

Drivers of Social Media Adoption Among SMEs Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

This study attempts to provide a comprehensive view of previous literature on social media adoption. The COVID-19 outbreak has indirectly influenced social media usage in various events as a tool of marketing and communication platform among SMEs. Hence, social media adoption study is important in encouraging the business growth and productivity. This literature review study covers empirical studies that has been conducted on the factors affecting social media adoption in various contexts. For the literature review, meta-analysis is used to find, choose, evaluate, and combine data pertinent to the factors influencing the adoption of social media.

Keywords: social media adoption, technology, pandemic, COVID-19, SMEs.

1. Introduction

COVID-19 is a worldwide outbreak which had been declared a pandemic in March 2020 by the World Health Organization (WHO). The onset of the pandemic had inflicted many countries with a severe impact, both socially and economically. It had forced governments throughout the world to respond by enforcing a 'lockdown' or stay-at-home orders to minimize the spread of the virus and prevent further outbreaks. In later stages, strict regulations had been implemented, such as encouraging activities (work, school, religious activities) to be conducted from home as well as social and physical distancing. These had grave repercussions on a huge number of businesses, particularly SMEs, due to the decline in demand (Nicola et al., 2020), as well as a shortage of raw material supplies and logistic issues (Syaifulah, J., Syaifudin, M., Sukendar, M. U., & Junaedi, J. (2021).

In a report by OECD (2020), it was mentioned that while the pandemic has had a vast impact on the supply and demand of businesses regardless of size, the impact was relatively bigger on SMEs due to their lack of resilience and flexibility. Realizing the impact, many SMEs had started to redesign their business strategies to survive during the COVID-19 pandemic (Effendi, Mohamad & Sugandini, Dyah & Istanto, Yuni, 2020). Amidst the pandemic, online shopping was blooming as it was seen as the main alternative for many people, especially during the 'lockdown'. Hence, many businesses had started to transition from offline to online business activities to cater to these needs. In this transition, social media marketing has gained popularity in the business domain today. Social media has been an important element of marketing strategy among small businesses due to the fact that it is cost-effective, and also due to its ability to attract targeted customers rapidly in order to gain more leads or sales (Ahamat et al., 2017). Previous studies by Ahmad et al. (2018), Bailey (2019), and Chatterjee & Kar (2020) have mentioned that social media marketing is a workable instrument that can help businesses to attract customers. By implementing social media as a form of marketing tool, companies can promote their brands more

effectively, build online communities in a different way, while also building customer loyalty (Trawnih et al, 2021).

During the pandemic, social media becomes one of the primary channels for communication, information sharing and gathering, social connection, as well as entertainment (Zhang, D., Zhou, L., & Lim, J. (2020). According to a study by Mason, A. N., Narcum, J., & Mason, K. (2021), COVID-19 had apparently been pushing customers towards more online consumer behavior activities. This shows that the society is undeniably relying on social media more than ever during the pandemic as compared to before, hence SMEs should find new opportunities through the use of effective social media in order to gain competitive advantages. However, the social media adoption rate by SMEs has remained low mainly due to the lack of knowledge on how to utilize the technology (Dekker et al., 2018; Nguyen & Luu, 2020).

This paper explores different factors influencing the decision to adopt social media among SMEs during the COVID-19 pandemic, with evidence from various countries. Related studies from the year 2020 up to the current year were chosen in this study to be reviewed, assuming that the data collection happened amidst the pandemic. Firstly, we have attempted to include different variables influencing social media adoption that had been empirically studied or mentioned in the existing literature. Secondly, we have grouped these variables into different factors to identify the least studied factors. Thirdly, we have attempted to summarize a possible framework that captures the richness of social media adoption for future research.

2. Framework

We have grouped the variables into seven factors: social factors, individual factors, external factors, technological factors, organizational factors, self-efficiency, and financial factors. Table 1 shows the factors that contribute to social media adoption presented in the previous study.

Table 1: Factors that Affect Social Media Adoption in the Literature

Author/Year	Factor	Variables
Abdat, F. A. (2020)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Technological factors 2. Technological factors 3. Social factors 4. Self-Efficiency 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Performance expectancy 2. Effort expectancy 3. Social influence 4. Facilitating conditions
Abdullah et al (2022)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Technological factors 2. Organizational factors 3. External factors 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Technological factors 2. Organizational factors 3. Environmental factors
Al Mamun, A., Che Nawi, N. B., Nasir, N. A. B. M., & Fazal, S. A. (2020).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social factors 2. Technological factors 3. Individual factors 4. Individual factors 5. Individual factors 6. Technological factors 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social influence 2. Performance expectancy 3. Perceived risk 4. Perceived trust 5. Perceived enjoyment 6. Effort expectancy
Basit, Tiong and Hassan (2020)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Individual factors 2. Individual factors 3. Social factors 4. Organizational factors 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Perceived Ease of Use 2. Perceived Usefulness 3. Subjective Norms 4. Organizational innovativeness
Effendi, Mohamad & Sugandini, Dyah & Istanto, Yuni (2020)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Technological factors 2. Organizational factors 3. External factors 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Technological context (the perception of relative advantage, complexity, and compatibility). 2. Organizational context (employee skills, high-cost perceptions, and top management support). 3. Environmental context (perception of competitive advantage, government support, and environmental uncertainty)
Eze, Eze and Bello (2020)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Technology factors 2. Organizational factors 3. External factors 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Technology 2. Organization 3. Environment
Hartanto, N., & Soelaiman, L. (2021)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Technological factors 2. Organizational factors 3. External factors 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Technological context 2. Organizational context 3. Environmental context
Khan et.al (2021)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social factors 2. Individual factors 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collaborative Learning 2. Perceived Ease of Use

Author/Year	Factor	Variables
	3. Individual factors 4. Individual factors	3. Perceived Usefulness 4. Perceived Enjoyment
Nurfarida, I. N., Sarwoko, E., & Arief, M. (2021)	Organizational factor	Customer orientation
Oyewobi et. al (2022)	1. Technology factors 2. Organizational factors 3. External factors	1. Technology 2. Organization 3. Environment
Patma, T. S., Wardana, L. W., Wibowo, A., & Narmaditya, B. S. (2020)	1. Financial factors 2. Individual factors 3. External factors 4. Technological factors	1. Financial support 2. Perceived benefits 3. External pressure 4. Adoption of the internet and e-business technology (IEBT)
Puriwat and Tripopsakul (2021)	1. Technological factors 2. Technological factors 3. Social factors 4. Self-Efficiency 5. Individual factors 6. Individual factors 7. Individual factors 8. Individual factors 9. Individual factors	1. Performance Expectancy (PE) 2. Effort Expectancy (EE) 3. Social Influence (SI) 4. Facilitating Conditions (FC) 5. Gender 6. Age 7. Time Spent on Social Media 8. Entrepreneur Status 9. Intention
Qalati et al (2020)	1. Technological factors 2. Organizational factors 3. External factors	1. Technological Impact 2. Organizational Impact 3. Environmental Impact
Qalati et al (2021)	1. Technological factors 2. Organizational factors 3. External factors	1. Technology Construct 2. Organizational Construct 3. Environment Construct
Qalati et. al (2021)	Organizational factors	Entrepreneurial Orientation
SA, Q., LI, W., EG, V., Bux, A., & AM, H. (2020)	1. Technological factors 2. Organizational factors 3. External factors	1. Technological characteristics (relative advantage, interactivity, and visibility) 2. Organizational characteristics (top management support) 3. Environmental characteristics (institutional pressure)
Samsudeen, S. N., Thelijjagoda, S., & Sanjeetha, M. B. F. (2021).	1. Technological factors 2. Organizational factors 3. External factors	1. Technological context (relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, observability) 2. Organizational context (top management support, CEO's innovativeness) 3. Environmental context (competitive intensity, bandwagon pressure, competitive pressure)
Sugandini, D., Effendi, M. I., & Istanto, Y. (2020)	1. Organizational factors 2. Organizational factors 3. Organizational factors	1. Managerial support 2. Organizational readiness 3. CEO knowledge
Syaifullah, J., Syaifudin, M., Sukendar, M. U., & Junaedi, J. (2021).	1. Self-Efficiency 2. Financial factors 3. Individual factors 4. Individual factors 5. Individual factors	1. Facilitating conditions 2. Cost 3. Compatibility 4. Perceived usefulness 5. Perceived ease of use
Trawnih et.al (2021)	1. Individual factors 2. Individual factors 3. Technological factor 4. Organizational factor 5. External factors	1. Perceived Usefulness 2. Perceived Ease of Use 3. Technological Context 4. Organizational Context 5. Environmental Context

Conclusion

The findings presented in this study indicate factors that may increase the likelihood of adoption of social media. The above table of the factors that affect social media adoption shows that most of the studies were conducted on technological, organizational, individual, and social factors. From the literature cited, we have found that there are study gaps in social media adoption factors. Firstly, there is a lack of studies that integrate the literature with situational factors such as the time constraint, the difficulty to adopt social media and etc. Secondly, it was found that there is a lack of governmental factors such as government support, government policies and the likes. Thirdly, there are few types of researches that imply self-efficiency factors but lack the actual behavioural control that drives social media adoption. Fourth, the use of social media has changed throughout the pandemic, having increased dramatically during this period. As a result, issues related to this situational aspect need to be taken into consideration for future study. The study on social media adoption may provide the opportunity for SMEs to better establish and operate their companies, locate possibilities in social media, and take advantage of it. This literature study provides a comprehensive view of social media adoption and guidelines for future study. The highlighted factors should be empirically tested in future studies.

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