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Review on Collaborative Strategic Marketing for Sustainable Manufacturing Growth of Saudi Small Medium Enterprises (SME): A Focus on Technologically Competent Generation

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ABSTRACT

Over the years, significant transformations in the manufacturing sector have been attributed to technology integration and government policies. This has resulted in the emergence of the next generation of business formation, strategies, practices, and overall planning. The issues of managing sustainable manufacturing that SMEs of Saudi Arabia face include Heading and Planning, International Competition, and Financing. In all these areas, it is for this reason that Saudi Arabian SMEs need cooperation to enhance competitiveness and improve their economic welfare and innovation. The current systematic literature review used an extensive search strategy, including databases to identify sources such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, among other databases. The articles on the effects of Collaborative strategic marketing on the sustainable growth & competitive advantage of Saudi Arabian SMEs that were published between 2018 and 2024 were selected. Of all the articles reviewed, 6,550 were identified, and 18 were used in the study after applying the following exclusion criteria. A systematic evaluation was conducted to evaluate two research objectives (RO). The first RO highlighted how collaborative strategic marketing contributed to the development of SMEs, while the second RO also showed that collaborative strategic marketing contributed to the achievement of competitiveness. The results exposed some of the issues that need to be addressed in Saudi Arabian SMEs: strategic orientation, competition from international firms, and the need for more capital. The study also noted that enhancing SME cooperation can greatly impact their digital transformation and innovation.

INTRODUCTION

The manufacturing sector's dynamics have shifted dramatically in the last decade by looking at the "movement" of 4/5 and digital transformation (Zhang *et al.*, 2021). The new organizational and management forms, the new processes, the extended product-service systems, and the new business models were outcomes of this radical change in the manufacturing sector revolution and political encouragement and the coalescence of a set of mature new technologies (Camarinha-Matos *et al.*, 2019).

The manufacturing sector is currently facing the challenge of meeting the growing societal demand for social responsibility and sustainability, as delineated in the United Nations Agenda 2030. Manufacturing is a critical component of Goal 9, designed to promote inclusive industrialization, create resilient infrastructure, and encourage innovation. It is one of the 17 goals for sustainable development that are the primary focus of the agenda (OCDE, 2021). Additional objectives include doubling global energy efficiency, increasing economic productivity through innovation, technological advancement, and diversification, and supporting development-oriented policies encouraging entrepreneurship, innovation, job creation, and productive endeavors. The phrase "sustainable manufacturing" is becoming increasingly important and well-known

(Camarinha-Matos *et al.*, 2024; OCDE, 2021).

Camarinha-Matos *et al.* (2021) emphasized the potential of utilizing mutually beneficial synergies between sustainability science and collaborative networks. They contended that the successful implementation of sustainability necessitates the collaboration of numerous stakeholders, fostering a sense of co-responsibility. They also emphasized that sustainability cannot be achieved by a single entity individually. Collaborative networks are recognized as a fundamental enabler for Industry 4.0 and digital transformation, underscoring the significance of collaboration in the pursuit of sustainability (Camarinha-Matos *et al.*, 2021).

Sustainability is gaining importance in strategic and political agendas, science and technology, and related terms like sustainable development and sustainability science (Qin & Li, 2023; Ruggerio, 2021). The UN's World Commission on Environment and Development report of 1987, also known as the Brundtland report, defined sustainability as meeting present needs without compromising future generations' ability to meet their own needs (Kavusa, 2021).

The concept of sustainability is typically examined from three perspectives: environmental, social, and economic. The environmental and ecological aspects of sustainability have been the primary focus of the discussion, as the environment is the foundation of

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existence (Fahmy *et al.*, 2023). However, this viewpoint must take into account other aspects, namely the cultural, societal, and organizational factors, as well as the management of resources. There are three primary pillars of sustainability, as determined by the 2005 World Summit: which includes the environmental, economic, and social (Mensah, 2019). Environmental issues include the conservation of biodiversity and bio-ecosystems, the protection of unexploited resources, and recycling

(Musostov & Dzobelova, 2023). The economic analysis focuses on creating sustainable growth from a long-term perspective using the principles of increasing yield, employment growth, and improving efficiency (Altman, 2019). In addition, Social considerations stem from protecting culture, institutions, and rights, delivering social services in one's vulnerable state, and enhancing political responsibility and social participation (Aliskhanova *et al.*, 2023).

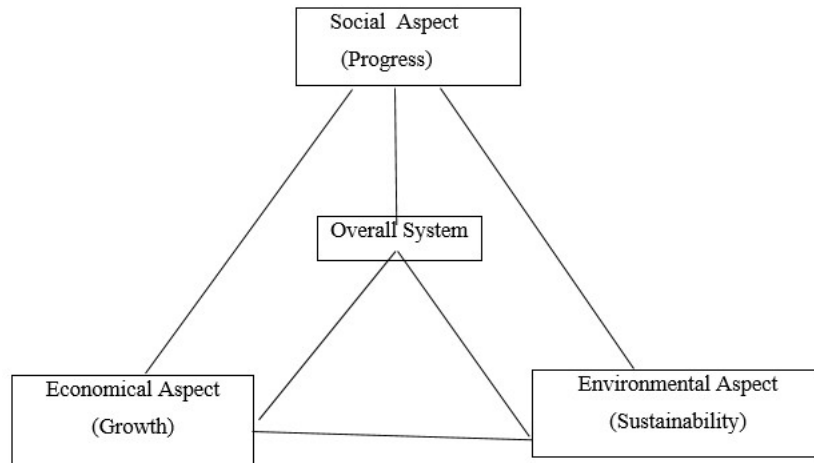


Figure 1: Sustainability Pillars

Sustainable manufacturing in SMEs means that SMEs engage in the implementation of production and service delivery mechanisms that support efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of quality goods while at the same time using limited resources and environmentally friendly approaches. These products significantly reduce their environmental and social impacts through most of their product life cycle (Machado *et al.*, 2020). This involves the conservation of wastes and gas, preservation of species, and utilization of friendly energy and materials. This also consists of respecting suppliers and ensuring that there is safety at the workplace, with a good public image, and in products (Ghobakhloo *et al.*, 2023). The benefits of a sustaining manufacturing economy are the increase of the local economy, employment, infusions to infrastructure, innovations, appropriate taxation, and no bribery and corrupt practices. It puts stress on rational economic acts as key critical concepts (Hegab *et al.*, 2023). The collaboration networks also play critical roles in enhancing sustainable production and implementing all sustainability factors for the sustainable growth of manufacturing SMEs. The collaboration includes organizations, people, and even smart products (Cloutier *et al.*, 2020). These networks are not only geographically dispersed but also mostly independent from institutional control and with different cultures, social capitals, goals, and contexts. They work together to accomplish goals that are either mutually beneficial or compatible. According to Camarinha-Matos *et al.* (2021), implementing sustainable production requires

collaboration (Camarinha-Matos *et al.*, 2021). Saudi Arabia's manufacturing sector faces significant challenges when integrating sustainable practices, specifically in the two main categories that are environmental and social sustainability (Abualfaraa *et al.*, 2022; Al-Alqam *et al.*, 2022; Ghathani *et al.*, 2021). The Saudi Arabian government has launched several inclusive industrializations and regular infrastructures that still need to feature strategic marketing initiatives toward sustainable manufacturing growth of SMEs. This is particularly true for SMEs, who contribute significantly to the development of the national economy yet need to pay more attention to problems like changing customer preferences or emerging market trends. There is a research gap in this area because understanding the appropriate use of collaborative strategic marketing for sustainable manufacturing development of SMEs in Saudi Arabia needs to be improved. Furthermore, studies failed to show how collaborative strategic planning impacts SME manufacturing firms' competitiveness (Dwikat *et al.*, 2022; Zhao *et al.*, 2024). In addition, little research seeks to explore the challenges SMEs experience as they attempt to embrace sustainability and the enabling role of collaborative networks in sustainable manufacturing growth. This review aimed to create awareness among Saudi Arabian SMEs on how collaborative strategic marketing fosters sustainable manufacturing. The findings would reveal how collaborative strategic marketing supports sustainable manufacturing initiatives and how SMEs

overcome challenges in their implementation. This systematic literature review approach involved conducting a thorough analysis through journals and databases to identify relevant research on cooperative strategic marketing for SMEs in Saudi Arabia to bring sustainability to Saudi Arabia. Thus, based on the collaborative strategic marketing significance as already above, the review analysis has the following research objectives:

RO1

Determine the influence of collaborative strategic marketing on the sustainable growth of the Saudi Arabia SME.

RO2

Determine how this collaborative strategic marketing helps Saudi Arabia SMEs to gain a competitive advantage.

METHODOLOGY

Search Study

A search strategy combines search terms to optimize the number of pertinent records retrieved during a database search (Yue *et al.*, 2023). For this systematic literature review, the most current and relevant papers were accessed through different databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, ProQuest, Springer Link, Google Scholar, and Science Direct. Only the publications, including books, research papers, and reviews conducted between 2018 and 2024, were included in this paper. The keywords that were utilized to find the relevant literature include “Collaborative Strategic Marketing,” “Sustainable Growth,” “Competitive Advantage through Sustainable Growth,” Digital Marketing in Sustainable Growth,” “Small Medium Enterprise,” “Lean and Green Manufacturing,” and Market Orientation.

Table 1: Search Strategy

S No	Search Strategy
1	“Collaborative Strategic Marketing,” “Partnership Marketing,” OR “Network Marketing,” AND “Integrated Marketing Partnerships,” AND “Sustainable Collaborative Strategy.”
2	“Sustainable Growth,” OR “Long Term Growth,” OR “Inclusive Growth,” “Social Sustainable Growth,” “Environmental Sustainable Growth,” AND “Economic Sustainable Growth”
3	“Competitive Advantage” OR “Sustainable Edge” AND “Strategic Advantage” AND “Technological Advantage” AND “Cost Leadership”
4	“Digital Marketing in Sustainable Growth” OR “Green Digital Marketing,” OR “Socially Responsible Digital Marketing,” AND “Digital Marketing Sustainable Promotion”
5	“Small Medium Enterprise” OR, “Startups” OR “Micro Enterprises,” AND “Manufacturing Enterprises”
6	“Lean and Green Manufacturing” OR, “Sustainable Manufacturing” OR, “Green Manufacturing Technology” OR “ECO Manufacturing, AND “Circular Economy”
7	“Market Orientation” OR “Market-Driven Approach” OR “Customer-Centricity” AND “Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Systems” and “Market-Driven Strategy”

Exclusion and Inclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria are designed to identify the population under investigation in a consistent, reliable, homogeneous, and objective way (Miranda *et al.*, 2024).

Regarding the research, the exclusion criteria consist of conditions or qualities that render the recruited population ineligible for participation. The inclusion and exclusion criteria of this systematic review are given below:

Table 2: Exclusion and Inclusion Criteria

Exclusion Criteria	Inclusion Criteria
This review only included the publications that were solely written in English	This review did not include publications that were not written in English
This systematic review consisted of the publications that were in between 2018 and 2024	All the studies conducted before 2018 were not part of this systematic review
The studies that determine the influence of collaborative marketing strategy on SME growth and assist in gaining competitive advantages were included in this systematic review	The studies that determine the influence of collaborative marketing strategy on SME growth and assist in gaining competitive advantages were not included in this systematic review

Selection Criteria

As part of the selection process, the articles discovered via the search are evaluated to determine whether they are suitable for inclusion (Liu *et al.*, 2024). For

this systematic literature review, 6,550 articles have been extracted from different databases. After thoroughly reviewing these extracted publications, 3 256 publications have been finalized after removing

repetitive publications. Out of these 3,256, only 125 were relevant to this review topic. Lastly, only 18 studies that were most relevant to the subject showed that the full text had been finalized. The other studies were excluded because they needed to focus on collaborative

marketing strategy fully, analyze the impact of digital marketing in implementing collaborative marketing, have Sustainable Manufacturing, and were not related to SMEs. Figure No. 2 shows the overall study selection criteria of this research:

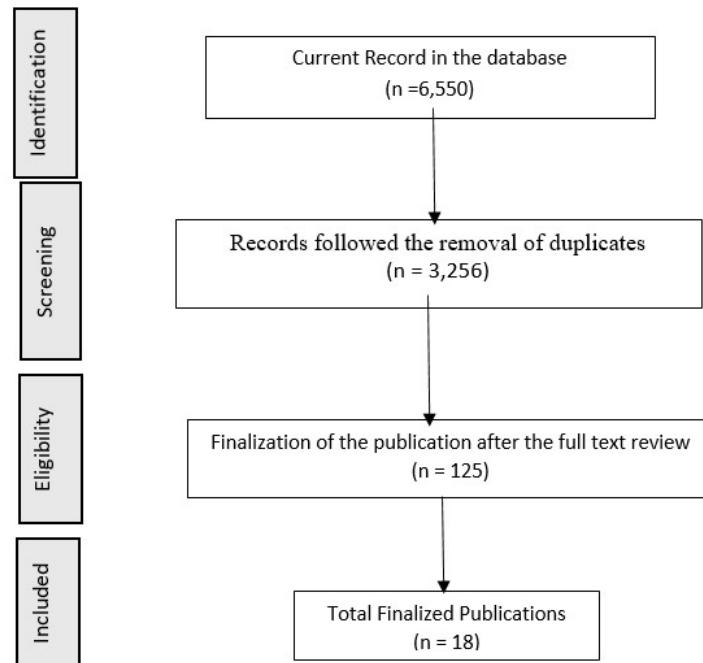


Figure 2: Study Selection Process

RESULTS

The thorough selection of the available data assisted in finalizing the 18 studies. These studies were most relevant to this systematic research objective. Each research objective is further divided into different themes that are elaborated on below in detail:

Collaborative Strategic Marketing Influence on Saudi Arabian SME Development

Over the years, there have been changes in manufacturing industries due to the integration of new technology and support from the government for the revolution of this particular industry. The change process has brought about new forms of organization and management, new methods and processes, extended product-service portfolios, and business models (Harikannan *et al.*, 2021). According to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN-SDG), the industry faces the challenge of meeting the population's growing demand in the sphere of social justice and environmentally friendly practices (Hassan *et al.*, 2018).

The importance and appreciation of sustainable manufacturing are steadily rising as it focuses on cooperation between players to achieve sustainability. To determine how collaborative strategic marketing is influencing SME growth and development, the following themes have been analyzed:

Challenges of Saudi Arabian Manufacturing SME

SMEs in Saudi Arabia encounter several challenges related to sustainable manufacturing. Lack of strategic planning is one of the major factors that hinders the effective implementation of sustainable manufacturing strategies with the support of strategic manufacturing planning. Lack of strategic planning in these industries may lead to a lack of the manufacturing resources and knowledge needed for long-run sustainable manufacturing, and this presents a great problem for most SMEs as they struggle to adapt to changing market conditions and customers' demands (Zarte *et al.*, 2022).

Also, a major challenge is global competition, through which SMEs need help in differentiating themselves in the market. The manufacturing sector has recently undergone major changes, thus calling for SMEs to adapt to the emergent modifications so that they remain relevant. SMEs experience a significant challenge in Saudi Arabia: securing adequate capital to finance their sustainable manufacturing plans. SME credit risk evaluation could also lag and be affected by questions of financial transparency, thereby facing challenges in accessing bank credit (Tripathi, 2019).

Furthermore, Saudi Arabian SMEs face significant threats due to environmental hostility, such as the novel COVID-19, whereby threats are imminent. Due to the pandemic outbreak, the efficiency of supply chains

has been affected, and the behavior of consumers has changed significantly, which has created concerns for SMEs to manage and run. Furthermore, this pandemic has highlighted the importance of environmental consciousness and sustainability, which remains a huge challenge to SMEs since they cannot fund such issues (Adam & Alarifi, 2021).

Significance of Collaboration in Saudi Arabia SME

For SMEs in Saudi Arabia, collaboration is important because it opens new channels for acquiring new knowledge and gaining access to novel resources, leading to innovation. This is particularly relevant when operating in dynamically changing markets where SMEs need to be proactive, adopt innovative technologies, and respond to the customers' needs (Dwikat *et al.*, 2022). SMEs can continue to compete effectively and improve on their developmental stage by allying with other businesses to access novelty, know-how, and capital. Nazarenko *et al.* (2021) conducted a study that posits that collaboration is essential when pursuing sustainability, saying that "Sustainability is a process that any individual firm or actor cannot accomplish and thus, the effort of many stakeholders is inevitable" (Nazarenko *et al.*, 2021).

Besides, collaboration increases competitive advantage since SMEs can alternatively re-orient themselves and adapt to new markets and customers' requirements. In a world that is incredibly crowded by competition, SMEs need to be ready for any change that occurs in the market, in technology, or consumers' tastes and preferences. Organizing work allows SMEs to respond to these changes more effectively since they are able to unite their efforts and skills (Batwa & Alamoudi, 2019). For instance, Tripathi (2019) noted that Saudi Arabia's SMEs have been changing rapidly over the years in response to new innovative technologies that accompany the political support for the revolution of the manufacturing sector. Therefore, Saudi Arabian SMEs need to adapt to these changes that affect them to avoid being uneconomical (Tripathi, 2019).

In Saudi Arabia's manufacturing industry, sustainability faces significant environmental and social challenges. The Saudi Arabian government has adopted the following strategies to promote sustainable manufacturing: Inclusive industrialization and Conventional Infrastructures. However, SMEs in Saudi Arabia must consider aspects such as changing consumer behavior and emerging markets. In this way, collaboration can help SMEs in Saudi Arabia address these challenges by providing better access to new knowledge and resources, increasing competitiveness, and improving overall economic well-being (Wasiq *et al.*, 2023).

Effective Collaboration Strategies

Collaboration is crucial for the sustainable expansion of SMEs in Saudi Arabia due to the lowered charges of success and improved degrees of risk encouraged by business collaborations. One way to achieve this is

through digitalization with the help of consultants and managers. This entails using several science technologies in supply chain management, customer uniqueness, and organizational performance enhancement. (Mohamad *et al.*, 2022). The study by Adam & Alarifi (2021) highlighted the role of digital transformation in the process of achieving sustainability, suggesting that "sustainability enhancement is an imperative that requires the engagement of many actors, creating a culture of shared responsibility (Adam & Alarifi, 2021).

Another is collaborative commerce, which involves using the web, e-marketplace, and social media to construct goods and distribute assets. This will be useful, especially for Saudi Arabia-based SMEs, as they will be able to establish themselves deeper into the market, cutting costs and enhancing competency. Abed (2020) observed that there has been a gradual shift in the manufacturing sector due to new technology and political support for the manufacturing sector revolution. Thus, SMEs must acclimate to such changes from the onset to remain relevant and competitive (Abed, 2020).

In addition, there is a requirement to involve the suppliers as well as the consumers of the value chain so as to promote innovation and enhanced performance. This may include the exchange of information, experience, and resources in order to create appropriate goods and services that satisfy the client. As observed by Cloutier *et al.* (2020) in their research study, collaboration is a crucial aspect of embracing sustainability in the manufacturing sector. Consequently, this study aims to investigate the role of collaborative networks in supporting sustainable production and all the sustainability aspects for SMEs within the manufacturing development context (Cloutier *et al.*, 2020)

Collaborative Strategic Marketing Role in Gaining Competitive Advantage

Marketing strategic alliances enhance and improve competitiveness among businesses. Marketing collaboration can be defined in terms of shared objectives and objectives that need to be complied with by the marketing companies entering into a partnership in which the partnership itself is going to be marketing the other parties' market and resources. Collaborative marketing describes how, through partnerships between different firms, corporations may foster creativity and utilization of resources, for instance, expertise and market regions, in a bid to gain a competitive edge (Camarinha-Matos *et al.*, 2024). To determine the impact of collaborative strategic marketing in Saudi Arabia, the following themes have been analyzed:

Digital Transformation and Innovation

Focusing on the process of digital transformation and innovation, strategic marketing partnerships are critical to improving the competitive advantage of SMEs in Saudi Arabia. In the era of digital complexities, small and medium enterprises are relatively suited to

understand the complexities if they engage consultants and managers. These people provide forecasts and help create and administer decision-making plans that are most appropriate for every SME due to its special needs and challenges encountered (Alghanmi, 2020). SMEs can obtain access to and knowledge of superior practices, market information, and advanced technology, which would not ordinarily be available to them if they embarked on collaborations. Such access to new knowledge and resources is important in unlocking innovation within SMEs. They can foresee the consumers' needs and shocks and respond accordingly while offering clients unique propositions to retain their business (Harikannan *et al.*, 2021).

Furthermore, strategic marketing cooperation tasks create networking prospects and partnerships in the business world and facilitate SMEs' gain of large streams of innovations and industry knowledge. Strategic marketing using 'synergy' will help Saudi Arabian SMEs survive and thrive in today's fast-evolving business environment. This can be done by leveraging digital transformation and innovation (Batwa & Alamoudi, 2019).

SME Long-Term Sustainable Growth

For small businesses to be able to sustain themselves in the long run, remain competitive, and foster economic growth in Saudi Arabia, it is crucial to encourage sustainable growth among SMEs. Therefore, SMEs are in a position to respond to the consumer's continually evolving needs and the fluctuating market demands within the region through sustainable growth (Albassam, 2021). This flexibility is important in the continual maintenance of the edge, which is important in beating competitors because consumer preferences and market forces are dynamic. Moreover, sustainable growth strategies increase the stakeholders' participation and information exchange through collaboration regarding the participation of SMEs, government, and other counterparts (Hassan *et al.*, 2018).

The other sustainable growth strategies include technology transfer, the development of human capital, and mentoring networks. According to Madkhali & Sithole (2023), Saudi Arabian SMEs should be able to apply sustainability in order to enhance the sustainability of the companies' status and develop the techniques for the long run through these measures. This implies that capacity-building programs provide SMEs with the competencies that enable the realization of new opportunities alongside the ability to effectively deal with diverse and competitive environments (Madkhali & Sithole, 2023). Technology transfer practices facilitate

the acquisition and implementation of technologies by SMEs in the economy, thereby improving production performances and competitive advantages. Mentorship networks create a culture of continuous learning and professional development for potential mentees with the assistance of experts in the same field (Zarte *et al.*, 2022). The inclusion of sustainability in the marketing mix of SMEs can also assist Saudi Arabian SMEs in becoming change agents and innovation champions in the market systems. This approach enhances individual SMEs as the economic pillar and has a positive impact on the enhancement of financial stability and sustainability for attaining stable progress and prosperity (Harikannan *et al.*, 2021).

Market Orientation and Customer-Centricity

Market orientation and customer orientation also came up as the most significant factors that characterize the success of SMEs in Saudi Arabia, with an emphasis on the utilization of CRM systems and market-oriented systems. These methods emphasize the identification of customer needs and also enhance the understanding of all products and services relating to these needs in the market, hence offering satisfactory methods to market needs (Alenazi & Alanazi, 2023). CRM systems can help SMEs better understand their customers' preferences, buying habits, and opinions, thus enabling them to utilize their resources and mechanisms more efficiently to offer products that suit customers' needs. Furthermore, market-oriented initiatives would allow SMEs to assess market trends and respond to them as and when they occur, hence making them operate as adaptable firms within the increasingly competitive arena (Hanaysha *et al.*, 2022).

Market orientation and customer focus, therefore, become all the more effective strategies to achieve the company's positioning strategy. It makes sure that, through collaboration, SMEs can effectively control their marketing activities in a way that is proactive to customers' requirements and desires (Alenazi & Alanazi, 2023). Market orientation, customer-centricity, and collaborative strategic marketing not only augment the competitive advantage of SMEs in Saudi Arabia but also strengthen each other. By focusing on the understanding and satisfaction of customer needs, SMEs can differentiate themselves in the market and build good relationships with customers in order to improve brand recognition and credibility. In addition, the cooperative nature of strategic marketing initiatives enables SMEs to gain access to a richer variety of resources and knowledge, which in turn strengthens their portable competitive edge (Hanaysha *et al.*, 2022).

Table 3: Studies include in the analysis

Author	Research Category	Year	Aim
Harikannan <i>et al.</i>	Systematic Review	2021	This systematic review aimed to determine the driver of Industry 4 in sustainability.

Hassan <i>et al.</i>	Research Article	2018	This study proposed a novel research framework for technological convergence. It combines a transformer-based dynamic link prediction model with the theory of interdependent networks to improve predictive algorithms and identify potential collaborators.
Zarte <i>et al.</i>	Systematic Review	2022	The review aimed to analyze the fuzzy support system to understand the sustainability production system.
Albassam	Literature Review	2021	This paper examined Saudi Arabia's most important government aspects of economic and human growth. This study helps decision-makers implement and maintain the country's development plans.
Tripathi	Research Article	2019	The paper has analyzed the challenges and benefits that Saudi Arabia faces during SME development.
Adam & Alarifi,	Research Article	2021	This research develops a theoretical model to examine the link between innovative practices and SMEs' performance and survival, particularly the impact of external assistance.
Dwikat <i>et al.</i>	Research Article	2022	This research examines how systematic strategic planning (SSP) and strategic business innovation (SBI) affect Palestinian manufacturing SMEs' sustainable performance (SP).
Nazarenko <i>et al.</i>	Comprehensive Review	2021	This study found important manufacturing system standards for the Digital Manufacturing Platforms (4DMP) cluster to establish zero-deduct manufacturing standards.
Batwa & Alamoudi	Systematic Review	2019	A study was conducted to identify the two primary characteristics of SMEs in Saudi Arabia: the extent to which they have adopted e-business and the most significant constraints and stumbling blocks to its adoption.
Wasiq <i>et al.</i>	Research Article	2023	This study's objective is to examine the impact of Green Innovation Adoption (GIA) on Sustainable Performance (SNP) in Saudi Arabia's SMEs through primary research.
Mohamad <i>et al.</i>	Case Study	2021	This research endeavored to investigate the potential of digital interactive platforms (DIP) to facilitate collaboration between service providers and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and expedite internationalization.
Abed	Research Article	2020	The study investigated the variables that influence SMEs' adoption of social commerce.
Cloutier <i>et al.</i>	Systematic Review	2020	The objective of this research is to examine the significance of cooperation in these projects and analyze the suggested CMs through a thorough literature review.
Alghanmi	Comprehensive Review	2020	The objective of the research is to investigate various methods used by SMEs in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to assess the influence of innovation strategies.
Madkhali & Sithole	Comprehensive Review	2023	The research has explored the role of technology in Saudi Arabia in bringing sustainability to SMEs.
Alenazi & Alanazi	Research Article	2023	The study examined how sustainable dynamic capabilities mediate the effect of social CRM on sustainable competitive advantage.
Hanaysha <i>et al.</i>	Research Article	2022	The objective of this paper is to examine the influence of CRM dimensions on the sustainability of SMEs.
Alenazi & Alanazi		2023	The objective of this study is to examine the mediating role of sustainable, dynamic capabilities in the impact of social customer relationship management on sustainable competitive advantage in Saudi Arabian SMEs.

DISCUSSION

To determine how collaborative strategic marketing impacts the SME growth of Saudi Arabia, the two research objectives have been analyzed. This was performed through the two research objectives (RO). In the first RO, the influence of collaborative strategic marketing on the growth of the Saudi Arabia SME was analyzed through themes including challenges of Saudi Arabia SME, the significance of collaborative strategic marketing, and effective collaboration strategies. Furthermore, the second RO, the impact of collaborative strategic marketing, was analyzed through Saudi Arabia SME digital transformation and innovation, SME Sustainable Growth, and Market Orientation and Customer-Centricity.

RO1: Collaborative Strategic Marketing Influence on Saudi Arabian SME Development

Collaborative strategic marketing is a critical enabler for the sustainability and growth of SMEs in Saudi Arabia. However, a number of issues within the SME manufacturing sector exist that are already described above. These challenges include the need to produce ecological products and services, competition originating from the country's WTO membership, and issues of financial reporting. As per Alenazi & Alanazi (2023), Different steps have been undertaken by entrepreneurial SMEs to deal with the challenges that have increased environmental hostility (Alenazi & Alanazi, 2023). To improve the competitiveness of SMEs, job creation, and innovation in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, it became necessary for Saudi Arabia SMEs to create strategic alliances (Camarinha-Matos *et al.*, 2024). As per this systematic literature review, this can be done through indirect business cooperation models, collaborative commerce, and digitalization.

Alghanmi (2020), in his research, has mentioned the significance of collaboration in strategic marketing for SME growth. Knowledge acquisition and the creation of new resources by SMEs create Saudi Arabian Collaboration Innovation by opening new routes. This is especially true in the current fast-growing market, where SMEs need to be quick in responding, adapting to new technologies, and meeting the ever-demanding customers. It also enhances the effectiveness of SMEs since they can swiftly address the needs and demands of consumers as well as other markets (Alghanmi, 2020).

As highlighted in this paper, the Saudi Arabian government has deployed various strategies to boost sustainable manufacturing, such as inclusive industrialization and conventional structures. However, according to the study from Wasiq *et al.* (2023), volatile emerging markets and changing consumer behavior consequently have emerged as important factors that SMEs must take into account when formulating their business ventures, strategies, and operations. These challenges can be overcome by the SMEs in Saudi Arabia through efficient allocation of the available resources, increase in competitiveness, access to new knowledge and resources, and increase in the total economic output (Wasiq *et al.*, 2023).

RO2: Collaborative Strategic Marketing Role in Gaining Competitive Advantage

This systematic review also established the level of competitive advantage attained by SMEs in Saudi Arabia by adopting Strategic Collaborative Marketing. It emphasized the role of digitalization and Information Technology (IT) for SMEs in terms of their enduring competitiveness. As stated by Madkhali & Sithole (2023), this IT helps SMEs understand their digital environment and develop the proper strategies for effective decision-making (Madkhali & Sithole, 2023). The paper also stressed the importance of maintaining a competitive advantage through collaboration. Strategic marketing collaboration allows SMEs to have better practices, market intelligence, and new technology to apply creativity and enable them to capture consumers' unpredictable needs and events (Camarinha-Matos *et al.*, 2024).

The development of SMEs and their sustainability is very important for the growth and development of Saudi Arabia's economy. This systematic review highlighted some approaches, which include stakeholder engagement, technology transfer, capacity enhancement, and mentorship. Moreover, according to this systematic review, two constructs, which, in fact, define the competitive advantage of SMEs in Saudi Arabia, are market orientation and customer orientation. As argued by Hanaysha *et al.* (2022), CRM systems enable SMEs to examine and understand customer requirements, the way, and their attitudes in a way that resources can be effectively used to meet demand and deliver what is required (Hanaysha *et al.*, 2022).

LIMITATIONS

There are some limitations in the systematic review of sustainable manufacturing and collaborative strategic marketing in Saudi Arabian SMEs. In analyzing the articles, the research should have considered those that were written and published before 2018, which limited the study to only articles that were published between 2018 and 2024. This, in turn, reduced the comprehensiveness of the review that was being conducted. Furthermore, the systematic review focused only on 18 studies, even though each of the databases contains numerous articles. The failure to include more studies for review, even though the authors received many more articles, could be explained by filters adopted to enhance their focus on the role of collaborative strategic marketing in the competitive advantage and sustainable growth of Saudi Arabian SMEs.

Future Implications

Several key questions and issues have been identified in this systematic review. Among them are factors such as technological constraints, challenges to obtaining funding, and the absence of a defined plan. Owing to this, it is apparent that there is a need for additional research to be carried out to discover more about these aspects as well as find ways of dealing with them. The review also recommends that studies should be conducted to

establish how government policies and programs have promoted the cooperation of strategic marketing and sustainable manufacturing among SMEs.

The review also emphasizes the necessity of further analysis of other various preferred collaboration partners and the fundamental successful outcomes for the improvement of sustainable development and competitive advantage. Furthermore, the review can also be extended to the Middle East region and other GCC countries as the problems and opportunities that SMEs operating in such environments may be similar to those in Saudi Arabia.

CONCLUSION

The systematic review has highlighted the need to encourage strategic and integrated marketing communication in Saudi Arabia for SMEs needed to foster sustainable growth and establish a competitive edge. Saudi Arabian SMEs can overcome dynamics similar to technological constraints, inability to access funds, and deficient strategic planning by collaborating using methods such as digitalization, stakeholder participation, and strategic marketing. Collaborative strategic marketing is a significant method for Saudi Arabian SMEs to maintain sustainable manufacturing growth coupled with the realization of sustainable competitive advantage in the market through superiority in innovation, improved competitiveness, and the creation of economic welfare.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations can help Saudi Arabia to successfully implement collaborative strategic marketing to ensure sustainable growth and competitive advantage:

- Saudi Arabia should have a digital transformation plan that will help enhance the competitiveness of SMEs. Digitalization, collaboration for commerce, and involving stakeholders can contribute to sustainable manufacturing practices and the introduction of new products.
- SMEs in Saudi Arabia should be motivated to work collectively and to utilize synergies, knowledge transfer, and skills development. Information exchange, technology acquisition, and collaboration may assist SMEs in gaining competitiveness.
- Saudi Arabia should formulate a long-term manufacturing strategy in order to assist SMEs to develop and compete fiercely in the relevant market. These include Waste and Emission Reduction, Lean and Green Manufacturing, Circular Economy, and Sustainable Supply Chain.

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The authors report that there are no competing interests to declare.

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