

Facilitating Conditions Mediating SME's Intention to Use Social Media for Knowledge Sharing

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Abstract : The Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the use of social media in SMEs to stay abreast with information about the latest news and developments and to predict the future world of business. The national shutdown regulations for curbing the spread of the Covid-19 virus resulted in SMEs having to distribute large volumes of information through social media platforms to collaborate and conduct business remotely. How much of the information shared on social media is used by SMEs as significant knowledge for economic rent is yet to be known. This study aims to investigate the facilitating conditions that enable SMEs' intention to use social media as a knowledge-sharing platform to create economic rent and to cope with the Covid-19 challenges. A qualitative research approach was applied where semi-structured interviews were conducted with 13 SME owners located in the Gauteng province in South Africa to identify and explain the facilitating conditions of SMEs towards their intention to use social media as a knowledge-sharing tool in the Covid-19 era. The study discovered that the national lockdown regulations towards curbing the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic had compelled SMEs to adopt digital technologies that enabled them to quickly transform their business processes to cope with the challenges of the pandemic. The facilitating conditions, like access to high bandwidth internet coverage in the Gauteng region, enable SMEs to have strong intentions to use social media to distribute content and to reach out to their target market. However, the content is shared informally using diverse social media platforms without any guidelines for transforming content into rent-yielding knowledge.

Keywords : facilitating conditions, knowledge sharing, social media, intention to use, SME

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