

Promoting SMEs in Pacific Island Countries Through Effective Marketing Strategies: A Systematic Literature Review and a Future Research Agenda

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ABSTRACT

This study provides the first systematic review of the different marketing strategies used for promoting SMEs in Pacific Island countries (PICs). Literature published in high-ranked management journals was reviewed in this area using PRISMA guidelines published between 2000 and 2020. The study identifies three major marketing communication strategies useful for SMEs in the PICs: digital marketing strategies, market orientation strategies, and experience-based marketing strategies. Further, this study includes a detailed future research agenda under these three major themes. The digital marketing strategies are divided further into social media marketing strategies, blogs, and company websites. Market orientation strategies were categorised as the role of infrastructure development and the role of innovation. The experience-based marketing is another marketing strategy to attract customers. For example, it is identified through the literature that PICs can focus more on cultural festivals and cruise ship markets.

KEYWORDS

Marketing Strategies, Pacific Island Countries, SMEs, Systematic Literature Review

1. INTRODUCTION

In high-income nations, SMEs account for 60% of GDP and 65% of employment; in middle-income countries, SMEs account for 70% of GDP and 95% of employment; and in low-income countries, SMEs account for 60% of GDP and over 70% of employment (Keskin et al, 2010). SMEs account for around 90% of all business entities in developing Asian countries and are the primary private sector employers, accounting for 66% of employment and 42% of gross value creation (Bello, Jibir, & Ahmed, 2018; Kartiwi & MacGregor, 2007). They also contribute to 20% of total exports (ERIA, 2018). In the Asia Pacific region, SMEs account for 96% of all enterprises and 62% of the labour force and contribute 42% to GDP (Yoshino and Taghizade-Hesary, 2018).

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SMEs are now so widely regarded as “engines” of economic growth and prosperity that the sector has found itself among the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for global prosperity (Al-Qirim, 2006; Baoling, 2014; Chong & Pervan, 2007; Douglas, Eti-Tofinga, & Singh, 2018; Yadav & Mahara, 2019). SME development and expansion is considered to cut across various SDGs, including SDG 1 (end poverty), SDG 2 (zero hunger), SDG 3 (good health and wellbeing), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 8 (promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment, and decent work) and SDG 9 (improve sustainable industrialisation and fostering innovation). During the 2020 global health pandemic, triggered by the COVID-19 virus, global and regional development partners the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, OECD, G20 and others identified the SME sector as critical for bolstering economic recovery. Literature is replete with single, cross-country, and regional studies investigating issues such as credit constraints, innovation, productivity, and performance of the sector. Research has also examined the efficacy of marketing strategies for meaningful expansion, growth, and performance of the sector (Heneman, Tansky, & Camp, 2000; Li & Wang, 2010). Marketing has been shown to increase company visibility by enhancing the firms image and improving the quality of customer service (Tambunan, 2005). Companies also use marketing as a tool to improve business growth and financial performance and build a competitive advantage (Samiee & Walters, 1991). However, very few studies seem to apply marketing tactics for SMEs, for example, marketing skills, endeavours and practice appear to be limited for SMEs (Duhan, Levy, & Powell, 2001), resulting in slower expansion and questionable sustainability of the sector (Gretzel & Fesenmaier, 2003; Ibrahim, 2021; Li & Wang, 2010).

Even in terms of documenting and analysing marketing strategies of SMEs, literature appears to be pertinent for Pacific Island Countries (PICs) (Bocconcelli et al., 2018; Everett, Simpson, & Wayne, 2018; Kersten, Harms, Liket, & Maas, 2017). Thus, little is known about what works and what does not in the case of PICs (Bocconcelli et al., 2018; Clark, 2010; Kersten et al., 2017; Li & Wang, 2010). Accordingly, this study is an attempt to fill this gap, via a systematic review of the literature that employs several PRISMA guidelines, such as a timeline, inclusion, and exclusion criteria. The aim of the PRISMA guidelines is to improve the quality of the systematic review protocols, while the main aim of a review type article is to interpret, synthesise and assess scientific reports and studies printed in scientific publications by experienced authors in the area (Sun, Liao, He, & Zhu, 2017).

The 11 World Bank member countries in the Pacific constitute the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Fiji, Kiribati, the Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI), Palau, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu¹. Additionally, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, and French Polynesia are included as PICs, according to the Country Cooperation Strategy reports of World Health Organization (Crick & Crick, 2015; Fairbairn, 2006; Hopkins, 2012; Sharma, 2018). For this review, the authors initially selected literature (2,477 articles) covering all the PICs. However, following a rigorous screening and filtering process, only 32 articles qualified to be included in the study, covering the PICs of CNMI, Fiji, Kiribati, the RMI, Palau, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. Subsequently, these 32 articles were reviewed to assess in terms of three major marketing communication strategies: digital marketing strategies, market orientation strategies and experience-based marketing strategies. This first section of this paper presents introduction, secondly the study context, thirdly systematic literature review methodology, and key findings with conclusion.

2. STUDY CONTEXT

2.1 The Macroeconomy

The PICs are small island economies that rely on aid, tourism, and remittances (see Table 5 in the Appendix).

(Everett et al., 2018; Khor, Kronenberg, & Tumbarello, 2016; Sharma, 2018). Economic growth in the region has generally been low and volatile in recent times, marked by a wide range of internal and external shocks (Figure 1). The contributing adverse events include natural disasters such as Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu (2015), Cyclone Winston in Fiji (2016) and Cyclone Yutu in the CNMI (2018)—that caused widespread destruction to infrastructure and economic livelihoods. The observed positive spikes are attributable to robust outputs from productive sectors and/or large one-off economic activities, such as the resumption of mining activities in the Solomon Islands in 2011, commencement of the Liquefied Natural Gas production in PNG in 2014 and the opening of a new casino in the CNMI in 2016. Figure 1 illustrates the economic growth in selected PICs & territories between 2010 and 2019.

According to the reports of UNDP (2019), Palau, Samoa, Fiji, and Tonga are listed among the high Human Development Index (HDI) group of countries; others, except PNG, are classified as medium HDI countries (see Table 5 in the Appendix). For example, around a quarter of Solomon Islanders lived below the international US\$1.90 per person per day poverty line in 2011 purchasing power parity terms and 15.4% in FSM. In FSM, 41% of the population lived below the national basic needs' poverty line, followed by Fiji with 28%, Nauru with 24% and Tonga with 22%.

2.2 Financial Sector

PICs financial system is predominantly bank-centric, characterised by foreign ownership, limited competition, a focus on urban operations, excess liquidity, large interest rate spreads and generally high profitability (Khor et al., 2016; Naidu & Chand, 2012). Overall, the financial systems remain shallow and include superannuation funds, life insurance companies and foreign exchange dealers and occasionally, stock markets. In some cases, such as in Kiribati, there's only one commercial bank and two public financial institutions. Table 1 illustrates the average money, credit, and interest margins over 2010 and 2018 in eight PICs.

In the PICs, typical interest rate margins range from 6% in Tonga to 11% in the Solomon Islands and Palau (Table 1). Fiji and Vanuatu are the exceptions, with margins averaging 3% from 2010 to 2018. Over the same period, private sector lending in both countries was also greater than in other PICs, with 66% in Vanuatu and 62% in Fiji (Figure 2). The ratios of Samoa, RMI and Tonga hovered between 30–50%, while that of the Solomon Islands, Palau and PNG were below 20%. Figure 2 shows the private sector credit in selected PICs as a %age of GDP over 2010 to 2018.

Figure 1. Economic growth in selected PICs and territories: 2010–2019 (Source: World Bank, 2020)

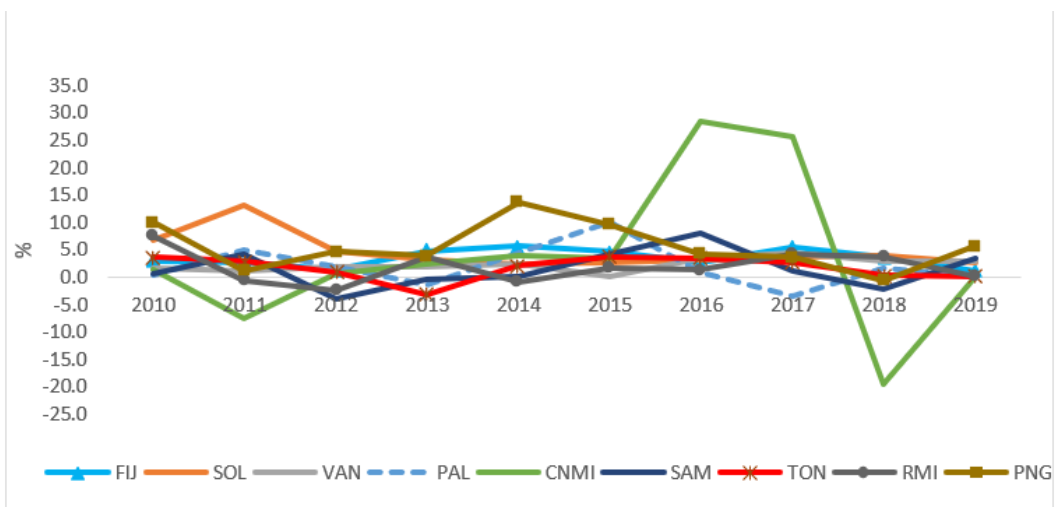
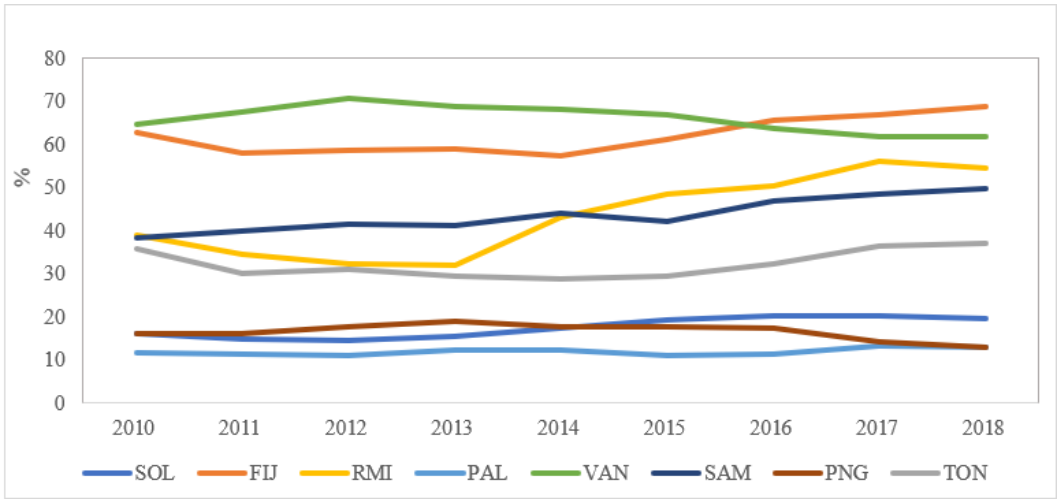


Table 1. Average money, credit and interest spread [2010–2018]

| Countries | Private Sector Credit (% of GDP) | Interest Margin |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Solomon Islands | 18 | 11 |
| PNG | 17 | 9 |
| Fiji | 62 | 3 |
| Vanuatu | 66 | 3 |
| RMI | 43 | 10 |
| Palau | 12 | 11 |
| Samoa | 44 | 7 |
| Tonga | 32 | 6 |

Source: World Bank (2019)

Figure 2. Private sector credit (% of GDP) in selected PICs [2010–2018] (Source: World Bank, 2019)



2.3 Small and Medium Enterprises

Despite their economic significance, SMEs in the PICs face numerous challenges that hinder their capacity to contribute fully to their national GDP and employment. highlighted that the lack of finance is one of the major problems faced by SMEs in the region. Typically, commercial banks are largely focussed on larger and well-established enterprises compared to SMEs, which typically suffer from the problem of asymmetric information and lack of collateral. As a result, SMEs tend to use informal sources of finances rather than banks. For example, in Vanuatu, around 68% of businesses in the urban centres used informal savings for business start-ups, while 19% used commercial bank loans. Similarly, in the rural areas, 81% used informal savings, and only 7% of businesses used commercial bank loans (RBV, 2016).

Another constraint inhibiting the growth of SMEs in the PICs is the enabling business environment. The World Bank’s Doing Business Indicators 2020², a prominent yet debatable measure that ranked 190 countries on their ease of doing business showed that the PICs performed poorly in comparison to the East Asia and Pacific (EAP) region’s average rank of 96. The main aim of this paper is to identify major marketing communication strategies useful for SMEs in the PICs. In Table 2, Samoa

attained the highest overall ranking (98) for ease of doing business in the PIC region, while Kiribati reported the lowest (at 164). Furthermore, between 2016 and 2020, most PICs except for Fiji and FSM have improved their ease of doing business scores, marked by improvements in their business investment climate.³ Table 2 shows the ease of doing business index of 10 PICs.

3. A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

A systematic literature review (SLR) is different from a traditional literature review in that the former is more objective, replicable, systematic, and comprehensive, and the process is reported in the same manner as for reporting both quantitative and qualitative methods research (Fan, Zhou, Yan, Meng, & Zhang, 2020; Sun et al., 2017). The purpose of the present SLR is to identify different marketing strategies in promoting SMEs in PICs (Fan et al., 2020; Jayawardena, 2020a; Sun et al., 2017). This review uses several PRISMA guidelines and categorises articles published over the period 2000 to 2020. The review identified 32 articles that provide an adequate understanding of different marketing strategies of SMEs in PICs. We conducted a database search manually, using several keywords such as “different marketing strategies of SMEs in Pacific Island Countries”, “Pacific Island Countries, marketing strategies and small and medium entrepreneurs” and “marketing strategies in promoting SMEs in Pacific Island countries.” We reviewed high-ranked journals (A or above in ABDC rankings and Q3 or above in SC imago ranking) in management and marketing fields across several databases, including Google Scholar, Griffith Library, Emerald Full Text, and ProQuest using the ‘publish or perish’ software (Fan et al., 2020; Jayawardena, 2020b, 2021; Sun et al., 2017). All results were limited to English only peer-reviewed studies. Table 3 shows the initial findings obtained from various databases.

Initially, a total of 2,477 articles were identified. Of these, 258 articles were identified as duplicated records and were thus eliminated. Abstracts were screened and articles that did not focus on marketing strategies of SMEs in PICs were eliminated. Specifically, only those articles with results demonstrating a contribution to SMEs in PICs were prioritised. Accordingly, of the remaining 2,219 articles, a total of 1,978 were identified as not relevant to our inquiry and thus also eliminated.

Table 2. World Bank Doing Business indicators [2016 and 2020]

| | Rank (2020) | Ease of Doing Business | |
|-----------------|-------------|------------------------|------|
| | | 2016 | 2020 |
| Fiji | 102 | 62.8 | 61.5 |
| Kiribati | 164 | 50.6 | 50.9 |
| RMI | 153 | 45.4 | 46.9 |
| FSM | 158 | 48.1 | 48.1 |
| Palau | 145 | 53.1 | 53.7 |
| PNG | 120 | 56.0 | 59.8 |
| Samoa | 98 | 60.2 | 62.1 |
| Solomon Islands | 136 | 54.7 | 55.3 |
| Tonga | 103 | 61.3 | 61.4 |
| Vanuatu | 107 | 59.3 | 61.1 |
| Average of EAP | 96 | | |

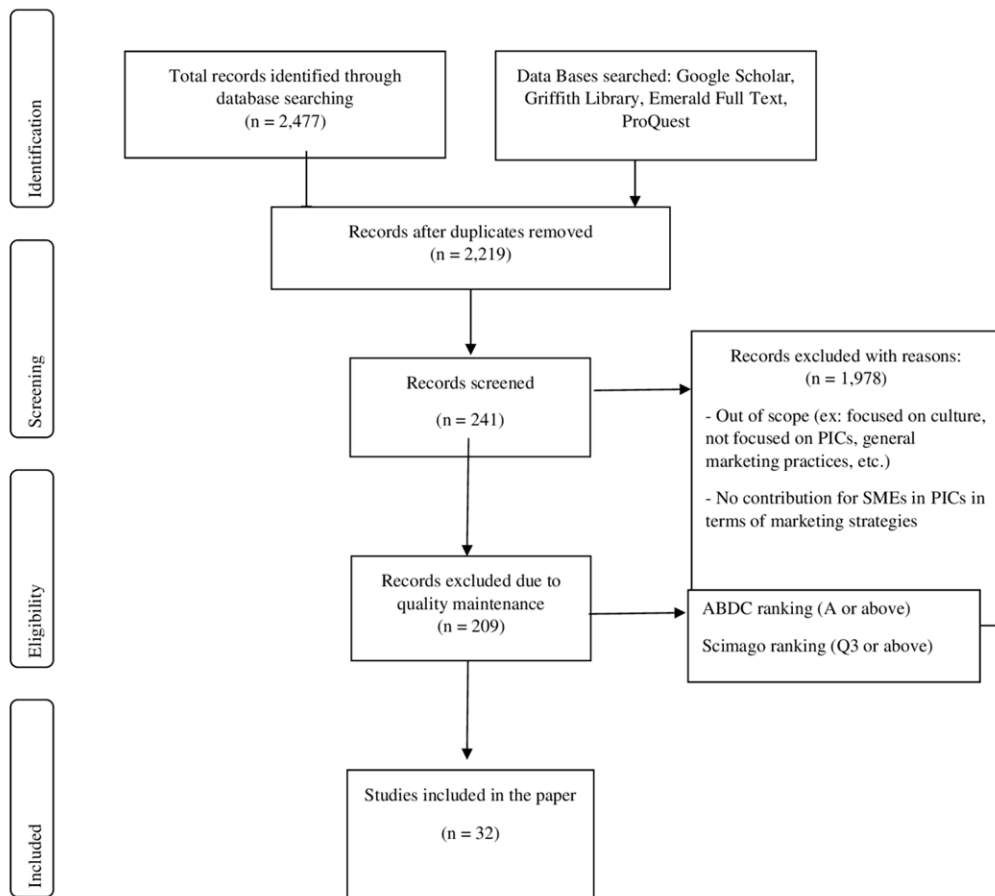
Source: World Bank Ease of Doing Business Indicators, 2020

Table 3. Initial findings

| Database | Number of Articles |
|------------------|--------------------|
| Google Scholar | 999 |
| Griffith Library | 724 |
| Emerald | 326 |
| ProQuest | 428 |
| Total | 2477 |

The remaining 241 articles were selected for the next stage of the review. To maintain the quality of the review, the articles published in A or above in ABDC ranking and Q3 or above in SC imago ranking were also included. Other than these rankings, for several studies, the impact factor of the journal and contribution of the paper were also considered (Jayawardena et al., 2021). Finally, a total of 32 articles were selected for the final review based on the contributions of different marketing strategies on SMEs of PICs. Figure 3 illustrates the inclusion and exclusion criteria used for this review.

Figure 3. Flow chart of the literature search process (Source: Developed by author based on the PRISMA guidelines)



4. KEY FINDINGS

In this section, regarding SME marketing strategies in PICs, as indicated earlier, we group the key findings into three themes: digital marketing strategies, market orientation strategies and experience-based marketing strategies (Chand & Kumar, 2017; Douglas et al., 2018; Felix, Rauschnabel, & Hinsch, 2017). The digital marketing strategies are divided further into social media marketing strategies, blogs, and company websites (Brooksbank, Garland, & Taylor, 2008; Chand & Kumar, 2017; Chandra, 2012). Market orientation strategies were categorised as the role of infrastructure development and the role of innovation. Overall, the results indicate that the issue of SME marketing strategies in PICs is under researched.

4.1 Digital Marketing Strategies

Digital marketing uses internet and digital technologies such as digital media, tools, and platforms to promote products and services (Abdullah, Novianti, Andari, & Nugraha, 2021; Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2015; Chandra, 2012; Fan et al., 2020; Sun et al., 2017). The phrase “digital marketing” has evolved over time from including the marketing of products and services using digital channels to also include the process of using digital technologies to acquire and build customer preferences, promote brands, retain customers, and increase sales (Abdullah et al., 2021; Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2015; Chandra, 2012; Fan et al., 2020; Sun et al., 2017). In this review, in the context of PICs, three main digital marketing strategies were identified as follows.

4.1.1 Social Media Marketing Strategies

Social media marketing is an essential component in 21st century business. However, the literature on social media marketing remains relatively under explored (Felix et al., 2017). Social media marketing offers an opportunity to use social media to build relationships with company stakeholders such as customers and employees. Further, firms may choose to view social media as simply another communication channel through which they can push information to customers (Chua, Deans, & Parker, 2009; Felix et al., 2017). The usage of social media such as Facebook pages, Instagram pages and Twitter can build relationships and a network without any cost. Therefore, SMEs in PICs can benefit through this strategy by using social media networks to share photos and details of tourist destinations (Blumberg, 2005). Further, promoting the latest discounts and offers (for example, hotel discounts in different seasons) and building a network of customers are other benefits of social media marketing. Sharma (2018) noted that most SMEs prefer using social network marketing, rather than traditional marketing (such as newspapers, banners, radio, and TV) due to its cost-effective nature.

Entrepreneurship needs to be encouraged from early stages, and infrastructure, technology and legal policies need to be developed as well (Sharma, 2018). Based on Table 6 in the Appendix, several researchers identified the lack of funds for marketing as an important challenge in promoting SMEs in PICs (Chand & Kumar, 2017; Nair & Chelliah, 2012a; Novaczek & Stuart, 2006; Sharma, 2018; Slack, Singh, & Sharma, 2020). To address this, social media marketing strategy was identified as an alternative. For example, Phippen (2004) notes the use of social networking and gaining the viewpoints of young adults was an important marketing strategy. For example, social media marketing strategy can be used to encourage the export of bamboo, a fast growing and resilient product in many Asian markets (Duhan et al., 2001; Everett et al., 2018; Felix et al., 2017). The marketing of social media refers to the process of gaining traffic or attention via social media sites. Social media marketing programmes usually focus on content generation efforts, which catch the attention of readers and encourage them to share it with their social networks (Duhan et al., 2001; Everett et al., 2018; Felix et al., 2017). Additionally, a potential for bamboo as a food source and charcoal aligns with the fiesta culture of Guam. Sourcing of *Bamboo vulgaris*, Guam’s major bamboo species, has ecological benefits, while *blumeana* (another type of the product) could be cultivated for crafts for export and tourists. These benefits can be further highlighted through social media sites to promote bamboo products.

4.1.2 Blogs

Longer descriptions of product or service can be provided by blogs. The longer description may contain reasons and uses. It may contain testimonials and links to and from Facebook, Twitter and many other social websites and blogs (O'Flaherty, 2008; Schroth & Janner, 2007; Singh, Pathak, & Naz, 2010). Blogs can be frequently updated and promote customer retention techniques. The following and subscribers are acquired and sent to your social network pages for further promotional uses. The new Internet (dubbed Web 2.0) fosters community participation and builds on collective community intelligence in a formalised, dynamic information creation and sharing environment (O'Flaherty, 2008; Schroth & Janner, 2007; Singh et al., 2010). Blogs can be considered as one such Web 2.0 tool with a person posting commentaries, descriptions of events and other information and readers posting comments immediately as replies to these entries (O'Flaherty, 2008; Schroth & Janner, 2007; Singh et al., 2010). A New Zealand-registered company called Pinnacle Life is an example of an SME using a blog as part of its niche marketing strategy (Chua et al., 2009). The company defines its target market as the younger, internet-savvy users, and the blog provides information about insurance regarding the life insurance concept (Chua et al., 2009). As a result of this innovative marketing strategy, Pinnacle Life won the US-based 2008 Innovator of the Year Award as well.

4.1.3 Company Websites

The websites of business firms are considered as a marketing tool by many business organisations (Charoula, Eleonora-Ioulia, Fotini, & Maro, 2014). Consequently, analysis of web content is essential to gain a competitive advantage over other business organisations. Website marketing is a less expensive advertising method, with high accessibility and prompt response (Li & Wang, 2010). Information intensive industries should always invite customers for internet transformation (Raymond, 2001). Raymond (2001) mentioned that the "firms which are future oriented and consist of a top management consultancy with updated technology are technologically opportunistic." Novacek and Stuart (2006) mentioned that access to technology, sophisticated packaging and a dependable supply of pure raw materials is critical. Al-Qirim (2005) found that adoption levels to internet marketing and infrastructure technologies mainly depends on organisation size, compatibility, CEO's innovativeness, support from technology vendors and competition.

Similarly, in some of the PICs, the government's intervention on e-commerce is not very enthusiastic (Chand & Kumar, 2017). Chua et al. (2009) found that potential e-business benefits include being able to respond to customer and competitor practices, being prepared to develop staff skills and knowledge, and having a well justified and strategic orientation towards e-business. Several researchers argue that Pacific Island SMEs do not have enough funds to allocate on marketing and promotional activities. For example, Chandra (2012) mentioned that in Handicraft SMEs technical interventions are low and manual processing is high. Organisational resources mainly influence brand strategy and effective communication practices (Renton, Daellenbach, & Davenport, 2016).

4.2 Market Orientation Strategy

Market orientation promotes the satisfaction of market needs with a higher degree of excellence than competitors (Vázquez, Santos, & Álvarez, 2001). It is identified that the firm infrastructure development and innovative products play a vital role in SMEs of Pacific Island countries.

4.2.1 The Role of Infrastructure Development

Singh, Pathak, Kazmi, Sharma, and Terziovski (2007) found that small business managers in Fiji should focus on business performance measures, risk and uncertainty management, and implementation of more sophisticated systems and procedures, and should be more aware of regulatory stipulations. Fairbairn (2006) stated that for SMEs, workers need to have a basic education, prior work experience in business or government service and the local application of business skills. Similarly, Tuibeqa

(2015) argued that small business support services are crucial for the development of the SMEs. Additionally, government intervention is also identified as a vital factor (Everett et al., 2018; Singh et al., 2010), specifically for SMEs in Fiji (Jayaraman & Singh, 2007; Nand, 2015). However, the low infrastructure facilities (Kersten et al., 2017; Leokana, 2014; Nair & Chelliah, 2012a; Reddy, Naidu, & Mohanty, 2003) and technical facilities (Nair & Chelliah, 2012a) influence the consumer dissatisfaction, which results in lower sales. Further, the Fijian government's small business advisory and micro finance service was poorly accessed with more than half the owners unaware of this service (Nair & Chelliah, 2012b). Moreover, Chand and Kumar (2017) found that SMEs in Fiji are aware that many of the customers do not have credit cards to make online payments (Chand & Kumar, 2017) and are aware of the consumer needs.

In terms of a niche strategy, SME owners should be aware of the business context and some basic marketing techniques (Stachowski, 2012). Further, they should not react or imitate other SMEs. They should develop professional relationships and always focus on the customer and not the country of origin (Stachowski, 2012). Similarly, Crick and Crick (2015) found that more priority needs to be given to developing relationships, rather than competing against other SMEs in the Pacific Island context. The low infrastructure was identified as a major factor that decreases the company marketing activities.

4.2.2 The Role of Innovation

Bamboo is fast growing and resilient in many Asian markets, and companies that focus on Bamboo products should focus more on exporting (Owen, 2015). Moreover, Nambo production culture of Temotu Province must focus on the traditionally inspired breadfruit farming systems and the demonstration of the traditional method of producing Nambo. These activities must be the focus of any agritourism product development (Lynthia, 2019). Additionally, a potential for bamboo as a food source and charcoal aligns with the fiesta culture of Guam. Sourcing of *Bamboo vulgaris*, Guam's major bamboo species, has ecological benefits, while *blumeana* (another type of the product) could be cultivated for crafts, for export and tourists (Owen, 2015). This further illustrates the need for innovativeness in SMEs of PICs due to availability of natural resources. Clark (2010) found that smaller firms will be more likely to have lower levels of innovation and lower sales volumes due to resource scarcity.

4.3 Experience-Based Marketing Communication Strategies

The experience-based marketing is another marketing strategy to attract customers (Fransen & Lodder, 2010). For example, it is identified through the literature that PICs can focus more on cultural festivals and cruise ship markets. The banana growing culture of Makira Province has been developed into a tourism event called the Banana Festival. Over the years, the Banana Festival has put more emphasis on the cultural aspect of banana farming, and therefore the event has been strongly promoted as a tourism event with side-line events of cultural performances through various tribal groups of Makira province (Lynthia, 2019). Further, considering the isolation of Temotu province, which is the main tourist traffic in the Solomon Islands, the practical market segment of a cruise ship market can be used under experience-based marketing (Lynthia, 2019). Table 4 summarise the three marketing strategies based on the existing literature.

5. FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA

The purpose of this systematic literature review is to provide a systematic mapping of the literature on SME marketing strategies in PICs. Further, authors identified three major research gaps in SME marketing strategies in PICs. These research gaps can be further divided as digital marketing strategies of SMEs in PICs, market orientation strategies of SMEs in PICs and experience-based marketing strategies of SMEs in PICs.

Table 4. Comparison of the three marketing strategies

| Marketing strategy | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| Digital marketing strategies | -A website can only be used for small investment, to identify new markets and trading globally -The right customers can achieve a well-planned and well-targeted digital marketing campaign for a much lower cost than traditional marketing methods | -Need to make sure your employees have the right knowledge and expertise to successfully perform digital marketing. Tools, platforms, and trends change quickly, and you need to keep abreast of them |
| Market orientation strategy | - Measuring the level of infrastructure and innovation levels facilitates the efficiency of marketing campaigns | - While market orientation strategy allows to reach a global audience and compete globally. It can be a challenge to stand out from competitors and to focus on the numerous messages for online consumers |
| Experience-based marketing | -Helps to build customer loyalty and create a reputation for being easy to engage with | -Higher cost for the SMEs as it includes cruise ship market and festivals |

Source: Developed by authors

5.1 Digital Marketing Strategies of SMEs in PICs

When considering the digital marketing strategies of SMEs in PICs, the authors found that adoption levels of internet marketing tools, such as social media, blogs, and company websites, are very poor among SMEs in PICs, which further illustrates the need of the SMEs to adopt to more digital marketing strategies (Felix, Rauschnabel, & Hinsch, 2017; Naidu & Chand, 2012; Sharma, 2018). The usage of digital marketing is being boosted by digital transformation, which is being driven by technology advancements and shifting customer demands (Bocconcelli et al., 2018; Taiminen & Karjaluo, 2015). The daily lives have become increasingly technology oriented (Bocconcelli et al., 2018; Taiminen & Karjaluo, 2015). It is changing the way consumers and businesses engage in the traditional sense. Consumer behaviour is said to be changing due to digitisation, including social media. Consumers are spending more time online and on social media platforms (Bocconcelli et al., 2018; Taiminen & Karjaluo, 2015). Three major future research gaps been identified.

5.2 Making Awareness on Digital Media Platforms

Firstly, there seems to be a requirement to improve awareness of how the various digital platforms can work together, and of their potential to benefit towards SMEs in PICs (Blumberg, 2005). Virtanen, Björk, and Sjöström (2017) analysed the deliberate social media marketing practices of a start-up company. For example, the main goal of this study was to see how behaviours (such as following potential consumers on Instagram and liking and commenting on their posts) affect developing and boosting awareness on the business. Social media has revolutionised customer behaviour and has become a vital aspect of everyday life for communicating and sharing information, which is a trend that businesses must respond to (Bocconcelli et al., 2018; Taiminen & Karjaluo, 2015). One such method identified through the literature is that in previous research on Instagram marketing, the activities of following customers, putting likes and commenting on their posts to create make awareness (Virtanen et al., 2017). On a more general level, studies suggest that marketing managers should carefully select which Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to track in social media marketing, considering platform variances which is lacking now. Similarly, Facebook provides a new way to advertise and interact with customers (Hopkins, 2012; Ibrahim, 2021). The indirect marketing methods via Facebook includes company FB pages (Pangan & Shim, 2021); sharing video clips including the brand names or logo (Hopkins, 2012; Ibrahim, 2021; Pangan & Shim, 2021) and sharing photos including the brand names or logo (Hopkins, 2012; Ibrahim, 2021; Pangan & Shim, 2021). Therefore,

creating awareness on digital media platforms can help SMEs to deliver a creative message without an additional advertising cost.

5.3 Market Orientation Strategies of SMEs in PICs

Market orientation is a business concept that focuses on discovering and addressing client needs or wants (Cheung, Pires, Rosenberger, Leung, & Ting, 2021). To be profitable, a company with a market-oriented approach concentrates on designing and selling goods and services that satisfy client wants. According to the literature, market orientation strategies of SMEs in PICs focused two main areas such as the role of infrastructure development and the role of innovation. It was found that low infrastructure levels affect the SME growth in an adverse manner (Fairbairn, 2006; Gretzel & Fesenmaier, 2003; Jayaraman & Singh, 2007; Lynthia, 2019) and innovativeness plays a vital role for the growth of SMEs of PICs due to availability of natural resources in PICs (Nair & Chelliah, 2012a; Nand, 2015; Pangan & Shim, 2021; Reddy et al., 2003).

Dialogue Marketing, according to Steinmetz (1997), is “an organised programme of continual two-way communication.” Dialogue marketing has four stages: recognition of the business, familiarisation with the business, development of an intention to utilise the business, and keeping an ongoing relationship with the business (Steinmetz, 1997). Tools such as electronic word-of-mouth conversation (eWOM) and artificial intelligence (AI) have emerged as a result of technology advancements, and they can possibly play a critical role in this area. In this aspect value co creation plays a vital role since, value co-creation is defined as the joint production of value by businesses and customers, allowing the latter to co-create service experiences that satisfy the needs and expectations of customers (Cheung et al., 2021). With customer privacy concerns on the rise, SMEs that utilise conversational agents (chatbots) to encourage private data self-disclosure, such as customer related inquiries, have a competitive advantage in their local market (Roggeveen et al., 2021). Customer reviews and social media posts are examples of eWOM as a written form of user generated content that is often anonymous (Roggeveen et al., 2021), understanding if SMEs are encouraging online dialogue with their social media touchpoints can be essential if they are to remain competitive, especially as SMEs continue to be affected by technological changes such as dialogue automation and data content generated by artificial intelligence (Ramsey & McCole, 2005; Sharma, 2018; Stachowski, 2012; Virtanen et al., 2017). Therefore, dialogue marketing such as customer reviews on social media posts, email campaigns, word of mouth campaigns is another future research perspective in SMEs of PICs.

5.4 Experience-Based Marketing Strategies of SMEs in PICs

Experience-based marketing is another marketing method to attract clients for example, PICs, can focus more on cultural festivals and cruise ship markets (Nair & Chelliah, 2012). The experience dimension of goods and services has been highlighted by marketing specialists and economists (Gretzel & Fesenmaier, 2003; Pangan & Shim, 2021). According to the literature, under researched components in experience-based marketing of SMEs in PICs include exposure towards the cultural festivals and cruise ship travel experience. Experience-based marketing is different from other communities in terms of social background, composition, magnitude, symbolic content, and storytelling as this method, lacks regular identities and it is difficult to deliver the exact message. Therefore, it is necessary to organise the product information while communicating the message. For example, showing the ingredients used while cooking when promoting food items in cultural festivals (Abdullah et al., 2021). Similarly, organising the service or product information such as delivering the leaflets, service and product details while delivering the travelling experience on cruise ships (Nguyen, Yu, & Lirn, 2021).

6. IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this systematic literature review was to identify different marketing strategies in promoting SMEs in PICs. Marketing strategies are vital for the growth of the SMEs in PICs. In

PICs the main income source is Tourism sector, as *Tourism* sector development offers *Pacific Island* countries a path to economic security. As a key **source of employment and income in Pacific island countries** **Travel and Tourism** is crucial to poverty mitigation (Lynthia, 2019). It was identified that Tourism will be one of the most important drivers of economic growth in the Pacific over the next decade (Lynthia, 2019). The demand for authentic cultural and natural experiences has been increasing globally, particularly among the island countries of the Pacific. Consequently, literature published in top management and marketing journals were reviewed. In most developing economies, small enterprises are critical for reducing poverty and providing jobs. This is especially true for the small island nations of the South Pacific. The truth is that little is known about the development of micro and small businesses in the South Pacific Island states which is a major practical implication of this study (Roggeveen et al., 2021). Therefore, this systematic literature review used several PRISMA guidelines, including a publication timeline of 2000 to 2020 and a filtering process (inclusion and exclusion criteria) in reviewing the papers. When considering the theoretical contribution, this study used PRISMA guidelines (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses). By using these guidelines, this paper was able to provide an impartial analysis by selecting the most relevant papers to be added for the review based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The authors divided the existing literature based on different marketing strategies in promoting SMEs in PICs into five sections as source, name of the journal, key constructs, theory, and findings (please refer to Table 6 in the Appendix).

In general, the authors identified that SMEs in Pacific Island countries should focus more on marketing, innovation and learning capabilities, as they are positively related to SME performance. Many of the basic strategic marketing practices were applied more by high performing firms than by their low or moderately performing counterparts. Further, the authors categorised the identified marketing strategies into three main types: digital marketing strategies, market orientation strategies and experience-based marketing strategies. The main findings revealed useful marketing strategies in promoting SMEs in PICs (Khor et al., 2016; Lynthia, 2019; Nguyen et al., 2021). It is important to understand that marketing strategies in PICs is an under researched area with several future research insights. This study revealed updated marketing approaches such as social media marketing, blogs, and company websites. Further, it was found that the role of infrastructure development and the role of innovation plays a vital role in marketing of SMEs in PICs (Khor et al., 2016; Lynthia, 2019; Nguyen et al., 2021). The experience-based marketing is another marketing strategy for the growth of the tourism sector.

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ <https://www.worldbank.org>.
- ² The Ease of Doing Business Index measures the ease of doing business in a country based on 10 components: (1) starting a business, (2) dealing with construction permits, (3) employing workers, (4) registering property, (5) getting credit, (6) protecting investors, (7) paying taxes, (8) trading across borders, (9) enforcing contracts and (10) closing business. Recently, there has been debate over the methodological approach used in this study; however, this finding is useful for indicative terms and to highlight the position of a country in terms of their ease of doing business.
- ³ Caution should be taken when investigating the World Bank’s ease of doing business, which was only recently discontinued due to discrepancies in terms of country-specific issues.

APPENDIX

Table 5. PICs and territories demographic and other socio-economic indicators

| Country/Territory | Population 2019 | Urban Population (% of total population) 2019 | HDI Category | GDP per capita 2018 | Proportion of Population below \$1.90 Purchasing Power Parity a Day | Proportion of Population Living below the National Poverty Line |
|--|-----------------|---|----------------|---------------------|---|---|
| Melanesia | | | | | | |
| PNG | 8,776,109 | 13 | 0.543 (Low) | 2,505 | ... | 37.5 (2017) |
| Fiji | 889,953 | 57 | 0.724 (High) | 4,795 | 1.371 (2013) | 28.1 (2013) |
| Solomon Islands | 669,823 | 24 | 0.557 (Medium) | 1,483 | 25.1 (2013) | 12.7 (2013) |
| Vanuatu | 299,882 | 25 | 0.603 (Medium) | 2,875 | ... | ... |
| New Caledonia | 287,800 | 71 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Polynesia | | | | | | |
| American Samoa | 55,312 | 87 | ... | 9,272 | ... | ... |
| Cook Islands | 20,200p | 75 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| French Polynesia | 279,287 | 62 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Samoa | 197,097 | 18 | 0.707 (High) | 3,860 | 1.14 (2013) | 18.8 (2013) |
| Tonga | 104,494 | 23 | 0.717 (High) | 4,055 | 0.9525 (2015) | 22.1 (2014) |
| Wallis & Futuna | 15,854 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Niue | 1862p | 46 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Tuvalu | 11,646 | 63 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Micronesia | | | | | | |
| Guam | 167,294 | 95 | 0.901 (High) | 31,477 | ... | ... |
| Palau | 18,008 | 80 | 0.814(High) | 12,260 | ... | ... |
| Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands | 57,216 | 92 | 0.875 (High) | 18,578 | ... | ... |
| Kiribati | 117,606 | 55 | 0.623 (Medium) | 1,778 | ... | ... |
| Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI) | 58,791 | 77 | 0.689 (Medium) | 3,067 | ... | ... |
| FSM | 113,815 | 23 | 0.614 (medium) | 2,729 | 15.39 (2013) | 41.2 (2013) |
| Nauru | 12,581 | 100 | ... | 8,143 | ... | 24 (2013) |

Notes: (1) HDI: Human Development Index; (2) GDP per capita in 2018 at constant prices (2010 US); (3) ... means data not available (4) p means preliminary.

Source: World Bank World Development Indicators, 2020; Key Indicators Database, Asian Development Bank (ADB), 2020; HDI sourced from United Nations Development Programme, 2019. Poverty indicators sourced from Basic Statistics, 2020, ADB.

Table 6. Summary of the findings

| Source | Journal/Book/Theses | Key constructs | Theory | Key findings |
|---------------------|---|--|---|--|
| Chandra (2012) | Master of Commerce Thesis University of South Pacific | Explored the current marketing practices used by SMEs in Fiji Identified new marketing opportunities of SMEs | Entrepreneurial theory of Kuratko (2009) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This SME, which is a Handicraft business, identified product prices and packaging as factors creating competitiveness. - Several marketing campaigns were identified as effective such as advertising, sales promotions, door to door selling, internet marketing, personal selling and mass marketing. - Implementation of quality control measures (ISO standards) are very low among SMEs in Fiji. - Marketing intermediaries are useful and necessary to connect producers with customers. - Technical interventions are low and manual processing is high. |
| Fairbairn (2006) | Journal of Small Business & Entrepreneurship | Discussed some of the leading constraints to entrepreneurship and small business development among Pacific islanders | Not discussed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For SMEs, workers need to have a basic education, prior work experience in business or government service, and the local application of business skills and know-how by islanders returning home from abroad. - The removal of unnecessary regulations, improving access to finance and the adoption of more innovative training schemes is another strategy for SME growth. - Identified obstacles are shortage of basic business skills, poor access to credit, inadequate infrastructure, and obstructive socio-cultural influences. |
| Tuibeqa (2015) | Doctoral Thesis of Victoria University, Australia | Developed a small business development framework that takes into consideration the input of small business stakeholders in the design and delivery of support services and assistance programs | Market Orientation Theory | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This study advances the belief that small business support services and assistance programs are not working in Fiji because of a mismatch between supply and demand. - Factors attributed to this failure include cultural misfit, limited sources of capital, lack of markets, inadequate information, and inappropriate products. - The main issue for failure was found to be a lack of preparation before businesses start-up. - A market-based view, rooted in market orientation theory, is offered to investigate the problem. - Market intelligence gathering, and customer surveys are needed for product and services development and enhancement. |
| Singh et al. (2010) | International Journal of Emerging Markets | Discussed the issues, challenges and impediments coming in the way of SME internationalisation in Fiji and Samoa | Resource-based theory, Industrial organisation theory, Network theory | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Huge political risks impacting SME businesses tremendously in Fiji are leading to brain drain (labour shortages). - Costing was a problem for the entrepreneurs intending to globalise, which was hampered further as they lacked marketing skills and were not equipped in pricing techniques, resulting in stiff competitive battles. - The main impediments in the two countries were namely: government paperwork, government regulations, locating qualified employees, employment regulation, rates, electricity and telephone costs, advertising, pricing and competition with other businesses. |

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Table 6. Continued

| Source | Journal/Book/Theses | Key constructs | Theory | Key findings |
|----------------------------|---|---|--------------------------------|---|
| Everett et al. (2018) | Report of Asian Development Bank | Discussed that Pacific Island countries and tourism through interventions in four areas: tourism policy, strategy and the regulatory environment; infrastructure; human resources; and product development and marketing. | Not discussed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Market- or demand-based development is a key path to increased competitiveness for the entire region. - The South Pacific Tourism Organisation has undertaken market surveys, but further support is needed to use the data more effectively and to undertake deeper research. - They need to maximise regional cooperation to maximise national benefits, especially for improving connectivity, product development, and joint marketing, workforce development and training, exchanging best practices for governance and destination management. |
| Chand and Kumar (2017) | Fijian Studies | This paper looked at the extent of adoption of ecommerce in Fiji's small and medium enterprises. | Not discussed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technically, SMEs are aware that many of the customers do not have credit cards to make online payments. - Government's intervention on e-commerce is not very enthusiastic. - There is an absence of legal and regulatory system for e-commerce. - For most SMEs, setting up e-commerce was a major problem. This was compounded by perceived costs of hiring additional staff to manage ecommerce. Delivery logistics was an added concern. Many SMEs also lacked support from upper management due to lack of knowledge and awareness. Most organisations were resistant to change. |
| Slack et al. (2020) | International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management | Examined the impact of customer perceived value and its dimensions on customer satisfaction in a developing country, and practical suggestions for marketing strategies | Value-percept disparity theory | Results reveal that customer perceived value (CPV) has a positive impact on customer satisfaction; and functional value (price/value for money) has a more positive impact than social value, emotional value has a negative impact and functional value (performance/quality) has no significant impact on customer satisfaction. |
| Novaczek and Stuart (2006) | Journal of Small Business Entrepreneurship | Discussed the development of two female-owned micro-enterprises on small Pacific islands. Each makes and sells products made from sea plants, which occupy ecological and cultural niches. | Not discussed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to technology, sophisticated packaging, and dependable supply of pure raw materials are critical. - As these case studies show, entrepreneurial women may already be employing their traditional knowledge and skills to provide community services, and a training opportunity may be enough to translate this into a microscale, income-generating enterprise. On islands and in coastal communities, where medicinal sea plants are available as potentially sustainable raw materials, health and beauty product businesses can be developed. Such businesses are particularly well-suited for women. |
| Sharma (2018) | Master of Commerce Thesis University of South Pacific | Explored how SMEs in Fiji can use social network marketing as a tool to better manage its relationships with customers | Not discussed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The majority of the SMEs prefer using social network marketing rather than traditional marketing (such as newspapers, banners, radio and TV) due to its cost-effective nature. - Entrepreneurship needs to be encouraged from early stages; infrastructure, technology and legal policies need to be developed. |

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Table 6. Continued

| Source | Journal/Book/Theses | Key constructs | Theory | Key findings |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Nair and Chelliah (2012b) | Journal of Global Business Management | Examined the most pressing challenges faced by small business owners in Fiji | Not discussed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The findings revealed that the lack of access to business advisory services and capital were the foremost hurdles faced by owners. - They seem to lack in imagination and were unaware of opportunities in other sectors like manufacturing or cottage industries. - The Fijian government's small business advisory and micro finance service was poorly accessed with more than half the owners unaware of this service. Others are unable to afford professional business and finance advice. |
| Owen (2015) | Journal of Marine and Island Cultures | Examined possibilities in improving Guam's Bamboo industry | Not discussed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The use of social networking, gaining viewpoints of young adults is identified as vital. - Bamboo is fast growing and resilient in many Asian markets and considering exporting is another vital element for the bamboo companies. - Additionally, a potential for bamboo as a food source and charcoal aligns with the fiesta culture of Guam. - Sourcing of Bamboo vulgaris, Guam's major bamboo species, has ecological benefits, while blumeana (another type of the product) could be cultivated for crafts for export and tourists. |
| Schoenberger-Orgad and McKie (2005) | Public Relations Review | The article illustrated how one SME— <i>Dawnraid Entertainment</i> , from the socio-cultural and geographical edge of Aotearoa/New Zealand—responds by pioneering community-embedded enterprises | Milton Friedman public relations theory | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The findings indicated that CSR often results from adverse publicity (and so has been defensive in nature, and reactive rather than proactive); and that its emphasis on corporations marginalises small to medium enterprises (SMEs). |
| Stachowski (2012) | Small Enterprise Research | This work reviewed studies on niche marketing strategy amongst internationally active SMEs, identifying opportunities for future research. It also provides practical advice for international marketers in New Zealand-based SMEs. | Not discussed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In terms of lessons for OMs leading exporting SMEs in New Zealand, there are some helpful suggestions for SMEs in Pacific Island countries. - In terms of a niche strategy that SME owners should be aware of in the business context, it suggests some basic marketing techniques: not to react or imitate other SMEs, develop professional relationships and always focus on customer and not the country. |
| Crick and Crick (2015) | Marketing Intelligence & Planning | Investigated how decision making and learning are related to marketing planning among owner/managers with lifestyle in comparison to growth-oriented objectives in the New Zealand wine industry | Not discussed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discusses uncertain business environments, such as problematic exchange rates and the influence of climate on vineyards. - More priority needs to be given to develop relationships rather than competing against others. |

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Table 6. Continued

| Source | Journal/Book/Theses | Key constructs | Theory | Key findings |
|-----------------------------|--|---|---|--|
| Ramsey and McCole (2005) | Journal of Small Business Enterprise Development | The aim of this study is to understand the reason New Zealand firms in the professional services industries are slow to embrace e-business technologies. | Diffusion of innovations theory by Rogers (1995) | - A combination of factors is influential in determining a firm's current and future level of e-business adoption. These factors include being able to understand potential e-business benefits; being able to respond to customer and competitor practices; being prepared to develop staff skills and knowledge of IBTs; and having a well-justified and strategic orientation towards e-business. |
| Chua et al. (2009) | Australasian Journal of Information Systems | The study presented a future research agenda on how the SMEs can use eBusiness technology such as blogs for marketing. | Diffusion of Innovation Theory Rogers, (2003), Social Network Theory, Resource-based Theory | - Blogs were identified as a marketing tool that creates awareness on branding, managing reputation, developing customer trust and loyalty, niche marketing, gathering marketing intelligence and promoting online presence. |
| Clark (2010) | Journal of Small Business & Entrepreneurship | Presented key findings from an empirical study of innovation processes in 95 New Zealand SMEs | Innovation Theory | - Smaller firms will be more likely to have lower levels of innovation and lower sales volumes due to resource scarcity. |
| Sok, O'Cass, and Sok (2013) | Australasian Marketing Journal | Developed a unified model to investigate the combined effect of marketing, innovation and learning capabilities on performance Examined the complementary effect of these capabilities on performance | Resource-based view theory | - The findings suggest that marketing, innovation and learning capabilities are positively related to SME performance. |
| Brooksbank et al. (2008) | Small Enterprise Research | Examined the contribution of selected 'textbook' strategic marketing practices to the competitive success of medium-sized New Zealand manufacturing firms and the extent of overall adoption for these marketing strategies | Not discussed | - Many of the basic strategic marketing practices were applied more by higher performing firms than by their lower performing counterparts. |
| Renton et al. (2016) | Journal of Brand Management | Examined brand orientation and brand management practices of New Zealand-based small and medium enterprises (SMEs). | Baumgarth's (2010) model of brand orientation | - Organisational resources influence mainly to brand strategy and effective communication practices |
| Miles and Darroch (2006) | European Journal of Marketing | Explored how large firms might leverage entrepreneurial marketing processes to gain and renew competitive advantage | Competitive advantage theory | - The findings show how large firms leverage entrepreneurial marketing processes to gain advantage. The findings suggest that, in free and open markets, entrepreneurial marketing processes can be strategically employed to create superior value for the firm's customers and owners. |

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Table 6. Continued

| Source | Journal/Book/Theses | Key constructs | Theory | Key findings |
|-----------------|--|--|--|--|
| Al-Qirim (2005) | Electronic Markets | Investigated the significance of an adoption-capability model of e-commerce technologies in SMEs in New Zealand | Adoption-capability model of e-commerce technologies | - The research findings indicated that: (1) starters: the adoption of the Internet and external email was dependent on the innovativeness of the CEO; (2) innovators: the adoption of any of the EC Infrastructure technologies (ECIT): Intranet, Extranet, Internet-EDI and websites was dependent on the CEO's innovativeness, organisation size and compatibility; and (3) extended innovators: the adoption of more than one ECIT was dependent on organisation size, compatibility, the CEO's innovativeness, support from technology vendors and competition. |
| Blumberg (2005) | Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research | Based on the results of a case study of tourism destination marketing in the Nelson/Tasman Region, New Zealand, this article examined the suitability of tourism destination marketing as a tool and of Destination Marketing Organisations as a vehicle for tourism destination management and development. | Not discussed | - Destination Marketing Organisations are unlikely to be able to claim too much responsibility for destination management, but they can play an important part in the management of the destination product. |
| Nand (2015) | Developing Country Perspectives on Public Service | This study is a conceptual analysis on the issues regarding the regulatory compliance requirements coupled with the financial constraints that have forced SMEs in Fiji to remain in the informal sector. | Not discussed | - It is evident from the analysis that the regulatory policy needs to be reviewed to provide efficient public service delivery for small and micro enterprises. - In general, there should be a "One Stop" checklist (according to the business type) detailing all the regulatory compliance needed to be fulfilled in opening and maintaining a business. - A checklist should be readily available in different languages and should come with considerable advice. Standalone legislation on SMEs may be considered desirable for SMEs, rather than a plethora of provisions in different legislation. |
| Lynthia (2019) | Master's Thesis of Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University | Explored the potential for Agritourism to support the current sustainable development policy frameworks in the Solomon Islands. | Not discussed | - The banana growing culture of Makira Province has been developed into a tourism event called the Banana Festival. - Over the years, the Banana Festival has put more emphasis on the cultural aspects of banana farming, and therefore the event has been strongly promoted as a tourism event with side-line events of cultural performances by the various tribal groups of Makira province. - Nambo production culture of Temotu Province must focus on the traditionally inspired breadfruit farming systems and the demonstration of the traditional method of producing Nambo. These activities must be the focus of any agritourism product development. Given the isolation of Temotu province from the main tourist traffic in the Solomon Islands, the most practical market segment for this product is the cruise ship market. |

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| Source | Journal/Book/Theses | Key constructs | Theory | Key findings |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|--|
| Jayaraman and Singh (2007) | ARTNeT Working Paper Series | Investigated the relationship between employment and foreign direct investment for Fiji through a multivariate modelling strategy by including GDP | Not discussed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fiji should continue not only its current proactive policies to attract FDI inflows but also maintain appropriate environment including political stability for retaining the inflows. - The Fiji Trade and Investment Bureau (FTIB), which is the screening and appraising authority, should stipulate while approving the FDI proposal that overseas investors should file returns on employment in their ventures in regard to employment by categories of skilled and unskilled; by levels such as plant, supervisory and managerial; by local and foreigners; and by gender. Further, FTIB should be entrusted with the responsibility for collecting the data. Enabling legislative amendments should be introduced in the FTIB Act towards these purposes. |
| Kersten et al. (2017) | World Development | A systematic review and meta-analysis of the empirical literature on SME finance effectiveness. | Not discussed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This yields three results. Firstly, few evaluations of SME finance programs apply the same rigorous experimental methods that are more commonly used in studies of microfinance. Secondly, most evaluations of SME finance programs consider neither spill over effects to other enterprises nor effects on the employee level. Thirdly, authors found a positive significant effect of SME finance on capital investment, firm performance and employment within the supported firm, whereas the summary effect on profitability and wages is insignificant. |
| Reddy et al. (2003) | Fijian Studies | This study utilises primary data from two cities and a town to examine the contribution of the urban informal sector to employment creation and poverty alleviation. | Dualistic theory of development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The results show that there has been a significant increase in the incomes and assets of those who are involved in the informal sector compared to their pre-informal sector days. It also shows that the average education level for those involved in the informal sector is no higher than primary school level. The informal enterprises absorb mostly immediate family members. It is also found that those in the informal sector have entered this sector relatively recently. - Another important cluster of results is that the informal sector has a relatively long working day as well as a relatively long working week. - The key problems faced by the informal sector operators are lack of access to credit facilities, and the national and municipal laws and regulations governing conducting business in the country. |
| Singh et al. (2007) | South Asian Journal of Management | The study involves the development and application of a competency-based framework in small businesses in Fiji | Not discussed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The findings led to five strategies being proposed for possible consideration by small businesses for the improvement of their performance. The study concludes that small business managers in Fiji need to become more strategically oriented, implement business performance measures, manage risk and uncertainty, implement more sophisticated systems and procedures and become more aware of regulatory stipulations. |

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| Source | Journal/Book/Theses | Key constructs | Theory | Key findings |
|------------------------|--|--|------------------------|--|
| Douglas et al. (2018) | Sustainability Accounting, Management Policy Journal | Examined the contributions of hybrid organisations to wellbeing in small Pacific Island countries. | Hybrid business theory | - Fijian hybrid organisations improve social and economic wellbeing for individuals, families and communities by providing employment, schools and training facilities, financial and support services, sustainable agriculture projects and facilitating networking. These services improve individual and community social and economic wellbeing, build resilience, add to personal and family security, offer opportunities for the future, advance leadership skills and sustain the environment. Commercial activities that support these organisations in their wellbeing endeavours include product sales, service fees, project levies and investment income. |
| Leokana (2014) | Master of Management Thesis Massey University | Using data drawn from interviews with ten Solomon Island business owners, this study explored the influences and practices that shape the development and operation of small businesses. | Not discussed | - Social capital, despite the economic and political situations and networks, helps as a valuable resource. Lack of funds, poor cash flow, low infrastructure and low technical and managerial skills were identified as other issues. |
| Naidu and Chand (2012) | International Journal of Emerging Markets | Examined the financial obstacles faced by micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) | Not discussed | - The research involved conducting a survey of 200 MSMEs in Fiji and Tonga. The study concluded that financial problems faced by the MSMEs could be divided into three broad categories: financing problems; operational and administrative problems; and sales and debtors' problems. |

Source: Developed by authors

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