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ADAPTIVE DIGITAL MARKETING CONVERGENCE FOR VILLAGE-OWNED ENTERPRISES IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT: Rural enterprises increasingly confront digital exclusion despite mounting pressure to compete in platform-based markets. This study contributes to digital marketing and rural enterprise literature by introducing a staged convergence model integrating content marketing and paid promotion according to varying levels of organizational digital readiness among Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDES). Using a sequential explanatory mixed-method design, the study combined surveys of 100 BUMDES, interviews, stakeholder discussions, and pilot implementation across five BUMDES in Cirebon Regency, Indonesia. The findings reveal severe limitations in digital literacy, infrastructure, and marketing capacity, yet the proposed convergence model substantially improved online visibility and business performance during implementation. The study demonstrates that digital marketing effectiveness in rural enterprises depends not merely on technological adoption but on adaptive alignment between promotional intensity, organizational capability, and resource constraints. These findings provide practical guidance for policymakers and local governments in designing scalable digital transformation programs for community-based enterprises.

Keywords: Content Marketing; Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDES); Competitiveness; Convergence Model; Paid Promotion; Online Visibility

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INTRODUCTION

Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDES) serve as the engine of the village economy in Indonesia but face substantial challenges in expanding market reach and increasing competitiveness in the digital era. Digital transformation has changed the way small and medium-sized enterprises build market visibility and competitiveness. According to data from news report only 75.8 per cent of the total 66,000 BUMDes spread across Indonesia are currently active (Khaerunnisa & Subagyo, 2024).

Cirebon Regency, with 424 villages and 312 established BUMDES, presents a microcosm of these challenges. Based on mapping conducted by the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) of Cirebon Regency, only 17.3% of BUMDES in Cirebon Regency are classified as developing, 62.5% are still in the basic stage, and 20.2% are inactive or stagnant (Bappeda Cirebon, 2023). This condition indicates that BUMDES in Cirebon Regency still need to improve their competitiveness. One effort that can be undertaken is enhancing online visibility through the development of marketing strategies and paid promotional activities.

Content marketing and paid promotion are two effective digital marketing strategies in increasing business online visibility (Jusuf, 2022; Zusnita et al., 2024). The research of (William et al., 2023) shows that the implementation of content marketing can increase consumer engagement by up to 138% and brand awareness by 86% in 6 months of implementation in MSMEs. Meanwhile, (Kojongian et al., 2025) revealed that successful strategies generally involve a deep understanding of digital consumer behavior, clear determination of advertising objectives, selection of relevant advertising platforms, and utilization of analytics features for evaluation and optimization. In addition, proportionate ad budget allocation and engaging ad content also proved to be key factors in increasing sales conversion rates.

The concept of convergence in digital marketing refers to the integration and synergy of various marketing strategies to achieve maximum effectiveness (Türkeş, 2024). Content marketing provides a narrative foundation, credibility, and organic engagement (Isibor et al., 2025), while paid promotion functions as a selective amplification mechanism for content that has proven effective (Spotts et al., 2022). Their interaction forms a complementary relationship, in which the narrative strength and trust generated by content marketing are reinforced by the reach and targeting precision of paid promotion.

Previous studies indicate that digital marketing plays a significant role in enhancing the visibility and performance of small enterprises, including BUMDES (Erwin & Amri, 2024). Several studies emphasize the effectiveness of content marketing in building audience engagement, trust, and brand awareness through the creation of valuable content (Jeswani, 2023; Muhic & Klico, 2022). On the other hand, research on paid promotion highlights its ability to accelerate market reach and increase conversions through precise targeting mechanisms at relatively measurable costs (Almestarihi et al., 2024; Taherdoost, 2023). However, in the context of BUMDES, most studies still examine these two strategies separately or focus on optimizing a single digital channel, resulting in recommendations that tend to be practical in nature and lack conceptual integration.

The research gap arises from the absence of a theoretical model that explains the mechanism of convergence between content marketing and paid promotion while taking into account the level of organizational digital readiness. Previous research generally positions digital readiness as a background condition rather than as a basis for marketing strategy design. As a result, it remains unclear how digital strategies should be adopted gradually by BUMDES with differing levels of capability. This study addresses this gap by developing a staged adoption framework based on digital readiness that positions strategic convergence as a mechanism for capability building and performance improvement, thereby offering a conceptual contribution to the digital marketing literature and BUMDES development.

Accordingly, the contribution of this study lies in the conceptualization of convergence as a readiness-based convergence mechanism. The staged adoption framework developed contributes to the enrichment of digital marketing theory and MSME development by demonstrating that the effectiveness of digital strategies is determined not only by the type of strategy employed, but also by the alignment between the strategy, the level of organizational readiness, and the process of gradual capability building.

Based on this conceptual framework, this study aims to: (1) identify the level of digital readiness of BUMDES in Cirebon Regency; (2) develop an adaptive convergence model of content marketing and paid promotion that accommodates variations in digital readiness; and (3) evaluate the impact of the model on the online visibility and business performance of BUMDES. By positioning digital readiness as the theoretical foundation and convergence as the strategic mechanism, this study is expected to provide both conceptual and empirical contributions to the digital marketing literature within the context of rural areas and community-based organizations.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Digital Marketing Theory

Digital marketing refers to the strategic use of digital channels to promote products, build customer relationships, and enhance business performance. According to (Chaffey & Smith, 2022), digital marketing integrates online communication tools such as search engines, social media, email, and digital content to reach audiences efficiently and measurably. The theory emphasizes customer-centricity, data-driven decision-making, and multi-channel integration. (Rafdinal et al., 2025). For village-owned enterprises (BUMDES), digital marketing provides an opportunity to overcome geographical limitations and visibility constraints by leveraging low-cost channels (Alimuddin et al., 2023). The shift from traditional to digital marketing aligns with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Technology Readiness Index (TRI), which explain how digital readiness and perceived usefulness affect adoption behavior.

Content Marketing Theory

Content marketing is defined as a strategic approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience (Jami Pour & Karimi, 2023). The Content Marketing Institute highlights that the central aim is to drive profitable customer action through storytelling, brand narrative, and audience engagement. Celestin et al. (2024) empirically show that content marketing increases customer engagement and brand awareness by stimulating emotional and informational value. The Content Marketing Matrix positions content types (entertain, educate, inspire, convince) as tools to influence different stages of consumer decision-making (Darvidou, 2024). In the context of BUMDES, content that highlights local culture, uniqueness, and community stories acts as an authenticity signal, which strengthens trust and differentiates rural products in saturated digital markets.

Paid Promotion Theory

Paid promotion, also known as paid digital advertising, refers to the use of paid channels such as social media ads, Google Ads, and sponsored content to increase visibility, reach, and conversions. According to (Parshetty et al., 2024), paid promotion accelerates exposure through targeted messages delivered to specific demographic and psychographic segments. The AIDA Model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) provides a theoretical foundation for paid promotion effectiveness. Paid ads help capture attention rapidly, generate interest through personalized messaging, create desire via persuasive visuals, and drive action through call-to-action mechanisms.

Convergence Theory in Digital Marketing

Jusuf (2023) demonstrate empirically that targeted paid promotion increases sales conversion for rural SMEs by enabling micro-targeting, geographic targeting, and retargeting strategies. This makes paid promotion particularly useful for BUMDES with limited brand recognition but high potential for niche markets. Convergence theory involves the integration of multiple marketing strategies to achieve synergistic effects greater than the sum of their individual contributions. (Mehr & Aref, 2023) defines convergence as the flow of content across multiple media platforms driven by consumer behavior and participatory culture. In digital marketing, convergence refers to synchronizing organic content strategies with paid promotional tools to

reinforce messaging and expand reach. (I. R. Putra et al., 2025) argue that convergence allows small enterprises to overcome resource constraints by amplifying high-performing content using paid channels. When content marketing provides narrative value and authenticity, paid promotion accelerates distribution, creating a continuous loop of engagement and visibility.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study uses a mixed-method approach (quantitative and qualitative) with a sequential explanatory design. The selection of this design is based on the study's conceptual need to systematically understand variations in the digital readiness of BUMDES while simultaneously explaining their implications for the design of a digital marketing convergence model. Given that the research objective is not only to measure the level of digital readiness but also to develop an adaptive strategic model, a single-method approach was considered insufficient to capture the complexity of the BUMDES context and its institutional dynamics. The quantitative phase serves as an analytical foundation to objectively measure and classify the digital readiness of BUMDES, which subsequently informs the focus of the qualitative exploration. The results of this readiness assessment guide the selection of informants, key issues, and strategic needs explored through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The qualitative findings are then used to elucidate the mechanisms, barriers, and specific needs at each level of readiness, and are directly integrated into the development of the convergence model. This approach, developed by (Plano Clark, 2017), allows for a comprehensive understanding of complex phenomena through the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data. The research was carried out in three main phases: (1) Preliminary Study, (2) Needs Assessment and Analysis, and (3) Model Development and Validation.

Research Phase

The research was conducted in three sequential phases to develop and validate an adaptive digital marketing convergence model for Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDES). The first phase focused on an extensive literature review covering digital marketing theory, content marketing and paid promotion strategies, BUMDES development, and previous empirical studies related to rural digital transformation. Preliminary observations were also conducted on ten BUMDES in Cirebon Regency to examine existing marketing practices and identify operational barriers in digital adoption. This initial phase provided the conceptual and contextual foundation for subsequent model development. Academic research loves calling this "preliminary observation," which is a civilized way of saying, "we visited the field and discovered people are still expected to compete digitally with almost no infrastructure."

The second phase emphasized needs assessment and situational analysis through a mixed data collection strategy. A structured digital readiness survey was administered to 100 BUMDES using an adapted Digital Readiness Assessment instrument derived from Parasuraman and Colby (2014) and Lynn et al. (2020). The adaptation process involved selecting indicators relevant to the institutional context of BUMDES, simplifying item wording for managerial comprehension, and testing readability through limited practitioner discussions. The instrument measured six dimensions: technological infrastructure, digital skills, innovation orientation, budget allocation, management support, and awareness of digital technology importance. All items employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. To enrich quantitative findings, semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten purposively selected BUMDES managers representing different business sectors and levels of digital readiness. The interviews explored existing marketing practices, barriers to digital transformation, resource limitations, and strategic expectations regarding digital marketing adoption.

This phase was further strengthened through three Focus Group Discussion (FGD) sessions involving BUMDES managers, village officials, representatives from government agencies, digital marketing experts, and business practitioners. Each session addressed a distinct objective, namely identifying digital marketing barriers, evaluating the feasibility of the proposed convergence model, and examining the institutional support required for implementation. The staged FGD structure enabled deeper stakeholder engagement while simultaneously functioning

as an iterative mechanism for refining the conceptual framework. Humans adore acronyms like FGD because “a room full of stakeholders debating budgets and internet access for four hours” sounds less elegant in methodology sections.

The third phase focused on model development and validation using a design thinking approach consisting of empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test stages. This approach enabled the model to emerge directly from the operational realities of BUMDES rather than from abstract technological assumptions. Model validation employed a Delphi technique involving seven experts, comprising academics in digital marketing, experienced practitioners, and government officials responsible for BUMDES supervision. The validation process was conducted in two iterative rounds to achieve consensus regarding model relevance and applicability. Furthermore, each component of the model was evaluated using a four-point content validity scale measuring relevance, clarity, and practical applicability. The Content Validity Index (CVI) was subsequently calculated to ensure the conceptual robustness and implementation feasibility of the developed convergence model.

Research Sample

The quantitative phase involved 100 BUMDES in Cirebon Regency which were selected through stratified random sampling based on business sectors (agriculture, trade, services, tourism, handicrafts) and level of development (basic, developing, advanced). This sampling ensures the representation of the diversity of BUMDES in the district. The qualitative phase involved 10 BUMDES managers who were purposively selected based on: (1) management experience of at least 2 years, (2) diversity of business sectors, (3) varying levels of digital readiness, and (4) willingness to participate in in-depth interviews. Meanwhile, the selection of seven experts in the Delphi process was based on their substantive expertise and strategic roles, consisting of academics in the field of digital marketing, practitioners with experience in implementing digital marketing for MSMEs/BUMDES, and local government officials responsible for the guidance and supervision of BUMDES.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data analysis in this study focuses on descriptive statistics to map the level of digital readiness of BUMDES and to identify patterns of variation across readiness dimensions. This approach was selected because the primary objective of the quantitative phase is classification and condition mapping, rather than testing causal relationships or making predictions. More complex inferential analyses were not extensively employed due to the limited sample size within each readiness group and the study’s focus on using quantitative data as a foundation for model development rather than theory testing. Nevertheless, one-way ANOVA was used in a limited manner to identify differences in digital readiness across business sectors and levels of BUMDES development, serving as supporting information for determining the focus of qualitative exploration.

Qualitative data were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach following the six stages proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006): data familiarization, initial coding, theme searching, theme reviewing, theme defining, and narrative construction. The coding process was conducted openly by identifying key statements from interviews and FGDs, such as “limited marketing budgets,” “lack of digital skills,” and “uncertainty about the benefits of digital marketing,” which were then grouped into initial codes. These codes were subsequently consolidated into more abstract themes, such as resource constraints, internal capability barriers, and skepticism toward digital effectiveness, which served as the conceptual basis for developing the convergence model. Data triangulation followed an established framework to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings (Denzin, 2017).

The results of the ANOVA analysis were directly integrated into the results and discussion narratives to demonstrate variations in digital readiness across sectors and levels of BUMDES. These findings were used not as an end point of statistical analysis, but as an analytical bridge linking quantitative results with qualitative insights, as well as an empirical justification for the development of the staged adoption framework. Accordingly, the entire data analysis process

was designed in an integrated manner to support the study's main objective: the development of a contextual, digital-readiness-based convergence model.

RESULTS

BUMDES Digital Readiness Assessment

A digital readiness assessment of 100 BUMDES in Cirebon Regency revealed significant variations in readiness levels. Based on the Digital Readiness Assessment instrument as in Table 1, BUMDES is categorized into three levels of readiness: low (score 0-40), moderate (score 41-70), and high (score 71-100).

Table 1. Distribution of BUMDES Digital Readiness Level

Readiness Level	Frequency	Percentage	Average Score
Low (0-40)	43	43%	28.6
Moderate (41-70)	49	49%	56.3
High (71-100)	8	8%	79.1
Total	100	100%	48.7

Table 1 shows that the majority of BUMDES (92%) have low to moderate digital readiness, with an overall average score of 48.7. This pattern indicates that the digital readiness of BUMDES remains partial, with awareness of the importance of digital technology being relatively higher than the actual capability to implement it. These findings confirm the need for adaptive strategies that accommodate varying levels of readiness. A detailed analysis of the readiness dimension reveals important insights in Table 2.

Table 2. Digital Readiness Dimension Analysis

Dimension	Average Score (0-100)	Level
Awareness of Technologies	67,4	Moderate-High
Management Support	58,2	Moderate
Technology Infrastructure	45,7	Moderate
Innovation Orientation	42,3	Moderate-Low
Digital Skills	34,2	Low
Budget Allocation for Digital	31,8	Low

Table 2 shows an interesting pattern: although BUMDES managers have a high awareness of the importance of digital technologies (67.4) and moderate management support (58.2), there are significant gaps in technical capabilities and resource allocation. The lowest scores on Digital Skills (34.2) and Budget Allocation (31.8) indicate the main obstacles to digital transformation. These findings are in line with (Siahaan et al., 2022) who identified a similar pattern in BUMDES in North Sumatra. Cross-sector analysis of business reveals variations: the tourism and handicrafts sectors show higher readiness (average 54.8) than traditional agriculture and trade sectors (average 43.2). This can be attributed to the visual nature of tourism and handicraft products that are easier to market digitally, as well as higher exposure to digitally literate consumers.

Phased Adoption Framework

Recognising the varying levels of digital readiness of BUMDES, the model incorporates a phased adoption framework that adapts implementation strategies according to BUMDES' capabilities, as in Table 3. The gradual framework ensures that BUMDES at each level can adopt strategies that suit their current capabilities while providing a clear path forward. For example, BUMDES in the Foundation stage focuses on building a basic digital presence through a free platform before investing in paid promotions, while those in the Optimization stage can implement sophisticated campaigns with advanced targeting and automation.

Table 3. A Phased Adoption Framework Based on Digital Readiness

Phase	Readiness Level	Key Focus	Key Activities
Foundation	Low (0-40)	Building Basic Capabilities	Digital literacy training, basic social media, simple content creation, website/marketplace presence
Development	Moderate (41-70)	Expanding Digital Presence	Regular content calendar, multiple platforms, basic SEO, small paid promotion experiments
Optimization	High (71-100)	Maximizing Performance	Advanced analytics, sophisticated campaigns, ROI optimization, conversion rate optimization

Model Validation Results

The convergence model underwent rigorous validation through Delphi techniques involving expert panel members. Validation was carried out in two rounds to reach consensus on model components, structure, and applicability.

Table 4. Expert Validation Results

Model Components	Round 1			Round 2		
	Average Rating (1-4)	CVI	Expert Consensus	Average Rating (1-4)	CVI	Expert Consensus
Content Marketing Components	3.71	0.86	Strong	3.86	0.93	Very Powerful
Paid Promotion Components	3.57	0.79	Good	3.71	0.86	Strong
Integration Mechanism	3.43	0.71	Moderate	3.71	0.86	Strong
Phased Adoption Framework	3.86	0.93	Very Powerful	3.86	0.93	Very Powerful
Implementation Toolkit	3.29	0.64	Moderate	3.71	0.86	Strong
Overall Model	3.57	0.79	Good	3.77	0.89	Very Powerful

Round 1 validation revealed that the Content Validity Index (CVI) for the overall model was 0.79, with variation across components. The phased adoption framework and the content marketing component achieved the highest CVI scores (0.93 and 0.86, respectively), while the integration mechanism and implementation toolkit received relatively lower scores (0.71 and 0.64). Methodologically, a CVI value of 0.79 indicates that the model has good content validity, although it is not yet fully robust conceptually. Substantively, this pattern suggests that the experts agreed on the relevance of the core ideas, particularly the importance of a staged, digital-readiness-based approach. However, they still identified weaknesses in the clarity of the convergence mechanism and the operationalization of the model. In other words, the initial model was considered directionally appropriate, but not yet fully mature in explaining how its components interact strategically. Experts provided valuable feedback including: (1) the need for a clearer integration mechanism between content and paid strategies, (2) more detailed budget allocation guidance, (3) specific metrics to measure success at each stage, and (4) a more comprehensive implementation toolkit with templates and checklists.

Based on Round 1 feedback, the model was improved by (1) developing a detailed content–promotion synchronization workflow, (2) a specific budget allocation formula based on BUMDES revenue, (3) a comprehensive KPI dashboard for each readiness stage, and (4) an expanded toolkit that includes 25+ templates, 15 checklists, and 10 case study examples. The revised model was then validated in Round 2.

Round 2 validation showed significant improvements across all components, with the overall CVI increasing from 0.79 to 0.89, indicating very strong validity. All components achieve a CVI of ≥ 0.86, exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.80 for content validity (Lynn, 1986). After

refining the model based on expert feedback, the second Delphi round showed significant improvements across all components, with the overall CVI increasing to 0.89 and all components reaching values of ≥ 0.86. Methodologically, this value exceeds the recommended content validity threshold (≥ 0.80), indicating a very strong expert consensus regarding the model's relevance, clarity, and feasibility. Conceptually, the increase in CVI reflects that the revisions particularly those related to the integration mechanism between content marketing and paid promotion and the clarification of the staged adoption pathway successfully strengthened the model's internal coherence. Thus, the second round not only confirmed the model's validity but also demonstrated that it had evolved from an operational framework into a strategic construct capable of theoretically explaining the relationships among digital readiness, strategy convergence, and improvements in BUMDES performance. Experts praised the improvements made, in particular: (1) clarity of the integration mechanism, (2) practicality of the budget guidance, (3) completeness of success metrics, and (4) user-friendliness toolkit implementation.

DISCUSSION

Analysis of BUMDES Digital Readiness Dimensions

The analysis of digital readiness dimensions indicates that BUMDES in Cirebon Regency are in a condition of unbalanced readiness (*asymmetric readiness*), in which awareness of the importance of digital technology and managerial support are relatively higher than implementative capabilities such as digital skills and budget allocation. This pattern suggests that the primary challenge of BUMDES digitalization does not lie in attitudinal resistance, but rather in structural constraints and organizational capacity limitations. These findings are consistent with the theory of *organizational readiness for change*, which emphasizes that successful technology adoption requires a combination of psychological commitment (*change commitment*) and adequate resource availability (*change efficacy*) (Parasuraman & Colby, 2014; Weiner, 2020). Studies on MSMEs and community-based organizations likewise show that high levels of digital awareness do not automatically translate into digital transformation without sufficient operational capabilities (Ellström et al., 2021; Yu et al., 2022).

The low level of digital skills among BUMDES managers reflects limitations in human capital and organizational learning processes. Most BUMDES are managed by small teams with multiple roles, causing digital competency development to receive limited priority. From a *capability-based view*, this condition hampers the formation of dynamic capabilities required to respond effectively to changes in the digital environment. As a result, although BUMDES recognize the importance of digital marketing, they struggle to translate this awareness into consistent and sustainable practices.

The low budget allocation dimension further reinforces these findings and indicates that digital marketing has not yet been institutionalized as a strategic function within BUMDES governance. A management orientation that remains focused on short-term operational survival leads digital-related expenditures to be perceived as costs rather than long-term investments. Structurally, this condition restricts opportunities for experimentation and data-driven learning, which are prerequisites for effective digital strategies, particularly those involving the convergence of content marketing and paid promotion.

This imbalance across readiness dimensions has direct implications for the adoption of digital marketing strategies. BUMDES with high awareness but low capabilities tend to adopt digital strategies in a partial and non-integrated manner, resulting in suboptimal outcomes. These findings align with innovation adoption literature, which emphasizes that complex digital strategies require alignment between the level of readiness and the complexity of the intervention (*fit between readiness and strategy*) (Permatasari & Khair, 2025; Webster & Gardner, 2019). Therefore, digital interventions for BUMDES require a phased approach that simultaneously builds skills, resource support, and strategic mechanisms. In this context, the phased adoption framework developed in this study is conceptually relevant, as it enables BUMDES to progressively enhance their digital readiness before implementing more complex convergent digital marketing strategies.

The staged adoption framework developed in this study emphasizes that the adoption of digital marketing strategies by BUMDES is an evolutionary process that is strongly influenced by

the organization's level of digital readiness. The organizational readiness perspective posits that the success of technology adoption is determined not only by positive attitudes toward innovation, but also by the availability of supporting capabilities and resources (Lynn et al., 2020; Parasuraman & Colby, 2014). The findings of this study reinforce this view by showing that most BUMDES are at low to moderate levels of readiness, such that the direct implementation of complex digital strategies may lead to an implementation gap.

At the Foundation stage, the focus is on building basic capabilities through improving digital literacy, establishing a minimal online presence, and producing simple content. This approach aligns with the concept of learning by doing and early capability development within the resource-based view (RBV), which argues that small organizations must build knowledge and skill assets before pursuing competitive advantage (Assensoh-Kodua, 2019). Previous studies on MSMEs and BUMDES also indicate that digital initiatives often fail due to weak skill foundations and inadequate supporting structures (Siahaan et al., 2022).

The Development stage reflects a transition from basic adoption toward the strengthening of strategic capabilities through more systematic content planning, platform diversification, and limited experimentation with paid promotion. This stage is consistent with dynamic capabilities theory, which emphasizes an organization's ability to learn, adapt, and reconfigure resources in response to environmental change (Cristofaro et al., 2025). Prior research shows that MSMEs that combine digital learning with controlled experimentation tend to achieve more stable improvements in visibility and performance (Setiawan et al., 2025).

At the Optimization stage, BUMDES have reached a high level of readiness that enables the full convergence of content marketing and paid promotion. In this phase, digital strategies function as a source of competitive advantage through the use of analytics, budget optimization, and cross-channel integration. These findings are consistent with the digital marketing literature, which highlights strategic integration and data-driven decision-making as key characteristics of organizations that have achieved digital maturity (Chaffey & Smith, 2022). Based on the results of a comprehensive assessment and needs analysis, a convergence model was developed that integrates content marketing and paid promotion using the Design Thinking approach. The model consists of three main components that are integrated.

Component 1: Content Marketing Strategy

This component focuses on creating valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and engage target audiences. Content types include:

- Blog Content: Articles that tell stories about local products, production processes, cultural heritage, and community impact. Optimized for search engines with relevant keywords.
- Video Content: Short videos (30-60 seconds) and longer documentaries showcasing products, behind-the-scenes production processes, customer testimonials, and village life. Suitable for social media and YouTube.
- Social Media Content: Regular posts (3-5 times per week) on Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok feature product photos, customer interactions, village events, and educational content about using the product.
- Email Newsletter: A monthly newsletter to subscribers containing product updates, special promotions, success stories, and village news to maintain customer relationships.

Component 2: Paid Promotion Strategy

This component leverages paid ad channels to strengthen content reach and accelerate visibility. Promotional channels include:

- Search Engine Marketing (SEM): Google Ads campaigns target relevant keywords for local products. Budget: minimum IDR 500,000-1,000,000 per month with a focus on high-intent keywords.
- Social Media Ads: Sponsored posts on Facebook and Instagram target specific demographics, interests, and geographic areas. Budget: IDR 300,000-800,000 per month with A/B creative content testing.
- Display Advertising: Banner ads on relevant websites and blogs that are frequented by the target audience. Budget: IDR 200,000-500,000 per month for retargeting campaigns.

- Marketplace Promotions: Sponsored listings and featured placements on e-commerce platforms such as Tokopedia, Shopee, and Bukalapak. Budget: 5-10% of the expected sales from the marketplace. (Abdurokhim, 2025)

Component 3: Integration and Synergy Mechanism

This component ensures that both strategies work synergistically through:

- Content Amplification: Paid promotions prioritize high-performing organic content to maximize ROI. The best-performing posts receive an additional budget allocation.
- Data-Driven Optimization: Regular (weekly/monthly) monitoring of key metrics including reach, engagement, Click-Through Rate (CTR), conversion rate, and Cost Per Acquisition (CPA). Insights inform content creation and budget allocation decisions.
- Unified Brand Messaging: Consistent brand voice, visual identity, and messaging across all organic and paid channels to build brand recognition and trust.
- Customer Journey Mapping: Touchpoint content and strategic promotions that align with the customer journey stage (awareness, consideration, purchase, advocacy).

Expert Validation Results of the Model

The results of expert validation using the Delphi technique indicate an increased level of consensus from the first to the second round, as reflected in the rise of the Content Validity Index (CVI) values. This pattern suggests that the developed model underwent significant conceptual refinement through an iterative process, as recommended in the design science research and iterative model development approaches. Expert feedback in the first round primarily highlighted the need for greater clarity in the integration mechanism between content marketing and paid promotion. Revisions that clarified the synergy pathway, where content functions as a creator of value and credibility, while paid promotion serves as a data-driven amplification mechanism strengthened the positioning of convergence as an integrated marketing strategy, in line with the concepts of integrated digital marketing and media convergence (Vukanovic, 2018).

In the second round, the increased expert consensus affirmed that the explicit linkage between levels of digital readiness and stages of strategy adoption is viewed as the study's main conceptual contribution. This approach aligns with organizational readiness and dynamic capabilities theories, which emphasize that the effectiveness of innovation adoption depends heavily on the alignment between strategy complexity and an organization's internal capabilities (Cristofaro et al., 2025; Parasuraman & Colby, 2014). Accordingly, expert validation not only confirms the model's operational feasibility but also reinforces the theoretical argument that the convergence of digital marketing strategies in BUMDES should be understood as a staged process built through readiness, learning, and capability strengthening, rather than merely as a tactical integration of marketing tools.

The developed convergence model offers several conceptual and practical strengths that distinguish it from previous digital marketing approaches for rural enterprises. Unlike earlier studies that concentrated primarily on either content marketing or paid promotion as isolated mechanisms (I. R. A. S. Putra et al., 2025; Suhud & Handaru, 2024), this model integrates both strategies within a mutually reinforcing framework. Organic content functions as the foundational mechanism for building audience trust and engagement, while paid promotion amplifies high-performing content to extend reach and accelerate visibility. This integration creates a cumulative amplification effect in which promotional expenditure is directed toward already validated content performance, thereby improving both engagement efficiency and budget utilization. In many ways, the model treats marketing less as random digital noise and more as a coordinated ecosystem, which is apparently still a revolutionary idea in some institutional settings.

A further strength of the model lies in its gradual adoption framework based on organizational readiness levels. Rather than imposing a uniform digital transformation pathway, the model recognizes the structural diversity of BUMDES in terms of infrastructure, managerial capability, and financial resources. Different implementation trajectories are therefore designed for low, moderate, and high readiness categories, making the framework more operationally realistic and institutionally achievable. This staged progression also functions as a motivational mechanism by providing measurable developmental milestones that encourage gradual

advancement toward higher levels of digital capability. The model therefore shifts digital transformation from an abstract technological ambition into a structured organizational learning process.

The convergence model also places strong emphasis on local content, cultural narratives, and village uniqueness as strategic marketing assets. Instead of imitating generic commercial branding practices, the framework encourages BUMDES to position local identity, traditional knowledge, and community authenticity as sources of differentiation within digital markets. Such an approach strengthens emotional connections with consumers seeking products associated with authenticity, locality, and social meaning. This orientation is particularly important because rural enterprises rarely possess the financial scale to compete directly with mass-market commercial actors through conventional advertising intensity alone. Humans eventually rediscovered that culture sells better than sterile corporate slogans generated in air-conditioned meeting rooms.

From an implementation perspective, the model is strengthened through a comprehensive practical toolkit designed to reduce operational barriers during adoption. The toolkit includes more than twenty-five ready-to-use templates, multiple implementation checklists, and case-based examples derived from successful BUMDES practices. These instruments provide direct procedural guidance for content planning, campaign execution, and performance evaluation, thereby addressing the persistent implementation gap between conceptual digital marketing frameworks and rural institutional realities. Finally, the model incorporates explicit budget efficiency considerations by recommending phased allocation ratios between organic content development and paid promotion according to organizational maturity levels. The framework prioritizes maximizing organic reach before scaling paid advertising investments, ensuring that limited financial resources are allocated strategically and sustainably rather than consumed by premature promotional spending.

Model Limitations and Contextual Conditions of Implementation

Although the developed convergence model of content marketing and paid promotion demonstrates a high level of validity and acceptance, its effectiveness is not universal and is highly dependent on the organizational readiness context. For BUMDES with very low digital capacity particularly those facing limitations in skills, weak management structures, and minimal budget allocation, the convergence strategy may fail to generate significant impact. Under such conditions, convergence does not function as a performance-enhancing mechanism but instead risks becoming an additional and unsustainable operational burden. This finding is consistent with the organizational readiness literature, which emphasizes that adopting complex digital strategies without an adequate capability foundation tends to result in symbolic adoption rather than substantive change (Parasuraman & Colby, 2014).

Moreover, the findings indicate that the success of a convergence strategy is determined not only by internal marketing design but also by external institutional support that extends beyond marketing interventions alone. Limited access to continuous training, digital mentoring, and affirmative policies from local governments may constrain the effectiveness of the model, even for BUMDES that have reached a moderate level of readiness. Therefore, this model should be understood as part of a broader BUMDES development ecosystem, in which digital marketing interventions must be aligned with governance strengthening, human resource development, and policy support. This perspective reinforces the argument that the convergence of digital marketing strategies represents a necessary condition, but not necessarily a sufficient condition, for uniformly improving BUMDES performance.

CONCLUSION AND FURTHER STUDY

This study successfully developed and validated an adaptive convergence model integrating content marketing and paid promotion strategies for Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDES) in Indonesia. The findings demonstrate that digital readiness among BUMDES remains highly uneven, with substantial limitations in digital capability, infrastructure, and marketing resources constraining broader participation in digital markets. In response to these structural disparities, the study proposed a phased adoption framework consisting of foundation,

development, and optimization stages tailored to different levels of organizational readiness. The model integrates organic content strategies with paid promotional mechanisms through content amplification, integrated messaging, customer journey alignment, and data-driven optimization. Validation through the Delphi technique confirmed strong conceptual and practical feasibility, particularly regarding the adaptability of the phased framework and the operational completeness of the implementation toolkit. These findings indicate that effective digital transformation for rural enterprises depends not solely on technological access, but on the strategic synchronization between organizational capability, resource allocation, and promotional integration. Rural institutions are repeatedly told to "go digital," as if internet access alone magically produces strategy, skills, and market legitimacy. Reality remains less inspirational.

Despite its contributions, this study remains limited to BUMDES contexts within Cirebon Regency, thereby restricting broader generalization across regions with different institutional capacities and socio-economic conditions. The pilot implementation period was also relatively short, limiting the ability to observe long-term sustainability and organizational adaptation processes. Future studies should therefore conduct longitudinal evaluations, expand cross-regional comparisons, and examine how institutional governance, leadership capability, and community participation influence the effectiveness of digital marketing convergence strategies. Further research may also integrate artificial intelligence, marketplace analytics, and platform-based consumer behavior into rural enterprise marketing models. Practically, the study provides implications for policymakers, local governments, and BUMDES facilitators by offering a scalable framework for designing staged digital transformation programs aligned with varying levels of organizational readiness and financial capability.

ETHICAL DISCLOSURE

This study followed ethical standards for social science research. All participants provided informed consent prior to participation and were informed about the study objectives, voluntary participation, and confidentiality of responses. Data were used solely for academic purposes, with participant identities kept anonymous.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare no conflict of interest related to this study.

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