

Internet and Competitiveness of enterprise: a Study of Tunisian Industrial SME

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Abstract: *The objective of this research is to explore and understand the influence of the use of the Internet technologies on the competitiveness of the SMEs. A literature review, based on the main approaches of the use of the Internet technologies, has allowed to propose a model of research. This model puts in relation, the use of Internet technologies and the competitiveness of the SMEs. A survey has been conducted in this regard, with 206 leaders of the Tunisian manufacturing SMEs. The obtained results, through the structural equations method, validate the proposed model by highlighting the entrepreneurial and environmental factors of the company which influence the use of the Internet.*

Keywords: *SME, Internet technologies, entrepreneurial factors, environmental factors, competitive advantages.*

I. Introduction

The diffusion of the Internet Technologies (IT) within the country can constitute an effective lever of economic and social development. The IT are both goods and services to the origin of a wide distribution of knowledge and skills, but also of the investment goods to increase micro-economic performance of firms by the increase of productivity and is an industry which can contribute significantly to increasing the macroeconomic performance of nations. They offer a potential for growth and development for all countries in general and for developing countries in particular.

These technologies are becoming essential to organizations. They represent real vertebral columns of those, sources of innovation, reactivity, competitive advantages and proximity with customers.

These IT are supposed to play a vital role in the process of disintegration of the firms and the diversification of activities in a globalized economy (Castells, 2001). In this perspective, they appear, for SMEs, as a source of competitive advantages, both in terms of cost reduction that of differentiation (Amabile and Gadille, 2003). In addition, the Internet provides, in an indifferent way, small and large firms, the possibility of a presence on the Web. It thus allows for a share of SMEs, a better connection to the market, contributing to increase the number of customer or an orientation to new markets (Lee and Cheung, 2004). The presence on the Web as well as the impact of the Internet and its related technologies on the costs and the differentiation, may therefore allow SMEs, with marketing budget restricted, to strengthen their competition ability in the international arena.

This research aims to clarify the impact of the use of the Internet on the SMEs competitiveness in specifying the factors which determine the use of this technology. In this perspective, the retained device of this research seeks to identify the relationship between the use of IT in SMEs and the competitive advantages obtained as a result of this use.

The most important according to several authors of the enterprise competitiveness, this is not to have the technological tools such as Internet applications but to use it effectively to create competitive advantages. "The technologies and even some skills can be purchased, leased, recruited on the IT market" Luc P. (2004). Therefore, many companies can acquire these technologies and imitate any pioneer in this area and they are therefore not likely to create a competitive advantage. Thus, several authors such as Barney (1991); Peteraf (1993); Teece, Pisano and Shuen (1997), argue that "the competitive advantage purely linked to technologies will be hardly sustainable and durable" (cited in Luc P., 2004).

In addition, Aldebert B. and Gueguen G. (2009) consider that this is not the introduction of technology in the company that will result in a better performance but it is by the use that the performance can be improved. It is for this reason that the Internet applications should be examined in terms of their use and not their simple possession. This constitutes a very important theoretical contribution and a difference of approach with several authors such as Powell and Dent-Micaleff (1997).

The nature of the equipment of ICT in Tunisian SMEs can be appreciated at two levels: the tools networks, which are the basis of the technological equipment (Intranet, Extranet), and the applications associated with these media network (web site, monitoring, electronic commerce). In the same context, Monod (2003) identifies five levels of Internet use for the management of SME: The web site, electronic commerce, monitoring tools, internal communication (Intranet) and inter-firm cooperation (Extranet).

1. Theoretical foundations of the research

A behaviorist theoretical approach takes into account "the dissemination of an innovation" and allows to identify the factors that influence the degree of use of innovation within the enterprise. The different models that belong to this approach will serve as the basis for the development of our research model. These models, of which their objective is to describe the adoption of ICT within the company, will be extracted from the key factors of their use.

1.1. Factors affecting the use of IT in the SME

The Internet applications use develops in enterprises to ensure more numerous tasks such as the search for information, the group work, the communication, the marketing of products and services, exploration, etc. This use depends on a company to another depending on several factors related to the entrepreneurial and environmental context (Uwizeyemungu S. and Raymond L., 2004; Aldebert B. and Gueguen G., 2009).

1.1.1. The influence of entrepreneurial factors

One of the main specificities of SMEs is the centralizing power of the leader who plays a central role in the company. In SMEs, almost all decisions are taken in the presence of the leader and that the same regarding the adoption of new technologies. Therefore, the leader of SMEs is regarded as the essential factor in the process of introduction of Internet applications in the enterprise. Several studies conducted by researchers such as Raymond et al., 1998; Limayem and Chabchoub, 1999; Monnoyer, 2002; Boutary and Monnoyer, 2003; Uwizeyemungu S. and Raymond L., 2004, etc. have concentrated on the significant influence of factors related to the leader of company on the Internet applications use.

The first hypothesis (H1) finds its justification in the work of Aldebert B. and Gueguen G. (2009) who consider that the leaders who demonstrate a higher interest for the IT will betender their companiesto greater use of different informational tools and a greater mobilization of staff about their use. Similarly, Thompson S.H Teo et al. (1998) stipulate that the factor which determines the ITuse within the company is the interest of the leader toward these technologies. So, we assume that the leaders strongly interested by the Internet applications will be tender their companies toward a greater use of these technologies.

H1: SMEs whose leader has a higher interest for Internet technologiesknow a greater use of these technologies.

The second hypothesis (H2) is formulated with reference to the conclusions of the work of Thompson S.H Teo et al. (1998) who consider that the behavior of the leader toward organizational changes, unfamiliar technologies and investment in Internet technologies can determine significantly the decision of the use of these technologies within the enterprise. These behaviors are reflected according to Thompson S.H Teo and al. in the risk aversion of the leader.

H2: An SME whose leader has a risk aversion would be less willing to use Internet technologies.

1.1.2 The influence of environmental factors

Previous research conducted by Thompson S.H et al. (1998); Uwizeyemungu S. and Raymond L. (2004) have demonstrated that the factors related to the environmental context as the competitive intensity and the informational intensity exert a significant effect on the use of Internet applications within the SMEs.

The hypothesis H3 is formulated with reference to the work of Thompson S.H et al. (1998). These authors mention that the competitive intensity is a factor likely to determine positively the use of Internet applications within the SMEs. Therefore, the third hypothesis reads as follows: **H3:** more the competitive intensity in the industry is high; more the company knows a greater use of IT.

The fourth hypothesis finds its justification also in the work of Thompson S.H et al. (1998) who consider that the informational intensity of the industry products influence significantly the use of IT within the enterprise. According to these authors, the informational intensity necessary to sell the product, the complexity of the use and understanding of the product of company compared with competitors, the order process of product and its life expectancy are factors which can determine significantly the IT use within the enterprise. The fourth hypothesis therefore reads as follows: **H4:** more the informational intensity in the industry is high; more the company knows a greater use of IT.

The dissemination of IT offers to SMEs, opportunities for innovation and emergence of new efficiency gains (Folacci, 2003). In effect, the use of these technologies allow SMEs to overcome their lack of resources, implement a strategy of cost reduction, differentiation or diversification, find new sources of income and improve their performance (Morrison and Taylor, 1999). All or part of these benefits can take place in the SMEs according to the modalities of integration of these IT in the company.

1.2. Internet in the SME: a source of competitive advantage

Chesnais F. (1997) has found that the technology is a central dimension of competitiveness as well as the deployment of international groups.

From an economic point of view, IT allows a reduction of transaction costs and the costs of research of the information. In effect, IT offers companies accessibility to information they could hardly have reached previously. The IT are then mobilized as instruments of monitoring or marketing. The ease of publication on the network also enables a cost economy: no charge printing, data always current and accessible throughout the world that therefore allow the companies to gain a competitive advantage by the decrease of costs. The IT allows the reduction in costs for editing brochures and advertising booklets which can achieve a significant economy.

A second strategic action aims to search a differentiation on the market. It is to play not on a reduction of price but on a differential value perceived by the customer.

Another strategic action is to seek new sources of income either by finding new markets or by offering services with high added value.

The table below (Table 1) presents the main strategic advantages that can make the IT for SMEs according to Morrison et al. (1999).

Table 1: The main strategic advantages of the IT

Strategies or perspectives	Managerial Vision	Potential benefits
Cost reduction	Advertising and promotion	Less expensive than traditional advertising
		Reduction of flyers and postal costs.
		More detailed information
Sales growth	Size of the market	Growth of online shoppers
	Distribution and reservation	New means of distribution and reservation
Access to new markets	Market profile	Internet users better informed and more assiduous
	Segmentation	Customizing the information on the market segments
	Niche Market	Users with specific interests are seeking more on the web
Customer satisfaction improved	Availability and quality of information	New visions of the conveniences
		Information available 24h/24h
		Convenient access to the information for clients
	Global Access	International customers
	Organization and feasibility decision	Facilitates the organization and the choice
Other critical business or needs client	Partnerships and Alliances	Active Participation in the digital partnerships
	Network	Tools to maintain and establish the current and potential partnerships
Other perspectives	Innovation and Learning	Follows the technological development

ICTs can enable companies in the agri-food sector to improve their competitiveness on the international market and better control the traceability of their products (Anthioumane T., 2010).

The IT can be considered a source of competitiveness participating in the implementation of generic strategies of cost reduction and differentiation (Amabile S. and Gadille M., 2006). Specifically, the use of these technologies can enable:

- In the framework of a cost reduction strategy, decrease the amount of work and reduce the use of materials;
- In the framework of a generic strategy of differentiation, to sell a product/service unique (develop a great flexibility, a better quality control, etc.);
- To expand markets to the extent that the creation of a Web site can support a marketing strategy, having for objective, the research new markets and the increase of the customer. In addition, for SMEs, the development of a Web site can extend this approach at the international level with a lesser cost (Brown and Lockett, 2004).

We notice while, in the case of SMEs, "the obtaining of competitive advantages in the use of ICTs can express in terms of cost reduction, differentiation, or diversification, in particular products and services" Amabile S. and Gadille M. (2006). In addition, Amabile and Gadille (2003) propose a model that has for objective the analysis of the production of competitive advantages such as the reduction of costs, the differentiation and diversification from the uses of ICT.

The hypothesis H5 refers to the role of the use of IT and their impact on the competitiveness of the company. It finds its origins in particular, in the research work of Aldebert B. (2008), Amabile S. and Gadille M. (2003), Porter (1985), Porter and Millar (1985) and Kalika (2000).

According to Aldebert B. (2008), the IT can offer to the SMEs a means to overcome their lack of resources and to implement strategic actions which are to seek a reduction of costs, search a differentiation on the market, seek new sources of income and diversify the products offered. Thus, the interests of managers to develop Internet solutions revolve around the obtaining of a competitive advantage. Therefore, the Internet applications enable organizations to reduce the transaction costs and research information, in other words, they

can be considered as instruments of intelligence or marketing since they offer companies a accessibility to information with a minimum of cost which enable them to gain a competitive advantage. In addition, IT can create a differential value perceived by the customer, modify, by geographical extension the field of the competitive action which corresponds to forms of diversification of products offered and to facilitate the search for new sources of income.

Aldebert B. (2008) states that there is a positive and direct relationship between the use of Internet technologies and competitive attitudes of the SMEs such as the partnership, the environmental intelligence and product innovation.

Amabile S. and Gadille MR. (2003); referring to Porter (1985), Porter and Millar (1985); mention that the use of the Internet and applications which are related, can facilitate obtaining a competitive advantages of the type cost reduction and differentiation of the product/service. In effect, the use of a web site, marketing applications on the Internet, intelligence activities can be important supports of the diversification strategy of the company. In this context, other authors such as Kalika (2000) specify that these new technologies may be held for one of the vectors of diversification of the company's products.

According to Porter (1985), there are three generic strategies, which can be envisaged to create and sustain a competitive advantage, which are the costs strategy, the differentiation strategy and the strategy which is to adopt one of the first two, but targeted to specific segments of activity.

As early as 1985, Porter and Millar suggested that, if IT could create a competitive advantage (of the type reduction of costs and differentiation), they allowed also to modify the field of the competitive action, which corresponds to forms of diversification. In this context, other authors such as Kalika (2000) specify that "these new technologies may be held for one of the vectors of diversification of activities".

In the case of SMEs, the competitive advantages of the use of Internet technologies can therefore be expressed in terms of reduction of costs, differentiation or diversification of products/services. To this effect, it is important to study the characteristics of companies arriving to assemble these three types of competitive advantages, from their uses of Internet technologies.

Amabile S. and Gadille M. (2006) identify three dimensions of the competitiveness of companies which are: the increase in the productivity of labor and the costs reduction, the diversification or the development of new products/services and the increase in the customer portfolio.

Amabile S. and Gadille M. (2003) mention that the uses of Internet technologies influence the three dimensions of the competitiveness of enterprises which are, according to these authors:

- The increase of labor productivity and reduction of costs;
- Diversification or development of new products or services;
- The improvement of the quality of products/services.

Of this fact, the indicators to measure the competitive advantage that we have retained, in our survey, are those used by Amabile S. and Gadille M. (2003).

In light of this literature review, we support the hypothesis that the use of IT influence significantly and positively the competitiveness of the SMEs. Hence, the fifth hypothesis is as follows:

H5: The use of Internet Technology exerts a positive influence on the competitiveness of the SMEs.

II. The Conceptual Model

The conceptual model makes the existence of causality relationships between the use of Internet technologies and the competitiveness of the SMEs. The first part of the model means the antecedents of the use of Internet applications in the enterprise. This level takes into account two independent sets of concepts identified in the theoretical foundations. It is, on the one hand, factors related to the leader such as his interest in the Internet technology and its aversion to risk, and on the other hand, factors related to the business environment. The second part characterizes the process of the use of Internet technologies and takes so in account its competitive capabilities. Therefore, our conceptual model takes the form described by the figure below.

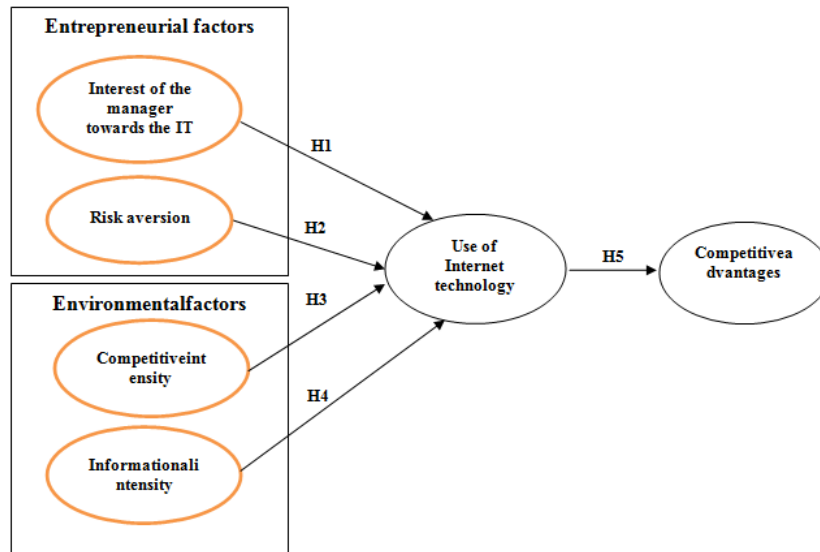


Figure 1 : Conceptuel model

III. The Methodology

In order to measure empirically the effect of the use of IT in the enterprise on its competitiveness and test the conceptual model presented above, we have chosen the survey by questionnaire as an instrument of data collection. Our empirical approach has proceeded in two stages. First the choice of measurement scales to retain, then the achievement of the investigation in the field.

Constructs are measured by scales from the literature. The type of measurement scales that are used is Lickert 7 levels. For the operationalization of the interest of manager toward the IT, risk aversion, competitive intensity and informational intensity, we have retained the scale of Thompson S.H Teo et al. (1998). And to measure the competitive advantage, we have retained the measurement scale used by Amabile S. and Gadille M. (2003) (see table 2).

Table 2: The measurement scales of the variables

Variables	References	Items/Dimensions
Interest of manager toward the IT	Thompson S.H Teo andal. (1998)	1. The leader of the company is interested in the adoption of the Internet. 2. The leader considers that the adoption of the Internet within the company is important. 3. The leader accepts unfamiliar technologies. 4. The leader agrees to invest funds in Internet technologies.
Risk aversion	Thompson S.H Teo andal. (1998)	1. The company does not have the tradition of being the first to try the new technology. 2. The company does not spend in developing new products over competitors. 3. The company does not recruit technical personnel 4. The company is not aware by the latest technological developments. 5. The leader does not show its support for the adoption of the Internet. 6. The manager does not accept the organizational changes.
Competitive intensity	Thompson S.H Teo andal. (1998)	1. There is a severe competition based on price. 2. There is a severe competition based on the quality of the products and novelty. 3. There is a high number of competitors in the industry.
Informational intensity	Thompson S.H Teo andal. (1998)	1. The product in our industry requires a lot of information to sell. 2. The product in our industry is complex to understand or use. 3. The order of products in our industry is a complex process. 4. The product in our industry is characterized by a long life cycle.
competitive advantage	Amabile S. and Gadille M. (2003)	1. The increase in labor productivity and reduction of costs; 2. The diversification or development of new products or services; 3. Improving the quality of products/services

For the effects of the use of IT on the competitiveness of the company can appear, it is appropriate to choose a sector sufficiently equipped in IT and accustomed to use them, which is mandatory if we want to identify the competitive differences related to the use of these technologies.

The data collection has been carried out on a sample of 206 leaders and/or managers responsible of a decision-making function in the Tunisian manufacturing company. Two hundred and fifty companies of the

manufacturing industries sector located in the region of Sahel have been selected. 206 leaders agreed to respond to the questionnaire i.e. a response rate around 81.6%.

IV. Results And Analysis

These results follow the order of the main hypothesis of research, namely the relationship between the entrepreneurial and environmental factors and the use of IT (H1, H2, H3 and H4) as well as the influence of this use on the competitiveness of the SMEs (H5).

The percentage of the variance returned by the CPA for the measurement scales of variables is generally superior to 60% justifying thus that the data is factorizable and that the result is satisfactory. The matrix of components after varimax rotation shows that the items are grouped under the variables risk aversion, interest of the leader toward the IT, competitive intensity, informational intensity and competitive advantages.

Moreover, indicators of relevance of the CPA are satisfactory for the different scales since the Cronbach alpha values are higher than 0.6. Thus, we can consider that these results are satisfactory at the exploratory level (table 3).

Table 3: Factorial results of variables

Variables	Items	Correlation Item/factor	Quality of representation	□Cronbach	KMO	Explained variance
Informational intensity	INFO_INT1	0,734	0,539	0,636	0,618	58,7%
	INFO_INT2	0,728	0,530			
	INFO_INT3	0,832	0,692			
Competitive intensity	COMP_INT1	0,916	0,839	0,875	0,728	80%
	COMP_INT2	0,866	0,751			
	COMP_INT3	0,902	0,814			
Interest of the leader toward the IT	ILIT1	0,724	0,524	0,839	0,783	67%
	ILIT2	0,889	0,789			
	ILIT3	0,884	0,781			
	ILIT4	0,778	0,606			
Competitive advantages	COMP_ADV1	0,562	0,516	0,6	0,6	55%
	COMP_ADV2	0,802	0,643			
	COMP_ADV3	0,841	0,707			
Risk aversion	RISK_AV1	0,830	0,689	0,913	0,849	70%
	RISK_AV2	0,877	0,769			
	RISK_AV3	0,829	0,688			
	RISK_AV4	0,902	0,814			
	RISK_AV5	0,797	0,635			
	RISK_AV6	0,790	0,625			

At the confirmatory level, the values of the coefficient Rhô of Jöreskog are satisfactory because they exceed the minimum level recommended 0.6 (Bagozzi, cited by Sandvik I.L., Kare Sandvik, 2003). In addition, it finds that the convergent validity conditions have respected the minimum threshold of 0.5 (see Table 4).

Table 4: Reliability indices and convergent validity

	Competitive intensity	Risk aversion	Interest of the leader toward the IT
Reliability : □ _R	0,89	0,95	0,88
Convergent validity: □ _{CV}	0,71	0,67	0,58

Now we present the results of the structural links between the variables in the model (Table 5). In effect, a relationship is considered as high if the standardized regression coefficient estimate exceeds the threshold of 0.1 points. It is considered significant if its estimated P-value is less than the threshold of 0.1.

Table 5: Significance of the causal links and validation of hypothesis

Hypothesis	Causal link	Estimate	Significance	Explained variance	Validation of hypothesis
H1	Interest of the leader toward the IT → Use of IT	0,549	0,000	0,449	Confirmed
H2	Risk aversion → Use of IT	-0,117	0,077	0,543	Confirmed
H3	Competitive intensity → Use of IT	0,034	0,700	0,563	Rejected
H4	Informational intensity → Use of IT	-0,089	0,581	0,532	Rejected
H5	Use of IT → Competitive advantages	0,259	0,001	0,071	Confirmed

In the case of the correlation between the interest of the leader toward IT and the use of IT (H1), the estimate of the standardized regression coefficient is equal to 0.549 which is superior to 0.1, thus it can be said that the relationship between these two variables is strong. In addition, the estimated P-value which is equal to zero is less than 0.1, and therefore we can confirm that the relationship is significant. As to the value of the explained variance, we find that 44.9% of the variance of the IT use is explained by the interest of the leader toward the IT.

The hypothesis concerning the structural link between the use of IT and the interest of the leader toward these technologies is significant and a sign corresponding to the initial hypothesis. The positive effect of the interest of the leader toward these technologies (the Intranet, Extranet, competitive intelligence, electronic commerce and the web site) on their use within the company is therefore validated and the initiator role of the leader is validated by our empirical investigations. This result corroborates the work of Julien and Morin (1996), Barney (1996), Beamish and Dhanaraj (2003), Prahalab and Hamel (1990), Laghzaoui (2006), Filion (1991), Allali (2004) and Baile S. and Djambou, R. (2008), and confirms that the degree of use of IT is positively influenced by the interest of the leader toward these technologies.

Furthermore, the result is similar to the risk aversion which has a significant correlation with the use of IT (H2). In addition, the estimated sign of the relationship is negative in accordance with the research hypothesis. This led in particular to validate the hypothesis of the link between the use of IT and the risk aversion. This result corroborates the work of Uwizeyemungu S. and Raymond L., 2004; Thompson S.H Teo and al. (1998) and confirms that the degree of use of IT is negatively influenced by the risk aversion of the leader.

Table 4 shows that the interest of the leader toward IT and his risk aversion exercise direct and significant effects at threshold of 1% on the use of IT in the enterprise. These results enable then to confirm the hypotheses H1 and H2. Therefore, we can conclude that the use of Internet technologies depends simultaneously on these two elements.

However, the two structural links rejected concern the relationship between the use of IT, on the one hand, on the other hand, the competitive and informational intensity.

However, the estimated regression coefficients for these two relationships have signs contrary to those originally planned in the research hypotheses. Therefore, the hypothesis justifying these structural links (H3 and H4) are rejected. In other words, it is clear from the collected empirical data, that environmental factors have effects on the use of Internet technologies inverse to those provided by the dominant theory of which are from our research hypotheses. These results corroborate the work of Julien and Morin (1996), Barney (1996), Beamish and Dhanaraj (2003), Prahalab and Hamel (1990), Laghzaoui (2006), Filion (1991), Allali (2004) and Baile S. and Djambou, R. (2008). We have not been able to demonstrate that the use of IT is subject to the influence of environmental variables. These results are surprising because the environment is a key factor in the strategic analysis (Ansoff, 1987). In addition, these results appear to be in contradiction with the literature which indicates that the behaviors of SMEs are determined by their environment (Gueguen, 2001). These results can be justified by the fragility of the SMEs in terms of resources which requires in a first time to have a survival behavior by best using of its resources without having really conscience of its environment (Aldebert B., 2008). The leader of the SMEs focuses primarily on the emergency, as well as on its closest environment, because at this level he thinks have the greater margin of maneuver and has a better control of his actions.

The hypothesis H5 which relates to the role of use of IT and their impact on the competitiveness of company is significant and with signs corresponding to the initial assumptions. The hypothesis corresponding to this structural link is therefore validated. This result corroborates those of the work of Baile, 1999, 2005; Venkatraman, 1995; Raymond and Bergeron, 1996; Bergeron, Raymond and Rivard, 2004; Raymond and St-Pierre, 2005; Baile S. and Djambou, R., 2008; Porter, 1985; Porter and Millar, 1985.

The potentially positive impact of the use of Internet technologies on the competitiveness of SMEs is consensus. As well, the integration of IT in SMEs may be, according to Amabile S. and Gadille M., (2006) "An additional factor of efficiency dynamics scale and therefore of competitive advantages of SMEs in the framework of a networks functioning".

A large number of economic studies show that ICT and more precisely the IT wear in their applications of the major opportunities in terms of competitive advantages (Badoc and al. 1998). They play a crucial role in the improvement of productivity, competitiveness and growth of the SMEs. But it must be, in the first time, reorganize the management and working methods and improve the skills within the company.

The most frequent findings of a large number of studies at the level of the enterprise indicating that the companies that use the Internet technologies have a better productivity. The more recent studies on the Canada focused mainly on the ICT and have, to a large extent, confirmed these results. Indeed, the Canadian firms using one or several ICT have a higher productivity than companies that are not using. These results are confirmed also for Tunisian industrial SMEs. In addition, we found the same results as the studies conducted by the OECD (2004), which demonstrates that the productivity and profitability of SMEs using advanced technologies is

progressing more than not computerized companies, especially those using communication technologies, networks of company or inter-company, including.

The IT enable then to facilitate within an SMEs, at the same time, the reduction of information costs or of deadlines and information search (Amabile S. and Gadille M., 2003; Malone and al., 1987) and improvement of the quality of products, but also of the process. Also, these technologies make information more accessible than previously (Aldebert B., 2008).

In the framework of a cost reduction strategy, Internet technologies allow to reduce the use of materials, decrease the overall amount of work and develop processes favoring economies of scale (Porter, 1985 cited in Amabile S. and Gadille M., 2006). In the same context, Aldebert B. (2008) considers that the IT allow to reduce costs due to the ease of publishing on the network which allow companies to acquire a competitive advantage by the decrease of costs.

Therefore, to know how to integrate the technologies of Internet in network organization strategy has become a crucial factor of competitiveness in all sectors of activity (Castells, 2001, p.85 cited in Amabile S. and Gadille M., 2006).

V. Conclusion

The classic organization based on the static structures, the models of hierarchical types, raster, mechanistic are no longer effective. Time came to the organic organizations corresponding more to a model in movement, a dynamic of change. An important part of these changes is particularly enabled by the Internet technologies.

In effect, the use of IT develops in enterprise to ensure various tasks such as the marketing of products and services, the information search, communication, group work, the management of the company, prospecting, etc. This integration depends on a company to another and this according to factors that are related to the organizational context of the company (size, sector of activity, etc.), the profile of the leader (experience, level of education, resistance to change, risk aversion, interest of the leader toward the use of IT, etc.) and the environmental context.

Technology is a central dimension of competitiveness as well as the international deployment of companies. This research shows that the ICT and more specifically the Internet technologies carry in their applications of the major opportunities in terms of competitive advantages (Badocand al 1998). They play a crucial role in improvement of productivity, competitiveness and growth of the SMEs.

The evaluation of the positive effect of the use of Internet technologies on the competitiveness of SMEs should facilitate the managerial actions of the leaders by implementing the following actions:

- Implement and strengthen the technological resources in accordance with the ambitions of the leaders and the targeted objectives by the company;
- The encouragement of the adoption of Internet technologies in the SMEs and the awareness for their interest in the competitiveness of the company could develop a management style based on these technologies.

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