

The Impact of Knowledge Digitalization on Firm Performance: The mediating role of information management, entrepreneurial orientation and business model innovation in Moroccan companies.

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Abstract:

In today's digital era, managing and leveraging knowledge effectively is crucial for business success. This research investigates the impact of digitalizing knowledge on firm performance, focusing on the mediating roles of information management and business model innovation, and the moderating role of entrepreneurial orientation.

We gathered data from 216 participants working in diverse sectors across Morocco, such as industry, banking, agriculture, services, and logistics. Most participants were highly educated, holding doctoral degrees, and were professionals at the early stages of their careers. To analyze this data, we employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM).

The analysis indicates a positive link between digital knowledge and firm performance. Effective information management was found to be key in converting digital knowledge into performance improvements. Additionally, a strong entrepreneurial orientation further enhanced these benefits. Companies that implemented innovative business models experienced greater performance gains from their digitalization efforts.

The findings suggest that digitalizing knowledge significantly boosts company performance, especially when supported by robust information management and innovative business models. The role of entrepreneurial orientation is also crucial in maximizing the benefits of digital knowledge initiatives.

This study highlights the importance of investing in digital knowledge initiatives and promoting entrepreneurial orientation for sustainable performance enhancement. Businesses should focus on effective information management and innovative business models to fully capitalize on the advantages of digital knowledge.

In the Future, the research should examine how digital knowledge initiatives impact firm performance over the long term across various cultural contexts and industries, and explore how emerging technologies might further enhance these efforts.

Keywords: Firm performance, Knowledge digitalization, Business model innovation, Information management, Entrepreneurial orientation.

1 Introduction

The digital revolution which has allowed organizations to transcend historical boundaries and improve digital knowledge management has been made possible by the contributions of artificial intelligence, big data, blockchain, and cloud computing (Jones & Brown, 2020). This has significantly impacted knowledge management. Knowledge digitalization uses cutting-edge technologies like digital systems and sensors to turn large amounts of knowledge into conveniently accessible digital representations (Williams, 2021). This progresses assimilation of external knowledge more quickly, enhances departmental collaboration, and promotes innovation in products, services, and technology (Lee, 2022). Valuable organizational resource that includes explicit, documented information and experiential insights that are essential for innovation and decision-making is how knowledge is defined (Davenport & Prusak, 2023). In emerging economies like Morocco, where digital transformation is gaining steam, it is imperative to understand how knowledge digitalization influences corporate performance. The moderating effect of entrepreneurial activity, information management, and business model innovation are the main areas of focus for this study's investigation of this effect.

This research aims to address the following questions: What impact does the digitalization of knowledge have on the performance of corporations in emerging economies? What are the ramifications of using information management and innovative business models as intermediaries, and how might entrepreneurial orientation lessen these effects?

This study contributes to the corpus of literature by providing empirical data on the mediating and moderating factors determining the influence of knowledge digitalization on business performance in emerging economies. Practically speaking, it offers managers and legislators guidance on how to maximize digital knowledge management to enhance corporate results.

The remainder of the article will be structured as follows:

The second section will provide the relevant literature, in the third section, the research methodology will be reviewed, the implications of the findings will be discussed in the fourth section, and a conclusion addressing the implications for theory and practice will be included.

2 Literature Review

This section provides a summary of the primary hypotheses that drive the research, with a focus on how they interact to influence business model innovation, knowledge management, and corporate performance. The primary theoretical underpinnings of the research are Knowledge-Based View (KBV), Digital Knowledge Management, and Resource-Based Theory (RBT).

The Knowledge-Based View (KBV) holds that knowledge is an essential strategic resource for any company. According to Grant (1996), an organization's ability to create, retain, and use

knowledge is essential for promoting innovation, gaining a competitive advantage, and providing value. KBV places a strong emphasis on the need of dynamic capabilities, which let companies continuously absorb, apply, and use knowledge to adapt to a changing environment.

Actually, knowledge digitization is a key element of knowledge-based business (KBV), since it enhances information management and use, fosters creativity, and boosts output (De Mauro et al., 2016; Liu et al., 2018). Digital representations of explicit and tacit information can help organizations become more efficient, responsive, and creative. Better information transmission and accessibility may come from this (González & Melo, 2021; Barile et al., 2022). Otherwise, better information management and innovative company ideas are supported by knowledge digitalization, which raises firm performance (FP) (Ahmed & Lim, 2018; Nieman, 2020). The theory of organizational performance explores the variables that affect an organization's performance, including operational effectiveness, innovation, and knowledge management (Lee, 2022).

Digital Knowledge Management demonstrating how digitizing knowledge may enhance business performance and revolutionize management practices is the aim of digital knowledge management. It demonstrates how digital technology may enhance these resources, assist people seek out new information, and change implicit information into explicit forms that can be saved digitally (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2021; Cohen et al., 2023).

The characteristics that characterize entrepreneurial orientation (EO) creativity, risk-taking, and proactiveness amplify the benefits of knowledge digitalization and strengthen an organization's capacity to adapt to shifting market conditions (Turner & Pérez, 2019; Jones & Brown, 2020). At the absolute least, effective business model innovation concentrates on optimizing current processes to increase output and performance without appreciably altering the value proposition (Amit & Zott, 2012; Demil & Lecocq, 2010).

The Resource-Based Theory (RBT) examines how an organization's internal resources, including its people, assets, and technologies, can provide it with a sustained competitive advantage. According to Barney (1991), maintaining a long-term competitive edge depends on the efficiency with which these resources are used and their distinctiveness. This strategy highlights how important it is to leverage internal advantages to outperform competitors.

To enhance performance, efficiency, and decision-making, information management (IM) aims to make the most of an organization's information resources. It involves the creation, capture, storing, and efficient use of information to support organizational actions while guaranteeing quality, security, and utility (Choo, 2016; Becerra-Fernandez & Sabherwal, 2014).

By combining these ideas, the paper provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how business model innovation and digital knowledge management improve company performance.

H1: Knowledge digitization enhances company performance immediately. This idea has been reinforced by the findings of De Mauro et al. (2016) and Liu et al. (2018), which demonstrate that digitizing information enhances organizational responsiveness and efficiency and increases overall performance.

H2a: The digitalization of knowledge positively impacts business model innovation. González and Melo (2021) claim that by utilizing digital technology, organizations can reassess and restructure their value propositions and customer base.

H2b: The originality of entrepreneurial models is positively impacted by the digitization of knowledge. Turner and Pérez's (2019) research demonstrate that businesses possessing a strong entrepreneurial mindset are better equipped to capitalize on the new opportunities brought about by digitalization.

H3a: A company's performance is improved by innovative business concepts. Studies conducted by Chesbrough (2010) and Zott et al. (2011) have demonstrated how a company's value generation reasoning may be altered and performance can be improved through business model innovation.

H3b: The entrepreneurial model's innovation enhances the performance of businesses. Innovation in entrepreneurial models can result in new consumer value sources and sustainable growth, claim Foss and Saebi (2017).

H4a: Innovation in business models acts as a mediator in the relationship between knowledge digitalization and company performance. Amit and Zott (2012) claim that knowledge digitization promotes business model innovation, which enhances company performance.

H4b: New business models act as a mediating factor in the relationship between knowledge digitalization and firm performance. Demil and Lecocq (2010) have demonstrated that the creation of entrepreneurial models is encouraged by knowledge digitization, and this improves the performance of businesses.

H5a: Entrepreneurial attitude affects the relationship between knowledge digitalization and creative business concepts. Jones and Brown (2020) propose that firms with a strong entrepreneurial spirit are more likely to leverage knowledge digitization's benefits to reinvent their business strategies.

H5b: Entrepreneurial attitude moderates the relationship between creative entrepreneurial models and knowledge digitalization. Turner and Pérez's (2019) study indicate that the impact of knowledge digitalization on the creativity of entrepreneurial models is enhanced by an entrepreneurial attitude.

H5c: An entrepreneurial mindset moderates the relationship between knowledge digitization and business performance. A business-oriented mindset amplifies the advantages of knowledge digitalization on organizational performance, claim Jones and Brown (2020).

H6: An entrepreneurial attitude has a good effect on information management. An entrepreneurial mindset has been shown to boost the effectiveness of information management strategies (Davenport, 1994; Marchand et al., 2000).

H7: Information management improves an organization's performance. Effective information management improves decision-making, operational efficacy, and overall business success, claims Eppler (2006).

H8: Information management acts as a mediator in the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and business performance. Alavi and Leidner (2001) propose that information management facilitates the utilization of entrepreneurial abilities to enhance corporate performance.

- **synthesis**

In light of the reviewed literature, the proposed hypotheses emerge from a convergence of the Knowledge-Based View, Resource-Based Theory, and Digital Knowledge Management perspectives, which collectively highlight the pivotal role of intangible resources in driving sustainable organizational success. Knowledge digitization appears as a central enabler, not only streamlining information flows but also nurturing agility, creativity, and responsiveness, thereby setting the stage for business model innovation. These innovations, in turn, translate strategic knowledge assets into tangible performance gains, particularly when reinforced by an entrepreneurial orientation that fosters risk-taking, proactiveness, and adaptability. Within this interplay, information management operates as both a strategic capability and a mediating mechanism, ensuring that knowledge and entrepreneurial potential are effectively converted into competitive advantages. This integrative view underscores that the theoretical pathways proposed linking knowledge digitization, entrepreneurial orientation, business model innovation, and corporate performance are grounded in complementary frameworks, offering a coherent basis for the hypotheses and a comprehensive lens for empirical validation.

3 Research methodology

We choose to employ a quantitative research methodology to understand the impact of information digitization on the performance of Moroccan businesses. A total of 216 highly educated specialists with expertise of digitalization and its possible impacts on business outcomes were chosen from a variety of fields, including industry, banking, agriculture, services, and logistics.

In this work, we employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), a method for data analysis and hypothesis testing that is well-known for its flexibility and dependability in management research. For complex structural models, such as the five-variable model employed in this investigation, PLS-SEM is particularly well suited.

It is also advantageous to investigate mediating and moderating effects using this method since it sheds light on the fundamental dynamics of our model. Additionally, because PLS-SEM may be applied to a wide range of sample sizes, it can be utilized for research involving both small and big sample sizes. We were cautious when establishing the structural model during the study, taking company size and demographic factors into consideration, to prevent any potential bias. Throughout the study, we made sure that participant anonymity was maintained and informed consent was obtained by adhering to strict ethical criteria.

This analytical framework provides a comprehensive approach to examine the potential impact of knowledge digitalization on the performance of Moroccan firms. It also offers valuable insights into the broader implications of digital transformation across diverse industries.

We adjusted measuring items from previous studies for each variable. Attached are measurement items found in the appendix. Every variable in this study was assessed using a five-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting strongly disagree and 5 denoting strongly agree.

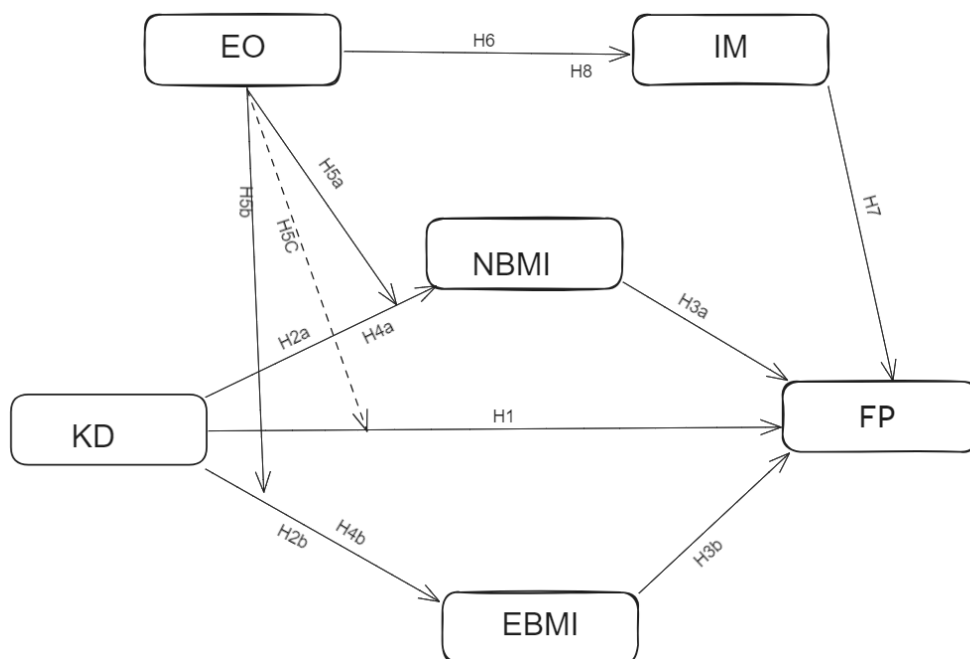


Figure 1 : Research model

4 Results and Discussion

Analyzing the validity and reliability of the constructs is crucial to ensuring the robustness of the measurement model. Table 1 provides a comprehensive examination of Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (rho a and rho c), and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each of the study's constructs: EBMI, EO, FP, IM, KD, and NBMI.

Table 1: Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach alpha	Composite reliability	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)
EBMI	0.918	0.921	0.942	0.802
EO	0.915	0.917	0.936	0.746
FP	0.923	0.981	0.945	0.810
IM	0.921	0.926	0.944	0.808
KD	0.915	0.916	0.932	0.663
NBMI	0.864	0.879	0.907	0.711

Cronbach's alpha values, which ranged from 0.864 to 0.923, were higher above the 0.70 cutoff. The constructions' dependability is validated by the similarly strong composite reliability, in which every rho_c value is greater than 0.90. Convergent validity is demonstrated by Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values more than 0.50 for all constructs, with particularly high values for FP, IM, and EBMI. These findings attest to the measurement model's robustness and reliability, ensuring that it is suitable for additional structural analysis and accurate for drawing research conclusions. The structural model's outcomes

The structural model analysis helps explain the connections among the primary constructs (EBMI, EO, FP, IM, KD, and NBMI). The path coefficients and their significance levels indicate the direction and strength of these associations.

Table 2: Path Analysis

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
EBMI -> FP	0.145	0.146	0.068	2.124	0.034
EO -> IM	0.774	0.777	0.038	20.627	0.000
IM -> FP	0.111	0.106	0.128	0.863	0.389
KD -> EBMI	0.632	0.632	0.050	12.572	0.000
KD -> FP	0.432	0.435	0.081	5.315	0.000

KD -> NBMI	0.639	0.637	0.045	14.290	0.000
NBMI -> FP	0.265	0.269	0.041	6.516	0.000
EO x KD -> EBMI	-0.067	-0.065	0.029	2.301	0.022
EO x KD -> FP	0.102	0.100	0.041	2.492	0.013
EO x KD -> NBMI	0.050	0.049	0.026	1.909	0.057

Numerous significant connections are made clear by the analysis: EBMI has a moderate but significant favorable influence on firm performance ($\beta = 0.145$, $p = 0.034$). Entrepreneurial orientation (EO) has a considerable impact on information management (IM) ($\beta = 0.774$, $p = 0.000$), indicating its critical role. However, IM has no appreciable impact on the performance of the company ($\beta = 0.111$, $p = 0.389$). Knowledge digitalization (KD) significantly increases firm performance ($\beta = 0.432$, $p = 0.000$), EBMI ($\beta = 0.632$, $p = 0.000$), and new business model innovations (NBMI) ($\beta = 0.639$, $p = 0.000$). The interaction between EO and KD has a beneficial impact on firm performance ($\beta = 0.102$, $p = 0.013$), while it has a negative impact on EBMI ($\beta = -0.067$, $p = 0.022$). The interaction effect on NBMI is marginally significant ($\beta = 0.050$, $p = 0.057$), suggesting a moderate impact.

Our understanding of how innovation, knowledge digitalization, and an entrepreneurial mindset interact to impact corporate success is improved by these findings. The R2 number indicates the proportion of a dependent variable's variance that can be explained by its related independent variables. A higher R2 value indicates a better fit for the data by the model.

Table 3: R-squart

	R-square	R-square adjusted
EBMI	0.581	0.575
FP	0.450	0.434
IM	0.599	0.598
NBMI	0.621	0.616

With revisions, the Existing Business Model Innovation (EBMI) model has a robustness of 0.575 and an R2 of 0.581, indicating that it accounts for a sizable portion of the variance in EBMI.

Firm Performance (FP) shows moderate explanatory power with an adjusted R² of 0.434 and a R² of 0.450. Information management (IM) has a high R2 of 0.599 and an adjusted R2 of 0.598,

indicating stable explanatory power. New Business Model Innovation (NBMI) shows a strong model fit and a notable influence of the factors taken into consideration with an R2 of 0.621 and an adjusted R2 of 0.616.

The coefficients of determination (R2) suggest that the study's model explains a significant portion of the variance in the dependent variables, particularly in business model innovation (EBMI and NBMI) and information management (IM). These results suggest that the components of the model, such as entrepreneurial orientation and knowledge digitization, are strong predictors of innovation and business success in Moroccan firms. The adjusted R2 values, which remain quite close to the unadjusted R2 values, account for the number of predictors. This shows that the results are not overfit and that the model is suitable for this investigation.

The analysis shows that knowledge digitalization (KD) has a significant impact in fostering business model innovations, as evidenced by the strong positive correlations between KD and new business model innovation (NBMI) (0.757) and existing business model innovation (EBMI) (0.745). The significant positive correlation between entrepreneurial orientation (EO) and information management (IM) (0.774) emphasizes the need of an entrepreneurial approach to effective information management. The results show that performance is influenced by these factors in addition to other variables. EO and firm performance (FP) (0.533), IM and FP (0.518), EBMI and FP (0.526), and NBMI and FP (0.571) have relatively positive associations. The interaction variables between FP (-0.149), IM (-0.534), and EBMI (0.363) showed negative correlations with EO and KD, indicating that combining these parameters could cause issues or lessen the effectiveness of the results. All things considered, there is a complex link between KD and EO that is revealed by the way they interact with each other and with business model innovation.

Table 4: correlation matrix

	EBMI	EO	FP	IM	KD	NBMI	EO x KD
EBMI	1.000	0.518	0.526	0.586	0.745	0.659	-0.363
EO	0.518	1.000	0.533	0.774	0.538	0.583	-0.353
FP	0.526	0.533	1.000	0.518	0.596	0.571	-0.149
IM	0.586	0.774	0.518	1.000	0.643	0.588	-0.534
KD	0.745	0.538	0.596	0.643	1.000	0.757	-0.338
NBMI	0.659	0.583	0.571	0.588	0.757	1.000	-0.236
EO x KD	-0.363	-0.353	-0.149	-0.534	-0.338	-0.236	1.000

Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the impact of information digitalization on corporate performance, particularly for emerging countries such as Morocco. The findings demonstrate that knowledge digitization significantly enhances company performance, especially when paired with innovative business plans and effective information handling. The role of entrepreneurial orientation, which places firms in a better position to take advantage of the opportunities brought about by digital transformation, further enhances these benefits.

As per the survey, companies need to accept the strategic need of incorporating digital technology into knowledge management if they wish to maintain their competitiveness in a rapidly evolving market. Knowledge digitalization accelerates the development of new products and services, fosters interdepartmental collaboration, and fundamentally changes business models—all of which improve performance over the long run.

The report also highlights how important it is to tackle digital transformation from an all-encompassing perspective. Companies that proactively manage information and adapt their business models on a regular basis will be better positioned to reap the rewards of digital knowledge. Entrepreneurial attitude is a critical moderating factor that enables firms to maximize the returns on their digitalization investments and manage the challenges of digital transformation. In conclusion, this study significantly advances our understanding of the mechanisms via which knowledge digitalization boosts the performance of businesses in developing countries. It provides legislators and managers with practical guidance on how to implement and reap the benefits of digital knowledge projects. Future research should look at how these projects perform in different corporate and cultural contexts over time, and how new technologies might further impact these dynamics.

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