# The Effect of Business Mentoring, Digital Capability, and Quality Management Capacity on MSMEs' Export Performance: The Mediating Role of Export Readiness

**Intan Maria Lewiayu Vierke[1]*; Muhammad Aqib Shafiq[2]**

[1]Department of International Trade for the ASEAN and PRC Region, Politeknik APP Jakarta
Jakarta, Indonesia 12630
[2]Department of Business Administration, Ghazi University, Pakistan 32200
[1]intanmarialewiayuvierke@gmail.com; [2]mastoiaqib@gmail.com

**Received:** 26th December 2025/ **Revised:** 23rd February 2026
**Accepted:** 03rd March 2026/ **Published Online:** 17th June 2026

***Abstract*** - This research examined the effects of business mentoring, digital capability, and quality management capacity on Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises' (MSMEs) export performance, with export readiness serving as a mediating variable. The research was conducted among MSMEs in DKI Jakarta. Using a quantitative explanatory design and Structural Equation Modeling - Partial Least Squares (SEM–PLS) analysis, data were collected from 100 export-oriented MSMEs through an online questionnaire. The results indicate that business mentoring, digital capability, and quality management capacity significantly enhance export readiness, and export readiness significantly improves export performance. However, export readiness does not significantly mediate the relationship between these three internal capabilities and export performance. The novelty of this research lies in its integration of business mentoring, digital capability, and quality management capacity within a single conceptual framework grounded in the Resource-Based View (RBV), Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT), and Export Readiness Theory (ERT), while empirically testing the mediating mechanism of export readiness in a metropolitan MSMEs context. The findings highlight that strengthening internal capabilities is essential to building export readiness. However, additional external factors are required to translate that readiness into measurable export performance.

***Keywords:*** MSMEs, business mentoring, digital capability, quality management capacity, export readiness, export performance

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization and economic digitalization, MSMEs play a strategic role in driving national economic growth, including through export activities (Añón Higón & Bonvin, 2024). In Indonesia, MSMEs contribute more than 60% to GDP and absorb approximately 97% of the workforce, yet their contribution to national exports remains relatively low at approximately 14–15% (BPS Batang, 2024). This disparity indicates that the primary challenge lies not in the number of MSMEs, but in their internal capabilities and export readiness to compete in international markets.

One significant factor in enhancing MSMEs' export capacity is business mentoring. These mentoring programs have been widely implemented by the government and related institutions to improve managerial knowledge, understanding export regulations, and strategies for international market penetration of MSMEs. Conceptually, business mentoring can be viewed as a means to strengthen intangible resources such as knowledge, experience, and business networks. From an RBV perspective, these resources are valuable, difficult to imitate, and have the potential to create a competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). However, despite the availability of various mentoring programs, not all MSMEs can convert mentoring into tangible improvements in

*Corresponding Author

doi: https://doi.org/10.21512/tw.v27i1.15034
1412-1212/2541-2388 ©2026 Authors
This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-SA license(https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/)
Journal The Winners is accredited as Sinta 2 Journal (https://sinta.kemdikbud.go.id/journals/profile/261)
How to Cite: Vierke, I. M. L., & Shafiq, M. A. (2026). The effect of business mentoring, digital capability, and quality management capacity on MSMEs' export performance: The mediating role of export readiness. Journal The Winners, 27(1), 33-45.

export performance. Thus, their effectiveness still requires deeper examination.

In addition to mentoring, digital capability is a key factor supporting the internationalization of MSMEs. It enables these enterprises to access global market information, communicate with international partners, manage cross-border supply chains, and promote products efficiently. However, digital adoption among Indonesian MSMEs remains uneven, only approximately 38.7% have adopted these technologies, specifically for export activities (Febriani & Nasution, 2025). Within the framework of Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT), digital capability allows firms to sense opportunities, seize international markets, and reconfigure internal processes in response to global competition (Teece, 2018).

Quality management capacity is equally significant, as export products must meet international standards of consistency, safety, and certification. Many MSMEs still encounter challenges in implementing structured quality management systems, limiting their ability to sustain long-term relationships with foreign buyers (Bertrand et al., 2022). From the RBV perspective, quality management capacity represents a strategic internal resource whose impact on export performance depends on systematic implementation and organizational readiness.

In this context, the concept of export readiness becomes increasingly relevant. Export readiness reflects the extent to which MSMEs possess the resources, capabilities, commitment, and strategic orientation necessary to engage effectively in export activities. Export Readiness Theory (ERT) emphasizes that firms with a high level of export readiness are better able to convert internal resources into sustainable export performance (Gerschewski et al., 2020). Without adequate readiness, MSMEs that utilize mentoring, digital technology, or quality management systems remain at risk of failing in their export activities.

DKI Jakarta provides a highly relevant context for examining MSME export readiness due to its role as the dominant center of Indonesia's national economy and trade. MSMEs account for approximately 98.78% of total business units in the province, with roughly 337,429 units distributed across five administrative cities and the Thousand Islands (Wijatmoko, 2023). The number of MSMEs supported through the Jakpreneur program also indicates a positive growth trend, reaching 243,972 businesses in 2023, an increase of 8.23% from 225,415 in the previous year (Nurhaliza, 2023). While many MSMEs in Jakarta have adopted digital technology to expand market reach and improve operational efficiency within an increasingly digital ecosystem, levels of digital adoption and export readiness remain uneven. This condition is reflected in the limited contribution of MSMEs to national exports, specifically, only about 15.7% of Indonesia's total exports originate from the MSME sector and merely 4% of MSMEs are integrated into global supply chains (Ayudiana, 2025). These figures indicate that abundant resources and a large domestic market do not necessarily translate into strong export performance without optimal support in international standards of compliance, global networking, and digital capacity enhancement.

From an academic perspective, studies on the effects of business mentoring, digital capability, and quality management capacity on MSMEs' export performance continue to exhibit significant gaps. For instance, a study finds that digital literacy and self-efficacy significantly influence export intentions but do not simultaneously incorporate mentoring or quality management (Robbani et al., 2025). Similarly, another Indonesian study emphasizes the role of mentoring in achieving international quality standards and accessing global markets, yet it does not quantitatively test its impact on export performance (Ferdiansyah & Nasution, 2025).

Furthermore, studies on digital export program readiness confirm the importance of digital readiness for overseas expansion but fail to connect it with quality management capacity and export readiness as a mediating variable (Robiyatuladawiyah & Rajiyem, 2023). In addition, international research grounded in the Resource-Based View and contingency theory identifies internal capabilities and management control as key determinants of SME export performance. Yet, it does not comprehensively integrate mentoring and digital aspects (Safari & Saleh, 2020). Lastly, a study on innovation capability demonstrates a positive relationship with export performance, despite a tendency to focus more broadly on SMEs and entrepreneurial orientation (Ribau et al., 2017).

Previous studies have mainly examined direct effects of single variables or general SME contexts without integrating business mentoring, digital capability, and quality management capacity within a unified framework based on RBV, DCT, and ERT, particularly with export readiness as a mediating variable. Therefore, this research examines the effects of these three variables on MSMEs' export performance, using export readiness as a mediating variable among MSMEs in DKI Jakarta, aiming to contribute theoretically to the MSME internationalization literature and to provide practical insights into strategies that strengthen global export competitiveness.

The RBV posits that MSMEs' export performance depends on valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable internal resources (Barney, 1991), such as managerial knowledge, organizational capabilities, export experience, and quality management systems. In this study, business mentoring, digital capability, and quality management capacity are viewed as strategic resources that enhance export readiness and performance, provided they are effectively managed, thereby explaining performance disparities among MSMEs in DKI Jakarta. DCT (Teece, 2018) extends the RBV by emphasizing a firm's ability to sense, seize, and reconfigure resources in dynamic international markets, highlighting digital capability and mentoring

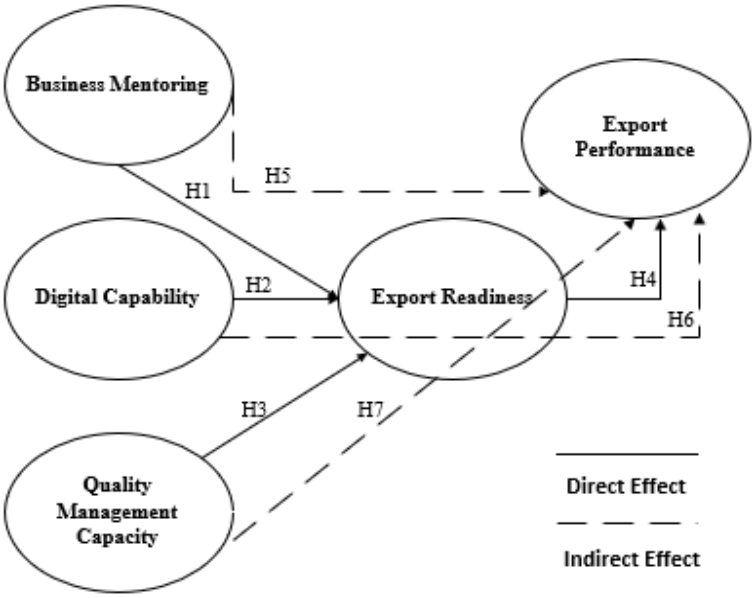



Figure 1 Theoretical Framework

outcomes as mechanisms that strengthen adaptability and sustainable export performance. Meanwhile, ERT (Gerschewski et al., 2020) stresses that internal resources and capabilities must be transformed into operational readiness encompassing knowledge, processes, commitment, and infrastructure before affecting export performance. Thus, this study positions export readiness as a mediating variable linking business mentoring, digital capability, and quality management capacity to MSMEs' export performance (see Figure 1).

In accordance with the RBV, business mentoring strengthens MSMEs' intangible resources, such as knowledge, experience, and managerial competencies, representing valuable and hard-to-imitate strategic assets that enhance internal readiness for international markets. The intensity, relevance, and applicability of mentoring determine its effectiveness. Empirical studies confirm that mentoring improves export knowledge, reduces uncertainty, strengthens strategic planning, and significantly enhances export readiness (Heriqbaldi et al., 2025; Calheiros-Lobo et al., 2023; Singh et al., 2024).

Digital capability reflects MSMEs' ability to leverage digital technologies in alignment with DCT, enabling sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring of resources within international markets. Through the utilization of digital platforms, marketing competence, and cross-border communication, digital capability enhances export readiness. Empirical evidence indicates that technology adoption, digital competence, and enhanced information access significantly improve a firm's readiness and its capacity to manage the complexities of exporting (Zhang et al., 2025; Denicolai et al., 2021; Añón Higón & Bonvin, 2024).

Quality management capacity denotes MSMEs' internal ability to maintain consistent standards that align with export requirements. From the perspective of the RBV, this constitutes a credibility-enhancing strategic resource. Prior studies demonstrate that quality management systems, compliance with international standards, and continuous improvement practices significantly strengthen operational readiness and foster long-term international relationships, thereby positioning quality capacity as a prerequisite for effective export participation (Parast & Safari, 2022; Pacheco et al., 2022; Imran et al., 2018).

ERT posits that internal preparedness encompassing product quality, documentation, financial health, logistics, and market knowledge is a key determinant of export success. Empirical findings confirm that firms with higher levels of readiness achieve stronger export performance, accelerated sales growth, enhanced risk management capabilities, and sustainable international expansion (Gerschewski et al., 2020; Melese, 2024; Singh et al., 2024).

RBV and ERT suggest that business mentoring enhances export performance indirectly through improved internal readiness. Empirical evidence demonstrates that knowledge-based support and the development of managerial capabilities significantly influence export outcomes by enhancing organizational readiness (Ferreras-Méndez et al., 2019; Vardarsuyu et al., 2024; Singh et al., 2024).

Furthermore, DCT posits that digital capability affects export performance through operational and strategic readiness. Studies confirm that export readiness serves as a mediator in the relationship between technology usage, digitalization, and export performance (Oh & Hwang, 2025; Goldooz & Zakery, 2024; Añón Higón & Bonvin, 2024).

Quality management capacity also indirectly affects export performance, as its effectiveness depends on a firm's systemic readiness to implement standards within export operations. Empirical research demonstrates that export readiness mediates the

Table 1 Summary of Key Findings from Previous Studies

| No | Relationship | Synthesis of Previous Research Findings |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Business Mentoring → Export Readiness | Empirical studies indicate that business mentoring enhances export knowledge, understanding of international trade procedures and regulations, and internal readiness of MSMEs regarding products, documentation, and export decision-making. The intensity of mentoring and the quality of mentor support contribute significantly to the improvement of export readiness. |
| 2 | Digital Capability → Export Readiness | Digital capability enables MSMEs to access export market information expeditiously, facilitates communication with international buyers, and improves the efficiency of marketing and cross-border transactions. The utilization of digital platforms and digital marketing competencies is shown to positively influence MSMEs' export readiness. |
| 3 | Quality Management Capacity → Export Readiness | Product quality consistency, compliance with international quality standards, and the implementation of quality control systems improve operational readiness of MSMEs to enter export markets while mitigating non-tariff barriers. |
| 4 | Export Readiness → Export Performance | MSMEs with higher levels of export readiness tend to have greater export opportunities, achieve faster export value growth, and realize more sustainable expansion into international markets. |
| 5 | Business Mentoring → Export Readiness → Export Performance | Export readiness acts as a mediating variable bridging the effect of mentoring on export performance. Knowledge and experience gained through mentoring enhance internal readiness prior to translating into tangible improvements in export performance. |
| 6 | Digital Capability → Export Readiness → Export Performance | Digital capability does not directly increase export performance without adequate internal readiness. Export readiness mediates this relationship by transforming digital capability into export opportunities and actualization. |
| 7 | Quality Management Capacity → Export Readiness → Export Performance | The impact of quality management capacity on export performance is primarily indirect. Export readiness allows MSMEs to integrate quality systems with export processes, thereby improving export success and sustainability. |

relationship between internal quality capabilities and export outcomes (Imran et al., 2018; Gerschewski et al., 2020; Calheiros-Lobo et al., 2023).

This study proposes the following hypotheses.

H1: Business mentoring has a positive and significant effect on MSME export readiness.

H2: Digital capability has a positive and significant effect on MSME export readiness.

H3: Quality management capacity has a positive and significant effect on MSME export readiness.

H4: Export readiness has a positive and significant effect on MSME export performance.

H5: Export readiness mediates the effect of business mentoring on MSME export performance.

H6: Export readiness mediates the effect of digital capability on MSME export performance.

H7: Export readiness mediates the effect of quality management capacity on MSME export performance.

Based on the theoretical and empirical discussion, this research aims to examine how business mentoring, digital capability, and quality management capacity influence export readiness and, subsequently, impact MSME export performance. The findings are expected to provide practical implications for MSME actors and policymakers, particularly in designing mentoring programs, digital transformation initiatives, and quality management enhancements to improve MSME export readiness and performance sustainably (Table 1). Furthermore, this research seeks to address a gap in the literature by offering a more comprehensive understanding of the mediating mechanism of export readiness in translating internal resources and strategic capabilities into tangible export performance, particularly within the context of MSMEs in developing countries such as Indonesia.

## II. METHODS

This research employs a quantitative explanatory design to examine the causal relationships among business mentoring, digital capability, and quality management capacity on export performance, with export readiness as a mediating variable. Grounded in the RBV, DCT, and ERT, the research posits that the export performance of MSMEs is influenced by internal resources, adaptive capabilities, and

organizational readiness.

A cross-sectional approach is applied, with data collected at a single point in time through an online questionnaire distributed to MSMEs in DKI Jakarta with either export potential or prior export experience. Respondents are MSME owners or primary managers, as these individuals possess comprehensive knowledge of business strategy and export activities.

Purposive sampling is employed based on the following criteria: (1) MSMEs operating for at least one year; (2) participation in business mentoring or training programs; (3) utilization of digital technology in business operations; and (4) demonstrated export interest, readiness, or experience. A total of 100 valid responses were obtained between April and June 2025. In accordance with the 10-times rule in SEM–PLS, this sample size is deemed adequate given the number of indicators used in the model. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

Five constructs are analyzed. Those are business mentoring ($X_1$), digital capability ($X_2$), quality management capacity ($X_3$), export readiness (M), and export performance (Y). Data are processed using SmartPLS. The measurement model (outer model) is evaluated through convergent validity (AVE $\geq 0.50$), internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability $\geq 0.70$), and discriminant validity using the Fornell–Larcker criterion and HTMT ($< 0.90$).

The structural model (inner model) is assessed using $R^2$ to determine explanatory power, $Q^2$ for predictive relevance, and path coefficients ($\beta$) to evaluate the direction and magnitude of relationships. Statistical significance is tested using bootstrapping with a threshold of $t > 1.96$ and $p < 0.05$. Mediation analysis was conducted to examine the indirect effects of the independent variables on export performance through export readiness, following established PLS-SEM procedures (Hair et al., 2021).

The overall research procedure is conducted systematically, beginning with the identification of research problems and theoretical framework development, followed by instrument design and questionnaire distribution, data collection, and SEM–PLS analysis for hypothesis testing and mediation assessment. The methodology flowchart illustrating these sequential stages can be seen in Figure 2.

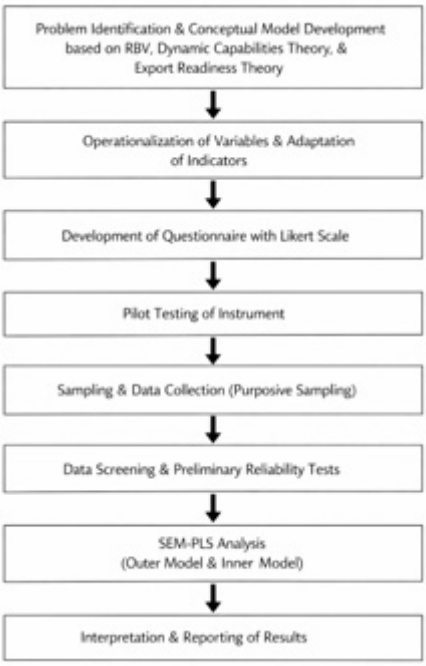



Figure 2 Research method flowchart

Table 2 Demographic Profile of Respondents

| Demographic Variable | Category | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 54 | 54% |
| | Female | 46 | 46% |
| Age | < 25 years | 10 | 10% |
| | 25–35 years | 40 | 40% |
| | 36–45 years | 32 | 32% |
| | > 45 years | 18 | 18% |

Table 2 Demographic Profile of Respondents (Continued)

| Demographic Variable | Category | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Education Level | Junior High School or equivalent | 6 | 6% |
| | Senior High School or equivalent | 24 | 24% |
| | Diploma Degree (D1–D3) | 26 | 26% |
| | Bachelor's Degree (S1) | 36 | 36% |
| | Master's Degree or above (S2+) | 8 | 8% |
| Type of MSME (Export-Oriented, Product-Based) | Processed Food and Beverage | 33 | 33% |
| | Fashion and Apparel | 25 | 25% |
| | Handicrafts and Creative Products | 20 | 20% |
| | Cosmetics, Herbal, and Personal Care | 12 | 12% |
| | Other Export-Oriented Products | 10 | 10% |
| Business Experience | 1–3 years | 38 | 38% |
| | 4–6 years | 34 | 34% |
| | > 6 years | 28 | 28% |
| Participation in Business Mentoring / Training | 1 time | 28 | 28% |
| | 2–3 times | 44 | 44% |
| | > 3 times | 28 | 28% |
| Type of Mentoring Received | Export procedures and documentation | 62 | 62% |
| | Digital marketing and platform utilization | 71 | 71% |
| | Quality management and standardization | 48 | 48% |
| Utilization of Digital Technology in Business | Marketing and promotion | 82 | 82% |
| | Communication with buyers/customers | 76 | 76% |
| | Accessing export market information | 64 | 64% |
| | Online transactions and marketplaces | 69 | 69% |
| Main Digital Platforms Used | Instagram | 73 | 73% |
| | TikTok | 55 | 55% |
| | Facebook | 42 | 42% |
| | WhatsApp Business | 68 | 68% |
| | Marketplace (Shopee, Tokopedia, etc.) | 70 | 70% |
| Location | DKI Jakarta | 100 | 100% |

Table 2 shows that the majority of MSME respondents are male (54%) and predominantly aged 25–35 (40%), indicating that export-oriented MSMEs in Jakarta are largely managed by individuals in their productive age. Most respondents hold either a diploma (26%) or a bachelor's degree (36%), reflecting a relatively adequate educational background to adopt business mentoring programs and digital technologies. In terms of business type, processed food and beverages (33%), fashion and apparel (25%), and handicrafts and creative products (20%) dominate the sample, aligning with Indonesia's main MSME export commodities. All respondents have participated in business mentoring, with most attending mentoring activities two to three times (44%). These programs primarily focused on digital marketing (71%), export procedures and documentation (62%), and quality management and standardization (48%). Furthermore, the high level of digital technology utilization—particularly for marketing and promotion (82%), communication with buyers (76%), and online transactions (69%)—confirms that the sample is consistent with the research context of export-oriented, digitally enabled MSMEs.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Assessment of the outer model represents the initial stage in the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis. This stage aims to assess the validity and reliability of the measurement model, ensuring that the indicators accurately and consistently represent their respective latent constructs. In accordance with the research framework, this research examines five latent variables: business mentoring, digital capability, quality management capacity, export readiness, and export performance. The outer model assessment focuses on convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability.

Convergent validity is assessed through indicator outer loadings, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and composite reliability. An outer loading exceeding 0.70 indicates a strong contribution of the indicator to the construct, while an AVE exceeding 0.50 suggests that the construct explains more than 50% of the variance in its indicators. As shown in Table 3, all indicators exhibit outer loadings ranging from 0.713 to 0.879. Moreover, all constructs yielded AVE values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.50, confirming that convergent validity was satisfactorily achieved (see Table 3).

Construct reliability is evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). Cronbach's Alpha measures internal consistency under the assumption of equal indicator contribution, while CR provides a more precise estimate by accounting for actual indicator loadings. The results indicate that all constructs demonstrate Cronbach's Alpha and CR values exceeding 0.70, confirming that the measurement instruments used are reliable (see Table 3).

Discriminant validity is assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait–

Table 3 Summary of Validity and Reliability Analysis

| Constructs | Indicators | Outer Loading | Cronbach's Alpha | Composite Reliability | AVE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Business Mentoring (BM) | BM1 | 0.742 | 0.821 | 0.874 | 0.583 |
| | BM2 | 0.801 | | | |
| | BM3 | 0.789 | | | |
| | BM4 | 0.756 | | | |
| | BM5 | 0.771 | | | |
| Digital Capability (DC) | DC1 | 0.734 | 0.808 | 0.865 | 0.563 |
| | DC2 | 0.769 | | | |
| | DC3 | 0.823 | | | |
| | DC4 | 0.761 | | | |
| | DC5 | 0.718 | | | |
| Quality Management Capacity (QMC) | QMC1 | 0.842 | 0.835 | 0.889 | 0.616 |
| | QMC2 | 0.793 | | | |
| | QMC3 | 0.817 | | | |
| | QMC4 | 0.754 | | | |
| | QMC5 | 0.779 | | | |
| Export Readiness (ER) | ER1 | 0.864 | 0.848 | 0.900 | 0.643 |
| | ER2 | 0.802 | | | |
| | ER3 | 0.783 | | | |
| | ER4 | 0.771 | | | |
| | ER5 | 0.812 | | | |
| Export Performance (EP) | EP1 | 0.879 | 0.857 | 0.907 | 0.661 |
| | EP2 | 0.824 | | | |
| | EP3 | 0.801 | | | |
| | EP4 | 0.792 | | | |
| | EP5 | 0.765 | | | |

Table 4 Fornell-Larcker Criterion

| Constructs | X1 | X2 | X3 | M | Y |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Business Mentoring (X1) | 0.763 | | | | |
| Digital Capability (X2) | 0.641 | 0.750 | | | |
| Quality Management Capacity (X3) | 0.612 | 0.667 | 0.785 | | |
| Export Readiness (M) | 0.703 | 0.726 | 0.748 | 0.802 | |
| Export Performance (Y) | 0.658 | 0.684 | 0.719 | 0.781 | 0.813 |

Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). According to the Fornell–Larcker criterion, the square root of the AVE for each construct must be greater than its correlation with other constructs. As presented in Table 4, this condition is met for all constructs. Additionally, all HTMT values remain below the threshold of 0.90, confirming adequate discriminant validity (see Table 5).

The inner model evaluation aims to assess the structural relationships among latent constructs and to determine the predictive capability of the proposed model. This evaluation involves the coefficient of determination ($R^2$), predictive relevance ($Q^2$), and hypothesis testing via path coefficient analysis.

The $R^2$ value indicates the proportion of variance in endogenous variables explained by the exogenous constructs. As shown in Table 6, export readiness has an $R^2$ of 0.598, indicating that business mentoring, digital capability, and quality management capacity collectively explain 59.8% of the variance. Meanwhile, export performance has an $R^2$ of 0.642, suggesting that export readiness, business mentoring, and digital capability explain 64.2% of the variance. These results demonstrate moderate to strong explanatory power.

Predictive relevance is assessed using the $Q^2$ value obtained through the blindfolding procedure: $Q2 = 1 - (1 - R12) \times (1 - R22)$. $Q2 = 1 - (1 - 0.598) \times (1 - 0.642)$. $Q2 = 1 - (0.402 \times 0.358)$. $Q2 = 1 - 0.144 = 0.856$. A $Q^2$ value greater than zero indicates that the model has strong predictive relevance.

Hypothesis testing is conducted using bootstrapping, with a relationship considered significant if t-statistic > 1.96 and p-value < 0.05. The results in Table 7 indicate that business mentoring has a positive and significant effect on export readiness (H1: $\beta = 0.318$; $t = 3.764$; $p = 0.000$), digital capability has a significant effect on export readiness (H2: $\beta = 0.346$; $t = 4.118$; $p = 0.000$), and quality management capacity exhibits the strongest effect on export readiness (H3: $\beta = 0.371$; $t = 4.492$; $p = 0.000$). Export readiness also has a strong and significant effect on export performance (H4: $\beta = 0.524$; $t = 6.103$; $p = 0.000$), confirming that MSMEs with higher readiness levels are more capable to realize export opportunities, increase export sales, and expand international market reach. These findings support the core propositions of RBV, DCT, and ERT by demonstrating that internal resources and capabilities—developed through mentoring, digital integration, and quality control—form the foundation of strategic readiness that drives competitive export outcomes.

However, the indirect effects of business mentoring, digital capability, and quality management capacity on export performance via export readiness

Table 5 HTMT (Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio)

| Constructs | X1 | X2 | X3 | M | Y |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Business Mentoring (X1) | — | | | | |
| Digital Capability (X2) | 0.782 | — | | | |
| Quality Management Capacity (X3) | 0.741 | 0.798 | — | | |
| Export Readiness (M) | 0.836 | 0.852 | 0.871 | — | |
| Export Performance (Y) | 0.793 | 0.818 | 0.846 | 0.889 | — |

Table 6 Coefficient of Determination ($R^2$)

| Endogenous Variable | $R^2$ | Explanation Strength Category |
|---|---|---|
| Export Readiness (M) | 0.598 | Moderate |
| Export Performance (Y) | 0.642 | Moderate–Strong |

Table 7 Hypothesis Test Results (Path Coefficients)

| Hypothesis | Path | Path Coefficient | t-Statistic | p-Value | Result |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| H1 | X1 → M | 0.318 | 3.764 | 0.000 | Accepted |
| H2 | X2 → M | 0.346 | 4.118 | 0.000 | Accepted |
| H3 | X3 → M | 0.371 | 4.492 | 0.000 | Accepted |
| H4 | M → Y | 0.524 | 6.103 | 0.000 | Accepted |
| H5 | X1 → M → Y | 0.067 | 1.284 | 0.200 | Rejected |
| H6 | X2 → M → Y | 0.081 | 1.447 | 0.149 | Rejected |
| H7 | X3 → M → Y | 0.054 | 1.032 | 0.302 | Rejected |

are found to be statistically insignificant: H5 (β = 0.067; t = 1.284; p = 0.200), H6 (β = 0.081; t = 1.447; p = 0.149), and H7 (β = 0.054; t = 1.032; p = 0.302). This indicates that while internal capabilities significantly enhance export readiness, they do not automatically translate into improved export performance through mediation alone. Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature by refining the RBV, Dynamic Capabilities, and Export Readiness perspectives, emphasizing that capability accumulation represents a necessary but insufficient condition for performance realization; export performance depends not only on internal readiness but also on complementary factors such as market access, experiential learning, and strategic alignment. Thus, export readiness functions as a direct performance driver, while mentoring, digital capability, and quality management capacity primarily strengthen the internal capability base that underpins sustainable internationalization.

The hypothesis testing results (H1) presented in Table 7 indicate that business mentoring (X1) has a positive and significant effect on export readiness (M), with a path coefficient of 0.318, a t-statistic of 3.764, and a p-value of 0.000 ($t > 1.96$; $p < 0.05$). This result suggests that more intensive and higher-quality mentoring increases MSMEs' readiness to enter export markets by facilitating the transfer of knowledge, experience, and practical guidance needed to address export procedural and operational complexities. Table 2 supports this finding, revealing that 100% of respondents have participated in mentoring programs, with 44% attending 2–3 sessions and 28% attending more than three sessions. The most common mentoring topics are digital marketing and platform utilization (71%), export procedures and documentation (62%), and quality management and standardization (48%), demonstrating their strong relevance to export readiness. Additionally, 72% of the SMEs had 1–6 years of business experience, suggesting that mentoring plays a critical role in accelerating readiness during the early growth phase.

Table 3 further confirms the construct validity of business mentoring, as all indicators exhibit adequate outer loadings, with the relevance of mentoring content (BM2) recording the highest loading at 0.801, indicating that the alignment between mentoring material and MSMEs' real needs is central to building export readiness. These findings are theoretically supported by the RBV and DCT, which emphasize structured and continuous capability development as a source of competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Teece, 2018). Empirically, the results are consistent with prior studies demonstrating that business mentoring significantly enhances MSMEs' export readiness by strengthening knowledge, skills, and adaptive capabilities required to meet international market demands (Calheiros-Lobo et al., 2023). Therefore, this study contributes to existing theory by reinforcing the argument that mentoring is not merely an external support mechanism but a strategic process of internal capability orchestration that transforms experiential learning into export readiness, thereby extending RBV and Dynamic Capabilities perspectives within the context of MSME internationalization in emerging economies.

The hypothesis testing results (H2) in Table 7 indicate that digital capability (X2) has a positive and significant effect on export readiness (M), with a path coefficient of 0.346, a t-statistic of 4.118, and a p-value of 0.000 ($t > 1.96$; $p < 0.05$), demonstrating that stronger digital capability enhances Jakarta MSMEs' readiness to enter export markets through improved mastery of digital platforms, online marketing, and access to international market information. Table 2 further indicates high digital technology utilization among MSMEs, with 82% for marketing and promotion, 76% for communication with international buyers, 69% for online marketplace transactions, and 64% for accessing export market information. Key platforms include Instagram (73%), e-commerce marketplaces (70%), and WhatsApp Business (68%), underscoring digital capability as a core component of export readiness in strengthening product visibility, cross-border communication, and global information access.

Furthermore, Table 3 confirms the construct validity of digital capability, as all indicators exhibit adequate outer loadings, with digital marketing competency (DC3) indicating the highest loading at 0.823, followed by online communication and digital channel management. This result confirms that measurable digital capability effectively represents MSMEs' technological readiness. These findings are consistent with the RBV and DCT, emphasizing the strategic importance of integrating and leveraging digital technology to enhance internal readiness (Barney, 1991; Teece, 2018), and align with prior studies demonstrating that digital capability significantly strengthens export readiness through improved market access, operational efficiency, and adaptability to international trade dynamics (Goldooz & Zakery, 2024). Therefore, this research contributes to existing theory by clarifying the role of digital capability as a dynamic strategic resource that translates technological adoption into export readiness. This finding extends the RBV and Dynamic Capabilities perspectives within the MSME internationalization framework, particularly in emerging-market contexts.

The hypothesis testing results (H3) in Table 7 indicate that quality management capacity (X3) has a positive and significant effect on export readiness (M), with a path coefficient of 0.371, a t-statistic of 4.492, and a p-value of 0.000 ($t > 1.96$; $p < 0.05$). This indicates that stronger quality management capacity increases Jakarta MSMEs' readiness to enter export markets. Furthermore, these findings confirm that compliance with quality standards and product consistency are fundamental prerequisites for export readiness. Table 2 further supports this finding, indicating that 48% of respondents have participated in mentoring related to quality management and standardization. Most respondents operate in processed food and beverage

(33%), fashion and apparel (25%), and handicrafts and creative products (20%) sectors that demand strict quality control and compliance with export standards. This reflects a growing awareness that quality management serves as the foundation of export readiness.

Table 3 reinforces the construct validity of quality management capacity, as all indicators exhibited adequate outer loadings. The availability of quality control personnel (QMC1) records the highest loading at 0.842, followed by quality consistency and compliance with export standards, confirming that the construct accurately demonstrates MSMEs' preparedness to meet international requirements. These findings align with the RBV and ERT, emphasizing internal quality capability as a strategic resource determining export readiness (Barney, 1991; Gerschewski et al., 2020), and are consistent with prior studies indicating that quality management significantly enhances MSMEs' export readiness prior to contributing to actual export performance (Calheiros-Lobo et al., 2023). Thus, this research makes a theoretical contribution by strengthening the conceptualization of quality management capacity as a foundational strategic asset that bridges internal operational excellence and export readiness, thereby extending RBV and ERT within the MSME internationalization context, particularly in emerging economies.

The hypothesis testing results (H4) in Table 7 indicate that export readiness (M) has a positive and significant effect on export performance (Y), with a path coefficient of 0.524, a t-statistic of 6.103, and a p-value of 0.000 ($t > 1.96$; $p < 0.05$). The result demonstrates that export readiness is a primary determinant of Jakarta MSMEs' export performance and a key mechanism for transforming export potential into tangible outcomes. Table 2 supports this finding, revealing that 64% of respondents have access to export market information, 69% utilize digital technology for transactions and marketing, and major platforms such as marketplaces (70%) and Instagram (73%) are widely used. Furthermore, 72% of the MSMEs have 1–6 years of business experience, underscoring export readiness as a crucial factor in transitioning from domestic to sustainable export activities.

Table 3 further confirms the construct validity of export readiness, as all indicators demonstrate strong outer loadings. Product readiness for export (ER1) exhibits the highest loading at 0.864, followed by documentation and logistics readiness, indicating that product, administrative, and operational preparedness are core drivers of export performance. These findings are consistent with the ERT, which posits that internal readiness determines export success (Gerschewski et al., 2020), and align with prior studies indicating that export readiness serves as a critical link between MSMEs' internal capabilities and actual export performance in international markets (Gkypali et al., 2021; Singh et al., 2024). Therefore, this research makes a theoretical contribution by strengthening the empirical positioning of export readiness as a multidimensional strategic construct that operationalizes internal capabilities into measurable export outcomes, thereby refining the ERT within the MSME internationalization framework, particularly within emerging market settings.

The hypothesis testing results (H5) in Table 7 indicate that export readiness does not significantly mediate the effect of business mentoring on the export performance of Jakarta MSMEs, as indicated by an indirect path coefficient of 0.067, a t-statistic of 1.284, and a p-value of 0.200 ($t < 1.96$; $p > 0.05$). Despite business mentoring significantly affecting export readiness (H1), this improvement does not automatically translate into higher export performance through mediation. Table 2 helps explain this result, revealing that 72% of respondents have 1–6 years of business experience, reflecting early- to mid-stage exporting. Although 100% respondents participate in the mentoring program, with 44% attending 2–3 sessions, the programs primarily focus on foundational capacity building, including export procedures and documentation (62%), digital platform utilization (71%), and quality standardization (48%), rather than immediate quantitative export outcomes. This suggests a time lag between readiness development and performance realization.

Table 3 further demonstrates that mentoring indicators strongly capture knowledge enhancement and readiness development but do not directly represent export performance outcomes. These findings align with the RBV and ERT, proposing that developing internal resources through mentoring is a necessary but insufficient condition to enhance export performance directly (Barney, 1991; Gerschewski et al., 2020). Furthermore, the results are consistent with prior studies indicating that mentoring impacts export performance indirectly, requiring greater international exposure, experience, and strategic maturity before yielding significant performance gains (Calheiros-Lobo et al., 2023; Sadeghi et al., 2023). Therefore, this research makes a theoretical contribution by clarifying the mediating role of export readiness in translating mentoring-based capability development into performance outcomes, extending the RBV and ERT by demonstrating that the mere accumulation of capabilities does not automatically generate export performance without the presence of complementary experiential and strategic integration factors within the Jakarta MSME context.

The hypothesis testing results (H6) in Table 7 demonstrate that export readiness does not significantly mediate the effect of digital capability on the export performance of Jakarta MSMEs. It is reflected by an indirect path coefficient of 0.081, a t-statistic of 1.447, and a p-value of 0.149 ($t < 1.96$; $p > 0.05$). Despite digital capability significantly affecting export readiness (H2), this enhancement has not yet translated into higher export performance through mediation. Table 2 indicates that digital technology usage remains concentrated on digital marketing and product

promotion (71%) and communication with potential international buyers (65%). In contrast, more strategic uses, such as logistics integration, international order management, and market analytics, remain limited. Furthermore, 72% of respondents have 1–6 years of business experience, suggesting that digital capability primarily supports early-stage readiness rather than measurable export performance outcomes.

Table 3 confirms that the digital capability indicators are valid and reliable, with the ability to use digital platforms for international marketing (DC1) indicating an outer loading of 0.789 above the required threshold. However, these indicators mainly capture operational and informational capacities rather than direct performance generation. The consistency between strong measurement validity (see Table 3) and the non-significant mediation effect (see Table 7) indicates that digital capability substantially strengthens export readiness but remains insufficient to enhance export performance without deeper market experience and strategic integration. These findings align with the RBV and DCT, as well as prior studies demonstrating that digital capability exerts a stronger influence on internationalization readiness than on short-term export performance (Barney, 1991; Denicolai et al., 2021; Teece, 2018). Therefore, this research makes a theoretical contribution by refining the positioning of digital capability as a dynamic, enabling resource that builds readiness capacity rather than directly generating export outcomes, thereby extending RBV and Dynamic Capabilities perspectives within the MSME internationalization literature, particularly in the context of emerging economies.

The hypothesis testing results (H7) in Table 7 indicate that export readiness does not significantly mediate the effect of quality management capacity on the export performance of Jakarta MSMEs. It is indicated by an indirect path coefficient of 0.054, a t-statistic of 1.032, and a p-value of 0.302 ($t < 1.96$; $p > 0.05$). Despite quality management capacity significantly affecting export readiness (H3), this enhancement does not directly translate into higher export performance through mediation. Table 2 supports this finding. While 48% of respondents have engaged in quality management and standardization mentoring, 72% possess only 1–6 years of business experience, suggesting that most MSMEs remain at the early to middle stages of export development. Thus, quality capacity serves primarily to meet basic standards and ensure product consistency, enhancing eligibility for export markets but not necessarily increasing export sales, market expansion, or short-term export value.

Table 3 further confirms that the construct is valid and reliable, with the availability and consistency of quality control systems (QMC1) showing the highest outer loading of 0.842, indicating strong internal capability to maintain standards rather than a capacity to generate direct export performance outcomes. These findings align with the RBV and ERT, which posit that quality capability is a necessary condition for internationalization but its impact on export performance is contingent upon subsequent factors such as market access, international distribution networks, and sustained foreign demand (Barney, 1991; Gerschewski et al., 2020). The results are also consistent with prior studies demonstrating that improvements in quality and standards compliance exert a stronger influence on readiness and market legitimacy than on short-term MSME export performance (Calheiros-Lobo et al., 2023; Chou et al., 2024). Therefore, this research makes a theoretical contribution by reinforcing the conceptual distinction between foundational capability and performance realization. It extends RBV and ERT by empirically demonstrating that quality management capacity functions as a strategic threshold resource that enables export readiness but requires complementary market and network factors to generate measurable export performance.

## IV. CONCLUSIONS

This research demonstrates that business mentoring, digital capability, and quality management capacity significantly enhance the export readiness of MSMEs in Jakarta, confirming the critical role of internal capabilities in preparing firms for international markets. Export readiness, in turn, has a strong positive effect on export performance, indicating that higher levels of preparedness enable MSMEs to transform internal resources into tangible export outcomes. However, export readiness does not significantly mediate the relationship between internal capabilities and export performance, suggesting that such readiness alone is insufficient without complementary factors such as market access, strategic networks, and financial support.

Theoretically, these findings reinforce the RBV, DCT, and ERT by demonstrating that internal capability development serves as the foundation for export preparedness, despite performance outcomes remaining contingent on broader strategic integration. Practically, the results underscore the need to align mentoring, digital transformation, and quality management initiatives with ecosystem-based support, including market linkage programs, certification facilitation, and international networking.

This research has several limitations. First, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to capture long-term or time-lagged effects. Second, the focus on MSMEs in Jakarta restricts the generalizability of the findings, and the reliance on self-reported export performance may introduce bias. Future studies should employ longitudinal approaches, expand to diverse regional or sectoral contexts, and incorporate objective export performance indicators. Further studies may also explore the role of external ecosystem factors in strengthening the link between export readiness and performance.

**Author Contributions:** Conceived and designed the analysis, I. M. L. V.; Collected the data, I. M. L. V.; Contributed data or analysis tools, I. M. L. V.; Performed the analysis, I. M. L. V, and M. A. S.; Wrote the paper, I. M. L. V, and M. A. S.; Other contribution, I. M. L. V.

**Data Availability Statement:** The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author (**I.M.L.V.**) upon reasonable request. The dataset consists of 100 valid responses collected through an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. Due to privacy and confidentiality considerations, the raw data cannot be shared publicly; however, anonymized data may be provided for academic purposes upon reasonable request.

## REFERENCES


Añón Higón, D., & Bonvin, D. (2024). Digitalization and trade participation of SMEs. *Small Business Economics, 62*(3), 857–877. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-023-00799-7

Ayudiana, S. (2025, June 13). *Apindo: Hanya 4 persen UMKM Indonesia terhubung rantai pasok global.* Antara. https://www.antaranews.com/berita/4898437/apindo-hanya-4-persen-umkm-indonesia-terhubung-rantai-pasok-global

Barney, J. (1991). Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage. *Journal of Management, 17*(1), 99–120. https://doi.org/10.1177/014920639101700108

Bertrand, O., Betschinger, M.-A., & Brea-Solís, H. (2022). Export barriers for SMEs in emerging countries: A configurational approach. *Journal of Business Research, 149*, 412–423. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2022.05.045

BPS Batang. (2024, August 12). *Selamat hari UMKM Nasional.* Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Batang. https://batangkab.bps.go.id/id/news/2024/08/12/336/selamat-hari-umkm-nasional.html

Calheiros-Lobo, N., Vasconcelos Ferreira, J., & Au-Yong-Oliveira, M. (2023). SME internationalization and export performance: A systematic review with bibliometric analysis. *Sustainability, 15*(11), 1–36. https://doi.org/10.3390/su15118473

Chou, S.-C., Kuo, Y.-H., & Cheng, Y.-H. (2024). The value of international standards certification: Evidence on export and firm performance from a security enforcement on borders. *The Quarterly Review of Economics and Finance, 98*, 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.qref.2024.101926

Denicolai, S., Zucchella, A., & Magnani, G. (2021). Internationalization, digitalization, and sustainability: Are SMEs ready? A survey on synergies and substituting effects among growth paths. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change, 166*, 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2021.120650

Febriani, F., & Nasution, E. Y. (2025). Analysis of technology adoption, digital market access, and product innovation on SMEs competitiveness in the era of digital transformation. *Jurnal AKMAMI (Akutansi, Manajemen, Ekonomi), 6*(1), 58–67.

Ferdiansyah, V., & Nasution, A. I. L. (2025). Strategi UMKM dalam menghasilkan produk ekspor melalui peran Dinas Perindustrian, Perdagangan, Energi dan Sumber Daya Mineral. *EKOMA: Jurnal Ekonomi, Manajemen, Akuntansi, 4*(2), 3755–3762. https://doi.org/10.56799/ekoma.v4i2.6954

Ferreras-Méndez, J. L., Fernández-Mesa, A., & Alegre, J. (2019). Export performance in SMEs: The importance of external knowledge search strategies and absorptive capacity. *Management International Review, 59*, 413–437. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11575-019-00379-6

Gerschewski, S., Scott-Kennel, J., & Rose, E. L. (2020). Ready to export? The role of export readiness for superior export performance of small and medium-sized enterprises. *The World Economy, 43*(5), 1253–1276. https://doi.org/10.1111/twec.12928

Gkypali, A., Love, J. H., & Roper, S. (2021). Export status and SME productivity: Learning-to-export versus learning-by-exporting. *Journal of Business Research, 128*, 486–498. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.02.026

Goldooz, A., & Zakery, A. (2024). Assessing the impact of digitalisation on the export performance of Iranian SMEs: The mediating role of export readiness. *International Journal of Globalisation and Small Business, 14*(1), 86–106. https://doi.org/10.1504/IJGSB.2024.138681

Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., Sarstedt, M., Danks, N. P., & Ray, S. (2021). *Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) Using R* (3rd Ed.). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-80519-7

Heriqbaldi, U., Esquivias, M. A., Lau, W., & Cesilia, A. F. (2025). Export promotion programs and firm performance: Linking knowledge, commitment, and market strategy to enhance competitiveness. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity, 11*(1), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joitmc.2025.100479

Imran, M., Abdul Hamid, S. N., & Aziz, A. (2018). The influence of TQM on export performance of SMEs: Empirical evidence from manufacturing sector in Pakistan using PLS-SEM. *Management Science Letters, 8*(3), 483–496. https://doi.org/10.5267/j.msl.2018.3.003

Melese, E. (2024). Export performance research over five decades: A bibliometric analysis. *MANTHAN: Journal of Commerce and Management, 11*(2), 100–122. https://doi.org/10.17492/jpi.manthan.v11i2.1122406

Nurhaliza, S. (2023, December 30). *Upaya pemerintah tingkatkan produk dalam negeri lewat UMKM Jakarta.* Antara. https://www.antaranews.com/berita/3893640/upaya-pemerintah-tingkatkan-produk-dalam-negeri-lewat-umkm-jakarta

Oh, S., & Hwang, S. (2025). How does digital capability translate into export performance?: The critical mediating role of GVC upgrading. *Asia and the Global Economy, 5*(2). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aglobe.2025.100116

Pacheco, L., Lobo, C., & Maldonado, I. (2022). Do ISO certifications enhance internationalization? The case of portuguese industrial SMEs. *Sustainability, 14*(3), 1335. https://doi.org/10.3390/su14031335

Parast, M. M., & Safari, A. (2022). Enhancing the quality and competitiveness of small businesses: A pooled cross-sectional analysis. *International Journal of Production Economics, 246*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijpe.2022.108410

Ribau, C. P., Moreira, A. C., & Raposo, M. (2017). SMEs innovation capabilities and export performance: An entrepreneurial orientation view. *Journal of Business Economics and Management, 18*(5), 920–934. https://doi.org/10.3846/16111699.2017.1352534

Robbani, M. B., Muzdalifah, L., Larassaty, A. L., & Sholikhah, A. (2025). The influence of digital literacy, self-efficacy, and social environment on the intention to become an entrepreneur among Gen Z in coastal areas. *Journal of Educational Management Research, 4*(2), 424–440. https://doi.org/10.61987/jemr.v4i2.934

Robiyatuladawiyah, A. F., & Rajiyem. (2023). *Kesiapan pelaku usaha kecil dan menengah (UKM) dalam menghadapi program UMKM Go Digital Shopee Ekspor (Studi kasus pada pengrajin kerajinan tangan di Kabupaten Bandung Barat tahun 2021)* [Master Thesis, Universitas Gadjah Mada].

Sadeghi, A., Aliasghar, O., & Bouguerra, A. (2023). Unpacking the relationship between post-entry speed of internationalization and export performance of SMEs: A capability-building perspective. *Journal of International Management, 29*(1). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intman.2022.100982

Safari, A., & Saleh, A. S. (2020). Key determinants of SMEs' export performance: a resource-based view and contingency theory approach using potential mediators. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing, 35*(4), 635–654. https://doi.org/10.1108/JBIM-11-2018-0324

Singh, V. K., Keshari, A., Singh, D., Singh, P. C., & Gautam, A. (2024). Green export strategies and SMEs export performance: Mediating roles of innovation, readiness, and activities. *Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, 13*. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13731-024-00451-y

Teece, D. J. (2018). Business models and dynamic capabilities. *Long Range Planning, 51*(1), 40–49. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lrp.2017.06.007

Vardarsuyu, M., Spyropoulou, S., Menguc, B., & Katsikeas, C. S. (2024). Managers' process thinking skills, dynamic capabilities and performance in export ventures. *International Marketing Review, 41*(1), 302–332. https://doi.org/10.1108/IMR-10-2022-0224

Wijatmoko, S. (2023). *Statistik sektoral DKI Jakarta tahun 2023: Volume 5 tahun 2023.* Bidang Data dan Statistik Dinas Komunikasi, Informatika dan Statistik Provinsi DKI Jakarta.

Zhang, C., Bai, T., Zhou, A. J., & Zhou, S. S. (2025). Digital platforms, internal digitalization, and internationalization of SMES. *Long Range Planning, 58*(6), 1–24. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lrp.2025.102588