

# Factors Influencing SME Performance: The Mediating and Moderating Role of Social Media Adoption and Organizational Culture

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## Abstract

Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) are considered the backbone of any successful and thriving economy. Therefore, this examines the effect of social media adoption and organizational culture on SME performance in the UAE using an integration of the TOE (Technology, organization, environment) framework and the competing values framework. The study employed quantitative approach. The validity and reliability of the measurement and structural models were established using PLS-SEM to test the hypotheses of the study. The results revealed that technological factor significantly influences the SMEs performance directly. The results also revealed that social media adoption significantly influence the SMEs performance. Nevertheless, organizational and environmental factors had negative impact on the SMEs performance. In addition, media adoption mediates the relationship between technological, organizational and environmental factor and SMEs performance. However, the present study that there is a significant negative effect of organizational culture in the relationship between social media adoption and SMEs performance.

## Keywords:

TOE framework, social media, organizational culture, SMEs performance

## 1. Introduction

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have become a vibrant and dynamic sector of the world economy. Thus, information technology plays a vital role in improving the performance of SMEs (Qalati et al., 2021). According to Ogundana *et al* (2017) in developing countries SMEs constitute over 90% of businesses, representing a major portion of gross domestic product. The UAE is among the developing country with a large SME sector covering 95 percent of private businesses and employing 86 percent of the workforce. Given the emphasis on SMEs in the UAE, it would be helpful to develop greater strategic insight into their use of technology such as information and communication technology, IT and social media. The advancement of the new technology play an important and vital role in the economy of the UAE, it was estimated that SMEs contributed 60% of GDP in 2015 and the government is aiming to boost the share to 70 percent by 2021 (John, 2016; Ahmad, Ahmad, Rahim, & Bakar, 2017; Abu Bakar, Ahmad, & Ahmad, 2019; Jabeen, 2019).

According to Digital Marketing Community (2018) there were 9.38 million active social media users in the United Arab Emirates, representing 99.26% of the population, compared to an average of 64% of all companies that used social media (Digital Marketing Community, 2018). In spite of the fact that individuals in the Middle East have embraced and adopt social media. However, SMEs have not been as keen about this social media technology (Abu Bakar, Ahmad & Ahmad, 2019). In addition, Jabeen (2019) stated that more than 60 percent of the UAE population uses, at least, one type of social media applications but the adoption of social media among SMEs is still below the desired level (Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government, 2014; Jabeen, 2019). Likewise, Jabeen (2019) further explained that SMEs in the UAE were facing major challenges because of the slow adoption of social media tool.

Furthermore, the penetration of social media network is huge in UAE. However, it is not being used for marketing purposes (The global information technology report WEF, 2016). Even though, the UAE is among the top countries in the world, with high percent smartphone penetration (78%) and more social media adoption even higher than the

United States (Nielsen, 2014). This shows that UAE citizen does not make use full advantages of the social network especially with broad coverage more extensive penetration for the online user, persuade them to become online buyers.

Considering the lack of previous empirical studies, specifically from the UAE. Also, there is evidently a gap in the literature regarding studies that have examine the mediating role of social media adoption and moderating effects of organizational culture in the relationship between the TOE characteristics (i.e. technological, organizational, environmental) and SME performance in the context of the UAE. Therefore, this study examines the direct effect of the mentioned independent variables on SMEs Performance in the UAE. Also, investigates the indirect role through mediating role of the social media adoption and moderating effect of the organizational culture. The results of this research could have significant implications for both the theories and the country's public policy and similar contexts in other Middle East in general and neighboring countries particularly.

## **2. PRIOR LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Social media and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)**

Social media has developed different ways to communicate, collaborate and participate by involving users when creating information, this is making social media a daily part of our lives through the connection of people as stated by McCann and Barlow (2015). Scholars such as Tajudeen, Jaafar and Ainin (2017) have argued that the adoption of social media has helped companies understand the need of customers, therefore, social media has its advantages that contributions to positive impacts while organizations use technology. This phenomenon raised hot discussions and arguments on the influence of social media on SMEs by scholars and industries. Several studies recommend that SMEs should adopt social media tools to transform it to business growth (Culnan, McHugh, and Zubillaga, 2010; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; Jagongo, A.O. and Kinyua, C., 2013).

Today, with the advance of the technology, both large organizations as well as small and mediumsized enterprises (SMEs) are using social media to communicate information and respond to competitors with less cost (Tajudeen, Jaafar and Ainin 2017; Ahmad, Rahim, Bakar, & Ahmad, 2018; Jose, 2018). The acceptance and popularity usage of social media technology has changed the way in business in different methods. Thus, large organizations are gaining the benefits of so many diverse types while the SMEs are still lagging far behind in adaptation of this innovative technology of the present century (Nuseir, 2018). Likewise, Nuseir (2018) stated that SMEs are held below the bottom in the competing world regarding earning of profits compared with multinational companies mainly because of not employing modern techniques like digital media in the business activities, marketing and the advertising campaigns (Nuseir, 2018). According to the Arab Social Media Report (2015), the use of social media for most traditional businesses in the Arab region is still at a basic level (TNS Global, 2015). Likewise, some SMEs have expressed concerns that adopting social media may lead to losing control over reputation management aspects (TNS Global, 2015).

In 2011, Derham, Cragg and Morrish, conducted a study in New Zealand with SMEs to find out the "benefit has been obtained by using social media. The study shows that SMEs adopt Facebook page, ads, Youtube, Google map, online review site and foursquare to integrate with their target customer. With help from those social media tools, SMEs are able to get feedback from customers, manage staffs, and acquire customer loyalty and so on. The results provide evidence that social media is efficient, low-cost, convenient, and its full utilization helps SME to co-create value with their customers.

Ahmed and Scheepers (2012) further present several business problems which SMEs face when they implement social media and he further illustrate how they adopt social media to overcome these problems and to derive business expanding. In his study, five SMEs is examined, those SMEs that use social media and the results show social media has a huge impact on SMEs, for instance, one SMEs' revenue increased from 60% to 80%, the other SME decreased the advertising cost by 70%, and the third SME increased website traffic by almost 50% within half year. Likewise, the fourth SME, 75% of their customer got from online (Ahmed and Scheepers, 2012). The fifth SME acquired revenue from growing and organization branding. The study illustrates other various beneficial values as well. Studies carried out by McCann and Barlow (2015) SMEs that adapt different types of social media and introduce them into their

business benefit by building” relations with their customers thus getting more contacts and as well develop brand awareness (Eze et al., 2020).

### **2.3 TOE framework**

The technology-organization-environment or also known as TOE framework was created by Tornatzky and Fleisher (1990). It describes factors that influence technology adoption and its likelihood. TOE characteristic describes the process by which a company adopts and implements technological innovations is influenced by the technological context, the organizational context, and the environmental context (Tornatzky and Fleisher 1990); thus, these three dimensions influence the way a company sees the need for, searches for, and adopts new technology.

#### **Technology factor**

The technological context includes all of the technologies that are relevant to the company. Both technologies that are already in use in the company as well as those that are available in the marketplace but not currently in use (Erind, 2015). Hence, a company’s existing technologies are important in the adoption process because they set a comprehensive perimeter on the scope and pace of technological change that a company can undertake (Hall, 2013). Innovations that exist but are not yet in use at the company also influence innovation; by defining the limits of what is possible as well as by showing companies ways in which technology can enable them to develop and adapt new tools (Sinica, 2013).

Rana *et al* (2019) mentioned that awareness of the relative advantage of a company is beneficial toward enhancing knowledge sharing and overall performance of an organization. Also, Chatterjee & Kumar Kar (2020) stated that compatibility is the extent to which new technology is consistent with prior practices, technology, and current needs, accompanied by present values of Small and medium-sized enterprises. Thus, technological factor is among the most crucial factors to assess the adoption of social media and was slightly used in existing literature, Rana *et al* (2019) under the TOE framework. Therefore, social media is an innovative technology as it provides ways to increase the interaction between customers and organizations (Maroufkhani et al., 2020).

#### **Organization factors**

The organizational context on the other hand refers to the characteristics and resources of the company, including the company’s size, degree of centralization, degree of formalization, managerial structure, human resources, number of slack resources, and connections among employees also culture (Angeles, 2013). Frequent lateral communication, decentralization of leadership and control, and active networking both within and outside the firm are hallmarks of the organic system of the organization (Stalker, 1994). Hence, creating interorganizational collaboration mechanisms is essential in meeting the needs of technological coordination associations, and enabling supply chain partnerships. Also, the top management can boost major organizational changes through developing and communicating a clear image of the company’s strategy, core values, and role of technology in meeting this strategy; next, sending consistent signals both internal and external the firm about the value of the innovation; and lastly through creating a team responsible for crafting a vision relevant to the technology innovation (Tushman and Nadler, 1986) and (Angeles, 2013).

#### **Environment factors**

The last dimension of the TOE framework is the environmental context, it includes the size and structure of the business, the company’s competitors, the macroeconomic context, and the regulatory environment (Jung & Shim, 2013). Hence, the environmental factor is the field surrounding a company, consisting of multiple stakeholders such as organizational members, competitors, suppliers, customers, the government, the community, and so on (Angeles, 2013). Thus, these factors highly influence how an enterprise interprets the needs for innovation, its ability to acquire the resources for pursuing innovation, and its capability for actually deploying it. These stakeholders could either support or block technological innovation (Chatterjee & Kumar Kar, 2020). Furthermore, changing market and competitive conditions prod companies to use various forms of innovation. Government regulation is also another powerful tools for constraining a firm’s operational activities, increasing costs of production, and instigating an investigation of technologies that must meet specified mandatory criteria on the country (Angeles, 2013).

## **2.4 Organizational Culture, Social Media Adoption and SMEs performance**

Organizational culture plays a very vital role in an organization to achieve its objectives. Any organizations that lack proper organizational culture its staff would undoubtedly linger in the pace of achieving organizational objectives (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Researchers are of the view that organizational culture mediates the relationship between social media and SMEs performance (Schlagwein & Prasarnphanich, 2011). Also, past study studies revealed that organizational culture has significant impact on both social media adoption and SMEs performance. For example, research by Hoque, Awang, & Gwadabe (2018) on the influence of organizational culture on social media and performance, in which they employed quantitative methodology and they used 450 respondents for their analysis, they found out that organizational culture increases the ability of the employees to work perfectly with the social media which would leads to organizational performance. Similarly, research conducted by Salam, & Hoque, 2019) with the title influence of organizational culture between social media and SMEs performance, they employed quantitative methodology in their research, and they collect data from 280 respondents, they used SPSS and AMOS for their analysis, their findings show a significant influence of organizational culture on the relationship between social media and SMEs performance.

In addition, Gorondutse, & Hilman (2019) conducted research in Indonesia and investigate the influence of organizational culture on social media tools relationship and performance, they employed quantitative methodology in their research work, their collected data was analysed using SPSS and Smart-PLS, their findings show that, organizational culture significantly influence the relationship between social media tool organizational performance. Moreover, Abdul-Halim, Ahmad, Geare, & Thurasamy, 2018) conducted research on the organizational culture factors that influence social media marketing tools on the organizational performance, they used quantitative methodology and data were collected from 175 respondents, they analysed the collected data using SPSS and AMOS software, their findings show that organizational culture factors have significant influence on social media marketing tools towards organizational performance.

## **2.5 Research framework**

The research framework of the study based on an extensive review of the past studies drawing upon technology–organization–environment framework or also called TOE framework and competing Values Framework (CVF) of organizational culture. Thus, the research framework provides an illustration of the map of the study by showing the variables being studied as well as reveal an outline of the examination. The dependent variable of the study is the SMEs Performance in the UAE, the independent variables of the study are technological, organizational and environmental factor. While the mediating variable is social media and organizational culture is the moderating variable.

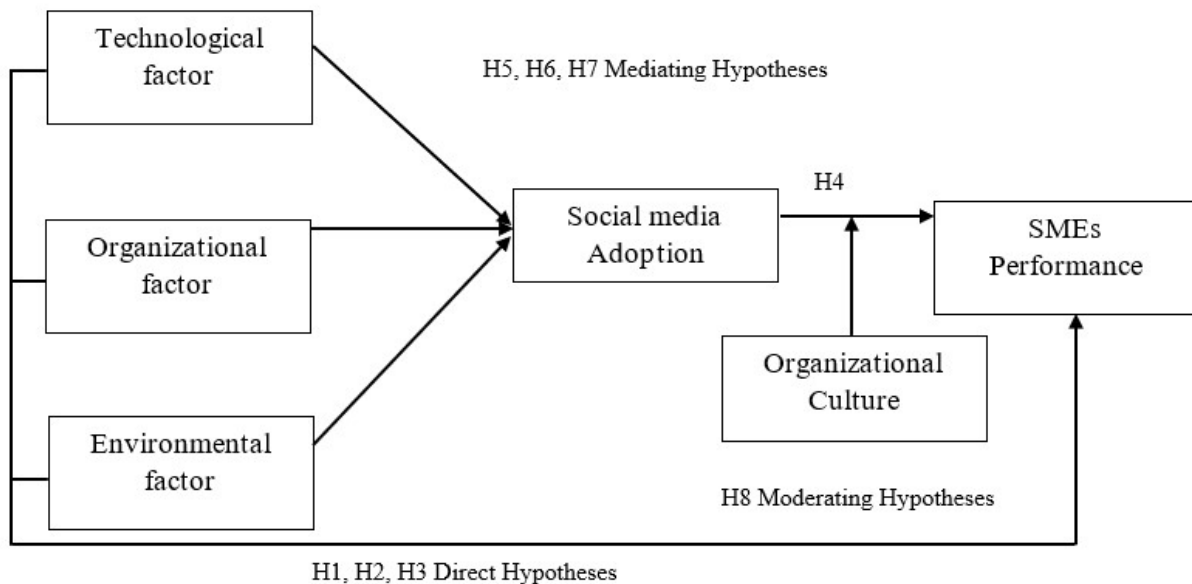


Figure 1: Conceptual model of the study

Figure 1 shows the research framework of the study and the corresponding hypotheses formulated to test the nature of the relationships. Therefore, this study investigates the mediating role of the social media and the moderating effects of organizational culture in the relationship between technological, organizational and environmental factor and SMEs Performance in the UAE.

## 2.6 Hypothesis of the study

The following are the hypotheses of the study.

**H1:** The technological factor has a significant effect on SME performance.

**H2:** The organizational factor has a significant effect on SME performance.

**H3:** The environmental factor has a significant effect on SME performance.

**H4:** Social media adoption has a significant effect on SME performance.

**H5:** Social media adoption positively mediates the relationship between technology and SME performance.

**H6:** Social media adoption positively mediates the relationship between the organization and SME performance.

**H7:** Social media adoption positively mediates the relationship between the environment and SME performance.

**H8:** Organizational culture positively moderates the relationship between social media adoption and SMEs performance

## 3. METHODOLOGY

In this study the sample used was randomly selected from the UAE directory of Small and mediumsized enterprises (SMEs). This lists all the SMEs operating in the country, across the seven main emirates. Thus, a quantitative approach was used; with a survey questionnaire comprises of five sections: section A the demographic background information of the participants. While section B consist of the independent variables technological, organizational and environmental factor as adopted from Ahmad et al (2019) and Qalati et al. (2021) which incorporate 23 items technology, organization and environment. Next, section C comprises mediating variable (Social media adoption) as adopted from Qalati et al. (2021). Moderating variable (Organizational culture) was presented in section D. Lastly, section E comprises of the dependent variable (SMEs performance) as adopted from Ahmad et al (2019) and Qalati et al. (2021).

Notably, all of the related items were examined with the aid of the 5-item scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree as the instrument for data collection. Thus, in this research, the researcher used both face-to-face questionnaire and online ([www.docs.google.com/forms](http://www.docs.google.com/forms)) survey. From total of 600 distributed questionnaire a total of 423 was returned. The validity and reliability of the measurement and structural models were established using PLS-SEM to test the hypotheses of the study.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1 Measurement model evaluation

Table 1 displays the results of the Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). All related constructs related to the study met the required values of the composite reliability which greater than 0.7. Also, AVE met the required values which is expected to be larger than 0.5. The result indicates a satisfactory standard for convergent validity (Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009).

Table 1: Constructs Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Bandwagon effect	0.887	0.930	0.816
Compatibility	0.920	0.940	0.759
Competitive Pressure	0.865	0.918	0.789
Competitive intensity	0.560	0.817	0.692
Complexity	0.914	0.935	0.743
Customer relationship	0.921	0.944	0.809
Entrepreneurial culture	0.954	0.962	0.786
Environmental factor	0.904	0.924	0.605
Hierarchical culture	0.942	0.954	0.777
Information accessibility	0.868	0.919	0.791
Organizational culture	0.982	0.983	0.679
Organizational factor	0.914	0.940	0.797
Rational culture	0.944	0.956	0.784
Relative advantage	0.919	0.937	0.715
SMEs Performance	0.798	0.866	0.628
Social Media Adoption	0.890	0.913	0.520
Social media for marketing	0.898	0.929	0.765
Team culture	0.965	0.970	0.780
Technological factor	0.949	0.956	0.505
Trialability	0.890	0.924	0.752
Visibility	0.898	0.928	0.764

Therefore, the composite reliability results indicated values greater than 0.7, indicating that the measurement scale used in this study had high internal consistency. With such results, these further illustrate that the instrument employed in this study has met the acceptable standards of validity and reliability analyses.

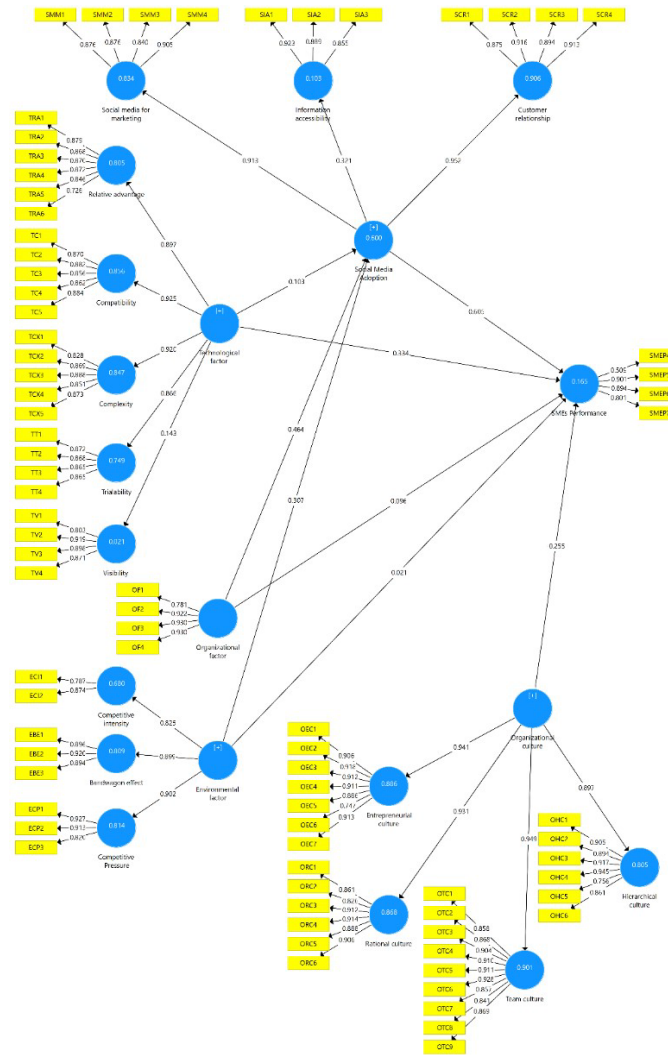


Figure 2: Measurement model

However, two items from customer relationship under the social media dimension scale and three items from SMEs performance scale were deleted because their factor loadings were extremely below the recommended value of 0.5. Their inclusion in the model resulted in AVE values less than the recommended threshold of 0.50, therefore, their deletion from the model. As Ramayah *et al.* (2016) suggested that the number of indicators deleted from a model should be less than 20 percent in order not to transition the research from confirmatory factor analysis to exploratory factor analysis. Thus, since only five items were deleted from the total number of 80 items in the study, this 20 percent criteria for deletion were upheld.

#### 4.2 Structural model evaluation

The significance of the path estimates was determined using the bootstrapping method PLS-SEM. Table 3 shows the path coefficients for the various path model hypothesized in the model. As the results show that technological factor was significantly correlated with SMEs performance ( $\beta = 0.103$ ,  $t$ -statistic 2.343) therefore, hypothesis 1 was supported. Also, hypothesis 4 was supported as the results shows that social media has significant effect on SMEs performance with ( $\beta = 0.605$ ,  $t$ -statistic 3.885). However, H2 and H3 were rejected as shows in Table 3.

Table 3: Significance test for the structural model path coefficient, t-statistics and p-values

Path	Std $\beta$	Std Error	t-statistic	p-value	Decision
Technological factor -> Social Media Adoption	0.103	0.044	2.343	0.020	Supported
Organizational factor -> Social Media Adoption	0.464	0.044	10.580	0.000	Supported
Environmental factor -> Social Media Adoption	0.307	0.053	5.787	0.000	Supported
Technological factor -> SMEs Performance	-0.334	0.071	4.693	0.000	Supported
Environmental factor -> SMEs Performance	0.021	0.075	0.282	0.778	Not supported
Organizational factor -> SMEs Performance	0.096	0.069	1.385	0.167	Not supported
Social Media Adoption -> SMEs Performance	0.605	0.156	3.885	0.000	Supported

Table 4 presents the mediating role of social media adoption and moderating effect of the organizational culture. From the results social media adoption mediate the relationship between technological, organizational and environmental factor and SMEs performance.

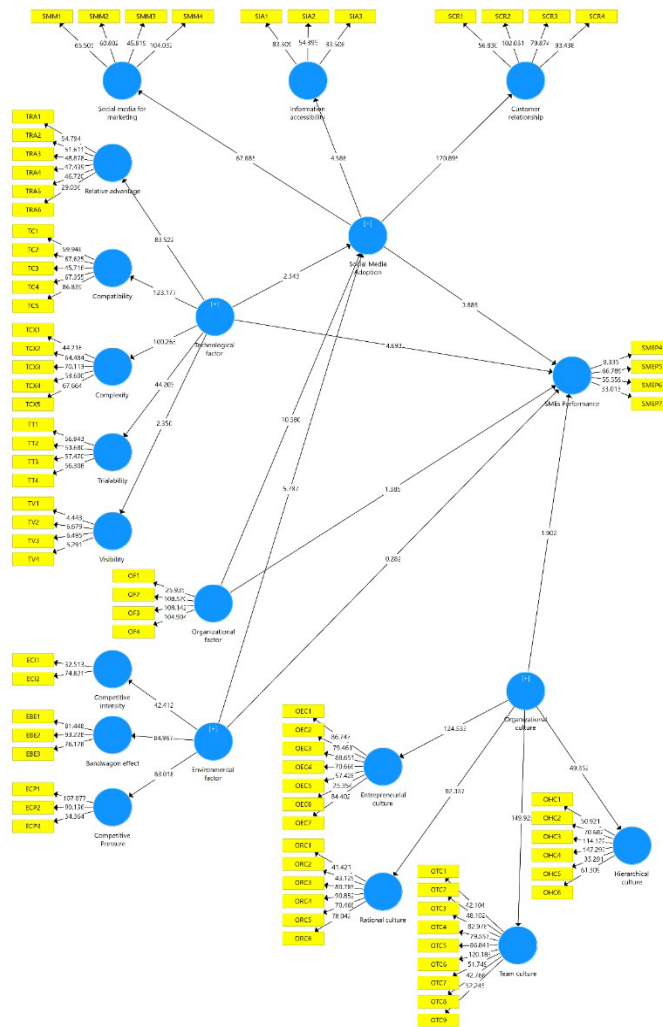


Figure 3: Structural model of the study (mediating role of the social media)



Although, technological factor, organizational factor and environmental factor on social media adoption. However, organizational factor and environmental does not have significant effect on SMEs performance.

Table 4: Mediating Role of Social Media Adoption and Moderating Effect of Organizational Culture results

<b>Mediating role of social media adoption</b>					
<b>Path</b>	<b>Std <math>\beta</math></b>	<b>Std Error</b>	<b><i>t</i>- statistic</b>	<b><i>p</i>- value</b>	<b>Decision</b>
Environmental factor -> Social Media Adoption -> SMEs Performance	0.186	0.061	3.051	0.002	Supported
Organizational factor -> Social Media Adoption -> SMEs Performance	0.281	0.083	3.384	0.001	Supported
Technological factor -> Social Media Adoption -> SMEs Performance	0.062	0.028	2.191	0.029	Supported
<b>Moderating effect of organizational culture</b>					
<b>Path</b>	<b>Std <math>\beta</math></b>	<b>Std Error</b>	<b><i>t</i>- statistic</b>	<b><i>p</i>- value</b>	<b>Decision</b>
Moderating Effect of the organizational culture -> SMEs Performance	-0.134	0.069	1.943	0.053	Not supported

However, as shows in Table 4, there is a significant negative effect of organizational culture in the relationship between social media adoption and SMEs performance. This implies that in the UAE organizational culture is not strengthen the relationship between social media and SMEs performance.

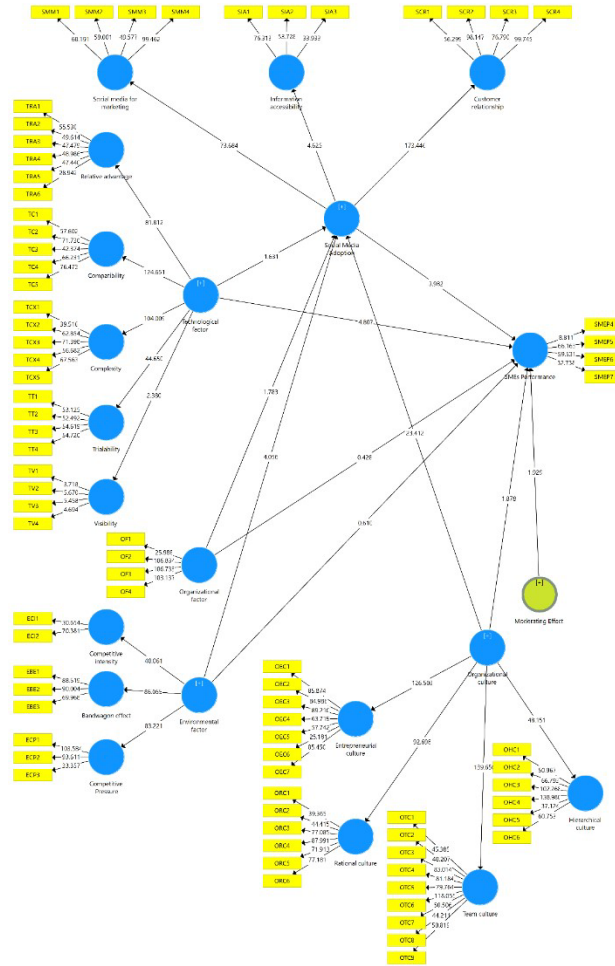


Figure 4: Structural model of the study (moderating effect of the organizational)

Despite the fact that the results revealed that there is direct relationship between social media and SMEs performance. However, organizational culture shows significant negative impact as the moderation variable between the two indicators.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The results from this study confirmed that the technological factor significantly influences the SMEs performance directly. The results also revealed that social media adoption significantly influence the SMEs performance. Nevertheless, organizational and environmental factors had negative impact on the SMEs performance. In addition, media adoption mediates the relationship between technological, organizational and environmental factor and SMEs performance. This result contradicting with the findings of Ahmad et al (2019) who study on social media adoption and its impact on firm performance in the UAE. Their results showed that social media adoption had no effect on SMEs' performance (Ahmad et al., 2019). However, the present study that there is a significant negative effect of organizational culture in the relationship between social media adoption and SMEs performance. This implies that in the UAE organizational culture is not strengthening the relationship between social media and SMEs performance. This results in line with the work of Reyaee and Ahmed (2015) and Ahmad et al. (2019) notes that although, the use of social media has increased drastically in the UAE, online privacy concerns, building trust are highly sensitive issues in this region. As a result, protection actions such as censorship and government regulations are characteristic of the culture in the UAE, which may transcend into the organisational cultural context such as the SME business environment. Therefore, an understanding of the role organizational culture plays in social media adoption and firm performance become particularly imperative given these instances.

## 6. RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

This research is of great significance to SMEs in which it bridged the gap and serve as a research reference for academicians, it will also provide the future areas of research as regards to social media and SMEs performance. Similarly, this research serves as a policy guide to policymakers not only in SMEs but in all other industries, this means, this study has the relevant contents that would help the policymakers in decision making as regards to not only SMEs in UAE but all the other sectors in country and world in general. This research if properly employed would undoubtedly help the policymakers in decision making as regards social media and SMEs performance in UAE. This study would be of great benefit to SMEs as it provided an avenue through which SMEs in UAE understand greatly the role social media marketing tools plays in their performance.

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