The Effect of Dynamic Capabilities on Export Performance: The Mediating Role of Innovation Ambidexterity and Strategic Planning Effectiveness

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Abstract

1. Introduction to the Problem

Local scholars such as Bouchikhi et al. (2016), stated that Algerian government faces serious issue of the non-diversification of its economy due to the non-performance of the SMEs exporting sector which makes the economy under the pressure of the global market and the negative results that might result in such as the loss of comparative advantages among international players at global markets.

In general speaking, the underperformance of Algerian exporting SMEs is the primary concern and critical issue (Kadi, 2017). Importantly, the contribution of the Algerian SMEs exporting firms to the gross domestic product and total exports is very weak at respectively 0.25%, and 4.17% in 2016. These statistics indicate that the overall status of the SMEs exporting sector is under threats from European companies in particular. To conclude, Algerian SMEs are the most fragile in the Mediterranean area (Bouchikhi et al., 2016).

In an interview given to "Décideur TV", Mr Issad Rebrab the CEO of Cevital (the largest exporting company in Algeria), and the president of FCE (Business Leaders Forum; The country's main employers' organization), said that despite the competitive advantages that Algerian SMEs have, such as the cost of energy and labour their contribution to the export of the country is insignificant and stays marginal. According to Mr Rebrab this phenomenon is due to the weakness of the internal capabilities of the Algerian companies (Rebrab, 2015).

A study by Haddoud et al (2018) revealed that lack of internal capabilities as one of the leading cause of poor SMEs export performance in Algeria. Thus, authors Mosbah and Debili (2014) indicated that the failure of Algerian exporting firms seems to be as a result of lack of marketing capabilities such as the channel of distribution, promotion, and design at international markets. Meanwhile, Haddoud et al (2018), and Mahdjoub (2012) mentioned that the non-utilization of a technological process as the main critical challenges that

faced Algerian firms at an operational level and particularly those operating in international markets.

Based on the available literature review, many empirical and conceptual studies indicated several factors that influence export performance, and among these factors are marketing capabilities (Haddoud et al., 2019; Kayabasi & Mtetwa, 2016), technological capabilities (Liao & Phan, 2016; Tzokas et al., 2015), customer relationship management capabilities (Kayabasi & Mtetwa, 2016; Wang & Feng, 2012), absorptive capacity (Ahimbisibwe et al., 2016).

An international competitive advantage can be secured by marketing capabilities, that can esnure the substantial firm export performance (Morgan et al., 2012). Previous studies have agreed that having unique marketing capabilities (MC) considerably assist to boost export performance through multiple channels (Haddoud et al., 2019; Kaleka, 2012; Knight, 2001; Krasnikov & Jayachandran, 2008; Obaida & Stottinger, 2015). Generally, these capabilities may possibly be a reason for low-cost and branding benefits that would provide the corporation to acquire several advantages across their rivals. They all found that marketing capabilities possess a strong positive effect on the export performance of both SMEs and big corporations in different levels and contexts.

Furthermore, in relation to the studies concerning the role of technological capabilities (TC) on the firm performance, several empirical investigations exist indicating the significant effect between both variables at all levels regardless of its size or industry (Buckley et al., 2004; Caniëls, 2003; Choonwoo et al., 2001; Dornberger, 2012; Guifu & Hongjia, 2009; Haddoud et al., 2019; Kim, 1997). However, most of them focused on firm performance with less attention to export performance, particularly in developing countries. Hence, the linkage between TC and SMEs export performance is still not comprehensible especially in the emerging economies like Algeria.

Absorptive capacity (ACAP) is the internal capability that permits to the organisations to acquire and maintain a competitive advantage by managing the external know-how (Camisón & Forés, 2010). Strategic management related literature has emphasized the central role of

ACAP in attaining prestigious firm performance. In fact, absorptive capacity is a source of gaining the superb financial performance and converting the external knowledge inflows into performance gains (Spiroglou, Kostopoulos, Varakis, & Papadaki, 2010). With the increase of significance of internationalization for firms around the world, the interest in the strategic determinants that predict export performance also increased. In other side, for the exporting firms, research is scarce and overlooked to examine the strategic role of these relationships between firms and their international customers (Kayabaşı & Mtetwa, 2016).

Firms suffer from poor comprehensiveness and performance of managing and tracking their customer with full services and informations about the product, thus they fail to successfully determine the needs and preferences of their customer at international markets (Soltani & Navimipour, 2016). Therefore, this research fills a significant gap emerged in the literature by introducing and examining the influence of CRM capabilities on Algerian export performance.

Various researches have been used several definitions and methodologies regarding capabilities factors that affect export performance (Dai & Yu, 2013; Dalvand et al., 2015; Haddoud et al., 2019; Kayabasi & Mtetwa, 2016; Oura et al., 2016; Yi et al., 2013). Nonetheless, there is no consensus concerning which of the capabilities guarantee survival and substantial performance or what are the particular building blocks of export performance. Also, all these factors were studied separately about the export performance and majority done in developed countries; in this study all the variables cited above are integrated together in the same framework to compare the Beta value of every variable. Hence, this research will bridge considerable gaps in internal capabilities and export performance perspectives as it will be explained in detail in chapter two.

To conclude, these factors above and that have been identified in the literature are considered as the major causes of the failure of Algerian exporting SMEs due their incapacity to compete at the international level. Many Algerian scholars provide pieces of evidence concerning the factors that hinder firms to operate at global markets, and these factors are as follows: poor customer relationship management capabilities, insufficient marketing capabilities, lack of technological capabilities, as well as undeveloped absorptive capacity (Berbar Née Berrached, 2015; Bouira, 2014; Farhi & boulaouinet, 2015; Haddoud et al., 2019; Kadi, 2017b; Kerzabi, 2007; Mahdjoub, 2012; Mokhefi & Khaldi, 2014; Mosbah & Debili, 2014; Rebrab, 2018; Refaa, 2004).

Previous studies developed various arguments to support the positive effect of strategic planning effectiveness on firm performance. A high strategic planning enhance the net profit (French et al., 2004). A strategic planning is positively correlated with both growth in sales/revenues and market share expansion (El Mobayed, 2006). Thus, several scholars confirmed the positive effect of strategic planning on firm performance (Arasa & Obonyo, 2012; El Mobayed, 2006; French et al., 2004; B. Gibson & Cassar, 2005; Hitt et al., 2001; Khan & Khalique, 2014; Owolabi & Makinde, 2012; Perry, 2001; Rudd et al., 2008). However, few studies indicated either a negative effect of strategic planning on firm performance (Dincer et al., 2006), or that strategic planning effectiveness does not contribute to firm performance at all (Falshaw et al., 2006; Kraus et al., 2006). Furthermore, only few scholars examined the relationship between strategic planning effectiveness and firm export performance (Elbanna, 2008; Namada et al., 2017). Besides the importance and necessity of strategic planning; the majority of the studies have been conducted in developed countries.

Previous studies have recognized the positive association between strategic planning effectiveness and the firm export performance (Elbanna, 2008; Namada et al., 2017). The efficacy of firms' activities is linked to the level of implementation of the goals, and more precisely to the work consequences. It is explained as the degree to which the companies attain the objectives or the capability to produce the required effects or outcomes. The effects or outcomes of an organization are shown through the organizational performance (Namada et al., 2017). Meanwhile, a study by Mamula and Paper (2015) found that strategic planning mediates the relationship between marketing, organization innovations and firm performance. Furthermore, Maryan (2012) conducted a study on 14 banks listed in the Amman Stock Exchange in Jordan and revealed that strategic planning mediates the relationship between technological capabilities and competitive advantage.

Studies such as (Benner & Tushman, 2003; Jansen et al., 2006; Raisch et al., 2009; Zang & Li, 2017) have emphasized that for those firms that are seeking to successfully compete in turbulent environments, they should consider and realize the critical effect of innovation ambidexterity. Innovation ambidexterity refers to the firm's activities and its strategies on how to explore and exploit the existing knowledge during the production process in order to match the current demands while synchronously discovering the unknown areas to adjust with the business changes that ultimately provides corporation prosperity on a long-term (Mashahad et al., 2016). Studies of the outcomes from achieving ambidexterity have been quite varied (Atuahene-Gima, 2005; He & Kim., 2004; Prieto, Revilla, & Rodriguez-Prado, 2007). These studies suggest that relationships exist between ambidexterity, and various sorts of performance outcomes. However, they have not investigated the attainment of innovation ambidexterity, on export performance.

Innovation ambidexterity may mediate the relationship between export performance and internal capabilities. In the view of the dynamic capability theory of the firm, it is the application and use of a firm's capabilities that enable the firm to perform the activities it needs to provide competitive advantages. Thus, the reason for hypothesizing a mediating effect is that it is the outcome of the application and use of these internal capabilities that enables the firm to perform the exploitative and exploratory activities that are needed to produce both incremental and radical innovations, which, in turn, generate greater export performance (Porter, 1991; Ray et al., 2004).

Previous study by Zahra and George (2002) found that there is a positive relationship between absorptive capacity and innovation ambidexterity. Zang and Li (2017) highlighted the positive effect of both technological capabilities and marketing capabilities on innovation ambidexterity. Studies of the outcomes from achieving ambidexterity have been quite varied (Atuahene-Gima, 2005; Z. L. He & K., 2004; Prieto et al., 2007; Zang & Li, 2017). These studies suggest that relationships exist between ambidexterity, and various sorts of performance outcomes. This is in line with Baron and Kenny (1986) condition. The assumption is if independent variable directly relates to mediator and mediator relates directly to a dependent variable, and then there is the possibility of mediation between the dependent and independent variables which means a direct and indirect relationship between the independent and dependent variables respectively.

Innovation ambidexterity and strategic planning effectiveness are used in this study as mediators to link internal capabilities of the firm with its export performance. According to the reviewed available literature, any research, which integrates all the four independent variables with export performance along with the mediating variables of innovation ambidexterity and strategic planning effectiveness, has not been found. Therefore, the underperformance of the Algerian exporting SMEs is an existing challenge of concern having practical as well as theoretical justification that entails an empirical investigation on internal capabilities and how it influences the Algerian firms export performance. There is a need to have a more comprehensive understanding with a very robust approach that will look into Algerian firm export performance with the mediating effects of strategic planning effectiveness and innovation ambidexterity respectively.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1 The Relationship between Technological Capabilities and Export Performance

Previous studies developed various arguments to support the positive effect of technological capabilities on export performance. A high technological capabilities provide effectiveness through mastering the innovations' processes and thus developing an innovative product in reaction to the market changes (Tsai, 2004). An aggressive and proactive TC is more than needed for the firm that are present in the international market (Dornberger, 2012).

Technological capabilities have an important role for the company to reach a higher export performance and to succeed in the global market (Flor & Oltra, 2005). Several scholars confirmed the positive effect of technological capabilities on export performance (Bell & Pavitt, 1995; Dornberger, 2012; Zang & Li, 2017). However, most of the previous studies focused on developed countries. The effect of technological capabilities on export performance needs to be more investigated especially when it comes to SMEs. Thus, we conclude to this hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Technological capabilities will positively influence export performance.

2.2 The Relationship between Marketing Capabilities and Export Performance

The marketing capabilities' influences on performance of the firm have been highlighted by various researchers (e.g., Day, 1994; Slotegraaf et al., 2003; Vorhies and Morgan, 2005). The worth of marketing activity for the performance of the firm is established by means of establishing the association between the customer and various central firm processes (Day, 1994; Krasnikov & Jayachandran, 2008). These include the financial performance and customer affiliation performance, and hitherto, by attaining the competitive advantage by inter connection of various firm based assets and marketing-specific activities in multifaceted ways (Slotegraaf et al., 2003). For this objective, Zou, Fang, and Zhao (2003) methodology to marketing capabilities will be undertaken, assuming pricing, product development, marketing communication, and the distribution of the product.

Many studies attested that marketing capabilities has a positive significant effect on export performance (Morgan et al., 2012; Murray et al., 2011; Tan & Sousa, 2015; Zou et al., 2003). As a result of higher marketing capabilities, the firm develops a capacity to identify and react better and in a manner time to market changes, and thus enhance its capacity to develop innovative products which leads to a higher performance than its competitors (Zang & Li, 2017). Based on these premises, the following research hypothesis will be:

Hypothesis 2: Marketing capabilities will positively influence export performance.

2.3 The Relationship between Absorptive Capacity and Export Performance

Literature indicates that export performance is significantly influenced by absorptive capacity. Unequal knowledge leads to differences in competitive advantage and differences in firm performance consequently. In developing countries, exporters acquire a higher export performance by enhancing their advantages that are linked to knowledge (Curado & Bontis, 2006). Under a constant change in the global market where companies are continuously seeking to reach the strategic objectives, their competitiveness can be a result of ACAP which is a dynamic capability (Waranantakul, W. and Ussahawanitchakit, 2012). However, export performance in developed countries is significantly enhanced by organisational capabilities which can be specific and unique to reach export success in developing countries (Tzokas et al., 2015).

The significant positive effect of absorptive capabilities on export performance has been highlighted in several studies (Dai & Yu, 2013; S. A. Zahra et al., 2009). Thus, exporting firms that can assimilate, transform, and exploit effectively external knowledge in a limited time should reach a higher export performance. Hence, the next hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 3: *Absorptive capacity will positively influence export performance.*

2.4 The Relationship between Customer Relationship Management Capabilities and Export Performance

Previous studies asserted that SMEs targeting a long term relationship with their clients set up efficient customer relationships (Ganesan, 1994; Slater & Narver, 1995; Weitz & Jap, 1995). Exporters that have an efficient CRM processes rely on their clear communication with their agents of distribution to skip the costly faults, decrease their mistrust toward the foreign market and make certain to survive as long as possible (Bello et al., 2010). The SME should not rely too much on its distributors for market information, which will lead to market myopia and affect negatively the launched product revenue. Considering that the concurrent firms will react to the differences in the performance, the competitive advantage will not last for a long time. Furthermore, CRM costs like after sales service, or providing advertisement to the agent of distribution are more likely to be important and affect the effectiveness negatively if not well managed. Nevertheless, these costs can be managed even though they reduce the earning, it

is likely accepted for a laps of time (Kaleka, 2012). The following hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 4: Customer relationship management capabilities will positively influence export performance.

2.5 The Relationship between Strategic Planning Effectiveness and Export Performance

Previous studies developed various arguments to support the positive effect of strategic planning effectiveness on firm performance. A high strategic planning enhance the net profit (French et al., 2004). A strategic planning is positively correlated with both growth in sales/revenues and market share expansion (El Mobayed, 2006). Moreover, all the strategic planning steps were found to have a positive effect on company performance (Arasa & Obonyo, 2012). M. W. J. Khan and Khalique (2014) study has combined the literature of strategic planning with that of intellectual capital and found that strategic planning positively affects firm performance and the differing nature from SMEs to large firms. The study of Owolabi and Makinde (2012) concluded that strategic planning is valuable to firms for reaching the goals and suggested that corporate organizations need to employ strategic planning to improve firm performance. Thus, several scholars confirmed the positive effect of strategic planning on firm performance (Arasa & Obonyo, 2012; El Mobayed, 2006; French et al., 2004; B. Gibson & Cassar, 2005; Hitt et al., 2001; Khan & Khalique, 2014; Owolabi & Makinde, 2012; Perry, 2001; Rudd et al., 2008). However, few studies indicated either a negative effect of strategic planning on firm performance (Dincer et al., 2006), or that strategic planning effectiveness does not contribute to firm performance at all (Falshaw et al., 2006; Kraus et al., 2006). Furthermore, only few studies examined the relationship between strategic planning effectiveness and firm export performance for SMEs (Elbanna, 2008; Namada et al., 2017). Besides the importance and necessity of strategic planning; the majority of the studies have been conducted in developed countries. Hence, the next hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 5: *Strategic planning effectiveness will positively influence export performance.*

2.6 The Relationship between Innovation Ambidexterity and Export Performance

Prior research suggests that firms capable of achieving ambidexterity are likely to generate outcomes that are not attainable if they emphasize one of these activities at the expense of the other (Cao et al., 2009; C. B. Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004; Z.-L. He & Wong, 2004; Tushman & O'Reilly, 1996). Studies of the outcomes from achieving ambidexterity have been quite varied. Atuahene-Gima (2005), e.g., suggests that the interaction of exploiting

existing competencies and renewing and replacing them with new competencies is positively related to radical innovation performance. Prieto et al. (2007) found that competence is positively related to new product development performance in general. Simsek, Heavey, Veiga, and Souder (2009) found that simultaneously combining exploitation and exploration within a single unit can improve the satisfaction of stakeholders including customers. Concerning financial performance, Han, Kim, and Kim (2001) suggest that a firm's pursuit of ambidexterity (versus pursuing incremental innovation only) is positively associated with market share and return on investment. He and Wong (2004) also found that the ambidexterity achieved by the interaction of exploitation and exploration learning is positively related to self-reported compounded average rate of sales growth over a 3-year period. Further, Schulze, Heinemann and Abedin (2008) suggest that ambidexterity has a positive effect on subjective ratings of performance, measured as a latent composite of operational and strategic planning. These studies suggest that relationships exist between ambidexterity, and various sorts of performance outcomes. Prior research, however, has not investigated the attainment of innovation ambidexterity, on export performance. Yet, there are suggestions that innovation ambidexterity may indeed lead to enhance export performance. The next hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 6: Innovation ambidexterity will positively influence export performance.

2.7 Strategic Planning Effectiveness as a Mediator
Previous studies have recognized the positive association between strategic planning effectiveness and the firm export performance (Elbanna, 2008; Namada et al., 2017). The efficacy of firms' activities is linked to the level of implementation of the goals, and more precisely to the work consequences. It is explained as the degree to which the companies attain the objectives or the capability to produce the required effects or outcomes. The effects or outcomes of an organization are shown through the organizational performance (Namada et al., 2017). Meanwhile, a study by Mamula and Paper (2015) found that strategic planning mediates the relationship between marketing, organization innovations and firm performance. Furthermore, Maryan (2012) conducted a study on 14 banks listed in the Amman Stock Exchange in Jordan and revealed that strategic planning mediates the relationship between technological capabilities and competitive advantage. Based on these premises, the research hypotheses 7, 8, 9, 10 are respectively:

Hypothesis 7, 8, 9, 10: Strategic planning effectiveness will mediate the relationship between internal capabilities (Technological capabilities, marketing capabilities, absorptive capacity, and customer relationship management capabilities) and export performance.

2.8 Innovation Ambidexterity as Mediator
Innovation ambidexterity may mediate the relationship between internal capabilities and export performance. In the view of the dynamic capability theory of the firm, it is the application and use of a firm's capabilities that enable the firm to perform the activities it needs to provide advantage. Thus, the reason for hypothesizing a mediating effect is that the outcome of the application and use of these internal capabilities that enables the firm to perform the exploitative and exploratory activities that are needed to produce both incremental and radical innovations, which, in turn, generate greater export performance (Porter, 1991; Ray et al., 2004).

Organizational capability theorists have indicated that the importance of capabilities to organizations today is much greater than it was before as a result of the relatively open and diverse sources of innovation now available to organizations (Pereira et al., 2015). However, most scholars also acknowledge that in order for a capability to provide competitive advantage for a company, it must be relatively scarce, difficult to imitate or duplicate through other means, and contribute positively to performance (Barney, 1991; Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000; Zang & Li, 2017). This logic suggests that while every firm may possess practices such as technological capabilities, marketing capabilities, customer relationship capabilities, and absorptive capabilities, not every firm can effectively and efficiently combine them so as to create a valuable and difficult to imitate internal capabilities (Haddoud et al., 2019). When the practices are effectively combined together, however, the combination creates properties that exist only as a consequence of the individual practices being part of the whole. And these properties, in turn, create an outcome, in the form of a capability that is unavailable in their absence (Colbert, 2004). Based on the above logic, it is proposed that the effect of internal capabilities will be felt through the process of innovation ambidexterity that will subsequently generate greater export performance of the SME.

The absorptive capacity of the improvement of the current knowledge has an important value to diagnostic the external resources for innovation. Thus the efficiency of exploratory innovation of firm is improved by exploitative innovation (Zahra & George, 2002). Reconfiguring current knowledge and resources linked to inventions and growing market opportunities is launched by a good comprehension leaded by an exploitative innovation (Fleming, 2001).

Business' commitment in exploitative innovation is facilitated by an efficient exploratory innovation. Exploitative innovation tasks is provided by exploratory

innovation in growing markets (Katila & Ahuja, 2002). In addition, current knowledge of exploitative innovation in a field could be completed by knowledge discovered through exploratory innovation in another field (Gupta et al., 2006). Furthermore, a higher explorative innovation level leads to a higher overall firm performance that will be a source of an effective exploitative innovation (Cao et al., 2009).

Previous study by Zahra and George (2002) found that there is a positive relationship between absorptive capacity and innovation ambidexterity. Zang and Li (2017) highlighted the positive effect of both technological capabilities and marketing capabilities on innovation ambidexterity. Studies of the outcomes from achieving ambidexterity have been quite varied (Atuahene-Gima, 2005; He & Kim, 2004; Prieto et al., 2007; Zang & Li, 2017). These studies suggest that relationships exist between ambidexterity, and various sorts of performance outcomes. This is in line with Baron and Kenny (1986) condition. The assumption is if independent variable directly relates to mediator and mediator relates directly to a dependent variable, and then there is the possibility of mediation between the dependent and independent variables which means a direct and indirect relationship between the independent and dependent variables respectively. Thus, the research hypotheses 11, 12, 13, 14 are respectively:

Hypothesis 11, 12, 13, 14: Innovation ambidexterity will mediate the relationship between internal capabilities (Technological capabilities, marketing capabilities, absorptive capacity, and customer relationship management capabilities) and export performance.

3. Methodology

This research is deductive and quantitatively seeking to measure the structural relationships between constructs toward well-performing export performance. This study used a self-administered questionnaire survey instrument based on past literature that measures the internal capabilities of the firm and export performance. The measurements were adopted from previous studies that have been tested to ensure validity and reliability. This study had utilized an interval scale as the scale of measurement in the survey. This type of scale is best used to study opinions, attitudes or dimensions. In this research, the unit of analysis is organization, which is represented by Algerian manufacturing exporter SMEs, and responded by the CEO, directors, or owners/managers of the firm. Although this study relied greatly on individual responses, the respondents were asked to represent their company when responding to the survey. The target population in this study is the SME related to manufacture that are exporting in Algeria. The manufacturing SMEs that export were chosen because of

their importance to increase the total exports in most of the developed and developing countries.

Due to lack of online data in the websites of different ministries, the researcher visited the Algerian National Centre for Commercial Record and requested a list of manufacturing SMEs, with a condition of exporting. Consequently, based on the request, the researcher obtained a list of manufacturing SMEs involved in the export activity. Therefore, the study had chosen a population of SMEs that existed in 2017, which was 521 (Algerian National Centre for Commercial Record CNRC). Applying Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula, the study determined the suitable sample size as 217 exporter firms that will be targeted for this research. Based on the Ministry of Industry and Trade Report, there were 521 exporter manufacturing SME in Algeria. Therefore, in order to achieve the maximum number of acceptable samples, which is 217, the number of questionnaires that were supposed to be sent out was 316 questionnaires. For 5 months, 316 drop-collect were distributed representing 62.08 % of the total population of 521 exporting SMEs in the manufacturing sector and a total of 263 questionnaires were returned. Out of the 263 questionnaires, there are 15 uncompleted questionnaires. Therefore, the number of completed questionnaires was 248, they were all considered as useable questionnaires (78.48 % from distributed questionnaires). This study used 7-point Likert scale to measure the research model constructs.

4. Results

Researchers have viewed that internal consistency reliability is the extent to which all measurements (Items) assess the same concept on a particular subscale (Bijttebier et al., 2000; Sun et al., 2007). In organizational research settings, the most widely used estimators of internal consistency reliability of a scale are Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability coefficients (e.g., (Bacon, Sauer, & Young, 1995; Peterson & Kim, 2013). Cronbach's alpha is very sensitive to a number of items in the measures; therefore, it tends to underestimate the internal consistency reliability of the measures. Thus, it can be utilized as a conservative method to measure internal consistency reliability (Hair et al., 2016). Composite reliability was chosen in this research to ascertain the internal consistency reliability of measures adopted.

The use of composite reliability coefficient provides a much lower level biased estimate of reliability than that of Cronbach's alpha coefficient due to the fact that it eventually assumes all items contribute equally to its construct with no consideration of individual loadings (Barclay, Higgins, & Thompson, 1995; Gotz, Liehr-

Gobbers, & Krafft, 2010). The threshold values of both Cronbach's alpha, and composite reliability values should be higher than 0.70 which is regarded as satisfactory sufficient for the model; meanwhile the value less than 0.60 indicates a lack of reliability (Joe F Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011; Tenenhaus, Vinzi, Chatelin, & Lauro, 2005).

In this study, Cronbach's alpha values of all constructs range between 0.805 and 0.925 as shown in Table 1 Furthermore, the composite reliability represents of all constructs passed the lowest acceptable value of 0.70; specifically, they range between 0.897 and 0.935. Thus, it can be summed up that the internal consistency reliability of the measures is verified and confirmed.

(Joseph F Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006) have demonstrated the convergent validity as the extent to which measurements (items) truthfully represent the intended latent variable and correlate with other measures of the same latent variable. They further

explained that factor loadings, composite reliability, rho A, and average variance extracted (AVE) were used to assess convergent validity. Table 1 lists the indicator loadings and weights, reliabilities, and AVE for all the items listed in the model. The loadings of all indicators surpassed the required cut-off level of 0.50 as suggested by Hair et al. (2006) except for items CRUC3, CRUC4, CWC3, CWC4, FEP1, IAXR5, IAXT6, PC1, DC1, SPE2, TUC2, and TUC4. On this note, these items were dropped from the model because it failed to meet the 0.50 minimum threshold value. The composite reliability values for all constructs exceeded the threshold value of 0.70 recommended by Hair et al., (2006) while the AVEs for each construct were over the recommended value of 0.50 as suggested by (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), where the values ranging between 0.502 and 0.837 AVE. In short, convergent validity was established. Therefore, it is summed up that the study demonstrates acceptable convergent validity.

Table1: Measurement Model

Constructs	Items	Loadings	CA	CR	AVE
Absorptive Capacity	AC1	0.821	0.909	0.926	0.610
	AC2	0.815			
	AC3	0.803			
	AC4	0.803			
	AC5	0.767			
	AC6	0.754			
	AC7	0.778			
	AC8	0.701			
CRM Capabilities	CIMC1	0.808	0.876	0.900	0.502
	CIMC2	0.752			
	CIMC3	0.789			
	CIMC4	0.719			
	CIMC5	0.644			
	CRUC1	0.584			
	CRUC2	0.592			
	CWC1	0.726			
	CWC2	0.725			
Export Performance	SATEP1	0.844	0.907	0.926	0.613
	SATEP2	0.905			
	SATEP3	0.825			
	STRATEP1	0.820			
	STRATEP2	0.830			
	STRATEP3	0.743			

	FEP2	0.621			
	FEP3	0.627			
IAXR	IAXR1	0.876	0.868	0.911	0.719
	IAXR2	0.922			
	IAXR3	0.797			
	IAXR4	0.790			
IAXT	IAXT1	0.769	0.844	0.897	0.685
	IAXT3	0.753			
	IAXT4	0.909			
	IAXT5	0.870			
*Innovation Ambidexterity	IAXR	0.914	0.805	0.911	0.837
	IAXT	0.916			
Marketing Capabilities	PC2	0.686	0.925	0.935	0.527
	PC3	0.692			
	PDC1	0.790			
	PDC2	0.769			
	PDC3	0.759			
	PDC4	0.748			
	CC1	0.704			
	CC2	0.715			
	CC3	0.682			
	DC2	0.643			
	DC3	0.720			
	DC4	0.753			
	DC5	0.758			
Strategic Planning Effectiveness	SPE1	0.709	0.857	0.897	0.635
	SPE3	0.775			
	SPE4	0.823			
	SPE5	0.830			
	SPE6	0.841			
Technology Capabilities	TAC1	0.671	0.869	0.898	0.526
	TAC2	0.607			
	TAC3	0.752			
	TOC1	0.841			
	TOC2	0.767			
	TOC3	0.722			
	TUC1	0.757			
	TUC3	0.657			

Note: AVE: Average Variance Extracted, CA: Cronbach's Alpha, CR: Composite Reliability

Due to the criticism that made by recent several statistical scholars, such as J. F. Hair Jr et al. (2017); Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2015) about the lack of discriminant validity of measurement via applying cross leading test and Fornell-Larcker criterion test, this lead to introduce another statistical method called by HTMT ratio to estimate the discriminant validity of the measurement. HTMT ration test is the mean of all

correlations of indicators across constructs measuring different constructs relative to the mean of the average correlations of indicators measuring the same construct (Henseler et al., 2015). Hence, this study also tests discriminant validity using this newly suggested approach, and the results are illustrated below.

Table 2: Discriminant Validity (HTMT)

	Constructs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Absorptive Capacity								
2	CRM Capabilities	0.709							
3	Export Performance	0.626	0.534						
4	Exploration	0.569	0.452	0.699					
5	Exploitation	0.545	0.608	0.684	0.785				
6	Marketing Capabilities	0.847	0.679	0.708	0.596	0.633			
7	Strategic Planning Effectiveness	0.783	0.709	0.747	0.733	0.704	0.748		
8	Technology Capabilities	0.688	0.646	0.686	0.557	0.587	0.793	0.722	

If the HTMT value is higher than the HTMT0.90 value of 0.90 (Gold & Arvind Malhotra, 2001), then there is a problem of discriminant validity. As presented in Table 2, all values have less than an HTMT0.90 value of 0.90 (Gold & Arvind Malhotra, 2001).

Since the measurement model has been ascertained, the next step in the PLS path modelling analysis was to test the structural model (inner model). In doing so, based on

researchers suggestions, the evaluation of the structural model was investigated through several requirements, including structural model specification, estimates for path coefficients, effect size (f^2) and predictive relevance (Hair Jr, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2016; Hensler, Ringle, & Sinkovic, 2009; Straub, Boudreau, & Gefen, 2004). Finally, to test the significance of the hypothesis in the research model, the bootstrapping was performed.

Table 3: Result of Path Coefficients

Relationships	Original Sample (B)	Standard Deviation	T-Values	P-Values
AC -> EP	-0.011	0.088	0.126	0.450
CC -> EP	-0.051	0.073	0.695	0.244
IA -> EP	0.312	0.057	5.451**	0.000
MC -> EP	0.236	0.082	2.860**	0.002
SPE -> EP	0.224	0.073	3.084**	0.001
TC -> EP	0.170	0.063	2.675**	0.004

Note: significant at p<0.05 at two-tailed T statistics value of 1.65. AC abbreviation refers to absorptive capacity. CC = customer relationship management capabilities, IA= innovation ambidexterity, MC = marketing capabilities, SPE = strategic planning effectiveness, TC = technological capabilities, EP = export performance.
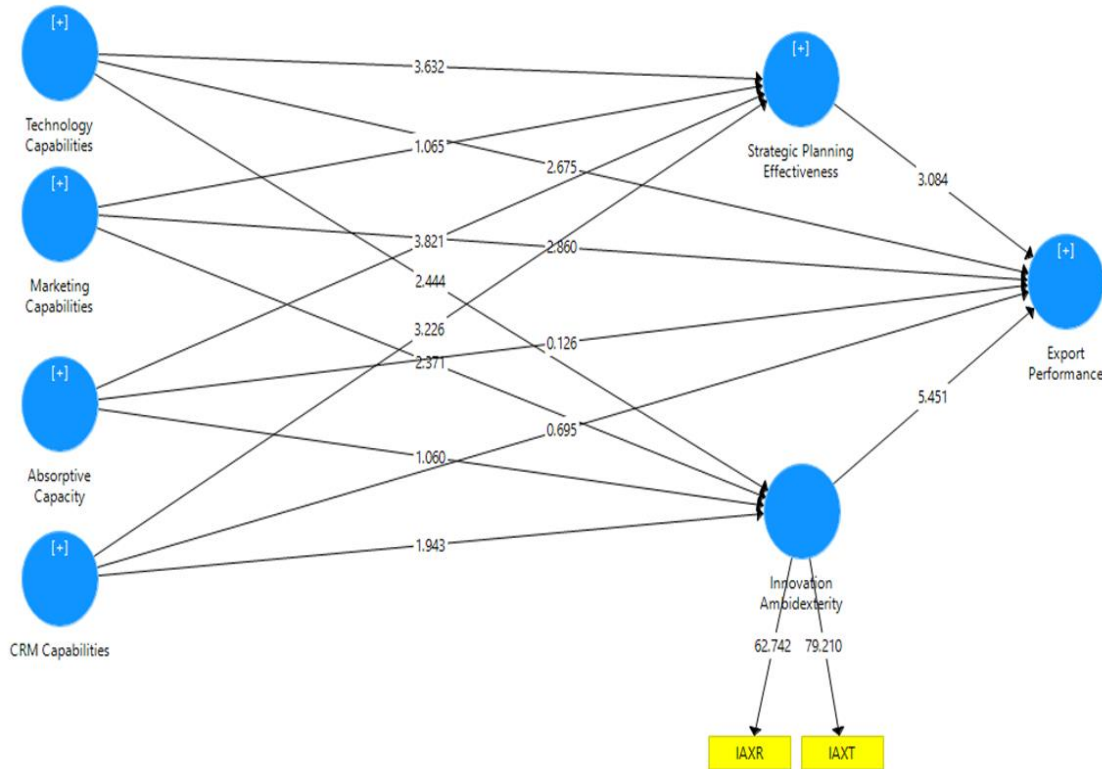
Figure 1. PLS Bootstrapping Results of the Model

According to the recommendation of Cohen (1988), the f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35 represents small, medium, and large effects in the structural model respectively. Therefore, as demonstrated in Table 4, the effect size (f^2) for absorptive capacity, customer relationship management capabilities (CRM), innovation ambidexterity, marketing capabilities, strategic planning effectiveness, and technological capabilities are less than 0.15, which means that they have a small effect size (f^2). Table 4 below shows the assessment of effect size.

Table 4 Effect Size (f^2)

Constructs	Export Performance	Innovation Ambidexterity	Strategic Planning Effectiveness
Absorptive Capacity	0.000	0.009	0.113
CRM Capabilities	0.003	0.019	0.059
Innovation Ambidexterity	0.116	NA	NA
Marketing Capabilities	0.039	0.037	0.005
Strategic Planning Effectiveness	0.040	NA	NA
Technological Capabilities	0.030	0.029	0.060

With regards to the assessment of the Q-square values, according to (Frnell & Larcker), (1994), Hair et al. (2011), and Hair et al. (2016), a research model with the cross-redundancy value (Q-squared) higher than zero is explained to have predictive relevance, otherwise, the predictive relevance of the model cannot be confirmed.

As shown in Table 5, Q-squared of each of export performance, innovation ambidexterity, strategic planning effectiveness range from 0.332 to 0.368. Therefore, these values are the predictive relevance of the model. Table 5 illustrates the Q-square statistics results.

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

Constructs	R^2	Q^2
Export Performance	0.583	0.347
Innovation Ambidexterity	0.414	0.332
Strategic Planning Effectiveness	0.602	0.368

Researchers claimed that the purpose of mediation test is to determine if a mediator construct could significantly carry the ability of a predictor to have an effect on a criterion variable (Ramayah, Lee, & In, 2011). MacKinnon and Cox, (2012) have stated that a mediating effect occurs when one chunk embodies the link of the independent variables to the mediator, and when another chunk embodies the link of the mediator to the independent variable. From the framework of the study, it is clear that the researcher has to examine two mediators, strategic planning effectiveness and innovation ambidexterity. Furthermore, these mediators will separately mediate the relationship between technological capabilities, marketing capabilities, absorptive capacity, customer relationship management capabilities as independent variables, and export performance as dependent variable.

To perform the mediation, Preacher and Hayes (2008) have explained that there are several means of mediation analysis in multivariate analysis comprising of simple techniques that consist of the causal steps approach (Baron & Kenny, 1986) and (Sobel, 1982) test. However, there are newer approaches involves fewer unrealistic statistical assumptions, such as the product of coefficients method (MacKinnon, Lockwood, & William, 2004); and the re-sampling methods such as bootstrapping method (MacKinnon et al., 2004).

Obviously, the latest mediation analysis approach is the bootstrapping method, developed by (Preacher & Hayes, 2004, 2008) which is a non-parametric resampling test. The key characteristics of this method are that it does not rely on the assumption of normality, thus it fits for smaller sample sizes (Hair Jr et al., 2016; Pardo & Roman, 2013). The bootstrapping test has more advantage in comparison with the older tests of Sobel. The bootstrapping test can assist determine the mediation effect with certainty. In line with Hair Jr. et al., (2016) recommendation, this study utilized the bootstrapping method through utilizing smart PLS 3 in investigating the mediating effects because it is more accurate and powerful than other methods. In general, in PLS bootstrap mediation calculation, "T" represents the coefficient significance level. Mediation is established if T value is similar to or bigger than the value of 1.96 at 0.05 significance level by utilizing two tail test or 1.64 at 0.05 significance level by utilizing one tail test (Hair et al., 2010).

Table 6: Mediation Result (Total Indirect Effect)

Relationships	Original Sample (B)	Standard Deviation	T-Values	P-Values
AC ->IA ->EP	0.037	0.035	1.069	0.285
CC ->IA ->EP	0.048	0.024	1.986*	0.048
MC ->IA ->EP	0.084	0.037	2.281*	0.023
TC ->IA ->EP	0.060	0.028	2.141*	0.033
AC ->SPE ->EP	0.081	0.031	2.599**	0.010
CC ->SPE ->EP	0.049	0.022	2.221*	0.027
MC ->SPE ->EP	0.017	0.020	0.854	0.393
TC ->SPE ->EP	0.051	0.025	2.051*	0.041

The findings from Table 6, shows the total indirect effect for absorptive capacity, customer relationship management capabilities, marketing capabilities, technological capabilities to export performance via the mediating role of innovation ambidexterity is respectively (B = 0.037, T = 1.069, p = 0.000) (B = 0.048, T = 1.986, p = 0.000) (B = 0.084, T = 2.281, p = 0.000) (B = 0.060, T = 2.141, p = 0.000) and via the mediating role of strategic planning effectiveness is respectively (B = 0.081, T = 2.599, p = 0.000) (B = 0.049, T = 2.221, p = 0.000) (B = 0.017, T = 0.854, p = 0.000) (B = 0.051, T = 2.051, p = 0.000).

Table 7: The Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Full Model				Supported
		B	S. E	T	p	
H1	TC -> EP	0.170	0.063	2.675**	0.004	YES
H2	MC -> EP	0.236	0.082	2.860**	0.002	YES
H3	AC -> EP	-0.011	0.088	0.126	0.450	NO
H4	CC -> EP	-0.051	0.073	0.695	0.244	NO
H5	SPE -> EP	0.224	0.073	3.084**	0.001	YES
H6	IA -> EP	0.312	0.057	5.451**	0.000	YES
H7	TC ->SPE ->EP	0.051	0.025	2.051*	0.041	YES
H8	MC ->SPE ->EP	0.017	0.020	0.854	0.393	NO
H9	AC ->SPE ->EP	0.081	0.031	2.599**	0.010	YES
H10	CC ->SPE ->EP	0.049	0.022	2.221*	0.027	YES
H11	TC ->IA ->EP	0.060	0.028	2.141*	0.033	YES
H12	MC ->IA ->EP	0.084	0.037	2.281*	0.023	YES
H13	AC ->IA ->EP	0.037	0.035	1.069	0.285	NO
H14	CC ->IA ->EP	0.048	0.024	1.986*	0.048	YES

After confirming the reliability and validity of the study' measurement and structural models, the subsequent stage was to test the hypothesized relationships. The hypothesises were run in order to answer the hypothesis applied in chapter two, simultaneously answering the research question and objective that was outlined in chapter one. To conclude whether the hypothesis is statistically significant or not, the current study has applied the bootstrapping technique entrenched with the Smart-PLS 3.0. Moreover, with the intention of obtaining the statistical t-value and the standard error, the bootstrapping was performed with 5000 samples and 248 cases. Subsequently, p-values with 0.05 significance level was created (Hair et al., 2016; Henseler et al., 2009). Table 7 shows the summary of hypotheses testing.

To start with, there are four significant hypotheses of six of SMEs export performance which are (H1) technological capabilities has a significant positive influence on export performance, (H2) marketing capabilities has a significant positive influence on export performance, (H5) strategic planning effectiveness has a significant positive influence on export performance, (H6) innovation ambidexterity has a significant positive influence on export performance. Where their result were found ($B= 0.170$, T= 2.675, P= 0.004), ($B= 0.236$, T= 2.860, P= 0.002), ($B= 0.224$, T= 3.084, P= 0.001), and (B=0.312, T=5.451, P=0.000) respectively. However, two hypotheses about the SME export performance were insignificant which are (H3) absorptive capacity has significant positive influence on export performance, and (H4) customer relationship management capabilities has significant positive influence on export performance. The evidence on the insignificant of each H3 and H4 were based on their results (B= -0.011, T= 0.126, P=0.450), and (B=-0.051, T= 0.695, p=0.244) respectively.

Furthermore, the study has established six mediators (H7, H9, H10, H11, H12, and H14). The indirect

relationship between technological capabilities, absorptive capacity, and customer relationship management capabilities as independent variables and export performance as dependent variable via the mediation role of strategic planning effectiveness (H7, H8, H9 respectively) is significant with the value of ($B= 0.051$, T= 2.599, P= 0.041) ($B= 0.081$, T= 2.599, P= 0.010) ($B= 0.049$, T= 2.221, P= 0.027) respectively, and the indirect relationship of technological capabilities, marketing capabilities, and customer relationship management capabilities as independent variables and export performance as dependent variable via the mediation role of innovation ambidexterity (H11, H12, H14 respectively) is significant with the value of ($B= 0.060$, T= 2.141, P= 0.033) ($B= 0.084$, T= 2.281, P= 0.023) ($B= 0.048$, T= 1.986, P= 0.048). As a result, the hypotheses H7, H9, H10, H11, H12, and H14 are supported.

Finally, the study has found that the indirect relationship of marketing capabilities and export performance via the mediation role of strategic planning effectiveness **(H8)** is insignificant with the value of ($B= 0.017$, T= 0.854, P= 0.393), and the indirect relationship of absorptive capacity and export performance via the mediation role of innovation ambidexterity **(H13)** is insignificant as well with the value of ($B= 0.037$, T= 1.069, P= 0.285). thus, these last-mentioned hypotheses **H8, H13** are not supported.

To sum up, the model shows that out of six determinants of export performance, the study has four significant relationships, namely H1 (technological capabilities), H2 (marketing capabilities), H5 (strategic planning effectiveness), and H6 (innovation ambidexterity), and two insignificant relationships, H3 (absorptive capabilities), and H4 (customer relationship management capabilities). Finally, the study found six significant indirect relationships. The first three relationships are between technological capabilities, absorptive capacity, and customer relationship management capabilities as independent

variables and export performance as dependent variable via the mediation role of strategic planning effectiveness (H7, H9, H10 respectively). The last three relationships are between technological capabilities, marketing capabilities, and customer relationship management capabilities as independent variables and export performance as dependent variable via the mediation role of innovation ambidexterity (H11, H12, H14 respectively).

5. Discussion and Conclusion

According to the results, technological capabilities is a prerequisite for SME export performance in the sense that it refers to internal capabilities that provide effectiveness through mastering the innovations' processes and thus developing an innovative product in reaction to the market changes and apply it to commercial ends. Thus, the acquisition of a proactive technological capabilities is more than needed for the company to reach a higher export performance and to succeed in the international market. As this study has been conducted in the transitional economy context, the findings had confirmed the results of previous empirical studies concerning transitional economies in countries such as Thailand, and Chile (Chantanaphant et al., 2011; Bianchi & Wickramasekera, 2016). These previous studies had found significant relationships between an SME technological capability and its export performance. Which these findings have re-affirmed the role of technological capabilities as a pre-condition for SMEs to enhance their export performance, particularly those from developed economies.

The findings of this study provide supporting evidence to the findings of several other studies (Morgan et al., 2012; Murray et al., 2011; Tan & Sousa, 2015; Zou et al., 2003), which had reported the significant effect of marketing capabilities on export performance. With a higher marketing capabilities, the firm develops a capacity to identify and react better and in a manner time to market changes, and thus enhance its capacity to develop innovative products which leads to a higher performance than its competitors (Zang & Li, 2017). The purpose of this study was to identify the various resource combinations likely to increase SMEs export performance. To achieve this aim, the study focussed on SMEs operating in a largely neglected area in the African continent, namely Algeria. It was found that to achieve higher export performance, Algerian exporters need to develop their marketing capabilities in term of pricing, product, communication, and distribution. In fact, the necessity analysis showed that managerial resources were necessary to reach high export performance. These results are in line with studies from developing countries. In such contexts, it was found that SMEs often rely on marketing capabilities to overcome obstacles related to exporting activities,

from Algerian context more exactly (Haddoud et al., 2019).

Concisely, the findings showed that absorptive capacity have an insignificant relationship with export performance; such insignificance may be referred to the nature of competitive advantages that have Algerian SMEs comparing to the foreign market. In fact, Algerian exporting SMEs rely more on the cheap labour and cheap sources of energy than on the innovative new products. This can be a good departure to launch the Algerian exports, but it cannot be enough in the long term since innovative and high-tech products bring more income. Absorptive capacity is essential in countries where scientific and technic activities are weak, it represents the most valuable source of new knowledge. To develop a product from high technology in order to export it, Algerian SMEs need to improve their absorptive capacity. Despite all the Algerian scientific and technological policies that have been in place since 1990, the country cannot yet build a knowledge economy. Given the situation the first two stages of the absorptive capacity, defined as "potential absorptive capacity", are the most important and those that have to be implemented in priority.

One of the current study's objectives is to examine the relationship between customer relationship management capabilities and SME's export performance in Algeria. In order to achieve this objective, Hypothesis four which predicts a positive relationship between customer relationship management capabilities and SME's export performance was tested. The findings showed an insignificant relationship between the two constructs (customer relationship management capabilities and export performance). The findings, therefore, demonstrated that Hypothesis four is not supported. The findings showed that customer relationship management capabilities have an insignificant relationship with export performance; such insignificance may be referred to the unique business culture in Algeria. The Algerian corporate and business culture have little concern in the customer relationship capabilities (Haddoud et al. 2019). It could also be that there is no effective practice of such mechanisms in the country.

According to the results, strategic planning effectiveness plays a strategic role by supporting firms plans, determining and mobilizing valuable resources to compete in the oversea markets efficiently and effectively. Studies that addressed this relationship between strategic planning effectiveness and firm export performance for SMEs (Elbanna, 2008; Namada et al., 2017) are quite poor. Besides the importance and necessity of strategic planning; the majority of the studies have been conducted in developed countries. This study provides further evidence about the crucial impact of strategic planning effectiveness and its close

relationship with export performance (either financially, strategically, or customer based). This study therefore extends dynamic capability theory by emphasizing the critical role of strategic planning to reconfigure and coordinate firms' dynamic capabilities in the way that leads to fulfil firms export managers goals to drive and enhance export performance.

Innovation ambidexterity refers to finding a balance between exploitative and explorative innovation activities so as to introduce incremental and radical innovation for a superior sustainable performance (Božič, K., & Dimovski, V. (2019). Exploitative innovations are incremental improvements to existing products serving current customers and markets, while exploratory innovations are radical changes contained in new products which are introduced to serve new customers and markets (Benner and Tushman, 2003, He and Wong, 2004). Exploitative innovation refines products and increases efficiency, while exploratory innovation experiments with new features and is related to flexibility (Jansen et al., 2008). They both relate to new knowledge acquisition, although of different types and to different degrees (Gupta et al., 2006). Reasons for the importance of innovation ambidexterity in both activities either exploitation or exploration because when exploration is the dominant activity, failures of explorative innovations and extensive searches will lead to a 'failure trap', whereby firms fail before obtaining returns from experimentation with different products and services (Božič, K., & Dimovski, V. (2019; Levinthal and March, 1993). By contrast, when exploitation is the dominant activity, short-run success increases the risk of stagnation, leaving firms unprepared for environmental changes (Gibson and Birkinshaw, 2004): firms get caught in a 'success trap' in which core capabilities become core rigidities (Leonard-Barton, 1995, Levinthal and March, 1993).

In conclusion, this study entailed a detailed investigation of the internal dynamic capability factors that affect the performance of Algerian exporter firms. These capabilities comprise technological capability, marketing capability, absorptive capacity, and customer relationship management capability. The researcher sought to determine what kind of dynamic capabilities are mor influential factor on export performance which would allow researchers and practitioners to predict the differences between the exporter country and the importing ones in terms of capacities to survival in the foreign markets. The study showed that the major factors that trigger and enforce export performance were technological capability, marketing capability, innovation ambidexterity, and strategic planning effectiveness. The findings of the study provided some guidelines for exporters in general and Algerian exporters in particular about the influential factors that affect export performance.

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