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The Integration of Strategic Management and Digital Marketing in
Enhancing Overall Business PerformanceFatima Ezzahra Mnajli¹, Hind Benkirane², El Khalil El Mountassir³, Youness Amahrouss⁴, Zineb Aboulhouda⁵, Nadia Loubbardi², and Redouane Kaiss*⁵¹Research Laboratory in Managerial Transformation and Innovation, National School of Business and Management, Hassan 1st University, Settat 26000, Morocco²Laboratory for Interdisciplinary Research in Law, Economics, and Business Management, Faculty of Economics and Management, Hassan II University, Ain Chock, Casablanca 21100, Morocco³ESCA School of Management, Casablanca 21100, Morocco⁴Research Laboratory in Management and Development, Faculty of Economics and Management, Hassan 1st University, Settat 26000, Morocco⁵Research Laboratory in Economics, Management, and Business Administration, Faculty of Economics and Management, Hassan 1st University, Settat 26000, Morocco

Abstract

In an increasingly digitalized and highly competitive business environment, organizations are required to strategically integrate digital tools into their management systems to enhance both competitiveness and long-term sustainability. This study examines the impact of integrating strategic management and digital marketing on overall organizational performance, with particular emphasis on their complementary and synergistic roles. A quantitative research design was employed, using a structured questionnaire administered to a sample of 200 medium- and large-sized enterprises operating across diverse sectors. The collected data were analyzed using multiple linear regression techniques with SPSS version 23, complemented by correlation analysis and diagnostic testing to ensure robustness. The findings indicate that strategic management is significantly associated with organizational performance ($\beta = 0.40$, $p < 0.001$ in a simple regression model), highlighting its central role in guiding organizational direction and resource allocation. Digital marketing practices also demonstrate a strong positive relationship with performance ($\beta = 0.35$, $p < 0.001$), reflecting their importance in enhancing customer engagement, market reach, and operational efficiency. Furthermore, the results suggest that strategic alignment strengthens the effectiveness of digital marketing initiatives, reinforcing the importance of integrating digital tools within a coherent strategic framework. The model explains a substantial proportion of the variance in organizational performance ($R^2 = 0.62$), indicating strong explanatory power. This study contributes to the literature by proposing and empirically supporting an integrated framework in which strategic management and digital marketing act as complementary drivers of financial, operational, and customer-related performance. Practical insights are also provided for managers seeking to leverage digital transformation through strategic alignment. Future research directions are proposed to further explore mediating and moderating mechanisms.

Keywords: Strategic Management; Digital Marketing; Organizational Performance; Strategic Alignment; Digital Transformation; Business Performance

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1. Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technologies over the past two decades has fundamentally reshaped the global business landscape. The emergence of big data analytics, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, social media platforms, and mobile technologies has transformed the way organizations operate, compete, and create value. Markets have become more dynamic, customer expectations more sophisticated, and competition increasingly globalized [1, 2]. In this context, digital transformation is no longer perceived as a technological upgrade but as a comprehensive strategic shift that affects organizational structures, processes, and business models [3, 4]. Organizations today face unprecedented pressure to innovate continuously and respond rapidly to environmental changes. Traditional sources of competitive advantage, such as scale economies or physical assets, are being complemented, and in some cases replaced, by digital capabilities, agility, and data-driven decision-making [5, 6]. Consequently, firms must integrate digital technologies not only at the operational level but also within their strategic frameworks to remain competitive and sustainable in the long term.

Strategic management plays a crucial role in guiding organizations through this complex environment. It involves defining long-term objectives, analyzing internal and external environments, allocating resources efficiently, and ensuring alignment between organizational capabilities and market opportunities. According to Porter's competitive strategy theory [7], firms achieve superior performance by creating distinctive positions within their industries. However, in the digital era, achieving such positioning increasingly depends on how effectively organizations incorporate digital tools into their strategic architecture [6]. Simultaneously, digital marketing has emerged as a powerful mechanism for customer engagement, brand development, and market expansion. Unlike traditional marketing, digital marketing enables real-time interaction, personalized communication, performance tracking, and data analytics [8, 9]. Through tools such as social media platforms, search engine optimization (SEO), online advertising, and content marketing, companies can build closer relationships with customers and enhance responsiveness to market trends. Despite the recognized importance of both strategic management and digital marketing, many organizations struggle to integrate these domains effectively. In numerous cases, digital marketing initiatives are implemented independently of the overall strategic plan. Such fragmentation often results in inconsistent brand messaging, duplication of efforts, inefficient allocation of financial resources, and limited return on investment. Without strategic alignment, digital efforts may fail to contribute meaningfully to organizational performance [10, 11].

The concept of strategic alignment, as emphasized by Venkatraman [12], underscores the need for coherence between business strategy and technological infrastructure. Extending this perspective, digital marketing should not be treated as a standalone function but rather as an integral component of corporate strategy. When properly aligned, digital marketing initiatives can reinforce strategic objectives, enhance operational efficiency, and support long-term growth [13, 14]. Moreover, integrating strategic management with digital marketing can generate synergies. Strategic management provides direction, prioritization, and governance, while digital marketing offers tools for execution, customer engagement, and performance measurement. Together, they form a complementary system that enhances financial performance, operational efficiency, and customer satisfaction [15–17]. However, empirical research examining the combined effect of these two domains remains relatively limited. While prior studies have explored the impact of strategic management on performance and others have analyzed digital marketing effectiveness, fewer studies have investigated their integrated influence on overall organizational performance. This gap calls for a comprehensive empirical investigation. Therefore, this study seeks to answer the following central research question: *How does the integration of strategic management and digital marketing influence overall organizational performance?*

To address this question, the study pursues the following objectives:

1. To examine the impact of strategic management on organizational performance.
2. To evaluate the influence of digital marketing practices on overall performance.
3. To analyze the complementary and interactive effects of integrating strategic management and digital marketing.

Based on theoretical foundations and prior empirical findings, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- **H1:** Strategic management has a significant positive relationship with organizational performance.
- **H2:** Digital marketing is positively associated with organizational performance.
- **H3:** Strategic management has a significant positive relationship with digital marketing effectiveness.

By empirically testing these hypotheses, this research aims to contribute to the literature on digital transformation and strategic alignment while providing actionable insights for managers seeking to enhance organizational performance in the digital era.

1.1. Literature Review

Strategic management is the process by which organizations define long-term objectives, analyze internal and external environments, formulate strategies, and implement actions to achieve sustainable competitive advantage. Henderson and Venkatraman [12] proposed a strategic alignment model emphasizing that performance improves when corporate strategy, organizational infrastructure, and technological capabilities are mutually consistent and reinforcing. Strategic management enables firms to anticipate environmental changes, respond to competitive pressures, and allocate resources efficiently. By systematically analyzing industry forces, competitors, and internal strengths and weaknesses, organizations can position themselves advantageously in the marketplace. Clear strategic direction also enhances decision-making processes and reduces uncertainty in dynamic environments [18].

In the digital era, strategic management has evolved to incorporate technological transformation as a core component of business models. Firms are no longer competing solely on physical assets but increasingly on knowledge, innovation, and digital capabilities. As highlighted by Warner and Wäger [19, 20], organizations that develop dynamic capabilities for digital transformation are better equipped to renew their resources and sustain competitive advantage over time. Dynamic capabilities allow firms to sense opportunities, seize them effectively, and transform their operations accordingly. Effective strategic management also promotes organizational agility. Agile firms can rapidly adapt strategies in response to technological disruptions or shifting customer preferences. This adaptability directly influences operational efficiency, innovation performance, and long-term profitability. Moreover, strategic clarity fosters employee alignment, ensuring that individual and departmental objectives support the overarching corporate goals [21, 22].

Empirical research consistently demonstrates a positive relationship between strategic planning intensity and organizational performance. Companies with well-defined visions and structured implementation processes tend to achieve higher financial returns and stronger market positioning. Therefore, strategic management remains a foundational driver of sustainable organizational performance.

Digital marketing refers to the use of digital technologies and online platforms to promote products, services, and brands. It includes practices such as social media marketing, content marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), email marketing, and online advertising. According to Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick [23], digital marketing integrates technological tools with strategic communication to create customer value and enhance competitive positioning. The rapid expansion of internet access and mobile technologies has transformed how organizations interact with customers. Digital platforms enable real-time communication, personalized messaging, and data-driven decision-making. Research by Trainor et al. [24] demonstrates that the effective use of social media technologies significantly improves customer relationship performance by increasing engagement, trust, and responsiveness. Social CRM capabilities strengthen long-term customer loyalty and satisfaction.

Furthermore, Bharadwaj et al. [25] argue that digital business strategy represents the fusion of IT strategy and business strategy. This integration enhances innovation, operational efficiency, and revenue generation. Digital marketing contributes to value creation by expanding market reach, reducing transaction costs, and enabling targeted campaigns based on customer analytics. Digital marketing also provides measurable performance indicators such as click-through rates, conversion rates, and customer acquisition costs. These metrics allow managers to evaluate campaign effectiveness and adjust strategies accordingly. The ability to collect and analyze large volumes of customer data enhances strategic decision-making and improves return on investment.

Several empirical studies indicate that firms investing in digital marketing capabilities achieve higher brand visibility, improved customer engagement, and stronger financial performance. By leveraging digital channels, organizations can differentiate themselves and build sustainable relationships with their target audiences.

While strategic management provides overall direction, digital marketing serves as a powerful execution mechanism within that strategy. The integration of these two domains ensures that digital initiatives are not isolated activities but are aligned with corporate objectives and long-term vision. According to Vial [26], digital transformation generates value when technological adoption is embedded within a coherent strategic framework. Without strategic alignment, digital investments may lead to fragmented initiatives and limited performance impact. Conversely, when digital marketing strategies are guided by clear organizational goals, operational efficiency and market responsiveness are enhanced [26, 27].

Strategic integration facilitates better coordination between top management and marketing teams. It ensures that digital campaigns support corporate positioning, brand identity, and competitive strategy. This alignment strengthens communication consistency and improves the organization's customer perception [28, 29]. Moreover, the integration approach supports long-term value creation rather than short-term tactical gains. Digital marketing effectiveness often mediates the relationship between strategic management and performance outcomes. A well-formulated strategy enhances digital execution, which in turn drives financial growth, operational excellence, and customer satisfaction [30, 31].

Organizations that successfully integrate strategic management and digital marketing consistently outperform competitors on both financial and non-financial indicators. Higher innovation capacity, stronger customer loyalty, and improved adaptability to environmental change are achieved. Therefore, strategic alignment between management processes and digital marketing practices constitutes a critical determinant of overall business performance [32].

1.2. Conceptual Model

The conceptual model proposed in this study explains the causal relationship between strategic management, digital marketing effectiveness, and overall business performance. It is assumed that strategic management serves as a foundational driver that shapes and strengthens digital marketing effectiveness, which, in turn, directly influences overall organizational performance.

To provide a clear representation of the theoretical framework, the conceptual model is presented in Figure 1. The model illustrates the hypothesized relationships among strategic management, digital marketing, and organizational performance. Strategic management is posited to directly influence organizational performance and, indirectly, to affect performance through digital marketing effectiveness, which serves as a mediating variable.

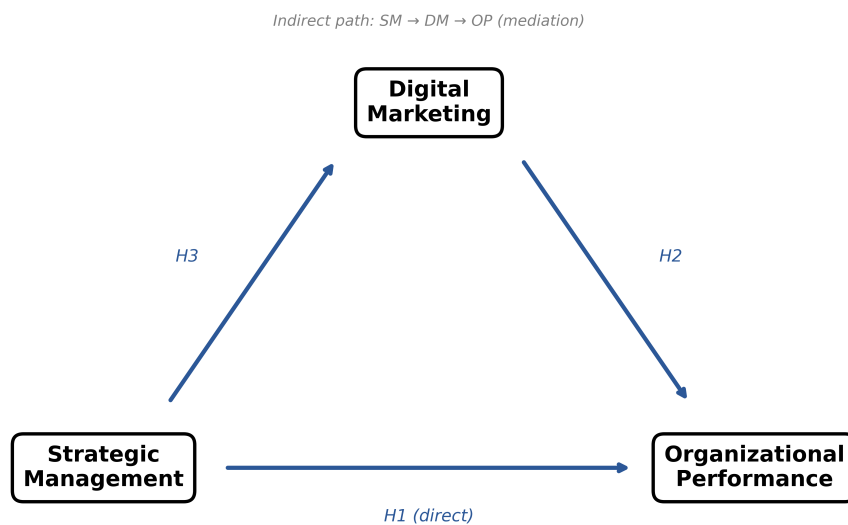


Figure 1: Conceptual model illustrating the hypothesized relationships among strategic management, digital marketing effectiveness, and overall organizational performance.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Population and Sample

The study was conducted in Morocco, targeting firms across major economic regions. A carefully selected sample of 200 medium- and large-sized enterprises operating across various industrial sectors, including services, manufacturing, and trade, was surveyed. The inclusion criteria focused on companies that had adopted some level of digital marketing activities and had formalized strategic management practices. The sample selection was purposive to ensure that the included firms could provide meaningful insights into the relationships among strategic management, digital marketing effectiveness, and overall business performance.

The sample represents diverse industries, providing a broad understanding of how strategic and digital initiatives interact in different organizational contexts. Medium-sized enterprises were defined as organizations with 50 to 250 employees, while large enterprises included firms with more than 250 employees. This distinction allows for the examination of possible differences in strategy and marketing integration across organizational scales.

Demographic characteristics of the participating companies were recorded, including sector, number of employees, annual revenue, and duration of operations. This information provided context for interpreting the results and enabled the identification of patterns and trends across different types of enterprises.

A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure the inclusion of firms capable of providing relevant insights into the integration of strategic management and digital marketing. The sampling frame was constructed using professional business directories and industry networks. A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed via email and online survey platforms to senior managers, marketing directors, and strategy officers. Of these, 200 valid responses were received, resulting in a response rate of 66.7%.

The study covered major economic regions within Morocco. This geographic scope ensures diversity in economic activities and organizational practices. Although the sampling approach was non-probabilistic, efforts were made to ensure sectoral diversity and representation across firm sizes and industries. Therefore, while the findings provide valuable insights into the relationships among strategic management, digital marketing, and organizational performance, any generalization of the results should be limited to contexts similar to the study.

A demographic analysis was conducted to describe the sample's characteristics. Firms were distributed across sectors, including services (45%), manufacturing (30%), and trade (25%). Regarding firm size, 60% were medium-sized enterprises and 40% were large firms. Additional ANOVA analysis indicated no significant differences in performance across sectors, suggesting that the results are not biased by industry effects.

2.2. Data Collection Instrument

To capture relevant information, a structured questionnaire was developed based on validated scales from previous research in strategic management and digital marketing. The questionnaire consisted of three main sections corresponding to the study's variables: strategic management implementation, digital marketing practices, and overall business performance.

The first section measured the level of strategic management implementation. It included items related to goal setting, strategic planning, resource allocation, objective monitoring, and alignment of strategy with organizational goals. Respondents were asked to evaluate the extent to which strategic practices were formalized and consistently applied in their organization. These items were adapted from established strategic management scales to ensure reliability and validity.

The second section focused on digital marketing practices. This included questions on the use of social media platforms for engagement, SEO strategies, content marketing approaches, email marketing campaigns, and other online promotional activities. The purpose was to evaluate both the scope and effectiveness of digital marketing initiatives. Questions were designed to capture whether digital marketing efforts were integrated with broader organizational objectives, reflecting the strategic alignment of digital initiatives.

The third section assessed overall business performance, encompassing financial, operational, and customer-related outcomes. Financial performance indicators included revenue growth, profitability, and return on investment. Operational performance was measured through efficiency, productivity, and cost management. Customer-related measures focused on satisfaction, loyalty, and perceived value. This comprehensive measurement ensured that performance was evaluated holistically rather than solely on financial metrics.

The measurement items used in this study were adapted from established and validated scales in the literature. Strategic management was measured using items adapted from the strategic planning and alignment scales developed by Kaplan and Norton [33], which have been further applied in strategic alignment research. Digital marketing effectiveness was assessed using items adapted from digital marketing capability and technology adoption scales proposed by Bharadwaj et al. [25] and Trainor et al. [24]. Organizational performance was measured using multidimensional performance indicators adapted from Venkatraman and Ramanujam [34], which were later validated in management research. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). All constructs were measured using multiple Likert-scale items, and composite scores were computed by averaging the corresponding items before regression and graphical analysis. This scaling allowed for quantitative analysis and comparison across the sample, and also facilitated the capture of managers' subjective perceptions of the effectiveness of strategic management and digital marketing initiatives.

Before administration, the questionnaire was pretested with a small subset of firms to ensure clarity, reliability, and comprehensibility. Feedback from the pretest led to minor adjustments in wording and sequencing to reduce ambiguity and enhance response accuracy. The adapted scales were reviewed for content validity and slightly modified to fit the context of this study. The questionnaire was then distributed through email and online survey platforms to senior managers, marketing directors, and strategy officers. These respondents were considered most knowledgeable about their organization's strategic and digital practices, and follow-up communications ensured a high response rate and data completeness.

Table 1 reports the reliability and validity of the constructs. Cronbach’s alpha values exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating internal consistency. Composite reliability (CR) values are above 0.80, and average variance extracted (AVE) values exceed 0.50, confirming convergent validity. These results demonstrate the robustness of the measurement model.

Table 1: Reliability and Validity of Items

Construct	Items	Cronbach α	CR	AVE
SM	5	0.88	0.90	0.65
DM	5	0.86	0.89	0.62
OP	6	0.89	0.91	0.67

Organizational performance was measured using a multidimensional approach, including financial (profitability, revenue growth), operational (efficiency, productivity), and customer-related indicators (satisfaction and loyalty). This comprehensive approach ensures a balanced assessment of firm performance.

2.3. Data Analysis Method

Data collected from the 200 firms were systematically entered into SPSS version 23 for statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, minimums, and maximums, were calculated for each variable to provide an overview of the sample characteristics and response trends. This preliminary analysis helped identify patterns and potential outliers.

To test the hypothesized relationships, a multiple linear regression analysis using the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) method was employed. Strategic management and digital marketing practices were treated as independent variables, while overall business performance was the dependent variable.

Before conducting regression, diagnostic tests were performed to ensure that the data met the assumptions of linear regression, including normality, homoscedasticity, multicollinearity, and independence of residuals. These tests ensured the validity and reliability of the regression results.

The regression model provided estimates of coefficients (B), standardized coefficients (β), t -values, and significance levels (p -values), allowing for the assessment of the strength and significance of relationships. A significance level of 0.05 was adopted for hypothesis testing.

Additionally, a correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among strategic management, digital marketing effectiveness, and performance. This provided initial insights into the direction and strength of associations before proceeding with regression analysis.

In addition to multiple regression analysis, a mediation analysis was conducted to test the indirect effect of strategic management on organizational performance through digital marketing. Following the approach of Baron and Kenny [35], three regression equations were estimated:

$$OP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SM + \varepsilon \tag{1}$$

Equation (1) examines the direct relationship between strategic management and organizational performance. The coefficient β_1 represents the extent to which strategic management is associated with performance outcomes. A positive and significant β_1 indicates that higher levels of strategic management practices are associated with improved organizational performance.

$$DM = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 SM + \varepsilon \tag{2}$$

Equation (2) evaluates the effect of strategic management on digital marketing. The coefficient α_1 captures the extent to which strategic management practices contribute to the effectiveness of digital marketing. A significant α_1 indicates that firms with stronger strategic management are more likely to implement effective digital marketing practices.

$$OP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SM + \beta_2 DM + \varepsilon \tag{3}$$

Equation (3) assesses the combined effect of strategic management and digital marketing on organizational performance. The coefficient β_2 reflects the impact of digital marketing on performance, while β_1 represents the direct effect of strategic management when digital marketing is included in the model. If the coefficient β_1 decreases compared to Equation (1), this indicates that digital marketing mediates the relationship between strategic management and organizational performance.

Furthermore, bootstrapping (5,000 resamples) was used to test the significance of the indirect effect. To address common-method bias, procedural remedies were applied, including anonymity and the psychological separation of variables. Additionally, Harman’s single-factor test showed that the first factor accounted for less than 50% of the variance (38%), indicating no serious common method bias.

The regression model is based on standard OLS assumptions, including linearity, independence of errors, homoscedasticity, and normality of residuals. These assumptions were tested through diagnostic procedures, including residual plots and normal probability plots, to ensure model validity.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of the main variables. Composite scores were calculated as the average of Likert-scale items, scored 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Strategic management shows the highest mean value ($M = 4.1$), indicating strong adoption of structured strategic practices. Digital marketing ($M = 3.9$) reflects slightly lower implementation with greater variability ($SD = 0.6$). Overall performance ($M = 4.0$) indicates that most firms perceive their performance as relatively high.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Strategic Management	4.1	0.5	3	5
Digital Marketing	3.9	0.6	2	5
Overall Performance	4.0	0.5	3	5

The mean score of 4.1 for strategic management indicates that, on average, firms reported a high level of adoption of strategic practices, including goal setting, planning, and resource allocation. This suggests that the surveyed companies place substantial emphasis on formalized strategic processes and are likely aware of the importance of aligning corporate objectives with operational execution. The relatively low standard deviation (0.5) suggests that responses clustered closely around the mean, indicating a consistent perception of strategic management practices across the sample.

The digital marketing variable has a mean of 3.9, slightly lower than strategic management, with a higher standard deviation of 0.6. This indicates that while most firms actively implement digital marketing strategies, the extent and sophistication of these practices vary more widely across companies. Some firms may employ advanced tools, including SEO, social media marketing, and content marketing, while others may rely on more basic or ad hoc digital initiatives. The range from 2 to 5 reinforces the notion that digital marketing adoption is uneven, reflecting different levels of digital maturity among firms.

Overall business performance, with a mean of 4.0 and standard deviation of 0.5, suggests that the majority of firms perceive themselves as performing well across financial, operational, and customer-related indicators. The minimum and maximum values (3 to 5) indicate that even firms with comparatively lower implementation levels still achieve moderate performance, while the highest-performing firms leverage both strategic management and digital marketing effectively.

The descriptive statistics confirm that the sample consists of firms actively engaged in strategic management and digital marketing practices, providing a suitable context for analyzing the relationship between these variables and overall business performance.

Table 3 presents the correlation matrix among the study variables. Strategic management is positively correlated with digital marketing ($r = 0.55, p < 0.01$) and organizational performance ($r = 0.60, p < 0.01$). Digital marketing is also positively correlated with performance ($r = 0.58, p < 0.01$). These results indicate significant associations between variables and justify further regression analysis.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix

Variable	SM	DM	OP
SM	1		
DM	0.55**	1	
OP	0.60**	0.58**	1

** $p < 0.01$.

3.2. Multiple Regression Analysis

Several diagnostic tests were conducted to ensure the robustness of the regression results. Multicollinearity was assessed using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), with values below 5 indicating no multicollinearity issues. Heteroscedasticity was examined using residual plots, which showed no systematic patterns. The normality of residuals was confirmed through a normal probability plot. These results suggest that the regression assumptions are satisfied and that the model is statistically reliable. Table 4 presents multicollinearity diagnostics. VIF values are below the threshold of 5, and tolerance values are above 0.2, indicating that multicollinearity is not a concern. This confirms the independence of the explanatory variables.

Table 4: Multicollinearity Diagnostics

Variable	VIF	Tolerance
SM	1.8	0.55
DM	1.8	0.55

Table 5 summarizes the overall regression model. The model explains 62% of the variance in organizational performance ($R^2 = 0.62$), indicating strong explanatory power. The F -statistic is significant ($p < 0.001$), confirming that the model is statistically valid.

Table 5: Model Summary

R^2	Adjusted R^2	F	Sig.
0.62	0.60	45.3	0.000

Table 6 presents the combined regression results (Equation 3). Both strategic management ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.01$) and digital marketing ($\beta = 0.35$, $p < 0.001$) are significantly associated with organizational performance. The decrease in the strategic management coefficient from $\beta = 0.40$ (Equation 1) to $\beta = 0.28$ (Equation 3) indicates partial mediation by digital marketing. The results support hypotheses H1 and H2.

Table 6: Multiple Regression Results (Equation 3)

Variable	β	p -value
Strategic Management	0.28	< 0.01
Digital Marketing	0.35	< 0.001

The findings from Table 6 indicate that both variables have positive and statistically significant relationships with performance. Strategic management shows a standardized coefficient of $\beta = 0.28$ ($p < 0.01$), suggesting that it continues to influence organizational performance even after accounting for digital marketing. Digital marketing demonstrates a stronger effect, with a coefficient of $\beta = 0.35$ ($p < 0.001$), indicating that firms with more effective digital marketing practices tend to achieve higher performance outcomes. The reduction in the coefficient of strategic management compared to the initial model (Equation 1) confirms the presence of partial mediation.

The scatter plots were generated using composite scores calculated as the mean of Likert-scale items for each construct. As all items were measured on a five-point scale from 1 to 5, composite scores theoretically range from 1.0 to 5.0. The observed ranges are consistent with the descriptive statistics reported in Table 2.

Figure 2 displays the scatter plot between strategic management and organizational performance. The upward trend indicates a positive linear relationship, supporting the assumption of linearity required for regression analysis. No significant outliers are observed.

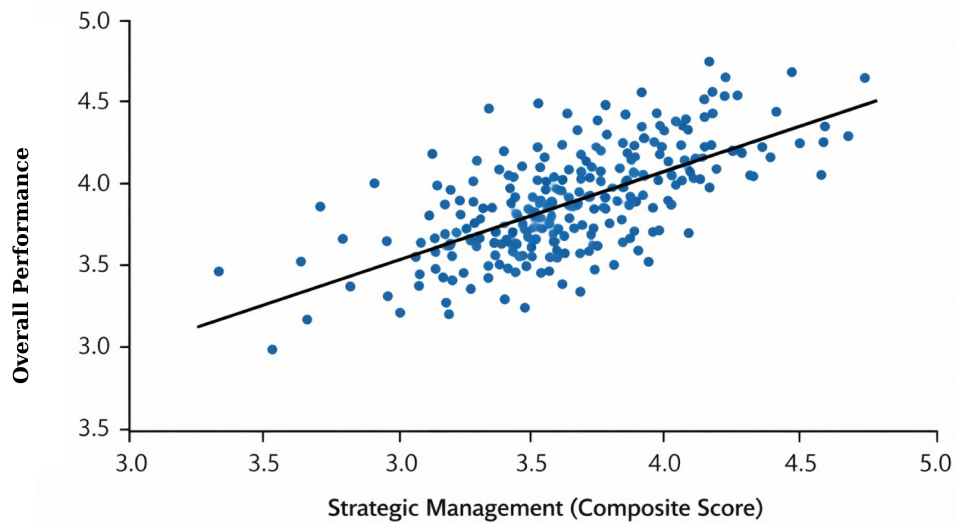


Figure 2: Scatter plot of strategic management composite scores versus organizational performance.

Figure 3 presents the scatter plot showing the relationship between digital marketing composite scores and organizational performance. Values represent averaged Likert-scale responses across multiple items.

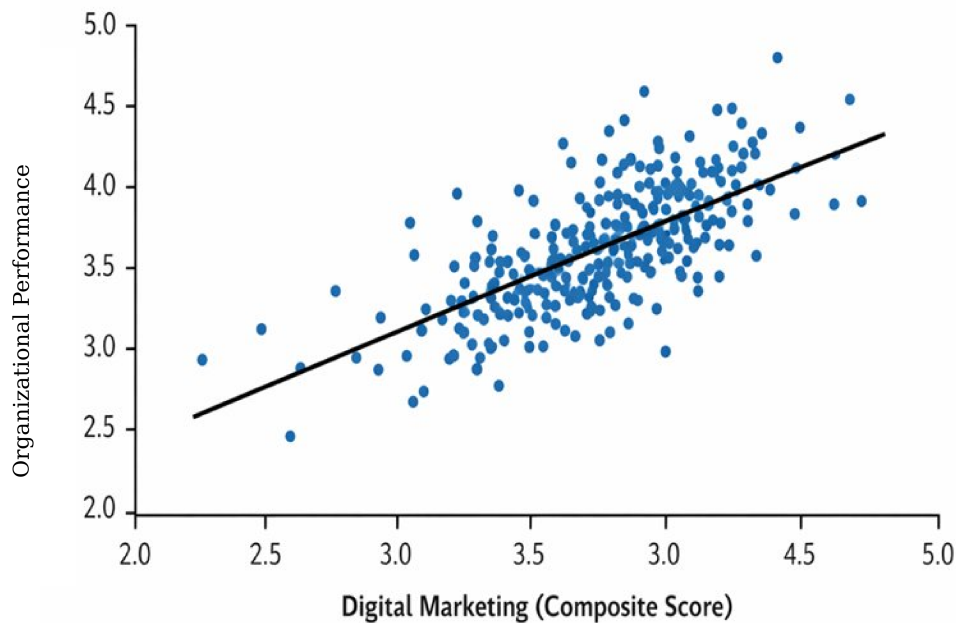


Figure 3: Scatter plot of digital marketing composite scores versus organizational performance.

Figure 4 presents the residuals versus fitted values plot. The random dispersion of residuals around zero indicates that the assumption of homoscedasticity is satisfied and that the model does not suffer from heteroscedasticity.

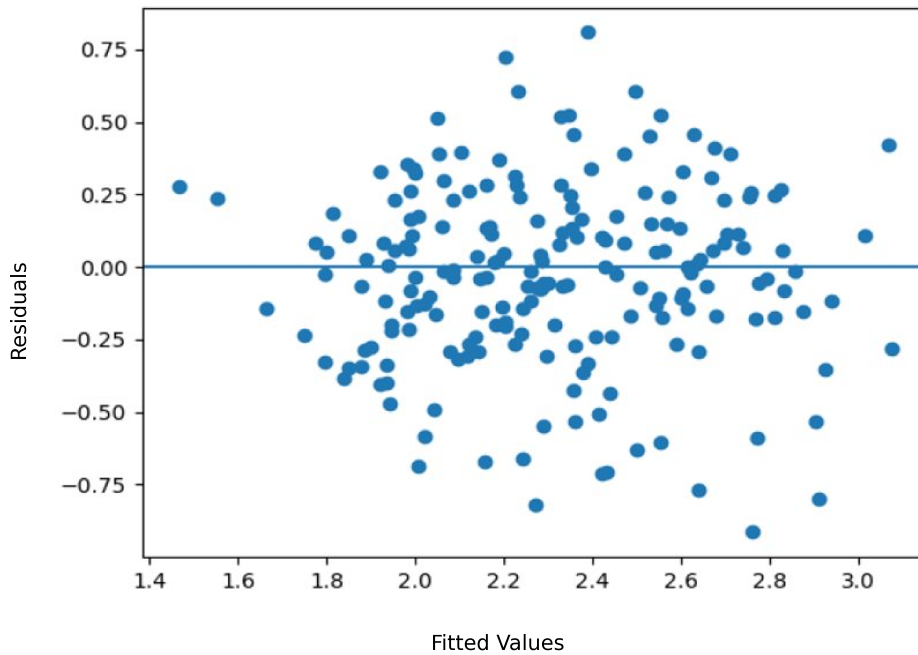


Figure 4: Residuals vs. fitted values.

Figure 5 shows the normal probability plot of residuals. The points closely follow the diagonal line, indicating that the residuals are approximately normally distributed and thus satisfying the normality assumption.

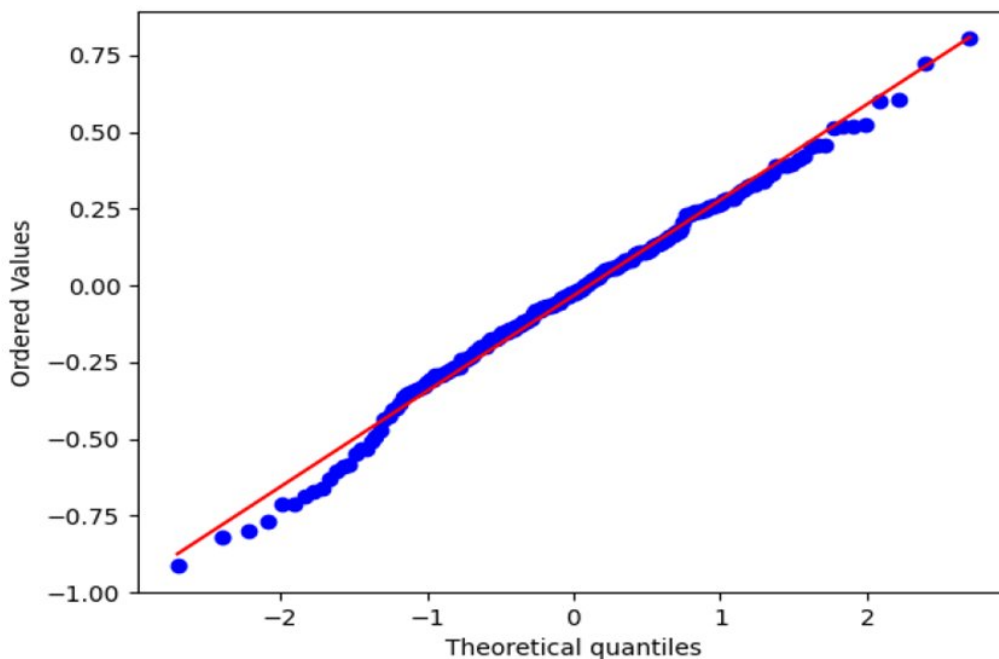


Figure 5: Normal probability plot of residuals (theoretical quantiles).

The findings are consistent with prior literature, including Bharadwaj et al. [25] and Vial [26], which emphasize that strategic alignment and digital integration are critical for superior organizational performance. The higher Beta value for digital marketing in the combined model (Equation 3) suggests that, when both variables are considered jointly, digital execution has a stronger direct association with performance, while strategic management exerts additional influence indirectly through digital marketing. The results also provide evidence for the mediating role of digital marketing effectiveness. Strategic management influences performance both directly and indirectly through its effect on digital marketing practices. Firms with robust strategic processes tend to deploy digital marketing more effectively, resulting in measurable improvements in revenue, productivity, and customer engagement. The descriptive and regression analyses collectively demonstrate that strategic management and digital marketing are complementary drivers of organizational performance. High-performing firms are those that do not treat digital marketing as an isolated activity but rather

integrate it within a strategic framework that aligns with corporate objectives, resource allocation, and long-term value creation.

3.3. Mediation Analysis

The mediation analysis was conducted following the regression-steps approach. In the first model (Equation 1), strategic management shows a significant positive effect on organizational performance ($\beta = 0.40, p < 0.001$). In the second model (Equation 2), strategic management significantly influences digital marketing ($\beta = 0.52, p < 0.001$). When digital marketing is included in the combined regression model (Equation 3), the coefficient of strategic management decreases to $\beta = 0.28 (p < 0.01)$, while digital marketing remains significant ($\beta = 0.35, p < 0.001$). This reduction indicates that digital marketing partially mediates the relationship between strategic management and organizational performance.

To further validate the mediation effect, a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples was conducted to estimate the indirect effect of strategic management on organizational performance through digital marketing. The results indicate that the indirect effect is positive and statistically significant (indirect effect = 0.18). The 95% bootstrap confidence interval ranges from 0.10 to 0.27, and since the interval does not include zero, the mediation effect is supported. These findings confirm that digital marketing partially mediates the relationship between strategic management and organizational performance.

Table 7 presents the bootstrapping results for the indirect effect.

Table 7: Bootstrapping Results for Indirect Effect

Effect	Estimate	Boot SE	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper	Result
SM → DM → OP	0.18	0.04	0.10	0.27	Significant

The findings provide strong evidence that firms that integrate strategic management with digital marketing practices consistently achieve superior overall performance compared to those that manage these domains independently. The regression results indicate that both strategic management and digital marketing are significantly associated with performance. These findings are consistent with prior research emphasizing the importance of digital transformation as a driver of competitive advantage. Bharadwaj et al. [25] argue that integrating digital technologies into corporate strategy enhances operational efficiency, innovation, and financial outcomes, while Vial [26] demonstrates that digital transformation strategies yield stronger performance when embedded within a coherent strategic framework. A key insight from this study is that the effectiveness of digital marketing depends heavily on strategic alignment. Organizations that adopt digital tools without linking them to overarching strategic objectives often experience limited returns. In contrast, firms that coordinate digital marketing efforts with corporate goals, resource allocation, and performance monitoring achieve higher levels of customer engagement, satisfaction, and loyalty. This integration ensures that digital initiatives support brand positioning, revenue growth, and operational efficiency. Moreover, the results highlight the mediating role of digital marketing between strategic management and organizational performance, suggesting that strategic clarity enhances the design, execution, and monitoring of digital campaigns, which in turn translate into measurable outcomes. Firms with well-developed strategic management capabilities are therefore better positioned to allocate resources efficiently, select appropriate digital channels, and leverage performance analytics.

From a managerial perspective, the findings suggest that digital marketing should not be treated as a standalone function but rather as an integral component of the strategic planning process. Managers should ensure clear alignment between digital initiatives and organizational objectives, supported by well-defined performance indicators and cross-functional collaboration between marketing, IT, and strategy teams. Furthermore, integrating strategic management with digital marketing contributes to both financial and non-financial performance outcomes. Financially, firms benefit from increased revenue, profitability, and return on investment, while operational improvements include enhanced efficiency and improved resource utilization. From a customer perspective, aligned digital strategies strengthen trust, satisfaction, and long-term loyalty, which are essential for sustained competitiveness. This study underscores the synergistic relationship between strategic management and digital marketing, demonstrating that firms that integrate these domains are more agile, adaptive, and able to respond to technological change and evolving market demands. By embedding digital initiatives within a coherent strategic framework, organizations can enhance both short-term performance and long-term sustainability. These findings contribute to theory by reinforcing the relevance of strategic alignment and digital transformation frameworks and by offering practical guidance for managers seeking to leverage digital capabilities for competitive advantage.

3.4. Hypothesis Testing Results

The empirical analysis provides support for all the proposed hypotheses.

H1: Strategic management has a significant positive relationship with organizational performance. This hypothesis is supported. In the simple regression model (Equation 1), strategic management has a positive, statistically significant effect on organizational performance ($\beta = 0.40, p < 0.001$). When digital marketing is introduced into the combined regression model (Equation 3), the coefficient of strategic management decreases but remains significant ($\beta = 0.28, p < 0.01$). This reduction indicates that part of the effect of strategic management on performance operates through digital marketing, confirming partial mediation while maintaining direct significance.

H2: Digital marketing is positively associated with organizational performance. This hypothesis is supported, as digital marketing demonstrates a positive and significant relationship with organizational performance ($\beta = 0.35, p < 0.001$).

H3: Strategic management has a significant positive relationship with digital marketing effectiveness. This hypothesis is supported, as the results indicate that strategic management is positively and significantly associated with digital marketing effectiveness ($\beta = 0.52, p < 0.001$).

The findings confirm that both strategic management and digital marketing play significant roles in enhancing organizational performance, with digital marketing also acting as a mechanism through which strategic management exerts its influence.

3.5. Limitations and Future Research Directions

Despite its theoretical and managerial contributions, this study presents several limitations that suggest directions for future inquiry. First, the research was conducted on a sample of 200 medium-sized and large enterprises, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Small enterprises and startups were not included, even though they often rely heavily on digital marketing and may exhibit distinct strategic dynamics. Future studies could expand the sample to include firms of varying sizes, enabling comparative analysis of how organizational scale shapes the integration process. Second, a cross-sectional research design was adopted, meaning that data were collected at a single point in time. As a result, causal relationships between strategic management, digital marketing effectiveness, and overall business performance cannot be definitively established. A longitudinal design would allow researchers to observe how strategic alignment evolves and how digital transformation initiatives influence performance over the long term. Third, the data were collected using a self-reported questionnaire, which may introduce response bias. Managers may overestimate the effectiveness of their strategic or digital practices due to social desirability or subjective perceptions. Although measures were taken to ensure confidentiality and clarity, perceptual data may not fully reflect objective performance outcomes. Combining subjective and objective performance indicators, such as audited financial data, would strengthen the robustness of future findings. Fourth, the study focused primarily on two independent variables, strategic management and digital marketing, while other potentially influential factors were not included in the model. Variables such as organizational culture, leadership style, technological infrastructure, innovation capability, and market turbulence may also affect business performance. Incorporating these variables could lead to a more comprehensive and multidimensional explanatory framework. Finally, the research context was limited to Moroccan firms, which may constrain external validity. Differences in regulatory systems, technological development, and digital maturity across countries could influence the observed relationships. Cross-country comparative studies would help determine whether the findings hold across diverse economic and institutional environments and could identify cultural factors that shape digital transformation success.

Beyond addressing these limitations, several additional research directions merit attention. Future research could explore the role of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, big data analytics, machine learning, blockchain, and marketing automation tools, in reshaping digital marketing capabilities and moderating the strategy and performance relationship. The application of structural equation modeling (SEM) would enable simultaneous testing of direct, indirect, and interaction effects, thereby improving the robustness of the theoretical model. Qualitative research methods, such as case studies or in-depth interviews with executives, could complement quantitative findings by providing a deeper understanding of managerial decision-making during strategic-digital integration. Finally, investigating how integrated digital strategies contribute to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) performance could extend the model beyond financial and operational outcomes.

4. Conclusions

This study demonstrates the critical importance of integrating strategic management with digital marketing to enhance overall business performance. The findings confirm that firms aligning their strategic objectives with digital initiatives achieve superior financial results, improved operational efficiency, and higher customer satisfaction. The results highlight the necessity of strategic alignment, ensuring that clear organizational goals guide digital marketing efforts to avoid fragmentation and maximize impact. Strengthening internal digital marketing capabilities through investments in skills, technology, and data analytics is also essential for effective execution and innovation. Moreover, the study underscores the importance of comprehensive performance measurement by combining financial, operational, and customer-based indicators to support informed decision-making. The findings further reveal that digital marketing serves as a mediating factor between strategic management and performance outcomes, translating strategic direction into measurable results, such as increased revenue, customer loyalty, and operational efficiency.

From a theoretical perspective, this research supports strategic alignment and digital transformation frameworks, emphasizing that digital tools alone are insufficient without a coherent strategic foundation. From a managerial standpoint, organizations should integrate digital marketing into their strategic planning processes, foster cross-functional collaboration, and ensure strong leadership and governance. The integration of strategic management and digital marketing constitutes a key driver of sustainable competitive advantage and long-term organizational success in the digital economy.

Author Contributions

Fatima Ezzahra Mnajli: Investigation, Resources, Writing: review and editing. **Hind Benkirane:** Software, Data curation, Visualization. **El Khalil El Mountassir:** Formal analysis, Writing: original draft, Writing: review and editing. **Youness Amahrouss:** Validation, Formal analysis, Writing: review and editing. **Zineb Aboulhoda:** Supervision, Project administration, Writing: review and editing. **Nadia Loubbardi:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Writing: original draft, Writing: review and editing. **Redouane Kaiss:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis.

Declaration of Competing Interests

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. All primary data generated during this study were collected through a structured questionnaire, and summary-level data are included in this article.

AI Disclosure Statement

The authors declare that no artificial intelligence (AI) tools or AI-assisted technologies were used in the preparation, drafting, or revision of this manuscript. All content, analysis, and interpretation presented herein are the sole work of the authors.

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Ethics Approval and Consent

This study was conducted in accordance with ethical principles. The research involved administering an anonymous questionnaire to consenting professionals in their capacity as organizational representatives. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents before data collection. No personally identifiable information was collected, and confidentiality of responses was ensured throughout the study. Formal institutional ethics approval was not required, as the study did not involve clinical trials, vulnerable populations, or sensitive personal data.

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