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THE EFFECT OF DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY ON CUSTOMER AND ORGANIZATIONAL OUTCOMES

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Abstract: *This study aims to test the impact of digital marketing strategy as an antecedent on customer outcomes (customer satisfaction, customer engagement, and customer loyalty) and the impact of these three outcomes on organizational outcomes. Twenty-five items are used to measure research variables. These items are developed referring to previous related works: digital marketing strategy, customer satisfaction, customer engagement, customer loyalty, and organizational outcomes. According to the research budget and time constraints, a convenience sampling method was implemented in the data collection process. This study applied structural equation modeling (SEM) to test the research hypotheses through AMOS software. The authors conducted a questionnaire to collect data from a sample of marketing practitioners selected from 10 organizations with a total number of 200 respondents. The total number of returned questionnaires is 187 responses. Eleven questionnaires are excluded due to invalid responses. Thus, 176 questionnaires are used to carry out data analysis. The results underline the significant effects of customer satisfaction, engagement, and loyalty on organizational outcomes. The authors noted that customer satisfaction is the most affected outcome by digital marketing strategy, followed by customer engagement and customer loyalty. Additionally, customer loyalty has the greatest effect on organizational outcomes, followed by customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. The findings showed that enhancing organizational outcomes requires marketing managers consider customer outcomes such as customer satisfaction, customer engagement, and customer loyalty, which are affected by marketing strategies. Marketing managers are requested to pay great attention to their marketing strategy, considering its effects on customer satisfaction and other customer outcomes, like customer engagement and loyalty. Likewise, scholars are required to re-test the current model to identify the mediating role of the outcomes mentioned above in the effect of marketing strategy on organizational outcomes.*

Keywords: digital marketing strategy, customer satisfaction, customer engagement, customer loyalty, organizational outcomes.

JEL Classification: M31, C83, C88, D22

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Introduction. Marketing strategies gained great attention from both academics and marketing practitioners. Such an interest could be traced to the effects of these strategies on customer outcomes. Examples of marketing strategies adopted by the organization in line with the current technological advancements and sustainability requirements are digital marketing (Eldahamsheh et al., 2021; Tariq et al., 2022), social media marketing (Al-Nady et al., 2016; Al-Nawafah et al., 2022), mobile marketing (Al-Hawary and Obiadat, 2021), green marketing (Al-khawaldah et al., 2022) as well as e-mail marketing, digital advertising, search engine optimization, and content marketing (Mandal and Joshi, 2017). On the other hand, examples of customer outcomes explored by scholars include customer purchasing behaviour (Alhalalmeh et al., 2022), customer satisfaction, customer engagement, and customer loyalty (Al-Dmour et al., 2019; Mohammad et al., 2022). For the current study, digital marketing strategies are conceptualized as a whole construct. Customer outcomes are operationalized as three basic variables: customer satisfaction, customer engagement, and customer loyalty. One more vein of literature is concerned with organizational outcomes like organizational ambidexterity (Tariq et al., 2022; Al-khawaldah et al., 2022), dynamic and innovation capabilities (AlTaweel and Al-Hawary, 2021), organizational health (AlHamad et al., 2022), and organizational performance (Alhalalmeh et al., 2020).

Integrating these two veins of literature results in new insights into digital marketing strategies' impact on customer and organizational outcomes. Based on previous research, this study theorized organizational outcomes as a whole construct evaluated in terms of organizational capabilities, performance, and health. It was noted that some digital marketing strategies, as explored in the literature, exert significant effects on customer outcomes, which in turn show significant effects on organizational outcomes. However, these effects are investigated separately. Therefore, the aim of this study is to examine the effect of marketing strategy on customer outcomes and the effect of the latter on organizational outcomes.

Achieving the objectives of this study contributes to the literature in two ways. First, it highlights the importance of marketing strategy in stimulating customer satisfaction, engagement, and loyalty. Based on this contribution, scholars could consider the effect of marketing strategy on other dimensions of customer outcomes. The study also instructs organizations about the most affected outcome of customers in response to marketing strategy. Second, the study pinpoints the most important dimension of customer outcomes in leveraging organizational outcomes. Hence, marketing practitioners are called to re-locate the role of marketing strategy concerning organizational results to make better marketing decisions.

Literature Review. The strategy has been deemed as a central part of marketing practice as it drives customer and organizational outcomes (Morgan et al., 2019). The benefits of marketing strategy in improving customer outcomes such as customer satisfaction can be understood through Varadarajan (2015) insights on the purposes of marketing strategy. The author indicated that the purpose of marketing strategy is to enable organizations to attain a sustainable competitive advantage, facilitate organizations to build strong relationships with customers, enable organizations to develop market-based intellectual assets, assist organizations in influencing customer behaviour, and support organizations to achieve marketing differentiation. Accordingly, achieving these objectives makes customers satisfied (Aityassine, 2022). Previous research identifies a significant effect of digital marketing strategy on customer outcomes such as digital customer purchase intention (Dastane, 2020; Alwan and Alshurideh, 2022), customer satisfaction (Al-Hawary and Al-Smeran, 2016; Onobrakpeya and Mac-Attama, 2017; De Pelsmacker et al., 2018; Adamet et al., 2020; 2016; Ilyas et al., 2021). Therefore, it is expected that digital marketing strategy as an approach to digital branding and digital communication (Indumathi, 2018) affects customer satisfaction as stated in the following hypothesis:

H1: Digital marketing strategy significantly predicts customer satisfaction.

In terms of customer satisfaction impacts, it is noted that scholars are more interested in its effects on other customer outcomes such as customer retention (Alshurideh et al., 2012) and customer loyalty (Osman and Sentosa, 2013; Alshurideh et al., 2017). However, there is evidence of a significant positive role of customer satisfaction on organizational outcomes such as organizational profitability (Odunlami et al., 2013), service quality (Alabboodi, 2019), brand development (Tariq et al., 2022; Asif et al., 2022), organizational performance (Nazari et al., 2020), and marketing performance (Alsheikh, 2020). Hence, it is expected that customer satisfaction is positively related to organizational outcomes, as assumed in the following hypothesis:

H2: Customer satisfaction significantly predicts organizational outcomes.

A key assumption on the impact of marketing strategy is that it positively relates to customer engagement (Bismo and Putra, 2019), which is regarded as a customer psychological state in terms of

customer emotional bonds to a specific brand (Mohammad, 2020). A common definition of customer engagement by van Doorn et al. (2010) indicates that this construct refers to customer behaviors that go beyond purchase transactions, like customer-positive word-of-mouth (WOM) and customer participation. It was acknowledged that customer engagement is affected by digital marketing strategies such as social media marketing (Al-Hawary and Al-Fassed, 2022) and mobile marketing (Baena, 2016). Leckie et al. (2021) added that customers' perceived value of green products enhances their brand love and engagement. Further, customer engagement significantly mediates some relationships, such as the relationship between social media analytics and business performance (Garg et al., 2020). Based on these results, it is expected that there is a direct effect of digital marketing strategy and customer engagement, as postulated in the next hypothesis:

H3: Digital marketing strategy significantly predicts customer engagement.

On the other side, it is expected, based on previous research, that customer engagement plays a significant role in enriching organizational outcomes such as business performance (Garg et al., 2020), successful organizational innovation (Badr, 2018), and organizational ambidexterity (Tariq et al., 2022). Moreover, Braojos et al. (2017) found that online customer engagement mediates the effect of social media and e-business capabilities and organizational performance. These studies suggest a positive link between customer engagement and some organizational outcomes. For investigating such a link using the current data, the following hypothesis is introduced:

H4: Customer engagement significantly predicts organizational outcomes.

Loyal customers are those who would return to purchase the same product, provide positive word-of-mouth about the product, consider the organization as a first choice, and has good relationships with the organization (Alshurideh et al., 2017). Customer loyalty is affected by numerous digital factors such as mobile marketing (Al-Hawary and Obiadat, 2021), relationship management and social customer relationship management (Aldaihani and Ali, 2018; Aldaihani and Ali, 2019), digital marketing (Lopez-García et al., 2019; Ilyas et al., 2021), marketing strategy (Heryanto, 2012; Themba et al., 2019), and e-banking services (Al-Hawary and Hussien, 2016). The logic behind the effect of digital marketing strategy on customer outcomes such as customer loyalty is that such a strategy is related to several indicators, including product, promotions, prices, place, people, processes, and physical evidence (Themba et al., 2019). Such indicators are projected to exert influences on customer behavioral and attitudinal behaviors. Therefore, the following hypothesis is presumed:

H5: Digital marketing strategy significantly predicts customer loyalty.

Customer loyalty as a construct of continuous purchasing, positive friend recommendations, and positive sayings (Themba et al., 2019) should result in positive organizational outcomes. A review of the literature on customer loyalty shows that scholars (e.g., Kiran and Diljit, 2011; Pan et al., 2012; Tarus and Rabach, 2013; Al-Dmour and Sweidan, 2016; Alshurideh et al., 2017) are more involved in investigating drivers of customer loyalty rather than its related impacts. However, some studies (e.g., Liu and Wang, 2017) indicate that customer loyalty could well support business performance. Conceptualizing customer loyalty as behavioral loyalty (repeated purchases) and attitudinal loyalty (WOM), Watson et al. (2015) found a stronger impact of behavioral loyalty on business performance. It is supposed that customer loyalty is positively associated with organizational outcomes, as specified in the following hypothesis:

H6: Customer loyalty is positively related to organizational outcomes.

Methodology and research methods. The sample of this study consists of marketing practitioners working in 10 companies. The total number of respondents is 200, i.e., 20 employees are selected to gather research data using a questionnaire distributed to sample members. The total number of returned questionnaires is 187. Eleven questionnaires are excluded due to invalid responses. Thus, 176 questionnaires are used to carry out data analysis.

Twenty-five items are used to measure research variables. These items are developed referring to previous related works: digital marketing strategy (Al-Hawary and Obiadat, 2021; Lopez-García et al., 2019; Ilyas et al., 2021), customer satisfaction (Al-Hawary and Al-Smeran, 2016), customer engagement (Al-Hawary and Al-Fassed, 2022), customer loyalty (Alshurideh et al., 2017), and organizational outcomes (Alsheikh, 2020; Nazari et al., 2020).

Figure 1, in which the conceptual model is portrayed, indicates that the study is concerned with predicting the effect of marketing strategy (MS) on three key outcomes of customers, i.e., customer satisfaction (CS), customer engagement (CE), and customer loyalty (CL), and exploring the effects of such outcomes on organizational outcomes (OO). It can be noted that the study seeks to test six hypotheses (H1-H6).

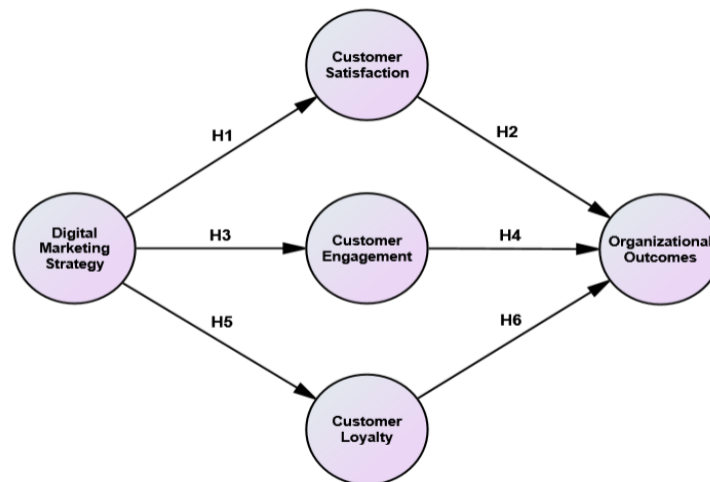


Figure 1. Research conceptual model

Sources: developed by the authors.

Results. Factor loadings (FL) and the average variance extracted are used to test validity, while Cronbach's alpha (α) and composite reliability (CR) are used to assess reliability. Factor loadings and AVE values should be higher than 0.50, and alpha coefficients and CR values should be more than 0.70. Table 1 indicates that these cut-off values are met. Loadings of digital marketing strategy are within (0.769-0.852), loadings of customer satisfaction (0.729-0.841), loadings of customer engagement (0.791-0.837), loadings of customer loyalty (0.714-0.844), and loadings of organizational outcomes (0.744-0.818). These figures indicate that all factor loadings are higher than 0.50. Moreover, the results in Table 1 show that AVE values are higher than 0.50; i.e., digital marketing strategy (0.653), customer satisfaction (0.606), customer engagement (0.665), customer loyalty (0.600), and organizational outcomes (0.606).

Table 1. Findings of validity and reliability tests

Variables	Items	FL	AVE	α	CR	Result
Digital marketing strategy	MS1	0.811	0.653	0.889	0.904	Supported
	MS2	0.829				
	MS3	0.852				
	MS4	0.776				
	MS5	0.769				
Customer satisfaction	CS1	0.777	0.606	0.876	0.885	Supported
	CS2	0.841				
	CS3	0.729				
	CS4	0.751				
	CS5	0.789				
Customer engagement	CE1	0.801	0.665	0.891	0.909	Supported
	CE2	0.837				
	CE3	0.828				
	CE4	0.791				
	CE5	0.821				
Customer loyalty	CL1	0.714	0.600	0.871	0.882	Supported
	CL2	0.738				
	CL3	0.824				
	CL4	0.743				
	CL5	0.844				
Organizational outcomes	OO1	0.789	0.606	0.879	0.885	Supported
	OO2	0.818				
	OO3	0.766				
	OO4	0.774				
	OO5	0.744				

Note: FL – Factor Loadings; AVE – Average Variance Extracted; CR – Composite Reliability; α – Cronbach's Alpha.

Sources: developed by the authors based on AMOS outputs.

On the other hand, the results underline acceptable Cronbach's alpha (α) and composite reliability (CR) values. It can be noted that alpha values are higher than 0.70; i.e., digital customer strategy items (0.889), customer satisfaction items (0.876), customer engagement items (0.891), customer loyalty items (0.871), and organizational outcomes items (0.879). CR values also are higher than 0.70, i.e., digital customer strategy items (0.904), customer satisfaction items (0.885), customer engagement items (0.909), customer loyalty items (0.882) and organizational outcomes items (0.885). The results mentioned above confirm that both validity and reliability are assured. Measurement and structural models fit are assessed using four indices; Chi-square to degrees of freedom (CMIN/DF), the goodness of fit index (GFI), the comparative fit index (CFI), and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). The results show that these two models fit the current data well, as CMIN/DF = 2.74 and 2.85, GFI = 0.912 and 0.923, CFI = 0.926 and 0.938, respectively.

The correlation between marketing strategy, customer outcomes, and organizational outcomes (Table 2), indicates that these variables are significantly correlated. The independent variable (marketing strategy) is significantly correlated to customer satisfaction, engagement, and loyalty, which are significantly linked to the dependent variable (organizational outcomes).

Table 2. Pearson's coefficients

Variables	MS	CS	CE	CL	OO
Digital marketing strategy	-				
Customer satisfaction	0.392*	-			
Customer engagement	0.412*	0.461*	-		
Customer loyalty	0.368*	0.558*	0.429*	-	
Organizational outcomes	0.459*	0.470*	0.398*	0.522*	-

Note: MS – Digital Marketing Strategy; CS – Customer Satisfaction; CE – Customer Engagement; CL – Customer Loyalty; OO – Organizational Outcomes; * – coefficients are significant at 0.05.

Sources: developed by the authors based on SPSS outputs.

Research hypotheses are tested using the structural model in Figure 2. The results (Figure 2 and Table 3) indicate that all research hypotheses are supported. It means that digital marketing strategy has significant effects on customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.361$, Sig. = 0.000), customer engagement ($\beta = 0.298$, Sig. = 0.001), and customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.259$, Sig. = 0.000).

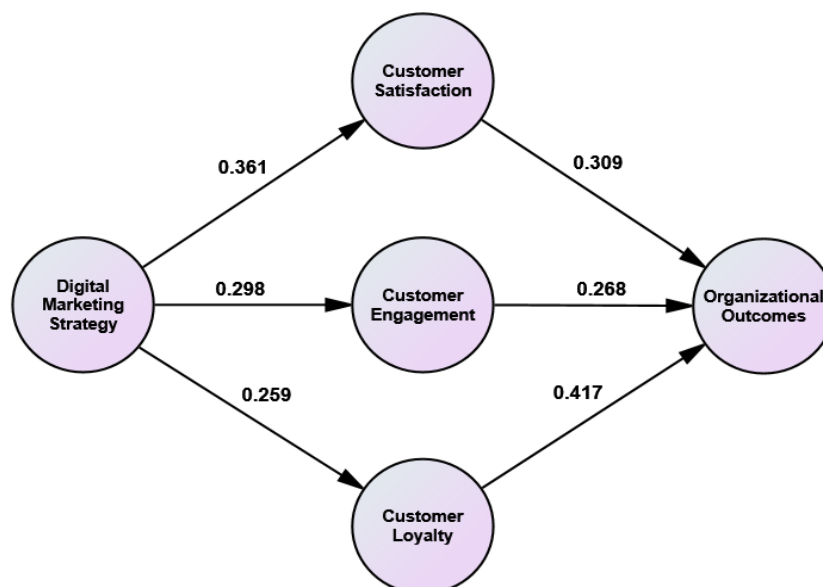


Figure 2. Research structural model

Sources: developed by the authors based on AMOS outputs.

These results confirm that hypotheses H1, H3, and H5 are accepted. On the other hand, the results underline the significant effects of customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.309$, Sig. = 0.000), customer engagement ($\beta = 0.268$, Sig. = 0.000), and customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.417$, Sig. = 0.000) on organizational outcomes, which

means that hypotheses H2, H4, and H5 are accepted. It can be noted that customer satisfaction is the most affected outcome by digital marketing strategy, followed by customer engagement, then customer loyalty. Additionally, customer loyalty has the greatest effect on organizational outcomes, followed by customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

Table 3. Results of the structural model

Hypothesis	IV	Path	DV	β	Sig.	Result
H1	MS	→	CS	0.361	0.000	Accepted
H2	CS	→	OO	0.298	0.001	Accepted
H3	MS	→	CE	0.259	0.000	Accepted
H4	CE	→	OO	0.309	0.000	Accepted
H5	MS	→	CL	0.268	0.000	Accepted
H6	CL	→	OO	0.417	0.000	Accepted

Note: MS – Digital Marketing Strategy; CS – Customer Satisfaction; CE – Customer Engagement; CL – Customer Loyalty; OO – Organizational Outcomes.

Sources: developed by the authors based on AMOS outputs.

Conclusions. The results indicate that digital marketing strategy, assessed based on digital and green indicators, is significantly and positively related to the three customer outcomes used in the study, i.e., customer satisfaction, customer engagement, and customer loyalty. These results support H1, H3, and H5. These findings are in line with several previous studies. According to Varadarajan (2015), customer satisfaction could be explained based on the benefits of digital marketing strategy, such as building strong relationships with customers, helping organizations modify customer behavior, and succeeding in marketing differentiation. In this context, digital means for achieving marketing objectives lead to more satisfied customers (Al-Hawary and Al-Smeran, 2016). Moreover, digital marketing strategy has a significant effect on customer engagement as customers have emotional bonds to the product (Mohammad, 2020) and go beyond purchasing behaviour (van Doorn et al., 2010). A study by Al-Hawary and Al-Fassed (2022) asserted that social media is a key antecedent of customer engagement. Furthermore, digital marketing strategies like mobile marketing (Al-Hawary and Obiadat, 2021) and digital marketing (Lopez-García et al., 2019) significantly improve customer engagement. On the other hand, the study revealed that customer outcomes, i.e., customer satisfaction, customer engagement, and customer loyalty, directly affect organizational outcomes as measured by organizational capabilities and performance, supporting H2, H4, and H6. In fact, similar results are found in previous studies. Alsheikh (2020) found a positive association between customer satisfaction and marketing performance, Nazari et al. (2020) highlighted the importance of customer satisfaction in organizational performance enhancement, Tariq et al. (2022) linked customer engagement to organizational ambidexterity, Braojos et al. (2017) connected customer engagement to organizational performance, Liu and Wang (2017) and Watson et al. (2015) specified a strong effect of customer loyalty on business performance. Based on these results, it is concluded that for marketing managers to enhance organizational outcomes should consider customer outcomes such as customer satisfaction, customer engagement, and customer loyalty, which are affected by marketing strategies. Hence, marketing managers are requested to pay great attention to their marketing strategy considering its effects on customer satisfaction and other customer outcomes like customer engagement and customer loyalty. Likewise, scholars are required to re-test the current model to identify the mediating role of the outcomes mentioned above in the effect of marketing strategy on organizational outcomes.

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Вплив стратегії цифрового маркетингу на клієнтів компаній та результати її діяльності

Метою роботи є оцінювання впливу стратегії цифрового маркетингу на задоволеність, залученість та лояльність клієнтів компанії та результати її діяльності. Для оцінювання обраних змінних дослідження, у роботі застосовано двадцять п'ять індикаторів, групованих у п'ять груп, розроблених з урахуванням результатів попередніх досліджень: стратегія цифрового маркетингу, задоволеність, залученість та лояльність клієнтів, а також результати діяльності компанії. З урахуванням бюджету дослідження та часових обмежень, у процесі збору даних було застосовано метод випадкової вибірки. Для перевірки гіпотез дослідження застосовано методологію моделювання структурних рівнянь (SEM) за допомогою програмного забезпечення AMOS. Вихідні дані для дослідження сформовано на основі анкетування практикуючих маркетологів, які працюють в 10 відібраних організаціях. Загалом було розповсюджено 200 анкет, з яких 187 повернуто. При

цьому 11 анкет було виключено через недостовірність даних. Таким чином, емпіричне дослідження проведено на основі результатів анкетування 176 респондентів. За результатами дослідження підтверджено значний вплив задоволеності, залученості та лояльності клієнтів компанії на результати її діяльності. Авторами зазначено, що стратегія цифрового маркетингу має найбільший вплив на задоволеність клієнтів. Дещо менший вплив є на залучення клієнтів та їх лояльність. Своєю чергою, лояльність клієнтів має найбільший вплив на результати діяльності компанії, потім задоволеність клієнтів та їх лояльність. За результатами дослідження автори прийшли до висновку, що підвищення ефективності діяльності компанії залежать від підвищення задоволеності її клієнтів, їх залученості та лояльності, на які впливають стратегії цифрового маркетингу. Таким чином, менеджерам з маркетингу рекомендовано приділяти значну увагу маркетинговій стратегії, враховуючи її вплив на задоволеність, залученість та лояльність клієнтів. Враховуючи отримані результати, авторами наголошено на необхідності дослідження посередницької ролі задоволеності, залученості та лояльності клієнтів при аналізі впливу маркетингової стратегії на результати діяльності компанії.

Ключові слова: стратегія цифрового маркетингу, задоволеність клієнтів, залученість клієнтів, лояльність клієнтів, організаційні результати.