Understanding the Skills and Roles of Social Media Manager in Improving Job-Related Performance among SMEs in Australia

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Abstract

One of the biggest challenges that Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) confront is coming up with the best business plan, which is made possible by a strong social media adoption of modern soft and hard skills. Due to the high rate of failures among SMEs, there has been a substantial investment in research to pinpoint the crucial elements that will ultimately lead to a more successful journey. Several models have also been developed to evaluate the profound impact of the social media manager. However, there is a gap in determining how prepared an SME is to successfully boost performance, and the gap is considerably larger when considering it from the perspective of the absence of intervention from social media managers skills (SMM). The current research suggests a model for evaluating such readiness by interrogating SMM skills. In order to help SMEs to better grasp the foundations that must be laid in order to successfully enhance performance, organisational readiness is introduced as a mediator. From the viewpoint of an employee, this paper suggests a model to position the role of SMEs for upcoming challenges. The organisational readiness evaluation seeks to give

SMEs in regional Australia a better understanding of the foundations that must be laid in order to successfully achieve the required increase in performance for SMEs.

Keywords: soft skills, hard skills, SMEs, job performance, social media, social media manager, readiness

1. Introduction

Small- and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) are crucial drivers of economic development and job creation in rural and regional areas, according to research (Uddin et al., 2023). This is due to the fact that SMEs are the foundation of economic growth. The primary functions of SMEs are to increase employment opportunities, foster innovation, and strengthen the economy (Ramdan et al., 2022). SME owners can build a strong team within the company to reduce competition in their sector. Before they can compete with other businesses, SME founders must produce value from a strong organisational staff (Mamun, 2023). The ability of SMEs to co-create value strengthens their competitive advantage. SMEs are regarded as the foundation of Australia's economy in every region. The discovery of numerous significant minerals in South Australia encourages the growth of new businesses throughout the state. The mining industry contributes to the state's growth (Mitra, 2023). However, due to a lack of trained staff, these SMEs are losing clients (Alam et al., 2022). SMEs need to figure out how to get these resources if they want to prosper. Recent small products from different countries such as India and China have largely contributed to the expansion of competition between Australian SMEs (He & Estébanez, 2023). The resilience of SMEs is seen as essential to Australia's advantage and financial development (Cerya et al., 2023). Demanding clients, brief product life cycles, and globalisation have created a situation where SMEs need to be flexible, quick to respond, and creative (Wang et al., 2023). With regards to gaining the upper hand when assisting the firm, SMEs are in a bind.

The most significant and most researched factor in organisational behavior and industrial management is likely job performance (Cao & Weerawardena, 2023). It is described as a person's own behavior—something they do and can see—that adds value to the organisation and advances the organisation's objectives (Do et al., 2023). The degree to which an employee satisfies general organisational performance objectives is another way to conceptualise job performance as an achievement-related behavior with certain evaluative elements (M. Chen et al., 2023). Over the last several decades, there has been a major evolution in the concept of job performance, from a conventional viewpoint that focused on employment and set responsibilities to a broader comprehension of work functions in ever-changing organisational situations. The fundamental force behind this re-direction in focus is the fiercely competitive and international corporate environment, where all organisations must be set up to accommodate dynamic and shifting situations (Baard, Rench, & Kozlowski, 2014). A broader definition of job performance that includes all imaginable behaviours that aid the organisation in achieving its goals is required in light of this new environment (Lutfi et al., 2022). Every SME firm's primary objective is performance in order to maintain its competitiveness in the market. Performance is the capacity of an entity,

individual, group, or organisation to carry out a series of acts to achieve a particular goal (Chowdhury et al., 2022).

Performance is often described as an organisation's ability to successfully complete tasks and achieve goals via work practices. Performance is thus an outcome as opposed to an action. Job performance is hence the end result of activities connected to work. In the literature, the subject of organisational performance is one that has been widely investigated and addressed (Zhu & Huang, 2023). Organisational performance is used to evaluate firms (Kumari et al., 2023). Formally, an organisation's performance is determined by its selection, which ultimately improves the organisation's performance pedigree (Kumari et al., 2023). Social media capabilities include the ability to build public profiles, specify users when sharing connections with others, and look through a list of links created by other users in a system (Solomon et al., 2023). One needs awareness, i.e., a self-perceived condition of existence, to become aware of something whether inside or outside of themselves (Wasike, 2023). Social media use has developed into a method for enhancing and spreading knowledge (Natasha et al., 2023).

Nowadays, it is essential to use social media managers (SMM) as a tool for business promotion (Lawal & Adejuwon, 2022). SMM is quickly becoming a preferred method of business promotion since it enables communications to move beyond private one-on-one conversations and into many-to-many conversations. Business owners can fully rely on SMM for selling, marketing, and promotion at a lower cost (Tajpour et al., 2023). They can utilise SMM techniques like sharing, tagging, messaging, commenting, and notifying to advertise their goods, services, and brands. When Hultman et al. (2023) examined how Facebook is used in enterprises, they agreed that firms should use it. If a firm is already connected, SMM can incorporate social media use without any new resources. As a result, SMM can use it for their daily transactions as it is inexpensive and requires only basic IT knowledge. Soft skills are behavioral abilities that are crucial to an individual's development. Hard skills, such as technical talents, are easier to identify and quantify than soft skills. Despite the absence of consensus concerning their definition, a number of authors, including Cimatti (2016) and Wentz (2012) asserted that they are related to social, emotional, and behavioural characteristics including resilience, time management, teamwork, intuitiveness, and emotional intelligence. Regardless of one's background, these talents are essential for commercial success (Wentz, 2012). Soft skills therefore complement technical and scientific education. When it comes to how people approach circumstances and interact with others, soft skills are crucial. Additionally, as noted by Muller-Heyndyk (2019), companies place a high priority on these particular talents. Additionally, learning soft skills is often more challenging than learning hard skills (GuerraBáez, 2019).

As a result, employers frequently choose candidates with strong soft skills (such as connection and collaborative abilities) over those with more in-depth technical knowledge. This happens because businesses believe that strengthening primarily technical skills will always be simpler than enhancing behavioral competence. Although there is a wealth of

technical information, most people lack the interpersonal and social skills that the labour market today demands, according to Rocco (2019). There is a widespread belief that a SME operator must possess not only a strong foundation of technical knowledge, but also soft skills like the ability to manage relationships and conflicts and the capacity for independent and continual learning. Soft skills must be handled in this regard as a strategy for enhancing job performance.

Social networking is an optional tool; therefore, the results may vary depending on which employees use it. As a result, a company's SMM adoption may be strongly impacted by the diversity of its workforce. Positionally competent SMMs are more likely than underproductive and unskilled personnel to use social media effectively and efficiently. Effective SMM makes use of social media for its intended purpose, improving work output. The purpose of this study is to ascertain how SMM soft skills affect job performance in Australian SMEs. The focus on social media research in SME contexts enhances the significance of the current work. Only a small number of studies, particularly in the context of Australian SMEs, have looked at how SMM soft skills are used and implemented within SME enterprises. Managers and administrators in these businesses require the assistance of SMM skills technology due to the detrimental effects of employees improper usage of social media on their efficacy and productivity. SMEs' organisational use of SMM soft skills can help enhance job performance and aid in problem resolution if executed effectively and efficiently.

Researchers have determined that the acquisition of any skill within a workplace necessitates a blend of both hard and soft skills (Ingsih & Suhana, 2023; Lamri & Lubart, 2023). Furthermore, they have clarified that there exist shared elements connecting hard and soft skills, which can be viewed as a linkage bridging the two skill categories (Guidotti et al., 2023; Qureshi et al., 2023). In the setting of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), this situation presents an intriguing opportunity for the comprehensive development of individuals. This approach enables an appreciation of both the technical and non-technical facets of skills.

Hence, the current study delves into the impact of social media skills (encompassing both soft and hard skills) while considering the preparedness of an organization. This inquiry focuses on SMEs in Australia. The rationale for selecting these specific variables is rooted in the conclusions drawn from prior research, which found a notably positive influence of these constructs on one's readiness to function effectively. The anticipation is that the outcomes of this ongoing investigation will empirically bolster the findings of earlier studies. Consequently, this study contributes to a more lucid articulation of the theoretical framework outlining the interplay between social media skills (both soft and hard) and organizational preparedness, ultimately influencing job performance within SMEs.

Organizational readiness has been reported to be focused in several studies concerning job performance (McDermott et al., 2022; Turek, 2020). However, these assessments are different in several ways; for example, they have implied varying foundations and conceptual models

of organisational readiness. In addition, research arguethat organisational readiness is a predictor of performance and recommends more empirical investigations on the relationship between organisational readiness and job performance in the context of developing countries (Ng et al., 2020). Past literature has discussed the association of social media usage with organisational readiness (Abdul Hamid, 2022; Dubey et al., 2023; Sulastini et al., 2023); and firm performance (Jamai et al., 2022; Lutfi et al., 2022; Ofosu-Ampong & Acheampong, 2022). Therefore, this study proposes that organizational readiness (mediated) are primarily influenced by the reviews, comments, and feedback achieved through social media, ultimately enhancing SME performance.. This study seeks to answer the research questions, including 1) the effects of social media manager hard skills on organisational readiness and SME job performance? 2) The impact of social media soft skills on organizational readiness. 3) How organizational readiness affects SME job performance directly and indirectly?

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Adoption of Social Media by SMEs

Social media has several definitions because various people view and utilise it in different ways (Amegbe et al., 2023). It is a group of web-based applications, according to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), that enable users to produce and distribute their own content. Many company activities can be enhanced by social media usage that is effective. SMEs that use social media do better in the context of both emerging and developed nations. It might be challenging to compare how SMEs in industrialised and developing nations use social media as there are different issues that SMEs in developed and developing nations must deal with (Oyewobi et al., 2022).

2.2 Job Performance

The work of an employee indicates their job performance (Caillier, 2010). Job performance is correlated with an employee's capacity to identify set targets, meet standards, accomplish targets, or finish a set of required tasks for their company (Khamaludin et al., 2021). Job performance and employee effectiveness are strongly associated because of the propensity of employees' performance to increase due to the stress reduction system at their place of work (Wibawa et al., 2022). The factors that affect employees' job success have received significant attention from organisations that are cognizant of this reality. A variety of internal and external circumstances, as well as an employee's success within a company, can influence how well they execute their jobs. Individual capacity, ability, and knowledge exemplify the external factors, whilst work environment, type of tasks assigned, benefits, organisational structure, and HRM practices exemplify the internal aspects (Muna et al., 2022). Numerous studies have examined employees' task, contextual, adaptive, creative, and agility performances on top of their effectiveness. By following processes or maintaining key services, task completion supports central organisational functions and is directly related to the technological components of the organisation (Nasir et al., 2022). Task performance was defined by Walter et al. (1997) as "the efficiency with which job incumbents conduct

activities that contribute to the technical core of the organisation". By conducting processes or providing key services, task completion helps any organisation's fundamental operations (Idris et al., 2023). Contextual performance refers to the behavioural patterns which contribute to the environment where the tasks are performed, both psychologically and socially. Contextual performance refers to how employees behave in situations outside of their primary duties, such as supporting and assisting co-workers, demonstrating a willingness to learn, sharing knowledge, and performing tasks that are not their own (Lai et al., 2022). Contextual performance supports, works with, and makes recommendations for methods to improve organisational processes. In short, contextual performance refers to behaviour that is advantageous to the business through cooperation, law adherence, and extra effort (Elshaer et al., 2023). Adaptive performance refers to an employee's capacity to understand and respond to internal organisational changes. The organisational support that employees attain at work is likely to increase both their individual and group performance (Sakib et al., 2022). The ability to learn new activities, manage work-related stress, adjust to evolving technologies and procedures, solve difficulties, and respond to others are all examples of adaptable performance (Cahyadi et al., 2022). The ability to create things, processes, or concepts deemed as innovative and potentially useful is known as creative performance. A worker's contribution is often assessed by a manager depending on how innovative they were. In fact, employee creativity improves the company's output. Each employee thus generates original ideas in respect to varied job descriptions and working techniques (Lutfi, 2022). Employees who frequently socialise at work are happier, have greater productivity, and more imaginative (Hernandez, Stanley, & Miller, 2014, p. 342).

2.2 Soft Skills

Hard skills and soft skills are the two types of knowledge (Nor et al., 2022). Soft skills are defined as highly particular knowledge still held within the human mind. It is challenging to formulate and divide spontaneously, and change requires interpersonal interaction (Zhang et al., 2022). The foundation of soft skills is a person's behavior and experiences, including ideals, values, and emotions (Herrick et al., 2022). On the basis of its comprehension, personal knowledge or understanding obtained via individuals or the personal is categorised as a soft skill (Cucino et al., 2022). Hard skills are difficult to articulate and translate from soft abilities (Strang, 2022; van Heerden et al., 2023).

2.3 Hard Skills

Hard skills, which often comprise inherent institutional knowledge (Lamri & Lubart, 2023), are a type of information that can be recorded, developed, and expressed easily. Hard skills are also attainable, documentable, and shareable by university activity units (Hari Kurniawanto, Zara Tania Rahmadi, 2022). Hard skills fall under the category of quantitatively specialised technical abilities (concrete, assessable, and verifiable via certain certificates, for instance), with direct links to professional activities, and oblivious to hierarchy, making it possible to identify certain hard skills. They comprise the level of educational preparation, knowledge gained via professional experience, expertise, language

proficiency, and computer proficiency (Astutik & Sulhan, 2022). It makes sense to delimit competence as the ability to activate, combine, and assign professional and other types of knowledge, resources, and abilities in such a context, and that it is an attempt to synthesise. The junction between knowledge (what to do), ability (how to do it), and attitude (wanting to do it) is where competencies can be found (Schislyaeva & Saychenko, 2022).

2.4 Social Media Manager

To create and/or disseminate content, social media users are encouraged to engage and contribute information (Schislyaeva & Saychenko, 2022). Such platforms have shifted the emphasis of Internet services away from being consumption-oriented towards being driven by collaboration and interaction, creating new opportunities for business and public interaction (Nadlifatin et al., 2021). Social media, in contrast to traditional media, can utilise both web-based and mobile technologies (Nadlifatin et al., 2021). Given the shifting customer habits, businesses should think about utilising social media. Marketing managers, according to Yousaf et al. (2022), should be aware of the influence and critical character of the conversations between users of social media. Due to social media's advantages in directly linking businesses with end customers in a rapid and affordable manner, it has drawn interest from a wide range of industries. These advantages include making it easier to handle customer connections, product management, public relations, marketing communications, marketing intelligence, and sentiment research. Due to social media's higher efficiency in comparison to other conventional communication techniques, industry executives have claimed that organisations must adopt social media like Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, and others, to thrive in online environments (Nguyen, 2022).

2.5 Organisational Readiness

The degree to which an organisation's members are ready and willing to implement change as a shared duty is referred to as its organisational readiness for change (Yulius, 2022). The theories of behavioral science and change management have influenced the development of organisational preparedness. Resistance and change readiness were distinguished by Armenakis et al. (1993). An individual operating in a way that slows or delays the process of change in an organisation is said to be resistant to change (Strugar Jelaa et al., 2023). But more often than not, organisational inconsistencies and imbalances—not people—are to blame for the resistance to change. Before making any change, a company should make necessary preparations (Brooke-Sumner et al., 2021). Lewin's (1951) three-stage model of change, which consists of unfreezing, altering, and freezing, lays the groundwork for organisational preparedness since the unfreezing step necessitates a successful dismantling of old patterns before persuading individuals to adopt new ones. The alterations in organisational structure are brought on by the introduction of new technology. The degree of alignment between the organisation and the new technology is how Snyder (2001) characterised the structural perspective for readiness. The importance of the non-technological components of an organisation's readiness is highlighted by the fit between technology and an organisation. According to Azhar et al. (2022), organisational change

readiness is inextricably linked to implementation readiness, networks, and communications, implementation climate, structural traits, culture, and leadership qualities.

2.6 Theoretical Postulation

The relationship between individual and organisational capital exchange that has been linked to increased organisational resilience is explained by the Social Exchange Theory (SET). According to the SET, when someone uses someone else's resources or provides them with a service, they develop a sense of debt to that person (Xuecheng et al., 2022). He or she reciprocates to allay that sensation. If the participants are happy with their results, the dialogue will proceed (J. K. C. Chen & Sriphon, 2022). According to research, people who receive highly valued financial and/or socioemotional benefits from their jobs may decide to positively respond by giving their employer more of their expertise, knowledge, and experience. Recent research has led to the development of a more insightful knowledge of the interaction between social media, soft skills, hard skills, and job performance thanks to the use of this theory.

2.7 Propositions Development

The authors considered the SET as the proper theoretical framework for this study due to its focus on the effects of soft skills, hard skills, social media, and organisational readiness of SMEs on job performance. The SET is better equipped to explain the function of SMM soft and hard skills within businesses as predictors of social media adoption among SMEs for improving job performance, according to prior studies. As a result, a number of things may have an impact on SMEs (Elshaer & Saad, 2022). There are four constructs from each of the domains in the framework that was used to create the six study hypotheses.

2.7.1 Relationship between Soft Skills and Job Performance

The most crucial workers in any company are those that are capable of possessing both technical and soft abilities (Siddique et al., 2022). Professional credentials and technical know-how are essential for employers and new employees to carry out careers and jobs successfully, but more and more attention is being paid to the development of soft skills or traits that are not dependent on knowledge acquired and are challenging to measure because of their relationship to emotional intelligence and personality traits. These qualities are crucial in the interim because they promote interpersonal relationships (Iorio et al., 2022). Soft skills are crucial for the advancement of employees' human capital, according to Medvedeva et al. (2022). The workforce can encourage organisational reforms, improvements, and innovations with the help of soft skills (Wibowo et al., 2020). Job performance has continued to be a major concern in many firms in this cutthroat economy. The effectiveness of a leader at carrying out his duties in the workplace to advance organisational objectives and increase productivity is measured by his job performance (Fernandes et al., 2021). Soft skills are essential for the success and well-being of an organisation since they have a significant impact on the accomplishment of work performance (Seetha, 2014). The effects of soft skills on job performance in several

disciplines, including education, medicine, engineering, commerce, and so on have been the subject of numerous studies. According to Lippman et al. (2015), there are five essential soft skills that foster employees' performance. They anticipated that having soft skills will boost a person's chances of succeeding in a variety of areas, including self-control, social skills, communication, positive self-concept, and higher-order cognitive abilities. Anggiani (2017) investigated how skills affect employees' performance and concluded that both hard and soft skills have a substantial impact. In a similar vein, Musembi et al. (2018) conducted research to ascertain the benefits of employees' soft skills on project performance and discovered that these talents have a favorable impact. Additionally, he stated that the development of soft skills will help the principal's leadership. According to Polnaya, Nirwanto, and Triatmanto (2018), there is a strong correlation between teachers' performance and their soft skills, clearly demonstrating that as their soft skills rise, so does their performance. Based on the above arguments, the current study postulates that:

Proposition 1: Soft skills and job performance are positively related.

2.7.2 Relationship between Hard Skills and Job Performance

Hard skills include things like the system used to make reservations, the steps taken to check guests in, the steps taken to maintain the property, the workflow when getting ready for banquets, and similar things. The systems, equipment, and procedures required to deliver goods and services to clients are referred to as "hard skills". Hard skills are thought to have a big impact on employee performance (Wibowo et al., 2020). The similar idea—that hard skills have a big impact on a person's ability to produce high-quality work—was made by Eliyana et al. (2019). Since technical, or hard skills, are more directly tied to employees' daily activities than human or soft skills, most companies prioritise professional certifications and training programmes. Other studies found that the importance of hard skills might increase a person's potential for forming bonds with co-workers and attaining bigger goals (Baum, 2008). Hard skills are technical competencies related to performing a variety of tasks and are a subset of the skills required for work (Rainsbury et al., 2002). Hard skills, such as technical and conceptual skills, are essential for managers, according to Haro and Turgut (2012). According to another research examining the effect of hard skills on employee performance, hard skills considerably improve work performance (Rusady, 2016). Being key sub-skills, hard skills are technical abilities connected to carrying out a variety of tasks (Rainsbury et al., 2002). According to Poisson-de Haro and Turgut (2012), hard skills including conceptual and technical skills are highly significant for the managerial level. Another research on the impact of hard skills on employee performance concluded that hard skills significantly enhance employee performance (Rusady, 2016). The third pillar of this research's premise is based on a variety of research findings that indicate the impact of hard skills, either positively or negatively.

Proposition 2: Hard skills and job performance are positively related.

2.7.3 Relationship between Soft Skills and Organisational Readiness

Employers favor employees who can demonstrate that they have the necessary technical skills. Employees that communicate well and conduct themselves properly are trusted. In addition to technical abilities, effective social skills are necessary for any employment position. Candidates for workplace preparedness are employable because they make wise choices. They are able to pick up new skills and adjust to various workplace settings. Additionally, employers are more likely to hire people who are reliable and have strong work ethics. They understand how to respect their superiors and co-workers. Employers who hire talented workers see an increase in productivity. It is because they do their duties correctly, finish their work on schedule, and accomplish the aims and objectives of the company. Because they see prospects for advancement, trained personnel frequently experience lower employee turnover. Knowledge of methods, processes, procedures, and techniques for carrying out the specialised activity as well as the aptitude to employ instruments and equipment specific to a given activity to affect performance have been connected to technical skills (Subramaniam, 2013). More specifically, it emphasises comprehending human behaviour and interpersonal workflows, the ability to infer others' thoughts, feelings, and motivations based on their words or actions (empathy, social sensitivity), the clear and persuasive way of talking, and the ability to form fruitful and collaborative connections (tact, diplomacy, listening skills, and knowledge of appropriate social behaviour) (Subramaniam, 2013). Technical skills, according to Subramaniam (2013), are primarily concerned with the technical skills needed by persons in charge of a company's performance. Technical expertise includes understanding of procedures, tools, and techniques for carrying out specialised tasks required for the implementation of change. Technical proficiency is more closely linked to factual understanding of the organisation, including its structure, policies, management practices, and employee personalities. This gives organisational members the capacity and chances to improve their capacity for change (Machado et al., 2021). According to Jasak (2020), in order to increase performance, it is necessary to restore the organisational members' confidence and competence by implementing a participatory management style and investing in technical skills that will improve the functions related to the technical aspect of organisational change.

Proposition 3: Soft skills and organisational readiness are positively related.

2.7.4 Relationship between Hard Skills and Organisational Readiness

As previously mentioned, employers aim to help staff members build the skills necessary for their field tasks (Putra et al., 2020). Employers must go beyond providing employees with knowledge, substance, or concepts; they also need to give them chances to use that knowledge in practical initiatives. Even different companies and sectors place a different value on various abilities. However, El and Mrah (2022) concluded from their study that problem identification, application of problem-solving, formulations and solutions, and ability to use techniques and abilities are the most crucial employability skills as regarded by SMEs. While this is going on, Hermawan et al. (2023) discovered that companies value

employees who can communicate clearly, write clearly, and think critically. Based on the above, the current study proposes that:

Proposition 4: Hard skills and organisational readiness are positively related.

2.7.5 Relationship between Organisational Readiness and Job Performance

Numerous research on change, change preparation, and change management have been carried out. Job performance is positively correlated with organisational readiness (Turek, 2020). The ability to adapt positively affects work performance and develops an organisation's managerial skills. Organisations must look for ways to strengthen their competitive advantage due to increased firm competition, an ever-changing business environment, and shorter product life cycles. The ability to adapt to change could boost a business's performance (McDermott et al., 2022). Organisations recently realised the value of change readiness. This acknowledgement is a significant factor that affects an organisation's effectiveness (Strugar Jelaa et al., 2023). In order to develop overall organisational strategies and objectives and to be responsive to erratic demands from the outside environment, change readiness strategies and plans are required (Stofberg, 2013). Due to the transition from a known scenario to an uncertain one, the implementation of change frequently causes organisational stress. In this sense, change is complex, hazardous, and uncertain (Wongsuwan & Na-Nan, 2022). Training the staff to develop their skills and knowledge of the process results in effective outcomes for the organisation. To enhance the performance of the company, changes must be made to its procedures and organisational structures.

Proposition 5: Organisational readiness and job performance are positively related.

2.7.6 The Mediating Role of Organisational Readiness

Not many research have empirically evaluated organisational change readiness as a mediating factor in the relationship between SMM soft skills and organisational success, especially in the context of SMEs. Organisational readiness for change has previously been found to influence the relationship between a variety of attributes (Al-Fahim et al., 2022; Binti Zakaria & Binti Ismail, 2021; Haque et al., 2016; Imam et al., 2013; Susanty, 2022; Yeap et al., 2021). As a mediator in the relationship between hard skills and organisational performance, organisational preparedness was also introduced. The managers of 179 Italian high-tech manufacturing SMEs were invited to investigate the causes and implications of the switch to teleworking in Italian high-tech corporations as a result of the COVID-19 crisis in the study by Tokarchuk, Gabriele, and Neglia (2021). By employing route analysis, the study creates a model of organisational readiness as a mediator of the firm's organisational and hard skill attributes in the rate of teleworking adoption. Both human resources and the COVID-19 lockout as an external shock are portrayed as being dependent on teleworking. Despite the fact that COVID-19 has made teleworking mandatory, how rapidly it is implemented in emergency situations will largely depend on organisational preparation. Asim, Waqas, and Cheema (2012) investigated the connection between employee performance at work as well as training and development in order to ascertain how training and development impacted

employees' willingness to change. Each of the five SMEs in Pakistan had 100 employees who responded to a self-administered survey. The results demonstrated that organisational preparedness for change acts as a mediator in the relationship between hard skills and organisational performance. Hard skills and development are related to employee performance. Thus:

Proposition 6: Soft skills and job performance are mediated by organisational readiness.

Proposition 7: Hard skills and job performance are mediated by organisational readiness.

2.8 Research Gap

While technical expertise is becoming more and more important in the context of SME, Mardikaningsih (2022) observed that the majority of employees and participants lack the interpersonal and social skills that the labor market of today demands. Businesses, governments, and other organisations have recently become aware of a variety of shortcomings in the hard and soft skills of SMM, according to Chiparausha et al. (2022), who endorsed this viewpoint. Many people hold the opinion that the SMM needs to have both a solid foundation of technical knowledge as well as soft skills, such as the capacity for independent and continuous learning and the ability to handle relationships and conflicts. It is crucial to meet the requirement for both hard and soft skills in this way. Social media-related technologies have become convenient platforms for businesses to seek potential clients, partners, and suppliers (Pellegrino & Abe, 2023). Tajpour et al., (2023) and Cao and (Weerawardena, 2023) echoed this by reporting social media-related positive contribution to job performance. However, most studies found in the existing literature on this topic were conducted on large firms, while only a limited number focused on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Hence, a research gap exists regarding the impact of these social media skills on business performance in the context of SMEs. Among the limited number of studies exploring the impact of skills and the social media manager's role on SME performance. Alsehani et al., (2023) reported that the intervention of social media and skills brings about tangible financial benefits to SMEs. This was echoed by Alghamdi et al., (2023), stating that social media tools help SMEs communicate with stakeholders and enhance marketing and organizational readiness.

However, some studies report social media communication tools as having only marginal effects on SME performance (Khamaludin et al., 2021; Latifah et al., 2022; Marolt et al., 2022; Oncioiu et al., 2022; Teng et al., 2022). Given the resource constraints that most SMEs face and the costs associated with investment in social media manager (Oyewobi et al., 2022; Salvadorinho & Teixeira, 2023) it is crucial to develop a better understanding of how these tools impact business performance. One reason behind this mixed result could be that the existing literature generally focuses on the direct effects of social media-related skills application. In contrast, these social media indirect effects on SMEs' job performance are less studied (Dabić et al., 2023). Organizational readiness is one factor that has never been explored as a mediator in the abovementioned relationship, though there is evidence in the

literature that SMEs use social media for readiness advantage, especially in the emerging economies (Zhen et al., 2021). Existing literature also includes evidence of organizational readiness bringing about several benefits to businesses by ensuring a smoother transition during periods of change, enhancing employee morale and confidence, improving decision-making, and fostering a culture of preparedness and adaptability (Hasani et al., 2023; Silva et al., 2022) So, a research gap exists in this case as well. To address the research gaps mentioned above, an integrated model was used to explore both the direct influence of social media manager's skills on SME job performance and the indirect (mediator) influence through SME owners' organizational readiness to enhance our understanding of the phenomenon. This integrated model can clarify how social media managers skills influence SME job performance and the extent of that influence. While the arguments for organizational readiness seem convincing, and the majority of the current literature is based on the assumption that organizational readiness is useful (Antony et al., 2023) the current literature demonstrates mixed outcomes regarding the effect of organizational readiness on business performance (Yousaf et al., 2022).

This study has the following contributions. First, limited researches have focused on social media usage in the SME context (Darma, 2020; Istikhoroh et al., 2021; Wijaya et al., 2023) , and the current research aims to fill this gap. Second, there is an enlarging focus on the casual system underlying the association between social media adoption (Tabassam, 2023) and SME job performance (Qureshi et al., 2023); however, studies indicated that the empirical evidence of social media from a theoretical perspective is still insufficient. This study is proposing a conceptual model which aims to test the theoretical relationship between social media managers skills and SME job performance. Third, this study is also proposing organizational readiness as a substantial mediator, which is less focused on in past research and needs more empirical evidence.

2.9 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework generated from the aforementioned literature review is shown in Figure 2.1. In order to function better, SMM uses both soft and hard skills. This section addresses how they perform in the areas of technology, organisations, and the environment. The research model views organisational performance as a dependent variable, organisational preparedness for change as the mediating variable, and the adoption of hard and soft skills by SMM working for SMEs as independent variables. Four theoretical constructs that were used in the creation of this conceptual framework were identified as a result of the study objectives.
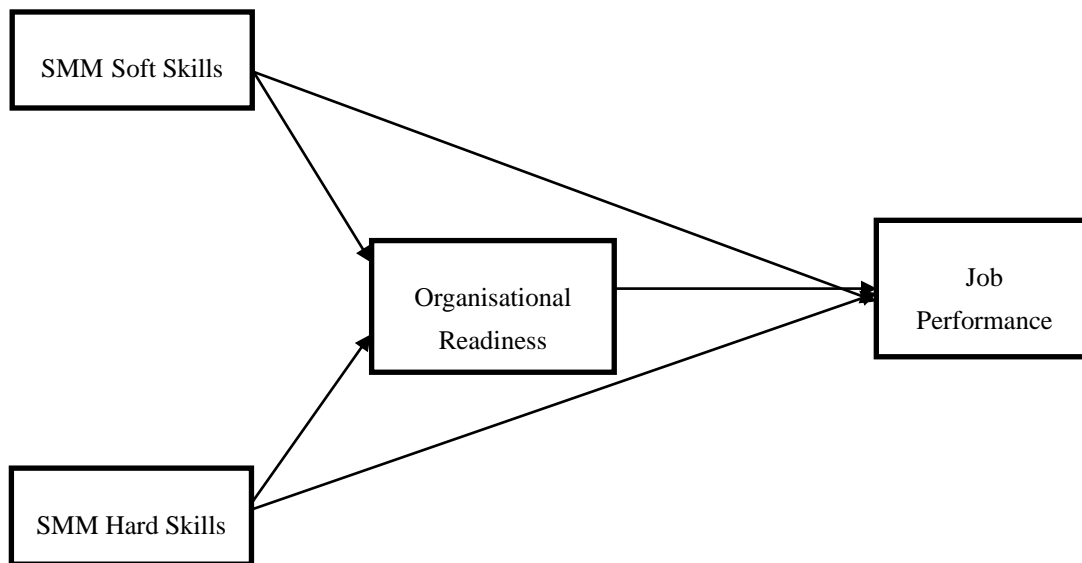
Figure 2.1. Conceptual Framework

2.10 Conclusion

The goal of this study is to develop a conceptual model for research on the contribution of SMM soft and hard skills towards improving work performance, with organisational readiness as the mediator. The case for SMM adoption has grown stronger as a result of its direct connection to customers. Previous research has examined the impact of numerous technologies, including e-commerce and cloud computing, on the efficiency of organisations' internal operations. This makes it challenging to predict how social media will affect businesses. There is no definitive solution in the literature on how SMEs should accept new technology. In SMEs, internal variables are more likely to have an impact on the adoption of skills than external ones The end user is the focus of Social Media ; hence, it is unlikely that it will follow this guideline. Because of the benefits new technologies offer, businesses are expected to adopt them. It is based more on the firm's expertise and comprehension of the topic than on its reality. Moreover, a comprehensive exploration of SMEs' performance necessitates an examination of their proficiency in utilizing social media. It is crucial to highlight the factors that contribute to firm performance, particularly those that foster success. Therefore, it is imperative for future research to investigate the correlation between social media engagement and both historical and prospective performance. Neglecting to acknowledge this correlation could result in erroneous conclusions, as a firm's historical performance can significantly influence its future advancement and offer deeper insights into its growth trajectory. A specific focal point for subsequent studies should involve a heightened participation in specialized skill development programs, aimed at enhancing the capabilities of current personnel and recruiting individuals well-versed in technology. Leading the charge in this endeavor could be governmental bodies or industry alliances, taking the initiative to establish a foundation that integrates theoretical and practical

knowledge. This approach would facilitate the assimilation of new expertise, consequently fostering preparedness that propels the performance of SMEs.

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