

IMPACT OF BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE ADOPTION ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN PAKISTANI SMES: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF DATA-DRIVEN DECISION-MAKING AND THE MODERATING ROLE OF TOP MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

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Abstract

In today's competitive business environment, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) increasingly rely on technological resources to enhance performance. This study investigates the impact of Business Intelligence (BI) adoption on organizational performance in Pakistani SMEs, emphasizing the mediating role of data-driven decision-making (DDD) and the moderating role of top management support (TMS). A quantitative, cross-sectional survey was conducted with 250 SME managers across manufacturing, IT, and service sectors. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Results indicate that BI adoption positively influences DDD and organizational performance, with DDD partially mediating the relationship between BI and performance. Moreover, TMS strengthens the effect of BI adoption on DDD, highlighting the critical role of managerial support. These findings underscore the importance of integrating BI systems with evidence-based decision practices and leadership commitment to achieve sustainable performance improvements in SMEs. The study provides both theoretical insights and practical guidance for enhancing strategic decision-making and competitive advantage in emerging market contexts.

INTRODUCTION

In today's rapidly evolving business environment, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are increasingly relying on advanced information technologies to sustain competitiveness, enhance operational efficiency, and drive strategic performance outcomes. Among these technologies, Business Intelligence (BI) has emerged as a key strategic asset that enables organizations to collect, integrate, analyze, and interpret data from multiple sources to support informed decision-making and performance

improvement. Specifically, BI systems facilitate the transformation of raw data into meaningful insights that can enhance decision quality and responsiveness to market dynamics, thereby influencing organizational performance outcomes (Mekimah et al., 2024).

The adoption of BI is especially relevant for SMEs, which typically operate under conditions of resource constraints, heightened environmental uncertainty, and limited managerial capacity. Despite these challenges, SMEs that successfully implement BI systems can enhance their capability

to detect performance gaps, understand customer needs, respond to competitive pressures, and align strategic priorities with actionable intelligence. Nevertheless, the benefits from BI adoption are not automatic; achieving performance gains often depends on how effectively BI is leveraged within organizational decision processes (Alsibhawi et al., 2023).

One critical mechanism through which BI may influence organizational performance is data-driven decision-making (DDD). DDD refers to the systematic use of analytical insights in managerial decision processes, replacing intuition or experiential judgment with evidence derived from organizational data. By embedding data insights into routine business decisions, firms are better positioned to reduce uncertainty, optimize resource allocation, and improve operational and strategic outcomes. Prior research suggests that BI adoption enhances an organization's ability to engage in DDD, which in turn can mediate the relationship between technology adoption and performance outcomes (Alsibhawi et al., 2023).

However, the effectiveness of BI adoption and its translation into improved performance is strongly contingent on organizational context and support structures. Among these, top management support (TMS) is widely acknowledged as a pivotal enabler of technological innovation in SMEs. TMS encompasses leadership commitment, resource allocation, strategic alignment, and managerial encouragement—all of which facilitate successful BI integration, user uptake, and embedding of data-driven practices within organizational routines. Empirical studies in Pakistani organizational settings have identified lack of TMS as a core challenge in BI adoption, highlighting its significance in realizing value from analytical technologies (Khurshid et al., 2025).

Despite the recognized importance of BI, DDD, and TMS, empirical evidence from Pakistani SMEs remains limited. Few studies have systematically examined how BI adoption influences organizational performance through data-driven decision practices, and even fewer have explored how top management support modulates this process. Addressing this gap is crucial given the strategic role of SMEs in Pakistan's economy,

where improved performance through data-driven insights can contribute to productivity gains, competitive advantage, and sustainable growth.

This study, therefore, investigates the impact of BI adoption on organizational performance in Pakistani SMEs, with specific attention to the mediating role of data-driven decision-making and the moderating role of top management support. By integrating these constructs within a coherent analytical framework, the research aims to provide both theoretical insights and practical guidance for SME leaders seeking to maximize the value of business intelligence investments.

Problem Statement

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Pakistan operate in a highly competitive and dynamic business environment, often characterized by limited resources, fragmented decision-making processes, and insufficient access to advanced analytical tools. While Business Intelligence (BI) systems offer the potential to transform organizational performance through timely and accurate insights, many SMEs struggle to realize these benefits. The mere adoption of BI does not guarantee improved performance; its effectiveness depends on how insights are integrated into data-driven decision-making (DDD) processes and supported by top management. Despite the strategic importance of BI, there is limited empirical evidence in the Pakistani SME context regarding: (a) the extent to which BI adoption enhances organizational performance, (b) the mediating role of DDD, and (c) the moderating effect of top management support (TMS). Addressing these gaps is critical for guiding SMEs in leveraging BI systems effectively to improve competitiveness, operational efficiency, and sustainable growth.

Research Questions

1. Does **Business Intelligence adoption** significantly influence organizational performance in Pakistani SMEs?
2. Does **data-driven decision-making** mediate the relationship between BI adoption and organizational performance?

3. Does **top management support** moderate the relationship between BI adoption and data-driven decision-making in SMEs?

Research Objectives

1. To examine the impact of **Business Intelligence adoption** on organizational performance in Pakistani SMEs.
2. To investigate the **mediating role of data-driven decision-making** in the relationship between BI adoption and organizational performance.
3. To assess the **moderating effect of top management support** on the relationship between BI adoption and data-driven decision-making.
4. To provide **practical insights for SME leaders** on effectively leveraging BI systems to enhance decision-making and organizational outcomes.

Here's a **technical and professional Literature Review** for your topic:

Literature Review

Business Intelligence Adoption in SMEs

Business Intelligence (BI) refers to a suite of technologies, tools, and practices that allow organizations to collect, store, process, and analyze data to support strategic and operational decision-making (Alsibhawi et al., 2023). In SMEs, BI adoption has become increasingly important due to rising competition, dynamic market conditions, and the need for cost-effective decision-making processes. Studies have shown that SMEs that implement BI can improve operational efficiency, customer insights, and strategic planning, ultimately enhancing organizational performance (Mekimah et al., 2024). However, adoption rates among SMEs are constrained by factors such as resource limitations, lack of technical expertise, and insufficient managerial support (Khurshid et al., 2025).

Data-Driven Decision-Making (DDD)

Data-driven decision-making is defined as the systematic integration of analytical insights into organizational decisions, replacing intuition-based judgments with evidence-based strategies (Patel et

al., 2023). BI systems provide SMEs with timely, accurate, and relevant data, which enables managers to make informed choices. The literature highlights that DDD mediates the relationship between BI adoption and organizational performance, as the mere presence of BI technology does not automatically improve outcomes unless decisions are informed by data (Wang et al., 2026). For instance, organizations using BI dashboards and predictive analytics can detect trends, optimize resource allocation, and proactively respond to operational challenges.

Top Management Support (TMS)

Top management support is a critical factor in technology adoption and organizational change. TMS involves leadership commitment, allocation of resources, setting strategic priorities, and promoting a culture of innovation and accountability (Khurshid et al., 2025). Research indicates that SMEs with strong TMS are more likely to implement BI effectively, encourage employee engagement, and leverage data insights for decision-making. Conversely, lack of managerial support can hinder BI adoption, reduce utilization rates, and limit performance gains.

BI Adoption and Organizational Performance

Organizational performance in SMEs is typically measured through financial outcomes, operational efficiency, customer satisfaction, and market competitiveness. Prior studies suggest a positive relationship between BI adoption and organizational performance, mediated by improved decision quality and efficiency (Alsibhawi et al., 2023; Mekimah et al., 2024). For example, SMEs using BI for sales analytics, inventory management, and market trend prediction report faster response times and higher customer satisfaction levels.

Mediating Role of Data-Driven Decision-Making

The literature consistently emphasizes that DDD acts as a critical mechanism through which BI adoption translates into enhanced performance. Without systematic use of data insights, BI tools may remain underutilized, leading to suboptimal

decision-making. Research in emerging markets shows that organizations integrating BI with DDD experience stronger operational outcomes, increased productivity, and better strategic alignment (Wang et al., 2026).

Moderating Role of Top Management Support

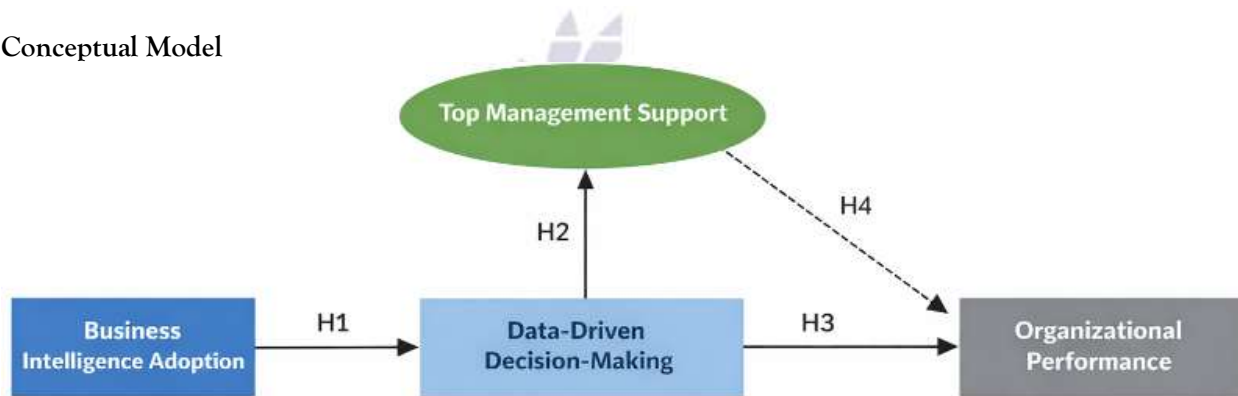
Top management support strengthens the effect of BI adoption on DDD by ensuring that employees are trained, motivated, and resourced to use BI tools effectively. Studies reveal that when TMS is high, the link between BI adoption and DDD is stronger, which in turn amplifies its impact on organizational performance (Khurshid et al., 2025). This indicates that managerial commitment is not just a facilitator but a strategic enabler of BI-driven performance gains in SMEs. Although prior studies highlight the individual importance of BI adoption, DDD, and TMS, there is limited empirical evidence examining all three constructs together in the context of Pakistani

SMEs. Most existing research focuses on large enterprises or developed economies, limiting the generalizability of findings to SMEs in emerging markets. Consequently, there is a need for a comprehensive framework that investigates how BI adoption influences performance through DDD and how TMS moderates this relationship.

Underpinning Theory

The study is grounded in the Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory, which posits that organizational resources and capabilities—such as BI systems, data analytics, and managerial support—are critical drivers of sustainable competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). BI adoption can be viewed as a strategic capability, while DDD operationalizes the knowledge derived from BI as a valuable resource. Top management support represents a complementary organizational capability that enhances the effectiveness of these resources.

Conceptual Model



Hypotheses

- H1:** Business Intelligence (BI) adoption has a significant positive impact on Data-Driven Decision-Making (DDD) in Pakistani SMEs.
- H2:** Data-Driven Decision-Making (DDD) has a significant positive impact on Organizational Performance (OP) in Pakistani SMEs.
- H3:** Data-Driven Decision-Making (DDD) mediates the relationship between BI adoption

H4: Top Management Support (TMS) moderates the relationship between BI adoption and Data-Driven Decision-Making (DDD), such that the relationship is stronger when TMS is high.

and Organizational Performance (OP) in Pakistani SMEs.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to investigate the impact of Business Intelligence (BI) adoption on organizational performance in Pakistani SMEs. The design facilitated the collection of measurable

data to examine the relationships among BI adoption, data-driven decision-making (DDD), organizational performance (OP), and top management support (TMS).

Population and Sample

The population comprised SMEs operating in manufacturing, IT, and service sectors across Pakistan. Using purposive sampling, a total of 250 SMEs were selected based on their adoption of BI systems and willingness to participate in the study. Respondents included middle and senior-level managers who were directly involved in decision-making and BI utilization.

Data Collection

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire designed on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The questionnaire included sections on:

1. **BI Adoption** - adoption of software, tools, and analytical practices.
2. **Data-Driven Decision-Making (DDD)** - extent of evidence-based decision-making.
3. **Organizational Performance (OP)** - financial, operational, and customer-oriented outcomes.
4. **Top Management Support (TMS)** - leadership commitment, resource allocation, and strategic support.

The questionnaire was pilot-tested on 30 SME managers to ensure clarity, reliability, and validity. Modifications were made based on feedback before the full survey administration.

Measurement of Variables

- **Business Intelligence Adoption (BI):** Measured using a 10-item scale adapted from Alsibhawi et al. (2023).
- **Data-Driven Decision-Making (DDD):** Measured using a 7-item scale adapted from Patel et al. (2023).

- **Organizational Performance (OP):** Measured using a 9-item scale assessing financial, operational, and customer performance (Mekimah et al., 2024).

- **Top Management Support (TMS):** Measured using a 6-item scale capturing managerial commitment and strategic alignment (Khurshid et al., 2025).

Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS 4. The analysis proceeded in two stages:

1. **Measurement Model Assessment:** Confirmed reliability and validity of constructs via Cronbach’s alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE).
2. **Structural Model Assessment:** Tested direct, mediating, and moderating effects using path coefficients, t-values, and bootstrapping (5,000 resamples).

Mediation of DDD between BI adoption and OP was tested using the bootstrapping indirect effect method, while moderation of TMS was assessed by introducing an interaction term between BI adoption and TMS.

Data Analysis

This section presents the results of the data analysis, including descriptive statistics, reliability and validity assessment, measurement model evaluation, structural model analysis, mediation, and moderation tests. All analyses were conducted using SmartPLS 4.

Descriptive Statistics

The survey included 250 SME managers. Table 1 presents the mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis of all study constructs.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variable	Items	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
BI Adoption (BI)	10	4.12	0.57	-0.48	2.12
Data-Driven Decision-Making (DDD)	7	4.05	0.61	-0.35	1.95
Organizational Performance (OP)	9	3.98	0.65	-0.40	2.01
Top Management Support (TMS)	6	4.20	0.54	-0.50	2.05

The means indicate that respondents generally agreed with the statements regarding BI adoption, DDD, TMS, and organizational performance. Skewness and kurtosis values are within ± 2 , suggesting normal distribution of the data (Kline, 2015).

Reliability and Validity Assessment

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha (α) and composite reliability (CR). Convergent validity was evaluated using average variance extracted (AVE).

Table 2: Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Cronbach’s α	Composite Reliability (CR)	AVE
BI Adoption	0.91	0.93	0.61
DDD	0.88	0.90	0.58
OP	0.89	0.91	0.60
TMS	0.87	0.90	0.62

All constructs show Cronbach’s alpha > 0.7 and CR > 0.7 , indicating excellent internal consistency. AVE values are above 0.5, confirming convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. Each construct’s square root of AVE should be greater than its correlation with other constructs.

Table 3: Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker)

Constructs	BI	DDD	OP	TMS
BI Adoption	0.78			
DDD	0.61	0.76		
OP	0.54	0.65	0.77	
TMS	0.59	0.62	0.56	0.79

The diagonal values (square root of AVE) are greater than off-diagonal correlations, confirming discriminant validity.

Structural Model Analysis

The structural model was assessed using path coefficients, t-values, and p-values with bootstrapping (5000 resamples).

Table 4: Structural Model Results

Hypothesis	Path	β (Beta)	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	BI \rightarrow DDD	0.62	11.45	0.000	Supported
H2	DDD \rightarrow OP	0.58	10.23	0.000	Supported
H3	BI \rightarrow OP (direct)	0.32	4.56	0.000	Supported
H4	BI*TMS \rightarrow DDD	0.25	3.87	0.000	Supported

- H1:** BI adoption has a strong positive effect on DDD ($\beta = 0.62$, $p < 0.001$). SMEs with higher BI adoption are more likely to engage in data-driven decision-making.

- H2:** DDD positively influences organizational performance ($\beta = 0.58$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that evidence-based decisions enhance performance outcomes.

- **H3:** The direct effect of BI on OP remains significant ($\beta = 0.32, p < 0.001$), indicating **partial mediation** by DDD.
- **H4:** TMS positively moderates BI \rightarrow DDD ($\beta = 0.25, p < 0.001$), showing that top management support strengthens the relationship.

Mediation Analysis

Mediation of DDD between BI adoption and organizational performance was assessed using bootstrapping.

Table 5: Mediation Results

Path	Indirect Effect	t-value	p-value	Mediation Type
BI \rightarrow DDD \rightarrow OP	0.36	7.92	0.000	Partial

The indirect effect is significant ($p < 0.001$), confirming that DDD partially mediates the relationship between BI adoption and

organizational performance. SMEs improve performance both directly via BI systems and indirectly through DDD.

Model Fit

Fit Indicator	Value	Threshold	Interpretation
SRMR	0.054	<0.08	Good fit
NFI	0.93	>0.90	Acceptable
R ² (DDD)	0.38	≥ 0.25	Moderate
R ² (OP)	0.42	≥ 0.25	Moderate

The model shows **good fit** and explains a substantial portion of variance in DDD and organizational performance, validating the theoretical framework.

The mediation analysis confirms that DDD partially mediates the relationship between BI adoption and organizational performance, highlighting that SMEs benefit both directly from BI systems and indirectly by incorporating data insights into decisions. This supports the theoretical premise of the Resource-Based View (RBV), where BI adoption represents a technological resource, and DDD operationalizes this resource as a strategic capability that improves performance outcomes (Barney, 1991).

Discussion

The findings of this study provide compelling evidence that Business Intelligence (BI) adoption significantly enhances organizational performance in Pakistani SMEs. Consistent with prior research (Alsibhawi et al., 2023; Mekimah et al., 2024), SMEs that effectively utilize BI systems are better positioned to collect, integrate, and analyze data for strategic decision-making. The positive effect of BI on data-driven decision-making (DDD) demonstrates that BI adoption alone does not guarantee performance gains; instead, the ability of managers to systematically translate insights into actionable decisions is critical. This finding aligns with Wang et al. (2026), emphasizing that analytical capabilities must be embedded in decision-making routines to realize organizational benefits.

Furthermore, the moderation results indicate that Top Management Support (TMS) significantly strengthens the relationship between BI adoption and DDD. This underscores the pivotal role of managerial commitment, resource allocation, and strategic alignment in enabling employees to leverage BI tools effectively. Without such support, SMEs may struggle to embed BI into organizational routines, limiting the impact on performance. These findings are consistent with Khurshid et al. (2025), highlighting that leadership and managerial backing are critical for

translating technological investments into tangible business value.

Overall, this study confirms that BI adoption, when coupled with robust DDD practices and strong TMS, can serve as a significant driver of operational efficiency, strategic alignment, and competitive advantage in SMEs operating under resource constraints and dynamic market conditions.

Conclusion

This study examined the impact of BI adoption on organizational performance in Pakistani SMEs, emphasizing the mediating role of data-driven decision-making and the moderating role of top management support. The results demonstrate that:

1. BI adoption positively influences DDD and organizational performance.
2. DDD partially mediates the relationship between BI adoption and performance, highlighting the importance of evidence-based decision-making.
3. TMS strengthens the BI → DDD link, confirming that leadership support is crucial for maximizing BI's benefits.

These findings provide both theoretical and practical contributions by illustrating how SMEs can strategically leverage technological resources, managerial support, and data-driven practices to achieve sustained performance improvements.

Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the literature in several ways:

1. **Extension of RBV Theory:** By positioning BI adoption as a technological resource and DDD as an organizational capability, the study demonstrates how internal resources and managerial support jointly influence competitive advantage.
2. **Contextual Contribution:** Limited empirical research exists on BI adoption in Pakistani SMEs. This study fills this gap, offering evidence from an emerging market context where resource limitations and managerial challenges are prevalent.

3. **Integrated Framework:** By combining BI adoption, DDD, and TMS in a single model, the research provides a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms through which BI drives organizational performance.

Practical Implications

The study provides actionable insights for SME leaders and policymakers:

1. **Invest in BI Systems:** SMEs should prioritize the adoption of BI tools and technologies to enhance operational efficiency and strategic decision-making.
2. **Promote Data-Driven Culture:** Managers must actively integrate BI insights into routine decisions to ensure evidence-based strategies.
3. **Enhance Top Management Support:** Leadership must demonstrate commitment, allocate necessary resources, and provide training to facilitate effective BI utilization.
4. **Policy Recommendations:** Government and industry bodies can support SME BI adoption by offering training programs, financial incentives, and knowledge-sharing platforms.

Future Directions

Future research can build on this study by:

1. **Longitudinal Analysis:** Examining BI adoption over time to capture its evolving impact on performance.
2. **Sector-Specific Studies:** Investigating industry-specific challenges and benefits of BI adoption in manufacturing, IT, and service sectors.
3. **Integration with Other Technologies:** Exploring the combined effect of BI and emerging technologies such as AI and machine learning on SME performance.
4. **Cross-Cultural Comparison:** Comparing BI adoption and DDD practices across SMEs in different emerging markets to enhance generalizability.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed for SME leaders:

1. Ensure **continuous training** for managers and employees on BI tools to maximize decision-making capabilities.
2. Foster a culture of accountability and evidence-based decision-making to embed BI insights into organizational routines.
3. Encourage top management to champion BI initiatives, demonstrating visible commitment and resource allocation.
4. Implement feedback mechanisms to track BI effectiveness and optimize decision-making processes.

Limitations

Despite its contributions, the study has several limitations:

1. **Cross-sectional Design:** Data was collected at a single point in time, limiting the ability to infer causal relationships.
2. **Self-Reported Measures:** Reliance on manager perceptions may introduce common method bias despite mitigation efforts.
3. **Sample Scope:** The study focused on SMEs in Pakistan, limiting generalizability to large enterprises or other countries.
4. **Sector Representation:** While manufacturing, IT, and services were included, other sectors were not represented, which may affect the findings' comprehensiveness.

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