

Digital Transformation and its Role in Enhancing Competitive Capabilities: A Case Study of Algeria Telecom Enterprise

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Abstract

The study aimed to analyze the role of digital transformation in enhancing the competitive capabilities of Algeria Telecom Corporation. It employed the VRIO model as an analytical tool to assess the organization's capabilities and resources. The results indicate that digital transformation serves as a strategic lever for enhancing the enterprise's competitive capabilities; however, not all of these capabilities translate into sustainable competitive advantages. To achieve this, they must be leveraged through investments in human Competencies, the standardization of service quality across the country, and the development of a distribution network based on smart applications.

Keywords : Digital transformation, competitive capabilities, VRIO model, Algeria Telecom.

Introduction

Like other institutions, "Algeria Telecom" is keeping pace with radical transformations resulting from the digital transformation at the global level. After institutions used to operate in an environment where material, financial, human and technological resources interacted to achieve sustainable competitive advantages, digital transformation has become a strategic pillar enabling Algeria Telecom to strengthen its competitiveness against other market players (Ooredoo, Djezzy); this transformation is not limited to infrastructure development alone but also encompasses enhancing operational efficiency and modernizing its service portfolio, updating its service portfolio and enhancing the customer experience, despite the corporation's monopoly over certain services such as fixed-line telephone and fixed internet. It is nonetheless compelled to keep pace with technological advancements and invest in both its tangible and intangible resources.

1. Research Problem:

Digital transformation has become an inevitable strategic choice for the enterprise. It requires moving beyond the traditional view of digitization as merely a technical tool, and instead treating it as a comprehensive strategy that impacts competitive capabilities. Accordingly, the research problem can be formulated as follows:

What is the role of digital transformation in enhancing the competitiveness of Algeria Telecom ?

This central issue encompasses a number of sub-questions :

- What are the key digital resources and capabilities possessed by Algeria Telecom?
- Do all these resources and capabilities constitute a source of sustainable competitive advantage ?
- What are the challenges limiting the enterprise's ability to transform its digital resources into a sustainable competitive advantage ?

2. Study Hypotheses:

a. Main Hypothesis: Digital transformation plays a role in enhancing the competitive capabilities of Algeria Telecom.

b. Sub-hypotheses:

- Algeria Telecom possesses digital resources and capabilities that constitute a source of competitive advantage.

- These resources and capabilities constitute a source of sustainable competitive advantage.
- Algeria Telecom faces challenges that limit its ability to transform its digital resources into a sustainable competitive advantage.

Second: Digital Transformation

A. Definition of Digital Transformation:

Digital transformation reflects the depth and integration of digital technologies within the organization. It represents a transition from legacy systems to systems based on a more flexible infrastructure built upon cloud services, mobile platforms, and integrated, sequential workflows (Rashidin, Taheri, & Javed, 2026).

A process aimed at improving an entity by making changes to its characteristics through a combination of information, computing, and communication technology (Henrico, Branderhorst, Tummers, & Meijer, 2025, p. 03).

It refers to the changes that digital technology brings to an the enterprise's business model., leading to changes in products, organizational structures, or process automation (Erik Andersson, 2022, p. 04).

Digital transformation is also characterized as a structured process based on the integration and interconnection of infrastructure, skills, innovation, organizational culture, and the institutional context (Małgorzata, Grañiela, Stankevičienė, & Tăran, 2026).

The success of digital transformation hinges on fostering a digital culture (cultural change) which is shaped by how individuals perceive and embrace the shift toward digital technologies, and by influencing the core beliefs associated with the expected benefits, ease of use, social expectations, and supporting structures that make culture a fundamental factor in the success of any adopted technology. The more widely shared organizational values are, the greater the enterprise's capacity to effectively adopt these new technologies (Held, Heubeck, & Meckl, 2026, p. 1692). Indeed, digital transformation is a dynamic, ongoing process that requires enterprises to adapt flexibly to a constantly changing external environment (Mudan & Yuhong, 2026).

B- Dimensions of Digital Transformation:

The digital transformation process is realized through four principal key dimensions (Bouelkamh, 2025, pp. 101-102):

- The strategic dimension : which encompasses the integration of technology and digital trends across various functions to achieve optimal performance, enhancing the services provided and citizen participation by aligning regulatory initiatives with organizational goals, adopting innovative technologies, reimagining and reshaping processes, and developing human resources in the field of digitalization.
- Technical dimension : providing integrated digital infrastructure that ensures the optimal utilization of resources, including operating systems, specialized hardware and equipment, storage media and software, and Specialized technical human competencies to manage and secure this system within advanced technical environments and data centers.
- The Human dimension : investing in human capital as the primary driver of transformation success by training and qualifying staff, equipping them with necessary skills, and fostering an environment rooted in learning and innovation. It is also worth noting the role of organizational culture which plays a pivotal part in guiding individual behavior and facilitating the transfer of knowledge and skills, thereby enabling the organization to adapt to new practices and emerging digital methods.
- Organizational dimension : relates to framing the digital transformation within a system of integrated regulations and procedures, ensuring the alignment and compatibility of digital initiatives with legal and regulatory frameworks. This includes protecting data privacy, addressing threats and misuse, and complying with the rules governing the use of information technology ; In addition to reinforcing infrastructure with

cybersecurity measures to ensure the continuity and integrity of digital systems, and embedding the principles of transparency and accountability as fundamental pillars for enhancing the confidence of customers and the public.

Third: Competitive Capabilities

A. Definition of competitive capabilities:

Porter views competitiveness as the enterprise's ability to attract and sustain any activity that achieves superiority and distinction over competitors (Bouakel, 2019, p. 31).

Al-Sulami defines competitiveness as the skills, technology, or resources an enterprise employs to deliver value and benefits to customers that surpass those offered by competitors, thereby establishing a state of organizational distinction and superiority from the customers' perspective (Al-Sulam, 2001, p. 104).

They are defined as the strengths an enterprise possesses to meet customer expectations, compared to its competitors' ability to do the same. It also indicates the enterprise's ability to compete across various dimensions of competitive priority, including low price, design flexibility, volume flexibility, a broad product line, conformance, performance, delivery speed, reliability, after-sales services, extensive distribution, and advertising (Berglund & Stohm, 2015, p. 06).

B. The VRIO Model of Competitive Capabilities:

Barney developed the VRIO model as a resource analysis tool based on the following dimensions (Benrahmoune, 2023-2024, p. 83):

1. Value: this is embodied in a resource's ability to enable the enterprise to seize opportunities and confront threats. Resources are most valuable when they meet customer requirements with efficiency that surpasses competitors, while generating stable returns that are resistant to erosion.

2. Scarcity: this refers to the monopolization of a resource by a limited number of institutions; the scarcer the resources, the greater the opportunities to build a competitive advantage.

3. Imitation difficulty: this occurs when competitors are unable to acquire the resource or develop alternatives to it within acceptable cost and timeframes.

4. Organization: refers to the readiness of organizational frameworks and structures to fully and effectively utilize resources and transform them into a sustainable competitive advantage.

The following table illustrates the resource characteristics of the VRIO model, which are based on four elements:

Table (01) : VRIO Model Framework

Valuable	Rare?	Is it difficult to imitate?	Exploited by the organization?	Competitive Contents	Strength or Weakness
no	-	-	no	No competitive advantage (competitive disadvantage)	Weakness
Yes	no	-	↕	Symmetrical (equivalent) feature	Strength
Yes	Yes	no		Temporary competitive advantage	Exceptional power and efficiency
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Sustainable competitive advantage	Distinctive, sustainable power and efficiency

Source: (Barney & Hesterly, 2008, p. 92)

Hesterly and Barney (2008) explained the following based on the table above (p. 93):

- **Non-valuable resources:** These constitute an organizational weakness that cannot be leveraged in formulating the organization's strategy ; as the enterprise's reliance on them weakens the enterprise's competitive position compared to competitors, resulting in the absence of a competitive advantage.
- **Resources are valuable but not rare:** exploiting them yields competitive parity rather than a competitive advantage. Furthermore, failure to utilize them leads to a decline in the enterprise's performance ; these valuable, though not rare, resources can be considered organizational strengths.
- **Resources are valuable, scarce, and easy to imitate:** exploiting them leads to a temporary competitive advantage ; It relies on the priority of resource exploitation ; however, this advantage dissipates as soon as competitors notice it. Such resources can be considered an organizational strength and a distinctive competence.
- **Resources are valuable, rare, and difficult to imitate:** exploiting them enables a sustainable competitive advantage; in this scenario, competing enterprises face a significant disadvantage due to the costs involved in imitating the firm's resources or capabilities. This type of resource or capability constitutes an organizational strength and a sustainable distinctive competence for a successful enterprise. Possessing resources with the aforementioned characteristics is not, in itself, sufficient to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage unless supported by efficient organization; if an organization possesses such resources but lacks the organizational capability to fully leverage them, it will achieve only competitive parity or a competitive disadvantage.

Fourth: Case Study of Algeria Telecom

A. Overview of Algeria Telecom:

- **Nature of activity and legal form:** A public joint-stock company operating in the fields of wired and wireless telecommunications, fixed-line telephone, and internet services.
- **Legislative and Foundational Framework:** This was realized through the restructuring of the postal and communications sector under Law No. 2000-03 dated in August 5, 2000, which separated wireline and wireless telecommunications activities, and this is based on the decisions of the National Council for State Shareholdings (CNPE) dated in March 1, 2001, which stipulated the establishment of a public economic enterprise named " Algeria Telecom."
- **Financial and Commercial Data:** It is classified as a joint-stock company with a share capital of 115 billions DZD and was registered in the Trade Register on May 11, 2002, under number 02B 0018083.

Table (02) : Subsidiaries of the Algeria Telecom Group

The Company	Its activities
Algeria Telecom	.Internet, landline telephone
Algeria Telecom Europe	Operation of the "Orval" and "Alval" submarine .cables
Algeria Telecom Mobile (Mobilis)	.Mobile phone, internet services
Algeria Satellite Communications	Communication networks, satellite internet
Commental	Management of excess dark fiber; suppliers-owned .optical networks
Algerian Information and Communication Technology Company	Technological innovation (data control, .communication, and remote supervision)

Source: (Algeria Telecom Group, 2026)

B. Algeria Telecom's Digital Capabilities:

1. Multimedia Call Center: A structure composed of a human apparatus, and communication tools based on a telephony platform; its function is remote customer management, and it is classified into :

Table (03) : Various Call Centers

Call Center	His duties
Information-oriented call centers	Linked to corporate communications regarding products and services, points-of-sale networks, and promotional offers, as well as call centers dedicated to handling complaints (consumer services) or after-sales support.
Commercial-oriented call centers	Remote sales and customer database qualification, debt collection, research, opinion polling, reservations, order renewals, appointment scheduling, etc
Technical support-oriented call centers	Marketing Technical Products

Source: (Multi-channel Contact Center, 2026)

2. Customer Base: Algeria Telecom serves a large customer base, categorized by the type of service provided as follows:

Table (04): Algeria Telecom Customers

Customers type	The number
Internet service customers	More than 6.9 million customers
Those connected to fiber-optic internet	More than 3.6 million customers
ADSL/VDSL Internet Service Customers	More than 1.2 million customers
Idoom 4G internet service customers	More than 2.1 million customers
The Commercial Network	More than 500 commercial agencies
.Authorized commercial agencies at your service	Tagging of 91% of reception sites

Source: (Algeria Telecom in numbers, 2026)

3. Strategic Partnerships: Algeria Telecom has entered into numerous international and national strategic partnerships to develop digital infrastructure; the table below highlights these partnerships:

Table (05): Algeria Telecom's International and National Partnerships

	day	The Partner	Type of partnership and its objective
International partnership	July 23, 2023	Sparkle Telecom Italy	Strategic projects in the field of telecommunications and information and communication technologies for Algeria telecom, concerning: a project to lay a new submarine cable connecting Algeria and Italy; establishing a new point of presence in Europe; providing technical support and guidance to Algeria telecom for the development of a world-class data center in Algeria; and creating a training platform covering cloud computing, networking, digital services, and cybersecurity.

Technological and industrial partnership	October 29, 2025	CATEL FIBER OPTIC	Manufacturing and supplying fiber-optic cables for telecommunications (FTTH) to support the development of Algeria telecom's networks including: transport and access networks in order to meet the growing internet needs of Algerian citizens, organizations, and institutions.
	November 13, 2023	Mobile network operator "Djezzy"	Developing technological solutions, with the aim of leveraging the skills and expertise of each individual to improve the technological solutions and services offered and designed for the Algerian market.
Institutional Academic Partnership	October 30, 2025	Skills Center in Annaba	Eight agreements were signed with the following entities: the Higher School of Management; the Higher School of Technology and Engineering; the Directorate of Vocational Training and Apprenticeship; the Environmental Research Center; the 8 May 1945 University (Guelma); the "JUNA" Association; the "HEDGE" startup accelerator; and the "Seybouse" Chamber of Commerce and Industry. These partnerships aim to foster a spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship, facilitate the exchange of expertise, and organize joint projects and programs in the fields of digitalization, training, and applied research.
	December 8, 2022	Renewable Energy Commission	A cooperation agreement regarding energy efficiency, energy management, and the development of renewable energy within the telecommunications sector.

Source: (Press Center), (Press release : "Signing of a strategic partnership between Algeria telecom satellite and Djezzy, 2023), (Agreement – Algeria telecom Group, 2022)

4. Electronic Services: Algeria Telecom offers a wide range of electronic services, including the transition to fiber-optic (FTTH) technology, online subscription requests, electronic payment, electronic top-up, and 4G LTE services, bill notifications via SMS, electronic billing, the customer portal, My IDOOM, IDOOMLY, etc. In addition, the showcase includes digital solutions and innovative applications such as distance learning platforms (DOROUSCOM) and academic support for various educational levels, the digital library (ECOTEB), LABLABEE, MOALIM, and FTTRGATO (e-services under the theme Your procedures are easier with Algeria Telecom, 2026).

5. Data Protection Policy: This policy outlines how personal data is protected, processed, stored, and shared, while ensuring respect for the customer's rights. Personal data is processed in accordance with Law No. 18/07 dated in June 10, 2018, regarding the protection of natural persons in the field of processing personal data, as well as the directives of the National Authority for the Protection of Personal Data (ANPDP) (Personal Data Protection Policy, 2025).

6. Security, technical, and organizational measures: The measures taken consist of (Personal Data Protection Policy, 2025):

- Securing communication channels and encryption by adopting secure protocols (HTTPS/TLS) to encrypt data exchanged between users' browsers and servers, thereby preventing the risks of eavesdropping or tampering.
- Strict access control: Restricting access rights to personal data while performing duties.

- Segmentation of access rights based on the principle of least privilege to mitigate risks associated with the compromise of internal accounts.
- Periodic security audits and readiness tests, whether internal or external, to measure protection effectiveness and the speed of addressing deficiencies.
- Logging and tracking access to systems containing sensitive data which enables the detection and analysis of suspicious behavior.
- Monitoring and alerting systems (SIEM) for the proactive detection of any intrusion or espionage attempts.
- Cybersecurity: Providing an integrated suite of services, including information systems review, Red Teaming, industrial cybersecurity auditing, and malware analysis.

7. Infrastructure: (Multi-channel Contact Center, 2026)

-Technology: Use of the latest technologies for IT systems, software, databases, and internal information systems.

-Assets : Includes real estate, movable property, and equipment.

-Human Resources: We find :

A. Key staff: Contact Center Head, Contact Center Manager, Planning Officer, Quality Officer, Technical Engineers, Network Engineers...

B. Users responsible for managing incoming and outgoing call center communications : the agent responsible for managing communications entering and leaving the various call centers (remote screener, remote investigator) and administrative officers.

8. Innovation: Algeria Telecom has established "Skills Centers" in Annaba, Setif, and Saïda dedicated to innovation and modern technologies spaces for exploring the latest technical advancements, learning, and collaboration. These centers offer training courses on cutting-edge technological developments, delivered both in-person and via remote video conferencing, and include training facilities ideally suited for trainees. and a dedicated artificial intelligence laboratory for exploring and developing solutions based on emerging technologies. These spaces provide an optimal environment for exchanging ideas and collaboration, housing a modern lecture hall, capable of accommodating over 60 people, for hosting events, seminars, and workshops, alongside a co-working space where professionals and entrepreneurs can meet, share ideas, and develop their projects in an innovation-fostering environment (Skills Center).

9. Quality: In accordance with the (V E R A CO NF O RMI T É, 2026) certificate, the management system of "Algeria Telecom", covering the design, implementation, and maintenance of dedicated links; the integration of information technology solutions for corporate clients; design, implementation, and after-sales service compliant with the ISO 9001: 2015 standard (ISO certification renewal). Despite the renewal of this certification, the quality of service provided by Algeria Telecom does not cover the entire national territory; certain inland and desert regions suffer from service quality issues, a fact noted by the post and electronic communications regulatory authority, and to avoid these shortcomings, the Minister of Post and Telecommunications, Mr. Sid Ali Zerrouki, chaired a working meeting dedicated to monitoring the status of telecommunications networks and service quality across the country. Clear deadlines were established to expand and improve coverage along strategic North-South corridors specifically National roads one, three, and six, and particularly the sections traversing desert and remote areas ; thereby ensuring the continuity of telecommunications services throughout the nation (Science and Technology, 2026).

10. Awards: winning the prestigious "Quality Achievements Award 2026," presented by the European Society for Quality Research (ESQR) (Press Center, 2026). (European Society for Quality Research – ESQR), Leadership in the telecommunications and high-speed internet sector, having won the "Best Practice of Home Broadband Development" award, This accolade follows Algeria Telecom's launch of the African continent's first 1.6 Gbps internet service, in addition to marketing the latest innovative technological solutions through the launch of Wi-Fi 7 and FTTR technologies, as well as expanding Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH) offerings (Press

Center, 2026). Winning two awards in the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) 2026 photos contest, winning the innovative project titled "Artificial intelligence for digital inclusion" led by Mr. El-Hachemi Ibrahim Abdelhak, with the award of the World Summit Award in the "Information and Communication Infrastructure" category in Switzerland (Press Center, 2026).

C. Application of the VRIO tool to Algeria Telecom:

By examining the various digital capabilities of Algeria Telecom, we can map these capabilities against the VRIO framework to identify the enterprise's competitive attributes, and determine whether it possesses a strength, a weakness, or a core competence.

Table (06): Application of the VRIO model to Algeria Telecom

Capabilities	Valuable?	Rare?	Is it difficult to imitate?	Exploited by the organization?	Competitive Contents	Strength or Weakness
Strategic Partnerships	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Sustainable competitive advantage	Distinctive, sustainable power and efficiency
Digital Investment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Sustainable competitive advantage	Distinctive, sustainable power and efficiency
Experience	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Sustainable competitive advantage	Distinctive, sustainable power and efficiency
Innovation	Yes	Yes	no	Yes	Temporary competitive advantage	Exceptional power and efficiency
Quality	Yes	no	no	Yes	Competitive parity	power
Infrastructure	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Sustainable competitive advantage	Distinctive, sustainable power and efficiency
Human Resources Technology	Yes	Yes	no	Yes	Temporary competitive advantage	Exceptional power and efficiency
Advanced technology and software	Yes	no	no	Yes	Competitive parity	power
hardware	Yes	no	no	Yes	Competitive parity	power
Electronic	Yes	no	no	Yes	Competitive	power

Services					parity	
Data Protection Policy	Yes	no	no	Yes	Competitive parity	power
Distribution network	Yes	no	no	Yes	Competitive parity	power

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on the preceding information.

Based on the table above and the outputs of the VRIO model, we find that Algeria Telecom achieves :

☞ A sustainable competitive advantage exists across the areas of strategic partnerships, digital investment, expertise, and infrastructure ; the enterprise's nature (as a public entity) grants it a natural monopoly over resource acquisition, particularly regarding fixed-line telephone and internet networks, where it is distinguished by its rarity and imitation difficulty, given the absence of a direct competitor at the national level, as well as its digital investment in the FTTH fiber-optic network; furthermore, the enterprise possesses extensive technical and organizational expertise spanning over 20 years.

☞ Competitive parity regarding quality indicators, technology and advanced software, hardware, electronic services, data protection policy, and distribution networks. Despite the organization's nationwide infrastructure (spanning 69 states), the quality of the electronic services provided varies across regions. Furthermore, the mobile network operator Mobilis faces competition from Djazzy and Ooredoo, both of which demonstrate great flexibility in keeping pace with technology and advanced software, as well as in delivering electronic services that meet the required quality standards.

☞ A temporary competitive advantage for both innovation and technical human resources, as despite Algeria Telecom possessing valuable human capital and its policy being geared towards innovation ; However, these two characteristics lack the quality of being difficult to imitate, as competitors can easily acquire similar competencies. To retain such staff, the focus must be on modernizing their management, such as by implementing a robust incentive system to keep existing staff and attract new talented ones. Consequently, providing a modern work environment, continuous education and training abroad to keep pace with the latest developments, thereby preventing the loss of talent to competitors or their recruitment by them.

Conclusion:

Digital transformation serves as a fundamental pillar in reshaping the competitive capabilities of Algeria Telecom through applying the VRIO model which has enabled the classification of the enterprise's resources and capabilities into three distinguished categories, differing in terms of their strategic value (Sustainable competitive advantage, competitive parity, and temporary competitive advantage).

Although digital transformation has been a driver for enhancing Algeria Telecom's capabilities, the company faces numerous challenges that limit its ability to convert all its digital resources into a sustainable competitive advantage, such as technological and technical challenges as a result of rising costs and escalating cybersecurity risks, as well as human resources challenges amidst external competition and migration; environmental and market challenges arising from rapidly changing customer expectations; and the difficulty of providing telephone and internet services across all geographical areas.

In light of the study's findings, Algeria Telecom needs to:

- Investing in human staff and developing an incentive policy based on competence and innovation, alongside advanced, continuous training programs.
- Standardizing service quality across the entire national territory.
- Enhancing investment in cybersecurity and the protection of customer data.

- Restructuring the distribution network by adopting digital solutions to narrow the gap with competitors.

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