

Competitiveness of SMEs in the Era of Technological Dynamics: An Analysis of Polish Economy*

Monika KAPLER

Czestochowa University of Technology, Poland, Czestochowa

Correspondence should be addressed to: Monika KAPLER, monika.kapler@pcz.pl

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Abstract

The innovation activity within the Polish economy highlights a notable disparity between large enterprises and small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Research from the Central Statistical Office (GUS) indicates that 36.1% of all companies were engaged in innovative activities between 2020 and 2022, with significant contributions from industrial (26.3%) and service sectors (34.2%). However, micro-enterprises, which comprise a substantial portion of SMEs, were excluded from the analysis, leaving a gap in understanding their innovative capabilities. Additionally, a remarkable increase in broadband internet access among businesses—from 28% in 2004 to 98.7% in 2023—reflects a trend towards digital transformation, essential for maintaining competitiveness in a rapidly evolving market. This digital shift is complemented by growing engagement in social media for customer relations and marketing, although only 3.7% of enterprises adopted artificial intelligence (AI) technologies as of 2023. With rising pressures from market challenges and technological advancements, SMEs must leverage digital tools, including cloud computing and integrated information systems, to enhance operational efficiency and foster innovation. The capacity to adapt and innovate is critical for survival and growth in the contemporary business landscape.

Keywords: SME, competitiveness, technological advancement, innovations