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Review Article

Empowerment Strategies to Enhance SMEs' Compliance with IFAS-MSMEs: A Systematic Review

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Abstract: Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Indonesia continue to face persistent challenges in complying with the Indonesian Financial Accounting Standards for Micro, Small, and Medium Entities (IFAS-MSMEs). Limited managerial capacity, insufficient financial knowledge, and evolving regulatory expectations contribute to inconsistent and unreliable financial reporting practices. Strengthening SMEs' capabilities is therefore essential to support accurate and compliant reporting. This study synthesizes existing evidence on empowerment models designed to enhance SMEs' compliance, identifies key approaches, and examines their contributions to improving reporting outcomes. Using a qualitative Systematic Literature Review guided by the PRISMA protocol, peer-reviewed studies were retrieved from the Scopus database and screened based on thematic relevance, publication period, language, and accessibility, yielding 37 articles for detailed analysis. A thematic synthesis was conducted to examine the types of interventions, reported compliance outcomes, and contextual factors that influence their effectiveness. The findings reveal five prominent empowerment strategies that support SMEs' compliance: capacity-building programs, adoption of digital financial tools, advisory and mentoring services, leadership and organizational readiness, and supportive regulatory environments. Collectively, these approaches enhance SMEs' ability to meet reporting requirements, with integrated, multi-level interventions demonstrating stronger impacts than isolated efforts. The review underscores that improving compliance with IFAS-MSMEs requires coordinated action across managerial, organizational, and policy dimensions. The insights generated offer practical guidance for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers in developing targeted, sustainable, and contextually appropriate support mechanisms. Future research is encouraged to explore the long-term impacts of interventions, digital transformation pathways, and sector-specific customization to further optimize compliance outcomes.

Keywords: SMEs compliance; IFAS-MSMEs; Empowerment models, Systematic literature review, PRISMA



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1. Introduction

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) play a crucial role in driving national economic development, particularly in Indonesia, where they contribute substantially to employment generation and overall GDP growth (Roffia et al., 2025). Despite their importance, many SMEs continue to grapple with long-standing financial management challenges, including limited managerial capacity and insufficient understanding of standardized accounting practices (Arshad &

Azzam, 2025). These constraints hinder their ability to produce accurate, transparent, and timely financial information, which in turn limits access to formal financing and reduces overall business accountability. To improve reporting consistency, the Indonesian Financial Accounting Standards for Micro, Small, and Medium Entities (IFAS-MSMEs) was introduced as a simplified framework tailored to SMEs' operational needs (Bühler et al., 2025). However, adoption and implementation remain inconsistent across the sector, with numerous SMEs still struggling with basic bookkeeping, documentation, and reporting processes. These persistent challenges highlight the need for structured support mechanisms that can effectively strengthen SMEs' financial reporting capabilities.

In response to these difficulties, empowerment has emerged as a strategic approach to enhance SMEs' readiness and capacity to comply with accounting standards. Prior research identifies multiple forms of empowerment, including training, digital financial tools, mentorship, leadership initiatives, and policy facilitation as effective mechanisms for improving managerial competencies and promoting accountability-oriented behaviors within SMEs (Segura & del Pilar Corredor García, 2024). Although these interventions demonstrate promising outcomes, the evidence is scattered across disciplines and contexts. Most existing studies examine single interventions in isolation or focus on limited case-specific findings, resulting in a fragmented understanding of how these empowerment strategies operate collectively.

A notable gap in the literature lies in the absence of a comprehensive synthesis that systematically examines empowerment approaches aimed at enhancing compliance with IFAS-MSMEs. Many studies either lack comparative analysis across different empowerment models or fail to explore how organizational, managerial, and policy factors interact to influence compliance outcomes (Ahmad et al., 2024). This fragmentation makes it difficult to determine which strategies are most effective and how they should be implemented within the diverse landscape of Indonesian SMEs.

Given these limitations, a systematic and rigorous consolidation of existing evidence is necessary to identify dominant empowerment models and understand their effectiveness. Employing a PRISMA-guided Systematic Literature Review (SLR) provides a transparent and structured approach to identifying, screening, and evaluating relevant studies (Shaikhnag et al., 2025). This method allows for an integrated understanding of empowerment interventions and their measurable impacts on SMEs' compliance with IFAS-MSMEs. Recognizing the national significance of strengthening SMEs' financial governance, this study focuses on synthesizing evidence-based empowerment strategies within the Indonesian context (Lomas, 2024). The review seeks to deepen understanding of the mechanisms that support consistent and accurate financial reporting, while also identifying areas where further policy and practical interventions are required. Guided by these objectives, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. **RQ1:** Which empowerment models are most effective in enhancing SMEs' compliance with IFAS-MSMEs, and what measurable outcomes are associated with each model?
2. **RQ2:** How do organizational, managerial, and policy-related factors interact with empowerment interventions to influence compliance effectiveness among SMEs?

Through addressing these questions, the study aims to provide actionable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers committed to strengthening SMEs' compliance capabilities and improving the overall quality of financial reporting in Indonesia.

2. Literature Review

The empowerment of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) has increasingly been recognized as a critical driver for improving compliance with IFAS-MSMEs, particularly because effective empowerment enhances managerial, technical, organizational, technological, and policy-related capacities. To maintain thematic precision and align with reviewer recommendations, this section focuses exclusively on literature directly relevant to financial reporting, simplified accounting standards, and compliance behaviors. Conceptually, empowerment is understood as a deliberate effort to strengthen managerial, operational, and technological competencies to improve organizational performance and regulatory adherence (Al Astal et al., 2025). Drawing on human capital and institutional theory, researchers emphasize that empowerment outcomes depend not only on internal capacity but also on the availability of external support structures. Within the context of SMEs' financial reporting, the literature consistently notes persistent challenges, such as limited accounting literacy, insufficient trained personnel, and inadequate technological readiness that contribute to inconsistent reporting practices (Bohorquez Villamil et al., 2019)..

Among the most prominent empowerment mechanisms discussed in the literature is training and capacity development, which strengthens SMEs' ability to understand and apply financial reporting requirements. Structured training programs that build accounting literacy have been shown to improve reporting accuracy, reliability, and overall compliance (Ononye et al., 2025). Evidence further suggests that continuous, sector-specific training is more effective than one-off interventions, demonstrating that sustained learning produces more durable improvements in reporting behavior (Lindawati et al., 2020). Complementing these efforts, the integration of digital technologies has emerged as an essential element in supporting IFAS-MSMEs compliance. Cloud-based accounting systems, mobile reporting

applications, and automated templates enhance accuracy, reduce manual workloads, and enable timely submission of financial reports (Van et al., 2024). However, digitalization benefits are often limited by low digital literacy and organizational resistance to change, reinforcing findings that technology-driven interventions are more effective when accompanied by relevant training and technical support.

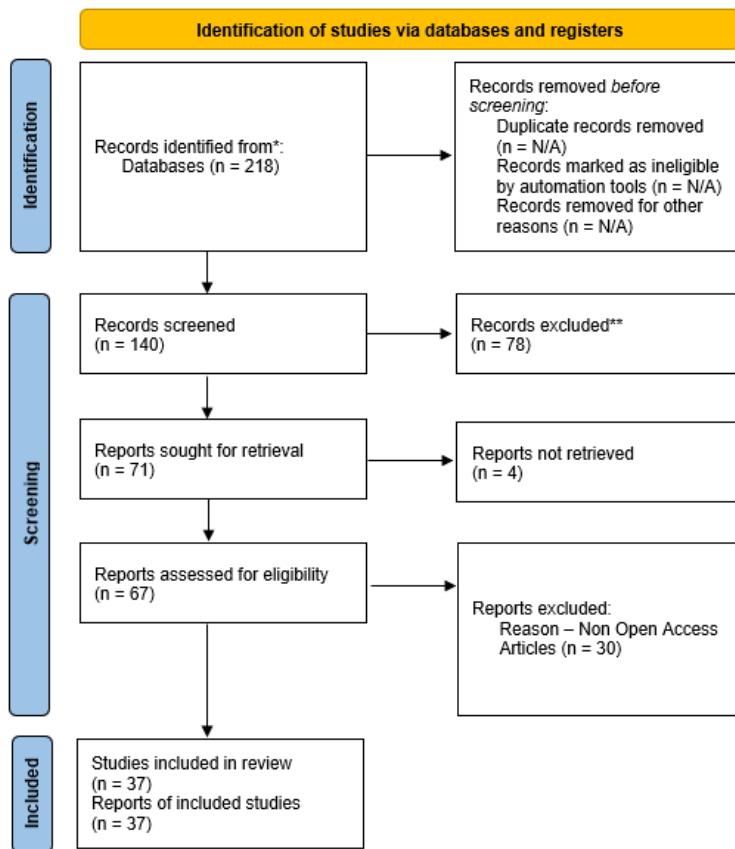
In addition to training and digitalization, mentoring and advisory services play an instrumental role in reinforcing reporting competencies. Studies show that SMEs receiving structured mentorship whether through professional advisors, peer learning networks, or institutional support programs exhibit higher levels of compliance, improved financial decision-making, and greater confidence in preparing financial statements (Rankhumise & Letsoalo, 2019; Iswari et al., 2019). These advisory models help SMEs apply theoretical knowledge to practical reporting situations, while peer networks cultivate shared accountability norms that further strengthen compliance behaviors (Pedroso et al., 2020). Organizational culture and leadership also feature prominently in the literature as determinants of compliance outcomes. Leadership commitment, transparent communication, and participatory decision-making foster environments in which reporting routines are valued, and adherence to standards is viewed as integral to organizational accountability (Mbali et al., 2019). Cultures that encourage continuous learning and embrace technology not only support employees' financial reporting tasks but also amplify the effectiveness of training and mentorship interventions.

At the policy level, regulatory support plays a pivotal role in shaping SMEs' ability to meet simplified accounting requirements. Policies that provide standardized reporting templates, subsidized accounting software, or targeted capacity-building grants significantly enhance the impact of firm-level empowerment efforts (Sariannidis et al., 2019). The literature suggests that multi-layered interventions combining policy facilitation with managerial training and technological tools yield more consistent reporting improvements compared to isolated initiatives. Despite these advances, notable research gaps remain. Longitudinal evidence assessing the sustainability of empowerment outcomes is still scarce, limiting understanding of whether training, technology adoption, or mentorship effects persist over time. Sectoral variations across SMEs are also underexplored, as many studies adopt broad, non-differentiated samples that obscure contextual influences. Additionally, most research examines empowerment strategies in isolation, rather than as interdependent components of a holistic compliance ecosystem. Finally, limited empirical studies investigate how organizational culture, managerial commitment, and policy structures interact to shape compliance with IFAS-MSMEs. These gaps highlight the need for a systematic review and reinforce the significance of the present study.

3. Materials and Methods

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) guided by the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) protocol to examine how empowerment strategies are utilized to strengthen SMEs compliance with IFAS-MSMEs. SMEs contribute significantly to national economic development, yet many continue to face obstacles in adopting standardized accounting and financial reporting practices. Empowerment initiatives, including capacity-building programs, targeted training, and structured managerial support, have been widely proposed as mechanisms for enhancing SME's financial capability and improving regulatory compliance. Although numerous studies discuss SMEs empowerment and financial management, the existing evidence remains fragmented, and few studies provide a comprehensive synthesis linking empowerment interventions specifically to IFAS-MSMEs compliance. Therefore, this review aims to systematically consolidate prior findings, classify key empowerment models, and identify research gaps and implications for practice. To ensure methodological transparency and rigor, this study relies exclusively on peer-reviewed secondary data and does not involve interviews, surveys, or fieldwork.

The review process adheres to the four principal PRISMA stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. The identification stage began with an initial Scopus search using the phrase "SMEs Financial Management Practices," generating 218 records. A refined Boolean search ("Empowerment" OR "Capacity Building" OR "Training") AND ("Accounting" OR "Financial Management" OR "Financial Reporting") AND ("SMEs" OR "Micro Enterprises") was then applied, removing 78 items not aligned with the study's focus and yielding 140 records for screening. During screening, the publication years were restricted to 2022–2025, leading to the exclusion of 71 additional records and leaving 69. In the eligibility stage, two non-English articles were removed, resulting in 67 studies assessed in full text. Under the final inclusion stage, 30 non open-access articles were excluded, and 37 peer-reviewed studies were retained for complete analysis. All bibliographic information was organized using Mendeley Desktop to enhance transparency, consistency, and traceability throughout the review. Through this structured and systematic process, the study provides a strong methodological foundation for evaluating empowerment strategies aimed at improving SMES compliance with IFAS-MSMEs, offering valuable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers.



*Scopus Database

**If automation tools were used, indicate how many records were excluded by a human and how many were excluded by automation tools.

Figure 1. Flow Diagram of Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA)

Figure 1 captures that the PRISMA-based screening process followed a systematic and transparent sequence to ensure that only high-quality and relevant studies were included in the final systematic literature review. In the identification stage, a total of 218 records were retrieved from the Scopus database, which served as the primary indexing source due to its comprehensive coverage of peer-reviewed publications related to SMEs, financial reporting, and IFRS for SMEs. These initial records included journal articles, conference papers, and review papers across various subject areas. During the first screening stage, the titles, abstracts, and keywords of the retrieved studies were examined to remove items unrelated to the core research focus, such as studies on large corporations, non-accounting topics, or unrelated financial frameworks. This step reduced the dataset to 140 relevant records, ensuring that only sources aligned with SMEs' financial reporting and compliance issues were retained for deeper assessment.

A second screening process, referred to as Screening (Filtered), was conducted by applying the publication year filter covering 2022–2025. This time window was selected to capture the most recent developments, regulatory changes, and empirical studies concerning IFAS-MSMEs and contemporary empowerment models. The application of this criterion further reduced the pool to 69 studies, removing older publications that no longer reflected current reporting practices or policy environments. In the eligibility stage, the full texts of these 69 papers were retrieved and evaluated in detail. At this point, two non-English papers were excluded, as the review followed an English-language criterion to maintain consistency in conceptual interpretation and methodological assessment. Once these exclusions were made, 67 studies remained eligible based on full-text evaluation, methodological rigor, and thematic relevance. Finally, during the inclusion stage, the studies were subjected to a more stringent relevance and quality appraisal process. This phase ensured that only empirical and conceptual papers directly addressing SMEs' compliance, empowerment mechanisms, and IFRS/IFAS-related reporting were included. As a result, 37 studies met all inclusion criteria and were incorporated into the final systematic review. These studies formed the foundation for the thematic synthesis and subsequent findings discussed in this research.

4. Findings and Discussion

The systematic review of 37 included studies revealed five main empowerment themes that support SMEs' compliance with IFAS-MSMEs: (1) training and capacity-building, (2) digital financial tools, (3) mentorship and advisory support, (4) organizational culture and leadership, and (5) policy and regulatory facilitation. These themes were identified through descriptive synthesis, with proportions calculated based on the total number of studies (n = 37). Training and capacity-building emerged as the most widely reported strategy, appearing in 21 studies (57%). These interventions ranged from basic accounting workshops to specialized modules and were consistently associated with improved understanding of reporting requirements and enhanced compliance (Dlamini & Schutte, 2025; Fall et al., 2023 ; Islami & Mulolli, 2024 ; Abdullah et al., 2023). Digital financial tools, present in 18 studies (49%), were found to improve reporting accuracy and timeliness using cloud platforms, mobile applications, and automated checklists (Francisco, 2024; Peng & Jia, 2024 ; Bhattacharyya et al., 2023; González-Prida et al., 2025). Mentorship and advisory support (12 studies, 32%) emphasized the importance of continuous guidance and iterative feedback in strengthening SMEs' reporting behavior (Roffia et al., 2024; Vargas-Figueroa et al., 2025). Organizational culture and leadership, described in 8 studies (22%), influenced compliance by fostering transparency, accountability, and supportive managerial attitudes toward reporting (Raharjo et al., 2024 ; Ariani et al., 2024). Policy and regulatory facilitation, identified in 10 studies (27%), supported compliance by offering simplified procedures, standardized templates, and subsidized reporting tools (Monroy-Gomez et al., 2022 ; Sklavos et al., 2024; Lutfi et al., 2022). In general, training and digital tools were the most frequently reported empowerment mechanisms, while mentorship, organizational leadership, and policy interventions although less examined provided essential complementary support. Moving beyond the descriptive synthesis, the following discussion interprets how these themes interact theoretically and practically to enhance SMEs' compliance with IFAS-MSMEs.

4.1. Effectiveness of Empowerment Models

The five empowerment models identified, training, digital tools, mentorship, organizational culture, and policy support, constitute a multilayered framework influencing SMEs' compliance with IFAS-MSMEs. Training and capacity-building enhance human capital by equipping SME owners and managers with the knowledge and skills necessary to internalize reporting standards (Abdallah et al., 2025). Digital tools reinforce these competencies by minimizing manual errors and providing structured reporting environments that support adherence to simplified standards (Saram et al., 2024). Mentorship and advisory support contribute a behavioral reinforcement mechanism, enabling SMEs to receive continuous feedback that sustains correct reporting practices over time (Latif et al., 2023). Furthermore, organizational culture and leadership determine the extent to which technical knowledge translates into routine practice. Leadership commitment, transparency, and accountability-focused norms encourage consistent reporting behaviors (Quarshie et al., 2025). Policy facilitation serves as a broader institutional mechanism that reduces structural obstacles, aligns compliance expectations, and ensures SMEs have access to simplified reporting procedures and government-supported resources (Oyelakin & Abdullahi, 2022). Taken together, these empowerment models demonstrate that compliance improves when interventions simultaneously address technical capacity (training and digital tools), behavioral reinforcement (mentorship), and institutional alignment (organizational culture and policy support).

4.2. Interactions Between Organizational, Managerial, and Policy Factors

The review also highlights that empowerment strategies do not function in isolation; rather, their effectiveness depends on the interaction between organizational, managerial, and policy-level conditions. Organizational environments characterized by participative culture, clear communication, and transparency amplify the impact of training and mentorship by fostering internal motivation and shared responsibility for compliance (Aduamoah et al., 2022). Managerial commitment further strengthens intervention outcomes, as engaged leaders are more likely to champion the adoption of digital tools and embed reporting routines into everyday practice (Kumala et al., 2021). At the institutional level, policy support acts as an external enabler, bridging resource gaps and reinforcing compliance expectations through standardized templates, digital incentives, and capacity-building programs, particularly benefiting micro- and small enterprises (Msomi et al., 2020). These findings suggest that compliance is not merely the result of individual or technical improvements, but rather emerges from synergistic interactions between human capabilities, organizational systems, and supportive regulatory structures.

5. Conclusions

This systematic review synthesizes evidence from recent empirical studies to identify five key empowerment models that support SMEs compliance with IFAS-MSMES: training and capacity-building, digital financial tools, mentorship and advisory support, organizational leadership and culture, and policy facilitation. Collectively, these models demonstrate that effective compliance requires not only technical knowledge but also an enabling environment

shaped by managerial commitment and supportive regulatory structures. The findings contribute to the literature by showing that SMEs financial reporting behavior is influenced by the interaction between individual competencies, organizational systems, and institutional support, reinforcing perspectives from human capital and institutional theory. These insights provide a foundation for designing integrated empowerment frameworks that combine training, technology adoption, behavioral guidance, and policy interventions to strengthen SMEs reporting practices. Building on these implications, policymakers are encouraged to prioritize capacity-building and accessible digital tools, while practitioners should implement continuous training and targeted mentoring. SMEs managers can strengthen internal reporting cultures through leadership engagement and transparent governance. Future research should explore the long-term sustainability of these empowerment models and examine their applicability across different SMEs sectors and regional contexts.

5.1. Research Implications

The theoretical implications of this SLR highlight that SMEs' financial reporting compliance is a multi-level construct informed by Human Capital Theory, Institutional Theory, and Behavioral Reinforcement Models. The review demonstrates that training initiatives enhance the knowledge and skills required for compliance, institutional structures shape the incentives and pressures that guide reporting practices, and mentorship, combined with leadership support, reinforces sustained behavioral change. Integrating these frameworks helps explain why certain interventions succeed while others fail, largely due to their alignment with contextual factors within SMEs. From a practical standpoint, the findings offer actionable insights for key stakeholders. Policymakers should incorporate simplified reporting templates, accessible training, and subsidized digital tools into national SME development strategies, with particular focus on micro-enterprises that show the greatest improvement when support is available. For practitioners and SME advisors, integrated programs that combine training, digital tools, and mentorship have been shown to be more effective than stand-alone interventions. Continuous follow-up is essential to reinforce consistent reporting behavior. SME managers, meanwhile, can enhance compliance sustainability by strengthening leadership engagement, promoting a culture of transparent reporting, and implementing performance-based incentives.

5.2. Limitations

This SLR is subject to several limitations. The review relies exclusively on secondary data, which restricts control over the quality and consistency of the included studies. Significant variations in research methodologies across these studies limit the extent to which results can be directly compared. Additionally, sectoral and regional differences play a substantial role in shaping SMEs' reporting behavior, meaning that the findings cannot be universally generalized across all contexts. Another key limitation is the scarcity of longitudinal studies in the current literature, which constrains understanding of how SMEs maintain or change their financial reporting practices over time.

5.3. Future Research Directions

Given these limitations, several avenues for future research are recommended. First, studies should examine integrated empowerment models using mixed-method or longitudinal designs to capture both depth and long-term effects. Future research should also explore the sustainability of financial reporting compliance across multiple years to better understand behavioral persistence. Cross-country comparative studies are needed to identify global best practices and evaluate the transferability of compliance frameworks across diverse regulatory environments. Furthermore, additional research is needed to examine leadership-driven compliance pathways, particularly in low-resource settings where capacity and institutional support may be limited.

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