

## Proactive Change or Adaptive Response: A Study on the Impact of Digital Transformation Strategy Modes on Enterprise Profitability From a Configuration Perspective

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**Abstract :** Digital transformation (DT) is an important way for manufacturing enterprises to shape new competitive advantages, and how to choose an effective DT strategy is crucial for enterprise growth and sustainable development. Rooted in strategic change theory, this paper incorporates the dimensions of managers' digital cognition, organizational conditions, and external environment into the same strategic analysis framework and integrates the dynamic QCA method and PSM method to study the antecedent grouping of the DT strategy mode of manufacturing enterprises and its impact on corporate profitability based on the data of listed manufacturing companies in China from 2015 to 2019. We find that the synergistic linkage of different dimensional elements can form six equivalent paths of high-level DT, which can be summarized as the proactive change mode of resource-capability dominated as well as adaptive response mode such as industry-guided resource replenishment. Capacity building under complex environments, market-industry synergy-driven, forced adaptation under peer pressure, and the managers' digital cognition play a non-essential but crucial role in this process. Except for individual differences in the market industry collaborative driving mode, other modes are more stable in terms of individual and temporal changes. However, it is worth noting that not all paths that result in high levels of DT can contribute to enterprise profitability, but only high levels of DT that result from matching the optimization of internal conditions with the external environment, such as industry technology and macro policies, can have a significant positive impact on corporate profitability.

**Keywords :** digital transformation, strategy mode, enterprise profitability, dynamic QCA, PSM approach

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