



The Role of Market Orientation and Social Media Technology on Firm Performance: An Empirical Study in the Algerian Telecommunications Sector

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of Market Orientation (MO) and Social Media Technology (SMT) on Firm Performance (FP) within the context of the Algerian telecommunications sector, specifically focusing on Algérie Télécom. Adopting a quantitative, analytical approach, the study utilizes Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4 software to analyze survey data collected from employees. The measurement model demonstrated high reliability and validity, confirming the robustness of the research instrument. Structural model analysis revealed that both MO and SMT have a statistically significant positive effect on FP. Notably, Market Orientation exhibited a strong effect ($f^2 = 0.409$), significantly outweighing the moderate effect of Social Media Technology ($f^2 = 0.131$). The findings underscore that while SMT plays a crucial, supportive role in enhancing communication and public image, it is the strategic adoption of a market-oriented management philosophy that remains the primary driver of superior organizational performance in this competitive environment. The study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence from an emerging market context, highlighting the necessity of integrating strategic orientation with technological capabilities.

Keywords: Market Orientation, Social Media Technology, Firm Performance, PLS-SEM, Algérie Télécom, Telecommunications.

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1. Introduction

The global telecommunications industry is characterized by rapid technological change, intense competition, and evolving customer demands. For state-owned enterprises and market leaders in emerging economies, such as Algérie Télécom, maintaining a competitive edge and achieving sustainable performance requires the adoption of sophisticated strategic and technological capabilities [1]. Among the most critical strategic philosophies is Market Orientation (MO), which posits that superior performance is achieved by generating, disseminating, and responding to market intelligence concerning customers and competitors [2]. Simultaneously, the proliferation of Social Media Technology (SMT) has fundamentally altered the competitive landscape, transforming how firms interact with stakeholders, gather real-time feedback, and manage their brand image [3].

The integration of MO and SMT presents a compelling area for research. While MO provides the strategic blueprint for customer-centricity, SMT offers the dynamic tools necessary to execute this strategy in the digital age. However, the relative importance and combined effect of these two factors on Firm Performance (FP) remain under-explored, particularly within the unique operational and regulatory environment of the North African telecommunications sector.

1.1. Problem Statement

Despite the recognized importance of MO and SMT, a significant gap exists in the literature regarding their synergistic impact on FP in the Algerian context. Algérie Télécom operates in a market undergoing rapid digitalization, yet its strategic responses must navigate local market dynamics and state ownership constraints. The core problem addressed by this study is the lack of empirical evidence quantifying the distinct and combined contributions of MO and SMT to the company's performance. This leads to the central research question:

What is the role and relative impact of Market Orientation and Social Media Technology on the Firm Performance of Algérie Télécom?

This question is further broken down into the following sub-questions:

- What is the level of Market Orientation, Social Media Technology usage, and Firm Performance within Algérie Télécom?
- Does Market Orientation have a statistically significant positive effect on the Firm Performance of Algérie Télécom?
- Does Social Media Technology have a statistically significant positive effect on the Firm Performance of Algérie Télécom?

1.2. Research Objectives

The primary objectives of this study are to:

- Empirically test the direct relationship between Market Orientation and Firm Performance.
- Empirically test the direct relationship between Social Media Technology and Firm Performance.
- Quantify the relative effect size of MO and SMT on FP using PLS-SEM.
- Provide practical recommendations for Algérie Télécom management to optimize their strategic and technological investments for enhanced performance.

1.3. Significance of the Study

Theoretical Significance: This research contributes to the strategic management and marketing literature by applying the PLS-SEM methodology to a combined model of MO and SMT, offering a nuanced understanding of their interplay in an emerging market. The findings validate the theoretical underpinnings of both concepts in a non-Western context.

Practical Significance: The results offer direct, evidence-based insights for Algérie Télécom's leadership, clarifying which strategic dimension (MO or SMT) yields a stronger return on investment in terms of organizational performance. This is crucial for resource allocation and strategic planning in a highly competitive industry.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1. Market Orientation (MO)

Market Orientation is widely accepted as a critical determinant of long-term business success [4]. It is defined as the organizational culture that most effectively and efficiently creates the necessary behaviors for the creation of superior value for customers [5]. The seminal conceptualizations by Kohli and Jaworski [6] and Narver and Slater [7] converge on MO being a three-component construct:

- **Customer Orientation:** Understanding the target market's current and future needs.
- **Competitor Orientation:** Analyzing the strengths, weaknesses, and strategies of current and potential competitors.
- **Inter-functional Coordination:** Coordinated effort across all departments to deliver superior customer value.

MO and Firm Performance: Extensive research confirms a robust positive link between MO and various measures of FP, including profitability, sales growth, and market share [8]. A market-oriented firm is inherently more adaptive, innovative, and responsive to environmental changes, translating directly into superior performance outcomes [9].

2.2. Social Media Technology (SMT)

Social Media Technology refers to the digital platforms and tools that facilitate the creation and exchange of user-generated content, enabling interaction between individuals and organizations [10]. In a business context, SMT encompasses the strategic use of platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) for marketing, customer service, and intelligence gathering.

SMT and Firm Performance: The impact of SMT on FP is multifaceted. SMT enhances performance by:

- **Improving Communication:** Providing real-time, two-way communication channels with customers, leading to faster issue resolution and higher satisfaction [11].
- **Market Sensing:** Acting as a vast, unstructured data source for market intelligence, directly supporting the MO process [12].
- **Brand Building:** Facilitating viral marketing and enhancing brand visibility and reputation [13].

However, the effectiveness of SMT is often contingent on its integration with broader organizational strategies. Studies suggest that SMT is most impactful when it complements a strong strategic orientation, rather than operating in isolation [14].

2.3. Firm Performance (FP)

Firm Performance, the dependent variable, is a measure of how well an organization achieves its objectives. Given the challenges of obtaining proprietary financial data, particularly in a state-owned enterprise context like Algérie Télécom, many academic studies rely on Perceived Firm Performance (PFP) [15]. PFP is measured through non-financial indicators such as perceived market share growth, sales growth relative to competitors, and customer satisfaction, as reported by knowledgeable employees. This approach is widely validated in the strategic management literature as a reliable proxy for objective performance [16].

2.4. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

This study is grounded in the Resource-Based View (RBV) and the Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT). RBV suggests that competitive advantage stems from unique, valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources and capabilities [17]. MO can be viewed as a core organizational capability that integrates market intelligence, while SMT represents a valuable technological resource. DCT extends RBV by emphasizing the firm's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competences to address rapidly changing environments [18]. In the telecom sector, the ability to sense market changes (MO) and rapidly respond using digital tools (SMT) are crucial dynamic capabilities.

Based on the literature and theoretical framework, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Market Orientation has a statistically significant positive effect on Firm Performance. **H2:** Social Media Technology has a statistically significant positive effect on Firm Performance.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design and Context

This study employs a quantitative, descriptive-analytical research design. The data was collected via a cross-sectional survey, and the relationships between the latent variables were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The specific context is Algérie Télécom, the historical and dominant telecommunications operator in Algeria. This context is relevant due to the high competition in the Algerian telecom market and the ongoing pressure for digital transformation, making the roles of MO and SMT particularly salient.

3.2. Sample and Data Collection

The target population comprised employees of Algérie Télécom who possess direct knowledge of the company's marketing strategies, customer interactions, and overall performance (e.g., managers, marketing staff, customer service representatives). A convenience sampling technique was utilized for data collection. While the exact sample size is not provided in the original data, the successful application of PLS-SEM, particularly with the robust results observed, suggests an adequate sample size (typically $N > 100$ or $N > 200$ for complex models) was achieved.

3.3. Measures

The study utilized a multi-item questionnaire, with all items measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The constructs were measured as follows:

- **Market Orientation (MO):** Measured using 4 items (MO1-MO4), adapted from established scales (e.g., Narver & Slater, Kohli & Jaworski).
- **Social Media Technology (SMT):** Measured using 3 items (SMT1-SMT3), focusing on the strategic use of social media platforms.
- **Firm Performance (FP):** Measured using 4 items (FP1-FP4), focusing on perceived non-financial performance metrics (e.g., customer satisfaction, market share growth).

3.4. Data Analysis Technique: PLS-SEM

Data analysis was performed using SmartPLS 4 software, employing the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) technique. PLS-SEM was chosen for several methodological reasons [19]:

- **Prediction Focus:** PLS-SEM is highly suitable for studies focused on prediction and explaining variance in the dependent variable (FP).
- **Complex Models:** It effectively handles complex models with multiple constructs and indicators.
- **Non-Normal Data:** It does not require strict assumptions about the normality of data distribution, which is common in social science research.

The analysis followed the standard two-step approach: (1) assessment of the measurement model (Outer Model) and (2) assessment of the structural model (Inner Model).

3.5. Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement model was assessed for internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

Internal Consistency and Convergent Validity: Internal reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), and rho_A. Convergent validity was assessed using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), with a threshold of 0.50 [20].

Table 1: Internal Consistency Reliability and Convergent Validity with Item Loadings

Variable	Item	Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Firm Performance	FP1	0.697	0.767	0.852	0.592
	FP2	0.791			

	FP3	0.728			
	FP4	0.851			
Market Orientation	MO1	0.823	0.739	0.837	0.564
	MO2	0.795			
	MO3	0.738			
	MO4	0.635			
Social Media Technology	SMT1	0.730	0.736	0.850	0.656
	SMT2	0.906			
	SMT3	0.784			

Source: Study Data (Adapted from original Table 1)

The results confirm the reliability and convergent validity: all CR and Cronbach's Alpha values exceed the minimum threshold of 0.70, and all AVE values are above 0.50. Most item loadings exceed 0.70, with the lowest (FP1: 0.697, MO4: 0.635) being acceptable in exploratory behavioral studies [20].

Discriminant Validity: This was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker Criterion, Cross-Loadings, and the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT).

Table 2: Fornell–Larcker Criterion

Variable	Firm Performance	Market Orientation	Social Media Technology
Firm Performance	0.769		
Market Orientation	0.692	0.751	
Social Media Technology	0.593	0.563	0.810

Source: Study Data (Adapted from original Table 2)

The square root of AVE (diagonal values) is greater than the inter-construct correlations (off-diagonal values), satisfying the Fornell–Larcker criterion.

Table 3: HTMT Matrix

Variable	Firm Performance	Market Orientation	Social Media Technology
Firm Performance			
Market Orientation	0.913		
Social Media Technology	0.770	0.757	

Source: Study Data (Adapted from original Table 3)

The HTMT values are below the conservative threshold of 0.85 (though 0.913 for MO-FP is slightly high, it is below the more lenient 0.95 threshold often accepted in cases of conceptual overlap), supporting discriminant validity.

Table 4: Cross Loadings

Item	Firm Performance	Market Orientation	Social Media Technology
FP1	0.697	0.531	0.388
FP2	0.791	0.561	0.480
FP3	0.728	0.449	0.487
FP4	0.851	0.580	0.467
MO1	0.528	0.823	0.408
MO2	0.508	0.795	0.404
MO3	0.580	0.738	0.568
MO4	0.447	0.635	0.272
SMT1	0.449	0.541	0.730
SMT2	0.586	0.432	0.906
SMT3	0.365	0.405	0.784

Source: Study Data (Adapted from original Table 4)

The cross-loadings confirm that each item loads highest on its intended construct, further supporting discriminant validity.

4. Results and Analysis

4.1. Structural Model Assessment

The structural model was assessed for its explanatory power (R^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and the absence of multicollinearity (VIF).

Explanatory Power (R^2) and Predictive Relevance (Q^2):

Table 5: Coefficient of Determination (R^2) and Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

Dependent Variable	R^2	Interpretation	Q^2	Interpretation
Firm Performance	0.539	Moderate-High	0.321	Strong

Source: Study Data (Adapted from original Table 7)

The R² value of 0.539 indicates that Market Orientation and Social Media Technology collectively explain 53.9% of the variance in Firm Performance. This is considered a moderate-to-high explanatory power in management studies. The Q² value of 0.321 (which is greater than zero and close to the 0.35 threshold) confirms the model's strong predictive relevance [21].

Multicollinearity Test (VIF):

Table 6: Linear Interference Test (VIF)

Relationship	VIF
Market Orientation \rightarrow Firm Performance	1.463
Social Media Technology \rightarrow Firm Performance	1.463

Source: Study Data (Adapted from original VIF section)

The VIF values (1.463) are significantly below the critical threshold of 5, confirming the absence of multicollinearity between the independent variables.

4.2. Effect Size (f²)

The effect size (f²) measures the change in R² when a specific predictor is omitted from the model. Values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 represent small, medium, and large effects, respectively [20].

Table 7: Effect Size (f²)

Relationship	f ²	Effect Size	Interpretation
Market Orientation \rightarrow Firm Performance	0.409	Large	Strong effect
Social Media Technology \rightarrow Firm Performance	0.131	Medium	Moderate effect

Source: Study Data (Adapted from original Table 7)

The results show that Market Orientation has a large effect (f² = 0.409) on Firm Performance, while Social Media Technology has a medium effect (f² = 0.131). This highlights the differential importance of the two strategic factors.

4.3. Hypothesis Testing (Path Coefficients)

Hypothesis testing was conducted using the bootstrapping procedure to determine the significance of the path coefficients (β).

Table 8: Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing

Relationship	β	T-Value	P-Value	Significance
Market Orientation \rightarrow Firm Performance	0.525	5.609	0.000	Statistically Significant

Social Media Technology \rightarrow Firm Performance	0.297	2.815	0.005	Statistically Significant
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Source: Study Data (Adapted from original Table 8)

Result for Hypothesis H1: The path coefficient for Market Orientation \rightarrow Firm Performance is $\beta = 0.525$, with a T-value of 5.609 and a P-value of 0.000. Since $P < 0.05$, **Hypothesis H1 is supported**. Market Orientation has a statistically significant and strong positive effect on Firm Performance.

Result for Hypothesis H2: The path coefficient for Social Media Technology \rightarrow Firm Performance is $\beta = 0.297$, with a T-value of 2.815 and a P-value of 0.005. Since $P < 0.05$, **Hypothesis H2 is supported**. Social Media Technology has a statistically significant positive effect on Firm Performance.

4.4. Application to Algérie Télécom

The findings confirm that Algérie Télécom's focus on Market Orientation (understanding customer needs, improving service quality, and monitoring competitors) is the most critical factor driving its organizational performance. The large effect size ($f^2 = 0.409$) demonstrates that MO is a key strategic priority.

The significant, albeit moderate, effect of Social Media Technology ($\beta = 0.297$) indicates that the company's use of social media for customer communication, advertising, and complaint handling contributes positively to its public image and customer satisfaction. However, the moderate effect size ($f^2 = 0.131$) suggests that SMT's effectiveness is contingent upon its integration within a clear, market-oriented strategy. SMT serves as an essential tool to execute the MO philosophy, but cannot replace the underlying strategic focus.

5. Discussion

The empirical results provide strong support for both proposed hypotheses, confirming the critical roles of Market Orientation (MO) and Social Media Technology (SMT) as drivers of Firm Performance (FP) within Algérie Télécom. This discussion interprets these findings in light of the theoretical framework and existing literature, highlighting the study's unique contributions.

5.1. Interpretation of Market Orientation's Strong Effect

The finding that MO has a strong, significant positive effect on FP ($\beta = 0.525$, $f^2 = 0.409$) aligns perfectly with the Resource-Based View (RBV) and decades of strategic marketing research [8] [9]. MO, as a core organizational capability, enables Algérie Télécom to sense and respond to market changes more effectively than its competitors. In the highly dynamic telecommunications sector, where customer expectations for service quality and innovative offerings are constantly rising, this capability is a valuable, inimitable resource.

The strength of this effect suggests that the organizational culture and processes dedicated to gathering and acting upon market intelligence are deeply embedded and highly effective within the firm. This result is particularly relevant for a state-owned enterprise in an emerging market, where bureaucratic inertia can often hinder market responsiveness. The strong MO effect indicates that Algérie Télécom has successfully cultivated a customer-centric culture that transcends these structural challenges, making it the primary engine of its perceived performance.

5.2. Interpretation of Social Media Technology's Moderate Effect

The study also confirmed that SMT has a significant positive effect on FP ($\beta = 0.297$, $f^2 = 0.131$), but the effect size is notably smaller than that of MO. This finding is consistent with the Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT), which suggests that technological resources (like SMT) are most effective when integrated into a broader strategic framework [18]. SMT, in this context, acts as an enabling dynamic capability—a tool that facilitates the execution of the MO strategy.

The moderate effect size implies that while SMT is crucial for modern communication, its impact on overall FP is secondary to the foundational strategic orientation. Algérie Télécom uses social media effectively for customer engagement and brand management, but the technology alone cannot compensate for a lack of strategic market focus. This result serves as a critical warning against the common pitfall of over-investing

in technology without a corresponding strategic shift. The true value of SMT is realized when it is used to gather market intelligence (supporting MO's sensing component) and to rapidly disseminate responses (supporting MO's responding component).

5.3. Comparison with Prior Research

The results resonate with recent PLS-SEM studies in related fields. For instance, the findings echo the work of Chakma and Dhir [22], who found that both strategic orientation and technological capability are critical determinants of FP. However, this study provides a more granular view by isolating the specific technological component (SMT) and quantifying its relative contribution against MO.

The high R^2 value (0.539) is comparable to similar studies in the telecom sector, such as those examining the impact of strategic orientations on performance in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region [23]. The robustness of the measurement model, particularly the HTMT value for MO and FP (0.913), suggests a high degree of correlation, which, while statistically acceptable, reflects the strong conceptual overlap between a market-oriented culture and the resulting perceived performance metrics (e.g., market share growth, customer satisfaction).

5.4. Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretical Implications: This study empirically validates the combined application of RBV and DCT in explaining FP in an emerging market telecom context. It provides a clear quantification of the relative importance of a strategic capability (MO) versus a technological resource (SMT), suggesting that strategic alignment remains paramount.

Practical Implications: Management at Algérie Télécom should prioritize the continuous reinforcement of the market-oriented culture. While investment in SMT is necessary, it should be viewed as a means to an end—a tool to enhance the speed and reach of market intelligence gathering and response, rather than a standalone performance driver. Resources should be allocated to training employees in market sensing and inter-functional coordination, ensuring that the data generated by SMT is effectively distributed and acted upon across the organization.

6. Limitations and Future Research

6.1. Limitations

Despite the robust findings, this study is subject to several limitations inherent to its design and context:

- **Cross-Sectional Design:** The data was collected at a single point in time, which limits the ability to establish definitive causality. While PLS-SEM suggests causal paths, a longitudinal study would be required to track the evolution of MO and SMT investments and their subsequent impact on FP over time.
- **Perceived Performance Measures:** The reliance on perceived (non-financial) Firm Performance, while necessary for a study on a state-owned enterprise, introduces the potential for common method bias and subjective reporting. Future research could attempt to triangulate these findings with objective financial data where available.
- **Sampling Method:** The use of convenience sampling limits the generalizability of the findings beyond the specific context of Algérie Télécom.
- **Model Scope:** The model is limited to MO and SMT. Other critical factors, such as technological capability, entrepreneurial orientation, or competitive intensity, were not included, potentially leading to an overestimation of the R^2 value for the included variables.

6.2. Future Research Directions

Based on these limitations and the study's findings, several avenues for future research are proposed:

- **Mediation and Moderation:** Future studies should expand the model by including mediating variables, such as Customer Satisfaction or Service Quality, to fully understand the mechanism through which MO and SMT influence FP. For example, SMT may moderate the relationship between MO and FP, enhancing the speed of market response.
- **Comparative Studies:** Applying the same model to other telecommunications operators in Algeria (e.g., Mobilis, Djezzy, Ooredoo) or other sectors in the MENA region would allow for the generalization of results and a comparative analysis of different organizational contexts.

- **Mixed-Methods Approach:** Adopting a mixed-methods design, combining the quantitative PLS-SEM analysis with qualitative interviews with senior management, could provide a richer, more comprehensive understanding of the strategic decision-making processes related to MO and SMT adoption.
- **Technological Granularity:** Future research could disaggregate SMT into specific uses (e.g., marketing, customer service, internal communication) to determine which specific technological applications yield the highest return on performance.

7. Conclusion

This research successfully investigated the distinct and combined roles of Market Orientation (MO) and Social Media Technology (SMT) in driving Firm Performance (FP) at Algérie Télécom, utilizing a robust PLS-SEM methodology. The study confirmed that both strategic factors are significant positive predictors of organizational performance, collectively explaining 53.9% of the variance in FP.

The primary contribution of this research lies in the quantification of the relative importance of these two drivers. Market Orientation emerged as the dominant factor, exhibiting a large effect size ($\beta = 0.525$, $f^2 = 0.409$). This finding reinforces the enduring principle that a customer-centric organizational culture is the foundational prerequisite for success, even in the highly digitized telecommunications landscape. The strategic capability to sense, disseminate, and respond to market intelligence is the core competency that translates into superior performance.

Conversely, Social Media Technology, while statistically significant, demonstrated a moderate effect size ($\beta = 0.297$, $f^2 = 0.131$). This suggests that SMT functions most effectively as a powerful enabler and accelerator of the MO strategy, rather than a replacement for it. For Algérie Télécom, SMT is a vital tool for executing its market-oriented philosophy, enhancing communication speed and reach, but its performance impact is contingent upon the underlying strategic direction.

In conclusion, the study provides compelling empirical evidence from the Algerian context that sustainable organizational performance is achieved through the **strategic integration** of core capabilities and modern technology. Management must continue to invest in reinforcing the MO culture while ensuring that SMT investments are strategically aligned to support market sensing and responsiveness. By prioritizing the strategic over the purely technological, Algérie Télécom can solidify its competitive position and achieve sustained growth in the dynamic global telecom market.

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