“Data-driven strategic orientation and customer value creation: The mediating role of digital marketing transformation – evidence from Jordanian telecommunications”

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DATA-DRIVEN STRATEGIC ORIENTATION AND CUSTOMER VALUE CREATION: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF DIGITAL MARKETING TRANSFORMATION – EVIDENCE FROM JORDANIAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS

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Abstract

In the face of growing competition, it has become important to understand the role of data-driven strategic orientation in customer value creation. This study aims to examine the impact of data-driven strategic orientation on customer value creation and to test the mediating role of digital marketing transformation within the Jordanian telecommunications sector, focusing on Zain, Umniah, and Orange. This study was conducted among a sample of 423 managerial employees using an electronic questionnaire. Data were collected in July and August 2025. SPSS was used as a tool to analyze the data. The findings of the study reveal that data-driven strategic orientation has a significant and direct impact on customer value creation ($\beta = 0.280$, $p < 0.05$). Besides, data-driven strategic orientation has a significant impact on digital marketing transformation ($\beta = 0.571$, $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, digital marketing transformation has a significant impact on customer value creation ($\beta = 0.446$, $p < 0.001$). Besides, the findings of the study reveal that digital marketing transformation has a partial mediating impact between data-driven strategic orientation and customer value creation ($\beta = 0.255$, $p < 0.001$). These results indicate that data-driven strategic orientation strengthens digital marketing transformation, thereby enhancing customer value creation.

Keywords data-driven, strategy, value, transformation, marketing, telecommunications, Jordan

JEL Classification M15, M31, O33

INTRODUCTION

Even though data-driven strategic orientation has become a key factor for competition in the field of business strategy and the environment, organizations are still struggling to figure out how to use data efficiently to create customer value (Akter et al., 2021). The result is that there are many organizations currently struggling because they lack strong analytics capabilities (Salah & Alzghoul, 2024; Vrontis et al., 2022). This state of affairs can easily lead to a scenario where there is a reluctance to embrace analytics-driven activity (Seitz & Burosch, 2018). As such, they miss out on opportunities to make a positive impact on customers (Bu et al., 2022). The fast-growing state of digital technology clearly demonstrates the extent to which digital marketing change can become a priority (Juan, 2025). The opportunity that exists to effect positive digital marketing change can mediate effectively between analytics-driven insight on the one hand and those actions being implemented on behalf of customers (Nwabekee et al., 2024).

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They can offer a guaranteed range of technological opportunities to make a difference to customers and ultimately impact customer experience (Toufaily & Zalan, 2023).

The application of this insight might prove to be profoundly relevant in understanding the way in which digital marketing change can transform analytics-driven decision-making into value-creating (customer value) activity (Alwan & Alshurideh, 2022). This overarching insight into the above-mentioned activity can help illuminate the point that there has to be an understanding of the way in which change can be linked to value (Awamleh et al., 2024; Oumaima & Lamari, 2024). Customers' expectations are constantly changing in an increasingly dynamic marketplace (Criado-Gomis et al., 2020). This reality puts pressure on companies to develop more flexible, tech-based strategies, especially as new competitors continue to emerge (Rajendran, 2024).

However, as things change, a long-standing problem remains: organizations are not completely clear on how a focus on data connects to creating value for customers, particularly when it comes to digital marketing strategies (Hurina et al., 2023). The interaction between digital transformation and data-driven strategies is a subject of little interest to traditional studies in the literature (Criado-Gomis et al., 2020; Rajendran, 2024). Moreover, empirical studies in developing countries, especially in Middle Eastern telecommunications industries, are limited, making it difficult to gain an understanding of administrative employees' perspectives and behaviors regarding data-driven practices and digital marketing activities (Al-Zu'bi et al., 2025; Salah & Alzghoul, 2024).

1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Dynamic Capabilities Theory acts as a foundation in understanding the concept of data-driven strategic orientation (Akter et al., 2021; Lee, 2025). The theory helps in understanding how an organization recognizes business opportunities and responds to them through strategic actions (Akter et al., 2021; Khawaldeh et al., 2025). In this regard, data-driven strategic orientation is an organizational ability to systematically collect and use data in strategic decision-making (Kumar, 2024). The use of analytics in strategic planning, market segmentation, and business operations enhances the ability of an organization to be responsive to dynamic environments (Kumar, 2024). The ability of an organization to use data insights will help in understanding customer behavior patterns and trends in the market, thus improving its competitive advantage (Juan, 2025).

The concept of digital marketing transformation is based on digital transformation theory and the technology-organization-environment framework (Chernobrovkina & Chernobrovkin, 2024; Nwabekee et al., 2024). Two theories provide an understanding of the interaction between technology, organization, and environment in digital transformation (Chernobrovkina & Chernobrovkin, 2024). Digital marketing transformation is an organizational strategy to integrate technology in marketing activities (Arias-Pérez et al., 2021; Toufaily & Zalan, 2023). Digital marketing transformation involves the use of technology in personalization, automation, and customer segmentation (Rajendran, 2024; Nwabekee et al., 2024). The use of technology in processing data will help in translating technology into an efficient marketing strategy (Rajendran, 2024).

Value creation theory and service-dominant logic theoretically underpin customer value creation (Hurina et al., 2023; Billore, 2024). Customer value creation is an extension of product characteristics that now includes personalization, convenience, service quality, and digital experience (Criado-Gomis et al., 2020; Hurina et al., 2023). Organizations with high analytics capabilities and digital marketing skills are more likely to provide their offerings in a way that is consistent with customer value evolution (Matarazzo et al., 2021). Thus, customer value creation is not only an outcome of organizational outputs but also of service experiences and digital engagement processes.

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Research findings have demonstrated the existence of a direct relationship between data-driven strategic orientation and customer value creation. It is possible for an organization to understand the needs of the customer and minimize uncertainties in the decision-making process if it has access to data (Bu et al., 2022; Abrantes & Lindberg, 2023). Thus, an organization with a data-driven strategic orientation is likely to offer better value to the customer. The result is likely to enhance customer satisfaction (Akter et al., 2021; Almajali et al., 2025). This research finding offers support for the expectation that there is a positive relationship between data-driven strategic orientation and customer value creation.

Data-driven strategic orientation is likely to drive the digital marketing transformation process in an organization. An organization is likely to invest in digital marketing, marketing analytics, digital marketing automation tools, and artificial intelligence if it has adopted a data-driven strategic orientation (Matarazzo et al., 2021; Yu et al., 2022). This approach is likely to enhance the technological readiness of the organization. This is because the research findings have demonstrated the existence of a positive relationship between investments in digital marketing, artificial intelligence, and technological readiness. An organization with a data-driven strategic orientation is likely to foster innovation (Hurina et al., 2023). Such an attitude is likely to drive the digital marketing transformation process in the organization. Innovation is a requirement of the digital marketing transformation process (Samarah et al., 2025). Thus, data-driven strategic orientation can be considered the foundational driver of the digital marketing transformation process.

Additionally, digital marketing transformation significantly enhances the strength of customer value creation. Through the application of automation technologies, predictive analytics, communication technologies, and omnichannel technologies, it is possible to offer effective marketing solutions to the organization (Chernobrovkina & Chernobrovkin, 2024; Rajendran, 2024). Digitally advanced firms are likely to be more responsive, consistent in service, and offer higher perceived value (Alarabiat et al., 2025; Kumar, 2024). Moreover, digitally advanced firms are likely to be able to anticipate their customers more accurately (Hien & Nhu, 2022; Oumaima & Lamari, 2024). In this context, there is a strong argument that digital marketing transformation will significantly influence the strength of customer value creation.

Most importantly, it is argued that digital marketing transformation may act as a mediator between the impact of data-driven strategic orientation and the strength of customer value creation. Although the application of a data-driven strategic orientation may offer the organization several analytical insights and strategic directions, it is important to apply these insights through the application of digital marketing technologies to generate the desired outcomes (Akter et al., 2021; Carvalho & Alves, 2023). By using automation, artificial intelligence, personalization, and advanced analytics technologies, organizations can effectively use the strategic insights gained from a data-driven approach (Hadjielias et al., 2022; Rachmad, 2024). In the absence of digital marketing transformation, the application of strategic insights to generate the desired outcomes is likely to be compromised (Rachmad, 2024; Seitz & Burosch, 2018). In this context, it is argued that digital marketing transformation acts as a bridge between the application of strategic insights generated by the application of a data-driven strategic orientation and the application of these insights to generate the desired outcomes (Gouveia et al., 2024; Holopainen et al., 2023).

Overall, the literature review indicates that the application of a data-driven strategic orientation has a significant impact on the strength of digital marketing transformation, which in turn affects customer value creation. However, few empirical studies investigate the proposed mechanism within the context of the telecommunications industry in developing economies of the Middle East.

In this context, the present study aims to investigate the impact of the application of a data-driven strategic orientation on the strength of customer value creation and the mediating role played by digital marketing transformation. Based on the arguments proposed by the literature review, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Data-driven strategic orientation positively affects customer value creation.

H2: Data-driven strategic orientation positively affects digital marketing transformation.

H3: Digital marketing transformation positively affects customer value creation.

H4: Digital marketing transformation mediates the relationship between data-driven strategic orientation and customer value creation.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in the context of the Jordanian telecommunication industry, targeting the three major mobile network service providers in the country, namely Zain, Umniah, and Orange. These firms represent the main body of the national telecommunication industry and operate in a highly competitive and technologically evolving context characterized by constant digital transformation, advanced analytics integration, and customer-centric innovation. Such a context represents an appropriate setting for the exploration of the interrelationship between data-driven strategic orientation, digital marketing transformation, and customer value creation, since these firms highly depend on digital systems, data analytics, and technology-based marketing processes.

The target population of the study included the administrative personnel employed in the departments directly associated with the operations of the firms, including the administration of the firms' strategic planning, operations management, customer service operations, and marketing management. The total number of administrative personnel in three firms was estimated to be 780 at the time of data collection.

Purposive sampling approach was used to guarantee that the participants had the required professional exposure to data analytics, digital platforms, and strategic processes. Participants in the study included employees in administrative and supervisory roles, especially those with the required level of participation in the decision-making process and digital marketing activities. In July and August 2025, 620 eligible administrative employees received electronic copies of the questionnaires through the official internal communication channels. By the end of the period, 447 responses to the questionnaires were collected. After checking the responses for completeness and consistency, 24 responses were eliminated due to missing and/or inconsistent information, and 423 responses remained to be included in the study. The number of responses exceeds the suggested thresholds for multivariate statistical analysis and structural equation modeling (Sharma et al., 2024).

Table 1 displays the number of responses from each company and the main administrative departments relevant to the study. The table indicates that there was a well-balanced response rate from Zain, Umniah, and Orange companies and from the four main administrative departments that are relevant to the study constructs. The highest number of responses came from the Customer Service Operations and Marketing Management departments, since these departments are the most involved in the process of customer interaction and the creation of customer value. Strategic planning and operations management are well represented in the study, ensuring that the analysis covers the required strategic and operational aspects.

The demographic profile of the respondents can be seen in Table 2. The demographic profile of the study participants is well-balanced in terms of gender, age, educational level, and work experience. Most of the study participants are in the

Table 1. Sample distribution by company and administrative unit (n = 423)

Administrative unit	Zain	Umniah	Orange	Total
Operations Management	14	11	8	33
Strategic Planning	20	16	11	47
Customer Service Operation	72	56	48	176
Marketing Management	59	60	48	167
Total valid responses	165	143	115	423

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Table 2. Demographic characteristics of the sample (n = 423)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	258	61.0
	Female	165	39.0
Age	20-29 years	98	23.2
	30-39 years	181	42.8
	40-49 years	106	25.1
	50+ years	38	9.0
Education	Bachelor's	279	66.0
	Master's	117	27.6
	Doctorate	27	6.4
Experience	Less than 5 years	104	24.6
	5-10 years	182	43.0
	10 years or more	137	32.4

30-39 age range and have five to ten years of work experience, meaning they have been exposed to organizational aspects in terms of strategy and technology. Most of the study participants have a Bachelor's level of education, while a significant number have a postgraduate level of education, meaning the findings of the study are valid and informed (Cheah et al., 2024).

The instrument was informed by the constructs validated in the recent literature on data-driven strategies, digital transformation, and value creation. The reflective scale was used to measure the constructs, and the responses to the scale were based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree.' The data-driven strategic orientation scale consisted of five items that focused on the organization's use of analytics, data availability, and the use of analytical results in the development of the organization's strategy (Akter et al., 2021; Manjunath et al., 2024). The digital marketing transformation scale consisted of five items that focused on the organization's use of automation tools, personalization technology, advanced targeting systems, and digital platforms in the development of the organization's marketing strategy (Chernobrovkina & Chernobrovkin, 2024; Samarah et al., 2025). Customer value creation was assessed using five items that focused on service quality, service responsiveness, service personalization, customer experience, and the perception of the organization's superiority in comparison to its competitors (Matarazzo et al., 2021).

Before conducting the main study, a pilot study was conducted on 30 administrative employees to assess the instrument's clarity and internal consistency. The pilot study participants were not included in the main study, and the study was conducted on the main participants. Reliability analysis was conducted on the instrument using Cronbach's Alpha, and the results showed that the instrument was internally consistent in the assessment of the constructs, indicating that the instrument was appropriate for the main study (Sharma et al., 2024).

Participating in the study was completely voluntary and anonymous, and the participants were assured that the responses to the instrument would remain confidential and would be used for academic purposes only. After the main study, the responses to the instrument were analyzed using SPSS and SmartPLS4, and the results were based on the assessment of the structural relationships and mediation effects using the bootstrapping technique.

3. RESULTS

Descriptive statistics shown in Table 3 suggest a strong agreement on the importance of a strategic approach rooted in data, technology trends observable in digital marketing, and customer value addition, on which there is a strong consensus on the part of the respondents, which can be gathered by observing that they have close to 4.0 points on a 5-point scale. The standard deviations, which are at a moderate level, indicate that there is a consensus among the respondents. According to the data, the company has made the digital transformation through investing in digital tools, and the employees believe that these tools are being utilized effectively for strategic and customer decisions (Agusalim, 2025).

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of study variables

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation
Data-Driven Strategic Orientation (DDSO)	3.92	0.54
Digital Marketing Transformation (DMT)	4.01	0.57
Customer Value Creation (CVC)	4.15	0.49

Table 4 shows the measurement model results (item codes, statements, and factor loadings) for each construct. All their loadings are > 0.80, which shows that items have a higher reliability and that each item adds a meaningful dimension to the construct. Results for Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability have all been over 0.88 for data-driven strategic orientation, digital marketing transformation, and customer value creation, indicating excellent internal consistency. Similarly, the AVE values exceed the recommended threshold of 0.50, implying good convergent validity. Hence, the measurement scales used for this construct are reliable, valid, and suitable for SmartPLS 4 structural equation modeling (Hair et al., 2025).

Fornell-Larcker criterion suggests that there is discriminant validity, wherein in Table 5, the square root of the AVE for each construct (bold) is greater than any correlations with other constructs. Every variable is thus uniquely experimental and measures a certain conceptual domain. Since correlations between constructs are moderate, the constructs have significant underlying relationships and a low level of overlap, which implies their suitability for structural equation modelling (Agusalim, 2025).

Table 5. Discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion)

Construct	DDSO	DMT	CVC
DDSO	0.833		
DMT	0.612	0.858	
CVC	0.578	0.641	0.824

According to Table 6 and Figure 1, the direct path analysis results provide strong and statistically significant relationships between the key variables. Strategic orientation in alignment with data is positively associated with both digital marketing transformation and customer value creation, reiterating its central place in strategic and operational development. Besides, digital marketing transformation can be interpreted as a strong predictor of customer value creation, demonstrating the importance of digital capabilities to improve consumer experiences. All three direct hypotheses were supported; two paths were significant at $p < 0.001$, while the remaining path was significant at $p < 0.05$ (Agusalim, 2025; Hair et al., 2025).

Table 7 indicates that mediation analysis shows that digital marketing transformation partially mediates the relationship between data-driven strategic orientation and customer value cre-

Table 4. Reliability and validity analysis of constructs

Construct	Code	Loading	Alpha	CR	AVE
Data-Driven Strategic Orientation (DDSO)	DDSO1	0.842	0.893	0.921	0.694
	DDSO2	0.867			
	DDSO3	0.823			
	DDSO4	0.814			
	DDSO5	0.850			
Digital Marketing Transformation (DMT)	DMT1	0.876	0.907	0.933	0.736
	DMT2	0.853			
	DMT3	0.891			
	DMT4	0.861			
	DMT5	0.848			
Customer Value Creation (CVC)	CVC1	0.832	0.881	0.914	0.679
	CVC2	0.846			
	CVC3	0.861			
	CVC4	0.802			
	CVC5	0.828			

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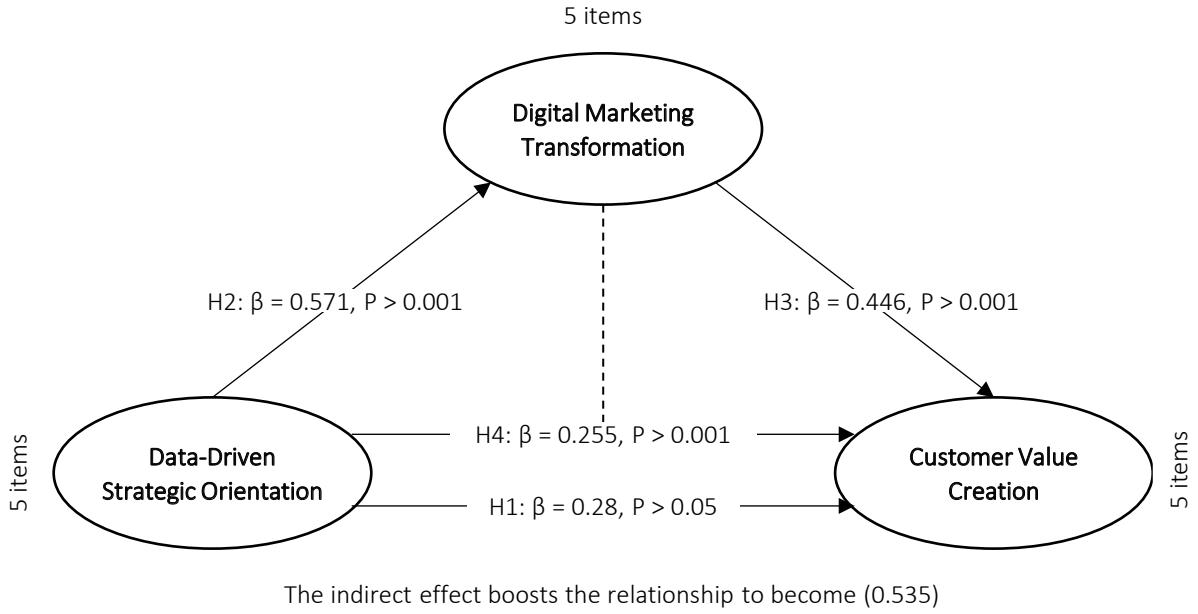

Figure 1. Structural model

Table 6. Path analysis results for direct hypotheses testing

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-value	p-value	Result
H1	DDSO → CVC	0.280	5.912	0.027	Supported
H2	DDSO → DMT	0.571	12.483	0.000	Supported
H3	DMT → CVC	0.446	8.771	0.000	Supported

ation. Its indirect effect is statistically significant with a strong t-value, implying that part of the effect of data-driven strategic orientation and customer value creation is mediated by better digital marketing ability. Nonetheless, the persistence of a notable direct pathway indicates that data-driven strategic orientation is also creating customer value in its own right and thereby supports the proposal to develop a partial mediation model. This further strengthens the view that strategic data practices and digital marketing technologies are fundamental participants for value creation (Cheah et al., 2024; Hair et al., 2025).

Table 8 indicates within acceptable ranges, RMS_theta denotes the reliability of reflective measurement models. When combined, these indices ensure that the structural and measurement models are closely related to the data collected and provide a solid foundation for interpreting hypothesis testing findings (Cheah et al., 2024; Hair et al., 2025).

4. DISCUSSION

The findings of the research validate the suggestion that a data-driven strategic orientation has a positive and significant impact on customer value

Table 7. Mediation analysis results

Mediation path	Indirect	Total	t-value	p-value	Mediation
DDSO → DMT → CVC	0.255	0.535	6.324	0.000	Partial

Table 8. Model fit indices

Fit index	Value	Criterion
SRMR	0.043	< 0.08 (good fit)
NFI	0.914	> 0.90 (acceptable)
Chi-square	1,284.37	–
RMS_theta	0.081	< 0.12 (aceptable)

creation. This is an important finding because it implies that only those organizations that rely on the analysis of data can understand the changing demands of the customer and translate those demands into initiatives for value creation. This conclusion is in line with the findings of other researchers who have noted that the ability of an organization to analyze data strategically has a positive impact on the ability of the organization to respond to the market while creating innovations with the customer in mind (Criado-Gomis et al., 2020). Even though many researchers agree that analyzing data helps create customer value, there are still ongoing discussions about problems like data quality, the culture of analysis, and the necessary skills that often make it hard for organizations to turn raw data into valuable initiatives for value creation (Manjunath et al., 2024). The findings of the research have also shown that for an organization in the telecommunication industry, which is highly technology-driven, the ability to be ready and advanced in the use of digital tools has a positive impact on the ability to utilize data-driven strategies for value creation.

The findings also indicate that data-driven strategic orientation has a significant impact on the digital marketing transformation process. This finding is in agreement with the universally recognized trend, which asserts that analytics capabilities play a significant role in the digital transformation process of organizations around the world (Syaglova et al., 2022). From the findings, it seems that organizations that use data in their strategic processes are more likely to speed up the implementation of digital marketing platforms and technologies in the marketing function of the business. However, past studies suggest that infrastructural, organizational, and technological challenges, like fragmentation, often limit digital marketing transformation programs (Awadallah et al., 2022). These findings seem to indicate that data-driven strategic orientation could play a role in addressing technological fragmentation in the digital marketing transformation process. These results might match recent findings that show combining analytics systems and marketing technologies is a key factor for success in the digital marketing transformation process (Al-Zu'bi et al., 2025).

The positive relationship between digital marketing transformation and customer value creation seems to suggest that digital marketing capabilities play a role in delivering value to customers in a personalized and flexible way. This may be feasible owing to the function of digital marketing in improving the adaptability, engagement, and uniformity of the enterprise, potentially influencing the perception of customer value positively. This finding is in line with other studies that highlight the importance of personalization and the quality of digital interaction in the development of customer outcomes (Rajendran, 2024; Oumaima & Lamari, 2024). However, the literature also recognizes the difficulties associated with content overload, inconsistency between digital communication channels, and the difficulties associated with the effective delivery of real-time communication (Awamleh et al., 2025a; Shwawreh et al., 2025). The results obtained in the present study support the idea that firms that can effectively navigate these difficulties through the integration of digital marketing capabilities are more likely to successfully leverage their investment in technology to create customer value (Samarah et al., 2025; Syaglova et al., 2022; Nwabekee et al., 2024).

Finally, the mediation analysis shows that digital marketing transformation plays a key role in connecting data-driven strategic orientation and customer value creation. In fact, this paper supports the notion that it is not sufficient to simply have analytical insight to create value, as it is operationalized through digital marketing systems (Syaglova et al., 2022). While the literature to date has highlighted the importance of digital transformation as a bridge between strategy and outcomes, it has also highlighted the structural limitations that exist in terms of departments that are not integrated well enough to allow this change to happen (Awadallah et al., 2022; Shwawreh et al., 2025; Syaglova et al., 2022). The results of this study show that having a data-focused strategy does help create value for customers, but this effect is much stronger when there are well-developed digital marketing transformation processes in place, which means that digital marketing transformation is how a data-driven strategy is put into action to benefit customers (Awamleh et al., 2024, 2025; Homburg & Wielgos, 2022).

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CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine how using data in strategic planning affects customer value creation and how changes in digital marketing support this relationship in the telecommunications industry. The findings demonstrate that organizations that incorporate data into strategic processes are more effective in creating value for customers. Besides, digital marketing transformation strengthens this relationship, suggesting that combining data-driven strategy formulation with digital marketing practices yields higher customer value.

The findings also suggest that sustainable customer value does not result from data availability alone but from integrating data use with digital marketing practices in the telecommunications sector. Therefore, telecommunications firms should institutionalize data-based strategy formulation and invest in digitally integrated marketing practices to improve responsiveness, personalization, and service quality. Future research could extend this model to other industries and economic contexts or use longitudinal designs to examine how digital marketing transformation shapes customer value creation over time.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization: Ahmad A. M. Alwreikat, Fawwaz Tawfiq Awamleh.
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Validation: Fawwaz Tawfiq Awamleh.
Visualization: Ahmad A. M. Alwreikat.
Writing – original draft: Fawwaz Tawfiq Awamleh.
Writing – review & editing: Ahmad A. M. Alwreikat.

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