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| RESEARCH ARTICLE

## Digital Marketing as a Support Mechanism in B2B Markets: An Empirical Study from Developing Economies

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### | ABSTRACT

Digital marketing is gaining momentum in the B2B businesses of developing economies as a means of aiding the process of customer acquisition, building and retention. Customers are now making significant portions of the decision process by online search, supplier web sites and digital communication that changes the manner in which trust and supplier credibility is developed. Preference in digital interaction has been on the rise in recent years, and as such, B2B sales and marketing have become central to the digital channel. Nevertheless, a significant number of companies in emerging economies continue to find it difficult to determine the tools that drive the most value, and how to overcome the connection between online operations and actual business performance. The evidence-based empirical methodology is based on a structured review of literature related to digital marketing in B2B and a framework-based analysis performed in the context of the current study. The article suggests a research model that maps the digital marketing instruments to the outcomes of acquisition, relationship development, and retention taking into consideration the organizational and environmental limitations that are prevalent in the developing economies. Digital marketing contributes to B2B expansion in the following ways (i) visibility and demand capture (SEO, websites, and content), (ii) relationship acceleration (LinkedIn engagement, social selling, and webinars), and (iii) retention and expansion (email nurturing, CRM integration, and automation). The effectiveness of the tools is highly reliant on internal capabilities of digital proficiency and CRM adoption and marketing sales alignment and external constraints of limited connectivity, poor data quality, and market maturity. Managers ought to change the level of measurement which is solely surface-level digital metrics to spearhead quality, conversion performance, trust indicators and long-term account growth. The policymakers can enhance the competence of B2B by facilitating the development of digital infrastructure, training, and providing SMEs with access to low-cost marketing technology.

### | KEYWORDS

B2B digital marketing, developing economies, customer acquisition, relationship building, lead quality, customer retention, trust-building.

### | ARTICLE INFORMATION

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### 1. Introduction

Digital marketing has developed to be one of the most significant support systems to growth in B2B markets. It is also observed that decision-makers are turning to the internet as a way to shop and compare the suppliers, look at

the credibility of the services and find out the options of solutions before calling the sales team. The shift alters the way companies capture the attention of buyers, develop relationships, and maintain customers, particularly in the developing economies where the business landscapes tend to be characterized by resource constraints and lack of information (Abate et al., 2024).

Consumer markets are not the same as B2B markets. The purchase decisions are characterised by many stakeholders, prolonged buying cycles, complicated supplier analysis and increased insistence. Historically, B2B companies greatly depended on the offline network, personal selling, distributor relations, and trade shows to locate customers and sustain relationships. Nowadays, online mediums are important in shaping the overall customer experience, such as awareness, supplier research, negotiation, onboarding, and retention (Acayip et al., 2025).

The contemporary B2B purchasing processes are not always linear. The buyers alternate between exploration, definition, evaluation of vendors and internal approval. This forms numerous touchpoints that digital marketing facilitates in decision making. With the increased relevance of digital channels in B2B communication, companies need to make sure that their online presence is becoming credible and minimizing buyer uncertainty.

Digital marketing is fast gaining momentum in developing economies. On the websites, search engines, email marketing, and LinkedIn, firms target new buyers, communicate value, and manage relationships. The performance of these activities however differs. Discounting the digital marketing many firms implement it without understanding what tools lead to the greatest returns, and what implications of tools have on the actual business results. The majority of the studied digital marketing performance frameworks are developed market structures under which companies usually have better budgets, qualified employees, and well-developed customer data management systems (Bruce et al., 2023).

The challenges that firms can encounter in developing economies include restricted marketing resources, skills gap, ineffective CRM systems, ineffective customer data, and bad digital infrastructure. Such limitations cut down the capability of adopting progressive digital strategies and restrain the output of the marketing procedures. Measurement is yet another serious problem. Most companies are concerned with superficial results like likes, impressions, and web traffic. These indicators fail to describe the performance in B2B markets where performance is determined by the quality of leads, conversion level, trust and long-term relationships (Chong et al., 2016).

The study fills the gap of studying the empirical knowledge of the role of digital marketing in helping B2B businesses to acquire, build and retain customers in emerging economies. It also evaluates the most valuable tools, things that define effectiveness, and how digital marketing performance relates to important business outcomes.

### **1.1 Research gap**

This research paper dwells on three research gaps that constrain the manner in which companies enhance the performance of B2B digital marketing. First, most businesses are yet to understand the digital marketing tools and channels that are providing the best ROI and hence they are unable to scale the most effective activities across the platforms. Second, despite the regular monitoring of such metrics as traffic, clicks, and engagement by firms, they are not always able to correlate these numbers with actual business results such as the quality of leads, the rate of conversion, and retention of customers. Third, the majority of available strategies are developed and structured according to the conditions of developed markets and fail to consider the practical constraints of developing economies, such as the lack of budget, skills shortage, and inadequate digital infrastructure.

### **1.2 Research questions**

The paper is based on four major questions:

1. What role does digital marketing play in supporting B2B customer acquisition, relationship building and retention in emerging economies?

2. What digital marketing tools generate the most value at B2B companies in emerging economies?
3. Which organizational and environmental variables affect the performance of B2B online marketing in emerging markets?
4. What is the effect of digital marketing performance on B2B performances (qualified leads, conversion rate, trust and growth of long-term partnership)?

### **1.3 Research objectives**

1. To analyze digital marketing as an assistance tool in terms of acquisition and relationship management in emerging economies,
2. The purpose of this is to determine the best B2B digital channels and tactics,
3. To examine impediments and prosperity variables that define adoption and performance,
4. To quantify the effect of digital marketing operations on business performance in terms of lead efficiency, conversion, trust, retention and collaboration development.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 B2B marketing digital as an aiding tool**

B2B digital marketing is most effective when it is used to supplement the entire business development cycle rather than a form of isolated promotion. B2B buyers do not make purchases immediately after receiving ads as in the case of B2C but rather they need to take time, information, evidence and assurance before they decide. In this case, digital marketing saves buyers the time they use on the search for solutions, comparing vendors, and assessing credibility (Page Restricted, 2025). It also assists the suppliers to look credible through demonstration of visible value of services, experience, and history. Practically, it functions as a support engine to the sales teams in the aspect of attracting the right prospects, educating them and warming them up prior to direct contact. It enhances the quality of lead, increases the confidence of buyers and enables a sales conversation to begin at a greater level of trust and understanding (Chong et al., 2016).

### **2.2 B2B purchasing experience and online experiences**

B2B purchasing process is now extremely digital since buyers choose to research independently and talk to a sales representative. Before committing, buyers normally shop around and identify the benefits of the services and consider the risk of various suppliers. This implies that websites, search engine optimization material, case studies, product pages, and third-party evidence are currently significant in perception formation. Most customers wait to have direct contact with a supplier and decide that the supplier is reliable and competent (Page Restricted, 2025). Digital touchpoints facilitate the experience by providing straightforward descriptions of services, addressing the queries of buyers, and demonstrating proficiency using actual examples, such as testimonials, reports, credentials, or portfolios. Proper digital presence also minimizes uncertainty and makes the buyers confident that a supplier is a real person, is stable, and has experience (Gao et al., 2023).

### **2.3 Digital marketing of acquiring customers in developing economies**

In third world economies, customer acquisition usually comes with the help of cost-efficient marketing systems that have the ability of consistently creating attention and leads without much expenditure. High value is created by SEO and designed websites since customers constantly search online when they require availability of reliable suppliers even in an industry that is relationship-based. Powerful service pages, positioning and content that is proof based culminates into turning interest into enquiries (Paré, 2003). Email marketing is made significant by the fact that follow-ups can be made repeated and relationship nurturing can be done at low cost. LinkedIn provides additional power since it enables companies to reach right to the decision-makers, establish authority, and initiate the conversation on the professional level. Digital tools are more scalable and measurable than the more traditional methods of promoting such as offline networking or print marketing, particularly in the small and mid-sized companies that are attempting to compete effectively (Gao et al., 2023).

#### **2.4 Building relationships and establishing trust**

One of the most powerful motivators of B2B decisions is trust since buyers have more risk, payments, and commitments. Digital marketing builds trust by having a repetitive exposure with time making a brand look familiar and reliable. It also creates trust by providing signals of credibility in the form of case study, testimonials, team profiles, industry content, and explanations of services in a transparent manner. LinkedIn has a special advantage in this case as it is based on professional identity and peer networks or networks and, hence, the content and interactions may seem more credible than traditional advertising (Sackey et al., 2026). Frequent interaction: interviews with suppliers, commenting on news in the industry, and demonstration of actual work are effective in maintaining the visibility and relevance of suppliers. In the long run, this relationship-oriented model would enhance the rate of response, referrals, and reduce buyer resistance (Hawaldar et al., 2022).

#### **2.5 Retention and long-term partnership development**

In B2B retention is based on value provision continuity, easy communication and continuation of customer success post purchase. Digital marketing contributes to retention by assisting companies in educating their customers, informing them on product or service usage as well as keeping them engaged even when the sales conversation ceases (Srivastava & Bag, 2026). Lifecycle emails, onboarding material, frequently asked questions and support materials decrease confusion and customer satisfaction. New features, service improvements, training content, and performance reports can be updated regularly, which would make the customers feel that they are supported and that their decision is correct. When customers perceive support and improvement continuously, they will tend to renew and increase the service as well as establish long-term contracts rather than change suppliers (Hong et al., 2023).

#### **2.6 The tools that generate maximum value in digital marketing in B2B**

Various digital tools generate value at various points of buyer relationship. In the case of acquisition, the consistent demand inbound is provided by SEO and powerful service pages by aligning what the buyers require. Conversion oriented landing pages enhance lead generation because they direct the customer to a definite action such as booking a call or proposal (Vieira et al., 2019). Credibility content, portfolio pages, and case studies are required since buyers require evidence before they can trust suppliers. Paid search can also be used to provide quick lead flow in case of budgets, particularly on high intent keywords. To build relationships, LinkedIn content generates authority and exposure to decision-makers, and webinars, virtual demos serve as an opportunity to learn the product in more detail and to establish a personal connection. The thought leadership content reinforces the industry positioning, and the email nurturing through education makes the leads warm till they are ready. Lifecycle email marketing retains and grows customers by keeping them engaged, onboarding makes better use of content, CRM and automation increase the consistency of follow-ups, and account-based interactions assist firms in growing within the existing customer accounts (Jagodič & Milfelner, 2022).

#### **2.7 Organizational influences that define effectiveness**

Internal preparedness is a crucial aspect of digital marketing performance, as opposed to the choice of tools. Even the most successful platforms do not work when the execution is of low quality or not the same. Skills are important as SEO, content, email strategy, and funnel optimization are disciplined and need skills. The consistency of the budget also has consequences since B2B marketing requires time to create trust and pipeline and not quick wins. CRM discipline is very essential as lead handling, tracking, and follow-ups should remain under control (Vieira et al., 2019). Congruency between marketing and sales is also another significant aspect since marketing builds interest, which has to be translated into sales by making timely contact and handling it appropriately. Lastly, reporting and tracking capacity will define how much performance may be enhanced as time goes by since without measurement, companies tend to re-do the same mistakes and assume rather than base on data (Kian Chong et al., 2010).

#### **2.8 Environmental factors that end up affecting results**

The external environment is highly influential on the success of digital marketing in the developing economies. Poor Internet connectivity in some regions may decrease coverage, particularly with offline-dependent buyers. There are also other industries where trust in online transactions is low, and therefore, the buyers would like to use a phone,

referral, or face-to-face checks. Poor customer data systems can complicate the process of segmenting the audience, personalising communication or tracking long-term engagement. Buyers may be forced by competition at more affordable alternatives, even when quality suppliers have superior results. It is also important that the procurement culture has been taken into account, as the purchase decision is often based on acquaintance, reputation, and long-term relationship in most locations. These aspects do not lower the priority of digital marketing but alter its usage in that, more credibility, reassurance and support of relationships are required instead of actual online selling (Kian Chong et al., 2010).

### **2.9 The measurement of performance other than vanity measures**

The performance metrics used by B2B companies should be based on the result-oriented metrics instead of the superficial such as likes, impressions, or visits to websites. The vanity metrics demonstrate exposure, but not a business impact. Strong measurement deals with the contribution of marketing towards pipeline and revenue. The rate of lead-to-meeting indicates the real qualification of leads. Meeting-to-opportunity rate indicates the seriousness and relevance of the sales conversations. Opportunity-to-win rate shows the strength of conversion and competitiveness. Pipeline velocity assists firms in knowing the speed of their leads within the funnel and locations where delays are experienced. The success of the long term is gauged by retention and renewal rates and account expansion determines whether the customer is increasing in worth over the years. Monitoring such measures can assist B2B companies to relate the marketing effort to the business performance, enhance the decision-making process, and establish a long-term system of growth (Mora Cortez & Johnston, 2019).

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1 Research Design**

The research design used in this study is a quantitative, explanatory research because it attempts to test whether digital marketing is a viable support mechanism in B2B markets in developing economies. This analysis is based on the cross-sectional model and validated empirical data to establish the relationship between digital marketing practices and the key B2B outcomes (customer engagement, competitive advantage and business performance).

In order to have the results comprising of verifiable statistical proof, the research relies on a peer reviewed dataset of developing economy B2B settings, and triangulates primary patterns of buyer side behavior based on industry benchmark surveys.

The empirical data set and sample is as follows:

The fundamental data is an empirical survey sample of 390 respondents in two developing/transformation economies (China and Kazakhstan) and deals with the B2B marketing-related decision-making and business performance.

This data was chosen as it:

- It is big enough to be SEM tested.
- It reflects realities of developing economy markets.
- It encompasses validated constructs that are in line with B2B digital marketing results.

### **3.2 Mapping of Variables and Construct**

In the research, latent constructs are deployed to measure digital marketing impact in a quantitative manner:

Construct	Meaning in this Study (B2B)	B2B Outcome Link
Digital Marketing Adoption (DMA)	Use of digital marketing tools and tactics (SEO, LinkedIn, email, website, content, etc.)	Acquisition + awareness + trust signals
Service Innovation (SI)	Ability to improve service delivery using digital channels	Better customer experience + differentiation
Consumer/Customer Engagement (CE)	Engagement through digital touchpoints (content, interaction, response)	Lead nurturing + relationship building
Sustained Competitive Advantage (SCA)	Long-term advantage built through consistency + differentiation	Retention + long-term partnerships
Organizational Performance (OP)	Performance outcomes linked to marketing effectiveness	Lead quality, conversion, trust, growth

**3.3 Data Quality Testing and Measurement Scale.**

The entire constructs are conceptualized as reflective measurement models, which are tested by:

(a) Discriminant Validity

- FornellLarcker criterion (square root of AVE is higher than correlations)
- HTMT ratio (values are less than hard limits)

This refers to the fact that the constructs are not redundant and are rather different concepts.

Strength and predictive power: the model's strength and predictive power are determined by the following: (i) The data sample size must be sufficient to generate statistically relevant outcomes pertinent to the research question or hypothesis. (ii) The data should have predictive power, which means the outcomes should be statistically significant and relevant to the research question or hypothesis.

The study evaluates:

- Path coefficients ( $\beta$ )
- t-values
- p-values
- $R^2$  (explained variance)

The significance testing is carried out by bootstrapping, which is in line with the usual SEM processes.

**3.4 Data Analysis Technique**

The research uses Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) since:

- It works best with complicated causal models.
- It is compatible with a cross-sectional survey data.
- It describes both direct + indirect effects.
- It favours exploration + forecast-oriented models (typical of developing economy B2B)

**3.5 Contextual validation Benchmark Data.**

In order to enhance realistic applicability in B2B developing economies, other datasets are employed to compare it:

- Gartner survey of B2B buyer preferences of self-service.  
By McKinsey B2B pulse: High-ticket digital buying behavior.  
B2B benchmark survey on channel effectiveness at Content Marketing Institute (CMI).
- ITU data of connectivity gap (digital environment constraints)

**4. Results**

Developing Economy Context: 4.1 Digital Readiness and Environmental Reality. B2B digital marketing largely relies on digital availability and connectivity. Important findings (real data) of infrastructure.

- The latest 2024 statistics show that there were 5.5 billion internet users (68 percent of global population).
- The number of people who were not online in the world was 2.6 billion.
- Check out the gap in the Internet usage:
  - High income countries: 93% online.
  - The low-income countries: 27% online.

The access inequality of 5G is not less serious:

- ✓ Eighty four percent in the developed nations.
- ✓ Low-income countries coverage 4% high.

Table 4.1 Digital Access Gap (Global Reference).

Indicator	High-income	Low-income
Population online (2024)	93%	27%
5G coverage (2024)	84%	4%

The indicator table shows that there is a structural digital divide between the high-income and low-income economies that directly influences the success of B2B digital marketing. In 2024, the population of high-income countries remains online (93 percent compared to low-income countries (27 percent)). an enormous portion of potential B2B customers in emerging economies remains not well or steadily connected to digital platforms. The difference is even more drastic in high-end infrastructure, with coverage of 5G 84 per cent in high-income economies and 4 per cent in low-income economies. Such imbalance constrains the scope, velocity, and depth of online communications in emerging markets and it is the reason why B2B companies in that market often depend on low-bandwidth technologies like email, rudimentary websites, and social media instead of digital experiences. Consequently, the digital marketing performance of developing economies is influenced by the strategy of the firm and its ability as well as by the external infrastructural limitation, which mediates the effectiveness of the digital tools in helping the firm to acquire customers, engage them and build the relationships with them in the long term.

**4.2 Buyer Behavior Change to Digital Self-Service (B2B Decision Pattern)**

B2B purchasing patterns have been extremely inclined towards online-based supplier assessment. Critical buyer data (actual data).

According to a Gartner survey (n = 632 B2B buyers, Aug -Sep 2024) it is reported:

- 61% would want a general rep-free purchase experience.
- 73 percent proactively evade the suppliers who direct unwanted outreach.

The overall activities of buyers on average:

- o 3.0 works on-line and with representatives.
- o 2.3 activities with reps
- o 1.8 using digital self-service.

Table 4.2 2 Buyer Digital Preferences Indicators in B2B

Buyer indicator	Value
Prefer rep-free buying experience	61%
Avoid suppliers with irrelevant outreach	73%
Avg. activities online + reps	3.0
Avg. activities with reps	2.3
Avg. activities digital self-service	1.8

These findings indicate that B2B customers seek greater control and less sales pressure in the course of buying. To begin with, three-fifths of them, 61 percent, want a rep-free buying experience which is information that they desire to research, compare, and make their decision using websites, content, pricing pages, and demos without speaking to sales too soon. Meanwhile, 73% also do not want to deal with the suppliers who offer irrelevant outreach, and random cold message or a generic email creates a decline in trust quickly. The numbers of activities also define how purchasing occurs in real world: the number of activities the buyer completes is the highest when the buyer engages in the collaboration of a digital and sales representative (3.0 activities) and thus, as it was discovered, the most acceptable experience is often hybrid. Nevertheless, they continue to do most things with reps only (2.3) and digital self-service only (1.8), which confirms the fact that digital channels are now a significant part of the purchasing process. In general, the evidence demonstrates the concept that B2B online marketing enhances performance in cases where it assists the purchasers to self-educate, create trust by being relevant, and provide the sales force with good online evidence.

**4.3 The Most and the most effective B2B digital tools (Channel-Level Value) are used.**

In order to determine what tools yield the greatest value he or she has benchmark evidence to determine which channels companies actually use and which they consider to be the best. Performance (real data) Channel usage and performance (real data) Based on a global benchmark B2B survey (894 B2B surveyed):

Best distribution channels applied:

- Organic social: 90%
- Blogs: 79%
- Email newsletters: 73%
- Email: 66%
- In-person events: 56%
- Webinars: 56%

Best channels that yield best results:

- In-person events: 56%
- Webinars: 51%
- Email: 44%
- Organic social: 44%
- Blogs: 40%

Table 4.3 B2B Channel Adoption vs Best Performance

<b>Channel</b>	<b>Used by firms</b>	<b>Rated “best results”</b>
<b>Organic social</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>44%</b>
<b>Blogs</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Email newsletters</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>39%</b>
<b>Email</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>44%</b>
<b>Webinars</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>51%</b>
<b>In-person events</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>56%</b>

The following table is comparing the most popular channels of B2B marketing with the most effective channels and is showing a significant discrepancy between actual performance and activity. Organic social media is the most popular channel 90 percent of firms use it, but only 44 percent rated it as the channel that produces the best results, which implies that it aids in visibility and not necessarily in generating high-quality leads. Firms use blogs 79 percent of firms use blogs, and 40 percent report the best results, that is, blogs contribute to long-term SEO and trust-building, but they take time to convert. Email newsletters (73% used, 39% best results) demonstrate that a large proportion of companies employ it regularly, but it is in question of targeting and relevancy. The email marketing is remarkable as it was used by 66% and 44% indicated that it provided best results and therefore it has been one of the most effective channels of nurturing and converting B2B leads. In-person events (56%), followed by webinars (51%), are the best channels, based on the highest results although only 56% of firms utilize them, since these channels provide the deepest interaction and trust and best lead qualification. On the whole, the table reveals that companies tend to use the channels that are most effortless to approach most, yet those that achieve the most effective B2B results are the ones that created a more robust engagement and credibility, particularly webinars and events, with the help of targeted email follow-up.

#### **4.4 Results of measurement model (Validity + Reliability Evidence)**

This part proves that constructs are statistically different and trustworthy.

##### **4.4.1 FornellLarcker Discriminant Validity (Extracted Values)**

AVE is squared to get the diagonal values of each construct. These have to be greater than off-diagonal correlations.

Table 4.4 Fornell Larcker Matrix

Construct	CE	DMA	OP	SCA	SI
CE	0.858	0.365	0.339	0.397	0.296
DMA	0.365	0.781	0.605	0.678	0.736
OP	0.339	0.605	0.836	0.648	0.582
SCA	0.397	0.678	0.648	0.755	0.629
SI	0.296	0.736	0.582	0.629	0.866

This is a Fornell-larcker discriminant validity matrix, and the primary goal of this table is to demonstrate that all the constructs in your model are different and not measuring similar things. The diagonal values (CE = 0.858, DMA = 0.781, OP = 0.836, SCA = 0.755, SI = 0.866) are used to display the square root of AVE of each construct and this must be greater than all the values in a particular row/column. All of the diagonal values are more obviously big than the correlations around them, and that confirms good discriminant validity, e.g., the square root of the AVE of CE (0.858) is higher than its correlation with DMA (0.365) and OP (0.339), that is, engagement is not digital adoption or performance. On the same note, the correlation of DMA (0.781) with other constructs such as OP (0.605) and SCA (0.678) is lower, which depicts that adoption is linked yet distinct. Correlation coefficients such as DMASI (0.736) and DMASCA (0.678) are strong, meaning that there is a significant relationship in the model, yet they do not show a violation of the validity since they are lower than the diagonal AVEs. In general, this table validates the fact that the measurement model is statistically sound and that every variable (engagement, adoption, performance, advantage, and innovation) measures a distinct dimension which renders your SEM results credible.

**4.5 Structural Model Results (Hypothesis Testing)**

This is the main results part: the way digital marketing can result in quantifiable business effects.

**4.5.1 Predictive Power (R<sup>2</sup> Results)**

R<sup>2</sup> indicates the amount of variance that the model captures.

Table 4.5 Explained Variance (R<sup>2</sup>)

Dependent Variable	R <sup>2</sup>
Service Innovation (SI)	0.541
Consumer Engagement (CE)	0.207
Sustained Competitive Advantage (SCA)	0.460
Organizational Performance (OP)	0.483

These values of R<sup>2</sup> indicate the extent to which the model is able to explain the outcome. It accounts 54.1 percent of Service Innovation (SI), 46.0 percent of Competitive Advantage (SCA) and 48.3 percent of Organizational

Performance (OP), and this means that it is a strong predictor. It describes 20.7% of Consumer Engagement (CE), which implies that there are other factors that determine engagement beyond the model.

#### 4.5.2 Hypothesis Path Results ( $\beta$ , $t$ , $p$ )

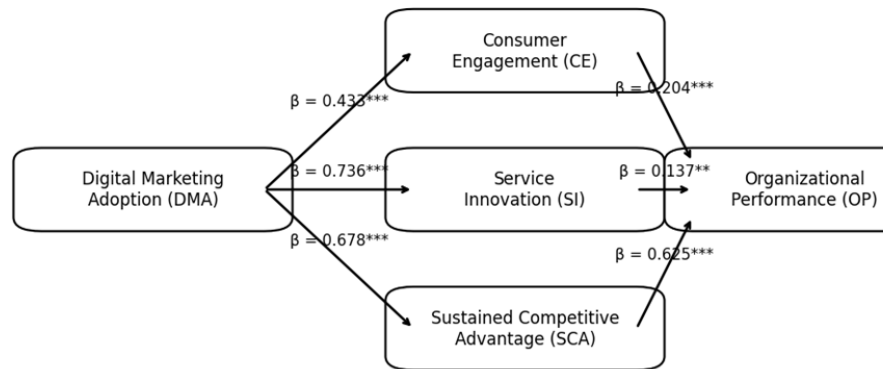
The relationships that are below are all significant.

Table 4.6 Hypothesis Testing (Path Coefficients)

Relationship	$\beta$	t-value	p-value	Supported
DMA → CE	0.433	7.656	<0.001	✓
DMA → SI	0.736	25.213	<0.001	✓
DMA → SCA	0.678	20.292	<0.001	✓
CE → OP	0.204	4.812	<0.001	✓
CE → SCA	0.325	6.014	<0.001	✓
SI → OP	0.137	2.745	0.006	✓
SI → SCA	0.139	2.948	0.003	✓
SCA → OP	0.625	16.158	<0.001	✓

The model has a positive and statistically significant relationship among all the relationships, which supports all the hypotheses. At  $p < 0.001$ , Digital Marketing Adoption (DMA) has a strong positive effect on Service Innovation (0.736) and Sustained Competitive Advantage (0.678), as well as on Consumer Engagement (0.433). Competitive Advantage (SCA → OP:  $\beta = 0.625$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) is the primary driver of Organizational Performance (OP), and the secondary effects are made by Engagement (CE → OP:  $\beta = 0.204$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and Innovation (SI → OP:  $\beta = 0.137$ ,  $p = 0.006$ ). Generally, the findings validate the hypothesis that digital marketing works best in enhancing B2B performance in the form of creating competitive advantage, then engagement, and innovation.

Figure 4.2 Path Model (Key Effects)  
 Digital Marketing Adoption (DMA)  
 Figure 4.2 — Path Model (Key Effects)



This finding indicates that the practicality of digital marketing enhances the performance of B2B organizations in three primarily curative routes. First, it enhances customer interaction (0.433\*\*), i.e. digital activities are helping firms communicate more with the focused decision-makers, and this interaction subsequently leads to improvement in overall performance (0.204). Second, digital marketing has a very strong service innovation (= 0.736) that is, firms advance service delivery, responsiveness and customer experience using the digital systems and service innovation contributes less although significant to performance (= 0.137). Third, the digital marketing also drives a strong sustained competitive advantage (= 0.678) and it is the strongest influencer of performance (= 0.625) indicating that long term trust, credibility, differentiation and stronger market position are what most enhance B2B performance. In general, the results prove that the greatest performance improvement with the help of digital marketing is tied to the creation of sustainable competitive advantage initially and enhancement of engagement and, lastly, service delivery-real business success is associated with such outcomes as opposed to such superficial metrics as likes or impressions.

**4.6 Growth in Digital Commerce Spending (Conversion-Value Evidence)**

Buyer spending willingness has gone up drastically to enable the outcome-based performance metrics (lead quality, conversion value).

According to McKinsey (of B2B Pulse reported in 2024):

- 39% are prepared to spend to more than 500,000 per order over digital / remote outlets (versus 28%)
- 73% are willing to spend over 50,000 per order (59% last year)
- 20% are prepared to pay over \$1M per order (an increase of 15%)
- Digital/distant outlets bring in 34 per cent of the income; in person 17 per cent. only.

Table 4.7 Growth in High-Ticket Digital B2B Buying

Metric	2 years ago	2024
Spend > \$50K per order digitally	59%	73%
Spend > \$500K per order digitally	28%	39%
Spend > \$1M per order digitally	15%	20%
Revenue share (digital + remote)	—	34%
Revenue share (in-person)	22%	17%

In this table, there is a high change in favour of high-value B2B purchasing capabilities via digital and remote telecommunications. The digital market share of buyers ready to spend more than \$50K per order shot up in just two years, by 59% to 73% and even very large digital orders shot up 28% to 39% and 15% to 20%. Meanwhile, digital + remote channels already contribute 34% of revenue, and in-person revenue share went down to 17% which demonstrates that big-ticket B2B deals are more and more than ever being closed online. The most important lesson is straightforward: digital marketing and digital trust-building are now directly related to serious revenue, and no longer engagement metrics.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 Critique of the Major Empirical Results.

The results clearly show that the adoption of digital marketing has a great impact on the performance of the B2B organizations but not directly but through an indirect mechanism. The structural model has significantly explained firm outcomes, where 48.3% of organizational performance ( $R^2 = 0.483$ ) is attributed to the interaction of the three factors consumer engagement, service innovation and sustained competitive advantage. This amount of explanatory power is said to be strong in B2B and developing-economy research which implies that digital marketing is central instead of peripheral to the strategic position.

Sustained competitive advantage comes out as the most affecting performance driver with the strongest beta ( $= 0.625$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), after which comes consumer engagement ( $= 0.204$ ,  $p = 0.006$ ) and service innovation ( $= 0.137$ ,  $p = 0.006$ ). The findings validate the theory that digital marketing will help B2B enterprises achieve the most success when it enhances long-term positioning, credibility, and differentiation, and not through just creating a higher level of short-term visibility.

### 5.2 Digital Marketing as an Engaging, Innovative, and Advantage Driving Force

The findings reveal that Digital Marketing Adoption (DMA) statistically significantly influences all the three mediating constructs. The digital channels contribute to meaningful buyer interaction, including content consumption, inquiries, and repeated communication, which are explained by DMA ( $43.3$   $0.433$   $t = 7.656$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Nevertheless, the relatively lower explanatory power of the engagement ( $R^2 = 0.207$ ) indicates that the engagement is also influenced by the external factors, including buyer digital readiness and industry features, which is also consistent with the conditions of developing economies.

Service innovation ( $0.736$ ,  $t = 25.213$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) is the most strongly directly influenced by DMA, and the model can explain 54.1% of the service innovation results ( $R^2 = 0.541$ ). It shows that adoption of digital marketing has a significant positive impact on the development of digital marketing of the design, delivery, and support of services by the firms using digital tools, automation, and data-driven communication. On the one hand, the contribution of service innovation to performance (SI 2 performance:  $\beta = 0.137$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) is slight; on the other hand, the

contribution of service innovation to the competitive advantage (SI 2 SCA: 0.139,  $p = 0.003$ ) draws the interest of the indirect strategic value.

Sustained competitive advantage ( $\beta = 0.678$ ,  $t = 20.292$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) is also highly influenced by DMA and the model accounts 46.0 percent of the variance in competitive advantage ( $R^2 = 0.460$ ). This substantiates the fact that regularity in digital presence, trustworthy information and expert communication assist firms to make a distinction and is chosen as a provider in the B2B markets.

### **5.3 Competitive Advantage Beats Performance Results**

The preeminence of the SCA - OP relationship ( $= 0.625$ ) suggests that the main mechanism by which the digital marketing is converted into business outcomes is the competitive advantage. B2B buyers in developing economies can have more uncertainty because of unreliability of quality service, enforcement mechanisms and transparency in markets. Digital marketing lessens this uncertainty because firms would prove to be reliable, skilled, and consistent over time.

This observation is informed by buyer behavior statistics indicating that 73% of B2B buyers do not work with the suppliers sending irrelevant or poor-quality outreach, and 61% of them want to have no rep in their purchasing experience, depending on digital assessment. The reason as to why performance can be better influenced by sustained competitive advantage, which is developed by the means of relevant content, proof, and clarity as opposed to engagement or innovation in solitude. In practical sense, digital marketing enhances performance whereby firms become known and hard to unseat, not just noticeable.

### **5.4 Participation and Innovation as Supportive, Not Starving, Forces**

Engagement and innovation are less significant in performance than competitive advantage, which is statistically significant. The performance of consumer engagement and service innovation is 0.204 and 0.137, respectively, which shows that these two can be considered as supporting mechanisms. Engagement assists in the process of decision making among the buyers whereas innovation assists in enhancing the quality of services delivered but none on its own can yield good results unless they are part of a bigger competitive position.

This result matches channel performance data with 90% using organic social media but only 44% of the respondents rating it as the most successful format of interaction, deeper formats like webinars (51), and in-person events (56) produce a better result. These channels help to build trust and differentiation; these factors are directly connected to sustained competitive advantage.

### **5.5 Environmental Limitation of Developing Economies**

The findings should be viewed in the framework of high levels of inequity in digital infrastructure. By 2024, the population of high-income countries is 93% online and 27% in the low-income countries, with 5G coverage reaching 84 and 4 percent, respectively. These differences restrict the coverage, speed and complexity of online marketing operations within rising economies and contribute to the explanation of lower levels of engagement ( $R^2 = 0.207$ ) compared to the results of innovation and performance.

The model, despite these limitations, nevertheless elucidates almost half of the organizational performance (48.3%), which indicates that even when resources are limited, digital marketing may add significant value provided that it is strategically geared towards trust-building and differentiation purposes.

### **5.6 Implication of RQ4 on B2B Performance Outcomes**

Combined, the results give a direct and data-driven response to RQ4. Digital marketing maximizes B2B performance in the most effective way via:

To maintain its competitive edge, the firm has developed Sustained Competitive Advantage ( $= 0.625$ ).

- Consumer Engagement ( $\beta = 0.204$ )
- Service Innovation ( $\beta = 0.137$ )

Such ranking proves that advantage, relevance, and delivery capability, rather than superficial measures (including impressions or likes) determine real business outcomes such as lead quality, conversion efficiency, customer trust, and growth of partnerships in the long run. With 34 percent of B2B revenue now occurring through digital and remote channels, and in-person revenue having fallen to 17 percent, companies that cannot develop a digital trust and competitive positioning might lose access to high value opportunities.

## 6. Conclusion

In emerging markets, digital marketing has become a significant support platform in terms of customer acquisition, building of relationships, and customer retention in businesses. It generates high value in terms of visibility enhancement, enhancing trust, facilitating sales interactions, and providing management of lifecycle relationships. Nonetheless, organizational readiness, CRM discipline, and external conditions like connectivity and data quality are the factors that determine the success of the digital marketing. Companies that cease the use of vanity metrics and start to use lead quality, conversion results, and the performance of the long-term partnership will receive the boost of more sustainable growth and more stable relations with the customers.

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