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Organizational Performance through Digital Marketing: Evidence from Pakistani Small and Medium Enterprises

Abstract

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Keywords: Digital Marketing Strategies, Social Media Marketing, SMS Marketing, Email Marketing, Organizational Performance, SMEs in Pakistan.

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This research examines how digital marketing strategies influence the organizational display of SME's in the Punjab, Pakistan. The data was collected from small and medium-sized managers across multiple sectors in the province. The analysis focuses on three primary digital marketing strategies, including social media, SMS, and email marketing. Comparatively, organizational performance is evaluated by measuring profitability, customer acquisition, and business growth. Among the three digital marketing strategies, social media had a strong impact on attracting customer engagement, SMS strategy contributed to promotional effectiveness, and email marketing results show a positive relationship with organizational performance indicators for enhancing customer loyalty. Study highlights that SMEs that actively incorporate a digital marketing strategy achieve a positive increase in profitability, customer acquisition, and market expansion. The findings show the importance of digital marketing for maintaining competitive advantage and offer practical solutions to problems to policymakers of an organization within the region's business landscape.

Keywords: Digital Marketing Strategies, Social Media Marketing, SMS Marketing, Email Marketing, Organizational Performance, SMEs in Pakistan

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Introduction

In this modern era, digital technology has significantly altered business landscapes worldwide. For the "Small and Medium Enterprises", particularly in developing nations, such as Pakistan, a shift from traditional to digital marketing has opened new avenues for engagement, growth, and competitiveness. Since Pakistani SMEs account for an important share of the workforce outside of cultivation and generate around 40% of Pakistan's GDP, understanding the importance of digital

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marketing is necessary for the country's economic growth. Punjab, one of Pakistan's major economic locations, is home to a strong SME sector that includes manufacturing, retail, services, and agriculture. SMEs in Punjab are extensively using digital marketing as an important instrument for achieving their company goals as a result of the growing popularity of mobile devices, social media platforms, and the internet. Punjab, one of Pakistan's main economic regions, is home to a variety of SMEs in the industrial, retail, services, and agricultural sectors. SMEs are using technology increasingly to improve outreach and communication as a result of the growth in mobile internet access and the growing popularity of social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. This study looks at the effects of email, SMS, and social media marketing methods on important performance measures.

The main purpose of this work is to investigate how marketing strategies digitally affect the organizational efficiency of "Small and Medium-Sized businesses in the Punjab province of Pakistan. It specializes on how email, SMS, and social media marketing impact performance outcomes including client acquisition, business development, and profitability There is still a lack of empirical evidence relevant to the Pakistani setting, particularly at the provincial SME level, regardless of the fact that research completed elsewhere have shown a positive relationship between digital marketing and business success. Since many Punjabi SME managers and owners are still in the early stages of digital adoption and might not have structured digital plans, it is important to learn about the information provided here. This research paper endeavors to provide knowledge about the usefulness of digital marketing and how such strategies may be utilised to improve business performance through empirical analysis based on survey responses from SME managers. Policymakers, support organisations, and SME stakeholders may all benefit from the insights produced in their efforts to encourage sustainable company growth in the current digital economy.

Literature Review

Digital marketing strategies and tools that use digital channels to connect businesses and customers. For SMEs, digital approaches often provide greater cost efficiency, interaction, and measurement abilities compared to traditional media. In Pakistan's growing digital economy, the use of such tools or platforms like social media marketing, SMS marketing, and email marketing allows SMEs to expand their market presence and enhance business growth (Tiago & Veríssimo, 2014).

Social media marketing has achieved significant goals among SMEs because of the direct relationship-building nature between customers and organizations. It also allows businesses to market and promote their products, engage with customers, and build long-term brand loyalty and relations. According to Felix et al. (2017), social media marketing brings brand awareness and engagement through two-way communication. Especially in developing economies like Pakistan, platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp Business offer new and upgraded opportunities for targeting its customers and offer personalized ads from AI-driven digital marketing. Previous studies have also identified that SM "Social Media" drives can lead to amplified reach, stronger customer retention, and improved sales performance (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

SMS marketing serves as a direct communication channel and tool even where internet access remains limited. Dickinger and Kleijnen (2008), SMS marketing is effective and efficient for conveying time-sensitive alerts, promotions, and special personalized offers to its selective customers. For SMEs in growing digital markets, SMS marketing campaigns provide immediate reach and low-cost marketing, making them especially effective for increasing sales. Barwise and Strong (2002) also noted that the low cost of implementation makes SMS marketing an attractive option for SMEs with limited resources.

Email marketing is one of the most cost-effective digital marketing strategies for SMEs, providing a direct and personalized communication channel. As stated by Ellis-Chadwick and Doherty (2012), effectively planned email marketing may boost sales and improve sustainable client connections. Additionally, email marketing enables a greater return on spending on advertising, ongoing engagement, and analytics-based monitoring of results (Chaffey, 2015).

Financial and growth indicators are used to measure organizational success in the overall performance of SMEs. According to Morgan et al. (2009), performance is significantly impacted by marketing strategies that are developed according to market demands in order to get a competitive advantage and grow in size. As stated by Kotler and Keller (2016), SMEs that successfully use digital tools typically experience increased market awareness, access to new clients or groups, and consistent revenue growth. Businesses can track and improve marketing in real-time in digital environments, which produces better results. Research has continuously

demonstrated that digital marketing activities and business performance are positively correlated. Digital efforts aim to improve relationships with customers and efficiency in operations, which eventually yield measurable advantages to firms (Tiago and Veríssimo, 2014; Alford and Page, 2015). SMEs may better negotiate competitive marketplaces by focusing their marketing campaigns on specific consumer categories. With many businesses acknowledging its role in increasing profitability, market expansion, and client acquisition, digital marketing is becoming more and more accepted in Pakistan as an important part of SME growth strategy. In 2024, a recent study of Malaysian SME's within the education sector shows a consistent and robust positive correlation of digital marketing with SME performance in Malaysia. (Nur Atiqah Binti Zamri and Ramita Abdul Rahim,2024).Year 2025, in another scenario based upon a surveyed data collected from Islamabad and Rawalpindi, describes the relationships between digital transformation, social media marketing, market unrest and marketing performance concurrently by (Muhammad Amin, Madiha Gohar & Irfan Ali, 2025) According to Arslan Ahamd et al,2025 targeted investment in social media marketing have effective, promotion innovation and growth in the digital era of technology.

Conceptual Framework

First, there is a deficit of empirical studies, particularly looking at how digital technologies like social media, SMS, and email marketing influence the overall organizational performance of SMEs in emerging countries, despite the fact that several studies highlight their immense potential. The majority of the research that has already been done has either focused solely on large businesses or has not taken into consideration the particular difficulties that SMEs face, such as a lack of resources, a lack of digital literacy, and barriers related to infrastructure (Alford & Page, 2015; Tiago & Veríssimo, 2014). Second, although some research has looked at how digital marketing affects certain performance indicators like sales or brand recognition, few have carried out thorough analyses that link various digital marketing tactics to more complete, multifaceted results for business success. For Pakistani SMEs, where the use of technology is still in the early stages and where cultural and economic factors are significant indicators of marketing success, the difference is especially significant.

Third, minimal research has been done on the relationships between different forms of digital marketing and how these channels work together to give SMEs an advantage in competition and long-term success. It is important to understand this interaction since SMEs usually employ a variety of digital tools rather than a single platform, and the degree to which these technologies support the overall organizational plan influences how efficient they are. Therefore, to tackle these issues, this research paper offers a conceptual framework that examines how digital marketing tactics such as email, SMS, and social media marketing relate to important organizational performance measures like customer acquisition, sales growth, and profitability in Pakistani SMEs. The method used also takes into account variables that could influence the pattern and extent of these relationships, such as market dynamics, business size, and digital literacy.

By filling these gaps, this study hopes to offer empirical results that will advance scholarly knowledge while also offering practical recommendations for SME managers and regulators looking to use digital marketing as an incentive for better organisational performance.

Theory and Philosophical Assumptions:

Relevant Theory

Two main conceptual models are used in this study: (TAM) "the Technology Acceptance Model" and (RBV) "the Resource-Based View" of the organization. Understanding how SMEs implement digital marketing strategies and how these strategies impact organizational performance is made clearer with the help of these models. As per "RBV," industries can gain a viable edge and perform better than their competitors by using capitals that are rare, valuable, inimitable, and non-interchangeable (Barney, 1991). Digital marketing tools like email marketing, SMS campaigns, and social media platforms may be considered by SMEs as crucial resources that improve market reach, increase consumer interaction, and increase brand awareness. Effective use of digital marketing as a strategic asset becomes crucial for improving performance and growth, given all of the resource limitations that SMEs frequently experience because resources are limited.

Davis (1989) developed the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which examines how people and organisations recognise and use new technologies according to their beliefs about their utility and accessibility. Given issues like poor digital literacy and inadequate infrastructure, TAM is especially significant when analysing how SMEs in developing countries like Pakistan incorporate digital marketing tools into their business operations. The model supports an understanding of how attitudes

towards digital technologies influence real consumption trends, which in turn influence marketing effectiveness and organisational success.

The research of the double functions of digital marketing strategies—as organisational resources and as technology innovations that SMEs use to achieve better performance outcomes—is influenced by these theories used together.

Philosophical Assumptions

The positivist epistemological point of view, which says that reality is objective and responsive to both observation and measurement, is the basis of this study. This supports the objective of the study, which is to use quantitative methodology to investigate the hypothesised correlations between digital marketing tactics and SME success. The positivist perspective gives results that are generalisable by using organised data gathering methods like surveys and statistical analysis.

Ontologically, the study takes a realist ontological perspective on knowing that the concepts being studied—digital marketing strategies and organisational performance—exist independently of the researcher's own perspectives. These constructs are seen as practical, measurable components that have a predictable impact on SME results.

RBV posits that firms achieve sustainable advantages through unique, valuable, and inimitable resources (Barney, 1991). Digital marketing tools represent such resources for SMEs, offering scalable solutions that improve market presence and customer retention.

TAM explains the adoption of know-how through apparent usefulness and comfort of use (Davis, 1989). This is particularly applicable for SMEs in Pakistan, where digital literacy and infrastructural limitations can hinder adoption.

The study aims to provide objective, reliable, and valid insights on how digital advertising strategies affect SMEs' organisational performance by adopting these assumptions from philosophy. By accomplishing this, it aims to add to the increasing literature of research on digital marketing in developing countries, both theoretically and practically.

Problem statement

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are essential contributors to Pakistan's economy. However, many of these enterprises struggle to enhance their performance in the digital era due to limited resources and a low level of digital adoption. While tools such as social media, SMS, and email marketing offer considerable benefits, including improved customer engagement and increased sales, SMEs face significant challenges in utilizing these tools effectively. Current research tends to focus on large firms or neglects how these digital marketing strategies collectively influence SME performance, particularly in resource-constrained environments. To solve this problem, this paper investigates "*the impact of digital marketing strategies on the organizational performance of SMEs in Pakistan*", aiming to provide practical insights for SME managers, marketers, and policymakers.

Objective

To examine the extent to which SMEs in Pakistan adopt digital marketing strategies, including social media, SMS, and email marketing.

To analyze how these digital marketing strategies influence the organizational performance of Pakistani SMEs.

Research Question

What is the level of adoption of digital marketing strategies (social media, SMS, and email) among SMEs in Pakistan?

How do these digital marketing strategies, both individually and collectively, affect the organizational performance of Pakistani SMEs?

Variables:

Dependent Variable (DV): Firm Performance

Firm performance, along with the overall efficiency and success of SMEs, is the dependent variable in this study. The three main metrics used to evaluate a company's performance are profitability, growth, and client acquisition. Growth is the extension of sales or market share, profitability is the financial returns achieved by the business, and customer acquisition is the firm's capacity to bring in new clients—all of which are important for the competitiveness as well as the sustainability of SMEs.

Independent Variables (IVs): Digital Marketing Strategies

The digital marketing techniques that SMEs apply are, in particular, social media, SMS, and email marketing, all of which are the independent variables. Using social media websites like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp to interact with consumers, promote goods, and increase brand recognition is known as social media marketing. Using responsiveness and high response rates, SMS marketing involves sending

customised alerts and messages to consumers' mobile devices. Email marketing supports lead generation, product updates, and customer retention by focusing on personalised contact through marketing emails. By increasing customer engagement, reaching more consumers, and increasing sales growth, these digital marketing techniques should have a positive effect on the performance of any business.

Research Methodology

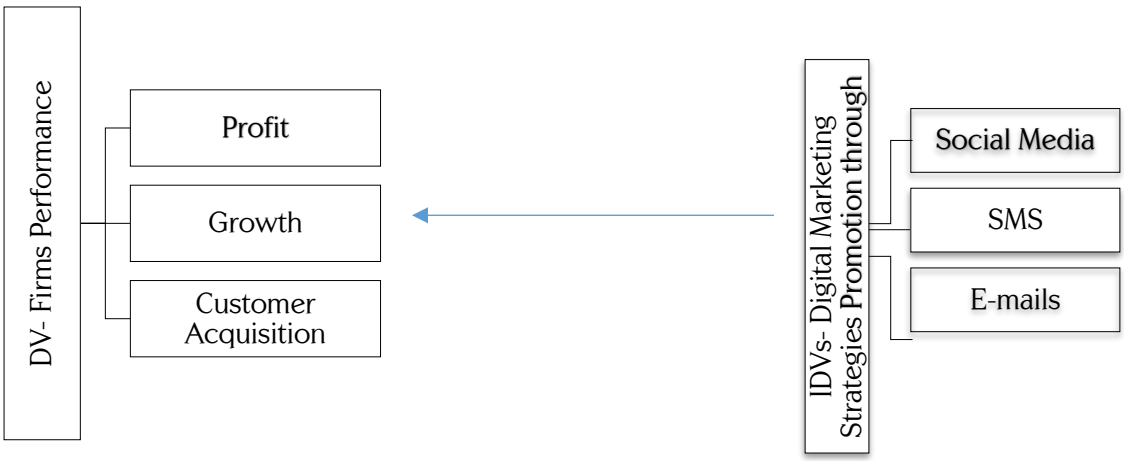
This study uses a quantitative, explanatory methodology to explore how digital marketing strategies—specifically, social media, SMS, and email promotion—affect the performance of SMEs in Pakistan as measured by profitability, growth, and new customer acquisition. The research follows a method called deductive reasoning, which begins with established beliefs and existing literature to produce hypotheses that are then supported by actual data.

Data was collected using a structured survey that was communicated through direct contact activities as well as digital means. The population being studied consists of Pakistani SMEs that are involved in digital marketing activities. Purposive sampling was used to identify and select these SMEs, collecting data from a sample of 100 respondents. Questions were evaluated using a 5-point Likert scale to measure respondents' opinions with multiple objections.

The study analyses the data using SPSS software for descriptive statistics, multiple regression analysis, correlation analysis, and reliability testing. Ethical recommendations, such as obtaining participants' informed consent and ensuring their data privacy, were closely adhered to throughout the whole research procedure in order to maintain the study's validity and credibility.

Research Model & Hypothesis

Figure 1



Composite Index

To accurately evaluate each element in this study, combination scores are produced for both the independent and dependent variables. Firm Performance (FP), the dependent variable, is measured using a composite index that is created by combining three key indicators: profitability, revenue or sales growth, and client acquisition. Each condition has been assessed on a Likert scale, and the Firm Performance Index (FPI) is calculated by averaging the values for these three factors.

Composite Score Calculation:

The Firm Performance Index (FPI) is calculated as follows:

Firm Performance Index (FPI) = (Profitability Score + Growth Score + Customer Acquisition Score) / 3

Digital Marketing Strategies (DMS), the independent variable, is effectively measured by three components: social media marketing (SMM), email marketing (EM), and SMS marketing (SMSM). Each sub-strategy is evaluated using a series of Likert-scale questions. The Digital Marketing Index (DMI), which provides a thorough assessment of the broad acceptance of digital marketing, is calculated using the average score across each of the above categories.

Digital Marketing Index (DMI) = (SMM Score + SMSM Score + EM Score) / 3

These composite indices permit a standardized and strong assessment of key constructs in the research, ensuring reliable and meaningful statistical analysis.

Regression Model

The association between digital marketing strategies and the performance of the firm is evaluated with the help of the following regression model:

- Firm Performance Index (FPI) = $\beta_0 + \beta_1$(Digital Marketing Strategies Index) + ε where:
- β_0 is the intercept,
- β_1 represents the coefficient for the Digital Marketing Strategies Index, and
- ε is the error term.

Null Hypothesis (Ho)

The null hypothesis posits that there exists no momentous effect of digital marketing strategies on SMEs' performance in Pakistan: H_0: $\beta_1 = 0$

Alternative Hypothesis(H1)

The alternative hypothesis suggests that digital marketing strategies have a momentous effect on SMEs' performance in Pakistan: H_1: $\beta_1 \neq 0$

Analysis:

Table 1

Augmented Dickey-Fuller Test (Results After First Differencing)

Variable	ADF Statistic	p-value	1% C.Value	5% C.Value	10% C.Value	Stationary
diff_organ_performance	-6.12	0.000	-3.501	-2.888	-2.588	Yes (at 1%)
diff_dgtm_starategies	-5.73	0.000	-3.501	-2.888	-2.588	Yes (at 1%)

The Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) test usually shows an important rise in consistency when first-order variance is applied to the non-stationary variables, which include digital marketing techniques and organisational efficiency or success. Differencing helps eliminate trends or patterns that lead to non-stationarity by transforming the data into a series of changes, rather than absolute values. Following this transformation, the ADF test generally produces more negative test statistics and p-values below the 0.05 significance level, supporting the rejection of the null hypothesis of a unit root test. It also confirms that the difference sequence is now stationary. Stationarity is essential for dependable time series analysis; moreover, these results suggest that both variables, once differenced, are appropriate for further statistical modeling and forecasting using techniques such as ARIMA or regression analysis.

Reliability Test

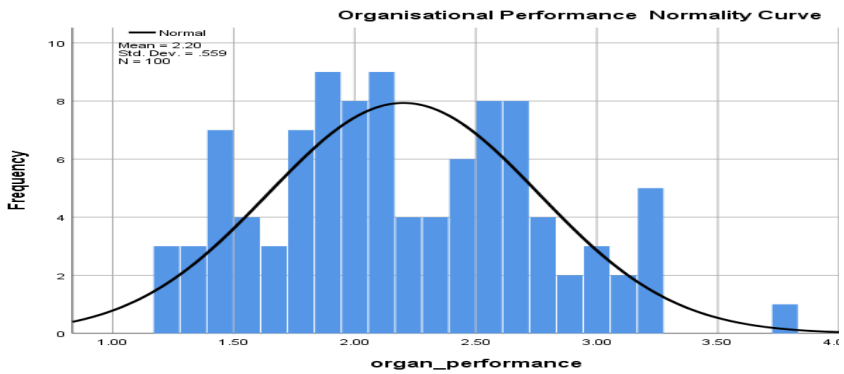
Reliability Tests	CRBH's Alpha Value	Items
	.775	26

The value 0.775 "(Cronbach's alpha)" shows that the 26-item scale has acceptable internal consistency, suggesting the 26 items collectively measure the same fundamental concept in a reliable manner. This value lies between the generally acknowledged range of 0.7 to 0.8 for social science research, confirming that the scale used in this study is sufficiently reliable for further statistical analysis.

Normal Distribution Test

Figure 1

GRAPH (Organizational Performance)



The histogram indicates that organizational performance is approximately normally distributed, displaying a bell-shaped curve centered around a mean value of 2.20. While the distribution is generally symmetric, it does exhibit a slight right skew. Overall, the data satisfy the normality assumption, making it suitable for parametric statistical analyses.

Figure 2

GRAPH (Digital Marketing Strategies)

The distribution of digital marketing strategies appears to be approximately normal, with a peak around the mean value of 2.49 and a slight right skew. The normal curve aligns closely with the histogram, indicating that the data is appropriate for parametric analyses.

Table 2

Independence of Errors "Durbin Watson Test"

Durbin Watson
1.629

a. Forecasters: (Constant), dgtm_starategies

b. Dependent Variable: organ_performance

The Durbin-Watson statistic is 1.629, falling between the range of 1.5 and 2.5, which is acceptable, and indicates that there exists no momentous autocorrelation in the residuals. This suggests that the assumption of independence of errors is reasonably met in the model, supporting the reliability of the regression results in this regard.

Table 3

Regression Analysis

Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
organ_performance	2.2011	.55873	100
dgtm_starategies	2.4893	.46942	100

Based on a sample of 100 observations, the statistical results show that the organisational performance mean score is 2.20 with a standard deviation of 0.56. This implies that, while there is significant variance in the states, organisations generally report insignificant performance levels. Similarly, based on 100 observations, the mean score for using digital marketing methods is 2.49 with a standard deviation of 0.47. These numbers show that, in comparison to performance results, organisations in the sample generally participate in digital marketing activities to an insignificant degree, with comparatively less

variation in this practice. A consistent response pattern across the sample for both variables is shown by the compared mean values and the relatively low standard deviations.

Table 4
Correlations

		organ_performance	dgtm_staratégies
Pearson Correlation	organ_performance	1.000	0.405
	dgtm_staratégies	0.405	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	organ_performance	.	.000
	dgtm_staratégies	0.000	.
N	organ_performance	100	100
	dgtm_staratégies	100	100

A Pearson correlation value of 0.405 shows that there is a somewhat favourable relationship between digital marketing approaches and organisational success. It also means that better organisational success correlates with increased adoption or efficacy of digital marketing methods. This relationship is statistically significant, as indicated by the significance level (p-value) of .000 (1-tailed), which is significantly lower in comparison with the traditional limit of 0.05. These findings offer an accurate measure of the direction and strength of the relationship, as they are based on a sample of 100 observations for each variable.

Table 5
Model Summary

	Value of R	R Sq	Adj R Sq	Std. Error Estimate
1	.405[a]	.164	.156	.51340

a. Independent Variable: (Constant), dgtm_staratégies
b. Dependent Variable: organ_performance

Through the value of R = 0.405, showing a moderately encouraging correlation between the independent and the outcome variable, the regression model summary shows that digital marketing methods significantly predict organisational success. The businesses' digital marketing strategies have around 16.4% variations in organisational performance, according to the R^2-value of 0.164. A considerably less optimistic measure of the variance explained by the model is given by the adjusted R^2 value of 0.156, which takes into consideration the sample size and the number of variables. With a standard error of 0.5134, this estimate represents the middling distance in the regression line and the actual values, as well as the normal forecast error. All things considered, these findings indicate that although digital marketing tactics are not the only factor influencing organisational success, they do contribute significantly to improving business results.

Table 6
ANOVA

		Sum of Sqs	df	Mean Sq	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5.075	1	5.075	19.254	.000[b]
	Residual	25.831	98	.264		
	Total	30.906	99			

a. Dependent variable: organ_performance
b. Indpen-variable: (Constant), dgtm_staratégies

The analysis of variance table displays that the regression model predicting organizational performance from digital marketing strategies is statistically significant. The sum of squares (5.075) represents variations explained by the independent variable, while the residual sum of squares (25.831) accounts for the unexplained variation. The model has 1 degree of freedom for the regression and 98 degrees of freedom for residuals, resulting in mean square values of 5.075 and 0.264, respectively. The calculated

F-value of 19.254 has a corresponding "p-value of 0.000", which is below the 0.05 significance threshold. It confirms that the overall regression model fits the data significantly and that digital marketing strategies are an important predictor of organizational performance.

Conclusion

This study identified a statistically significant moderate positive relationship between digital marketing strategies and organizational performance. The regression analysis revealed that digital marketing strategies account for approximately 16.4% of the variance in organizational performance among the sampled firms. These findings highlight the importance of adopting and refining digital marketing approaches to support organizational success.

Nonetheless, this research has certain limitations. The relatively small sample size of 100 organizations may limit the generalizability of the results, and the model included only one predictor, excluding other potentially important factors. Additionally, the cross-sectional strategy of this study prevents connecting inferences. With more than 83% of the variance in organizational performance left unexplained, future research should consider incorporating other variables, such as customer engagement, technology adoption, and broader market dynamics.

Given these insights, organizations are encouraged to prioritize digital marketing as a strategic tool and to invest in ongoing training and capacity building. Further studies will help develop a wide-ranging, thoughtful view of the factors driving performance in "small and medium-sized enterprises" SMEs.

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