

# Social Media Adoption in Italian Firms

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## Abstract

The Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) Revolution started from the end of the nineties has changed the socioeconomic structure in many countries. Tools and technologies able to facilitate economic relations, the flow of information and increasing firms' economic opportunities outside country borders, have been introduced (see Galliano et al., 2001; Bayo-Moriones & Lera-López, 2007; Haller & Siedschlag, 2011).

Recognizing the economic potential of ICTs, a number of studies have looked at the determinants of ICT adoption (see Lucchetti & Sterlacchini, 2004; Fabiani et al., 2005; Haller & Siedschlag, 2011; Jorgenson & Vu, 2016). Both firm's internal characteristics (e.g. firm size, human capital etc.) and external factors (e.g. geographical location) are found to matter. In particular, large firms with high-skilled employees and located in capital cities or, in general, in advanced regions are more likely to adopt ICTs (see Fabiani et al., 2005; Haller & Siedschlag, 2011). However, not all the ICTs are unaffordable for small and medium sized firms (SMEs). Indeed, there is a set of low cost tools that are frequently used by SMEs. These are the so-called *market-oriented ICTs* (Lucchetti & Sterlacchini, 2004), that include Social Media.

Social Media (SMs) that include, among the others, microblogs, social networking sites and content community sites have changed not only social but also economic relations (see, for example, Hassouneh and Brengman, 2011; Okazaki and Taylor, 2013; Meske and Stieglitz, 2013; Cesaroni and Consoli, 2015; Galati et al., 2017; Alarcón-del-Amo et al., 2018). Indeed, they represent a profitable and low-cost tool that can contribute to firms' growth, especially for the small-sized ones operating in backward regions. However, to be profitably adopted firms should merge the use of these tools and devices with a clearly defined strategy.

This paper aims to analyse social media adoption in Italian enterprises. To this end, we specifically distinguish social media by type (e.g. Facebook-type, Twitter-type, etc) and by usage purposes (e.g. Marketing, Recruitment, etc.). Moreover, we evaluate their potential role as facilitator of firm's internationalization. Our results show that, small-sized enterprises in the Southern Italy are more involved in social media adoption, but with the risk of a poorly strategic adoption.

## Main References

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