Navigating Digital Transformation: The Moderating Role of Dynamic Capabilities in Transforming Subjective Norms into E-Marketing Adoption in Zanzibar's Tourism SMEs

Hilal Maabad Ame
Department of Business Administration and Management, The University of Dodoma, Dodoma, Tanzania.

Amani Gration Tegambwage
Department of Business Administration and Management, The University of Dodoma, Dodoma, Tanzania.

Omari Khalifa Mbura
Department of Marketing. The University of Dar es Salaam Business School, Dar es Salaam. Tanzania.

Correspondence:
hilalmaabad@gmail.com

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Abstract

In light of the digital transformation in the tourism sector and the low rate of e-marketing adoption among small and medium tourism enterprises (SMTEs), this study aims to examine the impact of subjective norms on e-marketing adoption among SMTEs in Zanzibar, with dynamic capabilities as a moderator. Data were collected from 216 SMTEs in Zanzibar, and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was used for analysis. Drawing on the Decomposed Theory of Planned Behaviour (DTPB) and Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT), the study examined the influence of competitive pressure, customer pressure, and cultural influences on e-marketing adoption, with dynamic capabilities as a moderator. The results reveal that competitive pressure and cultural influences significantly influence e-marketing adoption, while customer pressure exerts adverse effects. Moreover, dynamic capabilities significantly strengthen the relationship between competitive pressure and e-marketing adoption but do not moderate the effects of customer pressure and cultural influences. These findings contribute to the theoretical framework of the DTPB by demonstrating that customer pressure may discourage e-marketing adoption in resource-constrained environments, while highlighting the role of dynamic capabilities in strengthening the influence of competitive pressure on e-marketing adoption. For managerial practitioners, this suggests the need for a more structured, market-oriented digital strategy, while policymakers should complement market competition with targeted capability-development interventions, including subsidised digital training programmes focused on SEO, social media marketing, and analytics to accelerate e-marketing adoption in the tourism sector.

Key words: E-marketing adoption, Subjective norms, Tourism SMEs (SMTEs), Dynamic capabilities, Digital transformation

1.0 Introduction

Digital transformation has become a strategic and competitive tool for tourism enterprises, enabling even small businesses to access local and international markets, engage with customers in real time, and enhance product visibility (Sigala, 2020). Accordingly, tourism organisations are compelled to re-evaluate and adapt their marketing strategies to the rapid pace of digital transformation in the post-COVID-19 era (Omerovic, 2024; Satalkina & Steiner, 2020). E-marketing is a vital element of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, in which technology and innovation serve as essential agents of economic transformation (Ajayi *et al.,* 2022). It is regarded as a technological tool that uses the internet and other electronic channels to promote products, information, or ideas (Bader *et al.,* 2022). Typical e-marketing tools include mobile marketing, intranet marketing, electronic data interchange, search engine optimisation (SEO), content marketing, social media marketing, paid advertising, and influencer marketing (Al-Ababneh, 2022; Ashokbhai, 2025; Purnomo, 2023).

E-marketing adoption has the potential to transform the business landscape and foster economic growth across diverse industry sectors, as noted by Radivojevic et al. (2022), with specific implications for the tourism industry (Law, Leung & Chan, 2020). For small- and medium-sized tourism enterprises (SMTEs), adopting e-marketing has become imperative for their sustainability, growth, and survival in the digital marketplace (Al Asheq *et al.,* 2021). This is due to the commercial advantages that e-marketing provides, including increased market visibility, enhanced sales and profits, cost efficiencies, and streamlined business processes (AlQattan & Al Mubarak, 2025; Iqbal & Zainab, 2025; Jaas, 2022; Kumar *et al.,* 2021). Like other developing nations, Zanzibar has consistently pursued initiatives to encourage SMTEs to adopt e-marketing technologies, thereby enhancing the customer experience and strengthening their competitive position. These initiatives have advanced Zanzibar's digital infrastructure, ensuring the delivery of sustainable, secure, and integrated ICT services within the tourism sector (RGoZ, 2021). Despite these efforts to promote e-marketing adoption among SMEs, uptake remains low in Zanzibar, with only 6.6% of SMEs engaged in e-marketing (Mohammed, 2020; RGoZ, 2018). This limited adoption hampers SMTEs' access to both domestic and international markets (RGoZ, 2020).

Previous research indicates that subjective norms are a pivotal factor in technology adoption decisions, as they can shape an individual's intention to engage in particular behaviours (Yean *et al.,* 2015; Taylor & Todd, 1995). Subjective norms refer to perceived external pressures from stakeholders, including competitors, customers, suppliers, and regulatory bodies, that affect decision-making in technology adoption (Ajzen, 1991). Nonetheless, despite their acknowledged theoretical importance, empirical results have been mixed and inconclusive, suggesting that subjective norms regarding e-marketing adoption may be context-dependent. For instance, several studies have documented significant effects of subjective norms on e-marketing adoption (Nguyen & Tran, 2024; Islam, 2023; Bayat *et al*., 2025; Bruce et al., 2023; Mohammed, 2020; Sechabe & Fatoki, 2021), whereas other investigations (Chicha & Phiri, 2023; Li, 2023; Ashaari *et al.,* 2024; Berhanu & Raj, 2024; Baye, 2021) report an insignificant relationship.

In addition to the ambiguous findings on the direct effects of subjective norms on e-marketing adoption, prior research

indicates that digital marketing adoption is seldom driven solely by subjective norms, contrary to the Decomposed Theory of Planned Behaviour (DTPB). Instead, it also depends on broader organisational and environmental contexts, including firms' resources, organisational culture, structure, managerial skills, and dynamic capabilities (Abate *et al.,* 2024; Masrianto *et al.,* 2022; Purwanti *et al.,* 2022; Homburg & Wielgos, 2022). Within these frameworks, dynamic capabilities are recognised as a higher-order construct through which organisations progressively align internal competencies with external opportunities and threats. Despite the growing body of literature, empirical research on the interaction between subjective norms and dynamic capabilities remains limited. The majority of existing empirical studies have examined subjective norms as a direct predictor of e-marketing adoption, with minimal consideration of firms' internal adaptive capacities.

Therefore, to address this gap, the current study introduces dynamic capabilities as a moderator to broaden the DTPB framework, shifting its focus from individual behaviour to organisational capabilities and offering a more comprehensive understanding of adoption behaviour within SMTEs. By integrating the DCT with DTPB, this study advances both the theoretical and empirical understanding of how organisational capabilities and individual managerial attitudes combine to promote digital transformation in small and medium-sized tourism enterprises. The findings hold strategic significance for policymakers, tourism development agencies and institutions supporting SMTEs in formulating interventions that enhance digital resilience within Zanzibar's tourism sector.

2. Literature Review

2.1 *Theoretical framework*

2.1.1 *Decomposed Theory of Planned Behaviour*

The Decomposed Theory of Planned Behaviour, introduced by Taylor and Todd (1995), builds upon Ajzen's (1991) model by breaking down its main constructs—attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control—into more specific belief components. This detailed partitioning allows for a clearer understanding of the factors influencing technology adoption intentions. In e-marketing adoption, this theory provides a thorough framework for understanding managerial decisions. Notably, pressure from competitors influences subjective norms related to e-marketing use, along with pressure from customers and cultural factors (Wendt & Farhadi, 2022).

Unlike other frameworks, such as the Technology-Organisation-Environment (TOE) framework, which focuses on objective environmental conditions, DTPB captures how environmental conditions are subjectively perceived by SMTE owners and managers. This framework is particularly relevant for SMTEs where decisions are dominated by managers and driven by perception (Nugraha & Iqbal, 2025). By decomposing the subjective norms constructs, DTPB offers a detailed understanding of the perceptual process through which subjective norms shape e-marketing adoption decisions among SMTEs. Nonetheless, because perception alone is insufficient to drive action, this study integrates dynamic capabilities theory to provide a comprehensive understanding of how SMTEs translate perceived social pressures into strategic action by sensing opportunities, seizing them, and configuring organisational processes and resources.

2.1.2 Dynamic Capabilities Theory

The Theory of Dynamic Capabilities (Teece *et al.,* 1997) enhances the Dynamic Theory of Perceived Behaviour (DTPB) by emphasising organisational-level capacities that enable firms to adapt, integrate, and reconfigure resources in a continuously evolving business environment. In the tourism sector, where shifts in consumer preferences, digital platforms, and competitive landscapes occur frequently, dynamic capabilities are vital for the effective implementation of e-marketing strategies (Abate et al., 2024; Law *et al.,* 2020). These capabilities are conceptualised through three interconnected processes: sensing, seizing, and transforming organisational resources. For Small and Medium-sized Tourism Enterprises, sensing is the ability to identify emerging market opportunities through digital platforms (recognising the growing significance of social media marketing and online travel agencies). Seizing involves mobilising resources to exploit these opportunities, including investing in staff training, developing digital partnerships, or adopting innovative e-marketing strategies. Transforming involves reconfiguring organisational structures and processes to sustain a competitive advantage through continuous digital innovation.

Drawing on the DTPB and DCT, this study proposes a framework for e-marketing adoption in Zanzibar's SMTEs. DTPB explains the belief structures that shape intentions, while DCT highlights the strategic capabilities that translate intentions into sustained adoption and competitive advantage. The framework suggests that dynamic capabilities moderate the effects of competitive pressure, customer pressure, and cultural influence on e-marketing adoption. This integration enhances DTPB's explanatory power and emphasises organisational adaptation in the digital age.

2.2 Empirical Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.2.1 Competitive pressure and E-marketing Adoption

Competitive pressure significantly influences the adoption of e-marketing. It concerns firms' perceptions of competitors within the same industry (Abbasi *et al.,* 2022; Akbar *et al.,* 2022). Organisations are more likely to adopt technological advances when they recognise the competitive landscape. This tendency stems from the fact that competitive pressure heightens a firm's concern about losing its competitive advantage (Abbasi *et al.,* 2022; Kwarteng *et al.,* 2023). Bilali (2022) and Eggers (2020) contend that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with limited support services, technology, skills, and finance are particularly susceptible to pressures from larger firms. In this context, pressures from emerging technologies have compelled SMEs to adopt e-marketing tools (Alrousan *et al.,* 2021). Although competitive pressure is widely hypothesised to influence technology adoption, empirical evidence is mixed. For example, studies such as Xavier (2025), Chicha (2024), Hulu & San (2024), Hien, Huong, and Thu (2023), Kwarteng *et al.* (2023), Abbasi (2022), Jankovic (2020), and Wong et al. (2020) have reported that competitive pressure positively impacts the intention to adopt e-marketing. Conversely, other research, including Nuseira & Aljumahb (2020) and Akbar *et al.* (2022), has identified a negative influence. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H_1: Industry pressure towards e-marketing positively influences the adoption of e-marketing among SMTEs in Zanzibar.

2.2.2 Customer Pressure and E-marketing Adoption

Customer pressure is defined as an organisation's perception of customer expectations directed towards the business (Sawang *et al*., 2024; Liem, 2024). Such pressure incentivises organisations to adopt technological innovation (Ahmed *et al.,* 2016). The greater the customer pressure, the more diligently the organisation implements e-marketing strategies. In the tourism sector, customers rely heavily on digital tools to search for, compare, and book hotels and other tourist destinations (Harrigan *et al.,* 2021). Empirical evidence indicates that customer pressure is a crucial factor in the adoption of e-marketing among small and medium-sized enterprises. Studies such as Sengkalit *et al.* (2025), Amini (2022), and Nangin *et al.* (2020) demonstrate that customer pressure significantly influences technology adoption. Despite its substantial impact, customer pressure does not uniformly affect e-marketing adoption, particularly in resource-constrained SME environments. Hence, other empirical studies, such as Rana *et al.* (2025), Indiani *et al.* (2025), Yelfiarita *et al.* (2025), Abbasi *et al.* (2022), Notta and Kitta (2020), and Jamil *et al.* (2020), have found an insignificant or weak influence of customer pressure on e-marketing adoption. Consequently, the study hypothesises that:

H_2: Customers' pressure towards e-marketing positively influences the adoption of e-marketing among SMTEs in Zanzibar.

2.2.3 Cultural Influence and E-marketing Adoption

Cultural influences, as an element of subjective norms in the Decomposed Theory of Planned Behaviour, encompass the beliefs, norms, values, and ideologies that unify individuals within an organisation or society (Touseef et al., 2023). In this study, cultural influence is conceptualised as a multidimensional construct representing the Zanzibari context. Despite its theoretical significance, empirical evidence indicates that cultural traits influence SMEs' willingness to adopt e-marketing technologies. For instance, Agag *et al.* (2024), Ghafoori *et al.* (2024), Mohammad *et al.* (2023), Scaliza *et al.* (2022), Mapunda (2021), Rabayah et al. (2021), and Martínez-Caro et al. (2020) found that cultural factors influence technology adoption. However, other studies found a negative effect of culture on e-marketing adoption (Badiang & Nkwei, 2024; Boustani & Chammaa, 2023).

In Zanzibar's tourism industry, culture is characterised by religious beliefs and traditional business practices that interact with global tourism cultures (Timothy & Said, 2023). These cultural dimensions typically shape attitudes towards technology adoption. For instance, Islamic values, as dominant religious norms, influence what is considered ethically right or wrong in digital marketing, including content creation, customer engagement, and transparency (Asra, 2025; Abbrar & Sumarlan, 2025). Similarly, traditional business practices are largely based on trust and face-to-face engagement with customers, which can create cultural resistance to e-marketing adoption, particularly when e-marketing tools are misaligned with perceived cultural values (Weiger, 2023; Pratesi *et al.,* 2021; Peña-García *et al.,* 2020). Accordingly, cultural influences predict e-marketing adoption, as they shape how SMTE managers perceive the compatibility of e-marketing tools with prevailing cultural norms. Consequently, the study hypothesises that:

H_3: Cultural influences positively influence the adoption of e-marketing among SMTEs in Zanzibar

2.2.4 Moderating Role of Dynamic Capabilities

Previous research has found a positive link between dynamic capabilities, such as strategic flexibility, and the adoption of electronic marketing in SMEs (Zahoor & Lew, 2023; Thoumrungroje & Racela, 2021; Wang, 2020). These studies show that firms with strong capabilities are more likely to implement digital strategies, thereby boosting competitiveness. Garcia and Martinez (2020) support this, observing that firms with higher capabilities adopt electronic marketing more extensively, thereby gaining a competitive edge. Liu *et al.* (2020) confirmed that, across industries, stronger dynamic capabilities are associated with higher adoption and better business results. Consistent with Digital Capability Theory, this study suggests that capabilities shape the translation of subjective norms into actual e-marketing adoption, even when subjective norms are negative. Accordingly, the study hypothesises that:

H_4: Dynamic Capabilities moderate the relationships between industry pressure and e-marketing adoption among SMTEs in Zanzibar
H_5: Dynamic Capabilities moderate the relationships between customers' pressure and e-marketing adoption among SMTEs in Zanzibar
H_6: Dynamic Capabilities moderate the relationships between cultural influences and e-marketing adoption among SMTEs in Zanzibar

2.3 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study comprises three independent variables: industry pressure, customer pressure and cultural influence, grounded in the DTPB. E-marketing adoption is conceptualised as the dependent variable, encompassing content marketing, social media and SEO marketing. Additionally, dynamic capabilities (sensing, seizing and reconfiguring resources) are used as moderating variables. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework used in this study.

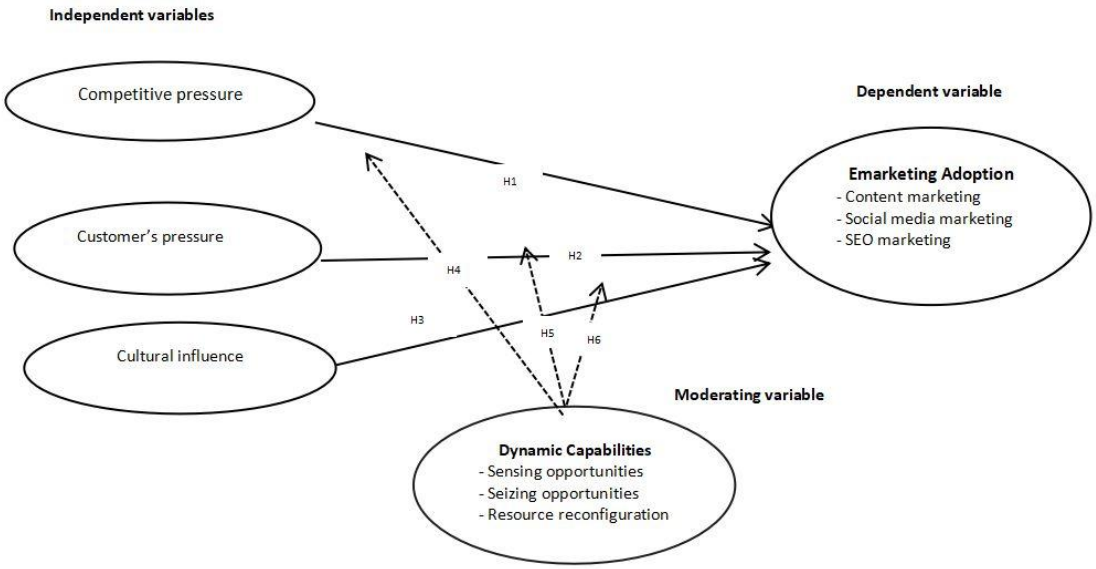

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework
Source: Researcher (2024)

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research design and study area

This study adopted a positivist, cross-sectional survey methodology. This approach investigates social reality by identifying causal factors that influence outcomes and by collecting and analysing data at a specific point in time (Wang & Cheng, 2020). The cross-sectional survey design is particularly suitable for this study, as the researchers are not concerned with measuring trends or variations in marketing adoption among SMTEs but rather with the current state of adoption. Furthermore, this design is cost-effective and time-saving, as it enables the collection and analysis of substantial amounts of data in a short period (Saunders et al., 2019).

The study took place in two Zanzibar regions: Urban West and South Unguja. These sites were selected for several reasons. First, Urban West has the highest number of SMTEs, followed by South Unguja. In contrast, the other three regions, North Unguja, North Pemba, and South Pemba, have fewer SMTEs (ZCT, 2024). Second, these regions are major commercial hubs in Zanzibar; for example, Urban West hosts 13,208 businesses, accounting for 48.7% of all businesses, the largest share. Meanwhile, South Unguja has 3,565 establishments, or 13% (RGoZ, 2017). Consequently, these regions offer key insights into e-marketing adoption among SMTEs in Zanzibar.

3.2 Sampling procedures

This study utilised stratified random sampling to select respondents from a sample frame of 456 registered SMTEs in Urban West and South Unguja, based on the registry provided by the Zanzibar Commission for Tourism. According to the Zanzibar Tourism Act, No. 6 of 2009, ZCT is the authorised government body responsible for developing, regulating, and promoting the tourism sector in Zanzibar (RGoZ, 2009). The population was divided into regions (Urban and South Unguja) and sub-sector strata (accommodation units and tour operators), as presented in Table 1. Within each stratum, firms were systematically selected using a random procedure to ensure equal probability of selection, and respondents were purposively selected from each firm. Using Yamane's formula, a sample size of 216 SMTEs was determined with a 5% margin of error and a 95% confidence level. This approach was appropriate given the population data (Yamane, 1967). Table 1 presents the sample sizes, categorised by region and sub-sector.

Table 1. Proportionate sample size by regions and sub-sectors

		Population	Proportion	Proportional sample size
Region	Urban region	295	0.6469	140
	South Unguja region	161	0.3530	76
Sub-sector	Accommodation	227	0.4978	107
	Tour operator	229	0.5021	109
Total		**456**	**0.9999**	**216**

Source: Table by authors

3.3 Data collection

The researchers used a questionnaire to capture the research questions and hypotheses, which was distributed to marketing and tourism experts for pretesting. A pilot study with 32 SMTEs in North Unguja was conducted, and that region was excluded from the main study to avoid contamination. Based on Kieser and Wassmer's (1996) guideline, the pilot sample size was appropriate. Subsequently, after piloting the instrument, irrelevant and overlapping questions were removed, and vague or technical items, such as content marketing, social media marketing, and search engine optimisation, were revised to preserve their original meaning. The results indicated that all constructs used in this study displayed high internal consistency.

Because managerial authority and operational control are highly centralised, data were collected from owners, general managers, and marketing and sales managers of SMTEs. These respondents were reliable sources of information on technology adoption. Previous studies have emphasised that owners make the final strategic decisions in the organisation, while managers in functional areas such as marketing and sales play an important role in the adoption process (Calli, 2024; Damanpour *et al.,* 2018); hence, their views were significant to this study. To minimise potential bias, respondents were purposively selected based on their managerial positions, experience, and familiarity with the firm's e-marketing practices. During visits, the researchers explained the study's objectives, presented a research permit, and provided a consent form for managers and owners. Only those who signed were included in the study. To maintain confidentiality, the researcher used codes rather than names and allowed respondents to continue or withdraw. Due to time constraints, enumerators dropped off and picked up questionnaires, allowing respondents to complete them at their convenience.

3.4 Measurements of study variables

3.4.1 Dependent variable

This study operationalises e-marketing adoption as the dependent variable, using a formative construct that captures SMTEs' engagement with key digital marketing tools: content marketing, search engine optimisation, and social media marketing. Each dimension represents a distinct component of adoption and is therefore modelled as non-interchangeable. At the indicator level, a binary coding scheme (0 = not adopted; 1 = adopted) was used to indicate whether each tool was adopted. However, this dichotomous coding does not imply a binary dependent variable; rather, the indicators are combined to form a composite measure of adoption intensity, allowing firms to exhibit varying levels of e-marketing engagement (Buvár & Gáti, 2023; Masrianto *et al.,* 2022).

Given this specification, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling was used for its suitability for estimating formative measurement models and its robustness in prediction-oriented research. In line with recommended practice, construct assessment focused on multicollinearity (variance inflation factors) and the significance and relevance of indicator weights, rather than on internal consistency measures such as Cronbach's alpha or composite reliability (Hair & Alamer, 2022).

3.4.2 Independent variables

The study identified three (3) independent variables, based on the theoretical and empirical literature. These variables are competitive pressure, customer pressure, and cultural influence, adapted from Iddris & Ibrahim (2015), Teixeira *et al.* (2018), and Ababa (2019). These indicators were

assessed using a Likert-type scale (1 = "Strongly Disagree", 2 = "Disagree", 3 = "Neutral", 4 = "Agree", and 5 = "Strongly Agree").

3.4.3 Moderating variable

This study employed dynamic capabilities as a moderating variable. A Likert-type scale (1 for "Strongly Disagree", 2 for "Disagree", 3 for "Neutral", 4 for "Agree", and 5 for "Strongly Agree") was used to assess nine (9) items adapted from Teece (2007) and Warner and Wager (2019). These items include: (i) regular collection of marketing information, (ii) identification of promising market opportunities, (iii) detection of changes in consumer needs and potential innovations, (iv) assimilation, analysis, and dissemination of market information, (v) review of marketing strategies, (vi) implementation of new ideas for marketing programmes, (vii) renewal of business processes in accordance with market demands, and (viii) integration of internal business processes.

3.5 Reliability and validity assessment

This study ensured the measurement model's content validity through a comprehensive literature review, expert consultations, and a pilot study. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was used to assess convergent validity, with an acceptable threshold of AVE ≥ 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

3.6 Data analysis

The study employed two statistical techniques for data analysis: descriptive statistics and factor analysis. The preliminary data were analysed using descriptive statistics in SPSS version 23, focusing on the demographic characteristics of SMTEs and the mean and standard deviation of the constructs. Subsequently, partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS was used to conduct factor analysis. The analysis involved evaluating the measurement model and, subsequently, the structural model in accordance with the recommendations of Anderson and Gerbing (1988). The assessment of the measurement model encompassed testing indicator reliability, internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity (Straub et al., 2004). Additionally, the structural model was evaluated by examining collinearity issues, the coefficient of determination (R^2), the effect size (f^2), and predictive relevance (Q^2).

The Product Indicator Approach in SmartPLS was used to assess the moderation effect (Hair *et al.,* 2022). Interaction terms were automatically generated by multiplying indicators of the independent constructs with those of the moderator constructs to estimate latent interaction effects. The significance of the moderation effects was assessed using bootstrapping with 10,000 resamples to ensure robust estimation.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Response rate

A total of 285 questionnaires were distributed to SMTEs, of which 225 were returned, yielding a response rate of 78.9%. After data cleaning, only 216 (75.7%) questionnaires were retained for the final analysis. To address non-response, researchers replaced firms within the same stratum to ensure proportional representation in the sample. Table 2 presents the response rate.

Table 2: Response rate.

Region	Questionnaire distributed	Response rate	Usable questionnaire
Urban region	179	158	140
South Unguja region	106	97	76
Total	**285 (100%)**	**225 (78.9)**	**216 (75.7%)**

Source: Table by authors

Table 3. Characteristics of SMTEs (N=216)

Variable	Frequency	Per cent
Business Location		
Urban region	146	67.6
South Region	70	32.4
Type of enterprise		
One Star Hotel	69	31.9
Upper Guest House	34	15.7
Lower Guest House	16	7.4
Tour Operator	97	44.9
Number of Years in Operation		
1-5 years	53	24.5
6-10 years	106	49.1
11 and above	57	26.4
Number of employees		
1-4 employees	49	22.7
5-19 employees	111	51.4
20-99 employees	56	25.9
Capital invested		
11-57 million	125	57.9
57-650 million	91	42.1

Source: Table by authors

4.2 SMTEs characteristics

Table 3 summarises the characteristics of Small and Micro Tourism Enterprises (SMTEs). The majority of SMTEs (67.6%) are located in the urban region, with tour operators the predominant category (44.9%). The data further show that a significant proportion of SMTEs (49.1%) have been operational for 6 to 10 years. Among the surveyed SMTEs, most (51.4%) employed 5-19 staff members. Additionally, the majority of SMTEs (57.9%) have invested between 11 and 57 million.

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Capital invested		
11-57 million	125	57.9
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Source: Table by authors

4.3 Respondent demographic characteristics

Table 4 summarises the demographic characteristics of the respondents. By gender, males constituted the majority at 79.6%, while females accounted for 20.4%, suggesting potential gender barriers that may inhibit women's engagement with tourism enterprises and their subsequent adoption of e-marketing strategies. These barriers include marital status, religion, and educational level (Maliva, 2016). The majority of respondents (50%) were general managers, with educational qualifications primarily ranging from a diploma (47.5%) to a bachelor's degree (31.9%).

4.4 Multicollinearity Test

Table 5 indicates that all VIF values for the inner model (constructs SI and its interaction with DC) are below the threshold of 5 (ranging from 1.000 to 4.96), as recommended by Hair et al. (2019). Therefore, there is no collinearity problem among the predictor constructs in the structural model.

Table 4: Respondent demographic characteristics (N=216)

Variable	Frequency	Per cent
Gender		
Male	172	79.6
Female	44	20.4
Job Positions		
Owner	19	8.8
General Manager	108	50.0
Marketing Manager	62	28.7
Sales Manager	27	12.5
Education levels		
Below Certificate	4	1.9
Certificate	38	17.6
Diploma	90	41.7
Bachelor Degree	69	31.9
Masters and Above	15	6.9

Source: Table by authors

Table 5. Multicollinearity

Constructs	VIF
DC1 - regular collection of marketing information	3.758
DC2 - identification of promising market opportunities	4.916
DC3 - detection of consumer needs and potential innovations	4.496
DC4 - assimilation, analysis, and dissemination of market information	2.484
DC5 - review of marketing strategies	3.299
DC6 - Implementation of new ideas for marketing programs	1.946
DC7 - renewal of business processes	2.732
DC8 - integration of internal business processes.	3.192
DC9 – taking marketing action based on routine intelligence	2.480
EMA1 - content marketing	3.264
EMA2 - social media marketing	2.218
EMA3 - search engine optimisation (SEO)	3.070
SN1- competitive pressure	1.000
SN2 - customer pressure	1.000
SN3 - cultural influence	1.000
DC x SN1	1.000
DC x SN2	1.000
DC x SN3	1.000

Source: Table by authors

4.5 Measurement model results

This study used Cronbach's alpha to assess the internal consistency of the constructs. Results showed satisfactory alpha values ranging from 0.80 to 0.94, as detailed in the Table. The Composite Reliability also ranged from 0.84 to 0.94, surpassing the acceptable threshold of 0.6 (Hair et al., 2014). Convergent validity was evaluated through the average variance extracted (AVE), with a cutoff of ≥ 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The findings confirm discriminant validity, as the square roots of the AVEs for each construct exceed their correlations with other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Additionally, cross-loading analysis indicates that the indicators predominantly align with their respective latent variables, as shown in Tables 6, 7, and 8.

Table 6. Measurements, reliability and convergent validity

Constructs/Items	Loadings	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
Subjective norms (SN)		0.80	0.84	0.72
SN1	0.916			
SN2	0.929			
SN3	0.701			
Dynamic capabilities (DC)		0.94	0.94	0.67
DC1	0.834			
DC2	0.858			
DC3	0.873			
DC4	0.748			
DC5	0.836			
DC6	0.782			
DC7	0.851			
DC8	0.829			
DC9	0.762			
E-marketing adoption (EMA)		0.89	0.93	0.82
EMA1	0.919			
EMA2	0.889			
EMA3	0.915			

Source: Table by authors

Table 7. Fornell-Lacker criterion

Constructs	DC	EMA	SN1	SN2	SN3
DC	0.820				
EMA	0.226	0.908			
SN1	-0.015	0.660	1.000		
SN2	-0.040	0.641	0.829	1.000	
SN3	0.173	0.454	0.422	0.473	1.000

Source: Table by authors

Table 8: Cross-loadings Analysis

Constructs	DC	EMA	SN1	SN2	SN3	DC x SI1	DC x SI2	DC x SI3
DC1	0.834	0.139	-0.135	-0.134	0.071	0.372	0.285	0.081
DC2	0.858	0.096	-0.176	-0.176	0.082	0.343	0.243	0.082
DC3	0.873	0.128	-0.084	-0.116	0.138	0.324	0.278	0.049
DC4	0.748	0.119	-0.116	-0.078	0.175	0.239	0.272	0.052
DC5	0.836	0.157	-0.017	-0.061	0.155	0.223	0.206	0.046
DC6	0.782	0.263	0.086	0.043	0.098	0.276	0.257	0.057
DC7	0.851	0.268	0.119	0.043	0.226	0.230	0.182	0.078
DC8	0.829	0.191	-0.012	-0.002	0.139	0.255	0.149	0.098
DC9	0.762	0.081	-0.080	-0.018	0.146	0.195	0.228	0.080
EMA1	0.197	0.919	0.553	0.541	0.398	0.290	0.222	0.180
EMA2	0.209	0.889	0.629	0.633	0.416	0.396	0.308	0.137
EMA3	0.209	0.915	0.612	0.566	0.419	0.324	0.268	0.103
SN1	-0.015	0.660	1.000	0.829	0.422	0.161	0.255	0.159
SN2	-0.040	0.641	0.829	1.000	0.473	0.244	0.247	0.196
SN3	0.173	0.454	0.422	0.473	1.000	0.154	0.199	0.096
DC x SN1	0.328	0.373	0.161	0.244	0.154	1.000	0.704	0.245
DC x SN2	0.276	0.295	0.255	0.247	0.199	0.704	1.000	0.368
DC x SN3	0.084	0.153	0.159	0.196	0.096	0.245	0.368	1.000

Source: Table by authors

4.6 Structural model and hypothesis testing

4.6.1 Testing Direct Effects

The study specifically aimed to examine the influence of subjective norms on e-marketing adoption among Small and Medium Tourism Enterprises in Zanzibar. Table 8 and Figure 2 display the direct relationships corresponding to the study's hypotheses (H_1, H_2, H_3). Results show that competitive pressure significantly and positively influences e-marketing adoption ($\beta = 0.215$, $p = 0.000$, $t = 3.857$), supporting H_1. This indicates that SMTE managers who perceive competitive pressure to use digital tools are more likely to incorporate them into their business activities. These findings are consistent with the Decomposed Theory of Planned Behaviour, which posits that competitive pressure, as a component of subjective norms, boosts the intention to adopt new technology (Hair et al., 2022; Henseler *et al.,* 2016). Empirically, this finding is supported by Chicha (2024), Jankovic (2020), Hulu and San (2024), Hien, Huong, and Thu (2023), and Wong *et al.* (2020), who found that competitive pressure is a strong determinant of e-marketing adoption.

Similarly, cultural influences also showed a significant positive correlation ($\beta = 0.066$, $p = 0.007$, $t = 2.700$), thereby supporting H3. This indicates that managers of SMTEs who perceive cultural pressures regarding the utilisation of e-marketing, such as collectivism and individualism, indulgence and restraint, masculinity and femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and power distance, are more inclined to adopt it. This conclusion is corroborated by the findings of Mapunda (2021), Agag *et al.* (2024), Martínez-Caro *et al.* (2020), Ghafoori *et al.* (2024), and Scaliza *et al.* (2022), who found that cultural pressure shapes SMTEs' intention to adopt e-marketing.

Unexpectedly, customer pressure shows an insignificant positive correlation ($\beta = 0.086$,

p = 0.119, t = 1.055), leading to the rejection of hypothesis H2. The findings suggest that perceptions of customer pressure are not a strong determinant of e-marketing adoption in resource-constrained SMTEs. This is because a large proportion of tourism SMEs in Zanzibar rely heavily on intermediated tourism markets, particularly international tour operators, hotel networks, travel agents, and informal brokerage systems, to acquire customers. In such arrangements, SMEs often receive customers indirectly rather than through their own digital channels. Consequently, firms may perceive a limited need to invest in e-marketing because customer flows are already secured through intermediaries. In this context, customer pressure may not translate into direct pressure for digital engagement at the firm level. This mirrors evidence from other emerging economies, where perceived behavioural control consistently outperforms subjective norms in predicting e-marketing adoption. These results are consistent with empirical studies, such as Notta and Kitta (2020), Yelfiarita *et al.* (2025), and Jamil *et al.* (2020), which found that customer pressure does not influence e-marketing adoption.

4.6.2 Moderation Analysis

The study examined the influence of dynamic capabilities on the relationship between subjective norms and e-marketing adoption. The results indicated mixed moderation patterns, suggesting that dynamic capabilities do not consistently enhance or diminish the effect of subjective norms. Table 10 presents the findings for hypotheses H_4, H_5 and H_6. In particular, a significant positive moderation effect was observed between dynamic capabilities and competitive pressure in e-marketing adoption (β = 0.137, p = 0.010), thus supporting H4. This finding implies that dynamic capabilities can strengthen the impact of competitive pressure. SMTEs, who perceive competitive pressure, may utilise dynamic capabilities to identify marketing opportunities, reconfigure internal and external resources, and effectively implement e-marketing strategies. This approach is consistent with the Dynamic Capabilities Theory, which posits that such capabilities help firms overcome internal limitations and convert perceived challenges into opportunities for adoption (Mikalef & Pateli, 2021).

By contrast, Dynamic Capabilities did not significantly moderate the relationship between customer pressure and e-marketing adoption (β = -0.066, p = 0.240), leading to the rejection of H5. This finding suggests that, within Zanzibar's tourism sector, organisational agility alone may not be sufficient to convert perceived customer expectations into digital adoption behaviour. A possible explanation is that customer relationships in the sector

Table 9. Testing of Direct Relationship

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path coefficient (β)	St. deviation	T statistics	P values	Decision
H1	SN1 -> EMA	0.215	0.056	3.857	0.000	Accepted
H2	SN2 -> EMA	0.086	0.055	1.559	0.119	Rejected
H3	SN3 -> EMA	0.066	0.024	2.700	0.007	Accepted

Source: Field Data (2024)

continue to rely heavily on interpersonal interactions, tour operators, and informal referral systems, thereby reducing the visibility and immediacy of direct digital customer demand. Consequently, even firms with relatively strong adaptive capabilities may not perceive customer pressure as a sufficiently strong motivation to intensify e-marketing practices.

Similarly, the moderating effect of Dynamic Capabilities on the relationship between cultural influence and e-marketing adoption was not statistically significant (β = 0.000, p = 0.989), leading to the rejection of H6. This suggests that firm-level dynamic capabilities may be insufficient to offset deeply embedded socio-cultural norms within Zanzibar's tourism sector. Although dynamic capabilities support organisational flexibility, innovation and performance (Wijaya *et al.,* 2025; Shariffuddin *et al.,* 2023), cultural influences associated with interpersonal trust and relationship-based exchanges operate at a broader institutional and societal level (Herrieth & Rahim, 2023). Consequently, these norms may not be easily transformed through internal organizational capabilities alone, even SMTEs with stronger adaptive capabilities may hesitate to adopt e-marketing practices where such practices are perceived to weaken culturally valued modes of interaction.

Table 10. Testing the Moderation Effect

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path coefficient (β)	St. deviation	T statistics	P values	Decision
H4	DC x SN1 -> EMA	0.137	0.053	2.565	0.010	Accepted
H5	DC x SN2 -> EMA	-0.066	0.057	1.174	0.240	Rejected
H6	DC x SN3 -> EMA	0.000	0.029	0.014	0.989	Rejected

Source: Field Data (2024)

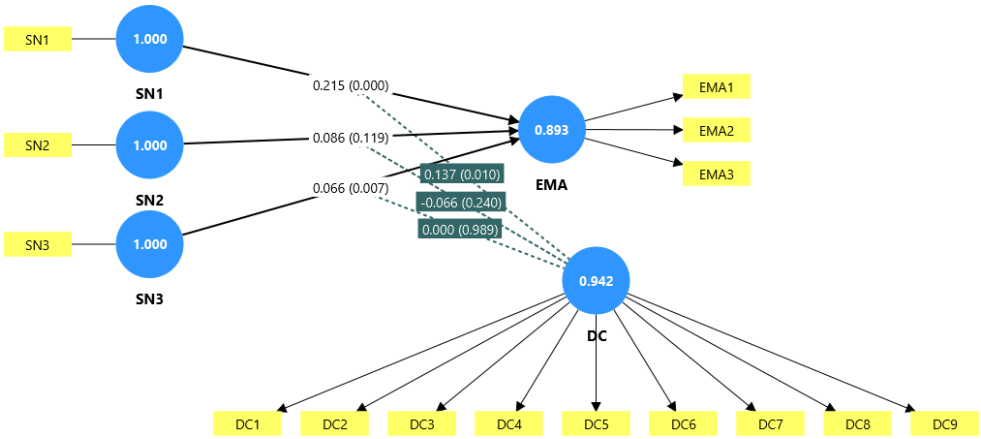

Figure 2: Direct and Moderation effects
Source: Field Data (2024)

5. Conclusion and Implications

This study examined the influence of competitive pressure, customer pressure, and cultural influences on e-marketing adoption, with dynamic capabilities as a moderator. The study found that competitive pressure and social influence have a significant positive effect on e-marketing adoption, whereas customer pressure has no significant effect. Additionally, dynamic capabilities significantly enhance the influence of competitive pressure but do not significantly moderate the effects of customers' pressure and cultural influences. This suggests that SMTEs with sensing, seizing, and resource configuration capabilities may be better positioned to respond to competitive pressure on e-marketing adoption.

6. Theoretical Contribution

The study advances the decomposed theory of planned behaviour by demonstrating that customers' pressure may negatively influence adoption in resource-constrained SMTEs, thereby challenging the conventional notion that these factors invariably promote positive outcomes. Integrating this theory with the dynamic capabilities framework to elucidate e-marketing adoption, particularly among SMTEs in developing economies, adds depth by emphasising that dynamic capabilities may amplify the effect of competitive pressure. To the best of the authors' knowledge, little research has examined the joint impact of subjective norms and firm capabilities on e-marketing adoption, making this study both highly relevant and original.

7. Practical Contribution

From a practical perspective, this study offers important implications for SMTE managers, policymakers, and tourism regulators in Zanzibar. For SMTE managers, the significant influence of industry pressures and cultural factors on e-marketing adoption suggests the need for a more structured, market-oriented digital strategy. Specifically, firms should strengthen their use of e-marketing tools, including social media marketing platforms and search engine optimisation, and continuously benchmark their online visibility, customer engagement, and digital positioning against competitors to support timely, evidence-based marketing decisions.

For policymakers, the positive moderating effect of dynamic capabilities on competitive pressure indicates that competitive market conditions alone are insufficient to stimulate e-marketing adoption without corresponding firm-level adaptive capacities. Policymakers should therefore complement market competition with targeted capability-development interventions, including subsidised digital training programmes focused on SEO, social media marketing, and analytics. In addition, tourism regulators should establish a centralised Destination Digital Marketing Platform that integrates an online booking system, market intelligence, and digital engagement tools to strengthen sector-wide e-marketing adoption. Collectively, these measures would provide an institutional mechanism to accelerate e-marketing adoption in the tourism sector.

8. Limitations and directions for future studies

The study used a cross-sectional design, collecting data at a single point in time. This limitation restricts the ability to analyse how managerial attitudes interact with dynamic capabilities over time. A longitudinal study could offer deeper insights into how e-marketing adoption evolves. Additionally, the findings

primarily apply to SMTEs in Zanzibar, limiting their applicability to other industries and contexts with different cultural, technological, social, and economic factors. Future research should explore whether these results can be replicated in other developing economies with similar cultural and socio-economic conditions.

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