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The Role of Social Media in Enhancing SME Performance toward SDG 8: The Mediating Effect of Competitive Advantage, Superior Support, and Competitive Pressure

Anastasia Riani Suprpti*, Hunik Sri Runing Sawitri, Asri Laksmi Riani, Mugi Harsono, Intan Novela Quratul Aini, Suryandari Istiqomah

Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia



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ABSTRACT

Objective: To examine the influence of competitive advantage, superior support, and competitive pressure on the performance of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). It also investigates the mediating role of social media adoption in the relationship between these determinants and SME performance to support sustainable business growth in line with SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). **Method:** The study employed a quantitative research design using a survey approach. The research population consisted of SMEs in the Solo Raya region, with 91 respondents selected through convenience sampling. Data were collected using an online questionnaire and analyzed using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to examine both direct and indirect relationships among the variables. **Results:** The findings indicate that competitive advantage, superior support, and competitive pressure significantly influence SME performance. Furthermore, social media adoption was found to mediate the relationship between superior support and SME performance. However, social media adoption did not significantly mediate the relationship between competitive advantage and SME performance or between competitive pressure and SME performance. These results suggest that managerial support plays a crucial role in encouraging effective social media adoption, which subsequently enhances SME performance. **Novelty:** The study extends the existing literature by examining the mediating role of social media adoption in the relationship between organizational and competitive factors and SME performance within the context of Indonesian SMEs. The findings provide empirical evidence that superior support is a key driver of successful social media adoption, offering practical insights for strengthening SME competitiveness and promoting sustainable economic development.

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of social media use is an interesting research issue for further study. This is due to phenomena occurring in the business world as well as the results of previous research which shows that the use of social media in business in developing countries continues to develop (Sangi et al., 2018). Although large companies globally can adopt social media (SM) and another internet-based strategy without requiring additional resources, social media can also be used by small and medium businesses (SMEs), this is due to its relatively low costs, ease of use, and its ability to connect and reach many consumers (Tajudeen et al., 2018). The use of social media continues to grow in companies in developing countries and is currently considered a key strategy in business in SMEs (AlQershi et al., 2020).

Previous studies have confirmed that the use of social media has shown several benefits (Abed, 2020). Including providing wider reach through brand engagement, increasing knowledge-sharing behavior and access to global markets through virtual environments, and appealing to SME executives in overcoming problems regarding distance, time, and geographic location (Chatterjee & Kar, 2020). The use of social media