marketing for Ecuadorian Commercial Microenterprises a Systematized Review

Marketing digital para microempresas comerciales ecuatorianas una revisión sistematizada

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ABSTRACT

This review examines digital marketing tools used as commercialization strategies by microenterprises in Ecuador's commercial sector. The problem emerges in a context of expanding connectivity and e-commerce, alongside persistent gaps in skills, planning, investment, and performance measurement. The objective was to interpret the available evidence in order to identify the tools with the greatest commercial usefulness, the conditions that support their implementation, and the limitations that constrain their outcomes. A systematized documentary review was conducted following PRISMA 2020 guidance and drawing on academic and institutional sources published mainly between 2018 and 2025. Information was organized through a bibliographic matrix and thematic categories concerning digitalization, competitiveness, business adaptation, e-commerce, and the performance of small economic units. Results indicate that social media, WhatsApp Business, websites, marketplaces, content marketing, search engine optimization, targeted advertising, email, analytics, and mobile marketing work more effectively as an integrated system than as isolated actions. Ecuadorian evidence associates digitalization with greater visibility, business continuity, and sales opportunities; nevertheless, it also reveals uneven adoption, insufficient training, and decisions weakly

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JOURNAL OF BUSINESS
and entrepreneurial
studies

ISSN: 2576-0971



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Journal of Business and Entrepreneurship
October - December, Vol. 10, No. 4, 2026
<http://journalbusinesses.com/index.php/revista>
e-ISSN: 2576-0971

journalbusinessentrepreneurial@gmail.com

Received: July 18, 2026

Approved: September 29, 2026

Pages 74-89

supported by indicators. The review concludes that effectiveness does not depend on accumulating platforms, but on connecting attraction, conversation, payment, delivery, after-sales service, and organizational learning according to each microenterprise's operational capacity. A gradual strategy grounded in customer needs and measurable commercial results is therefore more sustainable than dispersed digital presence.

Keywords: marketing; small enterprises; electronic commerce; social media; digital transformation; Ecuador.

RESUMEN

En esta oportunidad se analiza las herramientas de marketing digital utilizadas como estrategias de comercialización por las microempresas del sector comercio ecuatoriano. El problema se sitúa en un escenario de mayor conectividad y crecimiento del comercio electrónico, pero también de brechas en competencias, planificación, inversión y medición. El objetivo fue interpretar la evidencia disponible para identificar las herramientas con mayor utilidad comercial, las condiciones que favorecen su aplicación y las limitaciones que restringen sus resultados. Se realizó una revisión documental sistematizada, guiada por PRISMA 2020, con fuentes académicas e institucionales publicadas principalmente entre 2018 y 2025. La información se organizó mediante una matriz bibliográfica y categorías temáticas relacionadas con digitalización, competitividad, adaptación empresarial, comercio electrónico y desempeño de las pequeñas unidades económicas. Los resultados muestran que las redes sociales, WhatsApp Business, los sitios web, los marketplaces, el marketing de contenidos, el posicionamiento en buscadores, la publicidad segmentada, el correo electrónico, la analítica y el marketing móvil funcionan mejor como un sistema articulado que como acciones aisladas. La evidencia ecuatoriana vincula la digitalización con mayor visibilidad, continuidad comercial y posibilidades de venta; sin embargo, revela adopción desigual, capacitación insuficiente y decisiones poco sustentadas en indicadores.

Se concluye que la efectividad no depende de acumular plataformas, sino de integrar atracción, conversación, pago, entrega, posventa y aprendizaje, de acuerdo con la capacidad operativa de cada microempresa.

Palabras clave: marketing; pequeña empresa; comercio electrónico; redes sociales; transformación digital; Ecuador.

INTRODUCTION

Economic and technological transformations have altered traditional forms of negotiation and marketing. Mobile connectivity, social media platforms, payment systems, and delivery services have changed the way consumers search for, compare, purchase, and evaluate goods. In this context, digitalization has evolved from being merely a promotional tool to playing a role in the entire relationship with the market. ECLAC (2022) argues that Latin America's digital development requires the integration of infrastructure, capabilities, and innovation, while the World Bank (2024) warns that its benefits continue to be distributed unevenly. Therefore, access to technology is a necessary—but not sufficient—condition for improving productivity and commercial inclusion.

This transformation takes on special relevance for microenterprises, which operate with limited capital, staff, and time. Digital channels can expand reach with investments proportional to their scale, strengthen customer interaction, and generate information to inform decision-making. At the same time, they introduce new demands: timely responses, public reputation, constant content production, payment security, and logistical coordination. Bradač Hojnik and Hušek (2023) explain that the characteristics, resources, and competencies of small businesses determine technology adoption. Consequently, digital marketing must be understood as an organizational capability and not as a mere collection of applications.

In Ecuador, the pandemic accelerated the adoption of social media, messaging apps, and online sales. Rodríguez et al. (2020) note that e-commerce became an alternative for sustaining the operations of MSMEs, while Sampedro et al. (2021) show that social media platforms and e-commerce applications facilitated business continuity during lockdowns. However, progress has been uneven. Viteri-Rade et al. (2022), in a study of family-run microenterprises in Guayaquil, identified a lack of awareness regarding the strategic value of digital marketing, although they also noted a willingness to adopt it. The tension between technological availability and effective utilization constitutes the central issue of this review.

The guiding question of this study is: What are the main digital marketing tools that can serve as marketing strategies for microenterprises in Ecuador's retail sector, and what conditions determine their effectiveness? The objective is to integrate theoretical

contributions, regional evidence, and national findings to identify tools, benefits, barriers, and criteria for implementation. It is argued that the alternatives with the greatest potential are those that form a complete commercial journey: they attract audiences, facilitate conversations, convert interest into orders, enable secure payment and delivery, and encourage repeat purchases. Creating profiles or posting offers without objectives, accountable parties, and performance indicators generates visible activity but does not necessarily lead to performance.

MATERIALS Y METHODS

A systematic literature review with descriptive and interpretive scope was conducted. This design allows for the identification, organization, evaluation, and synthesis of knowledge derived from previous research through explicit and reproducible decisions. Snyder (2019) notes that a literature review constitutes a research methodology when the search, selection, and analysis serve a defined purpose. To enhance transparency, the PRISMA 2020 guidelines were followed, particularly regarding the definition of sources, eligibility criteria, data screening, and presentation of the process (Page et al., 2021).

The review combined scientific articles on digital marketing, e-commerce, and small businesses with institutional reports necessary to contextualize connectivity, digital transformation, and economic performance. The synthesis was qualitative because the documents featured different designs, samples, indicators, and regions; therefore, it was not appropriate to integrate their results as if they were equivalent measures. The analysis sought convergences, differences, conditions of application, and gaps, while exercising caution regarding unproven causal relationships.

The search focused on Google Scholar, SciELO, Redalyc, and academic or institutional documents included in the original manuscript. Combinations of the terms “digital marketing,” “digital commerce,” “e-commerce,” “social media,” “microenterprises,” “SMEs,” “performance,” “Ecuador,” “digital marketing,” “e-commerce,” “SMEs,” and “business performance” were used in both Spanish and English. The primary time frame was 2018–2025, although directly relevant institutional and methodological documents were retained. The review’s cutoff date was 2025, in accordance with the analyzed bibliographic corpus.

Publications with full-text versions in Spanish or English were included if they addressed at least one of the following relationships: digital tools and marketing; digitization and performance; e-commerce and small businesses; social media and business adaptation; or the Ecuadorian digital context. Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods studies, as well as reviews and reports from organizations, were accepted. Duplicates, works unrelated to business outcomes, and documents whose information did not allow for the identification of authorship, date, or thematic contribution were excluded.

A matrix was designed to include authorship, year, title, source, context, method, tools analyzed, main findings, and limitations. The review was organized into ten categories:

innovative alternatives; impact of digitization; adaptation to new trends; competitiveness; usefulness for microentrepreneurs; the Ecuadorian commerce sector; digital marketing in Ecuador; national evolution; application in microenterprises; and strategic tools.

The thematic corpus consisted of articles, reviews, and reports used in the analysis, in addition to the two methodological sources. Table I lists all the references used and allows for verification of the correspondence between citation, title, and year. Figure I summarizes the review process. Since this is a literature review, the results express reported associations and patterns; they do not prove that any single tool, on its own, leads to increased sales.

Table I. *Bibliographic information for the references used*

Acosta Rodríguez y Rodríguez-Rojas (2019)	Implementación de marketing digital: un desempeño empresarial para pequeñas y medianas empresas	2019
Ballerini et al. (2023)	How commitment and platform adoption drive the e-commerce performance of SMEs	2023
Banco Central del Ecuador [BCE] (2025)	Cuentas nacionales: cuarto trimestre de 2024 y previsión 2025	2025
Baque Cantos et al. (2021)	Marketing digital y su incidencia en el desarrollo comercial de las microempresas de Manta pos-COVID-19	2021
Bradač Hojnik y Huđek (2023)	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in the Digital Age	2023
Caraballo et al. (2023)	Digital Marketing Adoption in Small and Medium-sized Enterprises	2023
CECE y UEES (2025)	Estudio de Ecommerce 2024: VII medición	2025
Villalba Ávila (2023)	La evolución del marketing a lo largo del tiempo: del marketing 1.0 al marketing 5.0	2023
García-Pujay et al. (2024)	Digital Marketing in Ibero-American SMEs: A Systematic Review from 2013 to 2022	2024
Castro Medina (2025)	Uso de redes sociales como estrategia de marketing digital en las pymes de América Latina	2025
Kemp (2025)	Digital 2025: Global Overview Report	2025
Unión Internacional de Telecomunicaciones [UIT] (2023)	Datos y cifras 2023	2023
Perdigón et al. (2018)	Estrategias de comercio electrónico y marketing digital para pequeñas y medianas empresas	2018

López y Rivera (2020)	De la teoría a la práctica: el emprendimiento en Ecuador en época de COVID-19	2020
Loyola et al. (2024)	Medición de la digitalización de mipymes de Azogues, Ecuador	2024
Molina et al. (2023)	El mobile marketing como estrategia comunicativa en la industria 4.0	2023
CEPAL (2022)	A Digital Path for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean	2022
Núñez Cudriz y Miranda Corrales (2020)	El marketing digital como un elemento de apoyo estratégico a las organizaciones	2020
OCDE (2023)	OECD SME and Entrepreneurship Outlook 2023	2023
Page et al. (2021)	The PRISMA 2020 Statement	2021
Perdigón Llanes (2020)	Estrategia digital para fortalecer la gestión comercial de las cooperativas agropecuarias cubanas	2020
Rodríguez et al. (2020)	El e-commerce y las mipymes en tiempos de COVID-19	2020
Saltos Cruz et al. (2023)	Modelo de gestión de marketing digital para pymes	2023
Sampedro Guaman et al. (2021)	Transformación digital de la comercialización en las pymes a través de redes sociales	2021
Snyder (2019)	Literature Review as a Research Methodology	2019
Ukshini et al. (2025)	Meta-analysis of Publications on the Impact of Digital Marketing Strategies on SME Performance	2025
Viteri-Luque et al. (2018)	Importancia de las técnicas del marketing digital	2018
Viteri-Rade et al. (2022)	El marketing digital en las microempresas familiares de Guayaquil en la postpandemia	2022
Banco Mundial (2024)	Digital Progress and Trends Report 2023	2024
Zambrano Camacho et al. (2024)	El marketing y su incidencia en las ventas de las microempresas del sector comercio del Guayas	2024

Note: A duplicate reference from the original document was consolidated. The table includes articles, reviews, contextual reports, and methodological sources that are actually cited in the text.

Figure 1

Workflow for the literature review

Identificación Registros académicos e institucionales localizados y recuperados
Depuración Eliminación de duplicados y verificación de datos bibliográficos
Elegibilidad Lectura completa según pertinencia, periodo, idioma y acceso
Síntesis Clasificación temática, matriz bibliográfica e interpretación cualitativa

RESULTS

Innovative alternatives integrate social commerce, digital catalogs, instant messaging, marketplaces, electronic payments, and coordinated deliveries. Social commerce bridges the gap between discovery and purchase: consumers view a product, check availability, negotiate terms, and confirm their order all within the same ecosystem. Perdigón Llanes (2020), while studying Cuban cooperatives, demonstrates that a strategy based on Facebook can strengthen market relationships, innovation, and competitiveness. His transferable insight lies in designing processes, assigning responsibilities, and creating content, rather than limiting the strategy to simply posting offers.

For Ecuadorian microenterprises, WhatsApp Business is valuable due to its low barrier to entry and because it integrates a product catalog, quick replies, tags, location, and tracking. Instagram and Facebook facilitate discovery and social proof; TikTok and YouTube expand audiovisual demonstrations; and marketplaces drive traffic and build transactional trust. Rodríguez et al. (2020) view e-commerce as an alternative for streamlining operations and expanding markets, while Ballerini et al. (2023) explain that performance improves when there is a genuine commitment to the channel and the platform's features become operational capabilities. Innovation, therefore, does not consist of accumulating apps, but rather of reducing the difficulty customers face in learning about, comparing, paying for, and receiving products.

Digitalization expands the potential market, reduces information costs, and makes part of the consumer response observable. Loyola et al. (2024), based on an analysis of companies in Azogues, link digitalization to business recovery and profitability. Baque Cantos et al. (2021) also identify the contributions of digital marketing to the commercial development of microenterprises in Manta. Overall, national evidence suggests a positive association between digital capabilities, operational continuity, and business

performance, although the study designs reviewed do not allow for attributing every change in sales to a specific platform.

The impact is influenced by connectivity, logistics, trust in payment systems, content quality, and response speed. The World Bank (2024) argues that digital progress creates opportunities for productivity and inclusion but warns of gaps in connectivity, data, and capabilities; the ITU (2023) confirms that internet access continues to grow unevenly. The study by the Ecuadorian Chamber of E-Commerce and Espíritu Santo University (CECE and UEES, 2025) presents e-commerce as an ecosystem where devices, financial services, supply, and logistics converge. This perspective avoids a common pitfall: increasing promotions without sufficient inventory or delivery capacity can harm the customer experience and a company's reputation.

Adaptation requires a shift from short-term responses to planned management. During the pandemic, many companies incorporated online networks and sales to sustain operations; they then had to transform that reaction into a sustainable competitive advantage. Villalba (2023) describes the evolution from product-centric marketing toward approaches focused on the consumer, experience, data, and personalization. Current trends include omnichannel marketing, conversational commerce, short-form video, accessible automation, and analytics; however, their adoption must align with the needs of the audience and the business's actual capabilities.

The OECD (2023) notes that SMEs need managerial capabilities, skills, and support networks to navigate the digital transition. Castro Medina (2025) identifies Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp as among the platforms most widely used by Latin American SMEs, while also pointing out barriers related to training and resources. A reasonable approach begins by standardizing brand identity, product catalog, pricing, and customer responses; continues with tracking inquiries and sales; and only then incorporates advertising, automation, or artificial intelligence. This gradual progression allows businesses to assess costs, correct errors, and ensure that the promised online experience aligns with actual availability and service.

Digital marketing strengthens competitiveness when it helps differentiate the offering, understand the customer, and measure performance. Núñez and Miranda (2020) present it as a strategic support linked to the organization's overall objectives, not as a separate activity. García et al. (2024), in their review of Ibero-American SMEs, observe uneven adoption and a recurring relationship with sales management. Ukshini et al. (2025) find that digital marketing has a positive effect on the performance of SMEs, although the magnitude of this effect varies by sector and implementation conditions.

For a commercial microenterprise, competing does not mean matching the budget of a large chain. The advantage can come from specialization, proximity, visible availability, rapid response, and reliable delivery. Reach and engagement are initial indicators, but they must be complemented by qualified leads, conversion, repeat purchases, margin, and customer acquisition cost. This perspective prevents us from considering a campaign successful merely because it accumulates followers. Competitiveness is sustained when

data allows for adjustments to the value proposition and better allocation of time and budget.

Microentrepreneurs need to prioritize because they have limited resources. Viteri et al. (2018) describe social media, content, and digital media as relevant techniques, but their value depends on consistent application. Caraballo et al. (2023) emphasize that adoption requires skills, investment, and learning. An up-to-date catalog, organized responses, verifiable information, and clear payment methods can generate more value than a complex campaign that fails to hold the customer's attention. After streamlining the basic process, the business can expand its advertising, customer base, or its own store. Strategic value also depends on human buy-in. Training should include content creation, digital services, data protection, order tracking, and interpreting metrics. Acosta and Rodríguez (2019) highlight the contribution of websites, social media, search engines, advertising, and email to business performance. However, a tool only becomes an asset when it addresses a need and fosters learning. Therefore, digital literacy constitutes the intangible infrastructure needed to transform free or low-cost platforms into sustainable commercial capabilities.

The Ecuadorian retail sector comprises neighborhood stores, family-run businesses, specialized distributors, and chains with widely varying capabilities. The Central Bank of Ecuador (BCE, 2025) highlights the significance of commercial activities within the national accounts and their sensitivity to fluctuations in consumption and production. Zambrano et al. (2024) observe a recovery in the sector's sales following the 2020 decline, but note that microenterprises continue to face financial constraints. These differences in size, geographic scope, and formalization status influence the ability to adopt technology and compete.

Digital commerce has shifted from simple informational ads toward processes that integrate promotion, customer interaction, payment, delivery, and after-sales service. López and Rivera (2020) describe how Ecuadorian entrepreneurs adapted during the emergency, and Sampedro et al. (2021) highlight the role of online marketplaces and shopping apps. Connectivity provides a favorable foundation but does not guarantee a satisfactory transaction. Businesses need to align published information with inventory, communicate clear terms, protect data, and resolve changes or complaints. Perdigón et al. (2018) specifically highlight security, consumer behavior, and search engine optimization as key dimensions of a comprehensive strategy.

The national evolution can be divided into three stages. The first stage involved a basic online presence through websites, social media profiles, and ads that transferred traditional communication to the virtual environment. The second stage incorporated interaction, messaging, and social commerce, all of which accelerated during the pandemic. The third stage integrates payments, logistics, automation, analytics, and an omnichannel experience. Molina et al. (2023) place mobile marketing within the communication practices of Industry 4.0, an approach consistent with the central role of the smartphone in business-to-consumer interactions.

The expansion of the internet and social media creates the conditions for an everyday commercial relationship. Kemp (2025) documents the breadth of digital use, while CECE and UEES (2025) highlight the growth of electronic transactions and project that this trend will continue. The most significant evolution is also behavioral: consumers expect quick responses, verifiable information, and payment and delivery options. Maturity is not measured by the number of followers, but by the ability to attribute inquiries, orders, repeat purchases, and profit margins to specific actions. Omnichannel retailing does not eliminate physical stores; rather, it coordinates stores, social media, courier services, and distribution to maintain continuity.

Figure 2

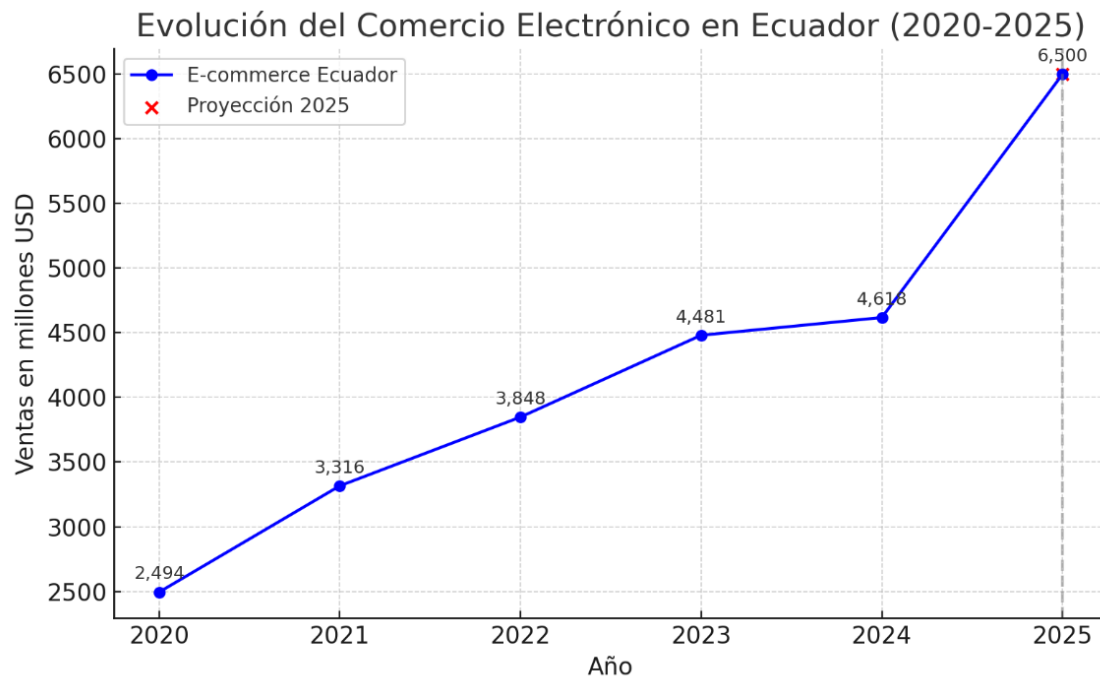
Ecuadorian E-commerce Indicators in 2024 and 2025 Projection



Note: Prepared by the author using data reported by CECE and UEES (2025).

Figure 3

Evolution of E-commerce in Ecuador from 2020 to 2025



Note: Values are expressed in millions of dollars; 2025 is a projection. Prepared by the author using data from CECE and UEES (2025).

Family-owned microenterprises are characterized by centralized decision-making, a blurring of personal and business finances, close customer relationships, and scarce resources. Viteri et al. (2022) found that a lack of knowledge limits the implementation of digital marketing in Guayaquil, despite an interest in attracting customers and improving performance. This finding suggests avoiding disproportionate recommendations. The first level should ensure a complete business profile, a catalog with prices, consistent photographs, delivery policies, hours of operation, frequently asked questions, and basic order tracking.

A second level incorporates targeted campaigns, a content calendar, loyalty messaging, and a dashboard of metrics. A third stage can integrate proprietary e-commerce, automation, and predictive models, provided that volume and capacity justify it. Saltos et al. (2023) propose coordinating email and CRM, websites, social media, inbound marketing, SEO, mobile devices, and paid advertising. This sequence reduces waste and prevents the increase in inquiries from exceeding service capacity. Zambrano et al. (2024) report a positive relationship between marketing spending and sales, but caution that investment remains low and its impact is still in its early stages; therefore, the budget must be accompanied by planning and expertise.

Social media and social commerce. Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube facilitate reach, segmentation, product demonstrations, and social proof. Each platform should

serve a specific function and lead to a concrete action. Castro Medina (2025) confirms the regional prominence of Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. Reposting the same content across all platforms without adapting it to the audience and format dilutes the message.

WhatsApp Business and conversational marketing. Messaging converts interest into a sale through catalogs, direct customer service, quick responses, and follow-up. Its strength is proximity; its risk, improvisation. It is advisable to define response times, tags by stage, consent for communications, and flexible scripts. In Ecuador, it functions as a lightweight commercial infrastructure that connects networks, payment, and delivery.

E-commerce, marketplaces, and digital payments. A company-owned store offers control over the customer experience and data; a marketplace brings traffic and trust, though it charges commissions and limits direct interaction. Ballerini et al. (2023) explain that the platform's capabilities improve performance when the company learns to use them. The choice depends on volume, margin, and logistical capacity.

Content and video marketing. Photos, demonstrations, comparisons, testimonials, and tutorials reduce uncertainty and communicate value. Viteri et al. (2018) consider content a core technique. Its effectiveness increases when it answers real questions and links to available products. A balanced content calendar combines education, trust, community, and product offerings.

SEO, local presence, and targeted advertising. Search engine optimization improves discoverability through names, descriptions, location, reviews, and helpful pages. Advertising accelerates reach but requires clear objectives, target audiences, and testing. Perdigón et al. (2018) link search rankings to security and consumer awareness. Investment should be evaluated based on cost per conversation, acquisition, conversion, and margin—not just impressions.

Email, CRM, and automation. Email remains useful for repeat purchases, updates, and re-engaging identified customers. A CRM can start as a structured spreadsheet with consent, history, and preferences. Automation should free up time from repetitive tasks without dehumanizing the service. Automating disorganized processes merely replicates their flaws more quickly.

Analytics, artificial intelligence, and mobile marketing. Metrics allow us to identify which content attracts audiences, which channel converts, and which customers make repeat purchases. Artificial intelligence can support copywriting, segmentation, and customer service, but it requires human review and data protection. Molina et al. (2023) link mobile marketing to new communication practices, and Ukshini et al. (2025) confirm the general relationship between digital strategies and performance. The guiding principle must be verifiable commercial utility.

The evidence converges on three assertions. First, digital marketing can enhance visibility, performance, and business continuity. Second, social media and messaging platforms serve as accessible entry points for small businesses. Third, gaps in knowledge,

resources, infrastructure, and measurement limit value capture. The alignment between the meta-analysis by Ukshini et al. (2025), the reviews by Caraballo et al. (2023) and García-Pujay et al. (2024), and the Ecuadorian studies from Manta, Azogues, Guayaquil, and Guayas lends consistency to this interpretation.

There are also differences that must be taken into account. Findings from the service sector or cooperatives cannot be directly applied to retail without adjustments. Similarly, an association between digitalization and profitability does not prove that any given campaign will lead to increased sales. The studies reviewed use diverse samples, time periods, and indicators; some were conducted during the pandemic, when restrictions altered consumer behavior. Therefore, the conclusion is conditional: these tools yield better results when integrated with value propositions, inventory, customer service, payment, logistics, and measurement.

Ecuador's main problem does not appear to be a total lack of technology, but rather its fragmented use. There is activity on social media, but the source of customers, conversion, repeat purchases, and profitability are often not tracked. Business owners monitor followers and reactions, yet they remain unaware of each channel's marginal contribution. This gap hinders learning and leaves investments vulnerable to algorithm changes. The priority must shift from mere presence to a data-driven commercial capability, without losing the personal touch that characterizes microenterprises.

In practical terms, a minimum sequence is proposed: assess customers and capabilities; select one or two channels; organize the catalog and content; establish a conversation protocol; enable reliable payment and delivery; track data; evaluate monthly; and scale gradually. Universities, chambers of commerce, and public agencies can contribute through applied training, consulting, connectivity, and digital security. Training should incorporate industry-specific case studies and economic metrics to prevent digital marketing from being reduced to the design of social media posts.

This review has limitations. The analysis was based on a heterogeneous set of documents, and descriptive or cross-sectional studies predominate. Information about platforms changes rapidly, and while several institutional reports provide context, they do not offer causal analysis. Furthermore, the retail sector encompasses activities with varying profit margins, purchasing cycles, and capabilities. These limitations do not invalidate the identified patterns, though they require that these patterns be interpreted as guidelines rather than a universal formula.

CONCLUSIONS

The main digital marketing tools for Ecuadorian retail microbusinesses are social media, WhatsApp Business, websites, e-commerce, marketplaces, content marketing, video, SEO, targeted advertising, email, CRM, analytics, automation, and mobile marketing. Their value lies not in acting as standalone substitutes, but in forming a system that accompanies the customer from discovery through repeat purchases. The selection

should be tailored to the target audience, product, profit margin, geographic area, and operational capacity.

The review identifies a positive correlation between digitalization and performance, but the benefit depends on training, planning, trust, security, logistics, and measurement. Simply creating online profiles does not guarantee competitiveness; value arises when each interaction is linked to business objectives and results. For small businesses, the most sustainable strategy is a gradual one: first organize the product offering and customer service, measure conversions and complaints, and then expand investment or technological sophistication.

Future research should measure sales, margins, retention, customer acquisition costs, and return on investment using longitudinal designs and comparisons by activity, territory, and level of maturity. It is also advisable to study data protection, the impact of artificial intelligence, and dependence on platforms. This agenda would make it possible to distinguish between short-term adoption and true, sustainable digital capability.

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