

The Impact of the Alignment of Business, Information Technology, and Marketing Strategies on Organizational Efficiency in the Tehran Telecommunications Administration

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ABSTRACT:

Business strategy is an innovative approach for leveraging unique organizational assets, strengthening competitive advantage, and improving overall company performance. It encompasses the actions and decisions that an organization plans and implements in order to achieve its business objectives. The present study aimed to investigate and determine the effect of aligning business strategies, information technology (IT) strategies, and marketing strategies on organizational efficiency. This research is classified as an applied study. The statistical population consisted of 460 senior and middle managers working in Iran's telecommunications companies across the information technology, business, and marketing sectors. Based on the Morgan table, a sample size of 210 participants was selected. Standardized questionnaires were employed as the data collection instrument. To analyze the sub-hypotheses, regression analysis was applied, while structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to evaluate the overall research model. The findings indicated that business strategies, IT strategies, and marketing strategies have a significant positive effect on organizational efficiency. In addition, the structural equation modeling results confirmed that the proposed research model demonstrated an acceptable level of fit. The results suggest that achieving superior marketing performance has become a major concern for telecommunications managers. Therefore, organizations should adopt and implement diverse marketing strategies in order to attain enhanced performance, particularly during periods of economic recession and within complex and dynamic business environments.

Keywords: *Business Strategy, Information Technology Strategy, Marketing Strategy, Organizational Efficiency*

INTRODUCTION:

In today's business environment, rapid changes in technology, software and hardware systems, market knowledge, and even the political and economic conditions of countries, combined with the need for innovation and operational agility, have created substantial challenges for organizations (Hatami, 2011). Researchers in the field of strategic management have long emphasized the importance of aligning organizational strategies with overall business strategy (Camin, 2013). Such strategic alignment enables organizations to pursue their objectives in a more coordinated and focused manner, ultimately improving organizational performance and efficiency (Hoffer, 2011). According to Haghighi et al. (2014), business strategic orientations can be categorized into three dimensions: proactive, defensive, and analytical orientations. Similarly, Salimi et al. (2016) identified flexibility, efficiency, and comprehensiveness as the primary dimensions of information technology strategic orientation. Moreover, based on the study by Narver and Slater (1990), marketing strategic orientation consists mainly of customer orientation and competitor orientation.

Although previous research has shown that strategic alignment generally improves organizational efficiency, it has also been recognized as one of the greatest challenges faced by managers. Moreover, researchers still possess limited knowledge regarding how strategic alignment can be structured and implemented to enhance organizational performance effectively (Nano et al., 2019). In addition, Narver and Slater (1990) described market orientation, regarded as one of the key business strategies, as an organizational culture that efficiently and effectively encourages behaviors aimed at creating superior value for customers while simultaneously improving organizational performance and efficiency. They further argued that market orientation is composed of three major behavioral dimensions: (1) customer orientation, (2) competitor orientation, and (3) interfunctional coordination (Lado, 1998). Accordingly, the present study aims to broaden the existing understanding of strategic alignment across different organizational sectors by addressing the following two research gaps.

The first research gap relates to the limited understanding of triadic alignment among business, information technology (IT), and marketing strategies. Business strategy explains how an organization

coordinates its activities to achieve its overall objectives. In contrast, marketing strategy supports business strategy by identifying environmental threats and opportunities, helping the organization attain a favorable market position (Barnard, 1999). Strategy has also been defined as the optimal allocation of scarce resources to achieve economic goals. It determines the scope of organizational activities within a complex and dynamic environment and serves as a mechanism that activates the human element within an organization, motivating individuals toward action (Qashqaei, 2019). Marketing strategy focuses on how a firm can effectively differentiate itself from competitors and leverage its unique strengths to deliver superior value to customers in a given environment (Cook, 2002). At the same time, information technology has increasingly become a vital component of most organizations, significantly influencing the formulation and implementation of both business and marketing strategies (Sin, 2005). It is generally expected that organizational efficiency depends largely on the extent to which business, IT, and marketing strategies are effectively aligned and mutually reinforcing (Day, 1997). However, previous research has mainly examined bilateral alignment effects, such as between business and IT strategies, marketing and IT strategies, or marketing and business strategies (Funk, 2021). To the best of current knowledge, no study has comprehensively investigated the impact of triadic strategic alignment among business, IT, and marketing strategies on business performance.

The second research gap concerns the limited understanding of strategic alignment when firms' specific strategic orientations are simultaneously taken into account. Strategic orientation refers to the overall set of guiding principles and approaches that a company uses to achieve its business objectives. For example, organizations may adopt different strategic orientations in relation to business, information technology, or marketing activities (Narver & Slater, 1990). Accordingly, firms seeking to align their strategies should consider their distinct strategic orientations, as these orientations play an essential role in enabling organizations to achieve effective strategic alignment and accomplish their business goals (Walker, 2015). However, in most studies examining the relationship between alignment and performance, strategic orientations are rarely incorporated as an integrated factor.

According to Drazin and Van de Ven (1985), alignment is not restricted to the relationship between two factors; rather, it can also be multivariate in nature. As more factors are considered simultaneously, richer and more comprehensive insights can be obtained. Therefore, understanding triadic strategic alignment is expected to assist organizations in appropriately formulating information technology and marketing strategies that coherently support their specific business strategic orientation. In this regard, the present study seeks to develop and test a triadic strategic alignment model. Based on configuration theory and its emphasis on

identifying the fit among multiple organizational factors, this research examines the alignment between business, information technology, and marketing strategic orientations (Chen, 2008).

By focusing on the fit among specific strategic orientations, this study seeks to show that an organization can achieve an optimal level of strategic alignment based on its own strategic orientations, and that such alignment can enhance its overall performance. The purpose of this research is to investigate the impact of aligning business strategies, information technology strategies, and marketing strategies on organizational efficiency in the Tehran Telecommunications Administration. The main research question is whether business strategies, information technology strategies, and marketing strategies have a significant effect on organizational efficiency in the Tehran Telecommunications Administration.

Theoretical Foundations of the Study:

Business Strategies:

Business strategy is an innovative approach that enables an organization to showcase its unique resources, strengthen competitive advantage, and enhance the performance of its various components. It reflects the set of planned actions and decisions that a company implements in order to achieve its business objectives (Mohammadi, 2014). Recent studies have shown a positive and direct relationship between market orientation and financial measures of business performance. For instance, Kotler et al. (2000) identified a positive association between market orientation and business outcomes in terms of profitability and revenue in quantitative studies. Similarly, more recent research has confirmed a positive relationship between market orientation and non-financial performance indicators (Zhang, 2014). The link between market orientation and organizational performance has also been highlighted by Aaker (2005). To explain this relationship, it can be argued that a higher level of market orientation within a firm—reflected in a stronger ability to meet customer needs—leads to greater profitability compared to organizations with lower levels of market orientation.

Research on market orientation has primarily focused on demonstrating its direct impact on various business outcomes, such as innovation, organizational commitment, new product success, and overall organizational performance. Accordingly, findings indicate that the most significant outcome of market orientation is improved business performance. Studies also suggest that a market-oriented organizational culture indirectly influences financial performance through its effects on market performance and managerial effectiveness. In addition, Davis (1999) concluded in his study that there is a strong correlation between objective and subjective performance indicators (Mirzaeian, 2019).

Information Technology Strategies:

Information technology strategies refer to the set of approaches related to software systems, hardware infrastructure, telecommunications, database management, and other information-processing technologies used within computer-based information systems (Jorgensen & Stiro, 2010: 23). The adoption of computers and information technology has led to significant changes in organizations. These changes can be observed in areas such as organizational structure, authority distribution, power relations, job design, employee hierarchies, supervision processes, and managerial roles (Rasouli Pashteh et al., 2010). Information technology can also influence decision-making processes and even alter decision-making styles. For example, it enables faster data collection for decision-making. Web-based intelligent agents can monitor environments and interpret information effectively. Overall, developments in IT reduce the time required to complete each stage of the decision-making process. At the operational level, information technology and computer systems contribute to the expansion of automation, allowing organizations to perform complex tasks more quickly and efficiently at lower cost. At the same time, operational use of IT helps simplify organizational processes, thereby increasing system efficiency and improving the effective utilization of both human and technological resources (Jahanpour, 2011).

Marketing Strategies:

Marketing strategy is a process or framework that enables an organization to utilize its resources efficiently in order to identify and capitalize on the most favorable opportunities for increasing sales, ultimately leading to the creation of a sustainable competitive advantage (Kotler, 2005). The main focus of marketing strategy is the effective allocation and coordination of marketing activities and resources to achieve a firm's operational objectives within a specific product–market context. Accordingly, a key issue in marketing strategy is the identification and selection of target markets for a particular product or product line. Firms then aim to achieve competitive advantage and generate synergy through the careful design and implementation of the marketing mix—namely product, price, place, and promotion—based on the needs and preferences of potential customers in the target market (Polonsky, 1995).

The foundation of strategic planning at all organizational levels is the identification of threats in order to avoid or mitigate them, as well as the recognition of opportunities to exploit them effectively. The primary strategic responsibility of managers is to continuously monitor the external environment so that the organization and its activities can be aligned with environmental changes. Because marketing managers operate at the interface between the organization, customers, distributors, and competitors, they are usually more aware of changes and dynamics in the market environment. As a result, they are not only

responsible for developing strategic plans for their product–market offerings, but also often play a central role in the organization's broader strategic planning process at the business level (Ebrahimpour, 2012).

Organizational Efficiency

Efficiency is defined as the extent to which resources are used to perform a specific activity (Amini, 2009). In 1958, the European Productivity Agency defined efficiency as the degree of effective utilization of production factors. It also emphasized that efficiency represents a mindset and attitude based on the belief that individuals can continuously improve their performance and accomplish tasks better than before. From this perspective, belief in productivity improvement reflects a strong commitment to human development and progress. In the establishment statement of the Japan Productivity Center in 1955, efficiency was defined in relation to its objectives as the optimal use of physical, human, and other resources through scientific methods. According to this view, efficiency contributes to reducing production costs, expanding markets, increasing employment, and improving the overall standard of living. From the perspective of the Japan Productivity Center, efficiency is considered a national priority that enhances social welfare and helps reduce poverty. Since its establishment in 1955, the center has guided Japan's national productivity movement based on three key principles: increasing employment, cooperation between labor and management, and the fair distribution of productivity gains among management, workers, and consumers (Mosarat, 2019).

Table 1. Summary of Previous Research

Year	Author	Title	Result
2014	Bagheri Hashti	Design and development of a model of key factors influencing information technology application in public organizations of industrial provinces of Iran	The factors were reduced to five key dimensions: planning and control, capacity for change, top management support, positive attitude, and organizational support.
2015	Baghayi	Investigation of the impact of information technology on organizational structural dimensions in the National Iranian Oil Company	The effect of IT adoption on organizational complexity and reduction of formalization was not confirmed; however, the reduction of centralization in the

			organization, which was the main hypothesis, was supported at the 95% confidence level.	2014	Barals	Key barriers to effective information technology strategy implementation in federal organizations of Nigeria	Four main barriers to IT adoption were identified: high cost of IT equipment, high maintenance and repair costs, frequent system failures, and high training costs.
2012	Ershad	Examining the impact of alignment between business, information technology, and marketing strategies on organizational efficiency	The results showed that (a) triadic strategic alignment has a positive effect on firm performance, and (b) an ideal triadic strategic alignment exists for prospectors and defenders. This study contributes to the strategic alignment literature and helps managers understand how to align business, IT, and marketing strategies to improve firm performance.	2015	Mosbahi Jahromi	Information technology strategy, organization, and productivity in the public sector	The study found that the selection and implementation of information technology leads to increased organizational complexity, implementation complexity, and a greater need for trained personnel in this field.

Based on the theoretical foundations and the review of previous studies, the conceptual model of the research is presented in Figure 1.

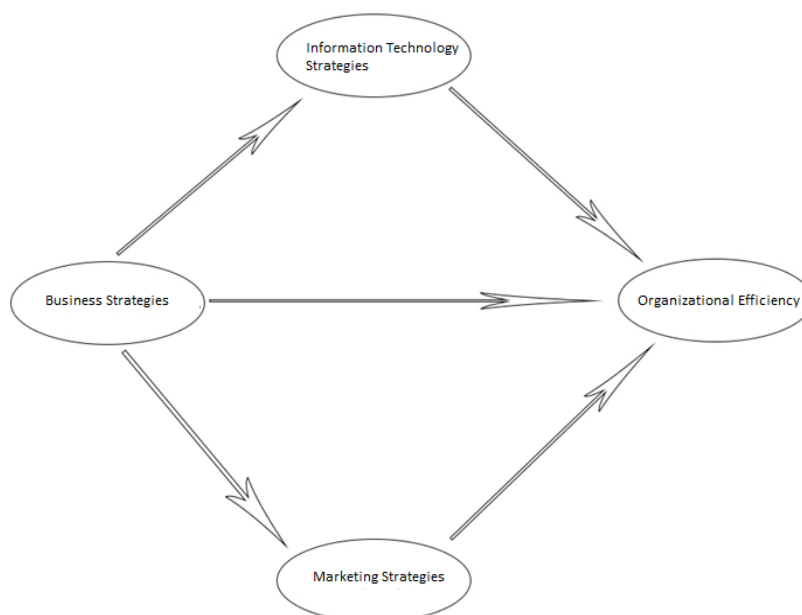


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of the Study

Research Methodology:

Given that one of the main objectives of this study is to examine relationships between variables, the research is classified as applied. It is also a descriptive-analytical study and follows a cross-sectional design. The statistical population consists of 460 individuals, including senior and middle managers of Iran Telecommunication Company across three departments: information technology, business, and marketing. This population includes currently active managers, with the study primarily focusing on senior managers, since the exact number of middle managers was not available in the organization's database. The population includes 201 IT managers, 122 marketing managers, and 137 business managers. The sample size, which covers managers from the three departments (IT, business, and marketing), was determined to be 210 based on the Krejcie and Morgan table. The inclusion criteria for participation were familiarity with the research topic and at least five years of work experience in the telecommunications sector. From the selected sample, cluster sampling was used to allocate respondents as follows: 81 managers from the IT department, 66 from the marketing department, and 63 from the business department. Overall, the study employed a random sampling approach.

In this study, the researcher used library-based sources to collect information related to the theoretical foundations, literature review, and previous studies. These sources included Persian and English books and articles, internet resources, and related empirical research in this field. The data collection instrument used in this research was a set of standardized questionnaires. The standardized Business Strategy questionnaire was developed by Glazer (1991). In a study by Gilgeous, the validity and reliability of this questionnaire were reported as 0.95 and 0.91, respectively (Glazer, 1991). The standardized Information Technology Strategy questionnaire was developed by Funk et al. (2021), with reported validity and reliability coefficients of 0.82 and 0.87, respectively. The standardized Marketing Strategy questionnaire was developed by Ganji (2015), with validity and reliability values of 0.79 and 0.92, respectively. Finally, the standardized Organizational Efficiency questionnaire developed by Pinpriyan and Singh Sai was used, with reported validity and reliability coefficients of 0.81 and 0.74, respectively. For data analysis, linear regression analysis and structural equation modeling (SEM) were used.

Findings:

The results showed that 118 participants, accounting for 53.6% of the sample, were male, while 102 participants, representing 46.4%, were female. Regarding age distribution, 32 participants (14.5%) were in the 20–30 age group, 77 participants (35%) were in the 30–40 age group, 63 participants (28.6%) were in the 40–50 age group, 38 participants (17.3%) were in the 50–60 age group, and 10 participants (4.3%) were over 60 years old. In terms of educational level, 5 participants (2.3%)

held a diploma, 15 participants (6.8%) held an associate degree, 87 participants (39.5%) held a bachelor's degree, 49 participants (22.3%) held a master's degree, and 64 participants (29.1%) held a doctoral degree.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Strategic Orientation	4.04	0.562
Information Technology Orientation	4.14	0.679
Marketing Orientation	4.12	0.483
Organizational Efficiency and Performance	4.12	0.480

Based on Table (2), the mean score for strategic orientation is 4.04, which indicates a relatively high level. In addition, information technology orientation has a mean of 4.14, marketing orientation has a mean of 4.12, and organizational performance has a mean of 4.12. All of the studied variables have mean values above the average level, suggesting that these constructs are generally in a favorable condition.

Table 3. KMO and Bartlett's Test Results

Instrument	KMO Measure	Bartlett's Chi-Square	Degrees of Freedom	Significance Level
Total Questionnaire	0.930	4825.451	560	0.0001

As presented in Table (3), the significance indicators confirm the suitability of the data for analysis. The KMO value for the research instrument is close to 1, indicating excellent sampling adequacy. Furthermore, the Bartlett's test statistic (an approximation of the chi-square value) and the significance level (less than 0.05) show that factor analysis is appropriate for identifying the structure of the questionnaires. In addition, the sample size is adequate for conducting factor analysis on the research instrument.

Table 4. Regression Analysis for Determining the Impact of Business Strategies on Organizational Efficiency

Hypothesis	R	R ²	F	Si g. (F)	B	Beta	t	Si g. (t)
H1	0.835	0.698	503.001	0.001	0.978	0.835	22.428	0.001

The results presented in Table (4) show that business strategy has the ability to predict organizational efficiency. Since the t-value is greater than 1.96 and the significance level (p-value) is lower than 0.05, it can be

concluded that business strategy has a significant effect on organizational efficiency.

Table 5. Regression Analysis for the Impact of Information Technology Strategies on Organizational Efficiency

Hypothesis	R	R ²	F	Si g. (F)	B	Beta	t	Si g. (t)
H2	0.82	0.67	452.59	0.001	1.16	0.82	21.27	0.001

The results presented in Table (5) show that information technology strategy has the ability to predict organizational efficiency. As the t-value is greater than 1.96 and the significance level (p-value) is lower than 0.05, it can be concluded that information technology strategy has a significant impact on organizational efficiency.

Table 6. Regression Analysis for the Impact of Marketing Strategies on Organizational Efficiency

Hypothesis	R	R ²	F	Si g. (F)	B	Beta	t	Si g. (t)
H3	0.99	0.99	3715.16	0.001	10.00	0.00	19.75	0.001

The results presented in Table (6) show that marketing strategy has predictive power over organizational efficiency. Since the t-value is greater than 1.96 and the significance level (p-value) is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that marketing strategies have a significant impact on organizational efficiency.

Table 7. Model Fit Indices

χ^2/df	GFI	CFI	AGFI	NFI	RMSEA
2.38	0.91	0.93	0.91	0.74	0.35

The fit indices presented in Table (7) indicate that the research model demonstrates an acceptable fit in the structural equation modeling analysis.

CONCLUSION:

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of aligning business strategies, information technology strategies, and marketing strategies on organizational efficiency in the Tehran Telecommunications Administration. The findings regarding business strategy indicated that it has a significant predictive effect on organizational efficiency.

Organizational performance is a multidimensional concept that can be evaluated through various aspects, including financial performance, customer satisfaction, internal processes, and learning and growth. Therefore, an effective organizational strategy should consider all of these dimensions. Achieving desirable performance requires a combination of factors, conditions, and managerial actions, among which the alignment of business strategy with performance improvement is identified as one of the most important determinants based on the results of this study. Despite extensive research in the strategy–performance domain, there is still no consensus regarding the nature and extent of this relationship. As a result, this area remains highly attractive for both academic researchers and practitioners. Consistent with previous studies and the findings of the present research, the assumption that a stronger strategic orientation leads to improved organizational performance is considered a valid and well-supported proposition, confirmed by numerous studies in this field. An effective strategy, based on reliable data and aligned with environmental conditions, can significantly enhance organizational performance. It is also important to note that the Telecommunications Company, as a leading and entrepreneurial organization in the country, values the effort, expertise, and commitment of its employees at all levels and regards internal development and national service as core values. The company seeks to become the largest entrepreneurial organization and provider of specialized human capital, while delivering advanced communication services in line with modern global technologies. One of the organization's main objectives is to maintain an active and strategic presence in the national telecommunications industry to strengthen its position and enhance the brand of its services at both national and international levels. Aligning organizational strategies with performance can have significant positive effects, enabling strategic review and fostering constructive organizational change. This, in turn, supports the development of appropriate strategic plans and the implementation of necessary actions to improve performance under changing conditions such as sanctions and communication

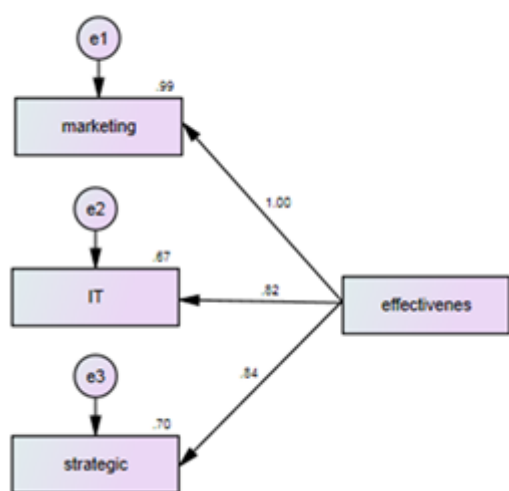


Figure 2. Standardized Output Model of the Software

The model shown in Figure (2) illustrates the effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable along with their corresponding coefficients, and it confirms the main hypothesis of the study.

challenges. The findings of this study are consistent with those reported by Ardalan (2015) and Izadi (2014). The analysis of the impact of information technology strategies on organizational efficiency showed that IT strategy has a significant predictive effect on organizational efficiency. Information technology is considered a key resource for organizations in achieving competitive advantage and promoting innovation. Strategic alignment refers to the integration and coordination between IT applications and organizational goals. In this regard, IT plans should reflect the organization's mission, objectives, and business strategies, while business strategies should also serve as a guiding framework for designing IT plans, applications, and technologies. Information technology strategies and information systems determine how organizations operate in today's dynamic environment and respond to diverse customer demands. Moreover, IT strategy defines the organization's mission and business objectives, as well as the ways in which technology supports their achievement. Establishing a performance evaluation system that is consistent with the organization's structure, culture, and climate is essential for improving employee performance through a technology-oriented approach. The effectiveness of such systems depends on the application of appropriate principles and, importantly, they must be aligned with organizational performance; otherwise, weaknesses in the IT structure may emerge, which can negatively affect the entire organization. Information and communication technologies, including the internet, have not only influenced IT professionals and employees who regularly use these systems but have also transformed organizational environments and society as a whole. Managers need to be aware of these changes and adapt accordingly. In particular, significant changes are expected in employee motivation, with a trend toward greater individualization in the future. This implies that employees will have more specific and differentiated needs, which should be reflected in IT strategies within the telecommunications sector to ultimately enhance organizational performance. These findings are consistent with previous research by Derini (2015), Dargahi (2016), Daneshfard (2015), Jahanian (2015), Patrick et al. (1997), Arabzadeh (2009), Menon (1992), Friedman (1994), and Day et al. (1990).

The examination of the impact of marketing strategies on organizational efficiency showed that marketing strategy has a significant predictive effect on organizational efficiency. Decisions related to the formulation of marketing strategies are generally aimed at increasing customer satisfaction and achieving higher profitability for the organization. Marketing strategy is one of the most important components of overall organizational strategy, and other organizational strategies are typically developed and implemented in alignment with it. This is because marketing strategies primarily focus on achieving the financial objectives of the organization, which, even if not the only goals, play a fundamental role in supporting other organizational

objectives. This is also applicable to organizations such as telecommunications companies, where marketing strategy plays an important role in the effective delivery of services and in increasing organizational revenue. Therefore, aligning organizational strategies is essential for improving overall performance. In such conditions, achieving strong marketing performance has become one of the most important concerns of telecommunications managers. They need to utilize various marketing strategies to achieve superior performance in both recessionary periods and complex, dynamic environments. Accordingly, understanding the effects of business cycles on performance, as well as the role of marketing strategies during economic downturns, is essential. The need to develop effective responses to recession highlights the importance of designing innovative and efficient marketing strategies. Marketing strategy can be considered one of the most influential factors in determining an organization's profitability, growth, or stagnation, particularly in telecommunications organizations.

Pasbani (2015) conducted a study titled *"Identification of Business Strategies for Coping with Environmental Uncertainty: A Review Study."* The results showed that the integration of organizing themes led to the identification of four types of strategies for dealing with uncertainty, namely foresight, adaptation, acceptance, and adjustment. The similarity between the present study and Pasbani's research lies in the selection of business strategy as a key variable, and there is also some overlap in the findings. However, the main difference between the two studies is their research methodology; the present study is quantitative, whereas Ismailzadeh's study is a qualitative, library-based research.

Asadi (2021) conducted a study entitled *"The Moderating Role of Business Strategy in the Relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility Dimensions and Firms' Economic Performance."* The results showed that economic value added and market value added are positively affected and improved through the implementation of corporate social responsibility across different dimensions. In addition, business strategy has a positive and significant moderating effect on this relationship. The similarity between the two studies lies in their focus on business strategy as a key variable and their use of similar analytical approaches, with some overlap in the findings. However, the main difference is related to the selection of independent and dependent variables. Based on these results, managers of the telecommunications company can improve organizational efficiency by making decisions aligned with business strategies. Furthermore, by considering managerial, financial, and marketing factors in their decision-making processes, they can enhance organizational performance. In addition, paying attention to information technology strategies in organizational activities can also contribute to improving efficiency.

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