

# THE ROLE OF MARKETING MANAGERS' CAPABILITIES IN STRATEGIC FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION: EVIDENCE FROM SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

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## Abstract

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Small and medium enterprises (SMEs), particularly in the home appliance, electronics, and information technology (IT) sectors, continue to face enduring challenges due to inadequate strategic processes and the underutilization of marketing managers. This study investigates the strategic role of marketing managers within these firms, focusing on their influence on strategic formulation, implementation, and overall organizational performance. Employing a quantitative, cross-sectional design, data were collected through a structured questionnaire from a random sample of 222 marketing managers. Analysis was performed using SPSS 26 and SmartPLS 3.9. The findings indicate that marketing manager have no statistically significant direct effect on firm performance, nor do they significantly influence strategic marketing. However, strategic marketing demonstrates a strong positive impact on firm performance, although it does not mediate the relationship between managerial capabilities and performance outcomes. These results challenge prevailing assumptions regarding the direct impact of managerial capabilities on performance and underscore the importance of strategic marketing as an independent driver. The study's contextual and methodological limitations suggest avenues for future longitudinal and cross-sectoral research. This research contributes to strategic management literature by offering a refined perspective on the conditional role of marketing managers in SME performance.

**Keywords:** Managerial Capabilities, Strategic Marketing, Firm Performance, RBV Theory

**Authors' individual contribution:** Conceptualization — S.R.; Methodology — C.L.; Software — S.R.; Validation — F.N.; Formal Analysis — S.R.; Investigation — T.A.-N.; Resources — T.A.-N.; Data Curation — F.N.; Writing — Original Draft — C.L.; Visualization — F.N.; Supervision — S.R.; Project Administration — C.L.; Funding Acquisition — T.A.-N.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive business landscape, the strategic formulation and implementation of corporate strategies are essential for long-term success and sustainability. Various internal and external factors shape these processes, including market trends, technological advancements, and regulatory environments. Among these, the capabilities of marketing managers stand out as particularly significant. As key decision-makers, they not only design and execute marketing strategies but also play a vital role in broader corporate strategy development (Nath & Bharadwaj, 2020).

Despite extensive research on the role of marketing managers, there remains a critical gap in understanding their impact on small and medium enterprises (SMEs), particularly in developing countries like Algeria. While Kotler (1972) laid the groundwork for understanding marketing managers' responsibilities, including decision-making in the marketing mix and strategy formulation, their role has since evolved into one that encompasses both strategic and tactical dimensions (Ali et al., 2021). Positioned between the operational core and the strategic apex, marketing managers align corporate strategies with dynamic market conditions (Mintzberg et al., 2003).

Research demonstrates that marketing managers significantly enhance firm performance through strategy formulation and implementation (Wooldridge & Floyd, 1990; Floyd & Wooldridge, 1994). However, the effectiveness of their role in Algerian SMEs, which face challenges such as insufficient management skills, outdated market information, and limited strategic planning capabilities, remains underexplored (Mosbah & Debili, 2014; Hani & Gani, 2024). This study aims to address this gap by focusing on Algerian SMEs and the mediating role of strategic marketing planning between marketing managers' capabilities and firm performance.

The theoretical foundation of this study is further supported by the resource-based view (RBV) and dynamic capabilities view (DCV), which emphasize the importance of internal resources and capabilities in achieving competitive advantage and superior firm performance. According to RBV, marketing managers' capabilities represent valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources that enable firms to differentiate themselves in the marketplace and achieve sustainable competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). These capabilities include strategic marketing expertise, leadership skills, and market intelligence, all of which contribute directly to superior firm performance. DCV extends this by arguing that firms must not only possess these valuable resources but also develop dynamic capabilities that allow them to adapt and reconfigure their resources in response to changing market conditions (Teece et al., 1997).

In this study, strategic marketing planning serves as the mechanism through which marketing managers utilize and reconfigure resources to align with organizational goals and environmental changes. DCV suggests that the ability to continuously integrate and adapt marketing strategies is critical for firms in volatile markets, such as SMEs in Algeria. By effectively applying their capabilities to strategic marketing planning, marketing managers enhance both financial and non-financial performance dimensions, ensuring

that firms remain competitive and resilient in the long term.

While some studies report a positive relationship between marketing manager capabilities and firm performance (Bianchi & Andrews, 2015), others present conflicting results. Algerian SMEs, which represent 99% of all enterprises and employ 24.6% of the workforce, face significant challenges in performance enhancement due to weak strategic planning and marketing practices (Bouazza et al., 2015; Dris et al., 2022; Mekki, 2017; Zeraibi, 2019). These firms must adopt new technologies and engage in strategic marketing to close the competitiveness gap with foreign companies (Nouari & Safia, 2024; International Monetary Fund [IMF], 2018). Hence, this study contributes to broadening the knowledge base by developing a comprehensive understanding of the role of marketing managers in strategic formulation and implementation in Algeria and to assess their influence on organizational performance, especially as digitalization and new strategic approaches evolve in the field of marketing.

This study contributes to the existing literature by analyzing the role of marketing managers in corporate strategy formulation and implementation, with a particular focus on SMEs in Algeria. Marketing managers gather market intelligence, understand consumer behavior, and provide critical insights that align corporate strategies with market opportunities (Furrer et al., 2008; Susanto et al., 2023). Their competencies, ranging from analytical skills to creative problem-solving and leadership, are essential in navigating the complexities of strategy formulation (Bouarioua & Mohand, 2023).

Furthermore, the study adopts the marketing manager role inventory developed by Gök and Hacıoglu (2010), which includes dimensions such as marketing mix management, strategy execution, and data management. This framework is adapted for the Algerian context, with strategic marketing planning positioned as a mediator between marketing managers' capabilities and firm performance, supported by RBV and DCV theories (Abid et al., 2019). The study also assesses both financial and non-financial performance, providing a comprehensive evaluation of organizational effectiveness.

The rest of this article is organized as follows: Section 2 provides literature review and develops the hypotheses. The research methodology, encompassing aspects such as questionnaire development and data collection, is exhaustively elucidated in Section 3. Section 4 provides the statistical analysis and discussion. Section 5 presents the conclusion, and Section 6 elaborates on the conclusions and implications of the study.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

### 2.1. Roles of marketing managers in companies

The role of marketing managers varies significantly across environments, leading to ongoing debates about their contribution to organizational performance (Bouarioua & Mohand, 2023; Moorman & Rust, 1999). At the macro level, marketing struggles to respond to criticisms levelled at its contribution to the whole company's strategy and performance, since the 1990s, marketing has

evolved from a function to a set of values and processes integrated across all organizational functions (Moorman & Rust, 1999; Grönroos, 2004; Griffith & Harvey, 2004; Balmer & Greyser, 2006). The rise of services marketing, relational marketing, and network-based approaches has reinforced this process-oriented view. Today, marketing is a guiding philosophy for the entire organization, with cross-functional involvement being essential for achieving better marketing outcomes (Gummesson, 2002).

Previous research has explored how varying definitions of the marketing manager's role impact marketing departments and has influenced strategies for enhancing organizational performance. Bouarioua and Mohand (2023) highlighted that many Algerian companies suffer from weak management skills, particularly in leveraging technology to optimize operations, which hampers firm performance (Iyer et al., 2023). Webster et al. (2005) conducted interviews with chief executive officers (CEO) and marketing managers, revealing uncertainty around the role definition of marketing managers, often shaped by the CEO's vision. For instance, one CEO defined a marketing manager as brand management plus sales (Bower, 2007; Webster et al., 2005). The study found that marketing managers are increasingly being shifted from advertising and merchandising to sales and service departments, with some equating marketing directly with sales, underscoring the need to clarify the marketing manager's role (Duah et al., 2024).

## 2.2. Role of marketing manager in formulating and implementing strategic marketing

The marketing manager's role in the strategic formulation and effective implementation of marketing strategies is crucial for enhancing organizational performance (Slater et al., 2010). Marketing strategy formulation and implementation are key constructs in marketing literature due to their significance for managers. Research indicates that most strategy failures stem from poor implementation or organizational behavioral issues (Perlit, 1993). Successful implementation is critical, as even less optimal strategies can yield better results if executed well (Bonoma, 1984). Despite some research on strategy implementation, the marketing department's role in this process remains underexplored (Jung & Shegai, 2023).

Previous studies on strategy formulation and implementation have primarily explored interpersonal and behavioral aspects and factors influencing marketing strategy implementation (Walker & Ruekert, 1987). Bonoma (1984) examined structural and behavioral variables, while Walker and Ruekert (1987) emphasized managerial autonomy, synergies across units, and performance evaluation. However, little research addresses the marketing department's role in strategy implementation. Noble and Mokwa (1999) argued that understanding the marketing manager's role is crucial, particularly when they are excluded from strategy formulation. Marketing is often undervalued within corporate strategy, as reflected in trends from the Chartered Institute of Marketing (2021).

According to Guiltinan and Paul (1991), the process of formulating and implementing strategic marketing planning by the marketing manager can be summarized in three interrelated

tasks: 1) establishing marketing objectives, 2) selecting the target market and 3) developing the marketing mix, 4) implementing and controlling.

## 2.3. Key processes in strategic marketing executed by marketing managers

### 2.3.1. Establishing marketing objectives

The success of marketing managers is measured by how well they achieve the objectives of the marketing strategy. To ensure success, they must set clear and realistic goals, which help define targets, motivate the team, provide a timeline for execution, and offer a way to assess performance. (Elbanna, 2007; Hollebeek & Macky, 2019).

### 2.3.2. Selecting the target market

Marketing managers should identify their target market(s) before developing specific strategies. Understanding their customers allows them to tailor products, promotions, pricing, and distribution to meet the unique needs of each market segment (Duah et al., 2024).

### 2.3.3. Developing the marketing mix

Marketing managers are responsible for developing the marketing mix, which is the set of controllable variables that must be managed to satisfy the target market and achieve organizational objectives. These controllable variables are usually divided into four major decision areas: product, price, place, and promotion (Hawi et al., 2015; Iyer et al., 2023).

### 2.3.4. Implementing and controlling strategic marketing

The implementation and control of strategic marketing means the execution of the marketing plan and the creation of exchanges. A plan is nothing if it does not degenerate into work. Not all marketing plans that are developed with great care can be executed with perfect timing (Bhutta et al., 2021). Therefore, the marketing manager must monitor and coordinate the execution of the marketing plan (Acquaah & Agyapong, 2015).

## 2.4. Hypotheses development

### 2.4.1. Marketing manager capabilities and firm performance

Corporate marketing managers play a key role in strategic planning and significantly impact organizational performance (Sebhatu, 2021). Research emphasizes the importance of their involvement in mergers and acquisitions, where they help align goals, allocate resources, and coordinate efforts post-acquisition (Doz & Prahalad, 1991). Marketing managers' participation in strategy development enhances firm performance by improving decision quality (Schilit, 1987), fostering consensus for strategy implementation (Sebhatu, 2021; Wooldridge & Floyd, 1990), driving strategic change (Burgelman, 1988), and promoting innovation and entrepreneurship (Bhutta et al., 2021; Hornsby et al., 2002; Finkelstein & Hambrick, 1990).

According to Howell and Higgins (1990), marketing managers play a crucial role in promoting ideas, garnering support, and ensuring the effective implementation of innovations. Wooldridge and Floyd (1990) found that marketing managers' involvement in goal-setting and alternative development significantly enhances organizational performance (Sebhatu, 2021). While extensive research has explored the intermediary variables linking marketing manager involvement to firm performance, the role of "firm performance" as an intermediary has yet to be examined (Susanto et al., 2023). This study hypothesizes that marketing managers' involvement positively impacts organizational capabilities. The marketing management literature highlights the importance of marketing managers in strategic thinking, innovation, organizational change, decision-making, and implementation, all of which are indicators of superior business performance. Consequently, the research has formulated the following hypothesis:

*H1: Marketing manager capabilities affect firm performance.*

#### *2.4.2. Marketing manager's capabilities and strategic marketing planning*

As Rajagopalan and Datta (1996) noted, organizations depend on who their top managers are because they influence the strategic orientation and options of the organization, which has a significant impact on organizational activity and performance. Marketing managers and management teams determine the nature and quality of organizations' coordination and control mechanisms, contribute to the firm's differentiation in the marketplace, and create competitive advantage through strategic options (Burgelman, 2002; Chandler, 1992).

Research indicates that employee and department manager involvement in strategy formulation enhances strategy implementation and improves organizational performance (Wooldridge & Floyd, 1990; Morgan et al., 2000). Managers with strong strategic development skills have a clearer understanding of organizational goals, improving their ability to execute strategies effectively (Barlett & Ghoshal, 1995). However, when marketing is viewed as a subordinate function, marketing managers may not be fully engaged in strategic planning, which impacts their commitment to implementation (Hackley, 1999). Studies have produced mixed results regarding the relationship between marketing managers and strategic planning; some report weak correlations (Cheng et al., 2020), while others find strong links (Bhutta et al., 2021). Overall, marketing managers' skills significantly influence organizational strategy and performance.

Thus, Wooldridge and Floyd (1990) found a strong positive relationship between marketing managers and strategic marketing planning, showing that mid-level manager involvement enhances organizational performance. Similarly, Mintzberg et al. (2003) highlighted that marketing managers act as facilitators between operational and strategic levels within organizations. However, there is limited research on the link between marketing managers' capabilities and strategic planning, particularly in developing countries like Algeria. This gap suggests the need for further investigation into the mediating role of strategic marketing planning between

managerial skills and firm performance. Therefore, the following hypothesis was formulated:

*H2: Marketing manager's capabilities affect strategic marketing planning.*

#### *2.4.3. Strategy marketing planning and firm performance*

Organizational performance stems from the successful formulation and implementation of marketing strategies. Historically, performance measures have been used to monitor and maintain organizational control, ensuring that goals are met (Acquaah & Agyapong, 2015; Ghalayini & Noble, 1996). These measures assist in strategy formulation and evaluation, helping managers improve the developed strategies. Performance is typically assessed using economic indicators like sales and profits, but strategic dimensions also play a role. Venkatraman and Ramanujam (1986) outlined three types of performance measurement: financial, operational, and organizational effectiveness. Kaplan and Norton (1996) highlighted both financial and non-financial factors in their balanced scorecard approach, while Ittner et al. (2003) emphasized the importance of psychological factors in certain measurement contexts.

Most studies on SME strategic marketing planning and its relationship with performance have been conducted primarily in the U.S., with fewer in developed countries like the UK (Falshaw et al., 2006) and Arab countries such as Jordan (Aldehayyat et al., 2011). In Algeria, research on strategic marketing planning, particularly for small businesses, remains limited. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by providing empirical evidence on strategic marketing planning in Algerian SMEs and its relationship with performance. Therefore, the study hypothesizes the following:

*H3: Strategic marketing planning affects firm performance.*

#### *2.4.4. Mediating effect of strategic marketing planning on the relationship between marketing manager capabilities and firm performance*

Strategic marketing planning in marketing management is an activity primarily performed at the top management level of the company or strategic business unit, as opposed to strategic marketing planning and tactics, which are carried out at lower levels and whose execution is handled by marketing managers (Homburg & Wielgos, 2022). However, Nadkarni and Barr's (2008) study concluded that managers' capabilities drive strategic action. Considering the ongoing debate about what strategic planning is and how it is formulated, Gavetti and Rivikin (2007) argued that managerial capabilities determine what constitutes strategy and what goals should be pursued. However, marketing management skills and relationships with other factors are fundamental in organizations, and it has been argued that management skills are a strategic resource.

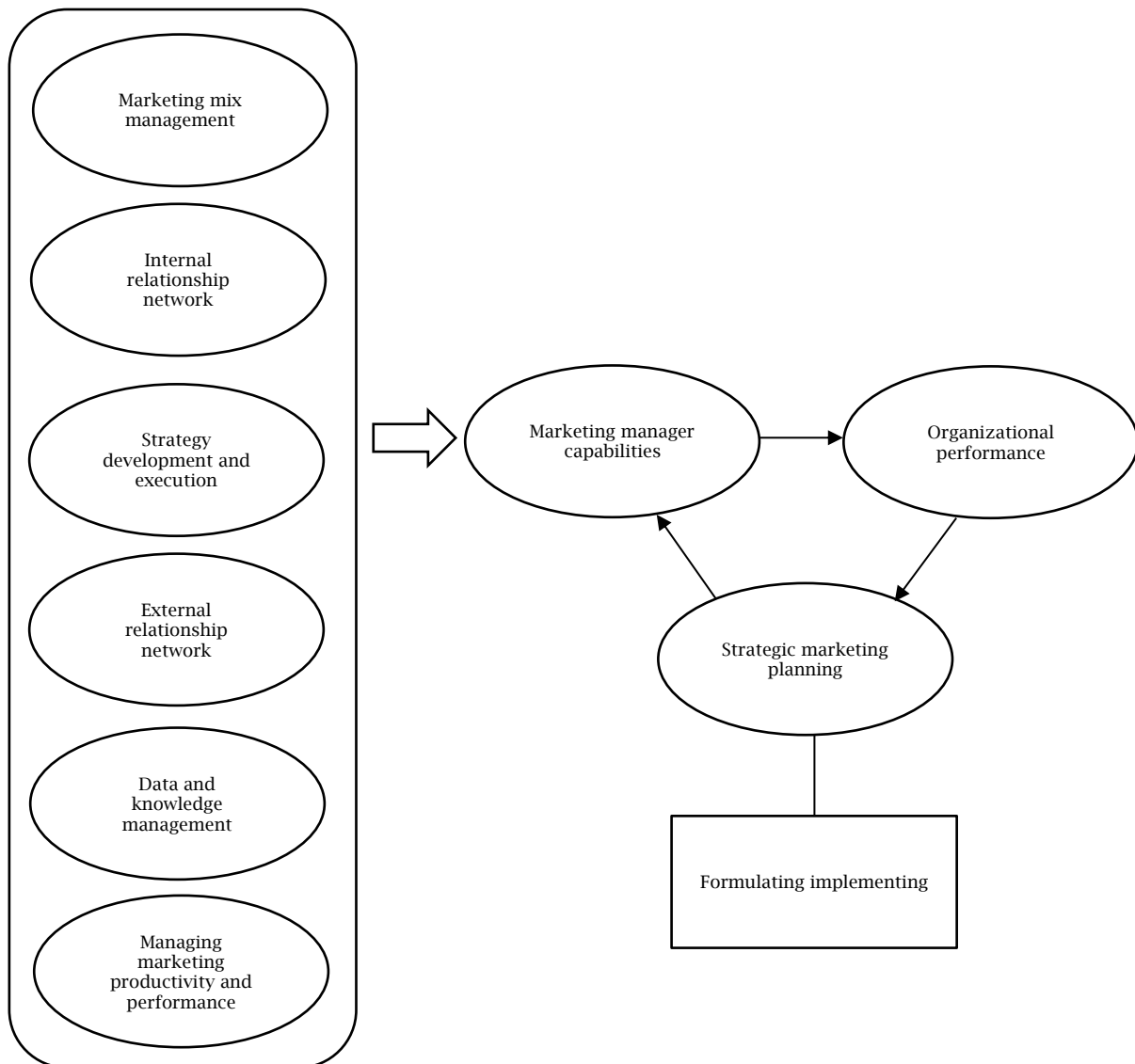
Earlier research in strategic management emphasizes the crucial role of top managers in shaping strategic decisions (Finkelstein & Hambrick, 1990). There is growing interest in how managers' values, experiences, and skills affect organizational strategy development, with organizations often seen as reflections of their top management. Key factors

for strategic success include consistency, consonance, and feasibility. A review of 2,125 strategic management articles identified leadership, decision-making, and cognitive skills as essential for achieving strategic fit and improving performance (Furrer et al., 2008). RBV theory posits that strategic actions mediate the relationship between resources and firm performance, allowing firms to leverage valuable resources (Fornell & Lacker, 1981; Barney, 2001). DCV theory suggests that firms must integrate and rebuild resources to create strategic capabilities that ensure sustainable competitive advantage (Teece, 2010).

While there is limited research on the mediating effect of corporate strategic marketing planning in European, American, and Asian contexts, there is a significant gap in literature regarding its role in the relationship between marketing managers' capabilities and corporate performance in small and medium manufacturing enterprises in Africa, especially in Algeria. Based on these observations, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

*H4: Strategic marketing planning mediates the relationship between marketing manager capabilities and firm performance.*

**Figure 1.** Conceptual framework



Source: Authors' elaboration.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section covers two main headings, "Questionnaire development" and "Data collection". Additionally, alternative methods for conducting this research are discussed to enhance the robustness of the methodology.

#### 3.1. Questionnaire development

The main concern of this study was the development of constructs. There are no hard and fast rules in development. Fortunately, some good guidelines in the literature help researchers and writers avoid common mistakes such as complexity and ambiguity and be as specific and accurate as possible. All constructs used in this study have been used or operationalized in previous research, following their

definitions in the literature (Gök & Hacıoglu, 2010). Ensuring the content validity of all constructs used in the current study was the reason for the heavy reliance on the literature. No single prior study utilized all the constructs examined here; therefore, this research combined constructs from multiple sources to fit the study's objectives.

To adapt the constructs for use in the current field study, the completed English version of the questionnaire was translated into Arabic by the researcher. To ensure linguistic accuracy and cultural appropriateness, an Arabic language specialist reviewed the translation, providing expert input to refine terminology. The pilot study was essential to test the reliability and validity of the adapted measurements. Validity measures the extent to which the instruments were developed and measure what they were designed to measure (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Reliability measures indicate the extent to which a variable instrument is not only error-free (free of bias) but also provides consistency and stability across multiple items in the scale (Hair et al., 2014). Therefore, a pilot study was conducted on a sample of 30 manufacturers of household appliances, electronics, and information technology (IT) sectors. These manufacturers were systematically selected from the original sample of 222 using a systematic sampling procedure.

The responses obtained in the pilot study provided the researcher with a clear picture. Based on this pilot study, minor modifications were made to clarify ambiguous items and ensure better alignment with the respondents' perspectives. The finalized questionnaire demonstrated acceptable reliability and validity, confirming its appropriateness for full-scale data collection.

While a structured questionnaire was used in this study, alternative methods could include interviews or focus groups to gather more in-depth qualitative insights. Mixed-method approaches, combining both qualitative and quantitative techniques, would allow researchers to triangulate data and achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the constructs under study. For instance, qualitative interviews could explore the subjective experiences of marketing managers, which could then inform the refinement of quantitative measure.

### 3.2. Data collection

According to recent Algerian data (Minister of Industry & Mines, 2018), there are 939 manufacturers in the appliances, electronics,

and IT sectors (the study population), comprising small, medium, and large enterprises. The names and addresses of 76% of these manufacturers were obtained from the Chamber of Industry, and questionnaires were distributed to 330 SMEs over nine months, from September 2022 to May 2023. To boost the response rate, follow-up reminders were made via telephone. Of the 330 distributed questionnaires, 107 were not returned, resulting in 250 responses (a 76% response rate). After excluding 27 incomplete or rejected questionnaires, 222 valid responses remained, representing a 68% usable response rate. This response rate is considered sufficient for analysis based on Sekaran's (2006) recommendation that a 30% response rate is generally acceptable for survey-based research.

On the other hand, alternative data collection methods could include online surveys to reduce logistical challenges and improve cost-efficiency. Online platforms like Google Forms allow for automated reminders, potentially improving response rates further. Additionally, semi-structured interviews could provide richer, more detailed data regarding participants' perceptions of marketing managers' roles in strategic formulation and implementation.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1. Sample profile

This study's respondents were mostly males (95.05%) and females (4.05%), with 29.09% being between the ages of 50 and 59. The vast majority of those respondents had more than 30 years of experience. In terms of education, slightly more than half of the respondents had a Bachelor's degree, 34.08% had a Master's degree, and the remaining 9%, had high school and middle school certificates. Only 3% had a PhD. In terms of time in business, 24% of respondents' businesses had been in operation for 6 to 10 years. Another 16.07% had been in business for between 31 and 35 years. 15.08% had been in business for 31 to 35 years (the longest duration of operation). However, 13.01%, 10.09%, and 10.04% of those polled had for between 11 to 15, 16 to 20, and 21 to 25, respectively.

#### 4.1.1. Marketing mix management

Table 1 shows that the majority have indicated that they have an important role to play in market mix management, with mean values of 5.22.

**Table 1.** Respondents' answers regarding their role in marketing mix management

Question	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Partially disagree		Neutral		Partially agree		Agree		Strongly agree		Mean
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
1	2	9	0.9	4.1	12	5.4	20	9.0	2	9	0.9	4.1	12	5.4	20

Note: Question 1 – My firm allow manager to manage and execute promotion, product, prices, and distribution related activities.

Source: Authors' elaboration.

#### 4.1.2. Internal relationship network management

Table 2 shows five statements developed to examine the role of marketing managers in managing internal relationship networks with mean values of 5.33, 5.33, 5.53, 5.33, and 5.47 sequentially agreed. As can be seen from Table 2, most of the marketing

managers agreed with the stated statements. Therefore, it can be said that the majority of marketing managers surveyed in Algeria are involved in one way or another in the internal labor management of their companies' marketing activities.

**Table 2.** Respondents' answers regarding their role in internal relationship network management

Questions	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Partially disagree		Neutral		Partially agree		Agree		Strongly agree		Mean
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
1	4	1.8	11	5.0	8	3.6	26	11.8	46	20.8	87	39.4	39	17.6	5.33
2	2	0.9	6	2.7	15	6.8	31	14.0	49	22.2	75	33.9	43	19.5	5.33
3	2	0.9	10	4.5	9	4.1	23	10.4	41	18.6	76	34.4	60	27.1	5.53
4	2	0.9	11	5.0	11	5.0	33	14.9	41	18.6	78	35.3	45	20.4	5.33
5			11	5.0	7	3.2	30	13.6	40	18.1	86	38.9	47	21.3	5.47

Note: Question 1 — My firm allow manager to partner, coordinate, motivate, train, and manage cross-functional teams.; Question 2 — My firm allow manager to partner effectively/working closely with other marketing functions; Question 3 — My firm allow manager to work with, support, and train the sales function; Question 4 — My firm allow manager to recruit, train, monitor, and manage marketing staff; Question 5 — My firm allow manager to Partner effectively and work closely top management.  
Source: Authors' elaboration.

#### 4.1.3. Strategy development and execution

Table 3 explores the role of marketing managers in strategy development and execution through three statements. The majority of respondents partially agree with these statements, suggesting that

marketing managers in Algerian companies play a significant role in formulating and participating in the implementation of marketing strategies and overall company strategy (mean values of 5.23, 5.08, and 5.21). The study will further confirm this assumption when the relationships are tested.

**Table 3.** Respondents' answers regarding their role in strategy development and execution

Questions	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Partially disagree		Neutral		Partially agree		Agree		Strongly agree		Mean
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
1			14	6.3	9	4.1	25	11.3	58	26.2	94	42.5	21	9.5	5.23
2	3	1.4	16	7.2	8	3.6	32	14.5	53	24.0	92	41.6	17	7.7	5.08
3			13	5.9	15	6.8	24	10.9	44	19.9	110	49.8	15	6.8	5.21

Note: Question 1 — My firm allow manager to develop and/or execute marketing strategies/plans/programs; Question 2 — My firm allow manager to develop and/or execute and participate in corporate-level strategies; Question 3 — My firm allow manager to develop target marketing strategy.  
Source: Authors' elaboration.

#### 4.1.4. External relationship network management

Table 4 shows the results indicating that a larger majority partially agree and agree. It can be

concluded that the role of managers in Algeria can be improved when it comes to knowing the external side in terms of competitors and market (mean values of 5.28, 4.09, and 5.00).

**Table 4.** Respondents' answers regarding their role in external relationship network management

Questions	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Partially disagree		Neutral		Partially agree		Agree		Strongly agree		Mean
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
1	3	1.4	16	7.2	7	3.2	22	10.0	40	18.1	109	49.3	24	10.9	5.28
2	7	3.2	16	7.2	21	9.5	54	24.4	42	19.0	59	26.7	22	10.0	4.69
3	4	1.8	18	8.1	11	5.0	28	12.7	58	26.2	83	37.6	19	8.6	5.00

Note: Question 1 — My firm allow manager to manage customer relationships; Question 2 — My firm allow manager to develop, coordinate, manage relationships with key industry organizations/partners/suppliers /competitors; Question 3 — My firm allow manager to develop, coordinate, and manage relationships with external agencies (e.g., advertising, public relation, and media).  
Source: Authors' elaboration.

#### 4.1.5. Data and knowledge management

Table 5 demonstrates the respondents' answers regarding their role in data and knowledge management. Most respondents partially agreed and

agreed. It can be concluded that the role of marketing managers in data knowledge management is essential to obtain and collect data, with mean values of 5.03, 5.27, and 5.42.

**Table 5.** Respondents' answers regarding their role in data and knowledge management

Questions	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Partially disagree		Neutral		Partially agree		Agree		Strongly agree		Mean
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
1	9	4.1	7	3.2	6	2.7	38	17.2	67	30.3	74	33.5	20	9.0	5.03
2	4	1.8	7	3.2	9	4.1	24	10.9	70	31.7	76	34.4	31	14.0	5.27
3	4	1.8	13	5.9	7	3.2	25	11.3	45	20.4	68	30.8	59	26.7	5.42

Note: Question 1 — My firm allow manager to conduct, supervise, and coordinate formal customer/industry/market research; Question 2 — My firm allow manager to develop, maintain, analyze, and evaluate market knowledge; Question 3 — My firm allow manager to develop, maintain, monitor, and report customer/production/sales data.  
Source: Authors' elaboration.

#### 4.1.6. Managing marketing productivity and performance (controlling)

The results of Table 6 are somewhat unusual in that the respondents' answers regarding disagreement,

neutrality, and strong agreement of the marketing manager to implement and control the strategy when compared to the results of the previous tables, with mean values of 4.81 and 4.71 in succession.

To further investigate this issue, a t-test and a p-test were used. The purpose of this test is to find out whether there is a significant difference between marketing managers who play an essential role in marketing management processes and strategic marketing planning and the performance of

the enterprise. The study examines the role of marketing managers and evaluates their actual impact on organizational strategy and performance. Ultimately, it identifies the specific challenges and areas of concern affecting these outcomes.

**Table 6.** Respondents' answers regarding their role in managing productivity and performance

Questions	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Partially disagree		Neutral		Partially agree		Agree		Strongly agree		Mean
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
1	9	4.1	16	7.2	20	9.0	28	12.7	70	31.7	45	20.4	33	14.9	4.81
2	8	3.6	21	9.5	17	7.7	30	13.6	74	33.5	47	21.3	24	10.9	4.71

Note: Question 1 — My firm allow manager to develop and report performance analysis and financial metrics for marketing;  
Question 2 — My firm allow manager to plan, create, control, and manage marketing resources, funds, and budget.  
Source: Authors' elaboration.

#### 4.2. Measurement model evaluation

The evaluation of a reflective measurement model focuses on construct validity and reliability. Table 7 summarizes the results of the factor loadings, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) from this study. Then, the convergent validity of the outer model was further tested using the values for the AVE, which ranged from 0.509 to 0.717 in this study. It was found that AVE values of at least 0.5 provided

sufficient convergence in construct measurement (Hair et al., 2011; Hair et al., 2014).

The discriminant validity of the measurement model was further confirmed using Fornell and Larcker's (1981) cross-loading method, as shown in Table 8. Measures of discriminant validity emphasize the use of non-overlapping terms by the items. In other words, the variance of each construct and its items must be greater than that of the other constructs and must not overlap.

**Table 7.** Measurement model: Reliability and convergent validity

Description	Items	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE	Loading	p-value	Conclusion
Marketing manager capabilities		0.961	0.964	0.616		< 0.001*	Valid
	MMC1				0.664	< 0.001*	Valid
	MMC2				0.795	< 0.001*	Valid
	MMC3				0.835	< 0.001*	Valid
	MMC4				0.831	< 0.001*	Valid
	MMC5				0.857	< 0.001*	Valid
	MMC6				0.834	< 0.001*	Valid
	MMC7				0.822	< 0.001*	Valid
	MMC8				0.778	< 0.001*	Valid
	MMC9				0.814	< 0.001*	Valid
	MMC10				0.792	< 0.001*	Valid
	MMC11				0.639	< 0.001*	Valid
	MMC12				0.729	< 0.001*	Valid
	MMC13				0.782	< 0.001*	Valid
	MMC14				0.823	< 0.001*	Valid
	MMC15				0.835	< 0.001*	Valid
	MMC16				0.766	< 0.001*	Valid
	MMC17				0.708	< 0.001*	Valid
Strategic marketing planning		0.967	0.970	0.717		< 0.001*	Valid
	SMP1				0.852	< 0.001*	Valid
	SMP2				0.863	< 0.001*	Valid
	SMP3				0.765	< 0.001*	Valid
	SMP4				0.841	< 0.001*	Valid
	SMP5				0.870	< 0.001*	Valid
	SMP6				0.856	< 0.001*	Valid
	SMP7				0.893	< 0.001*	Valid
	SMP8				0.846	< 0.001*	Valid
	SMP9				0.814	< 0.001*	Valid
	SMP10				0.885	< 0.001*	Valid
	SMP11				0.843	< 0.001*	Valid
	SMP12				0.885	< 0.001*	Valid
	SMP13				0.770	< 0.001*	Valid
Firm performance		0.891	0.911	0.509		< 0.001*	Valid
	FP1				0.718	< 0.001*	Valid
	FP2				0.809	< 0.001*	Valid
	FP3				0.571	< 0.001*	Valid
	FP4				0.803	< 0.001*	Valid
	FP5				0.765	< 0.001*	Valid
	FP6				0.756	< 0.001*	Valid
	FP7				0.635	< 0.001*	Valid
	FP8				0.582	< 0.001*	Valid
	FP9				0.754	< 0.001*	Valid
	FP10				0.692	< 0.001*	Valid

Note: \*  $p < 0.001$ .

Source: Authors' elaboration.



The square root of the AVE for all constructs was placed at the diagonal elements of the correlation matrix, as shown in Table 8 below. Fornell and Larcker (1981) advocated the adoption

of AVE with a value of 0.5 or higher as a rule of thumb. They also suggested that the square root of AVE should be higher than the correlation between latent variables to determine discriminant validity.

**Table 8.** Discriminant validity (Fornell and Larcker's)

Factors	Marketing manager capabilities	Firm performance	Strategic marketing planning
Marketing manager capabilities	0.785		
Firm performance	0.604	0.713	
Strategic marketing planning	0.628	0.821	0.846

Source: Authors' elaboration.

#### 4.3. Structural model assessment

Having established the goodness of the outer model through evaluation, the researcher proceeds to the next step, i.e., testing the hypothesized relationship by running the partial least squares (PLS) algorithm and bootstrapping procedure in

SmartPLS 3.2.9. Specifically, the standard bootstrapping procedure was applied with 500 bootstraps of 221 cases to evaluate the significance of the path coefficients of the direct relationships as well as the mediating relationships (Hair et al., 2014; Hair et al., 2011).

**Table 9.** Results of hypothesis testing

Hypotheses	Coefficient	Std. dev	t-values	p-values	Conclusion
H1	-0.002	0.042	0.053	0.952	Rejected
H2	0.094	0.078	1.199	0.231	Rejected
H3	0.390	0.050	7.868	0.000	Supported
H4	0.037	0.030	1.217	0.224	Rejected

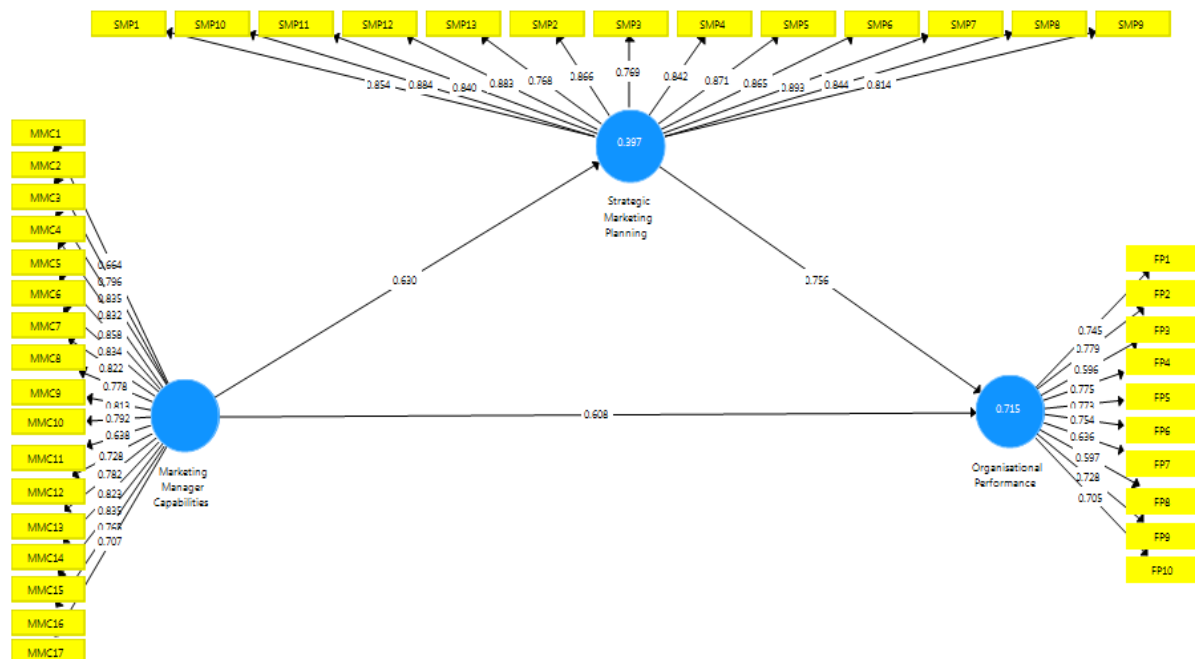
Source: Authors' elaboration.

As indicated by the results presented in Table 9, the effect of marketing manager capabilities on business performance was empirically tested and validated, providing credible and actionable insights; the beta value is  $\beta = -0.002$ ,  $t = 0.053$  and  $p = 0.952 > 0.01$ , which means that it is not statistically significant. On the other hand, the results of marketing manager capabilities show insignificant effects on strategic marketing planning ( $\beta = 0.094$ ,  $t = 1.199$ , and  $p = 0.231 > 0.01$ ). In addition, the result of the direct effect of strategic marketing planning on firm performance is  $\beta = 0.390$ ,  $t = 7.868$  with a p-value  $p < 0.01$ . Thus, strategic marketing planning is statistically significant and, therefore, a statistically significant

predictor of firm performance. While the mediating effect of strategic marketing on the relationship between marketing manager capabilities showed that there is evidence that strategic marketing planning did not mediate the relationship between marketing manager capabilities and firm performance with  $\beta = 0.037$ ,  $t = 1.217$ , and  $p = 0.224 > 0.01$ .

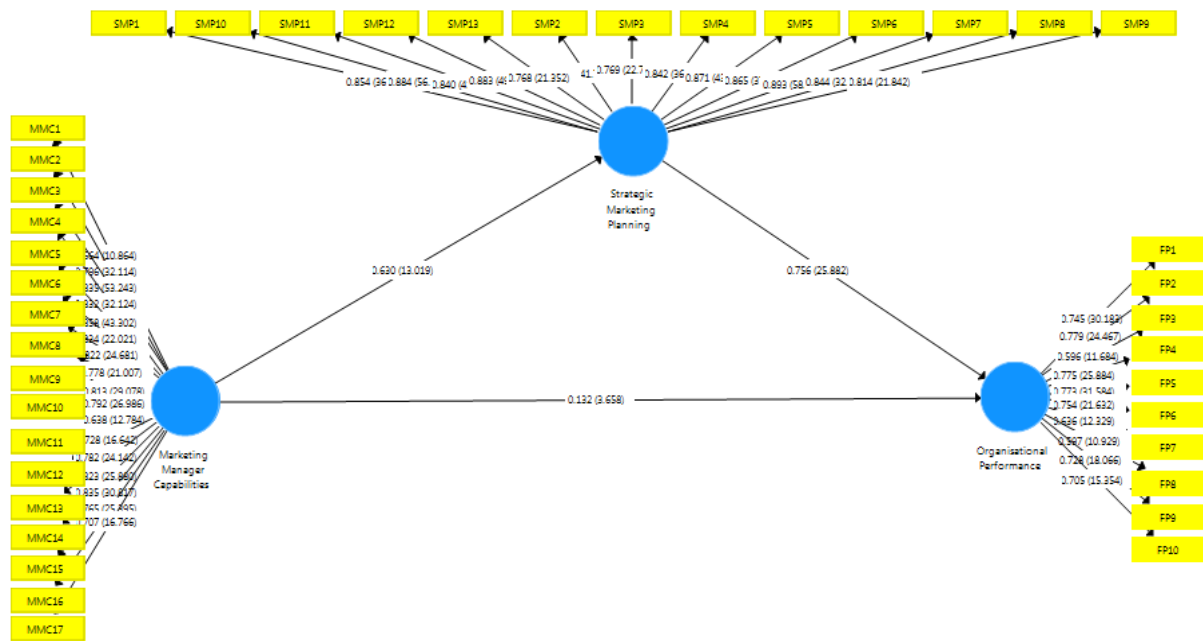
In essence, empirical evidence does not support all direct links between latent exogenous and endogenous constructs except H3. Besides, the evidence of empirical results of the mediating effect of strategic marketing on the relationship between marketing managers' capabilities and firm performance is not supported as well.

**Figure 2.** PLS-SEM algorithm measurement model



Source: Authors' elaboration.

Figure 3. PLS-SEM bootstrapping



Source: Authors' elaboration.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The primary aim of this paper is to investigate how marketing managers' capabilities and their involvement in formulating and implementing marketing strategies influence organizational performance. The findings indicate that in Algeria, marketing managers' capabilities contribute insignificantly to both the formulation and implementation of strategic marketing, negatively affecting firm performance. Additionally, strategic marketing planning does not act as a mediator between its antecedents and firm performance. However, the study reveals that the direct effect of strategic marketing planning on firm performance is significant.

The results for *H1*, *H2*, and *H4* reveal that marketing managers in Algeria have little influence on strategic decision-making, leading to weak firm performance. This is due to two main factors: marketing managers are mostly involved in strategy formulation but play a limited role in execution, and owners or CEOs often overlook marketing strategies proposed by these managers, opting instead for external agencies or other internal functions. Interestingly, *H3* shows that strategic marketing planning does have a significant impact on firm performance, but these strategies are usually developed by owners or general managers, not marketing managers. This challenges initial expectations and supports previous research (Mayew & Venkatachalam, 2012) that found marketing managers' capabilities do not directly influence organizational performance.

The study highlights that in Algerian firms, particularly SMEs, marketing managers are underutilized as strategic resources, contradicting the RBV theory which posits that internal resources, like managerial capabilities, should enhance firm performance. However, the results show that marketing managers in Algeria do not significantly contribute to performance. This is mainly due to the cultural context and the small size of firms,

where owners often manage multiple functions, including marketing, without relying on marketing managers for strategic decisions. As a result, marketing managers are involved in strategy formulation but excluded from the implementation process, limiting their impact on performance. In Algerian SMEs, especially in sectors like home appliances, electronics, and IT, this dynamic weakens the expected positive influence of marketing managers on organizational outcomes.

The study acknowledges the significant gender imbalance in the sample, with 95% of respondents being male. This skewness reflects broader societal and cultural dynamics within Algeria, where the workforce in SMEs, particularly in managerial and decision-making roles, is predominantly male. This is largely attributable to Algeria's status as a male-dominated society, where traditional gender roles and cultural norms often limit women's participation in professional spheres, particularly in leadership positions. In Algeria also, societal expectations and cultural perceptions about gender roles have historically influenced women's participation in the workforce. Men are often viewed as primary breadwinners, while women are expected to focus on familial responsibilities. These cultural norms have created systemic barriers to women's representation in managerial positions, especially in industries where strategic decision-making is a key component. The sectors in which Algerian SMEs predominantly operate, such as manufacturing and construction, are traditionally male-dominated. These industries often perpetuate gender biases, further reducing the likelihood of female participation in managerial roles.

Furthermore, the findings of this study challenge traditional assumptions posited by RBV and the DCV regarding the relationship between marketing managers' capabilities and firm performance. RBV suggests that a firm's unique resources and capabilities, such as skilled marketing managers, are pivotal to achieving sustainable competitive advantage. DCV builds on this by

emphasizing the role of dynamic capabilities in enabling firms to adapt and reconfigure resources to meet changing market demands. However, this study reveals that the direct effect of marketing managers' capabilities on firm performance is statistically insignificant. Similarly, their influence on strategic marketing planning also fails to reach statistical significance. These findings prompt a reevaluation of the assumptions underlying RBV and DCV, particularly in the context of Algerian SMEs.

One possible explanation lies in the cultural and organizational context of Algerian SMEs. Unlike firms operating in markets with a strong emphasis on marketing as a strategic function, many Algerian SMEs prioritize sales and operational efficiency over marketing-driven strategies. Marketing is often narrowly perceived as an auxiliary activity limited to advertising and promotions, rather than a strategic driver of competitive advantage. Consequently, marketing managers in these organizations are relegated to tactical roles with minimal involvement in strategic decision-making. This undermines the potential for marketing managers to leverage their capabilities in alignment with RBV and DCV principles, which rely on managers being empowered to develop and implement strategic insights.

Additionally, the centralized decision-making culture prevalent in Algerian SMEs further compounds this issue. In many cases, owners and top managers dominate strategic planning processes, leaving little room for marketing managers to contribute meaningfully. This hierarchical structure stifles the development of dynamic capabilities, as it limits the organization's ability to adapt to market changes through collaborative and data-driven decision-making. The lack of advanced analytics tools and technologies in these firms exacerbates the issue, as marketing managers are unable to harness data to inform strategies and demonstrate their value effectively.

The study's finding that strategic marketing planning significantly impacts firm performance underscores the importance of adopting a more structured and strategic approach to marketing. While marketing managers' capabilities alone do not directly influence performance, their potential contribution could be realized through active involvement in strategic marketing planning. This highlights the mediating role of strategic planning processes in bridging the gap between individual capabilities and organizational outcomes, a concept central to DCV.

To reconcile these findings with RBV and DCV, it is necessary to consider the unique challenges faced by Algerian SMEs. Financial and technological constraints often limit investments in marketing infrastructure, while cultural perceptions of marketing and the total ignorance of marketing operations further diminish its strategic relevance. Addressing these barriers requires a shift in organizational mindset to recognize marketing as a core business function and empower marketing managers to play a more central role in strategy formulation and implementation. This would involve fostering a culture of trust, investing in skill development, and adopting advanced analytics tools to enhance decision-making capabilities.

In conclusion, the apparent disconnect between marketing managers' capabilities and firm performance in Algerian SMEs does not invalidate

RBV and DCV but rather highlights the contextual limitations of their application. By addressing cultural, organizational, and resource-based barriers, Algerian SMEs can better align their practices with the theoretical insights of RBV and DCV, thereby unlocking the full potential of marketing managers as strategic assets.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Most marketing and management scholars group various roles under the "marketing manager" title and link this role to key responsibilities such as analysis, planning, implementation, and control of marketing activities. However, the title alone does not always reflect the true strategic influence of a marketing manager. This study's findings underscore a significant issue: the underutilization of marketing managers in Algeria stems from a profound misunderstanding of their potential by top management. In many Algerian firms, marketing is narrowly perceived as synonymous with advertising and sales rather than a critical strategic function. This cultural and managerial oversight neglects the core competencies of marketing, particularly in understanding customer behavior, leveraging advanced analytics, and developing data-driven strategies to strengthen market positioning. Instead of empowering marketing managers to drive strategic decisions, owners and top managers dominate these processes, delegating sales operations and basic promotional activities to marketing personnel. This limited perspective undermines the transformative power of marketing, reducing it to a tactical tool rather than recognizing it as a driver of sustainable competitive advantage.

The importance of recognizing marketing as a core business philosophy and leveraging marketing managers' capabilities cannot be overstated. Although Algerian SME manufacturers face challenges in adopting the marketing concept, such as financial and technological barriers, they must reconsider their approach to remain competitive. The evolving political, economic, social, and cultural landscape in North Africa underscores the urgency for this shift. In particular, the perception among Algerians that local products are inferior to imported ones highlights a critical challenge. Empowering marketing managers to play a more prominent role in strategic marketing management is essential to reversing these perceptions and improving the competitiveness of Algerian manufacturers in sectors like home appliances, electronics, and IT, both locally and globally.

To achieve long-term success, Algerian companies must cultivate a culture that values and prioritizes the role of marketing managers. Most importantly, business owners need to trust their marketing managers and invest in their development by providing the necessary skills, tools, and autonomy to enhance their capabilities. Developing marketing managers' strategic planning expertise is critical, as their knowledge of market trends, customer behavior, and competitive dynamics can significantly contribute to achieving excellence. Leaders of SMEs in Algeria are encouraged to involve marketing managers in both strategy formulation and execution. By doing so, SME leaders can tap into their expertise to make informed decisions, strengthen market positioning, and foster business growth. Granting marketing managers, the authority

and resources to actively contribute will not only enhance the cohesiveness of strategic efforts but also drive superior company performance and adaptability in an increasingly competitive business environment.

Future research should delve deeper into the implications of these findings and explore strategies to address the systemic issues identified. Additionally, the study's limitations, including its focus on a specific industry and geographic region, suggest that future studies could expand the scope to encompass diverse industries and regions for broader applicability. Further, longitudinal studies are also recommended to understand better the dynamic relationships between managerial capabilities, strategic marketing planning, and firm performance over time.

The findings have important implications for both theory and practice. From a theoretical perspective, the study suggests that the assumptions of RBV and DCV may not fully apply in contexts where cultural and organizational norms limit the strategic autonomy of key managerial roles. Future research should investigate these limitations further, exploring how contextual factors, such as cultural perceptions of marketing and centralized decision-making, influence the applicability of these frameworks.

Practically, Algerian SMEs must rethink their approach to marketing. Business owners and top managers should recognize the strategic value of marketing managers and invest in their development. This includes providing them with access to advanced analytical tools, fostering a culture that values data-driven decision-making, and empowering them to take an active role in strategic planning.

The gender imbalance in the sample may have implications for the study's findings. Male-dominated perspectives could influence how

marketing manager capabilities and strategic marketing planning are perceived and implemented. For instance, male managers may prioritize certain aspects of strategic decision-making, such as risk aversion or market dominance, while undervaluing more collaborative or customer-centric approaches that might be emphasized in a more gender-diverse sample.

Moreover, the absence of female voices limits the study's ability to capture diverse managerial approaches that could enrich strategic marketing planning. Research has shown that gender diversity in decision-making teams often leads to more innovative solutions and balanced strategic outcomes. Therefore, the findings may not fully represent the potential contributions of marketing managers in a more gender-inclusive environment.

The authors recognize the need to address gender skewness in future research to enhance the representativeness of findings. While the current sample reflects the reality of male dominance in Algerian SMEs, future studies should aim to include a more balanced gender representation. This could involve targeting industries with higher female participation or conducting qualitative studies to explore the perspectives of women in marketing roles. Additionally, addressing gender skewness in managerial roles and promoting diversity within SMEs could further enrich the strategic perspectives brought to the table, enhancing firm performance.

In conclusion, while strategic marketing planning demonstrates its importance as a driver of firm performance, the underutilization of marketing managers' capabilities highlights significant barriers to achieving sustainable competitive advantage in Algerian SMEs. Overcoming these barriers will require a shift in cultural and organizational norms, coupled with targeted investments in managerial and technological resources.

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