

NAVIGATING INTERGENERATIONAL TENSIONS IN DIGITAL MARKETING ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION: EVIDENCE FROM INDONESIAN FAMILY MICRO-ENTERPRISES

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Abstract

Family micro-enterprises (FMEs) constitute the majority of business entities in Indonesia. Despite their vital role as the backbone of regional economies, FMEs face challenges in innovation, including intergenerational tensions during the adoption and implementation of digital marketing. Using a qualitative approach, this study involves 24 informants from 12 FMEs in Sumatra, Indonesia. By applying a dynamic capabilities (DCs) perspective, this study explores how FME successors can navigate intergenerational tensions and turn them into opportunities to adopt and implement digital marketing. The findings identify four sources of intergenerational tensions: (1) founders' control and comparisons, (2) identity and value preservation, (3) digital literacy gaps, and (4) emotional decency. When strategically managed, these tensions can become spaces for relational negotiations among founders and successors. These negotiations depend on the successors' DCs, which involve (1) sensing opportunities to engage, (2) seizing opportunities for experimentation, and (3) reconfiguring traditional routines for digital transformation. Therefore, this study contributes to family business and digital marketing literature by showing that DCs, in the context of FMEs, are socially embedded and developed through daily negotiations.

Keywords: Family Business, Intergenerational Tensions, Family Micro-Enterprises, Digital Marketing, Dynamic Capabilities

Introduction

Research on family enterprises has gained increasing scholarly interest over the past twenty years, emphasizing the significance of family-owned businesses, which are vital to both national and regional economic growth (De Massis, Audretsch, et al., 2018). In many developing countries, family businesses often originate from micro and small-scale enterprises, representing the foundation of the economic backbone (Chrisman et al., 2021). For example, in Indonesia, 61.5 to 64 million, or nearly 99%, of business entities are classified as micro enterprises (Simatupang & Firtica, 2022; Tirta & Sarli, 2021) and it is estimated that about 90-95% of these are family-owned (Siringoringo et al., 2023). This indicates that family micro- enterprises (FMEs) are essential in maintaining local livelihoods and promoting economic growth. However, despite their widespread presence, FMEs have low survival rates, with only around 30% reaching a second generation, about 13% a third, and less than 3% continuing beyond that (The Jakarta Post, 2019).

This low rate of business survival across generations, therefore, encourages FMEs to increasingly turn to digital innovation as a strategic response to compete in the market and adapt to technological disruptions, aiming to thrive and survive through generations. (Arzubiaga et al., 2018). Since the digital innovation is believed to help FMEs improve competitiveness, expand market reach, and boost resilience (Kraus et al., 2019), FMEs primarily implement digital innovation through digital marketing, such as social media and online platforms (Martínez-Caro et al., 2020; Soluk & Kammerlander, 2021). However, while larger and established family enterprises can easily invest in comprehensive digital marketing optimization, FMEs tend to approach digital transformation with caution, as they need to balance innovation with the preservation of family identity and values (Skorodiyevskiy et al., 2024). This indicates that digitalization within FMEs is not only a technological shift but also a cultural and generational negotiation over control and change.

To better understand this phenomenon, dynamic capabilities (DCs) can serve as a lens to examine how entrepreneurs sense opportunities, seize them, and reconfigure their resource base (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000; Teece et al., 1997). In FME contexts, DCs are deeply intertwined with identity, legacy, and intergenerational learning (Erdogan et al., 2020; Soluk et al., 2021). Successor generations must therefore integrate technological knowledge with inherited family values, transforming not only business operations but also the underlying entrepreneurial mindset (Appleton et al., 2025; De Massis, Frattini, et al., 2018). In this sense, digital marketing serves as both a strategic tool and a capability-building process through which successors develop adaptive capabilities and ensure intergenerational continuity.

Nevertheless, the digital transformation journey in FMEs is rarely smooth, as it involves uncertainty, such as trial-and-error experimentation, and specific resources, like digital marketing capabilities, knowledge, and skills. It often provokes tensions among family members, especially between founders and successors, due to generational gaps in technological literacy, perceptions, and attitudes. Founders may resist digital change out

of fear of losing control or undermining family identities and values (Appleton et al., 2025; Gusenbauer et al., 2023), while successors aim to embrace digitalization.

These generational gaps highlight that the challenges of digital transformation are rooted in relational and psychological factors embedded within a family's social structure and intergenerational dynamics (Suddaby & Jaskiewicz, 2020). These factors often cause family businesses to be less innovative than nonfamily firms (Appleton et al., 2025). Although studies acknowledge the importance of communication and interaction between founders and successors in reducing intergenerational tensions, the specific dynamics and power asymmetries involved remain less understood. We know that the founders' dominant role may prevent mutual exchange and successors' efforts to start innovation, but how this further blocks successors' attempts to adopt and implement digital transformation remains unclear (Appleton et al., 2025; Suddaby & Jaskiewicz, 2020).

Additionally, while previous research has recognized the existence of intergenerational tensions, how successors actively address and manage these tensions remains largely unexplored. Most studies have focused either on the outcomes of digital transformation or on the structural barriers to its implementation, but less attention has been paid to the mechanisms by which successors balance innovation with family values while navigating intra-family resistance. Consequently, our understanding of the DCs needed to bridge intergenerational tensions and to facilitate both the implementation of digital marketing and harmony within family traditions remains limited. harmony within family traditions remains limited.

Against this background, this study aims to investigate, using a qualitative approach, how successors in FMEs manage intergenerational tensions during the adoption and implementation of digital marketing. This study explores how successors balance innovation and tradition. Specifically, it addresses two research questions.

- RQ1: How do intergenerational tensions hinder FMEs' adaptation and implementation of digital marketing?
- RQ2: How do FMEs' successors handle intergenerational tensions and promote the successful adoption and implementation of digital marketing?

This study offers two main contributions. First, academically, it broadens family business research by integrating insights from both family business and digital innovation, particularly in digital marketing. It emphasizes successors' DCs as a key factor in managing intergenerational tensions while also adopting and implementing digital transformation, particularly in micro-scale businesses. Second, it offers practical guidance for FME leaders, including founders and successors, on adopting and promoting digital marketing. It also proposes strategies to balance innovation and tradition, supporting transgenerational sustainability.

Literature Review

Intergenerational Tensions in FME's Digital Transformation

FMEs represent the economic backbone as they substantially contribute to job opportunities and community improvement (Chrisman et al., 2021). Despite their essential role, FMEs often face significant challenges in maintaining continuity across generations to ensure business sustainability (Kinias et al., 2023). The challenges in intergenerational transition frequently arise from knowledge gaps, power asymmetries, and attachment to family values (Chirico, 2008). The differences between founders and successors become clear when FMEs embrace and pursue innovation, such as adopting and implementing digital marketing strategies, including social media, online platforms, and digital branding (Kraus et al., 2019).

While digital marketing offers agility and competitiveness to leverage FMEs' market position, its adoption and implementation can, in some cases, simultaneously disrupt long-established practices and family hierarchies (Basly & Hammouda, 2020). On the one hand, successors within FMEs tend to explore opportunities offered by digital innovation, as this initiative is typically initiated by the younger generations (Martínez-Caro et al., 2020). On the other hand, such initiatives often encounter founders' resistance, stemming from concerns about shifting the family's values and exposing the family's reputation online (Appleton et al., 2025). Moreover, founders also assume digital innovation is risky and costly, especially in terms of losing personal touch with customers (Soluk & Kammerlander, 2021). As a result, these contrasting disagreements elicit emotional friction (De Massis & Rondi, 2020; Jaskiewicz & Dyer, 2017), often leading to intergenerational tensions. Here, different views are expressed, loudly or quietly, through disagreements over decision-making authority and strategic changes (Eddleston & Kellermanns, 2007; Madison et al., 2016).

Prior studies noted that tensions can be either destructive or generative. It depends on how interaction and communication are managed. When tensions are manageable, discussed, and negotiated, it can stimulate the learning process and leverage new capabilities. However, while existing research highlights the importance of interaction and communication as coping strategies for managing intergenerational tensions, most studies focus on the presence of conflicts rather than on mechanisms that transform disagreement into collaboration (Calabrò et al., 2019; Kraus et al., 2021), leaving opportunity to reveal the interactional processes through which intergenerational tensions emerge, evolve, and influence the adoption and implementation of digital marketing within FMEs. Especially in FMEs, where they often rely on informal mechanisms, the negotiation process is highly personal, enforced by kinship ties and respect (Chirico & Salvato, 2008).

Successors' Dynamic Capabilities and The Mitigation of Intergenerational Tensions

In FMEs, successors act as agents of change, responsible for the inherent business legacy and sustainability (Arzubiaga et al., 2018; De Massis & Rondi, 2020). To do so, they are open to new opportunities, knowledge, and technologies. They are aware that business environments are fluid and dynamic, requiring learning and the capacity to adapt and embrace change, which aligns with the concept of DCs. DCs represent the capacity to sense opportunities, seize them, and reconfigure resources to gain a competitive advantage (Teece, 2007). The sensing capability enables successors to identify opportunities in digital markets, such as recognizing emerging digital platforms, shifts in customer behaviour, expanding potential customer bases, and building online customer engagement (Mariani & Borghi, 2020; Martínez-Caro et al., 2020). Furthermore, they are seizing these opportunities by identifying the resources and family support needed to leverage the opportunities offered by digital markets and translating ideas into concrete plans to deploy digital marketing. Then, they reconfigure by modifying business routines and resource use to align with the adoption and implementation of digital marketing practices.

Existing studies mainly portray DCs in FMEs as adaptive mechanisms that reconcile continuity with innovation, emphasizing that DCs emerge from family learning and experience (Chirico, 2008; De Massis & Rondi, 2020; Soluk & Kammerlander, 2021). In this view, we can see that DCs act as a relational bridge to accommodate intergenerational tensions. It can help sense new opportunities while preserving the family identities, seize innovation within trust boundaries, and reconfigure FMEs' internal resources and routines without eroding family values.

However, this prior research captures only part of the intertwined story of intergenerational tensions and DCs in FMEs. Most existing studies assume that DCs can be instantly activated by the successor in seizing opportunities in digital innovation. But in reality, DCs are not purely technical capabilities; instead, they are socially and emotionally embedded within negotiated outcomes. They emerge through dialogue, persuasion, and sometimes confrontation within the family. The successor's ability to sense, seize, and reconfigure often depends on how authority, trust, and emotional influence are distributed between generations. When founders retain strong control over decision-making, successors' experimentation may be limited, turning DCs from adaptive mechanisms into defensive capabilities aimed at preserving harmony or managing conflict (Liu et al., 2023; Soluk & Kammerlander, 2021). In this sense, digital marketing becomes a space where successor capability building develops and exercises sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring capabilities while simultaneously navigating and resolving intergenerational tensions during digital marketing adaptation and implementation (Beliaeva et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2023).

Methods

Research Setting

This study concentrates on FMEs, especially in Sumatra, Indonesia, for two reasons. First, it is well known that in some regions, local industries are dominated by FMEs and play a significant role in regional economic growth. This is influenced by the entrepreneurial spirit embedded in certain Sumatran cultures as a core value and identity. The Minangkabau, Batak, and Palembang, for example, have strong business diasporas and see business not just as an economic activity but as a natural part of their blood, representing status, family pride, and cultural continuity. They are often born and raised in environments where business, trade, and strong familial obligations to continue the family enterprise are tied by moral duty. Their businesses, for example, in the food and beverage industry, such as the "Rumah Makan Padang," "Lapo", and the famous food of "Pempek," can be found throughout Indonesia and Southeast Asia. The main reason is that they live in a culture that has encouraged and expected them to "merantau" or migrate in search of business opportunities and a better life. Therefore, Sumatra provides a unique case in Indonesia that offers an empirical window into how, culturally, FMEs' values and identities shape tensions, negotiations, and strategies during the adoption and implementation of digital marketing.

Data Collection

This study employs a qualitative approach to explore the emotional and relational mechanisms through which FME successors navigate intergenerational tensions in adopting and implementing digital marketing. This study used purposive sampling to select 24 informants, including successors and founders in FMEs. Since Sumatran entrepreneurs are primarily known in the food and beverage industry, this study focuses on selecting informants from this sector. In the first phase, 47 FMEs were identified through online sources, such as search engines, websites, and social media. This was followed by sending invitation letters via text message and making follow-up phone calls to those who responded. After confirming that the potential informants are FMEs currently managed by the second generation, 12 FMEs agreed to be interviewed, involving a total of 24 informants, including both the founders and the successors. Data collection took place over approximately two months, from April to June 2025, through in-person interviews conducted by visiting the business sites directly, with about one hour allocated per interview session.

Data Analysis

The data analysis in this study mainly follows Obermayer et al. (2022), beginning with a line-by-line examination of the interview transcript after transcription is complete. NVivo 13 is used to structure and

organize all the data. The initial open coding was conducted after reading the transcripts multiple times to become familiar with the context. It then breaks into several segments to capture the initial concepts related to intergenerational tensions, digital marketing adoption and implementation, and successors' strategies during the process. These initial codes were constantly compared across informants' cases and industries to identify recurring patterns. The axial coding, as the next step, was conducted to cluster related codes into broader categories. Finally, two core categories are identified and linked to all codes representing sources of intergenerational tensions and successors' capabilities for navigating them during digital marketing adoption and implementation.

Results and Discussion

This study examined how FME's successor navigates tensions within families that arise during the adoption and implementation of digital marketing while also preserving their family businesses and identities. In this section, the study presents findings from multiple case studies, using quotes from informants to show that intergenerational tensions mainly emerge as dialectical processes between control and change. Figure 1 illustrates two main themes to answer the RQs in this study: (1) the sources of intergenerational tensions that can hinder FMEs' adaptation and implementation of digital marketing, and (2) successors' DCs as the fundamental strategies in navigating the tensions and promoting the successful adoption and implementation of digital marketing.

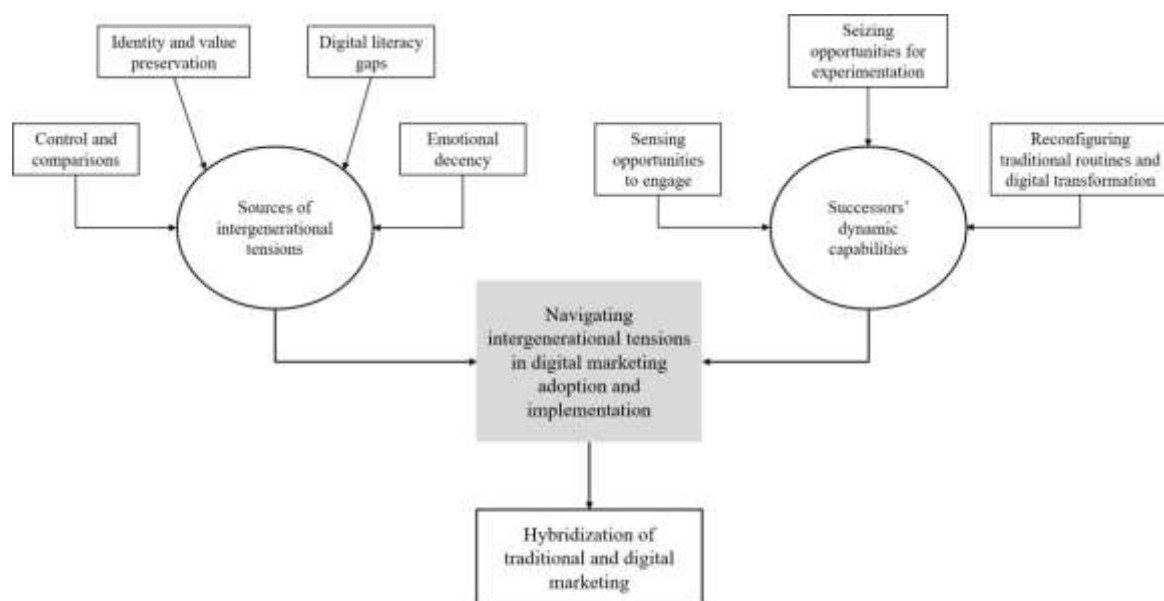


Figure 1. Framework Model of FME's Successor in Navigating Intergenerational Tensions in Digital Marketing Adoption and Implementation

The Sources of Intergenerational Tensions

Control and Comparisons

Founders' experiences in building their businesses illustrate how FMEs operate. They form the core of the company's stories and lay the foundation of its identity and value. Since the founders' long efforts are embedded in the business milestones, they serve as a guide for successors to follow when managing the business. This kind of authority often shapes how innovation occurs, as successors tend to follow the founders' path. Here, we see that while successors try to introduce digital marketing as an innovation strategy, it is filtered through the founders' hierarchical approval system. Decision-making is influenced by founders' permissions rather than strategic choices. This power asymmetry, signalled by founders' authority and control often delays the experimentation of digital marketing adoption and implementation, as some successors describe it:

My parents often told me about how they struggled to build this business because I wouldn't be in their shoes (Successor 5).

Since they succeeded in what they did, they believe their way is the best, so they still make all the decisions (Successor 1).

They feel more in traditional ways, which is fine in their era (Successor 9).

Identity and Value Preservation

The resistance to digital marketing adoption and implementation also stems from founders' assumptions that online exposure may erode family businesses' identity and authenticity. It can potentially hinder the

process of engaging and bonding with customers, as they believe that customer relationships are the foundation for differentiating themselves from competitors. In this case, founders often assume that digital transformations symbolize a threat that slowly eliminates the sacred value of their business rather than a commercial one. As some founders stated:

If we put everything online, then people will easily copy our product (Founder 6).

In this business, we value the process because it shows that our products reflect the feelings that we put into making them (Founder 11).

How can customers see our smiles and gestures or know that we appreciate our relationships when we can't see them? It's not the same feeling we deliver here when customers order only by phone or app (Founder 12).

Digital Literacy Gaps

Different era brings gaps in digital literacy. While successors attempt to embrace digital transformations, they are hampered by the gap in intergenerational digital literacy. The problem is not only about technical skills but also the founders' interest and, in some ways, their less confidence in becoming familiar with technology. While successors indeed try to convince founders that technology can make their business operations easier, founders tend to dismiss or even ignore successors' initiatives to introduce technology into the business, as it comprehensively explained by a successor:

I explained multiple times how we can use digital platforms to organize our business strategies easily. I even run simulations about it, for example, by integrating the website, social media, online orders, and online payments to manage the business systematically. But still, my parents just smile. First, they nod, but at the end of the day, we still rely on manual methods as they did, since they don't see the urgency of why it's necessary (Successor 7).

Emotional Decency

Like many Asian cultures, successors, as younger family members, may feel uncomfortable when their efforts to promote digital transformation are perceived as disrespectful to elders or founders. Balancing respect and politeness while constantly seeking permission is challenging. This permissive culture creates a dilemma because digital transformation involves not just strategic negotiations but also emotional and moral norms.

I need to understand that, at their age, people are more easily hurt. They will go silent if we confront them directly. Maybe they need some time to process everything because they're afraid of what they don't understand (Successor 1).

Some old staff members warned me to be careful. People might think I disrespect my parents, who are struggling to build this business, and I don't want that. I still need their blessing (Successor 6).

Through these structural, cultural, and emotional mechanisms, we can see that the sources of FMEs' intergenerational tensions in adopting and implementing digital marketing mainly stem from founders' desire to maintain control and their hesitation to combine traditional and digital methods. As a result, successors must constantly seek permission and approval before making changes. The tension arises during this transition because the gap between the founders' views and the successors' visions remains unresolved.

Successors' Strategies in Navigating Intergenerational Tensions

Sensing Opportunities to Engage

Successors understand that resolving intergenerational tensions starts with earning the founders' trust. Often, these tensions arise because founders lack a clear understanding of how technologies work and make judgments based only on assumptions, without firsthand experience. Therefore, by sensing opportunities to offer founders ways to engage in digital marketing through ongoing narrative negotiations, successors can frame digital marketing as an extension of the family's story and legacy. This approach encourages a sense that innovation can align with preserving family identity and values, which feels less disruptive to older generations, as successors explain.

I need to explain things to my parents more simply. I told them that posting our products on social media isn't just about making sales; it's about sharing our story (Successor 9).

I asked if we could share our stories, what stories should potential customers or the world know about us? It helps them feel involved. It's not just about what I want, but also about how to compromise with them (Successor 4).

Seizing Opportunities for Experimentation

The successors' attempts to invite the founders to participate in digital marketing through ongoing narrative negotiations create a space for further experimentation. It offers a setting where founders can observe and assess how digital marketing adoption and implementation actually work and impact their businesses through visible evidence. To avoid outright rejection, resistance, or emotional discomfort, successors often start small experiments to test market reactions. For instance, they demonstrate how digital platforms can be used to share promotional content to generate customer responses and increase sales. This

approach helps illustrate how digital marketing works, gradually reducing founders' scepticism about adopting and implementing it. Founders' reactions to experimentation serve not only as a negotiation tool but also as a learning process to embrace digital marketing, as acknowledged by successors:

Initially, I started by regularly sending promotional photos via WhatsApp to regular customers. My parents saw it worked because our customers responded to it, and orders increased (Successor 2).

I encouraged them to post our products on social media at least twice a week and ask for their opinions on how netizens respond. It took some time before my parents finally said, "Okay, maybe it's useful," though I can still sense a bit of scepticism (Successor 12).

Reconfiguring Traditional Routines and Digital Transformations

Once experiments are considered acceptable, the next task for successors is to maintain and sustain the founders' trust. Since the successors' primary responsibility is to ensure the business thrives and survives, they preserve the family business's identity and values by integrating traditional and digital methods. Unlike large firms, FMEs tend to blend long-established routines, reflecting the founders' footprints, with successors' digital skills to create a hybrid way of doing business. This reconfiguration of traditional routines and digital transformations further ensures that adopting and implementing digital marketing does not erode family identities and values, instead, it becomes an extension of how FMEs establish their presence and adapt to market environments, as explained by successors:

Using digital marketing doesn't mean completely shifting our business online (Successor 1).

We maintain manual and traditional operations and primarily use digital marketing to support and expand promotions, orders, and payments (Successor 12).

Instead of erasing our family business identity, we combine my parents' business experiences and my tech knowledge. I believe we can sustain the business by staying up to date with technology that suits us (Successor 11).

Through these capabilities, successors gradually establish a negotiation space where digital transformations can be introduced in ways founders can understand and accept. Instead of forcing digital transformations, successors focus on building founders' trust and demonstrating that adopting and implementing digital marketing is not about replacing the business but about supporting it in more effective and efficient ways. By providing clear explanations and showing tangible results through visible trials, successors help founders see the benefits of digital marketing implementations, making the adaptation process feel both safe and aligned with the family business's identity and values.

Discussion

This study examines how FMEs' successors in Indonesia manage intergenerational tensions that arise during the adoption and implementation of digital marketing, often challenged by founders' resistance to digital innovation. Using the lens of DCs, this study first identifies how intergenerational tensions emerge and how successors navigate them, employing emotional and relational approaches as the foundation of their DCs as soft strategies to reduce tensions through step-by-step negotiations and mini-experiments to build and gain founders' trust. Throughout this process, it becomes clear that digital transformation can be integrated with traditional business operations without threatening family business values and identities, and that digital marketing serves as a strategic tool to support long-term business sustainability. Thus, the findings of this study extend the current literature, particularly in the family business and digital marketing domains, in three interrelated ways.

First, existing studies acknowledge that intergenerational tensions commonly root from power asymmetries, identity preservation, and knowledge gaps (Calabrò et al., 2019; De Massis & Rondi, 2020). Consistent with prior research, this study reveals four complementary sources of intergenerational tensions, including founders' control and comparisons, concerns about family business identities and values, intergenerational literacy gaps, and emotional decency norms. Instead of posing a challenge, when handled properly, these tensions can create a space in which the relational bond between founders and successors can be strengthened through justification and negotiation. Hence, while existing studies often assume that successors can instantly activate the presence of digital marketing (Mariani & Borghi, 2020; Martínez-Caro et al., 2020), this study shows that successors should develop persuasive, trust, and adaptive strategies to gain founders' "blessing" before fully implementing digital marketing. Founders' blessing as a moral obligation can be seen as the most critical key to balancing family business identities and values preservation with digital transformation.

Second, while studies of DCs often treated DCs as the internal organizational mechanisms to embrace business opportunities (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000; Teece et al., 1997), this study enriches this view by highlighting that DCs in the context of FMEs are formed as relational capabilities that are influenced by the ability to negotiate and deal with family structures, intergenerational authority and power asymmetry, and emotional and cultural norms within the family. In this context, successors are not only sensing the opportunity in the potential use of digital marketing to reach more potential customers and expand the business but also sensing the emotional landscape to engage with the family members, particularly with the founders. They seize opportunities of digital transformations one step at a time through experiments to reduce

the risk of founders' rejection and maintain founders' respect. Then, they reconfigure it by intertwining traditional and digital ways of doing business. This study, therefore, repositioning DCs, in the context of FMEs, is not only about technical capabilities but also about the moral and relational order of the family's successors.

Finally, an interesting point arising from this study concerns how successors integrate digital marketing into daily business operations. Instead of replacing the traditional routines, they treat digital marketing as a complement to traditional business operations. They combine traditional family business routines with digital marketing practices, thereby creating hybridized business activities that enable FMEs to modernize marketing strategies without eroding inherited business values and identities. Thus, successors' DCs at the individual level to sense, seize, and reconfigure this hybrid mode can be seen as the expansion of existing knowledge by absorbing new knowledge, whereas shaping the FMEs' DCs at the organization level.

Theoretical Implications

Academically, this study broadens the understanding of DCs by demonstrating that, while DCs are often believed to be activated by strategic planning in large or established firms (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000; Teece, 2007), in FMEs, DCs are more triggered by successors' awareness, initiatives, and everyday negotiations that bridge intergenerational gaps. Furthermore, although prior research highlights that innovation in FMEs is mainly driven by family norms, socioemotional wealth, and informal family structures, this study adds to these ideas by showing that successors' DCs are crucial as they actively work to align innovation with family identities and values. Consequently, the way tensions are transformed into opportunities to generate new knowledge and practices in the adoption and implementation of digital marketing as an innovation in business activities relies on successors' DC.

Practical Implications

In practical terms, this study provides three main implications. First, FMEs should see digital marketing not as a threat but as a useful tool that can be chosen based on business needs to support marketing activities. In this way, digital marketing can serve as a means to expand markets, connect multichannel promotions, and increase market visibility. Second, based on the findings in this study, adopting and implementing digital marketing can be done gradually through small experiments to identify which platforms and activities suit FMEs' needs. These trial-and-error efforts can help FMEs reduce the risks and costs associated with digital marketing while gaining new knowledge and capabilities. Lastly, both founders and successors should recognize that digital marketing can be blended alongside traditional routines. Instead of threatening family business identities and values, digital marketing can be integrated to create a hybrid approach that preserves them in a modern way.

Limitations and Future Research

This study relies on qualitative insights and is limited to food and beverage businesses. In a qualitative manner, future studies might explore longitudinal or ethnographic methods to understand better how digital marketing adoption and implementation in FMEs evolve over time, how successors' DCs help navigate intergenerational tensions in the long term, and whether this digital transformation can effectively help FMEs scale up their businesses. Additionally, from a quantitative perspective, future research could extend these findings by examining and confirming the impact of four sources of intergenerational tensions on the effectiveness of digital marketing adoption and implementation in similar or other FME sectors, using successors' DC as a moderating or mediating variable.

Conclusion

Building on a qualitative analysis, this study reveals the process of adopting and implementing digital marketing in FMEs, initiated by successors. During the process, intergenerational tensions between the founders and the successors emerge from four main sources, including founders' control and comparisons, identity and value preservation, digital literacy gaps, and emotional decency. These tensions demonstrate that the adoption and implementation of digital marketing in FMEs is not merely a transformation of digital innovation but an intergenerational negotiation among family members.

Thus, these tensions are manageable and can be seen as opportunities to tighten family bonding. Findings in this study expose that these tensions can be an opportunity to create a space for successors to sense the opportunity to engage with founders, seizing the opportunity to invite founders for experimentations, and reconfiguring the hybridization of traditional and digital marketing while preserving the identity and value of the family business. Successors' initiatives to utilize and optimize these opportunities represent successors' DCs, which extend beyond technical skills to include the ability to balance innovation and family business sustainability.

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