



Digital Technologies Supporting SMEs – A Survey in Albanian Manufacturers' Websites

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Abstract: Marketing is now the main tool for creating, communicating, and distributing value from producers to customers and consumers. The key element and in many cases the first contact of clients or customers to a manufacturer or product is the website. The purpose of this paper is to investigate how website and internet marketing are used by manufacturing SMEs in Albania and how they can be further improved. The objective of the study is to highlight the current situation in Albanian manufacturing SMEs and to display the opportunities offered by information technology for increasing the effectiveness of internet marketing for them. The study followed the qualitative approach, using the case study method applied to some manufacturing companies. The results show that companies appraise the role of digital technologies and internet marketing and are investing to deploy them. Still, the use of digital systems and tools in communication and marketing by companies is often done spontaneously, without defined goals and poorly aligned with strategic plans or marketing policies. The paper discusses the findings from the observation in the Albanian environment and gives practical recommendations for potential improvements in using of the website and internet marketing by manufacturing companies.

Keywords: Website, Internet marketing, Manufacturing industry, Small and medium enterprises, Diagnose performance issues, SEO, Online visibility

1. Introduction

Digitalization has become the most important management process for companies of all sizes and sectors in recent years. Automation of processes, data collection and analysis, connection of equipment in different sectors of production and distribution are some of the areas where digital systems have enabled the increasing of capital effectiveness and boost of work productivity. Companies that make use of digital systems in their activities have realized production flexibility, more efficient processes, and higher product quality, thus getting a competitive advantage in their markets.

On the other hand, digitalization comes as a challenge for companies that have not yet advanced in this course, especially small and medium businesses. The implementation of new technologies requires significant investments and continuous efforts to increase the value of human capital. However, it is a must for the SMEs to realize they need to quickly adapt to changes in the digital market. It is strongly recommended by local and international institutions (OECD, 2021), considering the ability of SMEs to acquire knowledge as crucial for them to maintain their position in global business growth and job creation.

Of all the elements that information technology has made available to date, the Internet represents the tool most spread and used in business, including largely the fields of management, finance, and marketing. In particular, web marketing is considered a clear expression of a new concept of marketing levers for all businesses. It offers many opportunities for small and medium-sized businesses, which are dominant in the economies of all countries.

Nowadays, a large part of businesses has embraced a new vision of marketing, as a relational report where the client and consumer are not only “purchasing profiles” to be analyzed for identifying their needs, but also as players capable of an active role in the development of companies. It is theoretically elaborated as “Marketing 4.0” by Kartajaya et al., (2016) intending that customers are not only looking for products and services to satisfy their needs but also demanding to be part of the production process. This has become evident in the Albanian market for several years. Many Albanian companies, especially in sectors such as trade, communication, tourism, and professional services, are communicating and interacting with clients and consumers, becoming active collaborators through online marketing, e-commerce, and other digital tools (Zhezha et al., 2023; Shyle and Ruplli, 2022). From this point of view, company websites should be seen as important elements of relational marketing, which aims to create a new context of interaction with the client and the consumer.

When the analysis is expanded according to industries, it can be noted that Albanian manufacturers of industrial products (raw materials for other industries/ sectors, packaging materials, parts for machinery and equipment, furniture, construction materials, etc.) pay attention to the organization of production processes, investment in advanced technology, enlargement of their facilities, etc. Procurement of inputs and obtaining of sales markets is part of their daily work. Company managers carry out continuous searches for resources by using all traditional and digital means. Meanwhile, the website design of manufacturing companies, especially small and medium ones, generally makes them visible in business networks, but it is still lacking the use of the variety of instruments that internet marketing can offer. Analysis of the content and functioning of company websites can provide important information on how SMEs use digital instruments as part of marketing policies and reveal ways to optimize their general activity.

The Albanian business environment offers different experiences, but there is a lack of observations and documentation of them in the existing literature. Evidence of good practices and recognition of the challenges in website design and use would be useful for companies, especially manufacturing SMEs that have limited financial and human resources for marketing activities. The dissemination of prominent examples from this domain is one of the main tools to encourage and guide businesses in the path of digital development, to benefit from the multiple opportunities that it offers. This is one of the main purposes of the study, which explores how manufacturing companies perceive and evaluate the role of website and internet marketing in their activity. The paper aims to provide a theoretical contribution to an unexplored field in the academic literature and a practical contribution to Albanian manufacturing SMEs through the dissemination of relevant findings and recommendations.

2. Literature Review

Internet-based communication in recent decades has greatly contributed to the fast and vast global connectivity and information exchange. Due to a continuous trend of new site creation in 2024, the digital universe houses about 1.09 billion websites, of which 192,888,216 sites are active (Forbes, 2024). Similarly, the use of business websites is taking a particular place in their communication with consumers and other stakeholders. According to recent statistics, 71% of businesses now have a website and 43% of small businesses were planning to invest in the performance of their website in 2023 (Forbes, 2024).

Scientific research and grey literature (industry reports, blogs of service-providing companies, newspaper articles, etc.) have identified the factual impact of the Internet on the economy and respective market trends. According to a study by BCG (2011), the digitalization process is particularly analyzed in three aspects: the digital supply, the demand in the digital market, and the effects of digital infrastructure increase. During the investigation of the increasing demand of businesses for using digital products, it was highlighted that:

- SMEs that actively use digital tools grow faster in economic terms and positioning in the market.
- Active use of digital tools enables SMEs to reach international clients, leading to increased and better-managed export activity.
- SMEs that use digital tools have higher employment rates and can attract highly sought-after talent.
- Intensive use of the internet helps SMEs to become more productive, due to recognition and deployment of the latest technical and managerial knowledge.

Academics and practitioners share the same opinion that embracing digital marketplace rules (Pascucci et al., 2023) and engaging in a full range of Internet marketing activities is a necessity for companies across all industries (Conti et al., 2023; Kartajaya et al., 2016). Recent research encourages utilization of digital tools and company's website for

highlighting their engagement in corporate social responsibility. The active participation of companies in environmental oriented initiatives can be accompanied by target strategies to promote green consumption (Sun et al., 2022).

However, scholars agree that the implications of internet marketing are manifold and vary according to industries. For a long time, B2B manufacturers have relied on traditional marketing strategies and methods. Lately, the benefits achieved by companies in the most advanced sectors have encouraged the interest and commitment of manufacturing companies in the use of digital tools to support the marketing function.

Grubor and Jaksa (2018), based on a vast literature on recent marketing developments affirm that internet marketing (or online marketing) is a subset of digital marketing. It is the main component of digital marketing, and it exploits mainly internet channels for the promotion of brands. Considering that a website is a starting point in the internet marketing campaign and communication with customers (Chris, 2017), the analysis of the website becomes a key part of this process.

Research highlights the role of a well-designed website both for users and the company itself. The key contributions are in terms of sales and marketing, as well as in establishing an image and reputation for the company. The advantages companies can have from using their website and internet marketing are related to informative, strategic, and operational marketing activities (Kotler, 2004). There are several means businesses can take advantage of a functional website:

- They can collect information about the market and buyers to support market segmentation, diversification, and complementation of products following their marketing policy objectives.
- It enables customers and consumers to explore the market and easily find information on the variety of products, becoming their first choice, while permitting the company to obtain information about customer satisfaction after purchasing experience.
- The most experienced customers get the opportunity to participate in innovation and the creation of new products, through dialogue with the company. It facilitates the needs and demand recognition from the company side, contributing to a better fulfillment of demand and customization options.
- It allows businesses to reduce and/or eliminate costs associated with commercial mediation, using specific e-commerce tools to easily identify end users.

According to surveys conducted during the last years, when a company has carefully designed its website, ensuring that it loads quickly, and has a good content strategy, it has generated trust in the eyes of those who visit the company's website (Kuzic et al., 2010). A company's website that is easy to navigate and provides a positive user experience can highly contribute to retaining visitors and potentially converting them into customers. Moreover, it facilitates the development of long-term customer relationships alongside communication, contributing to the success of sales work (Barthelt, 2024). In a fast-changing business and technology landscape, companies should make sure their websites provide opportunities for improvement. According to a study by Seyedghorban et al., (2019) and the survey by Veseli-Kurtishi (2024) in the context of an emerging economy in our region (quite similar to our economy in terms of digital advancement), the development and optimization of SME websites contribute to increased online visibility, credibility, and customer trust. Wang and Vaughan (2014) recommend that managers should actively monitor and use website visibility as a web management measure in practice. Moreover, they can use website references as a valuable tool for marketing success.

Inbound and outbound marketing utilize different strategies and instruments to reach the objectives companies have (or should determine) while carrying out their activity, in different markets (Sweetwood, 2016). Inbound marketing is generally focused on showing up for people who are searching for what you offer. From this point of view, it is more suitable for the B2B manufacturing industry. With inbound marketing, companies can create website content that's purposely tailored to the best prospective customers' needs, challenges, and pain points. Inbound marketing, as one of the basic Internet marketing strategies, has some major channels: Web Site, Search Engine Marketing, Social Media Marketing, Content Marketing, E-mail Marketing, Mobile Marketing, and Banner Advertising. Such channels can be wisely and effectively used to draw the customers onto the company's website while they're searching for a product or a solution. On the other side, outbound activities can be a good complement to inbound digital marketing in the manufacturing domain.

Despite the type of marketing manufacturers choose the success of digital or internet marketing will depend on their overall marketing plan and goals. The investment made in the marketing instruments will take a long time to return unless the company starts with clearly defined goals, making them specific, measurable, and attainable.

The website of the company can become an effective instrument serving the marketing and general strategy of the business, by being more than just an “online location”.

3. Research Methodology - Materials and Methods

The use of information technology in Albanian business has taken place in official reports starting from 2015 (INSTAT, 2016). The main indicators recorded in businesses with more than 10 employees include the number of companies that use computers for work purposes, the number of employees that perform tasks with computers, companies that have websites, those that use social media, and those making online sales. The comparison of these indicators for the period from 2015 to 2023 based on INSTAT reports (2023) shows growth and differences in the advancement towards the use of information technology, especially according to industries. In 2015, 95.0% of enterprises with 10+ employees used a computer for work purposes, while in 2023 this indicator increased to 99.1%. The number of employees who use a computer for work purposes in these enterprises has increased from 24.4% in 2015 to 29.9% in 2023. In 2015, 48.8% of the enterprises had a website, while social media was used by 37.4% of enterprises. Large enterprises with more than 250 employees were those that generally had web pages or had used social media. In 2023, the website is active and available in 54.9% of enterprises that use a computer with Internet access.

Over the years, these indicators for the manufacturing industry and construction have been at lower levels. In 2023, about 48% of enterprises in the manufacturing industry have a website, being among the last ranked sectors for this indicator and online sales through websites and applications according to INSTAT (2023). Beyond these statistical data, studies have evidenced greater advancement in the digitalization of the banking industry (Pano and Angjeli, 2023) and the tourism sector (Gjika and Pano, 2020). Meanwhile, in Albanian manufacturing SMEs there is ambiguity and a lack of achieving a certain and measurable goal through investments in the field of marketing, especially the digital one (Zhezha et al., 2023; Shyle and Rrupli, 2022). The deficiencies in the managerial education of company leaders, limited marketing budgets, and limited experience in the use of information technology might be the main reason for this situation. It becomes obvious even on company's websites, which can serve better as an overview of the company's strategy, objectives and operational and marketing policies.

Stemming from this overview of information systems and digital tools utilization, the following research question is formulated: How do Albanian manufacturing businesses evaluate the role of website and internet marketing in their performance in the current competitive market?

Two auxiliary questions are added to support the observation and to answer the main research question.

- How are manufacturing SME websites performing in terms of their technical features?
- At what level do these businesses use websites and internet tools for the management and marketing of their activity?

Research has followed the multiple case study methodology (Eisenhardt, 1989; Andrews, 2021), to carry out an exploratory analysis of the website used by SMEs in different manufacturing sectors. Designing and using the website of a manufacturing company is a complex issue and can affect the company's activity in many ways. Therefore, a qualitative analysis is more suitable to highlight the features of the examined cases (Yin, 2018). According to Dul and Hak (2008), the case study approach allows investigation of the details and reasons for the actions and decisions taken, leading to a comprehensive understanding of the results achieved. In the case of this study, the qualitative analysis enables the evaluation of the website to demonstrate its effectiveness in the field of communication and the opportunities it offers for the implementation of certain marketing levers.

We do emphasize that this paper is part of a wider study on Smart Information Systems in Albanian manufacturing SMEs, which has researched the use of these systems in the entire activity of the companies participating in the project (NASRI, 2023). The following presentation of the study includes only the analysis of the digital systems that companies use to achieve their objectives in the field of digital marketing.

Research is based on primary data collected through in-depth and semi-structured interviews done in face-to-face meetings with individuals who had key managerial roles in the companies, despite their professional backgrounds.

Website design and enrichment process requires a combination of strategy recognition with information technology skills and competencies, and it normally should involve management, marketing, IT and other expertise. Especially in SMEs, the top managers (who in many cases are also the business owners in Albanian companies) are generally responsible and decision-making persons regarding the website content, functionality, and connections with the other information systems installed in the company. From this point of view, they are the most reliable and knowledgeable people in terms of the company's perception and level of using websites for operational and marketing aims.

As to the type of interviews, the semi-structured ones are used, because they better fit to explorative nature of the study. According to Yin (2018), they permit to keep a structured approach in all interviews, while also leaving space for interviewees to freely talk about their experiences and opinions.

The interviews were carried out on the company's premises, in the presence of one or more participants from their top management. They were also accompanied by visits to the production facilities so that the research group could fully understand the way the business operates, to what extent they are using digital technologies, and figure out the opportunities for smart improvements in all the areas included in the study.

The main aspects of the interview included: what objectives the company wanted to achieve with its website, how it had selected the information uploaded on the website, how often the website was revised and enriched, and how the website use and feedback was integrated with business activity.

The secondary data was collected from articles in journals and other periodical publications, reports of specialized institutions, and especially from the company's website. The website analysis was carried out by exploring and appraising the key technical features which determine website quality: accessibility, speed, navigability, best practice and those of managerial sort like contact details, useful information, content, mission statement, freebies, and first impressions (Kuzic et al., 2010; Forbes, 2018).

The analysis focused on the main characteristics of a website for SMEs in the manufacturing sector that carry out business-to-business (B2B), mainly revealing:

- How is the architecture of the website: is it a well-designed layout, with elements such as easy navigation to facilitate its use? Does it employ a logical site structure and an easy-to-understand menu?
- How is the content of the website, in terms of the type of information it contains, the content and quality of texts and articles? Are they easy to understand and beneficial for visitors? High-quality, informative content is the foundation of a successful business website.
- How detailed is the information about the products and services offered by the business? Product catalogs with detailed information facilitate the recognition of the business offer and allow the customer to recognize the brand identity.
- Does the website is reachable from any digital device? A website optimized for desktop, iOS, Android phones and tablet usage increases the chances for a higher number and frequency of visits from interested stakeholders.
- How capable is a company's website to communicate with customers and implement marketing policies through it, in the case of B2B companies?

In order to answer the research questions raised above, a sample of enterprises was selected. They meet these criteria:
- they belong to the small-and-medium enterprises group, employing more than 10 employees, having consolidated structures and activity since some years, and have functional website. In Albania, only 7.3% of all companies employ more than 10 persons (Business Registers, INSTAT, 2023).

- their factories are located in Tirana - Durres region, where 57.1% of all Albanian companies are located. This is the region where 49.2% of all industrial companies are carrying out their activity. Such a concentration of companies makes the region appropriate for the survey.

- they belong to manufacturing sectors (non-ferrous metal, paper, plastic recycling and production, furniture production, food processing, etc.) and market B2B. Industry branch in Albania is made up of 7.4% of all companies. Choosing SMEs from manufacturing sectors enables us to provide a clear picture of the current situation while considering different sectors, as well as different needs and criticalities from the perspective of website use and internet marketing. Business-to-consumer (B2C) trading companies are outside the scope of our study, as they are generally more inclined to use technologies for direct communication with customers and doing online sales.

Although the analysis has been conducted at a regional level, the findings are significant as this area is the densest region in Albania by the number of industrial companies carrying out the activity and engaging a high proportion of employees (63.4% of companies with more than 10 employees).

The study included ten SMEs that met the above conditions and agreed to cooperate with the research group to be part of a multiple case study.

Each case was thoroughly studied to obtain insights into the perceived and actual performance of website and internet marketing. The findings and recommendations were provided to each company participating in the study. Then, the cases were compared to analyze similarities and differences, gain a richer understanding of the phenomenon, and provide general recommendations applicable to a broad range of SMEs in similar conditions.

4. Results

The diagnosis of the website of manufacturing companies showed a generally satisfactory situation regarding the technical features that affect the navigation and use of the website. However, significant challenges still exist, particularly in technical performance, user experience, and cyber security.

There are some findings regarding the technical parameters that enable the evaluation of website performance for the observed companies. The main ones are summarized below:

- Technical performance issues are a common challenge for many websites, especially slow loading speeds. These problems are more noticeable when accessed via mobile devices, often due to heavy graphics, unoptimized code, poor server performance, and large media files. Slow load times lead to a frustrating user experience, higher bounce rates, and reduced traffic. Given the dominance of mobile browsing, optimizing for mobile performance is essential.
- Website accessibility seems to be a low priority for companies, as few websites meet global accessibility standards, and diagnostics show limited support for users with disabilities.
- There are diagnosed problems regarding content formatting, readability, and information hierarchy. Some websites fail to organize content effectively, making it difficult for users to find what they need quickly and necessarily reducing the trust and security of these websites. According to statistics, nearly nine out of 10 online users won't revisit a website if they have a negative experience on it (Forbes, 2024). This reinforces the need for designing a smooth and user-friendly website for users so that it makes a positive impact on potential customers of the company.

Figure 1 displays a summary of the website analysis of ten SMEs in terms of technical indicators in response to the first auxiliary question of the study. Due to varied confidentiality concerns expressed by some of the participants, we have decided to avoid mentioning the company's names in this publication. We have named them "website", followed by a number.

The detailed analysis of some parameters of the website's operation is accompanied by findings at the company level and enables the generalization of suggestions for a wider target of similar SMEs in the manufacturing industry.

There is variability in terms of website performance, as shown in Figure 2, a. There are several "best performers" achieving high scores (85 and 86), showing that they are well optimized. These sites have fast loading times, good compatibility with mobile devices, and high security, and represent examples of best practices in website development and maintenance. The "good performers" range between 62 and 74, suggesting that although they perform well, there is still room for improvement. Detailed diagnostics have revealed minor flaws such as unoptimized images, moderate server response times, or content not updated. The "low-level performers" (38 to 50) face significant performance challenges. Diagnostics of these sites revealed issues such as slow page loading, poor mobile optimization, lack of security features, and poor user experience. The recommendations for this category are to improve loading speed, increase accessibility, and ensure that sites meet modern web standards.

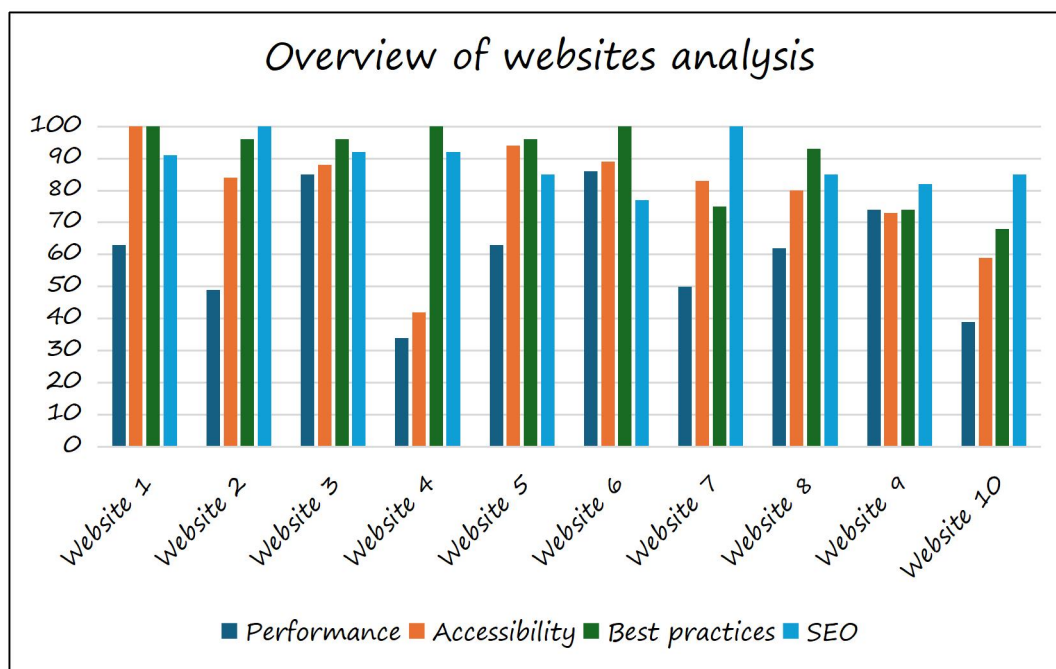


Figure 1: General view of website analysis

In general, Albanian manufacturing SMEs have limited capacities in human resources for the design and maintenance of the website, so they get such service from companies or individuals specialized in the field of IT and marketing. Consequently, the above analysis helped SMEs to understand what they should look for from specialists when subcontracting website services. Requests may include improving hosting services, optimizing on-page elements such as images and scripts, improving design for mobile devices, and applying better SEO strategies.

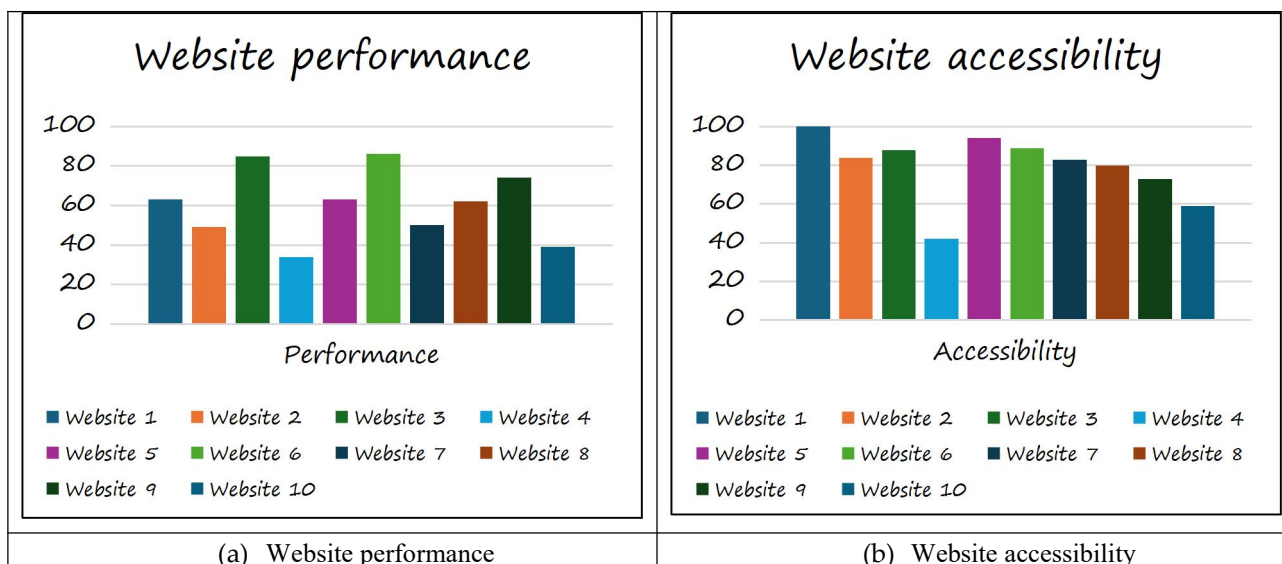


Figure 2: Presentation of website assessment

Accessibility is generally presented at good levels, with one company reaching maximum points (100) and several others reaching values above 85, which reflects a high level of compliance with accessibility standards (Figure 2, b). Meanwhile, the poor performers (scores below 60) have major accessibility issues, including poor color contrast, lack of alt text, or non-compliance with WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines).

Following industry best practices, such as the use of secure protocols, the correct implementation of modern web standards and the consistent implementation of accessibility features is evident in some of the cases studied (Figure 3, a). The best performers have achieved the maximum score of 100, while some websites have good scores (over 80),

indicating that they have minor problems such as outdated information, security warnings, or inefficient coding patterns. Poor performers need improvement. Potential issues may include unoptimized media, poor SEO (Search engine optimization) practices, or poor performance on mobile devices, which should be addressed to improve user experience and site reliability.

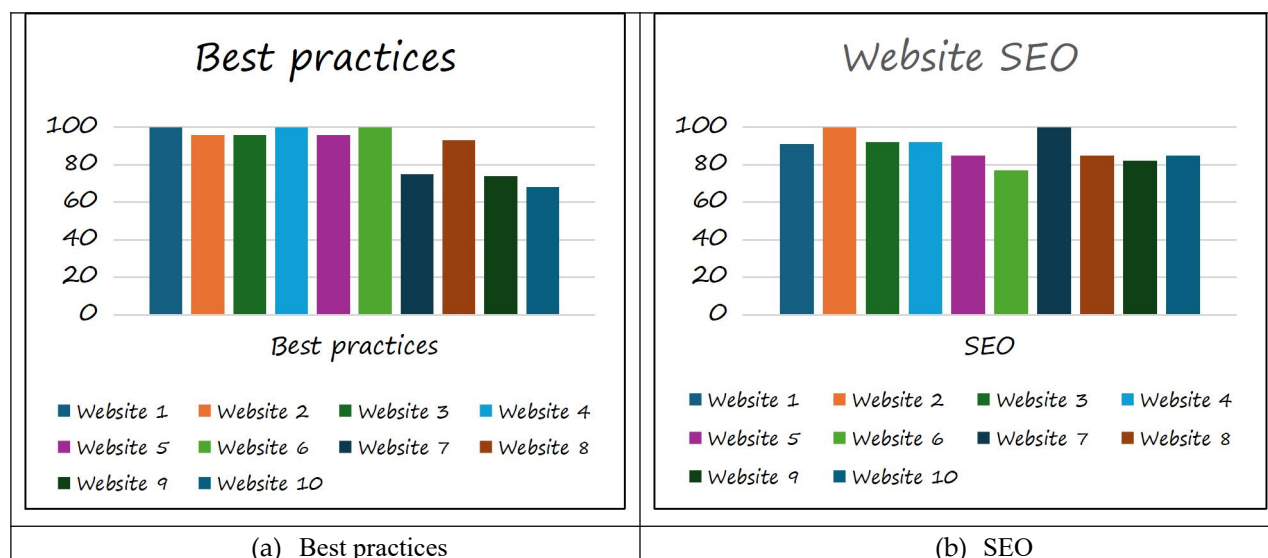


Figure 3: Presentation of website parameters

SEO and user experience are closely tied. Consequently, websites scoring high levels (above 95) show excellent SEO practices, such as strong use of keywords, optimized meta tags (keyword-rich titles and meta descriptions), and a clear page structure that increases visibility in engines of search and drives users' interest in the company. Although most companies have good results and none of the sites have critically low results (Figure 3, b), there is still room for improvement in the technical aspects of SEO, such as adaptability for mobile devices, improving alt tags, optimized URLs and refining content for better search engine rankings.

5. Discussion

The reasoning for the level of functionality of the website to support the management and marketing of the company's activity was based on interviews with the managers and the analysis of the websites. The specific field of activity greatly affects the content of the website, making it difficult to compare content elements between websites. Still, some of the common elements were easily identified and are mentioned below.

In all the websites analyzed it is noticed that the visitor can easily perceive a section dedicated to the history of the company, as well as a site structure that takes into account the main rules of communication with the public. In some cases, videos were carefully used to display the technological process. This proves the awareness of managers to highlight the development and growth of their companies, considering this as a strong point in the competitiveness analysis. However, only in very few cases do Albanian companies make visible the general economic data, such as the turnover or the assets they own. When asked about this, the leaders of the companies consider it sensitive information. In general, in Albanian businesses, financial transparency is still not perceived as a competence that can strengthen their competitive advantages.

Although the companies have established organizational structures, the website provides very little information about them and the points of contact with the functional divisions within the company. This was argued by the interviewees with the care to centralize all contacts and communications with customers and potential suppliers at the top management level. Such a trend is understandable in the case of small companies, but at the same time it, can delay the response time to the requests of visitors, overload people in management positions and prevent the recognition of the real production capacities of the company.

In most cases the products section contains superficial information, focused mainly on names and pictures. The product description does not fully highlight the technical specifications, which are the key to making the difference with the competitors. Now the website and internet marketing can present products in virtual form and replace all those sizeable

product catalogs that were previously distributed in hard copy format. Digital technologies enable companies to present their products with detailed information, facilitating their full recognition by potential customers. Except for the cases of trade secret protection, other products and services information exposed in an appropriate way (high-quality content) on the website would help companies reach their targets. This was one of the suggestions given to the companies during the communication after the website analysis.

In a broader context of the use of smart information systems, the connection between the website and the programs that can be used to analyze sales indicators or for direct communication with customers was generally missing. The website has no direct role in communication with the suppliers either. The installation and use of advanced resource management systems (like ERP) was not yet part of the company's plans or was even unknown in some cases.

There are several limitations of this study, which can become opportunities for future research.

-The case study method itself, as well as the limited number of companies investigated makes it difficult to generalize the results. The observation in a larger sample and the expansion of the research scope can be carried out in the future.

-Despite our efforts to include companies from different sectors in the survey, the industry has many other sub-sectors that have been left out of observation. This hinders taking into consideration the specific characteristics some of the industry sub-sectors have.

-An interesting direction could be the measurement of the effectiveness of marketing internet investments, which the method used in this study did not allow. It can be a field of research for the future to give answers to the concerns expressed by businesses during our observation that they find it difficult to invest in information systems when the economic benefits from them are not known exactly.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to investigate how manufacturing companies evaluate the role of website and internet marketing in their activity. The study was carried out following the case study method, analyzing the use of the website in some Albanian SMEs in terms of technical and managerial elements. Some of the main findings are:

- Despite the size and the sector where they develop activity, there is an awareness of SMEs for increasing the level of digitalization both in production processes and in using information systems to support company management. While there is progress in terms of awareness and digital presence, consistent implementation of modern web standards, regular updates, and investments in better infrastructure are required for further improvements.

- The website is perceived as an important component of the company's presentation and online presence, but it is mainly used for public impression and general information. It has the capacity to be used for designing promotional or marketing policies and to develop relationships with clients at the appropriate level. This makes it necessary to change the businesses' perception on the effectiveness of the digitalization of their management systems.

- There is a commitment and investment from businesses for their websites. Websites are in continuous development, have periodic maintenance, and improvement and in terms of technical performance are at satisfactory levels. However, the diagnostics of these websites show a landscape where there is still room for improvement in several key areas. Technical performance, security, SEO, and user experience are common challenges identified through diagnostics. The results suggest that a consistent and methodical approach to web diagnostics and optimization can significantly improve digital content.

The importance of this study is twofold and stems from the nature of the project that made it possible. First, the study explored the role of the website in the companies participating in the project, did offer specialized consulting in marketing and IT and gave concrete recommendations to each one. This enables participating companies to understand and plan measures to improve marketing functions, especially using digital systems and tools. Although the study is based on a small number of cases and not on much quantitative data, it evidences findings that can be generalized for companies in the manufacturing sectors.

The dissemination of the survey results within the framework of the project to other companies in the sector helps them to be informed and encouraged towards the design and use of their website in alignment with strategic objectives and marketing policies. This is one of the practical implications of the study.

Secondly, the study contributes to the enrichment of the literature in the field of digital marketing and strategic management, due to the literature review and real situations of the Albanian business it provides. The originality of the

work lies in the fact that it is one of the first observations made in the Albanian business that focuses on the website role and handles it as a multifunctional instrument that combines the advantages of IT and marketing.

By all means, highlighting the theoretical and practical dimensions of internet marketing and digital advancement is relevant and can contribute to the SME's competitiveness and success.

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