

CHAPTER V CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATION

A. Conclusions

1. The results showed that digital literacy has a negative influence on the financial performance of SMEs, indicating that the higher the level of digital literacy owned by SMEs, there is a tendency for a decrease in their financial performance.
2. Transaction security does not have a significant influence on the financial performance of SMEs, indicating that the perception of transaction security is not the main factor affecting the financial performance of SMEs in Purwokerto.
3. Ease of Use does not show a significant effect on the financial performance of SMEs. This indicates that the ease of using digital payment systems does not necessarily lead to better financial performance for SMEs.
4. The benefits of digital payments (Benefits of Digital Payment) have a positive and highly significant effect on the financial performance of SMEs, indicating that the greater the perceived benefits of using digital payments, the better the financial performance of SMEs.

B. Implication of Research

Based on the analysis discussed above, the implications of this research are as follows:

1. **Balancing Digital Literacy and Strategic Application for Optimal SME Financial Performance**

The practical implication of the finding that digital literacy has a negative impact on SMEs' financial performance highlights the importance of moving beyond digital knowledge to its strategic application and integration into business operations. While

digital literacy allows SMEs to understand and use digital tools, it does not automatically translate into financial gains unless coupled with proper implementation strategies. SMEs in Purwokerto need specialized training programs that focus on integrating digital tools into their business models and workflows, ensuring that technology becomes a core part of their strategic planning and decision-making.

According to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), perceived behavioral control is a key determinant influencing SMEs' intentions and actions in adopting digital technologies. Research by Safitri (2024) shows that digital financial inclusion can enhance SMEs' financial performance, but this requires more than just technological knowledge—it involves confidence in digital transactions and strategic planning. In contrast, Prasetyo and Santoso (2021) found that transaction security had no significant influence on financial performance, suggesting that for SMEs, transaction convenience and market demand are more critical factors than cybersecurity concerns.

The findings also indicate that while the ease of use of digital payment systems supports operational efficiency, it does not necessarily result in financial improvements unless integrated with other business strategies. Hidayat and Safitri (2021) observed that ease of use should be paired with robust security measures to be effective. Additionally, Maharani and Kurniawan (2023) highlighted that SMEs' financial growth depends on leveraging perceived benefits of digital payments, such as increased market access, transaction speed, and cost savings.

These insights align with the Theory of Planned Behavior by emphasizing that SMEs' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control are shaped by factors like digital literacy, transaction security, ease of use, and perceived benefits of

digital payments. Therefore, to achieve sustainable financial performance and operational resilience, SMEs must strategically combine these elements, integrating digital tools into business processes, optimizing marketing efforts, and focusing on customer engagement. Government support and continuous training initiatives are also crucial in ensuring that SMEs in Purwokerto can translate their digital literacy into practical, strategic applications, strengthening their competitiveness in the digital marketplace.

2. The Role of Transaction Security for Consumer Trust and Supporting SME Sustainability

Although transaction security does not have a significant direct impact on the financial performance of SMEs, it remains an important aspect that should not be overlooked due to its role in fostering consumer trust, which is critical for sustaining long-term business relationships. According to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), perceived behavioral control shapes SMEs' willingness to adopt digital technologies, and transaction security strengthens this control by addressing the risks inherent in digital transactions. The findings from Hidayat and Safitri (2021) show that while transaction security may not always result in immediate financial benefits, it builds customer trust and loyalty—factors that are essential for sustained business growth.

If transaction risks are not properly managed, it can negatively impact a business's reputation and consumer confidence. Research by Aini et al. (2019) highlights that transaction security is often seen as a baseline expectation among digital payment users, meaning that SMEs must implement robust security measures to meet customer standards and maintain trust. In this regard, transaction security serves as a safeguard,

ensuring that digital transactions remain reliable and trustworthy. This, in turn, supports SMEs in maintaining stable financial performance and long-term operational sustainability.

Therefore, while transaction security may not directly drive financial outcomes, incorporating it into a broader digital strategy enhances SMEs' perceived behavioral control and market positioning. It strengthens trust and loyalty, while ensuring operational resilience—aligning with the expectations outlined in the Theory of Planned Behavior. SMEs that integrate transaction security as part of their digital strategy are better positioned to build lasting relationships with customers, secure their market presence, and achieve long-term financial stability.

3. Reevaluating the Impact of Digital Payment Ease of Use on SME Financial Performance

The findings of this study offer valuable insights that refine the expectations based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). According to TPB, perceived behavioral control—comprising factors such as transaction security and ease of use—should positively influence SMEs' intentions to adopt digital payment systems. However, empirical evidence from Hidayat and Safitri (2021) shows that these factors do not always have a significant direct impact on financial performance. This indicates that SMEs' financial outcomes are influenced by other critical factors beyond perceived behavioral control, such as business strategy, competitive landscape, and market conditions.

For example, research by Adriani et al. (2023) emphasizes that elements like marketing strategies, supplier relationships, and customer engagement can significantly impact SMEs' financial performance. These factors often interact with market dynamics and strategic decisions, sometimes even surpassing the effects of transaction security or system usability. SMEs must consider these aspects in conjunction with digital tools to ensure profitability and long-term sustainability.

Therefore, while TPB highlights the importance of perceived behavioral control in adopting digital technologies, this study suggests that SMEs should also focus on strategic planning, competitive positioning, and differentiation. A comprehensive approach that combines digital adoption with strategic business decisions and market insights will enable SMEs to achieve greater financial success and maintain resilience in a competitive digital landscape.

4. Benefits of Digital Payments as a Competitive Advantage for SME Financial Performance

The benefits of digital payments play a significant role in enhancing the financial performance of SMEs, highlighting how strategic integration of technology can act as a competitive advantage. According to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), the perceived benefits of digital payment systems strengthen SMEs' attitudes and intentions, which in turn improves their perceived behavioral control over adopting digital technologies. Empirical research by Nugroho et al. (2020) supports this, showing that SMEs that utilize digital payments often experience higher profitability

and greater market reach, thereby boosting their competitiveness in the digital economy.

Digital payments streamline transaction efficiency, simplify financial recording, and enable broader market interactions—factors that align with TPB’s focus on attitudes and perceived control as determinants of behavioral intentions. This indicates that when SMEs fully understand and recognize the practical advantages of digital payments, such as speed, cost efficiency, and financial transparency, they are more likely to adopt these tools and sustain their use. Such integration leads to better financial outcomes and a stronger market presence.

Consequently, SMEs should strategically adopt digital payment technologies not only to enhance daily operational efficiency but also to establish a resilient and competitive foundation. A well-planned use of digital payments can support long-term operational stability and strategic growth, ensuring SMEs remain competitive in an increasingly digital marketplace.

C. Research Limitations and Suggestions

1. Difficulty in Finding Time to Meet SME Actors

During the data collection process, researchers experienced difficulties in finding the right time to meet SMEs who often had busy schedules. This resulted in some respondents not being able to be contacted to provide the required information, thus reducing the amount of data that could be collected. For future research, it is recommended to plan flexible data collection schedules and consider more efficient data collection methods, such as using digital platforms for surveys that allow respondents to fill out questionnaires at times that are most convenient for them.

2. Limitations in Time Allotted for Questionnaire Completion

Some respondents may have felt rushed or did not have enough time to carefully complete the questionnaire, which may affect the quality and accuracy of the data collected. For future research, it will be important to give respondents more flexible time, as well as provide the option of completing the questionnaire online with a longer deadline, so that they can provide more accurate and in-depth answers. This could also involve using reminders to increase response rates.

3. Limitations in Respondents' Subjective Understanding

Another limitation encountered was differences in respondents' understanding of the terms used in the questionnaire, especially regarding digital literacy and digital payment systems. Some SMEs may not have the same understanding of these concepts, which may affect the quality of the data collected. For future research, researchers can provide clearer explanations and concrete examples in the questionnaire, as well as conduct socialization sessions prior to filling out the questionnaire so that respondents better understand the terms used. This will help improve the accuracy and reliability of the data obtained.

