

Optimizing Digital Platforms as a Strategy to Improve the Skills of Creative Industry Players in MSMEs Assisted by CIC Hub Cirebon

Muthia Fariza^{1*}, Linda Norhan², Mustika Nurkhalisha³, and Almira Sofia Mokoagow⁴

^{1,2,3,4} Catur Insan Cendekia University, Indonesia

Journal of Economics and Management Sciences is licensed under a Creative Commons 4.0 International License.



ARTICLE HISTORY

Received: 18 September 25

Final Revision: 14 October 25

Accepted: 20 October 25

Online Publication: 31 December 25

KEYWORDS

Digital Platform, Human Capital, Creative Industry, MSMEs, Skill Development

KATA KUNCI

Platform Digital, Human Capital, Industri Kreatif, UMKM, Pengembangan Keterampilan

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

muthia.fariza@cic.ac.id

DOI

10.37034/jems.v8i1.243

ABSTRACT

The rapid development of the digital economy has shifted the way micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) compete, demanding the continuous improvement of human capital to remain relevant in the creative industry sector. This study aims to analyze the effect of digital platform utilization and the challenges faced on the improvement of creative industry players' skills in MSMEs fostered by CIC Hub Cirebon. A quantitative descriptive approach was employed, using a saturated sample of 55 respondents representing the entire population. Data were collected through a structured Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed using validity and reliability tests, as well as simple linear regression with PLS. The results show that all measurement items meet convergent and discriminant validity criteria, with composite reliability > 0.70 , indicating high construct reliability. The structural model yielded an R^2 value of 0.324, meaning that digital platform utilization and related challenges explain 32.4% of the variance in skill improvement, with significant path coefficients ($p < 0.05$). These findings are consistent with Human Capital Theory and the Resource-Based View, reinforcing those digital platforms are not merely marketing channels but strategic tools for structured skill enhancement. This research contributes theoretically by integrating human capital and digital capability perspectives and practically by providing a framework and training module that can be implemented to empower MSME creative industry players to compete in the digital era.

ABSTRAK

Perkembangan ekonomi digital yang pesat telah mengubah cara Usaha Mikro, Kecil, dan Menengah (UMKM) bersaing, sehingga menuntut peningkatan berkelanjutan terhadap kualitas sumber daya manusia, khususnya pada sektor industri kreatif. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh pemanfaatan platform digital dan tantangan yang dihadapi terhadap peningkatan keterampilan pelaku industri kreatif pada UMKM binaan CIC Hub Cirebon. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif deskriptif dengan teknik *saturated sampling* terhadap 55 responden yang mewakili seluruh populasi. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner berskala Likert dan dianalisis menggunakan uji validitas, reliabilitas, serta regresi linier sederhana dengan bantuan PLS. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa seluruh item pengukuran memenuhi kriteria validitas konvergen dan diskriminan, serta reliabilitas komposit $> 0,70$ yang mengindikasikan konsistensi instrumen. Model struktural menghasilkan nilai R^2 sebesar 0,324 yang berarti pemanfaatan platform digital dan tantangan yang dihadapi menjelaskan 32,4% variasi keterampilan pelaku industri kreatif dengan koefisien jalur yang signifikan ($p < 0,05$). Temuan ini sejalan dengan *Human Capital Theory* dan *Resource-Based View* yang menegaskan bahwa platform digital bukan hanya media promosi, melainkan alat strategis dalam meningkatkan keterampilan teknis, manajerial, dan literasi digital secara terstruktur. Kontribusi penelitian ini bersifat teoretis, yaitu memperkaya kajian integrasi *human capital* dan kapabilitas digital, serta praktis dengan memberikan kerangka kerja dan modul pelatihan yang siap diimplementasikan untuk pemberdayaan UMKM industri kreatif di era digital.

1. Introduction

The creative economy, as an emerging and dynamic sector, plays an increasingly vital role in the global and national economy. It is defined by the strategic utilization of human creativity, talent, and intellectual property in the production and commercialization of

goods and services that are based on innovative ideas. In Indonesia, the creative industry is a significant contributor to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP), with sectors such as culinary, fashion, and crafts comprising over 75% of the sector's total output in 2020. As of 2022, Indonesia's creative economy contributed 6.54% to the national GDP, demonstrating

the sector's robust and growing presence within the economy.

The creative economy's growth is further fueled by the rapid digitalization of industries, with digital platforms such as e-commerce, social media, and collaboration tools becoming essential for expanding market access and fostering innovation. The increasing adoption of digital technologies has transformed the way creative industries, particularly Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), engage with customers and operate within the market. As digital technologies provide creative MSMEs with platforms for marketing, distribution, and networking, they enable businesses to overcome geographical constraints, reduce transaction costs, and create more efficient business models [1], [2]. Digital platforms, such as Shopee, Tokopedia, Instagram, and TikTok, serve not only as marketing tools but also as essential instruments for business development, providing MSMEs with an accessible means to promote their products and enhance customer engagement [3].

Despite the clear potential benefits of digitalization, the adoption of digital platforms among MSMEs remains notably low, with national surveys indicating that only 20-40% of MSMEs fully utilize digital technologies. This digital divide is particularly evident in the creative industry sector, where numerous MSMEs struggle with limited access to technology, inadequate digital literacy, and insufficient resources to optimize digital platforms for business expansion. Key challenges include the lack of understanding of digital platform functions, low levels of digital literacy, and constrained access to the internet and digital devices, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas. These barriers prevent MSMEs from leveraging digital platforms to their fullest potential, hindering their growth and competitiveness in the global market [4].

The low adoption rate of digital technologies among MSMEs is further exacerbated by a lack of formal education or specialized training in utilizing digital tools effectively. Research shows that business owners with higher levels of education are more likely to adopt digital technologies and use them strategically to enhance business performance. Consequently, education and digital training are pivotal in bridging the gap between MSMEs and their competitors who have successfully integrated digital tools into their operations. By improving digital literacy and providing MSMEs with the necessary tools to utilize digital technologies, creative industry players can enhance their business capabilities, fostering innovation and increasing productivity [5], [6].

In Cirebon, a region with a growing creative ecosystem in sectors like craft, fashion, and culinary, MSMEs face similar challenges. At Catur Insan Cendekia University, the CIC Hub program serves as a business incubator for local creative industry MSMEs, providing

them with mentorship and guidance. However, despite receiving support, these MSMEs continue to face barriers in adopting digital technologies due to limited access to infrastructure, digital platforms, and inadequate understanding of how to optimize these tools for business development. The CIC Hub's role in mentoring MSMEs is crucial, as it highlights the importance of comprehensive support in the digital transformation journey. However, the program also underscores the need for broader systemic changes to enhance the capacity of MSMEs to leverage digital platforms effectively [7].

This research aims to fill the gap in understanding the role of digital platforms in enhancing the technical skills of creative industry MSMEs in Indonesia. Specifically, this study examines the challenges MSMEs face in utilizing digital technologies, the extent to which digital platforms contribute to skills enhancement, and the strategies that can help these businesses improve their use of digital tools. The study uses an applied quantitative approach, utilizing Likert-scale surveys, validity and reliability testing, and regression analysis to measure the impact of digital platform utilization on the skill levels of creative industry players. By doing so, the study seeks to provide valuable insights into how digital platforms can be used as tools for improving human capital and enhancing business performance in the creative economy [8].

The relationship between digital platform capabilities and the performance of MSMEs has garnered significant attention in recent years. Scholars have highlighted that digitalization plays a crucial role in the transformation of small businesses by enhancing their operational efficiency, market reach, and capacity for innovation. Digital platforms, such as social media, e-commerce websites, and digital marketing tools, allow businesses to engage with a wider audience, reduce costs, and offer personalized products and services to meet customer needs. These capabilities are particularly valuable for MSMEs, which often operate with limited resources and require efficient, low-cost solutions to remain competitive in a rapidly changing market [9].

However, the full potential of digital technologies can only be realized if MSMEs possess the necessary digital capabilities to integrate and utilize these tools effectively. The dynamic capabilities framework suggests that organizations must continuously adapt to new technological trends to stay competitive. In the context of creative industry MSMEs, this means developing the skills necessary to navigate digital platforms, from content creation and marketing to data analytics and customer engagement. The success of digital platform adoption in MSMEs is not solely determined by the availability of technology but also by the human capital and knowledge that enable

businesses to make strategic use of these technologies [10], [11].

Moreover, the human resource aspect is critical to understanding the success of digital platform adoption. According to Human Capital Theory, investment in education, training, and skill development enhances individual productivity, which in turn improves organizational or business performance. The creative industry, in particular, is highly dependent on human talent, creativity, and skills. By improving digital literacy and technical skills, creative industry players can foster innovation and improve their business management practices. For example, improving skills in digital content creation, social media marketing, and online customer service can directly contribute to better product promotion, higher customer satisfaction, and increased sales [12].

The challenges faced by MSMEs in adopting digital platforms go beyond technical barriers. There are also significant managerial gaps, such as issues related to stock management, pricing strategies, and market analysis. These challenges are compounded by the lack of digital tools for monitoring business performance and measuring marketing effectiveness. Social media marketing, for instance, requires a nuanced understanding of algorithms and customer engagement metrics, which many MSMEs lack. Furthermore, the availability of resources—such as time, capital, and skilled labor—can also limit the ability of MSMEs to develop and execute effective digital strategies [13].

As digital platforms continue to reshape the landscape of the creative economy, it is clear that MSMEs must adapt by improving their digital capabilities to survive and thrive. The role of education, training, and support programs like CIC Hub is essential in addressing these challenges and empowering MSMEs to utilize digital platforms for business growth. This research contributes to the ongoing discourse on the intersection of digital technology and MSME performance, offering practical insights and strategies to help creative industry players overcome the barriers to digital adoption and harness the full potential of digital platforms for innovation and competitiveness in the creative economy [14].

The growing significance of the creative economy and its reliance on digital platforms underscores the importance of fostering digital literacy and capabilities within MSMEs. With the right support, education, and infrastructure, creative industry players can leverage digital platforms to enhance their skills, expand their market reach, and improve overall business performance. However, this requires addressing the barriers to digital adoption and developing strategies to equip MSMEs with the tools and knowledge they need to thrive in the digital economy. The challenges and opportunities presented by digital transformation in the creative industry are vast, and future research should

continue to explore the most effective strategies for overcoming these barriers and unlocking the full potential of digital platforms [15].

2. Research Method

This research applies a quantitative research design, which is used to examine and investigate the relationship between existing variables. The population consists of all MSME actors mentored by CIC Hub, totaling 55 individuals. Due to the relatively small population size, this study uses a saturated sampling technique (census sampling). Saturated sampling is a technique where all population members are used as the sample, making this a population study [16].

A descriptive quantitative approach is employed to analyze the relationship between the optimization of digital platforms and the enhancement of skills among creative industry MSME actors mentored by CIC Hub Cirebon. Data collection is conducted through a closed-ended questionnaire using a Likert scale (1–5). The questionnaire is designed based on indicators such as the Level of Digital Platform Utilization, Challenges in Using Digital Platforms, and Skill Improvement Indicators. The study is conducted between June 10, 2025, and September 10, 2025.

Purposive sampling is used to select respondents. Purposive sampling involves determining specific criteria aligned with research objectives [16]. This study uses primary data collected directly from respondents through hybrid questionnaire distribution: offline during a digital skills enhancement event and online via Google Forms.

Hypothesis testing is carried out using outer model and inner model evaluation through Partial Least Squares (PLS). Data is analyzed using SEM-PLS to test for validity, reliability, and simple linear regression to identify significant relationships between variables. This method is chosen for its ability to objectively and measurably illustrate relationships between variables [17].

3. Result and Discussion

The testing was conducted using purposive sampling based on criteria determined by the research. The criteria determined based on the research objectives or research problems were all MSMEs under the guidance of CIC Hub. The questionnaire statements can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Questionnaire Items

Y	Improvement of Industry Players' Skills
Y.1	The use of digital platforms has helped me improve my technical skills (e.g., product design, packaging).
Y.2	I feel more proficient in managing my business after using digital platforms.
Y.3	I have become more creative in marketing products online.
Y.4	I am able to understand market trends through the use of digital platforms.
Y.5	Using digital platforms has made me more confident in developing my business.
X1	Level of Digital Platform Utilization
X1.1	I regularly use digital platforms (e.g., Instagram, Shopee, TikTok, YouTube, etc.) to support my business.
X1.2	I use more than one digital platform.
X1.3	I feel that digital platforms help me in running my business.
X1.4	I use digital platforms to expand my customer network.
X1.5	I actively seek online training through platforms such as YouTube, Skill Academy, or Coursera.
X2	Challenges in Utilizing Digital Platforms
X2.1	I have difficulty understanding the features of digital platforms.
X2.2	Internet access is a major obstacle in utilizing digital platforms.
X2.3	I lack confidence in using digital platforms for promotion.
X2.4	I have not received specific training on the use of digital platforms.
X2.5	Time and cost are obstacles to learning how to use digital platforms further.

Convergent validity was measured based on factor loading values, which can be seen from the correlation between indicator item scores and construct scores. Factor loading values are considered reliable if they have a correlation value above 0.70, but at the research development stage, a loading scale of 0.50 is still acceptable [18]. Based on the results of the analysis, which can be seen on Figure 1, the Digital Platform Utilization Level variable, which consists of five statement items, has a factor loading value between 0.782 and 0.931, while the Challenges in Digital Platform Utilization variable, which consists of five statement items, has a factor loading value between 0.760 and 0.817, and the variable of Skill Improvement of Creative Industry Actors, consisting of five statement items, has factor loadings between 0.701 and 0.728. This means that all indicators included in these research variables have factor loadings > 0.50. This indicates that no indicators are excluded and that the convergent validity requirements are met.

Discriminant validity assessment was conducted by comparing the average extracted variance square root for each construct with the correlation between that construct and other constructs in the model. The model has adequate discriminant validity if the AVE root value for each construct is greater than the correlation

between the construct and other constructs [19]. If the AVE root value is greater than the correlation between the construct and other constructs in the model, it can be said that the discriminant validity value is fulfilled. The analysis results show that the AVE square root value is higher than the correlation value. The Digital Platform Utilization Level construct has an AVE value of 0.719 and an AVE root of 0.848. The Challenges in Digital Platform Utilization construct has an AVE value of 0.670 and an AVE root of 0.818. Similarly, the Industry Player Skill Improvement construct has an AVE of 0.557 and an AVE root of 0.746, so it can be stated that all variables in this study have fairly high discriminant validity.

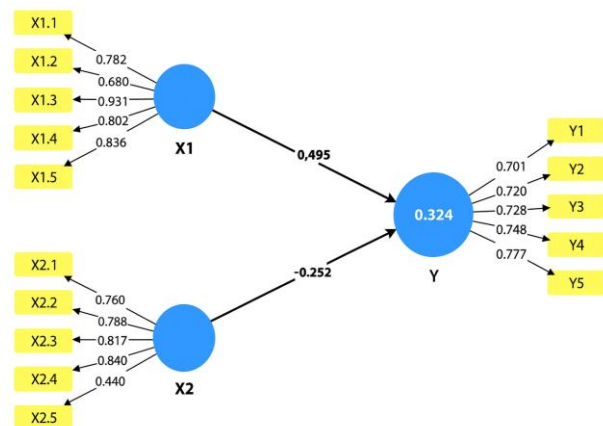


Figure 1. Research Model

In addition to testing the validity of the model measurement, reliability of a construct was also tested. Reliability testing was conducted to prove the accuracy, consistency, and precision of the instrument in measuring the construct. A construct is considered reliable if it has a composite reliability value greater than 0.70 [4]. In Table 2, it can be seen that the Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) values of all constructs are very good, namely above 0.70. This means that the variables tested are valid and also reliable, or accurate and consistent, so that they can be continued to test the structural model.

Table 2. Composite Reliability Value

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	Explanation
X1	0.903	0.927	Reliable
X2	0.891	0.910	Reliable
Y	0.802	0.863	Reliable

After the outer model requirements are met, the next step is to evaluate the structural model (inner model). The structural model can be seen through the R-squared value, which aims to assess how much influence the independent variables have on the dependent variables and path coefficients. Changes in the R-squared value can be used to assess the influence of certain independent latent variables on dependent latent variables. The R-squared values used in this

study are 0.67 (strong), 0.33 (moderate), and 0.19 (weak).

Table 3. R-Square Value

Variable	R-Square
Y	0,324

Table 3 shows that the Level of Digital Platform Utilization and Challenges in Digital Platform Utilization in Improving the Skills of Creative Industry Players has an R-square value of 0.324, which means that the variables of Level of Digital Platform Utilization and Challenges in Digital Platform Utilization affect the variable of Improving the Skills of Creative Industry Players by 32.4% and the remaining 67.6% is influenced by variables outside the scope of this study.

Table 4. Path Coefficients And T-Statistics

Construct	p-value	Explanation
X1 > Y	0,003	Supported
X2 > Y	0,039	Supported

To determine whether the hypothesis is accepted or rejected, the significance value of the p-value can be considered [20]. Thus, measurement estimates and standard errors are no longer calculated based on statistical assumptions but are based on empirical observations in the bootstrapping method. In this study, the hypothesis is accepted if the p-value is < 0.05, and vice versa, if the p-value is > 0.05, the hypothesis is rejected [21]. Table 4 contains the p-value significance values. We can see the original sample values to determine the relationship between the variables studied. Furthermore, to determine the significance level of the relationship between variables, we can look at the p-value. This study uses a significance level of 5% (one-tailed). With a confidence level of 95%, if the p-value is < 0.05, the result is significant.

4. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that optimizing digital platforms significantly enhances the skills of creative industry actors within CIC Hub Cirebon's MSME community, aligning with Human Capital Theory's emphasis on upskilling and talent retention in the digital age. It also supports the Resource-Based View (RBV), which highlights internal digital capabilities as strategic resources that distinguish successful MSMEs from those lagging behind in digital adoption. The R² value of 0.324 shows that digital platform utilization and adoption challenges explain 32.4% of the variance in skill levels, consistent with previous research on the impact of digital capabilities on SME innovation. The study underscores the role of human capital in facilitating digital transformation and recommends that CIC Hub implement continuous upskilling programs combining technical, managerial, and digital skills. A blended learning approach integrating e-learning and in-person mentoring is suggested, along with the establishment of a digital MSME community to foster

peer learning and networking. The study also encourages local governments and industry partners to provide support for infrastructure, training, and technology adoption to accelerate digital transformation, with future research focusing on policy support, product innovation, and social capital.

References

- [1] Bharadwaj, A., El Sawy, O. A., Pavlou, P. A., & Venkatraman, N. (2013). Digital business strategy: Toward a next generation of insights. *MIS Quarterly: Management Information Systems*, 37(2), 471–482. <https://doi.org/10.25300/MISQ/2013/37:2.3>
- [2] Shopova, T. (2014). Digital literacy of students and its improvement at the university. *Journal on Efficiency and Responsibility in Education and Science*, 7(2), 26–32. <https://doi.org/10.7160/eriesj.2014.070201>
- [3] Suyanto, B., Sugihartati, R., Egalita, N., Mas'udah, S., Singgih, D. S., & Sudarso. (2023). Digital literacy and survival mechanism of micro-small enterprises in practicing sharing economy. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 9(2). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2023.2245691>
- [4] Hariance, R. (2019). Aksi Kolektif Petani Dalam Koperasi Untuk Agribisnis Berkelanjutan. *Agrijo: Jurnal Agribisnis Universitas Malikussaleh*, 4(2), 93–106. <https://doi.org/10.29103/ag.v4i2.2725>
- [5] Anggitasari, D., Purwanto, E., & Pertiwi, T. K. (2023). The Effect of Digital Capability and Digital Literacy on Business Performance With Employee Innovation as a Mediating Variable at PT Pegadaian. *Return: Study of Management, Economic and Bussines*, 2(9), 883–898. <https://doi.org/10.57096/return.v2i9.150>
- [6] Zheng, B., Yuan, Y., Li, H., & Jiang, Y. (2023). A study of digital transformation and MSMEs performance from a spatial perspective: Evidence from China. *Journal of Economics and Management (Poland)*, 45(1), 319–343. <https://doi.org/10.22367/jem.2023.45.13>
- [7] Raman, K., Mantrala, M. K., Sridhar, S., & Tang, Y. E. (2012). Optimal Resource Allocation with Time-varying Marketing Effectiveness, Margins and Costs. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 26(1), 43–52. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2011.05.001>
- [8] Rosita, J., Ihalauw, J. J. O. I., Abdi, A. S., & Sirine, H. (2023). The Effect of Entrepreneurial Orientation and Social Media Adoption on Marketing Performance of Culinary Start-up Business. *Journal of System and Management Sciences*, 13(3), 29–51. <https://doi.org/10.33168/JSMS.2023.0303>
- [9] Jafari-Sadeghi, V., Garcia-Perez, A., Candel, E., & Couturier, J. (2021). Exploring the impact of digital transformation on technology entrepreneurship and technological market expansion: The role of technology readiness, exploration and exploitation. *Journal of Business Research*, 124, 100–111. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.11.020>
- [10] Judijanto, L., Utami, E. Y., Apriliani, D., & Rijal, S. (2023). A Holistic Review of MSME Entrepreneurship in Indonesia: The Role of Innovation, Sustainability, and the Impact of Digital Transformation. *International Journal of Business, Law, and Education*, 5(1), 119–132. <https://doi.org/10.56442/ijble.v5i1.355>
- [11] Firican, D. A. (2023). Digital Transformation and Digital Culture: A Literature Review of the Digital Cultural Attributes to Enable Digital Transformation. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Business Excellence*, 17(1), 791–799. <https://doi.org/10.2478/picbe-2023-0073>
- [12] Sapeciay, Z., Wilkinson, S., Costello, S. B., & Adnan, H.

- (2019). Building Organisational Resilience for the Construction Industry: Strategic Resilience Indicators. *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, 385(1). <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/385/1/012068>
- [13] Yoo, H. S., Lee, C., & Jun, S. P. (2018). The characteristics of SMEs preferring cooperative research and development support from the government: The case of Korea. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 10(9). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su10093048>
- [14] Sajjad, A., Ibrahim, Y., & Shamsuddin, J. (2022). The Moderating Role of Environmental Turbulence between Learning Orientation and SME Performance in the Manufacturing Sector of Pakistan. *Journal of Distribution Science*, 20(5), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.15722/jds.20.05.202205.1>
- [15] Yasmin, A., Tasneem, S., & Fatema, K. (2015). Effectiveness of Digital Marketing in the Challenging Age: An Empirical Study. *The International Journal of Management Science and Business Administration*, 1(5), 69–80. <https://doi.org/10.18775/ijmsba.1849-5664-5419.2014.15.1006>
- [16] Sugiyono. (2017). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- [17] Hair, J., & Alamer, A. (2022). Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) in second language and education research: Guidelines using an applied example. *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics*, 1(3). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rmal.2022.100027>
- [18] Purwanto, E. (2014). Model Motivasi Trisula: Sintesis Baru Teori Motivasi Berprestasi. *Jurnal Psikologi*, 41(2), 218. <https://doi.org/10.22146/jpsi.6951>
- [19] Șerban, R. A., Mihaiu, D. M., Herciu, M., & Ogorean, C. (2023). A Sectoral-Based Approach to the Link Between Financial Performance and Sustainability. *Studies in Business and Economics*, 18(1), 367–377. <https://doi.org/10.2478/sbe-2023-0020>
- [20] Nusannas, S. I., Yuniarsih, T., Sojanah, J., Mutmainnah, D., Rahayu, M., & Imbari, S. (2020). The effect of self-efficacy and employee engagement on employee performance in mediation by digital literation. *Enrichment: Journal of Management*, 11(1), 63–67.
- [21] Husna, N. (2022). Mediation effects of customer trust moderation on the influence of social media marketing and customer relationship management on online purchase intention in the Lazada Indonesia marketplace. *International Journal of Management & Economics Invention*, 8(7), 2515–2524. <https://doi.org/10.47191/ijmei/v8i7.04>