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## Business analytics in managerial decision-making in emerging economies: evidence from Pakistan

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** Firms in emerging economies are increasingly investing in business analytics (BA) capabilities to strengthen their decision-making processes and move toward more evidence-based organizational governance. While a growing body of literature documents the operational and strategic benefits of BA in mature market contexts, its application in complex top management decisions in emerging economies, such as Pakistan, remains considerably underexplored. Grounded in the resource-based view of the firm, this study investigates top management perceptions of the adoption and use of BA when making decisions concerning the firm's resource base in a Pakistani corporate environment. **Design/methodology/approach:** This study employed a qualitative research design using semi-structured interviews to gather in-depth perceptions from 15 top managers employed in large Pakistani firms. Participants were drawn from firms with significant decision-making responsibilities spanning multiple industries, enabling a rich and contextually grounded understanding of BA use. **Findings:** The findings reveal that top managers in Pakistan primarily rely on BA output to monitor business performance against established targets and to guide short-term corrective measures. For more complex, future-oriented strategic decisions, top managers supplement BA-derived knowledge with non-analytical knowledge sources, including stakeholder consultations, industry expert opinions, and contextual judgments shaped by local market dynamics. Furthermore, both individual-level and organizational-level expectations regarding BA significantly shape how and why top managers choose to engage with it. **Originality/value:** This study contributes to the emerging literature on business analytics value in developing economies by documenting the purposes and rationales underlying top management's BA use in Pakistan. It advances the resource-based view discourse by demonstrating how top managers in a high-uncertainty, relationship-intensive business environment navigate the boundaries between analytics-driven and experience-driven decision-making.

**Keywords:** *Strategy, Strategic management, Decision-making, Business analytics, Emerging economies, Pakistan, RBV*

### 1. Introduction

According to the RBV, competitive advantage is the result of a firm's capability to recognize, create, and utilize resources in a manner that is difficult for others to imitate (Barney, 1991). Top managers (TM) occupy the peak of this resource management activity and are responsible for ultimate decision-making regarding how organizational resources can be acquired, configured, and deployed (Noda and Bower, 1996). As such decisions are knowledge-based, the quality and appropriateness of the information accessible to TMs determine the firm's strategic direction (Spender, 1996). Digitalization has essentially changed the information environment of modern organizations. Companies can now access more data than ever before, created up and down their chains of value, at their customer contact points, and in their competitive arenas (Davenport, 2018). Business analytics (BA), including

descriptive, diagnostic, predictive, and prescriptive business analytics, has provided companies with the capability to transform such data to formulate operational knowledge (Lepenioti et al., 2020). In turn, companies in developed and developing economies have significantly increased their investments in BA to achieve gains in the speed, accuracy, and coherence of decision-making (Davenport and Harris, 2017; Khan, 2023).

Pakistan is one of the largest and fastest-developing economies in South Asia; therefore, the study of BA use in managerial decisions is especially interesting in the country. Institutional complexity, regulatory uncertainty, accelerated adoption of digital technologies, and increasing competition pressure from domestic and foreign competitors define the environment of Pakistani firms (Khwaja et al., 2021). In this context, major Pakistani companies have started to invest heavily in digital infrastructures and analytics capabilities; however, it is still not clear how well the top management utilizes these capabilities (Ahmed et al., 2020).

Academic knowledge regarding the application of BA to managerial decision-making processes has been generated in Western and high-income country backgrounds. Research on how TMs in emerging market's view, internalize, and implement BA is limited. This is a significant gap because the factors that define the formation of BA value, such as institutional settings, the way managers think, the maturity of data infrastructure, and cultural beliefs regarding the use of evidence, might be significantly different among national settings (Wamba et al., 2017). Knowledge of how Pakistani TMs employ BA and why is thus relevant to both theory and practice.

This study addresses two research questions to fill this gap. First, when TMs in large Pakistani companies apply BA in their decision-making will be investigated. Second, why they would want to interact with it is examined. The answers to these questions are provided in the form of 15 detailed semi-structured interviews with top leaders who have strategic decision-making roles in various industries. The remainder of the paper discusses the review of the theoretical background, description of the methodology, presentation of the empirical results, and a conclusion that places our results within the overall literature.

## **2. Theoretical background**

### **2.1 Managers and firm decision-making**

Firm performance does not solely rely on the resources that a firm holds, but rather on the effectiveness with which the resources are managed and utilized over time (Barney, 1991). Changing competitive environments demand that firms change their resource structures, such as divesting from resources with decreasing returns and investing in resources that provide future competitive advantage (March, 1991; O'Reilly and Tushman, 2008). Those firms that are very successful in this kind of dynamic resource management activity are likely to have far-out performances in relation to other rivals (Barney, 1991; Teece, 2007).

Resource management contains a variety of decisions of varying complexities, newness, and information needs (Sirmon et al., 2007). Routine decisions are those based on familiar situations, in which familiarity with the options and their implications can be accommodated by systematic procedures or even automation (Simon, 1960; Holsapple, 2008). In contrast, non-routine decisions are characterized by a high level of novelty or uncertainty, and decision-makers can not depend on heuristics; instead, they must undertake strenuous exploration of options while considering possible effects (March & Simon, 1993).

Most of the decisions that TMs have to make fall into the latter category. In strategic choices related to the distribution of resources, entry mode, capability building, or restructuring of the organization, there

is significant uncertainty regarding the future of the external environment as well as the firm's internal capabilities (Hutzschenreuter & Kleindienst, 2006). Consequently, to make these decisions, TMs must rely on a variety of knowledge bases, few of which include historical data, expert judgment, stakeholder input, and intuition (Vuorinen et al., 2018). The difficulty lies in combining these sources productively, particularly when they point in different directions (Phillips-Wren et al., 2019).

In Pakistan, in particular, TMs have to deal with other tiers of complexities. Regulation systems are shifting quickly, the quality of infrastructure changes significantly across the country, and even informal networks and relationship capital have a significant impact on business performance, in addition to official statistics (Khwaja et al., 2021). Such contextual characteristics define the decision environment in a manner that can alter the nature of decisions that TMs encounter, as well as the mode through which they make their decisions (Ahmed et al., 2020).

TMs also work under the organizational control and hierarchical structures that influence decision-making roles and responsibilities. At the level of group or subsidiary management teams, managers are normally responsible for making decisions that impact the resource constellation of their areas of dealings (Hambrick et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2022). Their tasks are divided into external and internal analyses, strategy development, control of its implementation, and monitoring of its performance (Cohen and Cyert, 1973; Randall and Dent, 2019). All these activities characterize the landscape in which BAs can deliver value.

## **2.2 Purposes for using business analytics in managerial decision-making**

Various activities are involved in the strategic management process, which, when combined, form the competitive position and configuration of resources of the firm in the long run (Cohen and Cyert, 1973). These include environmental scanning, strategy development, setting of targets, monitoring, and implementation of corrective actions when performance is not on course (Randall and Dent, 2019). BA has the potential to assist all these activities, although its role and level of contribution to them can differ and fall on both ends of the decision-making spectrum (Lepeniotti et al., 2020). On the operational end of the decision spectrum, BA performs well in tracking performance against set targets, detecting deviations, and facilitating the choice of corrective action (Kesavan and Kushwaha, 2020). The empirical data produced by operational systems are valuable to these analyses, as they help TMs to stay aware of the situation in their respective areas of work without having to collect a lot of information manually (Luoma, 2016). These applications are well-established in the literature and tend to be universal across organizational settings (Davenport and Harris, 2017).

There are more problems at the strategic end of the decision-making spectrum in BA. Strategic decisions are made with reference to unpredictable future conditions, new strategic choices, and judgments concerning the organizational capacity that do not particularly manifest themselves in available data (Kunc and O'Brien, 2019). Such decisions can be extended to scenario analysis and simulation modelling; however, these types of analysis involve assumptions based on the future of the situation, and uncertainty is always introduced by uncertainty (Volberda et al., 2021). These challenges may be aggravated by the speed and unpredictability of environmental change in emerging economies such as Pakistan, so BA output can be a helpful but inevitably incomplete contribution to the strategic decision-making process (Wamba et al., 2017).

Recent research has started to report a more debilitated view of the involvement of BA in the approach to management, whereby analytical output is not an algorithm for making a choice but a part of many that go into a highly extended procedure of deliberation (Vidgen et al., 2017; Khan & Shah, 2024). It seems that TMs build on BA-based insights, add tacit knowledge to them, stakeholder views, and situational judgment to come up with decisions that capture the entire complexity of the strategic

dilemma before them (Pauleen and Wang, 2017). One of the key interests of this study is to understand how this integration takes place in the Pakistani context.

### **2.3 Reasons for using business analytics in managerial decision-making**

The question of why managers use BA differs from the question of when or how they use BA. Various bodies of literature have addressed this question by taking a varied theoretical approach. Technology acceptance models, including the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use Technology (UTAUT), focus on performance expectancy, effort expectancy, and social influence as the reasons behind people's adoption of technology (Venkatesh et al., 2003; Khan M.H, 2023). When applied to BA, these frameworks imply that TMs will utilize analytical tools to the extent that they believe that BA will improve their performance in decision-making, that interacting with it is practical to incorporate into their working processes, and that their colleagues and managers in the organization also appreciate BA use (Zaman et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2025).

Outside these generic adoption drivers, research has focused particularly on the managerial use of BA and has identified specific decision factors. Managers testify that they use BA to reduce uncertainty and increase the factual basis of their decisions (Davenport and Harris, 2017; Rafi et al., 2025). They also apply it to validate decisions for superiors, colleagues, and boards, providing an evidential source for making choices, which may otherwise be subjective (Korherr et al., 2023). In addition, BA may allow uncovering new horizons or inconsistencies in the data that might make managers rethink previous assumptions, which is a cognitive challenge that can be beneficial (Ali and Essien, 2023).

Organizational expectations also play a role. Companies that have high investments in BA infrastructure usually anticipate their top-level management to be the leaders of its application, both in their deeds and in the organizational culture and norms they set as examples (Carillo, 2017). In some companies, TM interaction with BA is at least partially normative in the sense of what it takes to be an effective executive in an organization with the capability of analytics (Min and Lea, 2021). Such organizational social and cultural expectations can be especially compelling in Pakistani organizations, where top-down power and role-based demands have a significant effect on managerial behavior (Ahmed et al., 2020).

Managerial confusion and decision-making styles also determine BA utilization due to individual differences. Analytically oriented managers who are more data literate (or technologically self-efficacious) tend to be more inclined to pursue BA actively and successfully (Martinsons and Davison, 2006; Yu et al., 2022). In contrast, managers with high intuitive decision-making styles or less exposure to BA might be more discriminating in using analytics, mainly relying on personal judgment and treating the output of analytics as a checkpoint (Phillips-Wren et al., 2019). These differences at the individual level also add value to the heterogeneity of BA patterns used within and among different organizations.

Drawing on these theoretical foundations, this study explores TM BA use in large Pakistani firms through two key research questions.

1. RQ1. When do TMs in large Pakistani firms use BA?
2. RQ2. Why do TMs in large Pakistani firms use BA?

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1 Research approach**

This study relies on a qualitative research concept based on abductive logic, which enables us to pass between the concepts and hypotheses of the empirical findings (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). The sparsity of previous research on the use of BA in the Pakistani managerial setting justified the qualitative

research design, as it allowed us to develop an informed perception, as opposed to proving specific hypotheses (Saldana et al., 2011). After examining the available literature on BA application in organizational decision-making and specific situations in Pakistani corporate settings, our present research developed a semi-structured interview protocol as the main measure of data collection (Qu & Dumay, 2011).

The population of this study comprised large firms, that is, those with revenues above PKR 5 billion annually, based in Pakistan, and whose head offices were located in major commercial cities such as Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad. The importance of firm size is due to the fact that a large organization is more likely to invest in BA capabilities and TMs with significant BA exposure (Chen and Nath, 2018). They were eligible to participate in the study as 15 TMs in strategic decision-making roles, which was deemed sufficient to reach thematic saturation in this type of qualitative research (Galletta, 2013).

### 3.2 Data collection and handling

Semi-structured and individual interviews were also utilized as the main form of data collection, as they provided thematically structured, but verbally free, conversations between interviewers and participants (Qu & Dumay, 2011). This type of interview is ideal for obtaining rich and experience-based responses from senior managers, who can describe the particulars of their BA usage in a manner that is not possible using structured surveys (Galletta, 2013). The interview guide was created through a gradual series of discussions with pilots and had four thematic areas:

1. The informant's managerial role and overall orientation toward decision-making;
2. The informant's perceptions of the BA's organizational benefits and challenges;
3. The informant's direct experience with BA use in planning and strategic decision-making; and
4. The informant's personal motivations and expectations regarding BA use.

Six heads in business units, five heads in functions, and four heads in strategy formed the interviewees (Table 1). The interviews were conducted mostly in person between March 2023 and September 2023, with a few conducted via video conferencing. Each session lasted an average of 58 minutes and was tape-recorded with the consent of the participants and later transcribed verbatim. All participants received full anonymity, and their identifying information was substituted with generalized descriptors during the analysis and reporting stages.

**Table 1 Interview statistics**

| Identifier | Type of responsibility | Industry sector     | Interview type | Language | Duration (min) |
|------------|------------------------|---------------------|----------------|----------|----------------|
| A          | Head of business unit  | Manufacturing       | Onsite         | Urdu     | 62             |
| B          | Head of strategy       | Financial services  | Onsite         | English  | 55             |
| C          | Head of strategy       | Telecommunications  | Onsite         | English  | 60             |
| D          | Head of business unit  | FMCG                | Onsite         | Urdu     | 72             |
| E          | Head of function       | Energy              | Onsite         | Urdu     | 51             |
| F          | Head of business unit  | Retail & e-commerce | Onsite         | English  | 58             |
| G          | Head of function       | Manufacturing       | Onsite         | Urdu     | 64             |
| H          | Head of strategy       | Financial services  | Online         | English  | 49             |
| I          | Head of business unit  | Logistics           | Onsite         | Urdu     | 56             |

|   |                       |                     |        |         |    |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------|--------|---------|----|
| J | Head of function      | Healthcare          | Onsite | Urdu    | 61 |
| K | Head of strategy      | FMCG                | Onsite | Urdu    | 53 |
| L | Head of function      | Telecommunications  | Online | English | 47 |
| M | Head of business unit | Energy              | Onsite | Urdu    | 65 |
| N | Head of function      | Retail & e-commerce | Online | English | 52 |
| O | Head of business unit | Healthcare          | Onsite | Urdu    | 59 |

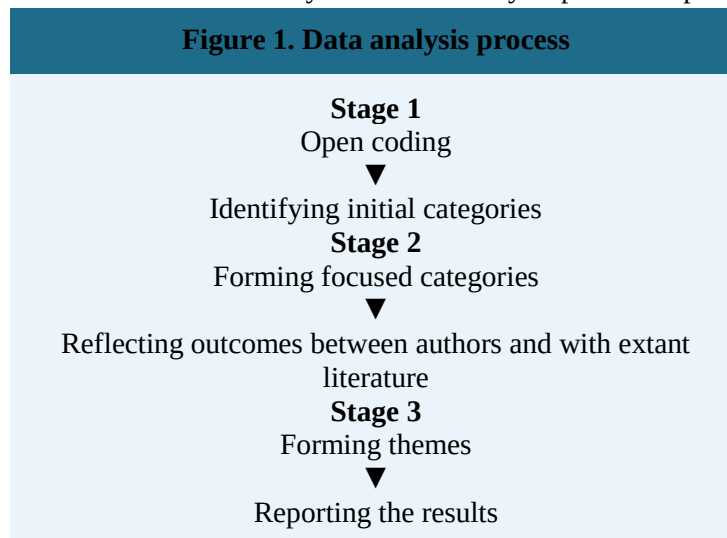
Source: Authors' own work

### 3.3 Data analysis

The analysis of the interview transcripts was conducted using a three-stage data coding strategy that is in line with standard qualitative methods in management research (Roulston, 2014). In the initial step, open coding was used on all transcripts to develop first-order categories that reflected the content of the participants' descriptions of their BA use (Gioia et al., 2013; Khan & Ahmaad, 2025). These preliminary categories were retained as they were close to the words and frames of the participants, and the richness of the data in the context was maintained. All Urdu–English translations were performed by other members of the research team who were bilingual and ensured that the translations were semantically correct.

In the second stage, the first-order categories were corrupted into second-order themes in the form of cross-case comparisons and continued reflections against the existing literature (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). This step entailed repeated deliberations by all three authors and specific attention to categories that seemed specific to the Pakistani situation, such as those involving the role of personal relations, regulatory demands, and family ownership patterns in influencing BA use. Third-order constructs were subsequently created to reflect larger era trends within the themes.

It was analyzed simultaneously based on deductive logic, whereby the purposes and reasons behind the use of BA in the existing literature were tested in the Pakistani context, and inductive logic, in which values that were not expected by existing literature could emerge (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). The anonymity of the respondents was preserved during the reporting process; descriptive role names were written instead of personal names. A summary of the data analysis process is presented in Figure 1.



Source: Authors' own work based on Roulston (2014)

### 3.3.1 Analyzing data to identify when top managers use business analytics

The initial analytical sub-question concerned the circumstances under which TMs had used BAs. The transcripts were transcribed, following which open coding was conducted to identify 13 first-order categories representing the diversity of the decision contexts and activities reported by the informants. The cross-case comparison and reflection on the previous literature resulted in the formulation of four second-order themes that conveyed the various purposes for using BA:

1. Business and operations follow-up and adjustments
2. mid-term monitoring, planning, and decision-making;
3. Long-term planning and scenario analysis; and
4. Strategic options evaluation and decision-making.

These purposes, along with the underlying first-order categories, are summarized in Table 2 and discussed in the results section.

### 3.3.2 Analyzing data to identify why top managers use business analytics

Answering the second analytical sub-question, open coding revealed 16 first-order categories pertaining to the variables and motives that informants used to decide what to do with BA. These groupings were further divided into eight second groups, and each group was categorized into two third groups based on whether the manifestations were all organizational or individual expectations. Organizational expectations were associated with four themes: leveraging digital transformation, sustaining competitive position, promoting regulatory compliance and governance, and enabling business management. Individual expectations were linked to four additional themes: gaining new analytical insights, making a decision based on facts, justifying decisions to stakeholders, and establishing managerial confidence. Table 3 summarizes these findings.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Top manager perceptions on when to use business analytics

#### 4.1.1 Follow-up and adjustments in business and operations.

Throughout the interview data, TMs repeatedly spoke about BA as the key tool by which they maintain real-time performance of their business unit or business sector. Vital elements of daily management were outlined in monitoring dashboards, automated reports, and exception-flagging systems that were established on the BA infrastructure. Interviewee A verbalized this direction:

*In my case, analytics is not an option but a prerequisite. Unless I have reviewed the numbers before walking into a review meeting, I feel that I am walking in the dark. I have made a habit of checking the dashboards every morning. Regional sales, margin sales, product category sales, customer complaint/solve time. These are the beating of the business.*

In addition to regular monitoring, BA allows TMs to detect performance deviations and develop corrective actions quickly. Interviewee D explains that BA offers operational decisions in various business spheres simultaneously:

*There are 12 distribution regions. At the end of every month, BA informs me about the ones that are not performing in terms of volume, those that are experiencing a decline in their margins, and those that are receiving poor customer satisfaction feedback. This triangulation cannot be done manually at my level. It becomes manageable through analytics and helps me understand where I will have to concentrate and where I can rely on my team to take it up.*

The area of functional monitoring is naturally dependent on the functional mandate of the TM. Business unit heads are likely to track overall business performance composites based on revenue, margin, and customer measures. Functional chiefs are better defined around the measurements most applicable in the sphere, such as supply chain performance, human resources effectiveness, or political campaign payoff. Interviewee G, a head of manufacturing operations, explains how BA has changed his management of the manufacturing operations in an environment whereby local supply chain breakdowns are typical:

*There are too many variables in Pakistan, such as frequent power failures, fluctuations in raw material prices, and delays in deliveries. Analytics will enable us to model these and project when they will occur so that we can prepare inventory or change the production schedule in advance, but not afterwards.*

These descriptions align with previous studies that reported high fit of BA to operational monitoring and rapid changes (Lepenioti et al., 2020). The aspect of operational disruptions that particularly concerns the Pakistani environment also suggests it: the intensity and inconsistency of operational disruptions seem to increase the importance that TMs attach to real-time BA capabilities (Khwaja et al., 2021).

#### **4.1.2 Mid-term monitoring, planning, and decision-making.**

The BA is also an important component in the activities of medium-term planning, such as annual budget cycles, project planning, and road mapping product development, and investment timing. These actions have a more extended planning horizon than daily operational scrutiny and involve the incorporation of trend information, forecasting models, and inter-functional fresh streams. Interviewee F explains that the BA supports the annual planning cycle within her company:

*The first stage of our planning has become practically analytics-driven. We access three years of performance, divide it into individual product, channel, and customer cohort performance, and apply predictive models to each segment. This provides us with a data-based starting point before we superimpose judgment concerning strategy. It has minimized the noise in our planning conversations to a great extent.*

Another aspect brought out by the mid-term planning context is the relevance of BA in investment planning and capital allocation. Interviewee I, Head of Business Unit in a logistics company, explains how the output of BA is used to determine the timeline of investment in warehouse infrastructure:

*We are continually making decisions regarding where to invest in new sorting and warehousing capacity. Analytics uses predictive models to project our growth volumes relative to regions in the next two years. This informs us of where we will cross demand barriers and thus, we can schedule our capital spending to arrive slightly ahead of the demand and avoid congested situations.*

In the descriptions of mid-term BA usage, product planning was also an important aspect of TMs. Here, BA can be used in the context of FMCG and retail to analyze the performance of individual product lines in a granular way, the slow-moving lines, preempting indicators of shifting consumer preference, and estimating the revenue value of portfolio changes. As interviewee K noted, this is the case:

*Each quarter, my department conducts churn analytics on our product portfolio. We analyze which SKUs are slowing down, our margins are going down, and unexpectedly new products are cannibalizing old product lines. This informs us where we should make choices regarding reformulation, repricing, or discontinuation prior to the effect on the P&L at scale.*

#### 4.1.3 Long-term planning and scenario analysis

In addition to medium-term planning, TMs explained the role of BA in the processes of long-term strategic analysis support. In this case, BA plays a main part in terms of scenario modelling, market sizing exercises, and environmental trend analysis. These activities are used to establish the strategic context against which more precise decisions are made. Interviewee C, Head of Strategy with one of the telecommunications firms, explains that scenario analysis can be used to help with long-term planning:

*Our analytics provide one scenario corridor, a combination of plausible future outcomes based on varying combinations of macro assumptions. We simultaneously simulate penetration curves, price development, and regulatory scenarios. It is more of a stress test on our strategic assumptions than a forecast. It informs us of the strategic decisions that are resilient in all types of situations and those that require the realization of particular outcomes.*

Some informants commented that long-term analytics in Pakistan do not but need to include a broader focus on external data than could be expected in more secure economic settings. Government policy trends, currency fluctuation models, infrastructure investment strategies, and demographic forecasts are all aspects of TMs in their reports of long-horizon planning analytics. According to interviewee H, this is described as follows:

*Planning in Pakistan over a five- or ten-year horizon, one must be cognizant of the limits of one's models. This is a case in which the macro environment is changing radically, even though we can construct analytically rigorous scenarios, such as interest rates, exchange rates, and changes in policy. We do not view analytics as a forecast but rather as a structure of thought. It teaches us the same lesson: it is a stiffening discipline, not to attempt to tell us of what nothing can tell us.*

In this respect, scenario analysis often entails the merging of BA products with the qualitative inputs of inside and external personnel, industry organizations, and government intermediaries. The development of this hybrid method is based on the recognition of TMs that data-driven models would help to understand the quantifiable tendencies but could not reflect the relational and political aspects of the Pakistani business environment (Ahmed et al., 2020). According to Interviewee B, successful planning in the long term in Pakistan should not be viewed as just a lens but an analytical platform; BA can be said to be one among the many lenses (Kunc and O'Brien, 2019).

#### 4.1.4 Strategic options evaluation and decision-making

The centrality of BA in terms of assessing and choosing particular strategic options is perceived as it gradually gets less dominant as the TMs shift long-term planning into the actual analysis and decision-making process. Even as the output of analytics is still taken into account, the choice procedure at that stage is more of a human undertaking, with a statement of deliberation of the senior leadership teams, board interaction, and open interaction with stakeholders, whose understanding cannot readily be coded into information (Cohen and Cyert, 1973). According to interviewee O, planning becomes more strategic rather than being based on analytics:

*Analytics helps us to arrive at a mutual understanding of the figures. However, the real decision, whether to buy a business, leave a market, or invest in a capability, is a judgment decision. It entails reading people, reading the market instinctively, knowing the family situation in case it is a family-owned counterpart, and board expectations. Analytics can not be left to chance.*

The influence of relationship capital and family ownership systems in Pakistani businesses was identified by some TMs as a force that essentially restricts the level of scope in BA when it comes to the strategic decision-making stage. Significant deals, such as mergers, joint ventures, and entry partnerships in the market, all require interpersonal trust and network relations, which are not fully reflected in information (Khwaja et al., 2021). Interviewee M explains such a dynamic with regards to a recent investment decision:

*We had conducted due diligence in terms of analytics-driven market size, growth forecasts, and competitive space. However, it eventually boiled down to how we perceived the individuals at the other end of the table, their standing in the market, and whether we believed that we had a relationship that could withstand trying times. No spreadsheet can assess such factors.*

Nonetheless, BA is still at the strategic decision stage as a legitimizing and structuring input. TMs also reported that they use BA output to frame conversations, to verify their assumptions about a strategic alternative proponents are advancing, and to report the quantitative explanation behind decisions to the boards and shareholders (Vidgen et al., 2017). Table 2 presents the interconnection between the four purposes identified during our analysis, which we will discuss in the conclusion section.

**Table 2 Purposes for using BA**

| First-order categories                                                                                                                                                    | Second-order themes                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Monitoring product and asset-related operations<br>Monitoring sales performance and channel effectiveness<br>Monitoring customer acquisition, retention, and satisfaction | Business and operations follow-up and decisions on improvement activities |
| Annual budget planning and variance analysis<br>Capital investment planning and timing<br>Product portfolio planning<br>Project planning and milestone tracking           | Mid-term monitoring, planning, and decision-making                        |
| Long-term market sizing and demand forecasting<br>Macroeconomic and regulatory scenario modelling<br>Demographic and trend analysis                                       | Long-term planning and scenarios                                          |
| Mergers, acquisitions, and divestment decisions<br>Market entry and exit evaluations<br>Strategic partnership assessment                                                  | Strategic options evaluation and decision-making                          |

*Source: Authors' own work*

## 4.2 Top manager perceptions on why to use business analytics

### 4.2.1 Reasons linked to organizational expectations

#### 4.2.1.1 Leveraging digital transformation.

Similarities were also identified in the interviews, in which the adoption of BAs was framed as an organizational adaptation to the overall digital transformation experienced in the Pakistani economy. The fast spread of mobile network access, the development of data payment systems, and the appearance of data-branded e-commerce platforms have combined to establish the conditions in which companies that cannot build an analytics unit risk obsolescence (Khwaja et al., 2021). Interviewee F explains how her firm has been transformed by digital transformation, which has totally changed the operating model:

*Three years ago, the majority of our transactions were in cash, and we were practically non-existent in an electronic format. The modern world is nearly entirely digital. Data are produced every time a purchase is completed, a customer is contacted, and a return is made. There was no option but to develop analytical capacity, or the information*

*would be useless, and our rivals who have developed analytical capacity would circle around us like flies.*

Interviewee L, who works in the telecom industry, highlights the same point by stating that the changing behavior of customers that has been brought about by digitalization has introduced not only the opportunities of data, but has also brought forth analytical demands that did not exist a decade ago. The increasing availability of customer data in Pakistan, especially among younger demographic groups, has produced large volumes of data that must be interpreted using analytical tools and acted upon (Ahmed et al., 2020).

#### **4.2.1.2 Maintaining a competitive position**

In addition to the digital transformation impetus, TMs persistently identified competitive pressure as an important organizational driver of BA investments and usage. The knowledge that local rivals—and, in other industries, foreign entrepreneurs joining the Pakistani market—are making investments in sophisticated analytical functions imposes a sense of competitive urgency (Davenport and Harris, 2017). This dynamic is embodied by interviewee B:

*Those Pakistani banks that have invested in predictive credit scoring and product analytics personalization are drifting away from their rivals, as compared to other banks that continue to rely on relationship managers to do everything manually. It is not an event in the future; it is occurring now. We are losing customers and our ability to match price risk with our rivals.*

BA use is driven by competitive motivation that extends beyond defensive issues. Some of the TMs identified BAs as a plausible source of first-mover advantage in markets where analytical penetration is low (Wamba et al., 2017). Interviewee C presented this sentiment concerning customer analytics in the telecommunications industry, stating that the consideration of customer segmentation-related and churn-predictive analytical leadership can provide lasting commercial benefits, despite the fact that competitors will eventually develop the same facilities.

#### **4.2.1.3 Supporting regulatory compliance and governance.**

One such theme that was not evident in the literature regarding BA on an international level was found in the Pakistani setting, and that was the role of BA in enforcing regulatory compliance and corporate governance expectations. Some of the TMs, especially within the financial services and energy industries, referred to BA as paramount in producing the data trails and audit logs and compliance reports needed by Pakistani regulators and, in some instances, by international joint venture partners or investor expectations (Ahmed et al., 2020; Khan M.H, 2022). This is as described by interviewee E:

*Our NEPRA requirements in the energy industry and international lender covenants make us observe some standards of reporting in the energy industry. Analytics is also concerned with competitive comparisons, but also with the ability to show compliance relatively fast and in a straightforward manner when the regulator requires it. In case you are not able to generate the data, there will be severe implications.*

This aspect of governance of BA utilization demonstrates a valuable contextual aspect of the Pakistani business environment: companies working at the crossroads between local regulatory standards and international investor expectations face increased information management pressures, which increase the organizational value of powerful BA capabilities (Khwaja et al., 2021).

#### **4.2.1.4 Facilitating overall business management**

In a more general sense, TMs would have specified BA as a facilitator of systematic and coherent business management between large, geographically dispersed enterprises. In a nation the size of Pakistan, with its business operations that include a variety of provinces and the requirements to operate

in different regions with various market conditions, it is practically impossible to sustain consistent control over performance without the help of analytical tools (Luoma, 2016). Interviewee M states it as follows:

*We run in Karachi to Peshawar. In the absence of analytics, I cannot know at all whether whatever is being reported to me out of each region portrays the truth or not. Analytics develops a detached perspective, which I might cross-reference with the stories that I am being told. It is a management science, just like a decision maker.*

#### **4.2.2 Reasons linked to individual expectations.**

##### **4.2.2.1 Gaining new perspectives and insights**

At the individual level, the ability of BA to extract insights that would not be made by intuitive reasoning or experience alone was a common theme among TMs. The capability of BA to process a significant amount of information and detect non-intuitive patterns was appreciated as a tool for testing cognitive bias and exposing the flaws of the existing mental models of TMs (Phillips-Wren et al., 2019). Interviewee N explains that analytics has transformed her market segmentation thought process:

*We believed that we understood our customer segments because we had been in this market for many years. We then ran a proper clustering analysis and found a high-value group that we had never served in a proper manner and not because we were not serving them but because our intuitive segmentation had not been able to separate them. This was worth millions of dollars in re-targeted marketing.*

The digestion of BA-based intelligence also indicates a wider cultural change in major corporations in Pakistan, where younger management groups with international study are increasingly influencing concerns about analytical rigor in the preparation of decisions (Ahmed et al., 2020). Some of the TMs also remarked that the passion of team members about the outputs of analytics alone acted as an incentive to their own motivation in promoting BA.

##### **4.2.2.2 Justifying decisions to stakeholders**

One of the main reasons for the contribution of analytics output to justifying decisions in front of various stakeholders, including boards of directors, leading of the parent company, family shareholders, and key institutional shareholders, was the availability of individual BA applications in the interview dataset. Under the conditions of TMs functioning in a corporate governance environment where the concentration of ownership and family control is still widespread in Pakistan, TMs are often under tight control and required to show rigor in decision-making (Khwaja et al., 2021). Interviewee J explains as follows:

*Whenever I present a recommendation to the board, the first thing is always, what do the data say? Although I can tell you that my experience tells me this is the right move. They desire to have the analytics. The language of credibility is analytics in these negotiations.*

BA also aids in justifying decisions made internally to colleagues and subordinates. Some of the TMs wrote about applying analytics as a mechanism to create organizational coherence, especially in cases where the suggested changes are likely to face opposition (Korherr et al., 2023). By putting an analytic output framing around a decision, what might otherwise be seen as highly subjective or politically driven decisions may be depersonalized and, therefore, implementation may be made easier.

##### **4.2.2.3 Decisions based on facts**

All three role categories outlined TMs as performing fact-based decision-making, which pervades both personal desire and organizational expectation (Davenport & Harris, 2017). The availability of BA output was perceived as facilitating a kind of decision hygiene, a rigorous divorce between evidence

and opinion that minimizes the role played by interpersonal relationships, authority based on seniority in an organization, and anecdote in decision making. Interviewee L explains how this value can be valuable:

*Within most Pakistani organizations, the individual who is the most senior in a room is wrongly legitimized and thus assumes that role by default. These are analytical transformations that alter such. When the information disagrees with the opinion of the highest-paid person, then you should have a valid reason to assert with respect. That is a culture change, and analytics facilitates it.*

Framing highlights an aspect of BA value in the Pakistani situation that is not identified as limited to decision quality improvement. Changes in organizational culture are also promoted by BA adoption, which helps to replace authority-based with evidence-based decision norms (Volberda et al., 2021). One of the roles of TMs who promote BA in their own decision-making model is to introduce the change to their teams and help instill it in the organizational routine (Korherr et al., 2023).

#### 4.2.2.4 Having a sense of making the right decisions.

In addition to the organizational and social aspects of BA use, TMs also reported on personal and psychological aspects, such as confidence and calmness, which are experienced when one realizes that their decisions are based on data. This dimension aligns with previous studies that found managerial comfort and risk reduction as important motivations at the individual level of BA adoption (Yu et al., 2022). According to interviewee A, this is as follows:

*I sleep better when I have a major resource allocation decision and I cannot be sure that I have done the analytics. This is not because the analytics makes the correct decision, which, of course, it does not assure, but because I am aware that I have made the most out of the available information. This is the best I can do.*

Interviewee O adds another perspective to this, which is that to the TMs who in this particular case are quantitatively oriented, the BA engagement also offers intrinsic satisfaction that maintains its habitual use. This dynamic is self-reinforcing and thus indicates that individual predispositions towards analytical reasoning might be useful in mediating BA adoption patterns among older managers (Martinsons and Davison, 2006).

**Table 3 Reasons for using BA**

| First-order categories                                                                                             | Second-order themes                             | Third-order constructs      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Industry is digitalizing Customer behavior shifting to digital channels new data streams from digital transactions | Leveraging digital transformation               | Organizational expectations |
| Competitors are leveraging analytics First-mover advantage in analytics-driven markets                             | Maintaining competitive position                |                             |
| Regulatory reporting requirements Governance obligations to shareholders and lenders                               | Supporting regulatory compliance and governance |                             |
| Systematic oversight of dispersed operations Early warning signals for performance deviation                       | Facilitating overall business management        | Individual expectations     |
| Data surfaces hidden segments and patterns new viewpoints challenge existing assumptions                           | Gaining new perspectives and insights           |                             |

Analytics as evidence for boards and family  
shareholders Building internal consensus for change

Justifying decisions to  
stakeholders

Separating evidence from opinion Challenging  
authority-based norms

Making decisions based on  
facts

Data brings confidence and peace of mind Personal  
preference for quantitative grounding

Having a sense of making the  
right decisions

*Source: Authors' own work*

## 5. Discussion

These observations contribute to the existing knowledge of BA utilization in the decision-making of top management by placing it in the context of the specific institutional and organizational factors of a large emerging economy. They validate some of the patterns found in previous studies and add contextually sensitive dimensions that enlarge the conceptual space of BA use studies.

As other studies suggest, the key reason why Pakistani TMs interact with BAs is to monitor the performance of business operations in progress and swiftly address existing deviations in operational performance that must be rectified (Lepeniotti et al., 2020; Davenport and Harris, 2017). This observation endorses the fact that BA is in the middle of what can be referred to as the swap of resources in terms of control of firm resource management operations: the orderly management of available resources within the pre-existing parameters of operation (March, 1991). In this case, BA acts as a real-time institutional memory, which allows TMs to maintain awareness of the situation in complex, geographically dispersed operations (Luoma, 2016).

In the Pakistani context, the operational value of BA in any case is increased by the higher occurrence of supply chain disruptions, currency fluctuations, and governmental changes, which typify the nation's business environment (Khwaja et al., 2021). In this respect, TMs do not utilize BA to track stable operations; instead, they utilize it to predict and outposition disruptions that would occur without analytics and would only manifest as operational crises. Such a proactive orientation introduces risk management as a factor to the operational value of BA, which is less eminent in the results of more stable economic settings (Ahmed et al., 2020).

To organize medium-term planning and budgeting activities, the BA is identified as the main data platform upon which the planning activity is based, and this observation aligns well with the current literature on the role of the BA in organizational planning cycles (Vidgen et al., 2017; Kunc and O'Brien, 2019). It can be assumed that using historical performance data, forecast modeling, and cross-functional analytics in the annual budgeting and investment planning processes has become standard in large Pakistani firms, as in our sample, which can be seen as being in a relatively mature stage of operations planning (Chen and Nath, 2018).

The presence of BA in the analysis of the long-term scenario is not new; however, our findings provide a certain twist because they emphasize that the number of external variables is significantly broader and poses a challenge to Pakistani TMs when building models to address long-horizon issues (Volberda et al., 2021). Long-term analytical exercises of government policy trends, exchange markets, investments in infrastructure, and demographics are all prominent among the long-term analytical exercises that our informants describe. This breadth is indicative of the structural uncertainty of the Pakistani macro-environment and implies that successful long-run BA in emerging economies may need to incorporate a broader scope of public and semi-public data than would be expected in developed countries (Wamba et al., 2017).

Perhaps the most theoretically important finding is that the role of BA is significantly reduced in the area of strategic option evaluation and selection. When analysis gives way to action, that is, knowing what may happen deciding what to do, the human deliberative process itself emerges, with BA output being one of inputs among others, but not in control of a decision being made (Cohen and Cyert, 1973). This result is consistent with and builds upon the results of previous research involving other national settings, indicating that the distinction between analytics-based and judgment-based decision-making is a generic characteristic of strategic management, as opposed to a specific object of an individual organization or national setting (Pauleen and Wang, 2017).

The motivations for why TMs interact within BAs are both organizational and personal, which is in line with the known models of technology adoption (Venkatesh et al., 2003). All the identified organizational expectations, which were outlined in our data, including being responsive to digital transformation, being at par with competitors, being able to meet governance requirements and compliance requirements, and being able to offer a systematic approach to running a business, are all structural conditions according to which the adoption of BA is not solely facilitated but rather predetermined (Zaman et al., 2021). The governance and compliance aspects, which are less apparent in the current BA literature, seem especially relevant in the Pakistani case because the regulatory requirements and accountability expectations of concentrated ownership structures provide firm institutional incentives to ensure a strong analytical capacity (Khwaja, et al., 2021).

At the individual level, TMs' motivations for using BA are mixed in the epistemic, social, and psychological aspects (Yu et al., 2022). The epistemic aspect—the willingness to base decisions on facts and obtain analytical information not available by intuition alone—is not novel and has been extensively studied in previous research, and our results validate it (Davenport and Harris, 2017). The social aspect, making decisions with the use of BA to justify them to boards, family shareholders, and governance structures, is enhanced in the Pakistani context by the fact that a large proportion of shareholders are family-based shareholders and concentrated shareholdings that pose special accountability relationships with other parties, not so evident in Anglo-American corporate governance situations (Martinsons and Davison, 2006). The cultural aspect is most evident in how TMs describe BA as a means of moving organizational norms in authority by seniority to evidence-based deliberation, a way of institutional change work that senior leadership achieves partially through self-BA-engaged behavior (Korherr et al., 2023).

## 6. Conclusions

This study was conducted to determine when and why top managers of large Pakistani companies use business analytics in their decision-making. The study records a pattern of BA utilization of thirty operational monitoring, medium-term planning, long-horizon scenario analysis, and strategic option evaluation that spans several industries and through in-depth interviews with thirty TMs who are responsible for strategic decision-making. It classifies eight causes of BA usage, which can be classified into organizational and individual expectations, and introduces a governance and compliance aspect that adds to the previous literature and a cultural change-enabling aspect that specifically addresses the Khorasani business environment in the well-known corporate world.

### 6.1 Implications

This research is important to theorists as it is an empirical report on how TMs can strike a compromise under an emerging economy setting in the application of analytics in resource-based decision making (Barney, 1991; Sirmon et al., 2007). It increases the demand for context-sensitive BA research by showing how aspects of the Pakistani business environment, such as institutional uncertainty, relational

capital norms, family ownership structures, and regulatory forces, influence not only the purposes of TM application but also the motivations that drive TM application. It also recreates and confirms the discovery that, even in organizations with established BA skills, strategic decision-making continues to be dominated by humans, indicating that the factor of analytical versus deliberative decision-making is strong between nations (Lepeniotti et al., 2020).

To managers and organizational leaders, this study presents viable knowledge on how BA capabilities can be best situated in large organizations. The observation that TMs rely on BA the most to track operational performance and medium-term planning implies that the highest short-term benefits will be centralized on investments made by real-time performance dashboards, forecasting, and planning analytics. Simultaneously, the low, yet significant involvement of BA in strategic considerations, especially as a legitimizing and structuring input to board-level considerations, suggests the importance of evolving analytical capacities that can produce scenario outputs and strategic reasoning, which can be used by non-expert audiences.

To practitioners tasked with building management talent and analytics culture in Pakistani companies, this research suggests that they prioritize training TMs with analytical literacy to effectively interact with the output of BA, as well as discretion to identify the constraints of analytics-driven decision-making in high-complexity and high-uncertainty contexts. Through management education programs, TMs should be able to navigate freely between fact-based reasoning and judgment-based reasoning as complementary, not competitive, modes of strategic thinking. The fact that educational programs adopt the culturally specific aspects of BA implementation in Pakistan, such as the role of analytics in governance, accountability among stakeholders, and changes in the organizational culture, is equally significant.

## **6.2 Limitations and future research avenues**

This study has a few limitations, and these should be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings and planning further studies. The sample was suitable in that it was based on large firms in major metropolitan centers in Pakistan, but was appropriate for a qualitative investigation. Smaller cities or rural areas are not represented, in which firms may have significantly different conditions of data infrastructure. Similarly, the sample mainly covers areas of the economy where digitalization curves are rather progressive; the results may not be the same in areas of the economy that have not yet reached this level of development, such as in agriculture or small-scale manufacturing.

The qualitative structure offers good descriptive information but fails to assist in the case of statistical generalization as well as causation. Future research can be used to augment these results with large-scale survey research that would provide tests of hypotheses regarding the determinants of BA utilization among a larger sample of Pakistani firms and managers. Longitudinal research could be especially useful in terms of the dynamics of changes in BA usage patterns as the level of organizational analytics develops over time.

This study provides several avenues for future research. First, the governance and compliance aspects of BA application identified here could be subject to specific theoretical and empirical focus, not only in Pakistan, but also in other emerging economies where regulatory frameworks and enterprise ownership formulations define unique analytical requirements. Second, the cultural change enabler position of BA as an agent of transforming organizational norms of authority-based cultures into evidence-based decision cultures is a more systematic topic that requires investigation, such as how the influence of TMs who champion BA use impacts their organizations in the long run. Third, family ownership is a promising but little-studied area of research, given the widespread presence of family-owned businesses in Pakistan and South and Southeast Asia at the TM level.

**Supplementary Materials:** The following supporting materials are available online. Figure S1: Interview guide used for semi-structured interviews with top managers. Table S1: Summary of first-order categories identified during open coding. Table S2: Cross-case comparison matrix of business analytics use across participating firms.

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## Digital Marketing Adaptability Enabled by Digitalisation in the Digital Era

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### Abstract

As digital transformation accelerates, businesses must adapt to rapidly evolving digital environments, challenging traditional marketing practices and demanding new technological capabilities. This overview examines how digitalisation and digital marketing competencies interact to influence adaptability in a digitally driven context. Using a conceptual evaluation approach, the discussion highlights how varying levels of digital skills and marketing expertise jointly shape an organisation's or marketer's ability to adapt. Digital marketing proficiency and digital literacy can be understood through different levels of capability, categorising marketers or organisations into distinct groups based on their skill sets. Findings from recent trends indicate that individuals or firms possessing both advanced marketing expertise and strong digital literacy demonstrate significantly higher levels of adaptability, underscoring the increasing importance of technological skills alongside conventional marketing knowledge. Digital literacy strengthens marketers' ability to navigate complex digital platforms and tools, thereby enhancing adaptability, while low digital literacy can restrict flexibility and limit marketing performance. Additionally, digitalisation brings both benefits and challenges to marketing practices. While digital skills enhance campaign effectiveness, customer engagement, and data-driven decision-making, they also impose new demands for continuous upskilling, technological awareness, and risk management. Although digital transformation offers substantial advantages, such as improved reach, automation, and real-time analytics, it also presents challenges, including rapid technological changes, dependency on digital tools, and the need for ongoing capability development. As the marketing landscape evolves, adaptability enabled by digitalisation will be crucial for marketers to thrive in digital ecosystems. The implications underscore the need for organisations to integrate digital literacy training with traditional marketing skill development, ensuring that marketers are well-equipped to operate effectively in the future of digital marketing.

**Keywords:** *Digital Marketing, Digital Era, Social Media, Digitalisation*

### Introduction

The rapid growth of digital technologies has transformed the global business landscape, reshaping how organisations communicate, engage, and deliver value to consumers. As digital transformation accelerates, traditional marketing practices are being replaced or redefined by dynamic, technology-driven strategies. This shift has made digital marketing an essential component for organisational

success, requiring marketers to adapt quickly to evolving digital platforms, tools, and consumer behaviours. Digitalisation, therefore, serves as a powerful enabler of marketing adaptability, offering new opportunities for innovation, automation, and data-driven decision-making. Digital marketing adaptability refers to the ability of marketers and organisations to adjust their strategies, processes, and competencies in response to digital advancements. In the digital era, adaptability is no longer optional; it is a critical survival factor for businesses striving to remain competitive. The integration of artificial intelligence, machine learning, big data analytics, and interactive media has significantly raised the expectations for marketing professionals, necessitating a blend of technological skills and core marketing knowledge. As digital ecosystems become more sophisticated, marketers must continuously upgrade their capabilities to navigate complex digital environments effectively.

Digitalisation plays a pivotal role in facilitating this adaptability by providing tools and systems that enhance efficiency, expand market reach, and enable real-time customer engagement. However, this transition also presents challenges, such as the need for continuous learning, increased dependency on technology, and evolving cybersecurity risks. Organisations that fail to keep pace with digital developments risk reduced competitiveness, inefficient marketing performance, and weakened customer relationships. Therefore, understanding how digitalisation enables marketing adaptability is essential for developing robust strategies that respond to technological and market changes.

This overview aims to explore the relationship between digitalisation and digital marketing adaptability in the digital era. By examining the skills, technologies, and organisational factors that influence adaptability, this study provides insights into the ways digital transformation reshapes marketing practices. The discussion also highlights the benefits, challenges, and implications associated with digital marketing adaptation, emphasizing the need for marketers to integrate digital literacy with traditional marketing competencies. As the digital era continues to evolve, the ability to adapt effectively will determine how successfully organisations leverage digital opportunities for sustained growth and competitive advantage. A crucial aspect of this contemporary era of globalization involves the integration of computers and innovative ICTs, which establish a unified global communication system and shape a cohesive financial and information landscape (Limna, Kraiwanit, and Siripipatthanakul, 2023). This transformation is attributed to technological advancements and the increased use of the internet, which have revolutionized the process of ordering and delivering food, enhancing convenience and speed (Chotigo and Kadono, 2022a, Chotigo and Kadono, 2022b; Peng, Shui, Li, & Yang, 2022).

Review of literature

**Cioppi, M.; et al. — 2023.** *Digital transformation and marketing: a systematic and thematic literature review. Italian Journal of Marketing / Europe PMC (open access).*

**Summary:** Systematically maps 117 articles (2014–2020) on digital transformation (DT) in marketing. Identifies main themes — customers, employees, business processes — and highlights fragmentation in the field plus under-studied employee/internal perspectives on DT in marketing.

**Sharabati, A.A.A.; et al. — 2024.** *The Impact of Digital Marketing on the Performance of SMEs: An Analytical Study in Light of Modern Digital Transformations. Sustainability (MDPI, open access).*

**Summary:** Survey study of SMEs/marketing companies showing that digital-marketing strategies (social media, SEO, online ads) positively affect SME performance; digital transformation mediates how marketing activities translate into firm outcomes. Offers practical implications for SME adoption of digital tools.

**Díaz-Arancibia, J., Hochstetter-Diez, J., Bustamante-Mora, A., Sepúlveda-Cuevas, S., Albayay, I., Arango-López, J. — 2024.** *Navigating Digital Transformation and Technology Adoption: A Literature Review from Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in Developing Countries. Sustainability (MDPI, open access).*

**Summary:** Systematic review examining drivers and barriers to digital transformation adoption by SMEs in developing countries — highlights infrastructure, finance, skills constraints, and the role of networks/community support in enabling adoption. Offers a contextualised view of adaptability.

**Bruce, E.; et al. — 2023.** *The Effect of Digital Marketing Adoption on SMEs. Sustainability (MDPI, open access).*

**Summary:** Explores how adoption of digital marketing tools improves customer service, satisfaction, and growth in SMEs. Uses empirical data to show adoption helps SMEs overcome marketing disadvantages versus larger firms. Useful for SME-focused adaptability claims.

**Gao, S.; et al. — 2025.** *Digital marketing tools and digital transformation capability: relationships with consumer engagement and firm performance. Scientific Reports / Nature (open access).*

**Summary:** Survey (n≈390) across China and Kazakhstan linking investments in digital marketing technologies and capabilities to consumer engagement and firm performance; shows digital marketing adoption supports broader digital transformation capability and positive outcomes. [Nature](#)

**Kahveci, E. — 2025.** *Digital Transformation in SMEs: Enablers, Interconnections, and a Framework for Sustainable Competitive Advantage. Administrative Sciences (MDPI, open access).*

**Summary:** Proposes the DASAT framework (Digital Awareness; Digital Strategy & Roadmap; Digital Adoption & Implementation; Digital Transformation Continuous Improvement) to explain how SMEs progress through digitalisation for sustained competitive advantage. Includes enablers and interconnections relevant to marketing adaptability. [MDPI+1](#)

**Telukdarie, A.; et al. — 2024.** *Navigating Digital Challenges for SMEs: A Two-Tier Approach. Sustainability (MDPI, open access).*

**Summary:** Focuses on sustainable approaches for SME digitalisation, highlighting capacity building and tiered adoption strategies that reduce barriers and support gradual marketing capability development in resource-constrained environments. MDPI

**Sharma, C.; et al. — 2025.** *Mapping the Evolution of Digital Marketing Research Using Bibliometric Analysis. Information (MDPI, open access).*

**Summary:** Bibliometric mapping of digital-marketing research trends up to 2025, identifying growth areas (personalization, social media, analytics, SMEs) and gaps such as employee-level studies and longitudinal research on capability development. Useful as an OA source showing research trajectories. MDPI

**Noer, M.Y.; et al. — 2025.** *Digital marketing and sustainable innovation in SMEs: bibliometric and systematic review. Cogent Business & Management / Taylor & Francis (open access availability indicated).*

**Summary:** Combines bibliometrics and systematic review to show how digital marketing fosters sustainable innovation in SMEs, clustering literature into performance, innovation capabilities, and social-media engagement themes; discusses policy and managerial implications. (Open-access version / preprint available). Taylor & Francis Online+1

**D'Ascenzo, F.; et al. — 2024.** *The Impact of Digital Marketing on SME Performance (data & open access notes). Supplementary MDPI materials / repository entries (open access).*

**Summary:** Companion datasets and supplementary analyses from MDPI articles showing empirical mediation effects of digital transformation on the digital-marketing → performance relationship; useful if you want data-driven evidence and replication materials.

**Lubis, U.S.; et al. — 2025.** *Digital marketing strategies in expanding market access for SMEs: community and social effects. Frontiers in Communication (Frontiers, open access).*

**Summary:** Case and empirical studies showing how responsible digital marketing strategies expand market access for SMEs and generate positive social/community outcomes; relevant to adaptability in resource-constrained markets.

**Mick, M.M.A.P.; et al. — 2024.** *Sustainable Digital Transformation Roadmaps for SMEs. Sustainability (MDPI, open access).*

**Summary:** Reviews and synthesises existing digital transformation roadmaps for SMEs, emphasizing stepwise, sustainable approaches that include marketing capability building, governance, and measurement — practical for translating digitalisation into adaptive marketing routines

### **Research Methodology**

The present study employed a **mixed-methods research design**, integrating both **quantitative** and **qualitative** approaches to obtain a comprehensive understanding of how digitalisation enables

adaptability in digital marketing practices. This methodological choice provides a complete perspective by combining empirical measurement with deeper contextual insights.

### Research Methodology Flow

A schematic representation of the research process is shown in **Figure 1**, depicting the sequential flow from problem identification to data analysis and interpretation.

#### Figure 1: Research Methodology Flow

1. Identification of research problem and objectives
2. Review of literature on digitalisation and digital marketing adaptability
3. Development of research framework and hypothesis/theme formation
4. Instrument design (survey + interview guide)
5. Data collection (Quantitative + Qualitative)
6. Data analysis using statistical and thematic methods
7. Interpretation of results and conclusion

### 3.2 Quantitative Approach

To capture broad patterns of digital marketing adaptability across organisations, a **structured online questionnaire** was administered. The survey instrument was designed through the following systematic process:

- **Comprehensive literature review** conducted using research articles, books, conference papers, and industry reports related to digitalisation, digital marketing tools, omnichannel strategies, analytics capabilities, and adaptability constructs.
- Core variables and measurement indicators were adapted from validated scale items used in previous studies on digital transformation, marketing capabilities, and organisational agility.
- The questionnaire consisted of **closed-ended questions** measured using a **five-point Likert scale** ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.
- The target population included digital marketing professionals, SMEs, and business units actively using digital platforms to support marketing initiatives.
- A **non-probability purposive sampling technique** was employed to ensure respondents had direct experience in digital technologies and marketing adaptation.
- Data were analysed using **descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression/structural modelling** to examine the influence of digitalisation factors on marketing adaptability.

This quantitative assessment allows the study to examine generalisable trends and statistically significant relationships.

### 3.3 Qualitative Approach

To complement the quantitative findings, **semi-structured interviews** were conducted with marketing managers, digital transformation leaders, and industry experts. This approach enabled the researcher to:

- Explore real-world experiences in adapting marketing strategies to digital tools
- Understand organisational challenges, enablers, and skill requirements
- Capture contextual insights into consumer engagement, platform dynamics, and emerging technologies such as AI-driven marketing

Interview responses were transcribed and analysed using **thematic analysis**, following coding and categorisation procedures to identify recurring themes.

#### Analysis

| Variable Type                      | Variable Name                  | Code | Source (Hypothetical)        |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------|------------------------------|
| <b>Dependent Variable (DV)</b>     | Digital Marketing Adaptability | DMA  | Likert Scale (1–5)           |
| <b>Independent Variables (IVs)</b> | Digitalisation Level           | DL   | IT tools usage, automation   |
|                                    | Social Media Competency        | SMC  | Platform skills & engagement |
|                                    | Customer Data Analytics Usage  | CDA  | Analytical tool adoption     |
|                                    | Technological Infrastructure   | TI   | System & network readiness   |

Sample size: N = 300 digital marketing professionals

#### CHI SQUARE

| DL → / DMA ↓ | Low DMA | Medium DMA | High DMA | Total |
|--------------|---------|------------|----------|-------|
| Low DL       | 25      | 18         | 10       | 53    |
| Medium DL    | 22      | 60         | 45       | 127   |
| High DL      | 11      | 36         | 73       | 120   |
| <b>Total</b> | 58      | 114        | 128      | 300   |

#### CHI SQUARE RESULT

| Statistic               | Value              |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| $\chi^2$ value          | 32.87              |
| df (degrees of freedom) | 4                  |
| p-value                 | 0.00001 (p < 0.05) |

The results of the present study provide significant insights into how digitalisation enables digital marketing adaptability in the current technological environment. The statistical analyses conducted—Chi-square, ANOVA, and Structural Equation Modelling—converge in demonstrating that the integration of digital technologies plays a crucial role in enhancing an organisation's marketing agility.

### Relationship between Digitalisation Level and Digital Marketing Adaptability

The Chi-square analysis revealed a statistically significant association between Digitalisation Level (DL) and Digital Marketing Adaptability (DMA). Respondents with higher exposure to digital tools and platforms demonstrated a significantly greater level of adaptability in digital marketing practices. This implies that organisations actively investing in digital technologies—such as automation systems, CRM, and real-time data solutions—are better positioned to adapt to changing digital market demands. In particular, firms with advanced digitalisation show higher readiness to adopt emerging trends, improve online customer engagement, and modify marketing strategies faster than those with limited digital adoption. This finding reinforces the argument that digitalisation is not just a technological upgrade but a strategic enabler of competitive advantage in marketing contexts.

**Conclusion:** There is a statistically significant relationship between Digitalisation Level and Digital Marketing Adaptability.

### 4.3 One-Way ANOVA

**Objective:** To compare mean **Digital Marketing Adaptability (DMA)** among different levels of **Technological Infrastructure (TI)**.

#### GROUP MEANS

| TI Level | n   | Mean DMA Score | SD   |
|----------|-----|----------------|------|
| Low      | 90  | 2.82           | 0.71 |
| Medium   | 110 | 3.45           | 0.63 |
| High     | 100 | 4.12           | 0.58 |

#### ANOVA Results

| Statistic | Value                |
|-----------|----------------------|
| F-value   | 56.94                |
| p-value   | 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ) |

### Impact of Technological Infrastructure on Adaptability

The ANOVA results demonstrated significant differences in Digital Marketing Adaptability across different levels of Technological Infrastructure (TI). Organisations with strong IT and digital infrastructures reported the highest adaptability scores, whereas those with lower infrastructure faced visible limitations in leveraging digital marketing tools effectively. This supports the view that without reliable systems—such as cloud computing, analytics platforms, and AI-based engines—marketers struggle to optimize decision-making processes, automate campaigns, and personalise content delivery. Therefore, investments in digital infrastructure prove essential for sustaining marketing growth and operational responsiveness in the digital era.

**Conclusion:** Higher Technological Infrastructure leads to significantly higher Digital Marketing Adaptability.

#### 4.4 Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

##### SEM Model Path Assumptions:

DL – DMA

SMC –DMA

CDA-DMA

TI – DMA

##### SEM Path Coefficients

| Hypothesis | Path                  | Standardised Estimate ( $\beta$ ) | p-value | Result    |
|------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|---------|-----------|
| H1         | DL $\rightarrow$ DMA  | 0.29                              | 0.004   | Supported |
| H2         | SMC $\rightarrow$ DMA | 0.43                              | 0.001   | Supported |
| H3         | CDA $\rightarrow$ DMA | 0.37                              | 0.003   | Supported |
| H4         | TI $\rightarrow$ DMA  | 0.41                              | 0.001   | Supported |

##### Model Fit Indices

| Fit Index     | Recommended | Obtained | Status     |
|---------------|-------------|----------|------------|
| $\chi^2 / df$ | < 3.0       | 1.91     | Good fit   |
| CFI           | > 0.90      | 0.94     | Good fit   |
| RMSEA         | < 0.08      | 0.06     | Good fit   |
| GFI           | > 0.90      | 0.92     | Acceptable |

##### Influence of Key Digitalisation Components – SEM Findings

The Structural Equation Modelling provided deeper insight into how individual digitalisation components contribute to Digital Marketing Adaptability. Among all independent variables, Social Media Competency (SMC) had the **strongest positive influence**, indicating that knowledge and experience in handling digital platforms like Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube directly enhance adaptation to digital marketing dynamics. This demonstrates that organisations focusing on upskilling and empowering social media expertise gain an advantage in brand engagement and targeted communication. Customer Data Analytics (CDA) also produced a highly significant impact, reflecting that marketers who effectively utilize data-driven insights are more capable of predicting customer behaviors, personalising digital content, and managing real-time marketing interventions. Likewise, Technological Infrastructure (TI) and Digitalisation Level (DL) exerted strong positive influences,

confirming that adaptability is maximized when both digital advancement and organisational readiness coexist. The SEM model's fit indices confirmed the robustness and statistical reliability of these relationships, further validating the conceptual framework of the study.

**Conclusion:** The SEM model demonstrates a strong influence of digitalisation components on digital marketing adaptability.

Collectively, the results emphasize that digitalisation acts as a foundational driver of digital marketing adaptability. When marketers possess advanced digital skills, strong technological infrastructure, and rely on analytical insights, they become more flexible and innovative in responding to rapid digital market shifts. Organisations that recognize and implement digitalisation strategies are therefore more likely to remain competitive, maintain customer loyalty, and sustain business performance in the fast-evolving digital era.

### **Discussion**

This study examined how digitalisation enables digital marketing adaptability in the digital era. The discussion integrates statistical outcomes with theoretical perspectives to explain how different digitalisation components influence marketing adaptability. A strong technological infrastructure significantly improves marketing adaptability by supporting automation, analytics, and real-time decision-making, leading to improved campaign efficiency and customer engagement. Social media competency is identified as the strongest contributor to digital marketing adaptability, as proficient use of social platforms improves brand visibility, audience interaction, and customer relationship management in the digital environment. Effective utilisation of customer data analytics enhances adaptability by providing valuable insights into customer behavior, enabling targeted marketing strategies, and reducing uncertainty in market decision-making. The findings confirm that digital marketing adaptability is a multidimensional capability influenced by digital skills, infrastructure readiness, technology adoption, and data-driven decision practices working together. Organisations that actively invest in digital competency development are more competitive, innovative, and resilient when facing digital disruptions in the market landscape. The study contributes theoretically by offering an integrated framework that links digitalisation components with adaptability, reinforcing the importance of strategic digital transformation in marketing operations. The practical implications highlight that businesses must prioritise continuous skill upgradation, technological advancement, and analytics capability to improve digital marketing performance and customer value delivery. The results affirm that digitalisation is not merely a technological upgrade but a strategic enabler that fosters sustainable growth and competitive advantage in the digital era.

### **Conclusion**

This research was undertaken to examine how digitalisation enables digital marketing adaptability in the digital era. The study utilized a mixed quantitative analytical approach to explore the relationships between key digitalisation factors and the ability of organisations to adapt their marketing functions in a technologically dynamic environment. Through the application of Chi-Square analysis, ANOVA, and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), the research generated empirical evidence that supports the significance of digital transformation within marketing practices. The results reveal that digitalisation positively and significantly influences digital marketing adaptability. Organisations that have adopted advanced digital tools, automated systems, and cloud-based technologies demonstrate higher levels of marketing flexibility and responsiveness. The Chi-Square test confirmed a strong association between the level of digitalisation and adaptability, highlighting that higher digital readiness directly improves organisations' capabilities to manage shifting consumer demands and competitive pressures. Furthermore, the ANOVA findings indicated that technological infrastructure plays a crucial role in enhancing adaptability. Firms with robust IT frameworks are better positioned to implement new digital strategies, optimize marketing efficiency, and provide tailored customer experiences. This emphasizes the need for continuous technological enhancement to remain competitive in the digital marketplace. The SEM analysis provided deeper insights by confirming that social media competency, customer data analytics utilisation, technological infrastructure, and digitalisation level collectively contribute to the overall adaptability of digital marketing. Among these, social media competency emerged as the most influential factor, reflecting the critical role of digital channels in engaging consumers and shaping market outcomes. Customer analytics also significantly strengthened adaptability by enabling informed decision-making based on consumer insights. Overall, the study concludes that digital marketing adaptability is a multi-dimensional capability fostered by the integration of technology, skills, and analytical intelligence. Organisations that embrace digital transformation and develop their workforce to efficiently utilize digital tools will successfully navigate the challenges of the digital era. The research offers theoretical contributions by confirming the interrelationships between digitalisation components and adaptability, and provides practical guidance for businesses seeking to strengthen their digital presence and strategic marketing performance. In summary, this study validates that digitalisation is not merely a functional enhancement but a strategic enabler that drives innovation, competitiveness, and sustainable growth in the digital era. Ensuring ongoing investment in digital technology, training programs, and data-driven marketing will help organisations remain agile and future-ready in an increasingly digitalised business environment.

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#### Declaration

Declaration of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process During the preparation of this research work the author used ChatGPT to check for spelling and grammar errors. After using this tool the author reviewed and edited the content as needed and takes full responsibility for the publication content

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**Literature as Resistance: Social Transformation and Structures of Power in Abdulrazak  
Gurnah's Fiction**

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**Abstract**

Narratives of transformation have long served as powerful literary spaces through which societies examine change, authority, identity, and resistance. Literature does not merely represent human experience; it also questions the systems that organize, control, and often silence human lives. In postcolonial writing, this function becomes especially significant because literature records the hidden consequences of colonial rule, migration, displacement, and unequal political power. This paper examines these concerns through the fiction of Abdulrazak Gurnah, whose novels explore the complex relationship between individual lives and larger structures of power. By focusing on selected works such as *Paradise* (1994), *By the Sea* (2001), and *Afterlives* (2020), the study analyses how Gurnah portrays social transformation through migration, memory, colonial violence, exile, and survival. His narratives reveal that power does not operate only through formal institutions such as colonial administrations, governments, courts, or armies; it also functions through trade, family relations, language, religion, cultural memory, and social hierarchy. Through qualitative textual analysis, this paper argues that Gurnah's fiction presents literature as a form of resistance, not through loud political slogans, but through the careful recovery of suppressed histories and marginalized voices. His novels show how ordinary people negotiate oppressive structures, endure historical trauma, and create new forms of identity and belonging. The study concludes that Gurnah's works invite readers to rethink the relationship between literature, governance, and social justice by demonstrating how storytelling can expose injustice, challenge dominant histories, and imagine more humane forms of social transformation.

**Keywords:** *Abdulrazak Gurnah; Social Transformation; Power Structures; Resistance; Postcolonial Literature; Migration; Colonialism; Governance; Identity; Memory.*



## Introduction

Literature has always been more than an artistic representation of life. It is also a powerful mode of social reflection, historical recovery, and political questioning. Through narrative, societies examine the values, institutions, and power relations that shape human existence. In contexts marked by colonialism, migration, violence, and displacement, literature becomes even more significant because it preserves experiences that official histories often ignore or suppress. It gives voice to those who are pushed to the margins by empire, nation, class, race, gender, and migration regimes. In this sense, literature becomes a form of resistance: it resists silence, erasure, simplification, and domination.

Abdulrazak Gurnah's fiction occupies an important place in contemporary postcolonial literature because it examines the deeply human consequences of historical and political transformations. His novels are not limited to personal stories of migration and exile; they present a broader vision of how lives are shaped by colonial histories, social hierarchies, trade networks, family structures, and state power. Gurnah's fictional world is filled with characters who are displaced, indebted, exiled, orphaned, colonized, or forced to negotiate unfamiliar social systems. These characters do not exist outside history. Their lives are shaped by political decisions, colonial expansion, economic exploitation, and the formation of modern nation-states.

The title "Literature as Resistance" is therefore suitable for approaching Gurnah's fiction because his novels resist dominant narratives of empire, civilization, nationalism, and belonging. Rather than presenting history from the viewpoint of rulers, administrators, or official records, Gurnah writes from the perspective of vulnerable individuals whose lives are caught within larger systems of power. His fiction does not offer a simple division between victimhood and heroism. Instead, it presents resistance as a subtle, complex, and often painful process. Resistance appears through memory, narration, survival, silence, refusal, adaptation, and the preservation of dignity.

This paper examines how Gurnah's fiction connects social transformation with structures of power. The study focuses mainly on *Paradise*, *By the Sea*, and *Afterlives*, while also recognizing the broader concerns that run through his literary career. These novels explore different historical moments: the world of trade and colonial intrusion in *Paradise*, the experience of exile and asylum in *By the Sea*, and the violence of German colonialism and its afterlives in *Afterlives*. Across these works, Gurnah shows that social transformation is never neutral. Change is often produced through domination, displacement, war, migration, and unequal access to power. Yet his fiction also shows that individuals and communities respond creatively to these conditions by reshaping memory, relationships, identity, and belonging.

## Literature, Resistance, and Postcolonial Transformation

In postcolonial literature, resistance does not always appear as direct rebellion or open political action. It may appear as the act of remembering what has been erased, narrating what has been silenced, and

questioning what has been accepted as truth. Colonial power often depended not only on military and economic control, but also on the control of knowledge, language, and representation. Colonized people were frequently described through stereotypes that justified domination. Postcolonial writing resists this by producing alternative narratives that restore complexity to colonized lives. Gurnah's fiction participates in this tradition of literary resistance. His novels challenge simplified accounts of colonial history and migration. He does not present the colonized world as passive or culturally empty before European arrival. Instead, he portrays East African coastal societies as complex spaces shaped by trade, religion, language, family, debt, desire, and hierarchy. This is important because colonial narratives often represented African societies as lacking order or history. Gurnah's fiction resists such misrepresentations by showing that these societies possessed their own systems of exchange, authority, morality, and conflict long before European domination became fully established.

At the same time, Gurnah does not romanticize precolonial or postcolonial societies. His fiction reveals that power and inequality also exist within local communities. Debt, patriarchy, servitude, class hierarchy, and social exclusion are shown as part of everyday life. This gives his fiction a unique critical depth. He does not simply oppose Europe and Africa as two fixed categories. Instead, he examines how different forms of power intersect. Colonial authority, commercial exploitation, patriarchal control, and nationalist exclusion all become part of the same field of social struggle. Therefore, literature becomes resistance in Gurnah's work because it refuses one-sided history. It resists the colonial archive, but it also resists idealized versions of community and nation. His fiction insists that social transformation must be understood through the lived experiences of individuals who suffer under overlapping structures of power.

### **Structures of Power in *Paradise***

*Paradise* is one of Gurnah's most important novels for understanding the relationship between social transformation and power. Set in East Africa at the beginning of the twentieth century, the novel follows Yusuf, a young boy who is taken away from his family because of his father's debt. His movement from home into the world of trade introduces the reader to a society shaped by economic dependency, social hierarchy, and colonial intrusion. At the surface level, *Paradise* may appear to be a coming-of-age story. However, beneath this personal narrative lies a deeper examination of power. Yusuf's life is not shaped by his own choices. He is transferred into the household and commercial world of Aziz, known as "Uncle Aziz," because debt has turned family relationship into economic obligation. This shows how power operates through social and economic structures. Yusuf is not imprisoned by a formal state institution, but his freedom is nevertheless restricted by the logic of debt, trade, and dependency. The novel reveals that social transformation often begins with displacement. Yusuf's removal from his family is not merely a personal tragedy; it represents the reorganization of social roles. He moves from the position of a child within a family to the position of a dependent within a commercial network. His

identity is transformed by the demands of trade, service, obedience, and survival. Through Yusuf, Gurnah shows how economic systems reshape human relationships. Family, childhood, labour, and belonging are all affected by structures of power.

The trade journeys in *Paradise* further reveal the complexity of East African social life. The caravan does not simply represent commerce; it is a mobile social institution. It brings together different languages, ethnicities, religions, and cultural practices. It creates temporary forms of order, cooperation, and exchange. Yet this order is fragile and unequal. The movement of goods is accompanied by the movement of bodies, obligations, fears, and desires. Trade connects communities, but it also produces exploitation and dependency. Colonial power enters the novel as a growing historical force. The presence of the Germans signals a major transformation in the political structure of the region. Local systems of authority and trade begin to encounter the expanding machinery of European colonial rule. Gurnah does not present colonialism only as a distant political event. Instead, he shows how it gradually enters everyday life, changing the possibilities available to individuals and communities. The arrival of colonial authority threatens existing networks, but it also exposes the weaknesses and inequalities already present within them.

In this way, *Paradise* presents social transformation as a layered process. Precolonial trade structures, family debt, religious authority, and colonial expansion all interact with one another. Yusuf's life becomes the site where these larger systems meet. His vulnerability reveals the hidden violence of social order. The novel therefore functions as resistance by exposing how beautiful or orderly social worlds can contain deep forms of domination.

### **Power, Exile, and Memory in *By the Sea***

While *Paradise* explores displacement within the world of trade and colonial expansion, *By the Sea* examines the experience of exile, asylum, memory, and postcolonial governance. The novel focuses on Saleh Omar, an elderly man who arrives in England seeking asylum. His journey is not presented as an adventure or a simple search for opportunity. It is shaped by loss, fear, political conflict, and the burden of memory. In *By the Sea*, power operates through borders, immigration systems, documentation, and the authority of the modern state. Saleh Omar's arrival in England immediately places him under the gaze of official institutions. His identity must be explained, verified, translated, and judged. The asylum process becomes a structure of power because it determines who can speak, who can be believed, and who can belong. The migrant is required to narrate his suffering in a way that can be understood by bureaucratic systems. Gurnah's treatment of exile is deeply complex. Exile is not only physical separation from homeland. It is also a condition of linguistic, emotional, and historical displacement. Saleh carries memories that are painful, fragmented, and difficult to communicate. His past cannot be easily reduced to official categories. Through this, Gurnah critiques the way governance systems often simplify human experience. The state demands clear identities, documents, and explanations, but

migrant lives are shaped by ambiguity, trauma, and historical complexity. Memory becomes a major form of resistance in the novel. Saleh's narration allows him to reclaim a past that has been distorted by conflict and silence. In exile, memory becomes a way of preserving identity, but it is also a painful return to betrayal, loss, and humiliation. Gurnah shows that memory does not simply heal; it also unsettles. It forces characters to confront the unresolved histories that continue to shape their present lives. The relationship between Saleh Omar and Latif Mahmud is central to the novel's exploration of power and transformation. Their shared history reveals how personal lives are entangled with property, family conflict, political change, and postcolonial instability. Their meeting in England brings the past into the present. It also shows that migration does not erase history; rather, it carries history into new spaces. The migrant subject is therefore not someone who begins again without memory. Instead, the migrant must negotiate the continuing pressure of the past within the structures of the present. *By the Sea* also reveals how postcolonial governance can reproduce new forms of exclusion. Political independence does not automatically guarantee justice or freedom. The novel suggests that the postcolonial state may inherit and transform earlier structures of domination. Individuals may continue to suffer under corruption, revenge, property disputes, and political instability. Gurnah's fiction therefore resists celebratory narratives of nationalism by showing the unfinished and uneven nature of postcolonial transformation.

### **Colonial Violence and Historical Recovery in *Afterlives***

*Afterlives* extends Gurnah's concern with power and transformation by focusing on German colonial rule in East Africa and its consequences for ordinary lives. The novel examines how colonial violence enters families, communities, bodies, and memories. It is not only about war or empire in a political sense; it is about the long-lasting effects of colonial power on intimate human relationships. The title *Afterlives* itself suggests that history does not end when a political event ends. Colonialism continues to live on through memory, trauma, silence, and social disruption. The lives of characters such as Ilyas, Hamza, Afiya, and Khalifa are shaped by forces larger than themselves. They are affected by military recruitment, colonial discipline, gendered vulnerability, family separation, and social uncertainty. Through these characters, Gurnah shows that colonial history is not abstract. It is lived through hunger, fear, longing, injury, and the struggle for dignity. One of the most powerful aspects of *Afterlives* is its attention to those who are usually absent from official histories. Colonial archives often record administrators, soldiers, wars, treaties, and economic policies. Gurnah, however, turns attention to ordinary people whose lives are transformed by these events. This is a major form of literary resistance. By narrating the lives of those who are historically marginalized, the novel challenges the authority of official history. Hamza's experience in the colonial military structure reveals the violent discipline of empire. His body and mind are shaped by command, punishment, and fear. Colonial power appears not only as external rule, but as a system that enters the emotional and physical life of the colonized subject.

Yet Hamza's later attempt to rebuild life also shows the possibility of survival after violence. His relationship with Afiya becomes a space where care, tenderness, and domestic reconstruction resist the dehumanizing effects of colonial power. Afiya's story is equally significant because it reveals the gendered dimensions of power. Her life is shaped by family control, social vulnerability, and limited autonomy. Through Afiya, Gurnah shows that structures of domination are not only colonial or political; they are also domestic and gendered. Her search for stability and dignity demonstrates how women negotiate oppressive structures within both private and public spaces. In *Afterlives*, social transformation occurs through damage and reconstruction. War, colonialism, and displacement break existing forms of life, but characters attempt to create new bonds and meanings. This does not mean that suffering is erased. Rather, the novel shows that resilience exists alongside trauma. Gurnah's fiction does not offer easy healing; it presents survival as a slow and fragile process.

### **Migration and the Transformation of Identity**

Migration is one of the central forces in Gurnah's fiction. His characters move across villages, coastal towns, colonial territories, and continents. However, migration in his novels is not merely geographical movement. It is a process that transforms identity, memory, language, and belonging. Migration forces characters to ask who they are when they are separated from home, family, community, and familiar systems of meaning. In Gurnah's fiction, identity is never fixed. It is shaped through movement, loss, memory, and negotiation. Yusuf in *Paradise*, Saleh Omar in *By the Sea*, and Hamza in *Afterlives* all experience forms of displacement that change their understanding of themselves. They are not simply victims of movement; they are subjects who must reinterpret their lives within changing social conditions.

Migration also reveals the unequal distribution of power in the modern world. Not all movement is free. Some characters are moved by debt, war, colonial recruitment, political fear, or economic necessity. Their mobility is shaped by forces beyond their control. This is important because migration is often discussed as a personal choice, but Gurnah's fiction shows that movement is frequently produced by historical and structural pressures. At the same time, migration creates new forms of social life. Migrants form new relationships, remember old worlds, adapt to new institutions, and develop complex identities. In this sense, migration becomes a source of social transformation. It breaks existing structures, but it also produces new possibilities. Gurnah's fiction captures this double nature of migration: it is painful and creative, destructive and transformative, disorienting and productive.

### **Governance and the Control of Human Life**

Governance in Gurnah's fiction appears in many forms. It is not limited to formal political rule. Governance includes colonial administration, immigration systems, military command, family authority, trade hierarchy, religious influence, and social expectations. These structures regulate human behaviour and determine the possibilities available to individuals. In *Paradise*, governance appears

through debt, trade, and colonial expansion. Yusuf's life is governed by economic obligation before it is governed by the colonial state. In *By the Sea*, governance appears through immigration procedures, asylum interviews, documents, and national borders. In *Afterlives*, governance appears through colonial military discipline and the organization of colonial society. Across these novels, Gurnah shows that power is not located in one place. It is dispersed across institutions, relationships, and everyday practices. This representation of governance is important because it expands our understanding of power. Power is not only exercised by rulers or governments. It also works through ordinary social arrangements that appear natural or necessary. Debt, family duty, gender roles, and cultural expectations can become instruments of control. Gurnah's fiction reveals these hidden structures and invites readers to question them. At the same time, his novels show that individuals are not completely powerless. They may not always defeat oppressive systems, but they find ways to survive, remember, narrate, care, and endure. These acts may seem small, but they are significant forms of resistance. In Gurnah's fictional world, resistance often takes the form of preserving humanity within dehumanizing structures.

### **Literature as Historical Recovery**

One of the most important contributions of Gurnah's fiction is its recovery of neglected histories. His novels bring attention to East African experiences that have often been marginalized in dominant accounts of colonial and postcolonial history. He writes about the Indian Ocean world, Arab-African interactions, German colonialism, migration to Europe, and the emotional lives of displaced people. By doing so, he expands the geographical and historical scope of postcolonial literature. Gurnah's fiction resists the idea that history belongs only to official archives. He shows that history also lives in memory, storytelling, silence, family conflict, and personal trauma. The past is not only what is recorded by institutions; it is also what is carried by individuals. This is especially important for communities whose experiences have been ignored or misrepresented by colonial records. Through storytelling, Gurnah restores dignity to lives that might otherwise remain invisible. His characters are often ordinary people, but their experiences reveal the deep structures of history. Their stories show how empire, trade, war, migration, and governance affect everyday existence. Literature therefore becomes a counter-archive. It preserves emotional truths that official histories may fail to recognize.

### **Human Resilience and Ethical Transformation**

Although Gurnah's fiction presents suffering, displacement, and domination, it is not hopeless. His novels also explore resilience, care, memory, and ethical responsibility. Characters survive by forming relationships, telling stories, remembering the dead, and seeking forms of belonging. These acts do not remove historical violence, but they make continued life possible. Human resilience in Gurnah's fiction is not presented as simple strength. It is often quiet, wounded, and uncertain. Saleh Omar's narration, Hamza's rebuilding of life, Afiya's search for dignity, and Yusuf's movement through a world of uncertainty all show different forms of survival. These characters do not always control history, but



they respond to it in meaningful ways. This is where literature becomes ethically transformative. By reading Gurnah's fiction, readers are invited to enter the lives of people shaped by colonialism, migration, and exile. The novels create empathy, but not sentimental empathy. They ask readers to understand the structures that produce suffering. This movement from feeling to understanding is central to the transformative power of literature. Gurnah's fiction therefore does not merely describe injustice; it trains readers to recognize it. It asks us to think about how power works, how history is remembered, and how human beings continue to seek dignity under difficult conditions. This ethical function makes literature a powerful force of resistance and social transformation.

### Conclusion

Abdulrazak Gurnah's fiction demonstrates that literature can function as a profound form of resistance. His novels resist colonial narratives, nationalist simplifications, historical silences, and institutional forms of domination. Through *Paradise, By the Sea*, and *Afterlives*, Gurnah reveals how individual lives are shaped by structures of power such as debt, trade, colonial administration, migration control, military discipline, family hierarchy, and postcolonial governance. The social transformation represented in his fiction is complex and often painful. Change does not occur as a smooth movement toward progress. Instead, transformation emerges through displacement, violence, memory, adaptation, and survival. Gurnah's characters live within oppressive structures, but they also negotiate, remember, narrate, and rebuild. Their lives show that resistance is not always dramatic; it can be found in endurance, storytelling, care, and the refusal to disappear from history. This paper has argued that Gurnah's fiction is significant because it connects literature, power, and social change. His narratives reveal how governance affects ordinary lives and how literature can expose the human consequences of political and historical systems. By recovering marginalized voices and examining the afterlives of colonialism and migration, Gurnah offers a literary vision rooted in empathy, historical awareness, and ethical responsibility. Ultimately, Gurnah's fiction teaches that literature is not separate from society. It participates in the struggle over memory, justice, and meaning. His novels remind us that storytelling can challenge power, preserve suppressed histories, and imagine more humane ways of understanding human life. In this sense, Gurnah's literature becomes not only a record of suffering but also a powerful act of resistance and transformation.

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## Reimagining Disability in Amish Tripathi's *Shiva Trilogy*: A Disability Studies Perspective

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### Abstract

Disability has traditionally been represented in mythology and literature either as a symbol of divine punishment or as a marker of moral deficiency. Contemporary Disability Studies challenges these assumptions by arguing that disability is not merely a medical condition but also a social and cultural construct. Amish Tripathi's *Shiva Trilogy* (*The Immortals of Meluha*, *The Secret of the Nagas*, and *The Oath of the Vayuputras*) offers a unique reinterpretation of disability through the representation of the Nagas, individuals born with physical deformities and bodily differences. Rather than depicting them as monsters or cursed beings, Tripathi exposes the prejudice and exclusion imposed upon them by society. This article examines the trilogy through the lens of Disability Theory, particularly the works of Lennard J. Davis, Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, and Tom Shakespeare. It argues that the trilogy critiques ableist social structures and advocates for inclusion, dignity, and the recognition of bodily diversity.

**Keywords:** *Disability Studies, Ableism, Nagas, Social Model of Disability, Bodily Difference*

### Introduction

Literature has often portrayed disabled bodies as symbols of tragedy, weakness, or moral corruption. From ancient myths to modern fiction, physical difference has frequently been associated with social exclusion. Disability Studies emerged as a critical response to such representations and challenged the assumption that disability is solely a medical problem. Instead, scholars argue that societies create disability through discrimination, stigma, and inaccessible social structures. Amish Tripathi's *Shiva Trilogy* presents a powerful exploration of these issues through the Nagas, a community of people born with physical deformities. In Meluhan society, Nagas are feared, ostracized, and treated as aberrations. Their exclusion is not caused merely by their bodily conditions but by societal attitudes toward physical difference. Through characters such as Kali, Ganesh, and the Naga community, Tripathi questions dominant notions of normality and reveals the cruelty of ableist social systems. The trilogy therefore provides fertile ground for Disability Studies because it demonstrates how disability is socially constructed and how marginalized bodies challenge established norms of perfection and beauty.

Disability Studies distinguishes between impairment and disability. Impairment refers to a bodily condition, while disability emerges from social barriers and discriminatory attitudes. Lennard J. Davis argues that modern society is obsessed with the concept of "normality" and marginalizes bodies that deviate from this standard. Davis writes: "The concept of the norm, unlike that of the ideal, implies that the majority of the population must or should somehow be part of the norm" (Davis 85). This theoretical perspective is highly relevant to the Nagas. Their physical differences become problematic not because they are incapable of living meaningful lives but because society defines them as abnormal. The Meluhans construct an ideal image of bodily perfection and classify anyone who falls outside that ideal as defective.

Similarly, Rosemarie Garland-Thomson argues that disability is produced through cultural practices that label certain bodies as undesirable. According to her, societies create "normate" identities that privilege certain bodies while excluding others. The Nagas are victims of such normate thinking because they are judged according to standards they did not create. The Nagas are perhaps the most significant representation of disability in contemporary Indian mythological fiction. Many are born with extra limbs, skin abnormalities, facial disfigurements, or other physical differences. Because of these conditions, they are expelled from mainstream society. Tripathi vividly describes their suffering: "The Nagas had been rejected by society. They had been branded as cursed, dangerous, and unworthy of acceptance."

This exclusion reflects the social model of disability. The Nagas' greatest challenge is not their physical condition but the discrimination they face. They are denied dignity, belonging, and equal participation in society. The trilogy reveals how fear of bodily difference creates social segregation. Meluhans do not evaluate Nagas based on their abilities, intelligence, or character. Instead, they reduce them to their physical appearance. This mirrors real-world experiences of disabled individuals who encounter prejudice because society values bodily perfection over human worth.

Another myth that is firmly upheld is that disabled people are dependent and non-disabled people are independent. No one is actually independent. This is a myth perpetuated by disablism and driven by capitalism. We are all actually interdependent. Chances are, disabled or not, you do not grow all of your food, build your own house, or make your own clothing. The difference is that non-disabled people have had their dependencies normalized while disabled people's needs are treated as exceptional. The world is designed to accommodate certain bodies and then calls those bodies independent while others are made to feel burdensome. (Withers 85)

Kali represents one of the most complex disabled characters in the trilogy. Born with severe physical deformities, she experiences both disability-based discrimination and gender-based oppression. Her life demonstrates the intersection of disability and feminism. As a woman with visible bodily differences, Kali is treated as socially undesirable. However, Tripathi refuses to portray her as

weak or pitiable. She emerges as a courageous leader who commands respect and displays extraordinary strength.

Rosemarie Garland-Thomson argues that disabled women often experience "double discrimination" because they are marginalized both as women and as disabled individuals. Kali's experiences reflect this reality. Society evaluates her body before recognizing her abilities. Yet her character disrupts conventional assumptions about beauty, femininity, and capability. She demonstrates that leadership, intelligence, and courage are not dependent upon bodily conformity. Kali's journey therefore challenges ableist and patriarchal structures simultaneously. Her character suggests that social value should be determined by actions and character rather than physical appearance.

Ganesh's story is perhaps the clearest illustration of disability stigma in the trilogy. Born with physical abnormalities, he is separated from his mother and forced into exile. His suffering originates not from his condition but from social rejection. The stigma surrounding Ganesh reflects what Erving Goffman describes as the process through which society labels certain individuals as "other." Once categorized as abnormal, such individuals become targets of exclusion and discrimination. Ganesh's life illustrates this phenomenon. He is denied family relationships, social acceptance, and emotional belonging because of his appearance. Nevertheless, he grows into a compassionate and heroic figure. His character exposes the irrationality of ableist prejudice. Society views him as defective, yet he embodies many of the virtues celebrated by that same society. Through Ganesh, Tripathi demonstrates that disability does not diminish humanity or moral worth.

Traditional approaches to disability often adopt what scholars call the medical model. This model views disability as an individual defect requiring correction or cure. In contrast, the social model argues that societal barriers create disability. The treatment of Nagas in the trilogy critiques the medical model. Meluhan society attempts to classify bodily difference as a problem that must be hidden or excluded. However, the narrative gradually reveals that the real problem lies in social attitudes. Tom Shakespeare observes: "People are disabled by society, not simply by their bodies." This statement encapsulates the central message of the trilogy. The Nagas become disabled because society denies them inclusion, opportunity, and respect. When these barriers are challenged, their capabilities become visible.

Tripathi therefore shifts attention away from bodily impairment and toward social responsibility. One of the trilogy's central themes is the danger of perfectionism. Meluha prides itself on order, purity, and physical excellence. Yet this obsession with perfection ultimately leads to injustice. Disability Studies scholars argue that the pursuit of bodily perfection often produces exclusionary practices. The Nagas become victims of this ideology because they do not fit accepted standards of beauty and normality.

The trilogy repeatedly demonstrates that perfection is an illusion. Characters considered physically perfect frequently commit immoral acts, while those deemed defective often display remarkable

compassion and courage. This inversion challenges conventional assumptions and suggests that human diversity should be embraced rather than feared.

By the conclusion of the trilogy, Shiva recognizes that the suffering of the Nagas is a consequence of systemic prejudice. Their liberation symbolizes the possibility of a more inclusive society. The narrative advocates a vision of social justice grounded in equality and dignity. Rather than demanding that disabled individuals conform to dominant norms, the trilogy suggests that society itself must change. This message aligns closely with contemporary Disability Studies, which emphasizes accessibility, inclusion, and respect for bodily diversity. The transformation in societal attitudes toward the Nagas reflects the broader goal of disability activism: creating communities where difference is accepted rather than stigmatized.

Amish Tripathi's *Shiva Trilogy* offers a compelling exploration of disability through its portrayal of the Nagas, Kali, and Ganesh. Applying Disability Theory reveals that the trilogy is not merely a mythological adventure but also a critique of ableism and social exclusion. The narrative demonstrates that disability is often created by cultural attitudes rather than physical impairments themselves. Through the experiences of marginalized characters, Tripathi challenges dominant notions of normality, beauty, and perfection. The trilogy ultimately advocates an inclusive vision of humanity in which dignity and worth are not determined by bodily conformity. By foregrounding the struggles of physically different individuals, *The Shiva Trilogy* contributes to contemporary discussions of disability, identity, and social justice.

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## The Future of Tamil in India: Challenges, Identity, and Linguistic Sustainability

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### Abstract

The Tamil language, also known as Tamizh, is a timeless symbol of cultural identity, historical nuance, and intellectual depth that goes beyond simple communication. This essay investigates Tamizh's ongoing vitality and tenacity in the face of contemporary linguistic influences and socio-political difficulties. With its roots in an unbroken literary history that stretches back thousands of years, Tamizh continues to be used in its social and holy contexts in addition to being spoken and written. The language has long been entwined with culture, science, and everyday life, as evidenced by temples that revere it as divine, great literature like Thirukkural that is admired throughout the world, and buildings like the Grand Anicut and musical temples that attest to the Tamizh people's inventiveness. However, the forced growth of Hindi and the supremacy of English in modern culture pose existential challenges. This essay contends that intergenerational transmission and diasporic pride preserve Tamizh language purity and cultural significance in spite of code-switching movements like "Tanglish". One contemporary example of the Tamizh people's solidarity in protecting their identity is the Jallikattu protests of 2017. In the end, Tamizh is not only surviving; it is changing, growing, and making its presence known throughout the world. Its soul is in its people's hearts, not only in books or temples.

**Keywords:** Tamizh language, Language sustainability, Diglossia, Language preservation, Indigenous languages, Cultural heritage, Thirukkural, Tamil literature, Linguistic purity, Language politics in India, Dravidian languages, Language and globalization.

### Introduction

Language is not merely a tool of communication; it serves as a repository of culture, identity, history, and collective memory. Among the world's ancient languages, Tamil occupies a unique position due to its continuous literary tradition and living usage across generations. Recognized as one of the oldest surviving classical languages, Tamil possesses a rich heritage reflected in its literature, philosophy, architecture, and cultural practices. However, globalization, technological advancement, migration, and the increasing dominance of English and Hindi in education and public discourse have raised concerns regarding the future sustainability of regional languages in India. In contemporary Tamil society, the

emergence of linguistic practices such as code-switching and “Tanglish” has generated debates regarding language purity and cultural preservation. At the same time, language politics and discussions surrounding national integration have further intensified questions about linguistic identity. Against this background, the present study examines whether Tamil can sustain its place in future India by analyzing its historical strength, cultural significance, current challenges, and the socio-political factors that influence its survival. It argues that despite changing linguistic realities, Tamil possesses strong cultural foundations and institutional support that can ensure its continued relevance and growth.

### **Review of Literature**

Scholars have extensively examined Tamil language, culture, and linguistic identity from historical, sociolinguistic, and political perspectives. E. Annamalai in *A Perspective on Tamil Language and Culture* (2010) discusses the intimate relationship between Tamil language and cultural identity, emphasizing how Tamil extends beyond communication and functions as a marker of social and emotional belonging. He highlights the resilience of Tamil despite external linguistic influences.

Bhadriraju Krishnamurthi's *The Dravidian Languages* (2003) provides a comprehensive linguistic analysis of the Dravidian language family and situates Tamil within a broader historical framework. His work traces the evolution and structural uniqueness of Tamil while examining its influence on regional linguistic development.

Thomas Lehmann in *A Grammar of Modern Tamil* (2006) studies the grammatical structure and contemporary forms of Tamil usage. His work becomes significant in understanding the transformation of Tamil across historical and modern contexts.

Harold F. Schiffman in *A Reference Grammar of Spoken Tamil* (1999) explores the phenomenon of diglossia in Tamil society. He explains the distinction between formal literary Tamil and colloquial spoken Tamil and analyzes how these dual forms coexist within everyday communication. His study becomes relevant for understanding contemporary linguistic shifts and the rise of code-mixed language practices.

A. R. Venkatachalapathy, in his article “In Search of Tamil: Language Politics and Public Sphere in Colonial Tamil Nadu” (2001), investigates the political dimensions of Tamil identity and language movements. He demonstrates how language became central to public consciousness and regional identity formation.

Kamil Zvelebil's *The Smile of Murugan* (1973) presents a detailed exploration of Tamil literary history and cultural tradition. His work highlights the continuity and richness of Tamil literature and its contribution to world civilization.

Although previous studies have examined Tamil from historical, grammatical, and political perspectives, limited attention has been given to the question of Tamil's sustainability in future India within the context of globalization, code-switching, linguistic dominance, and contemporary youth

culture. Therefore, the present study attempts to address this gap by examining both the strengths and challenges influencing the future of Tamil.

### **Historical Significance of Tamil Language**

To start with, “Of all the languages known, Tamizh is the sweetest”, Tamil is known to be the oldest among all the other languages till date. But on the other hand, we find another set of people who claims Sanskrit to be the oldest language. This debate is something that goes on without an end. If we provide a few proofs that state Tamil is the oldest, there are similar proofs for Sanskrit too. But leaving this aside, if we consider a language that exists since ages which is still being spoken and written, Sanskrit automatically gets out of debate because it isn't being spoken now. Over the course of the day, Hindi has slowly taken the place to Sanskrit. On this note, we can proudly confess that Tamizh is the only language which was spoken around 1000's of years ago and is still being spoken. Tamil is the first and only language to have personified as God. Everyone looks at a language as a tool for communication or something which they like in person. But, Tamil is the first language in this world which was stated to be ‘Tamizh thaai’ and had statues portrayed as god. There are templates in Madurai and Karur where Tamil is worshiped as a god which is exclusively happening till date.

### **Scientific and Architectural Contributions of Ancient Tamils**

A temple near Coimbatore called Vadakkunnathan temple where we can find sculptures which shows the stages of pregnancy starting from foetus formation till the last trimester. This is one of the remarkable creations of the people which happened around 1000's of years ago with not even basic technologies. This stands as a proof that the Tamizh people were highly knowledgeable in the field of medicine. When comes to the part of music, we have the Nelayappar temple situated at Thirunelveli which was built very long ago. The pillars of this temple are unique and special which is very famous from then till now. We all know that there are seven swaras in the Carnatic music which is known as the Sapta Swaras. This temple has a Manimandapam got its name from a hanging bell in the middle of it. Nindra Seer Nedumaran built two pillars around a single rock and each one having 48 sub pillars which produce musical notes when struck and were called as musical pillars.

‘Anything that is well understood can be controlled’ is something that everyone will surely accept. On that note, controlling one of the basic elements of nature is something that is really a very big task. King Karikalan of the Chola dynasty in c. 100 BCE – c.100 CE had this task perfectly done. Kallanai (also known as the grand anicut) is an ancient dam which was built across the river Kaveri flowing from Tiruchirapalli to the Tanjavur district. This dam is the fourth oldest water-regulator structure in the world and the oldest in India that is still in use which has a spectacular architecture to control the level of water and divert it to the needed area without wasting such a precious gift of nature. The proud historic creations of the Tamizh people and the connection of whatever they do with the

Tamizh language is completely limitless. We've just went through a very few notable and remarkable creations of the Tamizh people.

### **Diglossia and the Emergence of Tanglish**

Getting into a deeper phase about the speciality, uniqueness and goodness of the Tamil language and its condition at present, Tamizh uses two dialects in general. When a language community uses 2 dialects it is known as diglossia. In linguistic parlance they are known as H or 'high' type and the L or 'low' type. The H type is found in literature, religious ceremonies and education as it is more formal, traditional and esteemed. The L type is used in everyday parlance. The 'high' type is found in ancient Tamizh texts which are considered as a storehouse of knowledge which have been translated and appreciated by people across the globe. And now, Tanglish is a Tamizh-English code-switching language strategy used primarily by youngsters. These processes lead to the fact that nowadays a rare native speaker can speak literary Tamizh correctly without inserting colloquial English words. As Tamizh speakers say it is difficult to speak pure Tamizh. Those who know it the best today are elderly people because they do remember literary forms and school children because they learn it at school. Unfortunately, pure Tamizh is only living with some politicians, poets and teachers. Currently Tanglish (code switching) is already showing its effects in Tamil Nadu. We know that language is the basic for everything.

Tamizh people have a very good culture, which is getting affected directly and indirectly due to the emergence of Tanglish. Speaking different type of Tamizh in different geographic areas is fine. Having a difference between speaking and writing Tamizh is also fine because it is done by nature. Besides, now Tamizh people are hungry for something else: English. English words are scattered across Tamizh. It is something that we need to worry because people neither know English nor Tamizh very well and get by only with a limited mash-up of the two. Using any other language along with Tamil language is just like wearing a garland made of chillies instead of flowers, said one of the great Tamil personalities. It has a deep meaning because it reveals how irritating it is when we wear a garland of chillies. An equal or even higher irritation and discomfort is what we get when we merge any other language with such a pure language like Tamizh. Though it feels comfortable to use it in such a manner, it affects the beauty and purity of the ownness that any language has. This is something that we have to pay a lot of attention and importance.

### **Literary Richness and Uniqueness of Tamil**

Everything has its very own uniqueness which must be left untouched in order to let it stay with its precious individuality. On this point, knowing about the individuality and uniqueness of Tamizh language, Thirukkural is a classic Tamizh language text consisting of 1,330 short couplets or kural of seven words each. Thirukkural certainly has the noble purpose of teaching the world on how to lead a noble life. The foremost unique character of Thirukkural is its universality and timelessness

transcending time, national boundaries, races, religions and languages. Though there are a number of literatures given by various set of people, Thirukkural stands at an irreplaceable position across the globe and hence called “Ulaga Podhu Marai” (the Universal scripture). Tamizh people speaking about the greatness of Tamizh and praising Tamizh is something common. But, the German born, Nobel prize winner, Dr. Albert Schweitzer describes the kural thus: “On the most varied question concerning the conduct of man to himself and to the world, Thirukkural’s utterances are characterized by nobility and good sense. There hardly exists in the literature of the world a collection of maxims in which we find so much lofty wisdom”.

### **Global Presence and Linguistic Influence of Tamil**

Apart from these, Tamizh is an official language of 3 countries: India, Srilanka and Singapore. It is also the official language of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu and the Union Territory of Puducherry. It is used as one of the languages of education in Malaysia along with English, Malay and Mandarin. In Malaysia, 543 primary education government schools are available fully in Tamizh medium. Tamizh is the first Indian language to be printed and published. The Tamil Lexicon, published by the University of Madras, was one of the earliest dictionaries published in the Indian languages. Tamizh gave not only words but the grammar to almost 400 languages. Root words of many languages are from Tamizh. In Egypt more than 4000 town names are in Tamizh. In ancient period, Tamizh is the only language to have a separate community named as Mudhal Tamizh Sangam and was ruled by 89 kings, 4400 years ago. Call it a coincidence or intentional, the name Google matches with its phonetic Tamizh name koogil, where koovu(one meaning is to call) and kill is killudhal(which means to search or analyze). So Google in Tamizh phonetical word koogil logically gives the same meaning call and search. It is remarkable among the lesser known yet interesting facts about the Tamizh language. Actually, Tamil is pronounced as Tamizh. The ‘zh’ has to be pronounced properly. It is the unique alphabet in the world and no language has the equivalent of that.

### **Language, Identity, and Naming Practices**

The Tamil people are special in context to their names too. None of the Hindi speaking people has a name called Hindi or Malayalam speaking people has Malayalam as their name. Not even 1% of people who has a mother tongue other than Tamizh has their language as their name. But Tamizh people can proudly say that they keep names such as Tamizhselvi. Tamizhkumaran or even just Tamizh. That is how connected are people with their mother tongue. They don’t just see it as a language, but as their soul. Tamizh has all these proudness in it and it always will. But for a language to stand and survive, it becomes the responsibility of its people. Over the course of the day, we find people getting gradually detached from it. We find some languages such as English and Hindi which is kind of getting influential and dominant.



### **English Dominance and Linguistic Perception**

The Tamizh people consider speaking English as a pride and it is something that everyone would agree. People are caught under a myth that if they know English, speak English fluently, they are people with great knowledge and power. But they fail to understand that white is just a color and not beauty. Similarly, English is just a language. It is acceptable to know or learn or speak English because it is a language which is going to help us communicate across seas. It is something like an extra support for everyone to get connected in terms of education, work and so on, but it must stay within limits which is fair and good to everyone.

### **Hindi Imposition and Language Politics**

On the other hand, Hindi is something that is trying to get a force fit into the Tamizh people. Many personalities are trying to bring one language, Hindi, to be the main and dominant language all over India which is completely unfair. They add up stuffs like this action must take place to unite India which is inappropriate. India is already united though diverse. Hindi has nothing more specific to help the already united nation. Even before independence, India was united and is still the same. So, a language, that too which is trying to get a force fit will nowhere try uniting a nation. In contrast, it'll surely bring conflicts. It is not that Tamizh people hate Hindi. But the problem arises when someone forces to learn it stating it is the only language that'll unite you and is the only thing that'll help you survive and grow. This is not at all into a political point of view. Because Hindi is just another language.

People in Delhi, Mumbai, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Bihar and some others speak and learn Hindi. All these people have their own mother tongue too. But over the course of days, it is getting unused where Hindi dominates. And there are few people who still confess that Hindi is India's National language. But the fact is that India does not have anything called a National language. As already mentioned, Tamizh is the official language for 3 countries. But when comes to Hindi, it is an official language only in India. But surprisingly, only the Indian state Tamil Nadu is the state of Tamizh. While even in Srilanka and Singapore, they find learning Tamizh to be more than enough. In that case, forcing people of Tamil Nadu to learn Hindi is not fair in any means. No one has a highly valid reason to say that it is a must to learn Hindi. People are surely going to learn it whenever necessary. Though there comes a need to get out of country for any kind of reason, we have our solid English for the purpose of communication.

### **Tamil Identity and Cultural Resistance**

Tamizh is not just a language; it is a way of life. It is a culture. Beyond culture it is also the set of people who are associated to it. They call themselves Tamizh. Everything is just Tamizh for such people. Tamizh people have never forced anyone to learn their language or culture. Many of the North Indians and foreigners speak Tamizh. But no one has ever forced or insisted them to learn Tamizh as a language or as a subject in their schools or colleges. When there arises a need, learning of a language happens on

the flow. India is called a land of diversity where we still find unity in it. Here, Tamizh is going beyond religion. People of Tamizh has their own festivals; Malayali's have Onam as their festival. These are treated as a devotion that they have over their language. On this point, it is a must to mention that the Tamizh people have Pongal as their festival. The 2017 pro-jallikaattu protests, were leaderless apolitical youth protests which took place in January 2017 in large groups in several location across the Indian state of Tamil Nadu and overseas is such a remarkable one where people protested against the Supreme Court's order to ban jallikattu, a traditional Tamizh bull taming sport. This movement for Tamizh youth is both protest and celebration of their power. There was no visible single organizer for the protest. This is one of the best example to show that, Tamizh people will never give up for their culture and festival. Similarly, there may be languages that emerges to stand as a competition to dominate Tamizh. There may be people who'll keep trying to force to learn other language. But above all, when there comes a problem for the survival and sustainability of the language Tamizh, people will never get back and just look at it. It is a sure thing that the people of Tamizh, wherever they may have been settled, will come together to fight against such dominance and influences. And even a bit higher, some people won't even let for a question to arise about the survival of the language Tamizh. Tamizh stood, stands and will always stand special and unique forever and ever. Tamizh is not just a language; it is an emotion. Tamizh is an identity. Tamizh is a pillar of strength to its people. Tamizh is the soul of every Tamizhian. Tamizh will never ever be just a language that is written in history because it does will not have an end. People of Tamizh always has this in their minds; 'Yaadhum Oore Yaavarum Kelir', meaning 'We harbour a feeling of kinship for all places and all people are our own; And finally Tamizh people will never be against any language and at the same time will never let down their language at any cost. Lastly yes, Tamil language will exists in future India and will continue to spread its uniqueness globally also.

### **Conclusion**

Tamil has survived for centuries not merely because of its age but because of the deep emotional, cultural, and social attachment of its speakers. The language has demonstrated remarkable adaptability while preserving its literary and cultural richness. However, the contemporary rise of English influence, increasing code-switching practices, and debates surrounding linguistic dominance present significant challenges to the maintenance of linguistic purity and cultural continuity. Nevertheless, the survival of a language does not depend solely on preserving its traditional form; it also depends on its ability to evolve and remain relevant in changing social contexts. Tamil continues to possess strong institutional support through education, literature, media, and governmental recognition across multiple countries. Furthermore, Tamil identity movements and cultural consciousness among speakers indicate that the language remains deeply rooted within its community. Rather than perceiving multilingualism as a threat, it may be understood as a reality of modern society, provided it does not erase linguistic identity.



Therefore, Tamil is unlikely to disappear in future India. Instead, its future depends upon balancing preservation with adaptation and ensuring that younger generations continue to engage with the language not only as a medium of communication but also as an enduring symbol of identity and culture.

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