Evaluating the Effectiveness of e-Commerce SEO Strategies: The Case of l'Occitane-en-Provence

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact of Search Engine Optimization (SEO) strategies on the e-commerce performance of *l'Occitane-en-Provence* in two francophone markets: France and Tunisia. While extensive research addresses SEO effectiveness across different industries, empirical studies specifically examining SEO performance on e-commerce sites in varied regional contexts remain scarce. Addressing this gap, we evaluate SEO adaptations on the French and Tunisian websites of *l'Occitane-en-Provence,* using a descriptive and analytical research design over six months. Our methodology uses keyword analysis, alt tag optimization, and performance metric assessments to analyze website visibility and search engine rankings. Findings reveal significant improvements in organic traffic and search rankings due to targeted keyword and alt tag strategies, along with areas for further development in mobile optimization and technical SEO. This study underscores the complexities of sustaining a strong online presence beyond borders, necessitating tailored SEO approaches to address diverse customer needs. We provide a summative table and actionable insights to inform managers for enhancing SEO performance.

Keywords: e-Commerce SEO, Keyword Research, Alt Tag Optimization, SEO Performance Metrics, l'Occitane-en-Provence.

INTRODUCTION

In the crowded and fast-moving digital marketplace, Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is vital for organizations striving to achieve and maintain online success, particularly for e-commerce retail websites(Das, 2021; Erdmann et al., 2022). With millions of websites competing for consumer attention, effective SEO strategies are essential for enhancing online visibility and attracting targeted traffic(Bellm, 2024; Chawla, 2021). SEO encompasses a range of tactics designed to improve a website's ranking on search engine results pages (SERPs), thereby increasing its likelihood of being discovered by potential customers(Fishkin & Høgenhaven, 2013; Kowalczyk & Szandala, 2024).

By channelling organic traffic and enhancing visibility, SEO can lead to higher conversion rates and increased sales. Scholars find that SEO is also a cost-effective means to improve user experience through optimized content and website structure(Dutta et al., 2024; Tatikonda et al., 2024). Moreover, by elevating a website's position in search results, SEO builds brand credibility and trust (Ologunebi & Taiwo, 2023; Ward & French, 2013). Analyzing SEO performance can provide businesses with valuable insights into customer behaviour(Bhandari & Bansal, 2018), offering a competitive edge by outperforming competitors in search rankings(Daoud et al., 2024).

The global online market is in a state of constant flux, disrupted by the continuous evolution of search engine algorithms designed to deliver more relevant and user-focused results(Dutta et al., 2024). To remain competitive, business managers must stay agile and keep up-to-date with the latest SEO trends and best practices (De et al.,

2023; Papagiannis, 2020). This paper explores the pivotal role of SEO in digital marketing, with particular emphasis on its application toe-commerce websites. By conceptualizing an e-commerce website as a digital catalogue, this study presents a comprehensive framework for understanding and implementing sustainable SEO strategies.

The aim of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of SEO strategies employed by *l'Occitane-en-Provence* (hereafter referred to as '*Occitane*'), a prominent French skincare and beauty brand known for its sustainable business practices and high-quality products. This brand offers a unique perspective on the integration of SEO within a global e-commerce framework, highlighting best practices and potential areas for improvement. For example, by adopting a regenerative business model (Konietzko, Das and Bocken, 2023), *Occitane* has removed and substituted the plastic spatulas from their cream products, the plastic components from their e-commerce shipping boxes, and the plastic cello-wrapping on their retail/web standard products (De et al., 2023).

Our objective is to examine the brand's online presence, keyword strategies, content optimization and backlink profiles over a six-month period, to provide insights into how tailored SEO practices can optimize digital visibility, enhance consumer engagement and thereby contribute to sustained e-commerce success and digital marketing objectives(Bala & Verma, 2018; Das, 2021; Enge et al., 2012; Phomkamin et al., 2021).In doing so, we contribute to the understanding of an SEO's role in driving online consumer engagement and business growth in the crowded digital marketplace.

Prior research has focused on the general principles and applications of SEOacross various industries (Das, 2021; Enge et al., 2012). Studies have extensively explored the impact of SEO on enhancing online visibility and driving traffic to websites, particularly within the e-commerce sector (Confetto et al., 2023; Jusuf, 2023; Ologunebi & Taiwo, 2023). However, it remains unclear why certain SEO strategies are more effective in some industries than in others, and why companies like *Occitane*, despite their global reach, struggle with certain aspects of digital marketing (Odden, 2012; Ward & French, 2013).

In line with prior studies (Dragidella & Aliu, 2020), our findings underscore the need for beauty and personal care industrybrands like *l'Occitane* to continuously refine and adapt their SEO practices in response to evolving market dynamics and consumer behaviours. Our explanation for this outcome stems from the understanding that SEO is not a 'one-size-fits-all' solution(Paa-Kerner, 2018); instead, it requires customization to align with the unique characteristics and consumer expectations of each industry (Remmele et al., 2023).

This study was limited by certain factors, including the availability of proprietary data and the constantly changing algorithms used by search engines, which may have influenced the range and timeliness of the analysis. Despite these limitations, the research provides valuable insights into the application of SEO in the beauty and personal care industry, with practical implications for e-commerce strategies.We establish the centrality of our research by highlighting the pivotal role of SEO within the broader digital marketplace, particularly for e-commerce websites (Enge et al., 2012). Building on early studies of SEO (Kent, 2020; Peter & Dalla Vecchia, 2021), we explain the importance of SEO strategies in enhancing online visibility and driving targeted traffic.

Our research establishes a niche by arguing that, while general SEO strategies are well-documented, there is a gap in understanding how these strategies can be tailored to the beauty and personal care industry (Confetto et al., 2023). This study questions the effectiveness of industry-specific SEO approaches and contributes to the ongoing exploration of SEO's role in e-commerce success, focusing on the case of *Occitane*.

Thus, we put forward the following the research question (RQ):

Taking the case of Occitane, how can SEO strategies be tailored to optimize digital visibility and consumer engagement in the beauty and personal care industry?

The RQ is directly informed by the emphasis in the literature on the need for targeted and well-planned SEO strategies. The gaps identified, notably the lack of focus on industry-specific applications, justify the need for a study that examines how these strategies can be effectively implemented within a specific industry context.

The paper now proceeds with a literature review to provide theoretical underpinnings and explain the e-commerce SEO context, followed by a presentation of the methodology, findings and discussion, including limitations then concluding comments.

Theoretical Underpinning

This section provides an overview of existing literature, highlighting techniques and approaches proven successful in e-commerce, and then explains key terms used in this study.Our study is theoretically grounded in the concept that effective SEO strategies are essential for sustainable online visibility and performance; a well-optimized online presence is closely linked to higher consumer engagement and conversion rates (Almestarihi et al., 2024; Zhao et al., 2023).

Scholars confirm the vital role played by SEO in digital marketing, particularly for e-commerce websites (Erdmann et al., 2022; Erdmann &Ponzoa, 2021a), and the importance of industry-specific SEO strategies (Chawla, 2021; Remmele et al., 2023),particularly in competitive markets like beauty and personal care(Confetto et al., 2023). In fast-moving online markets, organizations need to understand how to adapt their digital marketing

strategies to remain competitive(Durmaz & Akan, 2023; Dutta et al., 2024). Scholars emphasize the need for targeted and well-planned SEO strategies to achieve sustained online visibility and performance (Dutta et al., 2024).

Building on this foundation, (Erdmann & Ponzoa, 2021a) examined how grocery e-commerce in Europe and the USA leverages digital inbound marketing to enhance visibility and consumer engagement. Their findings demonstrate that well-executed SEO strategies directly improve the economic performance of grocery e-commerce platforms, translating to increased web traffic, consumer interactions, and conversion rates. This, in turn, delivers economic benefits by minimizing customer acquisition costs and maximizing return on investment through SEO, in line with (Bhandari & Bansal, 2018) and Chawla (2021) who confirm the importance of customizing SEO efforts for distinct industries. Inhighly-competitive markets, organizations benefit from targeted SEO strategies that focus on high-intent keywords, consumer behaviour patterns, and mobile optimization – as digital inbound marketing significantly affects customer decisions, purchasing behaviors, and overall satisfaction(Almestarihi et al., 2024).

However, there remain many gaps in knowledge. (Erdmann & Ponzoa, 2021a)offer a timely snapshot but lack longitudinal insights to determine the long-term impacts of SEO strategies on e-commerce. Understanding whether the benefits of SEO investments are temporary or contribute to sustained economic growth is vital. Also, moreresearch is needed to evaluate the integration of AI and machine learning in automating and enhancing SEO efforts. While (Erdmann & Ponzoa, 2021b) briefly discuss AI's potential, deeper analysis is required to assess its role in optimizing website performance and transforming digital marketing strategies in real-time(Durmaz & Akan, 2023).Another gap lies in the regional nuances between Europe and the USA. (Erdmann et al., 2022; Erdmann & Ponzoa, 2021b)offer a comparative analysis but do not explore intra-regional differences, which can have a profound impact on SEO effectiveness. Factors such as consumer behaviour, cultural preferences, regulatory environments, and local competition vary across countries and regions. Granular studies are needed to understand how tailored SEO strategies can be implemented to target specific geographic markets more effectively (Dutta et al., 2024).

Addressing these gaps is more than an academic pursuit – it is a practical necessity for several reasons. Firstly, a deeper understanding of the long-term impacts of SEO will enable businesses to make informed digital marketing investments, avoiding the risks of short-term gains that do not contribute to sustainable growth. As highlighted by Agarwal et al. (2008), SEO is an evolving field that requires continuous adaptation; understanding its long-term benefits will be crucial in highly competitive sectors. Businesses need this knowledge to allocate resources efficiently and develop strategies that align with both immediate and future market demands.

Secondly, the integration of AI and machine learning into SEO has the potential to revolutionize digital marketing. Businesses that adopt AI-powered SEO strategies can automate processes, reduce costs, and optimize their online presence more effectively. However, without further exploration into how AI can specifically benefit grocery e-commerce, businesses may miss out on critical advancements in digital marketing. As technologies evolve, the ability to adapt SEO strategies to incorporate real-time data analysis and automated optimization will be essential for staying ahead in competitive markets (Confetto et al., 2023).

Finally, understanding regional differences in SEO effectiveness is critical for businesses that operate beyond borders. A one-size-fits-all SEO approach may not yield the desired results in markets with distinct consumer behaviours and regulatory environments. Conducting localized studies will provide businesses with actionable insights to tailor their SEO strategies, ensuring higher engagement, conversion rates, and economic performance in specific regions (Odden, 2012).

Filling these gaps is not only vital for advancing academic research but also for providing organizations with the knowledge and tools needed to refine their digital marketing strategies in an increasingly complex and competitive marketplace. Researchers must prioritize these areas andextend existing works (Erdmann et al., 2022; Erdmann & Ponzoa, 2021b), to enable organizationsto develop strategies that are not only responsive to current market demands but also forward-looking and sustainable, and able to anticipate future changes in consumer behaviour and technological advancements.

e-Commerce SEO

In the competitive online marketplace, SEO is fundamental. The abundance of online retailersoffers consumers numerous options at a click, making visibility in search engine results crucial for sustainable success. Research shows that the majority of online customer journeys begin with a search engine(Almestarihi et al., 2024; Odden, 2012), whereby the first page of search results capturing the bulk of traffic (Jones, 2011). This underlines the need for e-commerce businesses to implement effective SEO strategies to ensure they rank highly for relevant keywords(Bellm, 2024; N. S. Makrydakis & Skopeteas, 2022; Mazzarol, 2015).

The literature identifies several key areas of focus within e-commerce SEO, including keyword research and optimization(Erdmann et al., 2022; Erdmann & Ponzoa, 2021a; Nagpal & Petersen, 2021), content optimization(Agarwal et al., 2008; Öztürk & Göral, 2020), site structure(Ricca & Tonella, 2000; Sulova, 2023; Vu et al., 2021), and off-page SEO(Aryani et al., 2023; Jadav & Shrivastava, 2021; Kowalczyk & Szandala, 2024). Each

of these areas plays a critical role in enhancing a website's search engine performance and, by extension, its ability to attract and convert visitors(Erdmann et al., 2022; N. Makrydakis, 2024).

Keyword Research and Optimization

Keyword research is fundamental to a successful SEO strategy, especially for e-commerce websites seeking to attract highly targeted traffic likely to convert into sales(Jones, 2011; J. Stockwell, 2011). This process involves identifying terms and phrases potential customers use when searching for products or services online, encompassing both high-volume and specific long-tail keywords(G. Stockwell, 2016).

High-Volume vs. Long-Tail Keywords

High-volume keywords are frequently searched but often face significant competition(Khan, 2020). For e-commerce websites, these might include general terms related to a product category, such as 'running shoes' or 'smartphones'. While targeting these keywords is important for driving substantial traffic, the competition for top search rankings can be intense, making it challenging for newer or smaller sites to gain visibility(Necula et al., 2018).

In contrast, long-tail keywords are more specific and typically consist of three or more words. Although they may attract less traffic individually, they capture users with clear purchase intent. For instance, 'women's waterproof trail-running shoes' not only specifies a product but also indicates a user's readiness to buy. Focusing on long-tail keywords allows e-commerce websites to attract visitors further along in the purchasing decision process, resulting in higher conversion rates(Xiao & Benbasat, 2011).

Strategic Keyword Placement

Once keywords are identified, they must be strategically placed across the website to maximize their effectiveness(Daoud et al., 2024). Key areas for keyword placement include product descriptions, meta tags, headers, URLs and alt text for images. Product descriptions should incorporate keywords naturally, providing value to the reader while signalling relevance to search engines. Meta tags, including title tags and meta descriptions, should feature primary keywords to enhance click-through rates from SERPs. Headers, particularly H1 and H2 tags, should be optimized with relevant keywords to guide both users and search engines through the content(Jerath et al., 2014; Nagpal & Petersen, 2021).

URLs should be informative, incorporating primary keywords to improve user experience and SEO(Kent, 2020; Shenoy & Prabhu, 2016). Thus, a URL like www.example.com/mens-running-shoes is both user-friendly and keyword-rich, aiding search engine rankings. In addition, alt text for images should include keywords to optimize image search potential and improve accessibility.

Semantic Search Optimization

With the evolution of search engines towards semantic search, the focus has shifted from exact keyword matching to understanding the context and intent behind a user's query. Padding out content with keywords is no longer effective, and can be detrimental. Instead, content should be contextually relevant, offering comprehensive answers to potential queries(Mivule, 2017; Soiland-Reyes et al., 2024).Semantic search optimization involves creating content that not only includes targeted keywords but also addresses the broader context of the search(Confetto & Covucci, 2021; Finkelstein et al., 2001). For example, a user searching for 'best running shoes for marathons' is likely to be seeking a detailed comparison of various shoes suitable for marathon running, rather than just a list of products.

To optimize for semantic search, e-commerce websites should produce high-quality, informative content that addresses user needs holistically(Fernández et al., 2011). This might include detailed product guides, how-to articles and FAQs that incorporate keywords and provide valuable insights. Using structured data mark-up (schema) can help search engines better understand the content and improve the chances of appearing in rich snippets, thereby enhancing visibility.Structured data is a standardized format for providing information about a page and classifying the page content (Bizer et al., 2023).

Content Optimization

Content optimization is crucial for SEO, particularly for e-commerce websites where visibility is highly competitive. Content extends beyond product descriptions to include various forms of valuable content that attract and engage visitors, encouraging conversions(Papagiannis, 2020).

High-Quality and Relevant Content

Effective content optimization begins with high-quality, relevant, and engaging content. This involves creating content that is informative and useful to the target audience while aligning with their search intent. For e-commerce websites, this means addressing specific needs and pain points through comprehensive product descriptions, detailed buying guides, and insightful blog posts(Landay & Hong, 2003).Regularly updating content to reflect the

latest trends, product offerings, and customer preferences is crucial. New content signals to search engines that the website is active and relevant, while also maintaining user interest and encouraging repeat visits.

Diverse Content Formats

Content optimization should encompass diverse formats such as videos, infographics, and interactive elements to enhance user engagement. Multimedia content, such as product demonstration videos or 360-degree product views, provides a richer and more immersive experience, aiding customers in making informed purchasing decisions(Das, 2021).

Additionally, blog posts and guides that answer common customer questions or provide extra value can establish the website as a trusted resource(Handley & Chapman, 2012). This not only drives organic traffic but also builds authority and trust with users and search engines.

SEO and Readability

Content must be optimized for both search engines and human readers. This involves incorporating keywords naturally while ensuring readability. Clear headings, bullet points, and short paragraphs improve readability and make it easier for users to scan and absorb information(Spyridakis, 2000).

Search engines favor content that provides a positive user experience(Flavián-Blanco et al., 2011). Therefore, content should be structured for easy navigation and quick access to desired information. Optimized readability can reduce bounce rates and increase time spent on the site, positively impacting SEO.

User Experience and Engagement

Optimized content also enhances user experience. Engaging content that resonates with users can significantly impact their site journey, leading to higher conversion rates(Sihotang & Hudrasyah, 2023). Customer reviews, testimonials, and user-generated content provide social proof, increasing consumer confidence and encouraging purchases(Pellegrino, 2024).

Interactive content, such as quizzes, calculators, or product finders, can further engage users by offering personalized experiences(Barnes & Vidgen, 2014; Batat, 2021; Nadeem et al., 2021). These elements not only enrich the user journey but also provide valuable data for refining content strategies and better targeting potential customers(Ali, 2022; Sihotang & Hudrasyah, 2023; Xu & Sundar, 2016).

Site Structure and Technical SEO

A well-structured website is fundamental to a successful SEO strategy, impacting how search engines crawl, index, and ranks a site. For e-commerce websites with extensive content, optimizing site structure is crucial(Bellm, 2024; Roumeliotis et al., 2022). A logical hierarchy improves search engine visibility and enhances user experience by making it easier for visitors to navigate the site and find information.

Site Structure Optimization

Organizing content into a clear, hierarchical structure is key. This involves grouping related pages into categories and subcategories with intuitive navigation, using 'breadcrumbs'.Breadcrumbs are a navigational aid that allows users to keep track of their current location on a website or interface; a breadcrumb trail displays the page a user is currently on and its relation to the pages they visited before it, or the hierarchy of higher level parent pages above the current page (Roumeliotis et al., 2022). Breadcrumbs benefit both users and SEO by creating a logical internal linking structure(Ivanova & Mitev, 2023).Internal linking helps search engines understand the relationship between content, improving crawlability and distributing link equity effectively. This enhances the rankings of individual pages.

Mobile Optimization

With mobile searches on the rise, optimizing for mobile devices is essential. Mobile optimization involves more than making a site look good on smaller screens; it requires a mobile-first design approach that prioritizes speed, usability, and seamless navigation(Daniel et al., 2023; Fling, 2009; Roth et al., 2024).Search engines like Google use mobile-first indexing, meaning they predominantly use the mobile version of a site for ranking. Issues with the mobile version – such as slow loading times or poor usability – can impact SEO performance.Responsive design adapts to different screen sizes, ensuring a consistent user experience. Optimizing images, reducing unnecessary code, and leveraging browser caching improve mobile site speed, a critical ranking factor(Sevencan, 2024; Shan et al., 2017).

Technical SEO Considerations

Technical SEO involves practices ensuring a website meets search engine technical requirements. This includes optimizing page speed, ensuring secure connections (HTTPs), implementing structured data, and creating XML sitemaps. For e-commerce sites, where page load times impact user experience and conversions, technical SEO is crucial(Enge et al., 2012; Muralidhar &Lakkanna, 2024; Sharma, 2023).Structured data helps search engines understand content, enhancing visibility through rich snippets. For e-commerce sites, this includes product information, reviews and availability, improving click-through rates.XML sitemaps aid search engines in discovering and indexing all site pages. For large e-commerce sites, keeping the XML sitemap comprehensive and up-to-date is essential for maintaining visibility.

Site Performance and Core Web Vitals

Site performance is a critical aspect of technical SEO. Google's Core Web Vitals – metrics assessing loading performance, interactivity, and visual stability – are key ranking factors. E-commerce websites must prioritize these metrics to ensure a smooth user experience. Optimizing server response times, compressing images, and minimizing JavaScript can significantly improve these areas and overall SEO performance(Adem et al., 2023).

Off-Page SEO and Backlink Strategies

While on-page SEO focuses on optimizing individual pages, off-page SEO aims to build site authority and credibility through external factors. One of the most effective off-page SEO techniques is acquiring high-quality backlinks.

Building Quality Backlinks

Backlinks from reputable and relevant sites signal to search engines that a website is authoritative and trustworthy. For e-commerce sites, earning backlinks through guest posts, collaborations, and influencer partnerships can significantly enhance credibility and search engine rankings(Ward & French, 2013).It is important to focus on the quality rather than the quantity of backlinks. A few high-quality, relevant backlinks can often be more valuable than numerous low-quality links. Additionally, avoiding black-hat tactics – such as link schemes or buying backlinks – can ensure sustainable SEO success.

Monitoring and Analyzing Backlinks

Regularly monitoring backlinks is crucial for maintaining a healthy link profile. Tools like Google Search Console and third-party SEO tools can help identify and disavow harmful links that could negatively impact SEO performance(Chau et al., 2007).Analyzing backlinks also provides insights into the effectiveness of link-building strategies and identifies opportunities for further growth. Evaluating the impact of backlinks on search rankings and traffic helps refine strategies and achieve better results, as demonstrated in prior studies(Barrett & Herten, 2021; Daoud et al., 2024; Dobbala &Lingolu, 2023; Miklosik, 2019).

Local SEO for e-Commerce

Local SEO is particularly relevant for e-commerce businesses with physical stores or those targeting specific geographic regions. Local SEO practices enhance visibility in local search results, driving targeted traffic to both online and physical stores(Smith & Zook, 2024).

Optimizing for Local Search

Local SEO involves optimizing for location-based keywords and creating a Google My Business (GMB) profile. For e-commerce businesses with physical locations, ensuring consistent and accurate NAP (Name, Address, Phone) information across online directories and local listings is essential(Chaffey et al., 2019).Localized content, such as regional product offerings or promotions, can also enhance relevance in local searches. Encouraging customer reviews and leveraging local backlinks can further enhance local SEO efforts(Malecki, 2011; Ward & French, 2013).

Local Listings and Reviews

Local listings and reviews play a significant role in local SEO. Positive customer reviews not only influence local search rankings but also build trust and credibility. Responding to reviews, addressing feedback, and maintaining an active presence in local directories help enhance local visibility and customer engagement(Fishkin & Høgenhaven, 2013; Grappone & Couzin, 2011).

Taken as a whole, the existing literature offers broad insights into understanding of the role played by SEO in digital marketing, particularly for e-commerce websites. Theoretical frameworks emphasize the need for tailored SEO strategies that align with industry-specific dynamics to achieve sustained online visibility and performance.

While studies have extensively documented general SEO principles, there is a noticeable gap in understanding how these strategies can be customized to meet the unique needs of specific industries, such as the beauty and personal care sector.

The critical role of SEO is well-supported by various theories in digital marketing and consumer behaviour (Confetto et al., 2023; Nawir & Hendrawan, 2024; Rachmad, 2024), which suggest that search engines significantly influence online consumer decision-making. This is particularly relevant for e-commerce, where the ability to attract targeted traffic through effective SEO can directly impact sales and business growth. Theoretical models like the AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) model(Oktiani et al., 2022; Poh et al., 2024) underscore the importance of visibility and engagement at different stages of the consumer's online journey. By capturing attention, generating interest, fostering desire, and driving action, effective visibility and engagement ensure that consumers progress smoothly through each phase of the decision-making process, ultimately leading to conversions (Sihotang & Hudrasyah, 2023). Here, SEO serves as a crucial mechanism for driving attention and interest, particularly in highly competitive markets like beauty and personal care(Confetto et al., 2023).

METHODOLOGY

This section details the methodology employed to evaluate the effectiveness of the SEO strategies applied to *Occitane*(https://fr.loccitane.com). To address the RQ, we begin by outlining the steps taken to improve the website's search engine rankings, followed by a discussion of the progress observed, and conclude with recommendations for further enhancements.

Data Collection

Keyword Research

The initial data collection phase involved identifying relevant keywords that potential customers use when searching for products offered by *Occitane* (see Table 1). Google Ads Keyword Planner was employed to gather data on search volumes, competition levels, and keyword trends. Keywords were selected based on their relevance to the company's product range and their potential to attract high-quality traffic.

Table 1. identified keywords and their metrics for *Occitane*.

Keywords	Page & Rank
Gift box for women	Page 2 – Rank 3
Gift Tunisia	Page 3 – Rank 4
Women's perfume gift Tunisia	Page 2 – Rank 2
Perfume gift for her Tunisia	Page 2 – Rank 3
Perfume gift for mothers Tunisia	Page 6 – Rank 9
Birthday gift for mom Tunisia	Page 7 – Rank 6
Men's eau de toilette gift Tunisia	Page 1 – Rank 4
Women's shower gel gift Tunisia	Page 2 – Rank 1

Alt Tag Analysis

A comparative analysis of image alt tags was conducted between the Frenchand Tunisian adaptations of the *l'Occitane*website (Fig 1). The analysis aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of alt tags in describing product images and improving search engine visibility. Alt tags from the French site, known for its comprehensive and SEO-friendly descriptions, served as benchmarks for optimizing the Tunisian site.
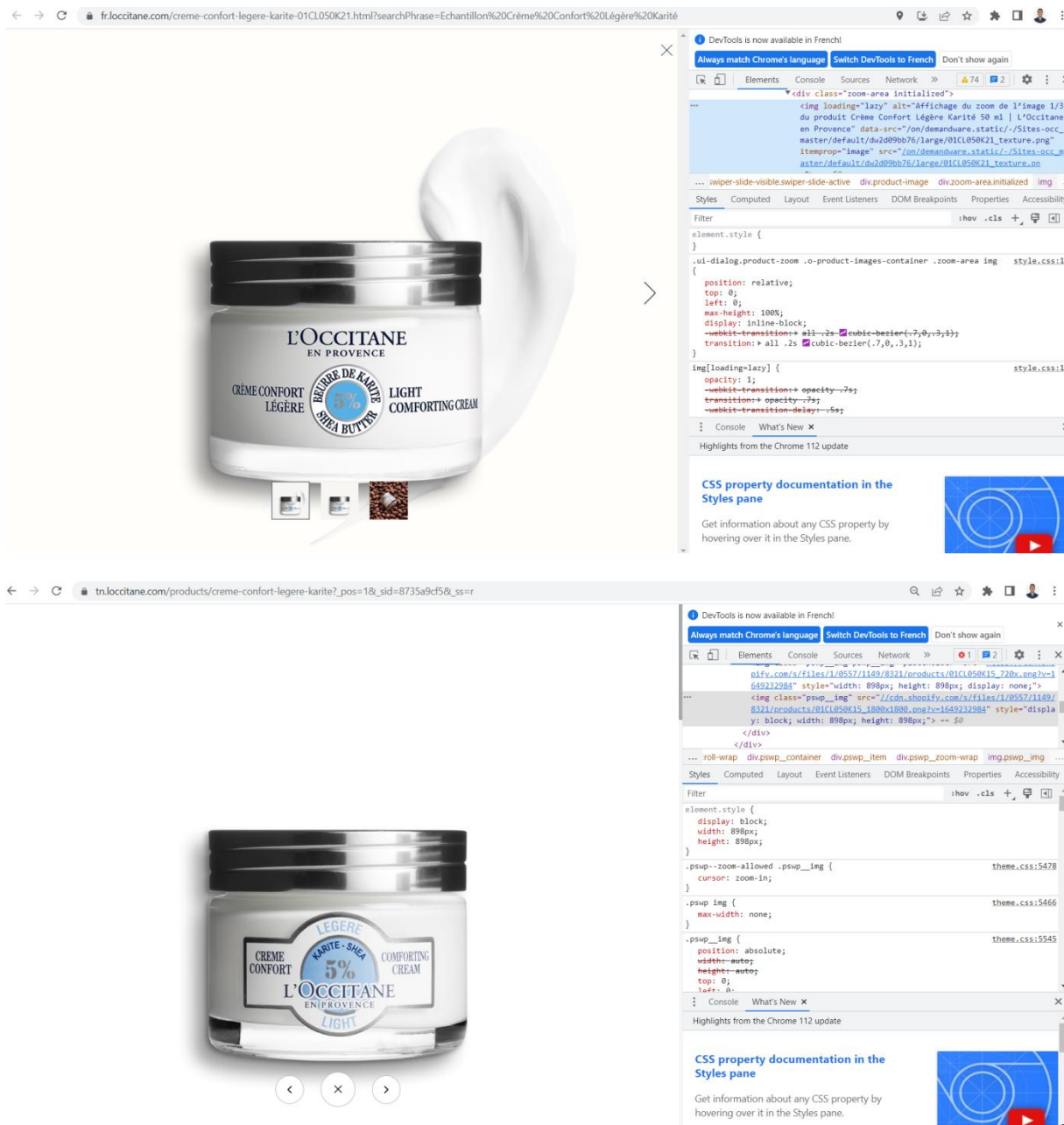
Figure 1. Comparative analysis of image alt tags in French and Tunisian adaptations.

SEO Performance Metrics

Quantitative data on SEO performance were collected using various analytical tools, including Google Search Console, SEMrush, and GTmetrix. These tools provided insights into key performance indicators (KPIs) such as organic traffic, page rankings, click-through rates (CLICK-THROUGH RATE) and overall site health.

Data Analysis

Keyword Analysis

The performance of selected keywords was analyzed based on search volume, competition and relevance to the target audience. Tracking of keyword performance over time assessed improvements in page rankings and organic traffic. Comparative analysis evaluated the effectiveness of keywords before and after optimization.

Alt Tag Optimization

Alt tags were evaluated for their descriptiveness, keyword richness, and alignment with the content strategy. Changes made to the alt tags on the Tunisian website were documented, comparing original tags with new, optimized versions. The impact of these changes on image search rankings and accessibility was then assessed.

SEO Performance Evaluation

SEO performance metrics were analyzed to measure the impact of optimization strategies on the website's visibility and ranking. A longitudinal analysis observed trends and patterns in SEO performance over time, focusing on key metrics such as changes in organic traffic, average position in search results, and Click-Through Rate.

Tools and Resources

The following tools and resources were used for data collection and analysis:
- Google Ads Keyword Planner: To identify relevant keywords with high search volume and low competition.
- Google Search Console: To monitor website performance and identify optimization opportunities (Fig 2).
- SEMrush: To conduct comprehensive SEO audits and analyze competitors (Fig 3).
- GTmetrix: To evaluate website speed and performance.
- Screaming Frog: To perform technical audits and optimize site structure and URLs (Fig 4).
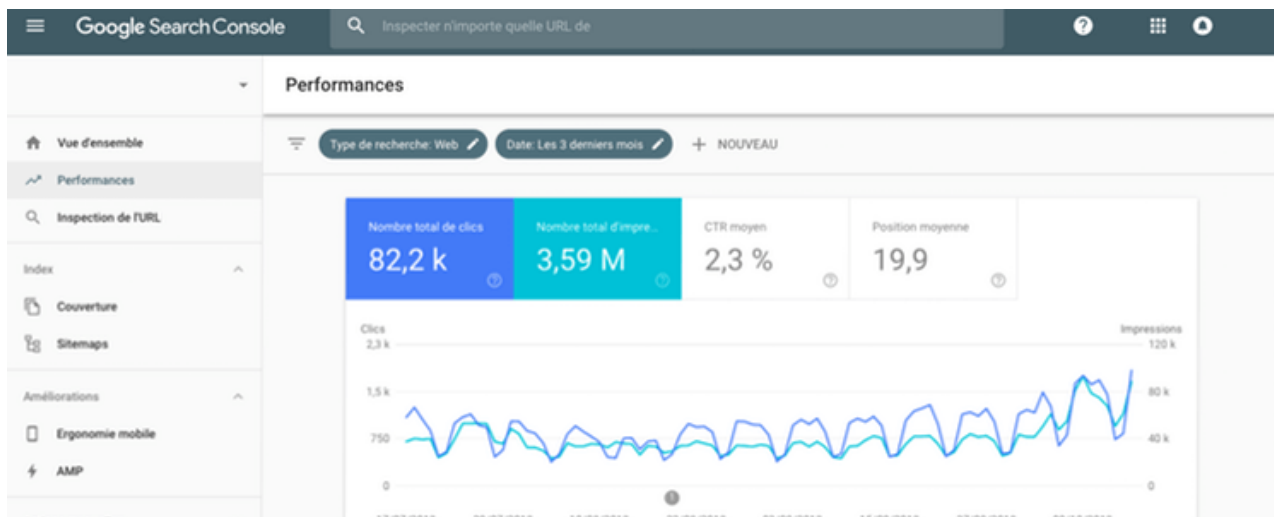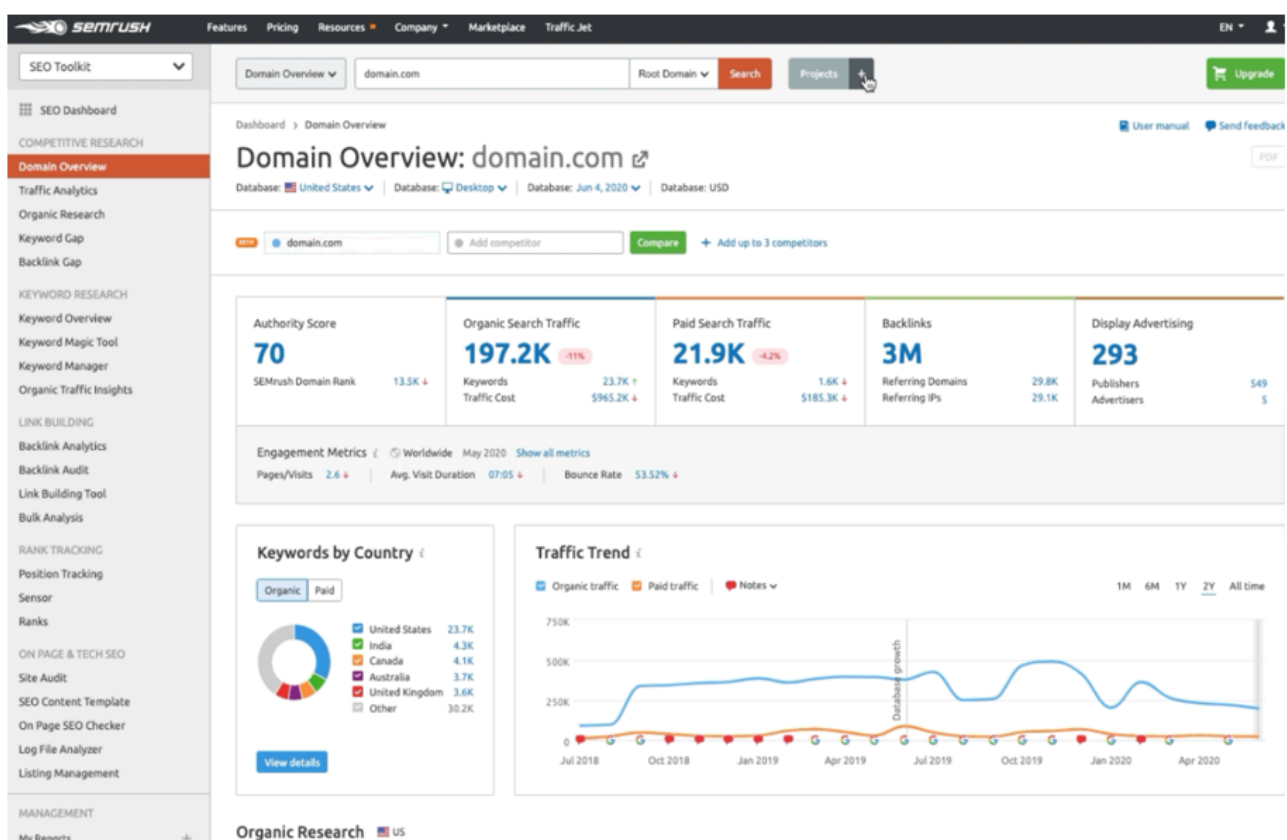

Figure 2. Google search console dashboard.
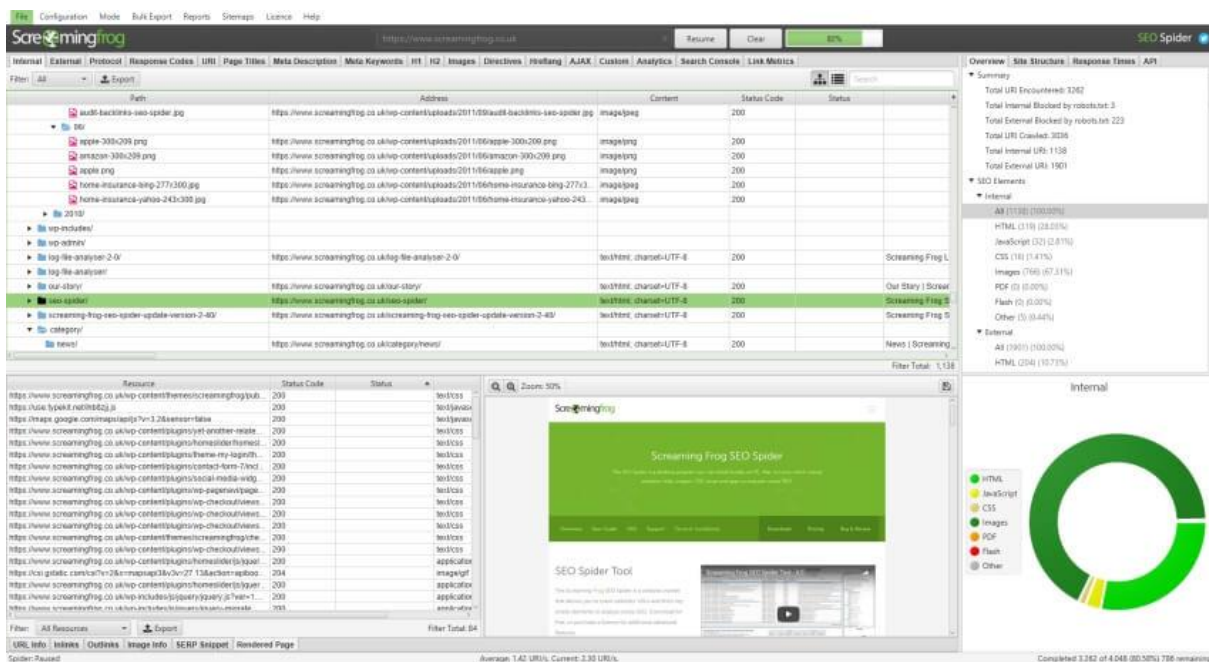

Figure 3. SEMrush dashboard.

Figure 4. Screaming Frog dashboard.

FINDINGS

The findings show that industry-specific SEO strategies play a crucial role in maintaining a competitive edge within the beauty and personal care sector. An in-depth analysis of *Occitane*'sonline presence revealed several key data points, as follows:

Keyword Strategies: The analysis of *l'Occitane*'s keyword strategies reveals an effective use of both high-volume and long-tail keywords. FollowingMakrydakis (2024), a well-planned keyword strategy is fundamental to SEO success, particularly in capturing diverse search intents. This is consistent with the literature that emphasizes the need for a balanced approach to keyword targeting to maximize reach and relevance. Das (2021)further supports this by highlighting the importance of long-tail keywords in driving targeted traffic with lower competition. However, the underutilization of niche long-tail keywords in *l'Occitane*'s strategy suggests an opportunity to further refine their approach, aligning with the literature's recommendation for continuous keyword optimization tailored to industry-specific needs.

Content Optimization: *l'Occitane*'s content optimization efforts are consistent with the literature's assertion that high-quality, relevant content is crucial for SEO success (Pellegrino, 2024; Sihotang & Hudrasyah, 2023). The frequent updates to content and focus on product descriptions and guides reflect best practices in content optimization as described by existing research. However, the observation that some content lacks semantic richness ties back to the gap identified by (Das, 2021), who argue that deeper semantic optimization is increasingly important in the age of semantic search. This suggests that while *l'Occitane* is following general content optimization practices, there is room to enhance their approach by incorporating more advanced semantic techniques, as recommended in the literature.

Backlink Profiles: The strength of *l'Occitane*'s backlink profile aligns with the literature's emphasis on the importance of high-quality backlinks for improving search engine rankings and domain authority (Dobbala & Lingolu, 2023). However, the reliance on a few dominant sources for backlinks, as revealed in the study, mirrors concerns raised in the literature about the need for diversification to avoid potential vulnerabilities (Dobbala & Lingolu, 2023; Miklosik, 2019). This finding supports the call from digital marketing experts and SEO researchers for a more strategic approach to link-building that includes a wider range of sources to build a more resilient backlink profile.

Mobile Compatibility and Technical SEO: *l'Occitane*'s optimization for mobile users is in line with the literature's focus on the growing importance of mobile-first indexing in SEO strategies (Makrydakis, 2022). The literature stresses that technical SEO, including mobile compatibility and page load times, is essential for maintaining a competitive edge in the digital marketplace. The study's findings that some aspects, such as image compression and server response times, could be improved are consistent with the literature's emphasis on the ongoing need to refine technical SEO practices to align with evolving search engine algorithms.

The analysis of *Occitane's* SEO strategy reveals a nuanced understanding of how industry-specific approaches impact e-commerce performance, within the beauty and personal care sector. The findings align with prior studies,

but also highlight areas where further refinement could lead to improved outcomes. We now explain how the findings compare to existing research.

Keyword Strategies: The review of *l'Occitane*'s keyword strategies reveals an effective balance between high-volume and long-tail keywords, which mirrors the literature's emphasis on the importance of targeting diverse search intents (Makrydakis, 2024). This is consistent with Grimsley and Meehan's (2020); (Chevalier et al., 2015) argument that long-tail keywords drive more targeted traffic with lower competition, helping to secure niche market segments. However, the identified underutilization of more niche long-tail keywords suggests that l'Occitane may be missing out on additional opportunities to capture highly specific customer search intents. This gap aligns with broader industry recommendations for continuous keyword optimization (Grimsley & Meehan, 2020), particularly in the highly competitive beauty industry where nuanced customer needs can translate into significant conversion rates.

Content Optimization: *L'Occitane's* approach to content optimization is largely in line with the literature's best practices, which emphasize high-quality, relevant content as a key driver of SEO success (Makrydakis, 2024). Their frequent updates to product descriptions and guides demonstrate a commitment to maintaining content freshness, an important factor in search rankings. However, the study identified a lack of semantic richness in some areas of their content, a limitation that Grimsley and Meehan (2020) also note as increasingly critical in the era of semantic search. This observation indicates that while *l'Occitane* follows general content optimization principles, further integration of semantic search optimization could improve both user experience and SEO performance. This aligns with the literature's recommendation for content that is not only updated regularly but also structured to reflect evolving search engine algorithms that prioritize semantic relevance.

Backlink Profiles: The strength of l'*Occitane*'s backlink profile supports existing literature that underscores the importance of high-quality backlinks in enhancing domain authority and improving search engine rankings (Grimsley & Meehan, 2020). The company's reliance on a few dominant sources for backlinks, however, presents a potential vulnerability, as over-dependence on a limited number of high-authority sites can expose a business to fluctuations in ranking if these sources lose relevance or experience penalties (Makrydakis, 2024). The literature calls for a more diversified link-building strategy to mitigate these risks, a call echoed by SEO experts who warn against the concentration of backlinks from too few sources. This suggests that while *l'Occitane's* backlink strategy is strong, it could be improved by incorporating a more diversified and resilient approach to ensure long-term SEO stability.

Mobile Compatibility and Technical SEO: *L'Occitane's* mobile optimization efforts reflect the growing focus on mobile-first indexing as a critical component of SEO strategies, as noted in the literature (Bellm, 2024; Roumeliotis et al., 2022). With search engines increasingly prioritizing mobile accessibility, technical SEO aspects such as mobile compatibility, fast page load times, and efficient server responses are essential for maintaining competitive rankings. The findings that some technical aspects, such as image compression and server response times, could be enhanced, underscore the ongoing need for businesses to refine their technical SEO to stay aligned with evolving search engine algorithms. These observations are consistent with the broader consensus in the literature that technical SEO is not a one-time fix but requires continual updates to maintain optimal site performance (Roumeliotis et al., 2022; Tatikonda et al., 2024)

The findings from *l'Occitane's* SEO analysis highlight several key insights consistent with the literature, while also pointing to areas for improvement that align with broader industry trends. Keyword strategies, content optimization, backlink profiles, and technical SEO remain fundamental pillars of an effective SEO strategy, but the study underscores the importance of continuous refinement in each area. As SEO evolves with new technologies like AI and machine learning, companies such as *l'Occitane* must stay ahead of the curve by adopting more advanced, nuanced strategies, particularly in the areas of semantic search, backlink diversification, and technical SEO optimization for mobile users.

By addressing these gaps, businesses can better position themselves to maintain a competitive edge in the digital marketplace, particularly in fast-moving industries like beauty and personal care. This also highlights a broader trend observed in the literature: successful SEO strategies are not static but require constant adaptation to reflect changing consumer behaviors, technological advancements, and search engine updates.

Finally, the findings highlight several areas for improvement. Incorporating the advanced practices recommended in works of Erdmann and peers will help *l'Occitane* refine their SEO strategy, ensuring long-term competitiveness in the beauty and personal care sector.

DISCUSSION

In line with the literature suggesting that industry-specific customization of SEO strategies is key to achieving and maintaining online visibility and consumer engagement(Chaffey et al., 2019; Nadeem et al., 2021; Pellegrino, 2024), the data collected provide evidence that this is particularly relevant in the context of the beauty and personal

care industry, where consumer expectations and search behaviors often differ from those in other sectors(Confetto et al., 2023; Poh et al., 2024).

Our findings build on and broaden the literature (Chaffey et al., 2019; Das, 2021; Erdmann & Ponzoa, 2021a; N. Makrydakis, 2024)by illustrating the practical implications of these SEO strategies in a real-world context. Specifically, they confirm that while the general principles of SEO are widely applicable, the most successful implementations are those that are tailored to the unique characteristics of the industry and continuously refined in response to changing market dynamics and search engine algorithms(Aryani et al., 2023; Grappone &Couzin, 2011).

Furthermore, our data show that beyond general SEO principles, adaptation to local needs and idiosyncrasies plays a critical role in optimizing performance. This includes factors such as consumer behavior patterns, and regional search trends, which can influence how effectively an e-commerce website ranks and engages with its target audience. Tailoring SEO efforts to these local specifics not only improves search engine visibility but also fosters stronger customer relationships, leading to higher conversion rates and long-term success in the market.

Above all, our findings resonate with the notion that SEO is not a one-size-fits-all solution(Grappone & Couzin, 2011).As highlighted in our study, it requires a nuanced approach that considers the specific needs and behaviors of the target audience, as well as dynamic adaptation to the marketplace and competitors. The study contributes a detailed examination of how these elements are applied in the context of *Occitane*, offering insights that can inform SEO strategies for other brands in the beauty and personal care sector and beyond.

Also, the findings show that while *Occitane* adheres to many of the established SEO best practices, there are certain areas within their strategy that could benefit from further enhancement. This is particularly evident when considering the need for industry-specific customization of SEO strategies, as highlighted in the literature (Makrydakis, 2024). *L'Occitane*'s approach reaffirms that the beauty and personal care industry requires tailored SEO approaches to effectively engage with consumer expectations and search behaviors, which may differ significantly from those in other sectors.

From the data gathered, it is apparent that *Occitane* has successfully implemented effective keyword strategies, content optimization, and backlink profiles. However, our investigation also reveals gaps, such as the underutilization of long-tail keywords and the lack of semantic richness in content. These findings are consistent with the literature(Das, 2021; Dutta et al., 2024; Erdmann & Ponzoa, 2021a), which emphasizes the importance of continually refining SEO strategies to maintain competitive advantage in a rapidly evolving digital landscape. The outcome of this study underscores the necessity for a dynamic and adaptive approach to SEO, especially within specialized industries like beauty and personal care (cf., (Confetto et al., 2023; Landay & Hong, 2003)).

It is evident that while general SEO principles provide a strong foundation, they must be adapted to the unique characteristics of each industry. The reliance on a few dominant backlink sources, for instance, reflects a vulnerability that could be mitigated through diversification, a strategy supported by existing research (Makrydakis, 2024).Our findings contribute to the broader understanding of SEO by illustrating how these strategies are applied in practice and by offering explanations for the observed outcomes. This aligns with the calls for more research into refining SEO practices,such as those made by (Chawla, 2021; Daoud et al., 2024),in response to changing market dynamics and search engine algorithms.

The implications of our analysis are significant for both *Occitane* and similar brands in the beauty industry. The need for continuous adaptation to market dynamics and consumer behaviors is crucial, as the digital landscape is constantly evolving(Dutta et al., 2024). Our study can be used to inform other brands in decision-making for refining their SEO strategies to better meet the demands of their specific markets, and for ensuring sustained online visibility and consumer engagement. In this way, the study contributes to the ongoing discussion in the literature by providing a real-world example of how general SEO principles can be effectively customized and adapted to meet the needs of a specific industry, reinforcing the idea that a one-size-fits-all approach to SEO is insufficient in today's dynamic digital environment (cf.,Poh et al., 2024; Shan et al., 2017)).

Management Implications

Based on the data collected, we propose strategic recommendations for e-commerce managers in the beauty and personal care sector to sustain and improve SEO performance:

1. Adopt a systematic approach to continuous monitoring: Regularly track and adjust keyword performance and SEO metrics using tools such as Google Search Console and SEMrush. This enables real-time optimization of strategies based on the most recent data.
2. Enhance mobile optimization: Prioritizing improvements in mobile load speed and ensuring responsive design is critical for improving search engine rankings and overall user experience (Chevalier & Bonnardel, 2007).

3. Diversify content strategies: Utilize a variety of content formats, including videos and infographics, to engage a broader audience and elevate user interaction metrics (Han et al., 2024), ultimately enhancing SEO outcomes.
4. Localize SEO strategies: Customizing SEO practices to align with local search behaviors, including optimizing for region-specific keywords and building local backlinks, is essential for maximizing visibility and impact in localized markets.
5. Perform regular technical SEO audits: Employing tools such as Screaming Frog and GTmetrix to conduct in-depth audits aimed at identifying and fixing technical issues. Prioritize optimizing site structure, refining URL hierarchy, and resolving crawlability and indexation challenges to ensure sustained search engine visibility and performance.

We summarize the findings in order to inform decision-making, as follows (Table 2).

Table 2. Comparative Analysis of SEO Strategies for *Occitane* in France and Tunisia.

SEO Element	France	Tunisia	Similarities	Differences
Keyword Strategy	High relevance and competitive keywords tailored to French users	Bilingual keyword strategy (French and Arabic) to cater to local context	Both sites focus on using high-relevance keywords	Tunisia employs a bilingual approach, integrating Arabic for regional relevance
Content Localization	Customized French-language content with local promotions	French content adapted with Tunisian cultural nuances	Both regions use culturally relevant content	French site prioritizes broad engagement, while Tunisia adapts content to local cultural context
Backlink Strategy	Backlinks from high-authority French websites	Limited regional backlink network focused on general French sites	Both leverage high-authority sites for credibility	French site has more diverse and established backlinks compared to Tunisia
Alt Tag Optimization	Detailed and SEO-rich alt tags for all images	Limited, less descriptive alt tags for images	Both use alt tags for SEO	French site has comprehensive alt tags, while Tunisian site lacks detail in tag descriptions
Technical SEO	Strong focus on technical SEO, including site speed and security	Basic technical SEO, improvements needed in loading speed	Both ensure mobile compatibility	French site is fully optimized for speed, whereas Tunisian site shows slower load times
Mobile Optimization	High-priority, mobile-first approach	Mobile-friendly, though optimizations are still in progress	Both are mobile-optimized	France has more refined mobile-first features; Tunisia is improving but not fully optimized
Local SEO & Google My Business	Well-established Google My Business presence, integrated with local SEO efforts	Limited local SEO presence, lacks Google My Business profile	Both sites focus on local visibility	French site utilizes Google My Business, Tunisia lacks this integration

This research enhances the SEO literature by demonstrating how localized SEO practices affect brand performance in various markets, as evidenced by the contrasts between France and Tunisia. It underscores the value of bilingual keyword strategies, culturally tailored content, and region-specific backlink profiles, especially in emerging markets. Furthermore, the findings highlight the necessity for technical SEO and mobile optimization adapted to local infrastructure, providing practical insights for digital marketers in multi-regional e-commerce.

Limitations and Avenues for Future Research

We acknowledge the limitations of our study. The evolving nature of search engine algorithms implies that the results observed may not remain consistent over time. Furthermore, the focus on the French and Tunisian adaptations of the *l'Occitane* website may restrict the applicability of the findings to other cultural or linguistics markets or industries. These weaknesses, however, offer opportunities to develop the study. Given the constant evolution of digital technologies, it would be constructive to undertake a longitudinal investigation to monitor evolution over time. Similarly, by exploring similar brands in other geographic regions, it may be possible to draw up a comparative framework for benchmarking SEO strategies for e-commerce websites.

CONCLUSION

This study examining the French and Tunisian adaptations of *Occitane's* e-commerce platform underscores the critical impact of precisely targeted SEO strategies on digital performance across distinct markets. We highlight the key takeaways below.

i. Strategic Keyword Selection: Implementing high-relevance, low-competition keywords effectively drives targeted traffic, demonstrating the importance of thoughtful keyword selection in enhancing online visibility and audience relevance.

ii. Alt Tag Optimization: Optimizing alt tags, particularly on the Tunisian platform, has resulted in improved image search rankings and site accessibility, positively impacting user engagement and click-through rates, thereby underscoring the value of comprehensive image SEO practices.

iii. Increased Organic Traffic and Search Rankings: The analysis shows a consistent rise in organic traffic and improved average search rankings, confirming the effectiveness of tailored SEO strategies in enhancing overall site performance.

iv. Localized SEO Approaches: The findings highlight the necessity of adapting SEO strategies to specific regional contexts, as localized practices address unique market dynamics and consumer behaviors, optimizing performance across diverse geographic settings.

To summarize, this research provides actionable insights for e-commerce managers and digital marketers, emphasizing that customized, region-specific SEO strategies are essential for increasing online visibility, driving user engagement, and optimizing site performance in varied international markets.

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