



## Literature Study of the Use of Social Media in Indonesian SMEs

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### Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to review the academic literature on the use of social media in Indonesian SMEs to highlight the current state of the art, the addressed key research themes and the implications for research and practice. A systematic literature review of academic research on the use of social media has been conducted to gather, examine, and synthesise studies related to Indonesian SMEs. All relevant studies were identified and analysed by following a review protocol based on automatic and manual searches on the Scopus dan the Sinta database. A critical conceptualisation of the use of social media in Indonesian SMEs has been provided. This research only reviews social media and SME keywords. It only involves publications from scientific journals in the last ten years indexed by Scopus as trusted sources in terms of quality and impact factors by researchers worldwide, also Sinta1 and Sinta2, as journal accrediting agencies in Indonesia. This study contributes to the literature on social media and Indonesian SMEs by proposing future research avenues.

Index Terms— Indonesia, Social Media Marketing, SMEs, Systematic Review.

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### 1. Introduction

Many businesses have concerns about social media regarding the importance of social media in today's business, including Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Businesses take crucial steps to link to their stakeholders, such as customers, employees, suppliers, and other partners. They try to identify the benefit of social media and how to maximise all its features to boost their performance [1].

SMEs are essential in developing any country worldwide, including developing countries such as Pakistan, India, and Indonesia [2]–[4]. SMEs provide financial services to the community, support income distribution, increase people's income, encourage economic growth, and achieve national stability [5].

The Indonesian business world is currently still dominated by Micro and Small Enterprises. These businesses reach more than 26 million businesses (98.68% of the total non-agricultural businesses in Indonesia). This business can also absorb more than 59 million workers, or around 75.33% of all non-agricultural workers [6].

However, in 2019, the number of internet users in Indonesia was 196,714,070. The penetration (ratio of internet users to total population in a year) is 73.7%, and internet growth is 25,537,353 or 8.9%. Most internet users in Indonesia use the internet to surf on social media, communicate via messages, access entertainment, access banking services, and shop

online [7]. Furthermore, 94% of Indonesia's internet users use social media. Social media is also a medium Indonesian consumers are in great demand to shop online (63,67%) [8]. The number of internet users has increased due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and restrictions on movement. It also reduces direct interaction between business actors in the economy and trade. It also impacts consumption patterns and how people shop, which was initially conventional (face-to-face with merchants) has turned to online shopping [9]. Online shopping is increasing because it is the main alternative for many people [10].

The Covid-19 pandemic has forced all businesses, including SMEs, to run their business with restrictions. The pandemic causes changes in business activities and the mindsets of businesspeople [2]. The business world responds to the policy of restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic by adopting technology and social media marketing [11]. Social media connects companies, including SMEs, with various people as an integral part of SME marketing strategies that can improve business performance and growth for many businesses [12]–[14].

Although the effectiveness of social media marketing is a topic of great interest for researchers and marketers [15], academic research examining the use of social media in Indonesian MSMEs has received little attention and remains largely unexplored. To date, there has been no effort to review systematically and synthesise existing studies on that topic. Therefore, this study aims to examine the scientific literature on the use of social media by SMEs in Indonesia to highlight the current state of the art, the main research themes discussed, and their implications for research and practice.

This paper is organised into several parts. The following section contains a literature review followed by the research methodology. The next section includes results and a discussion of the systematic review analysis of the articles published in Scopus dan Sinta between 2005 and 2022. The final part of the paper contains the conclusion and implications from theoretical and practical perspectives, along with limitations and future research directions.

## **2. Theoretical Background**

### **A. Social Media Marketing**

Social media is a medium that has developed in the last ten years. Social media develops in line with the development of information technology. Social media has reached every level of society and all human activities [5]. Social media is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content [16]. Social media is vital in accessing customers and establishing an individual relationship with them [17], [18]. Social media is gradually changing consumer behaviour and expectations. At the same time, social media is becoming a new social reality that business-oriented organisations must pay attention to as a strategic business communication medium [19].

Social media is widely utilised for marketing activities [20]. Social media provides a new way for people to communicate with the people around them and for companies to display their products, services, or brands to their target market [21]. Social media has become an interactive medium that can attract potential consumers to visit and click on links that provide information on the products offered [22]. Social media can bring numerous benefits, such as the ability to reach out to huger audiences, drive sales through social commerce, and establish

trust and reputation [23]. Social media also easily recognise consumers who are paying more attention to the brand and engaging with them on a personal level [17], [24].

Social media marketing refers to the process of gaining customers' attention and acceptance through social media platforms [25]. According to Kim and Ko (2012), social media marketing comprises interaction, entertainment, trendiness, word-of-mouth (WOM) characteristics, and customisation [26]. Social media allows companies to design their advertising materials using rich, dynamic, and interactive media at a minimal cost [26]. Social media achieves several marketing objectives, including creating brand affinity, increasing sales prospects, improving customer service, and driving favourable customer attitudes [27], [28]. It has become an efficient channel for delivering marketing and institutional communications to the online community and is even considered a hybrid element of the promotion mix [29].

Many SMEs use popular social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to market their operations and communicate with their clients [30]. Social media allows small businesses to compete outside their local market [9]. SMEs would use social media if they perceived it to be less expensive, easy to use, having compatible [31]. By developing and maintaining customer relationships, SMEs can benefit from social media and relationship marketing trends. Social media can make SME brands visible to others (Sedalo et al., 2022).

### **B. Small and Medium Enterprise (SMEs)**

SMEs are considered a substantial source of employment generation. SMEs help as sources of livelihood for low- and middle-income countries worldwide [32]. SMEs have been considered effective drivers of alleviating poverty [33].

SMEs are businesses managed by individuals or business entities to improve market competitiveness and economic stability and reduce unemployment rates. SMEs have high potential that needs to be improved to contribute to a country's micro or macroeconomic development. SMEs must strengthen their competitive advantage to ensure long-term viability [21].

SMEs usually operate in uncertain market conditions, which can cause difficulties due to their characteristics. SMEs typically specialise in a narrow range of products and use them to meet the needs and wants of a niche market. Since SMEs cannot compete by leveraging economies of scale, their competitive opportunity lies in developing innovative products or processes. SMEs' limited resources lead to the paradoxical development of new products and technologies under pressure to minimise costs and encourage entrepreneurs to use creative and alternative marketing tools, for example, online practices, to overcome financial resource constraints [34].

The characteristics of SMEs are highly heterogeneous, with high flexibility and appreciable innovative entrepreneurial spirit. SMEs have a variety of sizes, having different technological levels with varied features of services and products. As a result, it helps to spread industrialisation in backward and rural areas, reducing regional imbalances. This helps to provide an equitable and fair distribution of wealth and national income [31].

As one of the pillars of the Indonesian economy, MSMEs have a significant role. MSMEs immensely contribute to GDP, namely 61.97% of the total national GDP or equivalent to Rp.

8,500 trillion by 2020. MSMEs absorb many workers, which is 97% of the absorption capacity of the business world in 2020. Many MSMEs are directly proportional to the number of jobs in Indonesia, so MSMEs have a significant share in labour absorption. MSMEs absorbed the most considerable credit in 2018 of approximately Rp. 1 trillion. The Indonesian government has made several efforts to promote MSMEs, including ratifying job creation laws, loan assistance, campaigns to proudly use products made by MSMEs, and export expansion through ASEAN Online Sale Day (AOSD) [35]. Indonesia continues to strive to encourage MSME actors to enter the digital ecosystem so that national MSMEs are not only able to move buying and selling activities but also able to expand market reach and the value of trade transactions [36]. However, many problems and obstacles are often experienced by MSMEs. The problems encountered were diverse, ranging from difficulties in obtaining permits, challenges in accessing capital, marketing strategies, distribution of goods, and optimising digital platforms [37].

### 3. Method

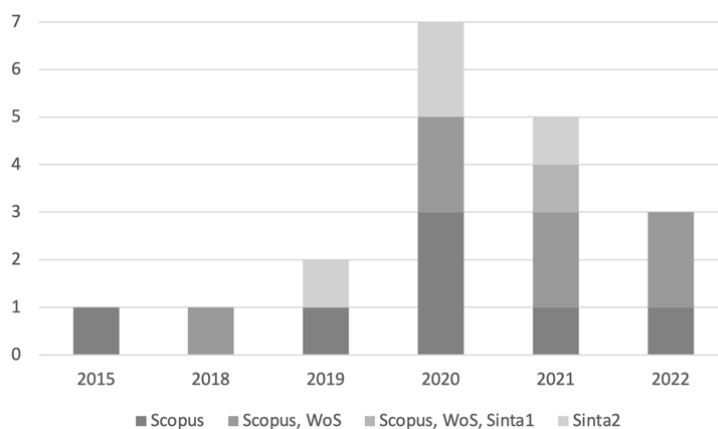
This study systematically reviews the empirical literature to explore research on social media usage in Indonesian SMEs. A systematic review design is adopted to provide a "systematic accumulation, analysis and reflective interpretation of the full body of" studies [38] by searching some keywords of publications indexed in scientific databases [39], [40]. The Scopus database was selected as it is the largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature, scientific journals, books, and conference proceedings [41]. The following database is Sinta (Science and Technology Index), a Web-based research information system offering access to accredited journals in Indonesia [42].

This research begins with a search on Scopus.com with the setting TITLE-ABS-KEY (SMEs AND "social media"), which means that investigations with the word SMEs and social media are focused on titles, abstracts, and keywords. The search resulted in a total of 571 hits. After being limited based on the subject area of business, management and accounting, 285 documents are available. The following limitation is based on the state of Indonesia, which produces 28 papers entirely in English. Then, papers are limited by the type of source from the journal and the type of article document to ensure the rigour of our study [41]. It resulted in 20 articles published from 2015-2023. Then, after reading each article, four articles mention SMEs and social media in the abstract but do not focus on the use of social media in SMEs in Indonesia. So, 16 articles are used as the basis for the literature review from Scopus.com.

The search in Sinta was carried out by limiting journal subjects to the economic field, which resulted in 303 Sinta-indexed journals with a mix of 4 Sinta1 journals, 98 Sinta2 journals, 76 Sinta3 journals, 83 Sinta4 journals, 27 Sinta5 journals, and 10 Sinta6 journals. Further searches were carried out on every page of the Sinta1 and Sinta 2 journals using social media and media social as keywords. Sinta1 and Sinta2 are ranked for the international standard journals in Indonesia [43]. The results show a Sinta1 journal and 22 Sinta2 journals with articles with the words social media and media social in the title with 38 articles. Two of the research articles conducted in Nigeria were excluded from the list.

Furthermore, a manual search was conducted on 36 article titles to find out the research conducted in the context of SMEs and obtained four articles as the basis for a literature

review originating from [sinta.kemdikbud.go.id](http://sinta.kemdikbud.go.id). Overall, 16 articles indexed by Scopus, Web of Science (WoS), and Sinta will be analysed in this study. The journal indexation and the year of published articles can be seen in Fig. 1. The articles were published from 2015 until 2021.

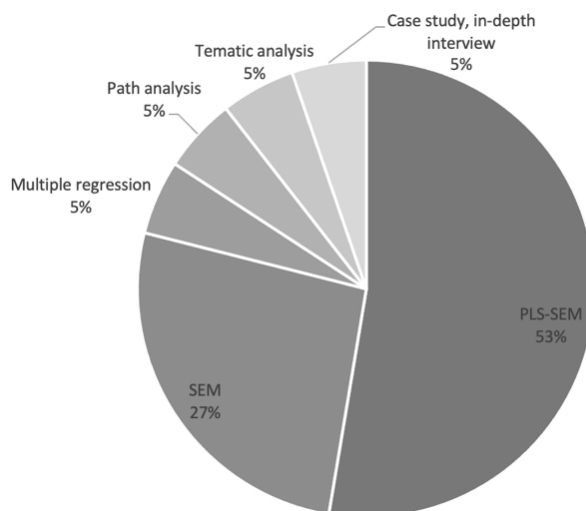


**Fig. 1.** Year of Publication and Indexation

#### 4. Result and Discussion

##### A. Methods, Analytical Tools, and Respondents

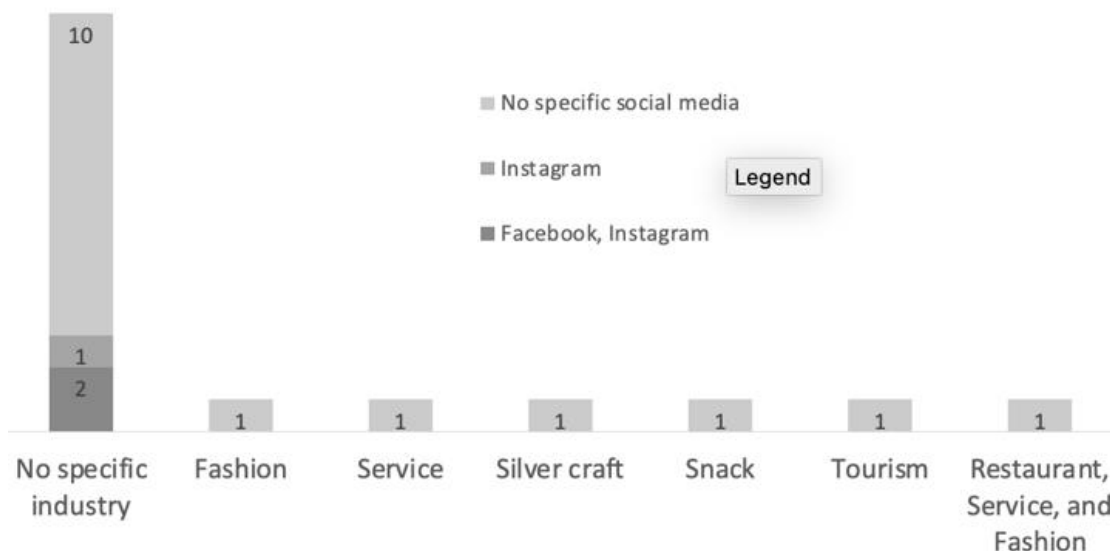
Fig. 2 shows the results of the analysis of the methods used in previous studies showing that most studies used quantitative methods, as many as 17 studies. Ten articles used the Partial Least Square – Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM) analysis tool, five used the SEM analysis tool, two used Path analysis, and 1 article used multiple regression. Meanwhile, research that does not use quantitative methods focuses on qualitative case study methods with in-depth interviews and thematic analysis. Furthermore, most of the investigation, as many as 15 studies examined from the perspective of SMEs with owners or managers as respondents. These results indicate a lack of research on social media in SMEs that uses qualitative methods. Research that looks at it from the consumer's point of view is also lacking. The quantitative method becomes powerful since the number of SMEs is vast. However, the qualitative method can deeper the understanding of the cases in adopting social media.



**Fig. 2.** Type of Methods

**B. Types of SMEs, Types of Social Media, and Research Areas**

Previous research has shown that most studies do not specify their research on certain social media (14 articles) and certain types of industries (6 articles). Details can be seen in Fig. 3. Several articles focus on specific industries: fashions, services, silver crafts, snacks, and tourism. An article focuses on multiple industries, i.e., restaurants, services, and fashions. Furthermore, Fig. 4 shows that most of the research was conducted on Java Island (eleven articles), the most developing island in Indonesia, followed by Bali Island (three articles). A previous study was undertaken on Sumatera Island; another was conducted without a specific area.



**Fig. 3.** Type of Social Media and Industries



**Fig. 4.** Type of Social Media and Industries

**C. Variable Involved**

Appendix 1 shows the variety of variables studied in previous studies. Several studies make use of social media as a response to the construct. Several other studies have also used performance as a response to the use of social media in previous studies. The visualisation of the variable involved is shown in Fig. 5.

Social media usage is usually measured as a second-order construct. It consists of social media usage for marketing, social media usage for information accessibility, and social media

usage for customer relations and services as dimensions. Social media is beneficial for SMEs in building branding, advertising, and promoting, enhancing community interaction and content sharing, building trust and relationships, reaching potential customers, digital marketing trends, and low-cost promotion and content customisation. Entrepreneurial orientation is proven that has weak relation to SMEs' performance. That relationship can be strengthened by social media usage. Entrepreneurial orientation and social media usage can also increase SMEs' performance [44], [45].

Furthermore, the more intensive the social media promotion strategy, the higher the SMEs' business value and the better SMEs' performance [46]. Higher social media adoption also increases relational and informational capabilities, which enhance better SMEs' performance [47].

Perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness also influence social media adoption, as in other technology adoption. At the same time, the cost variable impacts technological adoption, but it does not link with social media marketing [10]. Furthermore, SMEs are more likely to utilise social media marketing activities as promotional tools when they have a higher degree of confidence in the simplicity of these activities. Marketing activities using social media are user-friendly. SMEs can easily promote the products and services offered by SMEs to the public. SMEs must utilise social media marketing to communicate their message and brand/product offerings to other enterprises and end users. Social media marketing adoption is a conduit for communicating the relevance of simple technology use and its utility in achieving organisational growth and development. In addition, considering Indonesian SMEs' sensitivity to cost-effectiveness, the lower costs associated with adopting social media marketing practices bolster the significant role of perceived use and usefulness in technology adoption by increasing the use of social media marketing as a promotional tool by SMEs for the convenience of their consumers above and beyond their own [3].

From the customers' perspective, social media quality will enhance brand awareness, electronic word of mouth, and brand image [18].

#### **D. Fundamental Theories**

The theory widely used in previous research is the Technology-Organization-Environmental (TOE) framework and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). In addition, other studies also base their research on Schematic theory, Resource-based view (RBV) theory, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) capability approach, social presence theory, and social capital theory, with details in Appendix 1.

Social presence theory is a social interaction between two parties through media. Social presence is vital due to its impact on social interaction. Social presence can bring advantages to the firm, such as higher exposure, lower marketing costs, increased customer base, and developed brand image, which leads to greater purchase intention. Social presence also can be acquired through social media. The prospective consumer can still feel the marketer's presence via social media. Thus, developing social media will bring a competitive advantage to the company [44]. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) concerns two distinct concepts: perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness which has been viewed as a very explanatory universal model for technology acceptance [3].



Fig. 5. Visualisation of Variable Involved

### E. Discussion

Although this study has not detailed the various relationships in charts or tables, efforts have been made to develop a framework based on observations within the framework of previous research, as shown in Fig. 6. The variables that have been studied previously, in general, have demonstrated the determinant of social media usage in SMEs, how social media is used in SMEs, and the impact of the use of social media in SMEs. The determinant of social media usage consists of technology construct, organisation construct, and environmental construct (TOE). These constructs capture the characteristics of organisations, including SMEs that adopt the technology. TOE shows how the organisation's characteristics affect social media awareness and embrace social media. Social media adoption will affect marketing activities, mainly social media marketing quality. Then, high-quality social media marketing also helps SMEs to create knowledge, innovation, marketing capabilities, and perceived value. All the effort is dedicated to improving performance so SMEs can keep sustaining. Most previous studies used the TOE model as the basis for research because it was considered the most complete from other models. However, further research needs to examine various theories that may be supported so that they can refine the existing model and be suitable for implementation in SMEs. Further research can also be carried out using qualitative methods or mixed methods to get more in-depth results. The findings of this study are expected to be relevant to the use of social media in SMEs. SMEs are advised to use social media and utilise social media in a well-planned and executed manner to get maximum results.



Fig. 4. Proposed Framework



## 5. Conclusion

This study shows a brief construct of social media adoption and its role in increasing SMEs' performance. This study has several limitations, particularly its limited scope, which only uses sources from Scopus.com and [sinta.kemdikbud.go.id](http://sinta.kemdikbud.go.id). However, this can be explained because the two trusted databases provide quality library resources. In addition, using keywords social media and SMEs in the title, abstract, and keywords as the initial filter to search online databases resulted in very few articles being identified. If the keyword search is extended to the body of the article, many more articles will likely be found. It is an opportunity for other researchers to investigate further. Further research can also involve different types of literature besides journal articles. Additionally, this study focused on Indonesian SMEs, so future studies may focus on other emerging markets, which will facilitate comparing and contrasting SMEs' behaviour in emerging markets.

## 6. Acknowledgement

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## APPENDIX I. Involved Variables and Theories

Ref.	Journal Name	Variable Involved	Theory Used	Source
1	Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entrepreneurial orientation</li> <li>• Marketing capabilities</li> <li>• Social media usage</li> <li>• SMEs performance</li> </ul>	Resource-based view (RBV) theory	[2]
2	International Journal of Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social media use</li> </ul>	Social presence	[48]

Ref.	Journal Name	Variable Involved	Theory Used	Source
	and Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing performance</li> </ul>	theory	
3	International Journal of eBusiness and eGovernment Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perceived ease of use</li> <li>Perceived of usefulness</li> <li>Social media marketing adoption</li> <li>Facilitating conditions</li> <li>Cost</li> <li>Business Development and Grow</li> </ul>	Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT2)	[3]
4	Gadjah Mada International Journal of Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brand image</li> <li>Website quality</li> <li>Social media quality</li> <li>Brand awareness</li> <li>E-WOM</li> </ul>	Schematic theory	[50]
5	Cogent Business and Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perceived of usefulness</li> <li>Perceived ease of use</li> <li>Cost</li> <li>Adoption of internet/e-business technologies</li> <li>Social media marketing</li> <li>SMEs' sustainability.</li> </ul>	Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Technology Environment Organisation (TOE) model, Social presence theory	[11]
6	The Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial support</li> <li>Perceived benefit</li> <li>External pressure</li> <li>Adoption of Internet and e-business technology</li> <li>Social media marketing</li> </ul>	-	[51]
7	Academy of Strategic Management Journal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Usage of social media</li> <li>Business performance</li> <li>Perceived value</li> </ul>	-	[5]
8	Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social media awareness</li> <li>Intention to adopt social media</li> <li>Technological context</li> <li>Organisational context</li> <li>Environmental context</li> </ul>	TOE model	[10]
9	Journal of Relationship Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarity</li> <li>Attractiveness</li> <li>Interactive</li> <li>Relevance</li> <li>Brand awareness</li> <li>Brand image</li> </ul>	-	[19]
10	Management Science Letters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service strategy based on TKP</li> <li>The strategy of social media promotion</li> <li>Business value</li> <li>Business performance</li> </ul>	-	[47]

Ref.	Journal Name	Variable Involved	Theory Used	Source
11	International Journal of Data and Network Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopting social media</li> <li>• Relational capabilities</li> <li>• Informational capabilities</li> <li>• Business performance</li> </ul>	-	[48]
12	Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managers innovativeness</li> <li>• Pressure from competitors</li> <li>• Barrier to adoption</li> <li>• Perceived usefulness</li> <li>• Perceived ease of use</li> <li>• Attitude</li> </ul>	TAM and TOE model	[52]
13	Management Research Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social network</li> <li>• Firm performance</li> <li>• Trust</li> <li>• Selling capability</li> <li>• Pricing capability</li> </ul>	Social capital theory	[53]
14	International Journal of Applied Business and Economic Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brand development</li> <li>• Word of Mouth</li> <li>• Social media communication</li> </ul>	-	[54]
15	Jurnal Pendidikan Ekonomi & Bisnis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interactivity</li> <li>• Cost-effectiveness</li> <li>• Compatibility</li> <li>• Trust</li> <li>• The utilisation of social media</li> <li>• Customer service performance</li> <li>• Sales performance</li> <li>• Marketing performance</li> <li>• Internal operating</li> <li>• Innovation performance</li> </ul>	-	[55]
16	Indonesian Journal of Business and Entrepreneurship (IJBE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Knowledge creation</li> <li>• Innovation</li> <li>• Performance</li> </ul>	-	[56]
17	AKRUAL: Jurnal Akuntansi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social media type</li> <li>• Creativity</li> <li>• MSME's entrepreneurial performance</li> </ul>	-	[22]
18	Matrik: Jurnal Manajemen, Strategi Bisnis, dan Kewirausahaan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perceived number of users</li> <li>• Perceived ease of use</li> <li>• The attitude of SMEs to use social media technology</li> <li>• Intention to use social media technology</li> </ul>	TAM	[57]