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# Factors Influencing the Performance of Small & Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Trade: Empirical Evidence from Afghanistan

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## Abstract

*In Afghanistan, the SME area is considered one of the significant supporters of the economy by providing revenue and employment to a huge extent of the population. Companies with less than 100 employees make up 80% -90% of all the country's businesses, and they contribute 50% of the GDP and 75% of the labour force (MoCI of Afghanistan). Despite the SME's significance to the Afghan economy, three out of five organisations fall during the first three years of activity. The failure of SMEs prompts loss of employment and thus expanded uncertainty, low liquidity in the economy, and decrease in financial development. There had been significant challenges of restricted resources, consequently causing SMEs to be overseen in non-proficient structures as a large number of the business entrepreneurs lacked adequate resources to successfully connect all elements of production sufficiently. Human resources stay to be the biggest causality as the owners infrequently put resources into this. The absence of specialisation of obligations and feeble administration issues leave these little firms inclined to have distorted reports. The financial reports, which give a general outline of the financial strength of the organisation, may, on occasion, give false information as the books of account are set up by individuals with restricted knowledge and experience. In situations where the finance staff are very much prepared, they, for the most part, become overpowered as they assume various parts, remembering going about as human resources for charge, organisation director and operations manager. There is no new research on factors influencing the financial performance of SMEs in various zones around Afghanistan. Notwithstanding, none of these investigations has focused on the factors that influence the financial performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Afghanistan.*

**Keywords:** *Afghanistan, SMEs, Trade, Challenges, Opportunities*

## Introduction

SME area is progressively seen as a significant motor for work creation business creation and economic growth. This has been required by the expanding mindfulness inside the public authority that enormous undertakings in the mechanical area are more averse to creating essential work openings, given the high capital intensity of yield in the sector.

The significance of finances has been seen as a basic component for financial performance of small and medium-sized enterprises. Cutoff to financial impede development and improvement of these organizations (Levy, 2015). Normally, smaller enterprises face higher exchanges costs than bigger enterprises in getting credit (Villanueva, 2009). poor administration and accounting practices is likewise a central point that thwarts financial performance of these organizations and it hampers the

capacity of smaller enterprises to raise money. Data deviations related with loaning to small scope borrowers have limited the progression of account to smaller enterprises. Despite these cases nonetheless, a few examinations show countless small enterprises fizzle in light of non-financial reasons. Study by Tushabonwe (2009) affirmed that poor record keeping and absence of fundamental business the board experience and skills are significant supporters of failure of small business. Specialists have additionally recognized absence of admittance to outside money and frail capital base, inexperience in the field of business, especially absence of specialized information in addition to deficient administrative skills, absence of preparation and absence of statistical surveying as reasons for small business failure (Story 2010). The answer for tackling issues of monetary development in agricultural nations frequently lives in the performance of small scope businesses. It is required that the increases to be gotten from the foundation of small-scale businesses will be converted into the age of work at a low venture cost.

SMEs are the main thrust for the advancement of an economy. Because of their importance, every one of the nation either, developing and developed, are focusing on the advancement of SMEs., Small ventures are considered as primary driver for advancement, destitution decrease, work age, and social combination. SMEs area may intensify the creation limit which has critical effect for the advancement of economic and social development. SMEs given by far most of work in agricultural nations are keystones in the profitable designs of arising economies (Subhan, 2013).

A positive relationship has been archived between SME improvement and economic growth in developed and developing nations (Harris and Gibson, 2006). Notwithstanding, very little exploration has been led on this relationship in developing nations. Studies in SMEs advancement and performance are essential in developing countries on account of the dissimilarities in the process among developing and developed nations (Arinaitwe, 2012). It is likewise fundamental to comprehend the elements affecting SMEs performance in Asian nations since they are altogether not the same as those confronting developed countries. These elements include: accessibility of business data, admittance to finance, accessibility of administrative experience and admittance to infrastructure.

Economic Survey (2012) The First 1993 Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) study uncovered that there were around 910,000 SMEs up to 2 million employing. The second SME benchmark study (1995), assessed the size of the SME area at 708,000 ventures employing up to 1.2 million employees. Contrasted with different areas of the economy, the commitment of the SME area to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) expanded from 13.8% in 1993 to more than 18% in 1999. As of now, it is assessed that the commitment to the GDP by this sector remains at more than 25%.

Corporate governance can be characterized as "the structure and process used to coordinate and deal with the business issues of the organization towards improving business thriving and corporate responsibility with a definitive target of acknowledging long term investor value, while considering the premium of different partners (Panos, 2009). In the SME area, corporate governance rotates around the parts of investors as proprietors and the directors of this organizations frequently alluded to as specialists. There exists a conflict circumstance in the objectives that the directors as specialists seek after and those of the proprietors or partners. This hence makes an office issue that is frequently settled through corporate governance. In SMEs, the assets, stewardship and control offered by chiefs

for example might be totally different from and more straightforward than in enormous organizations. Corporate governance has acquired significance among administrators, researchers and other intrigued partners particularly for organizations possessed by general society or in broad daylight recorded organizations. In sufficient observational and hypothetical writing regarding SMEs have zeroed in predominantly on evolved economies (Berger 2012).

### **1.1. Problem Statement**

In Afghanistan, the SME area is considered as one of the significant supporters of the economy by providing revenue and employment to a huge extent of the population. Companies with less than 100 employees make 80% -90% of all country businesses and it contribute 50% of GDP and contribute 75% of labor force (MoCI of Afghanistan). In spite of the SMEs significance to the Afghan economy, three out of five organizations fall during the first three years of activity. The failure of SMEs prompts loss of employment and thus expanded uncertainty, low liquidity in the economy, and decrease in financial development There had been a significant challenges of restricted resources consequently causing SMEs to be overseen in non-proficient structure as a large number of the business entrepreneurs lacked adequate resources to successfully connect all elements of production sufficiently. The human resources stay to be the biggest causality as the owners infrequently put resources into this. Absence of specialization of obligations and feeble administration issues leave these little firms inclined to having distorted reports. The financial reports which give general outline of the financial strength of the organization may on occasion give false information as the books of account are set up by individual with restricted knowledge and experience. In situations where the finance staffs are very much prepared, they for the most part become overpowered as the assume various parts remembering going about as human resources for charge, organization director and at operations manager. There are few no new research composed few on factors influencing financial performance of SMEs in various zones around in Afghanistan. Notwithstanding, none of these investigations has focused in on the factors that influence financial performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Afghanistan.

### **Research Objective**

The general objective of the study is to know factors influencing the financial of small & medium enterprise (SMEs) while the specific objectives of the study are:

- To know the impact of technological impact on performance of the SMEs in Kabul Afghanistan
- To know impact of organizational impact capacity on performance of SMEs in Kabul Afghanistan
- To know impact of environmental impact on performance of SMEs in Kabul Afghanistan

### **Research question**

- What are the factors influencing the performance of SMEs in Afghanistan?

### **Significance of the study**

The study is valuable for owners in the SMEs area as it encourages them observe the factors that influence financial performance of the SMEs. The study is useful to financial institutions that are sharp in financing SMEs as they can realize key things to utilize while examining capacity of a business to

remain financially sound. The study is valuable for the Afghan government as its discoveries may help the public authority in thinking of good systems and approaches that will help in smoothing out activities in the SME area.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The second chapter reviewed the literature on factors affecting performance of SMEs. The first section reviewed literature on technology and performance of SMEs, the second part reviewed governance and the performance of SMEs. The third part looked at how human resource capacity affect performance of SMEs and the remaining parts focused on the effect of access to finance, organizational impact and social media adoption on financial performance of SMEs.

### 2.1: The Technological Impact on Performance of SMEs

This investigation utilized technology factors (e.g., relative benefit, cost-viability, similarity, deceivability, and intuitiveness) to quantify technological effect on SME performance. Relative benefit is "how much potential adopters consider advancement to be superior to the other option" (Alford, 2015). Additionally, Hsu (2014) expressed that consciousness of the general benefit of a venture's SM is useful toward improving information sharing and by and large performance of an association. Similarity is the degree to which new technology is predictable with earlier practices, technology, and current necessities, joined by present upsides of SMEs.

Cost-adequacy is the degree to which development is practicable, or more useful, comparative with its expense. This measurement is viewed as quite possibly the most significant variables to survey the selection of SM and was somewhat utilized in existing writing, under the TOE system. Intuitiveness is the degree to which at least two gatherings can collaborate with one another utilizing a correspondence medium. SM is a kind of Web 2.0 technology that is ascribed to a serious level of intelligence. SM is an innovative technology as it gives approaches to build the collaboration among clients and associations (Maroufkhani, 2019).

Thusly, intelligence was added as one of the elements of technological effect and considered one of the basic variables in the current writing of SM. Perceive ability is the degree to which something draws in everyday consideration. Because of restricted assets, SMEs are needed to utilize and use SM for showcasing exercises, as it gives them greater perceive ability rather than huge associations (Bhattacharya, 2018).

During the 1990s, technology-driven system, called the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) structure, was given by Michael Scott Morton. The MIT system expresses that procedure, structure, the executives cycle, and people and jobs impact technology, while technology reversely affects every one of them. Various examinations have been directed at individual and authoritative levels to research the impacts of technology appropriateness on performance measures. Tornatzky et al. (2002) dissected information from 202 assembling firms to explore the collaboration between organization foundation and performance. The creators found a positive communication of technology with an association's performance.

Ahmad et al. (2018) led a meta-examination of the technology model, thinking about the MIT system, and developed a calculated model, which expressed that there are four components of the model technology itself, the people and their job, design, associations, and the executive measures. The creators contended the beneficial outcomes of the technology on a company's performance and recommended that the proposed model should have been inspected exactly. Maduku et al. (2016)

expressed that technology adds to an association's performance. Dutot et al. (2016) supported that technological developments are decidedly identified with a company's performance in SMEs.

Undoubtedly, there is expanding rivalry among associations, notwithstanding size and type. In this manner, associations should have the option to fulfill client assumptions and requests on schedule. As a result of these necessities, SMEs for the most part need to improve conveyance time, quality, and cost. Thus, associations should constantly foster their items or administrations and cycles. To accomplish these upgrades, they are satisfied to restore both their business cycles and equipment. This regenerative interaction could conceivable happen just with the assistance of technological turn of events. Worldwide contest abbreviated item life cycles, and headway in innovations urge firms to contend in an unpredictable and dynamic climate. Technology has incredible significance for both the advancement of nations and the upper hands of associations. Likewise, Tajvidi, R. what's more, Karami, A. (2017) contended that technology and absolute quality administration are quick and turning out to be fundamental highlights for the achievement of any association. The creator's investigation discoveries uncover that technology assumes a huge and integral part in improving a company's performance. Eminently, SMEs are to a great extent denied of assets, thus, premium in vital technological banding together has developed among associations, as it improves organization performance.

Watchman and Millar (2008) contended that few technological difficulties antagonistically impact the manageable business performance of SMEs. The creators broke down an example of SMEs working in Thailand and tracked down a positive connection between technology (industry 4.0) and business performance among SMEs. Besides, he proved the significance of technology in SMEs, above all, to help the inventory network work.

The creators contended that data technology is an empowering factor impacting inventory network performance in SMEs situated in India. In addition, Leibenstein (2005) guessed that the breadth of technological advancement impacts a company's performance. Datta et al. (2019) examined an example of 710 lodging representatives of 21 inns, among them, 13 were global inns and the rest were nearby inns in Seoul, Korea. They conjectured that the utilization of front office, administrative center, and use of visitor related technology application emphatically corresponded with performance. The creators confirmed the positive relationships among's technology and performance in the lodging business. Essentially, Leibenstein (2005) dissected an example of 218 Swedish fare firms to examine the relationship among technological hierarchical development and the performance of fare firms; they theorized that the breadth of technological advancement affected the performance of fare firms.

## **2.2: The Organizational Impact on Performance of SMEs**

As indicated by Lee (2008), the organizational build incorporates inner attributes of firms, like employees, size, turnover, administrative design, and related issues. The current paper utilized top supervisory crew support and pioneering direction as a measurement to foster organizational effect. [58] contended that the endurance of SMEs exceptionally relies upon their capacity to abuse open doors on the lookout. Because of their restricted assets, top supervisory groups (explicitly (CEOs) and top managers) pick organizational methodologies, and through these techniques, they impact the

company's performance. Likewise, Kaplan (2010) expressed the job of HR in the company's performance and contended that, in the opposition market, an association's center colleagues (CEO and managers) settle on key vital choices that sway the future bearing and in general performance of the firm. Along these lines, this investigation contended that, in view of exceptionally unified frameworks, SMEs are typically overseen by proprietors or CEOs.

Trainor et al. (2016) considered an example of 774 managers of Taiwanese claimed organizations in China and tracked down a positive relationship between the top supervisory crews and firm performances. Barney, (2001) as well tracked down a positive relationship between the top supervisory crew and on association's performance. The job of entrepreneurship is basic in the public eye, as it adds to the development of an association's performance and business. Given the progressions in the serious climate for SMEs, it is generally fundamental to think about the significance of top managers, from the angle of how their enterprising inclination and worth may impact dynamic.

From the organizational perspective, it is characterized as "the system-making measures that give associations a reason for enterprising choice and activities" (Rauch,Wiklund, Lumpkin, and Frese, 2009) examined an example of 121 SMEs working in India, and their discoveries upheld the huge beneficial outcome of enterprising direction on SME performance. Additionally, Leonardi (2017) guessed the connection between innovative direction and an association's performance. Also, he saw the critical impacts of top administration support and pioneering direction and performance of SMEs working in Malaysia. Existing writing affirms that top administration support and pioneering direction is critical in an association's performance.

### **2.3: The Environmental Impact on the Performance of SMEs**

Environmental consequences are influenced by industry structure, while environmental drivers are influenced by the external environment. Environmental influences aid in comprehending the aspects that influence SME performance in the external environment (Haseeb, 2019).

Consumer pressure, trading partner pressure, competition enforcement, and vendor support have all been factors explored in previous studies. The bandwagon effect, competitive intensity, and competitive pressure are all investigated in this study on environmental impact. Competitive intensity emerges when there are a lot of competitors and little prospects for growth in the industry (Lutfi, 2020).

SMEs today compete in a fragile business environment characterized by global competition, according to the report. Furthermore, competitive intensity is a key factor in the development of environmental antagonism. According to Pateli et al. (2016), their research demonstrated the effects of competition intensity on a firm's performance using a sample of 182 manufacturing companies in China. Studen and Tiberius (2020) studied 130 respondents from Indonesian SMEs and discovered a negative—but statistically significant—relationship between competitive intensity and SME success. Furthermore, in terms of a firm's success, competitive intensity considerably affected the association between interactive innovation and service (Zhang,2019).

When competitors feel pressure, the company is forced to adopt new technology that will allow it to survive. In the context of SMEs, it is argued that the greater the number of firms under competitive



pressure, the worse their performance will be. Competitive pressure has a considerable positive link with strategic success, according to Geurin and Burch (2017). In a similar study, looked at 118 SMEs in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, and found negative connections between competitive pressure and SME performance.

The bandwagon effect, also known as the contagion effect, is a psychology phrase that refers to “a phenomena of public opinion impinging upon itself” Hurd (2018) suggested that this impact occurs when a product's demand rises as a result of the actions of others, or when a firm uses a particular technology just because other companies do, rather than for strategic reasons. When the climate is more dynamic, such as the digital climate and the bandwagon effect becomes even more relevant.

#### **2.4: The Impact of Social Media Adoption on the Performance of SMEs**

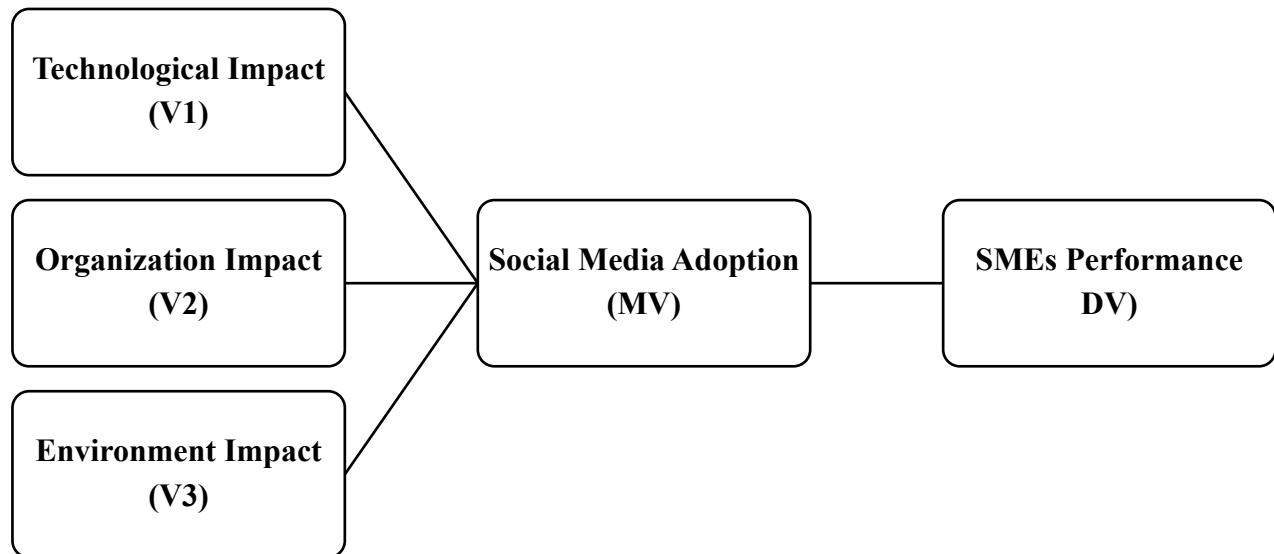
The organizational utilization of SM (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and so forth) affects firms by improving client connections, data availability, and marketing (Parveen, 2015). SM affects firms in the computerized world with regards to taking care of client questions, and building client connections. Expounding on work by Rogers (2003), we utilize crafted by Ringle (2015), who expressed that SM is a gathering of Web 2.0-based web applications that incorporate sites, discussions, photograph and video sharing, social systems administration destinations, item or administration surveys, online networks, and so on, permitting associations to make and share client created content.

Consequently, Becker et al. (2012) contend that SMEs utilize SM as an interrelated arrangement of vital assets to accomplish prevalent performance. Our second reasoning for the theoretical SM adoption–SME performance relationship depends on an asset based view, in that creators consider SM adoption as an asset that empowers SMEs to acquire an upper hand. This is on the grounds that online social media stages assume a vital part in working with information dividing between firms and their partners. Besides, he proposed that management analysts perceive the arising imperativeness of SM use for associations. They suggested that researchers center around how SM permits associations and scientists amplify their examinations identified with information co-creation and performance (Canedo, 2019).

Third, different examinations have laid out the significance of SM adoption in improving an association's performance (Bagozzi, 2018). Be that as it may, the operationalization of a company's performance has contrasted among a large number of these examinations. These investigations have additionally attested that context oriented proof with respect to SM adoption to upgrade an association's performance is required, explicitly, proof in the creating setting is restricted. These examinations have additionally commonly suggested further examination of SM adoption and an association's performance. As to SM adoption impacts SME performance needs further exact proof; this is significant on the grounds that the restricted proof accessible has generally been founded on cross-sectional information. At last, we propose that the SM adoption–SME performance connection ought to be researched in a more all-encompassing way utilizing a longitudinal methodology. Subsequently, the current examination plans to give more strong observational proof by utilizing a delay approach.

## 2.5. Theoretical Framework

An investigation done by Ali, (2011) to know the impact corporate finance, human resources capacity and access on financing on financial performance of SMEs in south Africa. The result of study shows a significant relationship between corporate finance, human resources capacity, access on financing and financial performance



## 2.6. Hypothesis

**H<sub>1</sub>**: there is a positive and significant relationship between Technological Impact and SMEs performance.

**H<sub>2</sub>**: there is a positive and significant relationship between Organizational Impact and SMEs performance.

**H<sub>3</sub>**: there is a positive and significant relationship between Environmental Impact and SMEs performance.

**H<sub>4</sub>**: there is a positive and significant relationship between Social Media Adoption and SMEs performance.

### **3. Research Methodology**

This section explains the research method used for the analysis of collected data, the data collection process, further population, sample & sampling method of the study will be explained and at the end of chapter data analysis will explained.

#### **3.1 Research Method**

The researcher's approach of conducting the study is referred to as the methodology (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). There are three methods for conducting research: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. Techniques include quantitative, qualitative, and a combination of the three. It is the contention of Babbie (2010) that the focus of quantitative methods is on target estimations and the investigation of mathematical numerical or factual information, which can be gathered through methods like surveys and questionnaires, or that can be controlled using computational procedures. As a further demonstration of the optimal method of doing this study, the quantitative approach critically replies to inquiries about the number of, how much, and how frequently. The inquiry requires a quantitative approach. This is because numerical attributes will be used to support or disprove the findings of the study. If the independent factors are found to predict behavior or attitude at a statistically significant level, then the results of the study can be summarized across the group of persons selected as the study population.

#### **3.2 Data Collection**

Two types of data can be collected to do research: structured and unstructured. These are information gathered from different sources, both primary and secondary. For this study, primary data is data acquired from the source. Direct interviews, observation, questionnaires, and surveys are among the methods used to get these data. Secondary data is data that is easily accessible and can be obtained through secondary sources such books, the internet, periodicals, and articles published in print. Primary and secondary data will be used in this investigation. Secondary data will be acquired from a variety of sources, such as journal articles, relevant course materials, magazines, books, and online resources, to name just a few.. For the most part, surveys involve questionnaires that are designed and coordinated specifically for the intended audience. Mail, phone, or the internet are the most common methods of communication for this (Grimsley, 2003). Structured questionnaires are prepared and sent to respondents via email as the primary data collection method. In light of the fact that it is cost-effective, time-saving, and covers a large number of people, this method of data gathering is a good fit. The distribution and collection of data took place over the course of three months. The email database was used to ensure that the demographics of the sample were balanced in terms of gender, age, and educational level. To make things even more convenient, Google Survey Tool was used to send the questionnaire to responders via email.

#### **3.3: Population and Sampling**

Each member of the group being studied can be referred to as a member of the population, which is the total number of people in the group. An entire population is made up of all subjects, objects, or people that fit into a specific set according to Polit and Hunger (1999). As a general rule, it is impossible to collect data from every single person in a population, hence a subset of the population

known as a sample is utilized instead. In this instance, a sizable sample of the population is selected for the purpose of gathering research data that can be used to generalize research findings to the full population. Sample selection is the process of selecting a subset of the population and using it to address the entire population (Polit & Hungler 1999). SME owners in Kabul city make up the study's subject population. 160 small business owners were randomly selected for the study, which employed a probability random selection procedure. In order to disseminate the questionnaire, it will be sent to their email. In order to collect the data, we'll use questionnaires based on widely used questions from the literature. Rule of thumb for sample size: Sekaran (2003; Sekaran, 2003) There is a minimum of 30 participants per group (males and females, juniors and seniors, etc.) in all studies that break down samples into subsamples. For most research projects, sample sizes greater than 30 and lower than 500 are adequate. It is generally recommended that the sample size used in multivariate research (such as multiple regression analyses) be ten to one hundred times greater than the number of variables being studied. As a result, a sample size of 160 was selected for the current investigation.

### **3.4 Data Analysis and Instrumentation**

Due to the online system failure, it was initially necessary to validate the data for any possible duplicate. The SPSS software was used to ensure that no copied data were discovered. The frequency of demographic data was also established. This establishes the number of men and women who responded, as well as their various age groups and educational levels. On the extracted factors, validity and reliability tests were conducted to ensure their integrity. These are the variables that are independent of each other.

The research variables are tested on the survey scale. Respondents can choose from a number of different options when answering the survey's questions, some of which are open-ended. Developed by American social scientist Rensis Likert, it is considered one of the most reliable metrics. An optional satisfaction measure may be included as well as a 5- or 7-point liker rating. This study employs a five-likert scale. In this questionnaire, there were two parts. Personal information such as age, gender, education, and years of work experience are collected in the first section of the questionnaire, while variables such as the impact of technology on organizations, the environment's impact, social media adoption, and SME performance are measured in the second section. One of the sources listed was a survey (Qalati & Mirani, 2020). The study aims to identify the elements that influence the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Kabul. If the study is focused on Kabul City, then the results may not be applicable to other areas. Furthermore, the study's participants are limited to the owners of a small number of selected SMEs in the country in which the research was done. Because of this, the findings of the study cannot be extrapolated to encompass the entire population of the country in which they were conducted.

## **4. Data Analysis & Findings**

This section discusses research findings on factors (technological impact, organization impact, environment impact) with mediating variable social media adoption influence the SMEs performance in Afghanistan. The chapter includes demographic information about sample of the study and regression analysis.

#### 4.1 Regression Analysis

Regression is the statistical strategy that recognizes the relationship between at least two variables; an independent variable or explanatory variable (or variables) the variable which information is accessible and dependent variable whose worth is to be anticipated. This strategy is utilized to discover the equation that addresses the relationship between independent variables and dependent variable. Multiple regression reads an equation that predicts one variable from at least two independent variables.

The regression investigation shows the statistical reliance of dependent variable on independent variables. This method is utilized to show what extent of difference between variables is because of the dependent variable, and what extent is because of the independent variables.

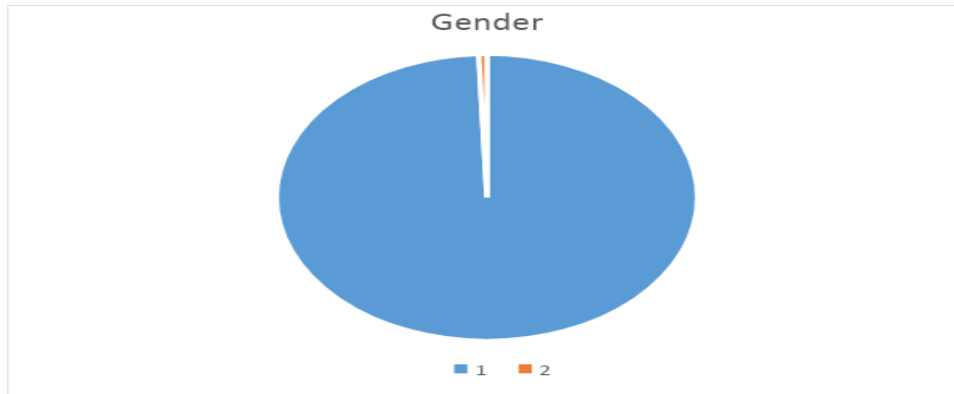
#### Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Technological Impact	160	.25	1.25	1.0918	.21387
Organization Impact	160	.33	1.67	1.1632	.45599
Environment Impact	160	.25	1.25	.9434	.31213
Social Media Adoption	160	.20	1.00	.9085	.16209
SME performance	160	.28	1.00	.8580	.24154
Valid N (listwise)	160				

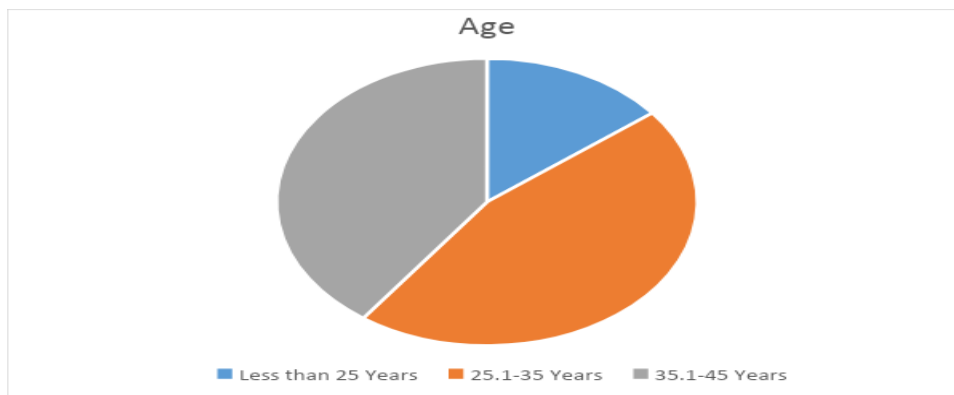
The descriptive statistics shows that based on the survey participant's perception, the employees of SME's perceived low level in terms of Technological impact (M=1.09, SD=.21); Organization Impact (M=1.16, SD=.45); Environment Impact (M=.94, SD=.312). The level of Social Media Adoption (M=.90, SD=.162); SME performance is also reported to be low (M=.85, SD=.24).

#### Demographics

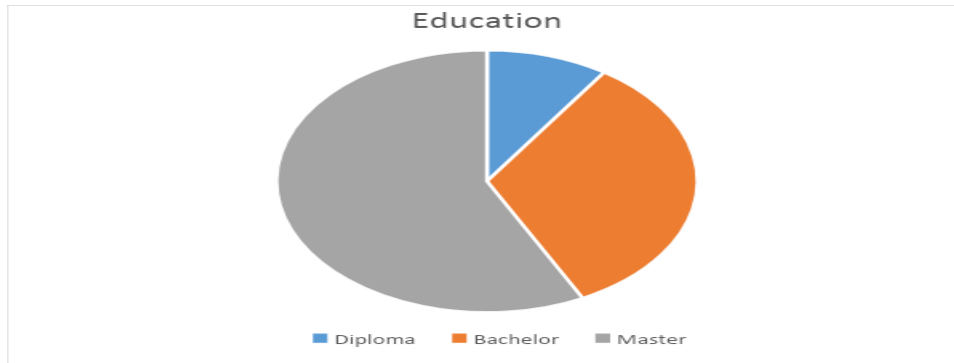
Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	136	85%
Female	24	15%



Age	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 25 Years	23	14.4%
25.1-35 Years	73	45.6%
35.1-45 Years	64	40%



Education	Frequency	Percentage
Diploma	15	9.4%
Bachelor	53	33.1%
Master	92	57.5%



As the above table-1 above shows there were total 160 survey participants. From the total 136(85%) were male and 24 (15%) were female. Age range of the participant were 23(14.4%) belong to the age category 18 to 25 years; 73 (45.6%) belongs to 25.1 to 35 years; 64 (40%) were related to the age of 35.1 to 45 years. Moreover, 15(9.4%) were having diploma degree, where 53(33.1%) were having bachelor degree, 92 (57.5%) were having Master degree.

#### Reliability Analysis

Survey Measure	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha		No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Technological Impact	4	.92	SME Performance	5	.96
Organizational Impact	3	.85			
Environmental Impact	4	.94			
Social Media Adoption	5	.95			

All variables including independent, dependent, and mediating variables showed satisfactory reliability based on Cronbach alpha of above 0.60 (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

#### Correlation Analysis

	1	2	3	4	5
Technological impact	1				
Organization Impact	.900**	1			
Environment Impact	.933**	.947**	1		
Social Media Adoption	.967**	.833**	.904**	1	

SME performance	.936**	.878**	.931**	.944**	1
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n=160, \*P < 0.05; \*\*p < 0.01; \*\*\*p < 0.001

The correlation analysis above table suggested that the independent variables Technological impacts, organization impact, Environment impact, social media adoption are positively and significantly associated with SME's performance where the P-value is less than 0.05. Moreover, the technological impact, organization impact and environment impact is also significantly associated with Social Media Adoption and the P-value of variables are less the 0.05.

### Model 1

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.951 <sup>a</sup>	.903	.902	.07576
a. Predictors: (Constant), Environment Impact, Technological Impact, Organization Impact				

The coefficient of variation R2 shows that 90 % of the variation in the dependent variable (SME'S Performance) is explained by the independent variables (Environment Impact, Technological Impact, and Organization Impact)

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8.381	3	2.794	486.717	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	.895	156	.006		
	Total	9.276	159			
a. Dependent Variable: SME performance						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Environment Impact, Technological Impact, Organization Impact						

The above table shows good fitness of the proposed model (F= 486.7, P<.05).

Coefficients
--------------



Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.127	.044		-2.870	.005
	Technological Impact	.605	.079	.535	7.675	.000
	Organization Impact	-.066	.042	-.125	-1.592	.114
	Environment Impact	.425	.074	.550	5.784	.000
a. Dependent Variable: SME performance						

The results in the coefficient table show that two independent variables (Technological Impact and Environment Impact) are having significant relation with SME performance. The Organization impact has negative and insignificant effects on SME Performance. The Technological impact has positive and significantly related with SME performance ( $r=.605$ ,  $P>0.5$ ). The Organization Impact has negative and insignificant effect on SME Performance ( $r=-.066$ ,  $P>0.5$ ). The Environment Impact has positive and significantly effect on SME performance ( $r=.425$ ,  $P< 0.5$ ).

## Model 2

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.975 <sup>a</sup>	.950	.949	.03663
a. Predictors: (Constant), Environment Impact, Technological Impact, Organization Impact				

The coefficient of variation R2 shows that 94 % of the variation in the dependent variable (Social Media Adaptation) is explained by the independent variables (Environment Impact, Technological Impact, and Organization Impact)

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.968	3	1.323	985.548	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	.209	156	.001		
	Total	4.177	159			
a. Dependent Variable: Social Media Adoption						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Environment Impact, Technological Impact, Organization Impact						

The above table shows good fitness of the proposed model ( $F= 985.5$ ,  $P<.05$ ).

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.076	.021		3.568	.000
	Technological Impact	.757	.038	.998	19.866	.000
	Organization Impact	-.138	.020	-.388	-6.860	.000
	Environment Impact	.176	.036	.340	4.961	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Social Media Adoption						

The results in the coefficient table show that two independent variables (Technological Impact and Environment Impact) are having significant relation with Social Media Adoption. The Organization impact has negative and significant effects on Social Media Adoption. The Technological impact has positive and significantly related with Social Media Adoption ( $r=.757$ ,  $P>0.5$ ). The Organization Impact has negative and significant effect on Social Media Adoption ( $r=-.138$ ,  $P>0.5$ ). The Environment Impact has positive and significantly effect on Social Media Adoption ( $r=.425$ ,  $P< 0.5$ ).

#### Mediation Model

#### Mediation Analysis

	<b>M 1</b>	<b>M 2</b>	<b>M 3</b>	<b>4</b>
	<b>S 1</b>	<b>S 2</b>	<b>S 3</b>	<b>S 4</b>
(Constant)	-.127(.005)	.076(.000)		-.202(.000)
Technological impact	.605(.000)	.757(.000)	.605(.000)	-.148(.257)
Organization Impact	-.066(.114)	-.138(.000)	-.066(.114)	.071(.091)
Environment Impact	.425(.000)	.176(.000)	.425(.000)	.250(.000)
SME performance	.000 <sup>b</sup>			.000 <sup>b</sup>
Social Media Adoption			.895(.000)	.000 <sup>c</sup>
R Square	.903		.903	.926

Adjusted R Square	.902		.902	.924
F statistic	486.717		486.717	483.576

Our results comparison from model 1 and model 4 shows that there were four significant results in the first model which turned out to be insignificant in model 4. Thus, it shows that social media Adoption is working as a mediator in our data. For example, technological impact turned from positive significant ( $P < .05$ ) to negative significant ( $P > .05$ ). Similarly, organization impact also turned from negative significant to positive significant.

In model 1, the value of R square was 90% in model 4; the value is 90% it increases. The adjusted R square was 90 % and in model 4 it indicates 90%, in model 1 our F- statistic value was 486.717 which indicated that the model was good fit but in model 4, by introducing mediation the value of F- statistic sustains as it was in model 1, no change has occurred in the value of F-statistics which shows the model is good enough to be fit because the independent and dependent having significant relationship.

## 4.2 Discussion

### Technological Impact

In order to gauge the impact of technology on SME performance, this study looked at a variety of technological factors. How much potential adopters see innovation as superior to the current status quo is called relative advantage (Bakar 2019). Furthermore, Ghobakhloo (2019) stated that an understanding of an organization's SM's relative advantage is beneficial to knowledge sharing and overall organizational performance. It is the degree to which new technology is compatible with prior practices, technology and current needs, as well as the values of SMEs. Cost-effectiveness measures the degree to which a new idea can be implemented and is more productive than the cost of doing so. As one of the most important dimensions to consider when evaluating the adoption of SM, this one was only briefly mentioned in the existing literature, which used the TOE framework. Using a communication medium, interactivity refers to the extent to which two or more parties can interact with each other In terms of Web 2.0, SM is a type of technology that is highly interactive. SM is a cutting-edge technology because it provides new ways to connect customers and businesses (Tseng,202). As a result, in the existing SM literature, interactivity has been recognized as an important aspect of technological impact. Visibility is the degree to which an object or event is noticed by the public. SMEs must use and leverage SM for marketing activities due to limited resources because it gives them greater visibility than large organizations (Wamba, 2018).

MIT framework was given by Michael Scott Morton in the 1990s, a time when technology was driving the approach (Lin,2018). According to the MIT framework, all of these factors influence and are influenced by each other in a reciprocal manner by technology. Research on the impact of technology applicability on performance measures has been conducted at both individual and organizational levels (2019, Tornatzky et al). Research by (Tornatzky,2017) examined the relationship between a company's infrastructure and its performance using data from 202 manufacturing firms. Technology has a positive effect on a company's performance, according to the authors. After conducting a meta-

analysis of the technology model using the MIT framework, Ahmad and his colleagues (2016) developed a conceptual framework in which the model's four dimensions — technology itself, people and their roles, structure and organizations — are all interconnected. An empirical study is needed to support the authors' claims about the positive impact of technology on a company's performance. According to Maduku et al. (2018), a firm's performance is positively correlated with technological innovations in small and medium-sized enterprises.

Regardless of size or type, organizations are unquestionably becoming more competitive. Organizations must be able to meet customer expectations and demands on time in order to maintain a competitive advantage. As a result of these demands, small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) are under pressure to reduce costs while also speeding up delivery times. Since this is the case, organizations have to keep improving their products or services and their processes.

These changes necessitate the renewal of both business processes and hardware. Only through technological advancement can this regenerative process take place. Firms are compelled to compete in a dynamic and complex environment because of global competition and technological advancements. The role of technology in the growth of nations and the competitiveness of businesses cannot be overstated (Zahra,2018). A recent study by Tajvidi, R. and Karami, A. (2015) asserted that a company's ability to succeed depends increasingly on the integration of technology and total quality management. As the author's research has shown, technology has a significant impact on the performance of an organization. It is worth noting that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) lack resources, which has led to an increase in interest in strategic technological partnering. According to Porter and Millar (2019), a number of technological issues have a negative impact on the long-term viability of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). According to the authors, who studied a representative sample of Thai SMEs, there is a positive correlation between business performance and technological advancements (industry 4.0). Furthermore, the importance of technology in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) was demonstrated, particularly in the supply chain function. Supply chain performance is influenced by information technology in small and medium-sized enterprises in India, according to the authors. The extent of technological innovation, according to Leibenstein (2016), may have an impact on a company's performance.

More than 700 hotel workers from 21 hotels were interviewed by Datta et al. (2015), which included 13 international hotels and the rest of Seoul's local hotels. They posited a link between guest satisfaction and the use of front office, back office, and guest-related technology applications. The authors found that in the hotel industry, there was a direct link between technological advancements and better performance. An analysis of 218 Swedish export firms by Leibenstein (2018) looked at how technological organizational innovation affected export firm performance, with the hypothesis being that greater levels of technological innovation were associated with better export firm performance.

### **Organizational Impact**

Employees, company size, turnover, management structure, and related issues are all part of the organizational construct, according to Chan (2013). Organizational impact was measured in terms of top-level management team support and entrepreneurial orientation. Lorch (2014) argued that the

ability of SMEs to take advantage of market opportunities is critical to their survival. With limited resources, top management teams (especially CEOs and top managers) decide on organizational strategies, and these strategies influence the firm's performance. A firm's core team members (CEO and managers) make key strategic decisions that affect the firm's future direction and overall performance in the competition market, according to Kaplan (2010), who stated the importance of human resources in a firm's success. Due to centralized systems, this study concluded that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are typically managed by their owners or CEOs. Research by Trainor and colleagues (2014) found a link between firm performance and the leadership teams of Taiwanese-owned businesses in China, which included 774 managers. Barney, (2017) also found a positive association between the top management team and on organization's performance.

Entrepreneurship plays a critical role in society because it helps to boost a company's productivity and profits. Accordingly, it's critical to consider the role that top managers play in a company's decision-making process in light of changes in the competitive landscape for small businesses. When it comes to a business perspective, it's defined as "the strategy-making processes that provide organizations with a basis for entrepreneurial decision and action" (Rauch et al. 2009). They studied 121 small and medium-sized enterprises in India, and their findings indicated a significant positive effect of entrepreneurial orientation on SME performance. As Bakar (2019) observed, top management support and entrepreneurial orientation have a significant impact on the performance of Malaysian small and medium-sized enterprises. Existing research shows that a firm's performance is influenced by the support of its top management and its entrepreneurial orientation.

### **Environmental Impact**

The structure of the industry has an impact on environmental impacts, and environmental drivers come from the environment outside of the organizations. Understanding the effects of environmental factors on SME performance in the external environment is facilitated by environmental impacts (Slusarczyk,2019). Consumer pressure, trading partner pressure, competitive enforcement and vendor support have all been considered in prior studies. The bandwagon effect, competitive intensity, and competitive pressure are all examined in this study. When there are a large number of competitors and few opportunities for the industry to expand, competition becomes intense. Lutfi (2020) stated that today's volatile business environment is characterized by global competition for small and medium-sized enterprises. Furthermore, the intensity of competition is a key factor in the development of environmental hostility. An investigation into the impact of competitive intensity on the performance of manufacturing firms in China by Pateli and co-authors (2017) found evidence of this. Although the relationship between competitive intensity and SME performance was statistically significant, it was found to be negative (Studen and Tiberius, 2015). Furthermore, in terms of a company's performance, the relationship between interactive innovation and service was significantly moderated by competitive intensity.

When a company's competitors believe they are exerting pressure on it, this is referred to as competitive pressure. According to a SME context, the greater the competition, the greater the impact on a company's performance (Tella,2020). According to Geurin and Burch (2017), strategic performance is significantly influenced by competitive pressure. Similarly, Tella (2020) analyzed a

sample of 118 small businesses in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, and found that competitive pressure had a negative correlation with SME performance. In psychology, the bandwagon effect, also known as the contagion effect, "denotes a phenomenon of public opinion influencing itself," according to the Oxford English Dictionary. For Ngai (2017), this effect is a result of an increase in the price of a product due to the fact that other companies are also using it, and not because the company has a strategic need to do so. A more volatile climate, like the digital climate, magnifies the impact of the bandwagon effect.

### **Social Media Adoption and SME Performance**

When it comes to answering customer questions and cultivating customer relationships, the way businesses use social media (e.g., Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, etc.) has a significant impact on the digital world's businesses. There are a variety of Web 2.0-based internet applications, such as blogs and forums and photo and video sharing as well as social networking sites, product or service reviews and online communities that allow organizations to create and share user-generated content (SM). It follows that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) utilize an interrelated set of strategic resources to achieve superior performance, in line with Becker and colleagues (2018). As part of our second rationale for SM adoption and SME performance, we use a resource-based perspective. SM adoption is seen as a resource by the authors of Mustkibil (2018), who see it as an opportunity for SMEs to gain a competitive advantage. So why is it important for companies and their stakeholders to share knowledge via online social media platforms? SM use in organizations is becoming increasingly important, according to Cao (2018), and this should be recognized by management researchers. Scholars should focus on how SM helps organizations and researchers expand their investigations into knowledge co-creation and performance, they said.

The adoption of SM has been shown in various studies to improve an organization's performance (Bagozzi,2018). Many of these studies, however, have used different operationalization of a firm's performance. These studies have also argued that evidence in the developing context is lacking when it comes to SM adoption to improve a company's performance. SM adoption and a company's performance have also been recommended in these studies. Further empirical evidence is needed to determine how SM adoption affects the success of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The current evidence largely relies on cross-sectional data. If you want to better understand how SM adoption and SME performance are linked, we recommend using a longer-term perspective.

### **Mediating Role of Social Media Adoption**

The concept of "service failures and recovery strategies" has evolved from a dyadic customer focus to a global web quality as a result of recent advancements on the internet. For a better understanding of how people use, adapt, and benefit from social media, numerous studies have examined a variety of motivations. This study focuses on the role of social media adoption among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Several studies have shown that the use of technology can improve the efficiency of business processes (Millar, Chan and Trainor, 2017). Adoption of social media by corporations has been found beneficial by some researchers, and a few have found a link between social media adoption and company performance. Using social media has a positive impact on customer-facing activities

and, consequently, on sales results, according to Hair et al. (2019). Using social media can have a positive impact on an organization's social capital, which in turn affects its results.

Hair et al. (2016) discovered that social media has a positive effect on sales for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Social media, according to Hair et al. (2019), can have a significant impact on business, influencing consumer purchasing decisions to a significant degree. Nunnally (2019), trust and selling capabilities Fornell and Larcker (2019) have been used as a mediator between SM and SME performance by previous researchers (2014). Even though SM has direct effects on SME performance, this study claims that it also mediates the relationship between TOE characteristics and SME performance, in accordance with Hu et al. In a customer-based review study, it was discovered that social media (SM) experience played a helpful mediating role between behavioral intention and user motivation in the study.

## **5. Conclusion**

SM adoption in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) appears to be erratic. An investigation into how these technologies can improve the efficiency of small and medium-sized businesses is possible. Researchers can also investigate the link between SM adoption and entrepreneurship in small and medium-sized enterprises. Because this process is constantly evolving, researchers will be able to examine how well SMEs can adapt to change. Social media platforms are constantly evolving, and customers are also changing platforms, making it a good area for researchers to investigate which platforms are more effective in terms of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Few studies in Asia and Afghanistan focus on SME performance and the mediating role of social media at the same time, and this is one of the few studies in that area that does so. SME performance in Afghanistan is examined as a result of the adoption of SM in this study. Due to its customer-centric nature, the results of this research are particularly intriguing.

Technology has a significant and positive impact on the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), according to the findings of this study (2020). D'Attoma and Ieva's findings are in agreement with these results (2020). As a result, innovation in technology and strict oversight are essential for long-term growth and profitability. A significant influence on the growth of organizations is exerted by new products and technologies. As a result of their focus on innovation, small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) are major engines of job creation and economic expansion (Ghobakhloo,2019). In addition, the findings of this study suggest that top management outsources the adoption of technology in SMEs, necessitating the use of it by staff for tactical or marketing purposes.

Respondents' age and education level may indicate that they are already familiar with the technology, which may explain why they are interested in using it for business purposes as well. There was also a strong link between the performance of a company and that of a SME. SME performance is positively influenced by organizations, which is supported by previous research. According to Sawaeen and Ali (2020), there is little evidence to support the idea that managerial and organizational capacities have any effect on outcomes. Many studies have found that socioeconomic, demographic, and organizational characteristics have a significant impact on performance. Researchers found a direct

link between organizational factors and community sustainability perceptions, according to the study authors. Organizational factors and performance management systems in Vietnamese firms are linked in both direct and indirect ways, according to Hahsmi et al. (2020). Furthermore, top management support (especially CEO leadership) and other organizational factors have a significant influence on product innovation performance in firms operating in Thailand (2019). (2019).

Ali, et al findings are consistent with our results, which show that the environment has a positive and significant impact on SME performance (2020). Previous studies have taken into account the structure of the industry, the suppliers, and the regulatory systems. Sustainability initiatives challenge industries to do more than the obvious when it comes to redesigning their products and processes with the environment in mind, as Asad, et al. (2020) and Adel, et al. (2016) report. Non-Governmental Organizations NGOs, universities, consulting firms, and the industry itself have all contributed to the rise of sustainable development over the years. With the rise in environmental awareness, many businesses saw the opportunity to diversify. In order to gain a leg up on the competition, some businesses have incorporated environmental practices into their strategic planning. Recognized that the economic foundations of business must be the basis for environmental policy Risks from government and competition activities, public outrage, and employee problems have been mitigated by a strategic approach to environmental performance.

A similar finding was made in this study, which found that SM adoption acts as a significant mediator between the impact of technology, organizational impact, and environmental impact on SMEs. Findings from Freixanet (2018) are in line with this study. The expected advantages are the primary drivers of SM adoption, according to these studies' findings. According to Ainin (2015), who argues that comparative advantage is an important factor in Malaysian SMEs' adoption of SM, a positive correlation between relative advantage and SM adoption was found. SM adoption offers lower-cost options than traditional media for SMEs because they have limited resources (Chatterjee,2020). This shows that SM has a significant impact on SME performance in terms of improved customer service, their relationships and engagement, increased loyalty and retention, increased visibility, brand reputation, cost efficiency, and reaching a large number of customers. These findings are in line with previous studies (Tajudeen,2008). According to the findings of this study, top management is enthusiastic about the adoption of SM, and employees are expected to make extensive use of SM adoption as a marketing tool. According to the findings of this study, young, well-educated Afghan business owners, executives, and managers prefer to use social media as a marketing tool. Regarding the entrepreneurial orientation and SM-adoption relationship, entrepreneurial orientation had a significant relationship with SM adoption. Possibly due to fear of losing ground to competitors, SMEs in emerging countries, such as Afghanistan, are acting entrepreneurially regarding SM adoption.

In addition, environmental factors and the adoption of SM show that environmental impact has a significant impact on the adoption of SM in SMEs, as Cao, Ajjan, Hong, and Le (2016) argue. SM adoption is not influenced by competitive intensity, unlike in previous studies (Wongpinunwatana,2003). Pressure from rivals is also a major factor in the adoption of social media. This suggests that SMEs are compelled to develop a positive attitude toward SM adoption as a result of competitive pressure. This finding is consistent with previous research (Bergeron,2016). The study



also discovered that SM adoption is heavily influenced by the "bandwagon effect.". As a result, it suggests that most small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) adopt such an innovative technology merely to avoid being left behind by market fluctuations. As a result of the findings, there was a positive correlation between social media use and SME success. SM adoption compatibility is an important consideration for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), according to previous studies (Bakar, 2013). Nowadays, most young people and new businesses have access to the internet and can use social media (SM) tools like WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and so forth. As a result, SM is a perfect fit for the current infrastructure. Adoption of social media is encouraged by its interactivity, which provides a platform for two-way communication with customers and business partners, and thus encourages SMEs to use it.

## **5.2. Recommendation**

According to the findings of this study, top management is enthusiastic about the adoption of SM, and employees are expected to make extensive use of SM adoption as a marketing tool. According to the findings of this study, young, well-educated Afghan business owners, executives, and managers prefer to use social media as a marketing tool. Entrepreneurial orientation had a significant impact on SM adoption when it came to the relationship between the two. Businesses in developing countries, such as Afghanistan, are acting entrepreneurially when it comes to the adoption of SM. This could be because they are worried about falling behind their rivals. The findings of this study suggest that top management outsources the adoption of technology in SMEs, necessitating the use of it by employees for tactical or marketing purposes.

## **5.3. Future Research Recommendation**

Few studies have focused on SM adoption in SMEs and tested hypotheses similar to those tested in our study. Scholars have recently examined the forefathers and outcomes of numerous information technology-based systems. However, from the standpoint of SM, there is a need to investigate SM adoption and usage in the context of SMEs operating in emerging markets. As well as the current study demonstrates the impact of technology, organization, and the environment on SMEs, as well as the critical role of a mediator in using social media to performance. As a result, future research may examine the impact of social media use based on the categorization of the impact factors identified in this study, and the findings may be extended to different contexts.

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