



The impact of e-marketing orientation and learning capacity on online SME performance in Jordan: The moderating role of technological orientation



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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of the study is to investigate the effects of electronic marketing orientation (EMO) as well as learning capability (LC) on the performance of internet-based SMEs in Jordan using the moderating role of technological orientation (TO). To achieve this goal, the research employed a non-probability sample method and a study-adapted questionnaire. We distributed 320 surveys to Internet small and medium enterprises (SME) owners using the Internet-based survey method (Google Form), which adhered to a probabilistic random sample approach, resulting in 156 entirely complete responses. We subsequently examined the data using the Smart PLS. The study's findings indicate that TO moderates the statistically significant connection among EMO, LC, and internet-based SME performance. In contrast, EMO and LC had a statistically important effect on internet-based SME performance. According to this study's final finding, learning ability is an indicator of the performance of online SMEs. In addition to outlining numerous significant consequences for owners of online SMEs, this report also makes several recommendations for further studies. Based on prior findings, the researchers propose that marketing managers in enterprises focus on the use of several e-marketing channels, such as email advertising, Facebook advertising, YouTube promotion, and TikTok promotion, to develop stronger market positioning for SMEs. Furthermore, future studies may take into account some fresh factors, including staff expertise, SME managers' and owners' technological prowess, and an emphasis on innovation when assessing the performance of online SMES firms.

Contribution/ Originality: This study contributes to the development of a new model that connects EMO, LC, and TO as moderators, and it adds many topics related to e-marketing in enhancing online SME performance, a subject that very few studies have covered to date.

1. INTRODUCTION

E-marketing has gained a lot of attention from scholars, investigators, and management professionals all over the world and has evolved into an innovative model within the discipline of marketing studies (Eid & El-Gohary, 2013). According to research, SMEs, or small and medium-sized enterprises, are most likely to reap a variety of business advantages from the implementation of e-marketing, including higher profits, lower expenses, and easily accessible services for company customers (Ainin, Parveen, Moghavvemi, Jaafar, & Mohd Shuib, 2015). The connection between e-marketing orientation (EMO) and internet-based SME performance had not been extensively

studied in prior investigations, particularly in emerging economies like Jordan. This is even though the impact on both business owners and market orientation upon SME performance remains the core focus of inquiry in previous studies (Buli, 2017; Jarah, Alghadi, Al-Zaqeba, Mugableh, & Zaqabeh, 2024; Keh, Nguyen, & Ng, 2007; Laukkanen, Nagy, Hirvonen, Reijonen, & Pasanen, 2013). Once more, researchers have continued to pay close attention to the concept of TO, which is a characteristic of competitive edge. This is because technologically oriented business organizations are more likely to offer sophisticated and novel technology-integrated products and services to suit client needs (Gao, Zhou, & Yim, 2007). LC are also an indicator of the long-term competitiveness of enterprises in the modern internet-based company ecosystem (Real, Roldán, & Leal, 2014). Therefore, it is crucial for business organizations to strategically emphasize the development of learning capabilities to thrive in the modern, digitalized corporate environment.

People undoubtedly view SMEs as potential contributors to a nation's overall economic growth at the same time (Yousaf & Majid, 2016). SMEs in Jordan have significantly contributed to quickening the nation's economic expansion over many years, and nearly six million SMEs account for about half of the country's manufactured goods (Raihan, Khondker, Quoreshi, & Rahim, 2016). Because of the increasing dispersion of technology, the Internet is the ideal means to deliver financial services to consumers, regardless of time or region. That is why businesses see the Internet as a critical aspect of their strategic planning. Internet technology has altered the design and delivery of financial services, prompting the banking industry to innovate continuously, particularly in the fields of communications and information technology (Chong, Bian, & Zhang, 2016). While e-marketing involves utilizing information and communication technology to reach a broad consumer base, marketers have been able to quickly build their lists of satisfied customers at a minimal cost thanks to more efficient technology (Al-Qudah, 2020). Information and communication technology simplifies marketing prospective clients by enabling rapid reach to distant customers (Jamil, Jusoh, & Ghani, 2020). Jordan's national Internet penetration rate is increasing, which has particularly sped up the emergence and expansion of online enterprises. A variety of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) continue operating using the Internet-based web platform because it is now more widely available and accessible. In this situation, a study is necessary to better understand the underlying issues that might affect the success of internet-based SMEs. With TO acting as a moderator.

However, the impact of e-marketing, LC, and TO on the performance of internet-based SMEs in emerging economies has not received much attention. The rapidly expanding online SMEs in Jordan necessitate urgent research on the factors influencing their performance. This study aims to investigate the effects of EMO and LC on internet-based SME performance in Jordan, with TO acting as a moderator. Therefore, e-marketing has become an important part of organizations' plans for success and survival in the market as technology has advanced and the Internet has become more widely used. However, the real influence of e-marketing on organizations' ability to learn and improve their performance remains a source of curiosity and debate among scholars and business administrators. Therefore, there is an urgent need for a better understanding of how e-marketing influences learning processes within businesses and how this learning can improve overall performance, particularly for SMEs that face unique challenges in the digital business environment (Awad & Aboalghanam, 2023; Aziz, Nurhayati, Yudha, & Annisa, 2022; Hailat, Jarah, Al-Jarrah, & Almatarneh, 2023; Nadube & Ordah, 2023). Furthermore, the significance of this problem lies in providing a thorough understanding framework for researchers and decision-makers in SMEs, as well as practical guidance on how to improve performance and success by effectively utilizing e-marketing as a tool for continuous learning and development.

Therefore, the challenge is to ascertain how e-marketing processes influence firms' capacity for learning and how they can leverage this learning to enhance their performance. Also, this study contributes to providing a comprehensive overview of the e-marketing processes used, with a focus on the extent to which they stimulate learning processes within companies, as well as an analysis of how this learning can translate into improved company performance and financial results. Therefore, this study aims to provide a statement about the impact of

EMO and LC on online SME performance in Jordan, using the TO as a moderator. The study will also address the following research questions:

1. Does e-marketing orientation (EMO) have a significant impact on online SME performance?
2. Does learning capability (LC) have a significant impact on online SME performance?
3. Does technology orientation (TO) significantly moderate the relationship between E-marketing orientation (EMO) and online SME performance?
4. Does technology orientation (TO) significantly moderate the relationship between CF (LC) and online SME performance?

Therefore, the structure of this study is as follows: An overview of the literature appears first, and then the construction of hypotheses follows. The next parts present the approach, findings, and commentary. The final section provides a conclusion and recommendations for further study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section aims to provide relevant research on how electronic marketing orientation (EMO) and LC affect the performance of online SMEs in Jordan. Digital business growth remains in its nascent stages in underdeveloped nations like Jordan. According to Brodie, Winklhofer, Coviello, and Johnston (2007) technology-related information is essential for efficiently supporting and speeding all business organization operations. Information technology has proven to facilitate the long-term survival of small company organizations (Alqudah, 2023; Chatterjee, Gupta, & Upadhyay, 2020). In small and medium-sized organizations, the Internet-based web technology has been seen as a crucial platform for future development (Mandal, 2017). In accordance with this assumption, investigation has concentrated on the elements that can significantly affect the performance of online SMEs. The study takes into account two factors: electronic marketing orientation (EMO) as well as LC, which assesses their effects on the success of SME companies online.

Recently, educational scholars have shifted their primary focus to the implementation of e-marketing as a solution to the EMO problem (Tsiotsou & Vlachopoulou, 2011). E-marketing is becoming more well-known and respected, and its vital role in influencing businesses' success across a variety of industries and business settings is growing. Coviello, Milley, and Marcolin (2001) defined e-marketing as the use of the Internet and various technological devices to generate and facilitate dialogue between a firm and its identified clients, as stated on page 26. According to Watson, Pitt, Berthon, and Zinkhan (2002) implementing e-marketing has relatively lower costs than traditional marketing operations (such as selling via door-to-door or delivery). E-marketing is probably going to be crucial in bringing about an important change in both corporate and consumer attitudes today (Sheth & Sharma, 2005). Enterprise firms must coordinate their actions with their electronic marketing orientation (EMO), a managerial strategic prerequisite, to meet customer needs (Shaltoni & West, 2010). A dearth of empirical studies still constrains the EMO field, examining how EMO impacts the performance of internet-based firms. According to Hooper, Huff, and Thirkell (2007) a company's business performance is probably going to be positively impacted by the combination of marketing and IT. According to Borges, Hoppen, and Luce (2009) marketing efforts, followed by online alignment, might have an indirect effect on corporate performance through market orientation. According to empirical studies, the incorporation of the internet makes it easier to conduct transaction-oriented company operations such as placing orders, selling products, and settling payments, all of which are directly associated with improved and higher firm performance (Drennan & McColl-Kennedy, 2003). E-marketing initiatives have been observed to make an impact on the success of SME, according to Ariyachandra and Frolick (2008). Mutlu and Surer (2016) also discovered a beneficial effect of EMO on the general performance of medical organizations within Turkey.

According to Chiva, Alegre, and Lapedra (2007) "Learning Capabilities" have been defined as "the organizational along with managerial qualities that encourage the organizational learning or enable an organization

to acquire knowledge" with regard to LC. A capacity for learning becomes essential in order to acquire, share, and use information, as well as support the enhancement and conversion of a company's business abilities (Zollo & Winter, 2002). Companies can find new production opportunities for their company's growth by actively seeking out fresh knowledge (Ambrosini & Bowman, 2009). According to Mallén, Chiva, Alegre, and Guinot (2016) aptitude for learning fosters the process of knowledge accumulation and diffusion throughout various organization divisions, which could result in the development of new products or services. According to the latest research (Siahaan & Tan, 2020), a capacity to learn has a direct impact on the commercial success of Indonesian ICT SMEs.

Also, Jamil et al. (2020) found that EMO, perceived relative advantage, customer pressure, and degree of competition all have no favorable impact on strategic company success. Furthermore, Aziz et al. (2022) discovered that e-marketing utilization has a positive and substantial influence on product innovation and competitive advantage, as well as on competitive advantage through product innovation. E-marketing, on the other hand, has little effect on marketing performance or the competitive advantage gained through product innovation. The study by Nadube and Ordah (2023) found a substantial link between e-customer relationship management and the two metrics of e-marketing performance. Anser, Yousaf, Usman, and Yousaf (2020) discovered that information and communication technology enable e-marketing initiatives to attain competitiveness. The empirical findings demonstrated that the utilization of information and communication technology offers a foundation for developing a successful e-marketing mechanism that assists hotels in achieving strategic business performance. Similarly, Etim, James, Nnana, and Okeowo (2021) found that social media marketing, internet advertising, and email marketing had considerable beneficial effects on the performance of SMEs in the new normal age. Folasade, Ranti, and Samuel (2018) found that e-marketing had a substantial influence on organizational performance in terms of effective decision-making, customer satisfaction, and sales volume. According to the findings of Ahidin, Haerofiatna, Nurjaya, Manik, and Karolina¹⁰ (2020) the association between e-loyalty and marketing performance is considerable, but e-marketing has no meaningful influence on performance.

Accordingly, the following theories were put forth in the present investigation:

H₁: E-marketing orientation (EMO) has a significant impact on online SME performance.

H₂: Learning capability (LC) has a significant impact on online SME performance.

2.1. Technology Orientation (TO) as Moderator

The technical orientation has significantly transformed and modified the traditional view of the current business sector during the age of globalization (Saqib, Zarine, & Udin, 2018). The way that firms conduct their company has undergone enormous changes as a result of new technological advancements. According to Idrus, Abdussakir, and Djakfar (2020) it is seen as a crucial innovation factor or strategic instrument that fosters the development of new ideas for commercial firms. Also, technology innovation is the primary concern in contemporary business sectors because it facilitates knowledge dissemination and sharing through the use of technological devices in business operations. This also quickly expands communication from one location to another. By utilizing technological resources, businesses can become more aware of scientific advancements. This technological innovation orientation is crucial for modifying new technology to tackle the challenges associated with business or company performance (Yousaf et al., 2020). Technically speaking, TO indicates competence that can assist business sectors achieve the most return by offering superior goods and services for the market. In this case, business organizations can generate high-quality goods and services in accordance with market demand thanks to technological applications for business (Kocak, Carsrud, & Oflazoglu, 2017). TO also enhances the operational efficiency and customer value of commercial organizations (Ozkaya, Droge, Hult, Calantone, & Ozkaya, 2015). According to several studies by Ardito and Dangelico (2018) and Hao and Song (2016) there is a favorable relationship amongst TO with a number of business success metrics across several industry sectors. Idrus et al. (2020) found an increase in entrepreneurial orientation and TO correlates with an increase in market orientation;

additionally, education strengthens the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on market orientation while decreasing the influence of TO on market orientation. Also, Borodako, Berbeka, Rudnicki, and Łapczyński (2023) found that the strategic, technological, organizational culture, and market components of innovation orientation all had a favorable impact on knowledge management. On the other hand, knowledge management serves as a key mediator in the interaction between the four aspects of innovation orientation and performance. Furthermore, technology preparedness acts as a moderator, favorably influencing the link between knowledge management and organizational performance. Accordingly, this study puts forth the following theories:

H₁: Technology orientation (TO) significantly moderates the relationship between E-marketing orientation (EMO) and online SME performance.

H₂: Technology orientation (TO) significantly moderates the relationship between Learning capability (LC) and online SME performance.

As a result of previous findings and a gap in the literature, the researchers investigated the role of EMO in enhancing and LC on online SME performance in Jordan through technological orientation as a moderator, where firms can use e-marketing to gain a better understanding of their performance. Furthermore, based on the literature review, the researchers developed the conceptual framework shown in Figure 1.

2.2. Research Framework

Based on the literature review, the authors developed the study model as follows:

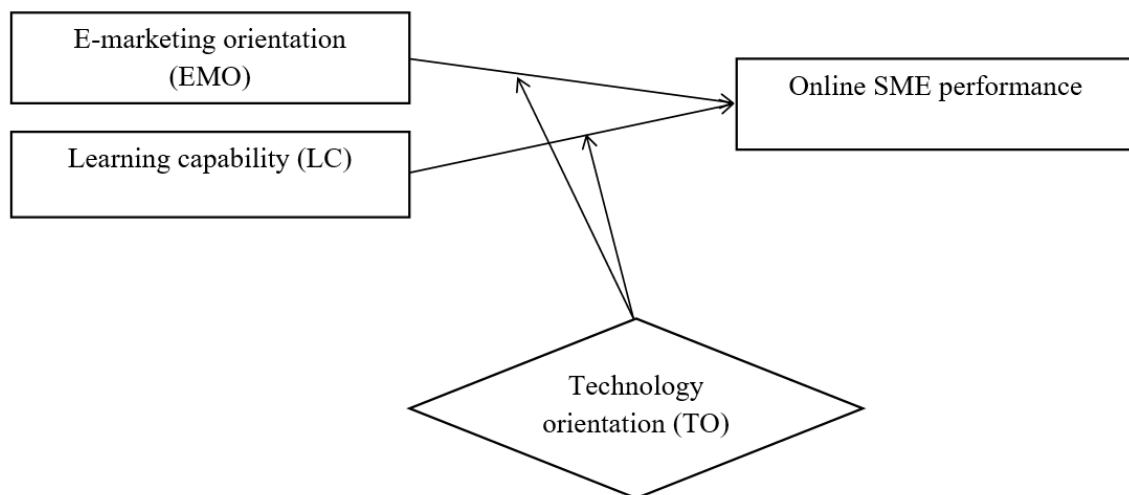


Figure 1. Research conceptual framework.

3. METHODOLOGY

This investigation aims to determine how technological orientation (TO), e-marketing orientation (EMO), and learning capability (LC) influence the performance of internet-based SMEs in Jordan. To achieve this research goal, the study specifically focused on SME business organizations that carried out their business tasks online through social networking websites. Since the precise number of present-day online SMEs that exist in Jordan remained unknown throughout the data-gathering phase, the research used a non-probability sample method.

3.1. Sample Selection

In light of previous research, the researchers created a questionnaire for an internet-based survey, which was then sent through email to 320 online Smes Jordanian owners of businesses using a Google form. The questionnaire explicitly included the explanations of EMO and LC, along with the research objective, to simplify the respondents'

understanding of the research's purpose. The survey received 156 valid responses. The research's overall sample consisted of 156 people.

3.2. Data Collection

We used a questionnaire to collect data on the impact of EMO and LC on the performance of internet-based SMEs in Jordan. To ensure the questionnaire's content validity, research supervisors examined and verified it. To eliminate any concerns or contradictions, the questionnaire was pilot-tested before being sent to research participants. The current study utilized a modified version of a questionnaire from previous research (Al Asheq, Tanchi, Kamruzzaman, & Karim, 2021; Hernández-Linares, Kellermanns, & López-Fernández, 2021; Lee, Dedahanov, & Rhee, 2015; Yousaf, Sahar, Majid, & Rafiq, 2018). SmartPLS (PLS 4) has been used to assess the data.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1. The Measurement Model

Before assessing measurement effectiveness, the primary goal of the measuring method is to analyze the constructs' reliability and validity. When analyzing the data to establish the reliability of the measurements, 0.4 was considered to be a suitable cutoff number. We assessed the amount of internal consistency using composite reliability, considering a score of 0.7 or above as satisfactory. Convergent validity was assessed using the average variance extracted (AVE) at a threshold of 0.5 or greater. Discriminatory validity was determined by comparing factors with different loadings to ensure that items loaded more strongly on their specific conceptions than other concepts (Hair, Anderson, Babin, & Black, 2010). Each item in this investigation met the fundamental requirements, making the instrument dependable. Factor loadings exceeded the 0.4 threshold and ranged from 0.496 to 0.814. The composite dependability scores ranged from 0.783 to 0.828, which exceeded the required limit of 0.7. The AVE exceeded the minimal criterion of 0.5, measuring between 0.508 and 0.548, indicating convergence validity. The AVE and coefficient squared for the related variables were likewise satisfactory in terms of discriminant validity, as shown in the tables below:

Table 1 presents factor loading.

Table 1. Factor loading.

Items	Composite reliability	AVE
E-marketing orientation (EMO)	0.800	0.508
Technology orientation (TO)	0.672	0.512
Learning capability (LC)	0.783	0.548
Online SME performance	0.828	0.547

Table 2 presents Discriminant validity.

Table 2. Discriminant validity.

Variables	EMO	TO	LC	PER
EMO	0.74			
TO	0.41	0.71		
LC	0.32	0.42	0.74	
PER	0.50	0.51	0.64	0.75

4.2. Structural Model

After the measuring model passed the standards for construct validity and reliability, the next step was to test the research's hypotheses. We achieved this by utilizing both PLS algorithms and Smart PLS 4.0 bootstrapping.

Table 3. Hypothesis testing results.

Hypotheses	Relationship	Beta (β)	S.E	T statistics	Decision
H1	EMO -> PER	0.367	0.051	7.12**	Supported
H2	LC-> PER	0.462	0.063	5.01**	Supported

Note: **Significant at 0.01 (1-tailed).

Table 3 revealed a substantial and positive correlation between online SME performance and electronic marketing orientation (EMO) ($=0.367$, $t=7.12$, $p<0.01$), as well as between online SME performance and learning capability (LC) ($=0.462$, $t=5.01$, $p<0.01$). Indicating that Hypothesis 1 is supported.

4.3. Testing the Moderating Effects of Technology Orientation

This study used Partial Least Squares (PLS) analysis to determine the indirect impacts among the variables, with a significance level of 0.05, to investigate the moderating impact of technology orientation on the relationship between electronic marketing orientation (EMO), learning capability (LC), and online SME performance.

Table 4. Moderation hypotheses.

Hypotheses	Relationship	Beta (β)	S. E	T statistics	Decision
H3	EMO * TO -> PER	0.174	0.060	2.88**	Supported
H4	LC * TO -> PER	0.262	0.030	3.17**	Supported

Note: **Significant at 0.01 (1-tailed), *significant at 0.05 (1-tailed).

Table 4 supports Hypothesis 3 by demonstrating that TO moderates the association between EMO and online SME performance.

The study's findings show that TO moderates the link between LC and online SME performance ($=0.262$, $t = 3.17$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that TO has a role in influencing the connection between EMO, LC, and online SME performance. The analysis outcomes further support Hypothesis 4, and the findings demonstrate a substantial moderation influence ($=0.174$, $t = 2.88$, $p < 0.01$).

5. DISCUSSION

Recently, educational academics' principal attention has shifted to the implementation of the e-marketing concept (Tsiotsou & Vlachopoulou, 2011). E-marketing is becoming increasingly well-known and acknowledged, and its critical role in influencing corporate performance across a wide range of sectors is expanding. An enterprise firm's operations must integrate with its EMO to meet customer expectations, a strategic need in management (Shaltoni & West, 2010).

A scarcity of empirical research currently limits the EMO area, exploring how EMO influences the performance of internet-based businesses. As a result, the impact of e-marketing, LC, and technological orientation on the performance of internet-based SMEs in emerging economies, where e-marketing has received a lot of attention from scholars, investigators, and management professionals all over the world, has evolved into an innovative model within the discipline of study on marketing (Eid & El-Gohary, 2013). This is because technologically focused businesses are more likely to provide complex and new technology-integrated goods and services that meet the demands of their customers (Gao et al., 2007).

Learning capabilities (LC) are also a measure of an enterprise's long-term competitiveness in today's internet-based business environment (Real et al., 2014). To flourish in today's digitalized corporate world, businesses must proactively emphasize the development of learning skills. Whereas e-marketing entails using information and communication technology to reach a large number of consumers, with more efficient technology, marketers have simply built lists of satisfied customers at a low cost, allowing them to quickly contact customers all over the world

(Al-Qudah, 2020). Marketing potential consumers is made easier by the use of information and communication technology, which allows you to contact far-flung customers quickly (Jamil et al., 2020).

6. CONCLUSIONS

The goal of the current study was to evaluate the effects of TO, EMO, and LC on the performance of online businesses in Jordan. The investigation's objectives led to the development of four hypotheses, which we then tested through analysis based on previous research. The findings accept the first hypothesis, demonstrating a significant impact of EMO on online SME performance (H1). It does imply that internet SME owners who engage in various forms of e-marketing can expect to see an improvement in their company's online performance. This outcome backs up earlier research's conclusions.

The e-marketing orientation of the nonprofit company significantly impacts its overall organizational performance (Lee & Ng, 2021). The research's second hypothesis, which states that electronic LC significantly affects online SME performance (H2), has also been supported. This result is consistent with other research, which suggests that knowledge acquired through increased company LC provides a direct impact on corporate performance (Jehangir, Dominic, Langove, & Khan, 2012). The final finding supports Hypothesis 3 by showing that TO moderates a connection between EMO and online small business performance. The findings showed that TO moderates a connection between LC and Online small business (SME) performance, proving that TO plays an important part in impacting the relationship between EMO, LO, and Online business performance. The results showed a substantial moderation effect, and Hypothesis 4 was also supported. The results of the research also show that, because internet SMEs exist in a cutthroat environment, owners and managers of these businesses must adopt and incorporate cutting-edge technological tools into their business processes to boost their company's performance.

Also, the results of this study agreed with the results of Jamil et al. (2020); Aziz et al. (2022); Nadube and Ordah (2023); Anser et al. (2020); Etim et al. (2021); Folasade et al. (2018) and Ahidin et al. (2020) which found that EMO impacts the performance of SMEs, strategic company success, competitive advantage, and e-marketing performance.

7. IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The investigation provides several avenues for future studies while acknowledging certain limitations. The investigation was quantitative in the sense that it used Smart PLS software to test hypotheses. Therefore, in future periods, researchers can think about using qualitative research techniques to uncover some novel findings that will add to the existing body of knowledge. The research assessed the effects of two variables on an internet-based SME's performance. Future studies may take into account some fresh factors, including staff expertise, SME managers' and owners' technological prowess, and an emphasis on innovation when assessing the performance of online SMES firms. The study gathered information from Jordan's online SMEs. To obtain more reliable findings from studies, future investigators may consider a cross-country sample technique.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on previous results, the researchers recommend that marketing managers in firms focus on the adoption of multiple e-marketing channels, such as email advertising, Facebook advertisements, YouTube promotion, and TikTok promotion, to establish better market placement for small and medium-sized businesses on the internet. The final finding of this study suggests that managers of SMEs should focus on enhancing the internal learning abilities of relevant stakeholders by promoting knowledge-generating events among employees, as this ability serves as an indicator of the performance of online SMEs.

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Transparency: The authors state that the manuscript is honest, truthful, and transparent, that no key aspects of the investigation have been omitted, and that any differences from the study as planned have been clarified. This study followed all writing ethics.

Data Availability Statement: Upon a reasonable request, the supporting data of this study can be provided by the corresponding author.

Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Authors' Contributions: All authors contributed equally to the conception and design of the study. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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