

The Role of Social Media in Expanding Market Reach for Small-Scale Entrepreneurs

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ABSTRACT

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Social media is not only used for entertainment but can also be leveraged for business and marketing purposes. Through the appropriate use of platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook, entrepreneurs can engage with consumers, enhance brand awareness, and foster customer loyalty. The utilization of social media as a promotional and marketing tool is not limited to large enterprises; small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can also benefit from it. However, the differing characteristics between large businesses and SMEs lead to distinct implementation approaches. Employing a literature review approach, this article examines the extent to which SMEs are able to use TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook as marketing channels, and how appropriate social media strategies for SMEs can be developed. This paper synthesizes scientific evidence on SMEs' readiness and optimal strategies for utilizing TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook as marketing media to achieve market expansion.

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1. Introduction

As a sector that contributes significantly to Indonesia's economy, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) face various challenges that require them to formulate appropriate strategies in order to remain competitive. One unavoidable challenge for MSMEs is digital technology. Rapid technological development has influenced almost all aspects of human life, including marketing activities.

To maintain business sustainability and expand market reach, MSMEs can utilize social media as part of their marketing strategy [1]. For MSMEs, social media offers numerous benefits, including identifying customers, enabling two-way communication, facilitating information sharing, understanding customer preferences, tracking customer presence, analyzing relationships among customers based on location and interaction patterns, and enhancing collaboration with other entrepreneurs, which ultimately improves MSME performance and growth [2].

Social media has become an online channel that enables effective communication with consumers. These benefits encourage MSMEs to adopt social media platforms. For instance, 52.62% of MSME actors in Bandung Regency have used Instagram for promotional purposes. Facebook remains a preferred platform for 13.04% of MSMEs, followed by Twitter (8.70%), Pinterest (4.35%), and YouTube (8.70%). Meanwhile, 13.04% of MSMEs have begun utilizing TikTok to reach specific target markets [2].

Survey results from E-Commerce Statistics indicate that as of December 31, 2023, approximately 58.49% of businesses were still operating conventionally. From a geographical perspective, 75.04% of e-commerce businesses are concentrated on Java Island, while 24.96% are distributed across other

regions, including Sumatra (12.83%), Sulawesi (4.15%), Kalimantan (3.92%), Bali and Nusa Tenggara (3.65%), and Maluku and Papua (0.41%) [3].

The uneven adoption of social media among MSMEs presents opportunities for stakeholders to provide training and capacity-building programs. Training programs on social media utilization conducted in Pagar Alam City revealed that prior to training, MSME participants' mastery of social media was only 24%. However, this figure increased significantly to 92% after the training [4]. Similar outcomes were observed in Kupang Regency, where MSMEs initially did not use social media at all, resulting in limited product exposure. After training, MSMEs created business Instagram accounts, achieving a total of 11,019 content impressions and reaching 4,434 users [5].

Social media mentoring programs for MSMEs in Bonto Jai Village, Bantaeng Regency, South Sulawesi Province, led to increased sales after MSMEs actively promoted their products online [6]. Furthermore, digital literacy enhancement initiatives for MSMEs in Makassar City also produced positive impacts. Approximately 40% of participants successfully created Google Maps accounts and uploaded promotional content on social media within one week after the program. These findings indicate that structured and continuous educational interventions can significantly accelerate MSME digitalization adoption [7].

Although numerous studies demonstrate that social media usage can improve MSME performance, gaps remain in MSMEs' ability to effectively utilize platforms, particularly TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook. Therefore, this study aims to examine the extent to which MSMEs can use TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook as marketing tools and to formulate appropriate social media strategies for expanding market reach.

2. Method

This study employs a literature review approach with a descriptive analysis focus to identify MSMEs' capabilities in using TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook as marketing tools, as well as to determine appropriate social media strategies for MSMEs. A literature review involves systematically collecting, reading, recording, and analyzing relevant academic sources. Appropriate theoretical references are required to ensure alignment with the research problem being discussed [8].

Literature sources were obtained from Scopus, Google Scholar, and DOAJ, consisting of 21 articles published between 2021 and 2025. The selected keywords included “social media marketing,” “TikTok, Instagram, Facebook,” and “social media strategies for MSMEs.” Relevant articles were screened, followed by full-text review and data extraction based on predefined criteria.

3. Results and Discussion

This section presents the results of the literature review that form the basis for an in-depth analysis of MSMEs' capabilities in utilizing TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook as promotional media, as well as social media strategies for MSMEs. The findings and discussion are structured according to the research objectives and synthesized from relevant recent scientific studies to ensure empirical validity and reliability.

3.1. MSME's Capability in Using TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook as Promotional Media

A survey conducted by the Institute for Development of Economics and Finance (INDEF) in December 2023 involving 254 MSME respondents from the Greater Jakarta area, non-Greater Jakarta regions, and areas outside Java Island showed that 33.46% of MSMEs used Facebook Marketplace, 28.74% used Instagram Shop, and 20.87% used TikTok Shop. The use of social media platforms had a positive impact, as indicated by increased employment and higher average annual turnover. The primary reasons for MSMEs adopting business digitalization included the convenience of online selling, broader exposure and traffic, and faster business growth potential.

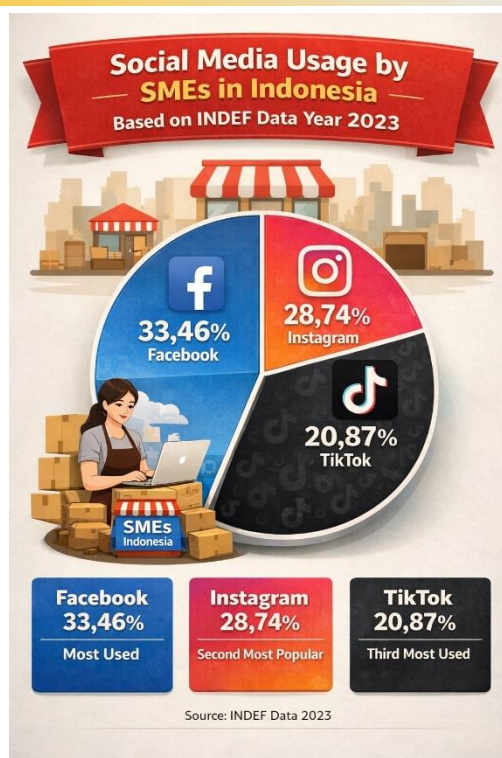


Fig. 1. The Use of Social Media by MSMEs in Indonesia Based on INDEF Data

In selecting social media platforms, MSMEs can align their choices with targeted market segmentation. Instagram users range from young people to older adults, whereas TikTok users are predominantly younger demographics. Another distinction lies in interactivity, as studies suggest that Instagram offers higher interactivity and more diverse features compared to TikTok. Additionally, Instagram provides paid advertising options that enable MSMEs to expand audience reach with more specific targeting [9].

The widespread use of social media is further supported by a study conducted in East Java Province involving 200 MSMEs, which found that Instagram and Facebook were utilized as consumer communication media. Most MSME owners had also used various platform features to encourage innovation, with 24% of respondents having used social media for more than five years [10].

Similarly, MSMEs in South Sulawesi Province have effectively utilized TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook for promotional purposes. Their promotional strategies were consumer-oriented, attention-grabbing, capable of enhancing customer loyalty, and featured creative, innovative, and informative content [11]. In Palembang City, 76% of 42 MSMEs actively used social media, resulting in a 10–30% increase in sales [12].

Further findings from Bengkulu City indicate that MSMEs used Instagram to upload visual content such as product photos, short videos, and Instagram Stories. TikTok complemented this strategy through creative videos leveraging current trends, including popular music and hashtags. As a result, Instagram followers increased from 5,000 to 7,500, while TikTok followers grew from 1,000 to 3,500 within six months [13].

Social media platforms also provide live streaming features that allow real-time interaction. Unlike traditional mass media broadcasting, live streaming enables two-way communication through comment sections, which is essential for increasing engagement. Additionally, audiovisual live streaming allows consumers to directly see and hear information about promoted products [14].

Some MSMEs have also utilized influencer marketing. Influencer selection is typically budget-driven, with nano-influencers (1,000–10,000 followers) and micro-influencers (10,000–100,000 followers) being preferred due to lower collaboration costs. Partnerships may involve product bartering or paid collaborations. Increased orders generally occur within 1–3 days after content

posting, especially when influencers have highly relevant audiences. In some cases, viral content can sustain increased sales for up to one month and foster customer loyalty [15].

Although TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook are the most commonly used platforms, their effectiveness varies. A study in Padang City found that MSMEs using Instagram achieved the highest average sales compared to TikTok and Facebook. Facebook was less effective in attracting consumer interest, while TikTok demonstrated strong sales performance due to its rising popularity and ability to reach younger audiences [16].

Overall, these findings indicate that social media provides new opportunities for MSMEs to enhance market orientation. The ease of communication, efficient information dissemination, and cost-effectiveness of social media position it as a strategic approach that prioritizes consumers in decision-making and business development.

3.2. Social Media Usage Strategies for MSMEs

Social media strategies play a crucial role in enhancing MSMEs' competitiveness and expanding market reach in the digital era. The following practical and effective approaches can be implemented by MSMEs:

1. Selecting the Appropriate Platform

MSMEs must clearly identify their target audience, as platform selection should align with demographic characteristics and consumer preferences. Each social media platform has distinct features and user behavior patterns; therefore, strategies effective on one platform may not yield similar results on others. Choosing the right platform enhances marketing campaign effectiveness and business outcomes [17][24].

2. High-Quality and Relevant Content

Quality and relevance are key factors in attracting user attention. Informative content, engaging visuals, and interactive formats can build trust, increase engagement, and expand brand reach [17][18][19][23]. Aligning content with trending formats and popular audio enhances visibility on Instagram Explore and TikTok for You Page (FYP), as algorithms prioritize watch duration, interaction speed, and relevance [19][21]. Content quality positively influences purchase decisions [20].

3. Consistent Posting

Consistency in content uploads helps build brand image and maintain follower engagement. Posting schedules should align with audience online behavior [17][18][19][24][25][27]. Studies show a significant correlation between posting frequency and increased traffic and customer acquisition [28].

4. Active Interaction with Followers

Responding to comments, questions, and messages strengthens relationships and supports two-way communication. This interaction builds trust and provides insights into consumer preferences, market trends, and business opportunities [17][18][27]. Limited interaction often discourages consumers from completing transactions [20].

5. Utilization of Platform Features

Features such as Instagram Stories, Facebook Live, paid advertisements, and analytics tools (e.g., Meta Ads) enable real-time engagement, product demonstrations, precise targeting, and campaign performance measurement [17][22][26].

6. Collaboration with Influencers and Brands

Collaborations expand reach and enhance brand awareness [20]. Influencer partnerships add credibility, as followers tend to trust influencer recommendations [17] [29]

Based on the reviewed literature, six social media strategies for MSMEs have been formulated. The most frequently mentioned strategies in the articles are the creation of high-quality and relevant content, as well as consistent posting. Subsequently, active interaction with followers, utilization of social media features, and collaboration were each mentioned three times across different studies. The least elaborated strategy in the literature is the selection of appropriate platforms. The frequency of each strategy is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Social Media Usage Strategies for MSMEs

Strategys	Authors	Frequency
Selecting the right platform	Barokah, I., Sarofi, A., & Deni, A. A. (2024) Donoriyanto, D. S., Indiyanto, R., AR, N. R. J., & Syamsiah, Y. A. (2023)	2
High quality and relevant content	Barokah, I., Sarofi, A., & Deni, A. A. (2024) Talib, N. R. A., & Sari, M. N. (2024) Silaban, I. M., Sarif, M. I., Rambe, R., & Sitepu, A. I. (2025) Fauzi N. J. Usman, Maximilian M. J. Kapa, & Yacobus C. W. Siubelan. (2025) Aryani, I. D., & Murtiariyati, D. (2022) Padapi, A., Haryono, I., & Rukmelia, R. (2022)	6
Content consistency	Barokah, I., Sarofi, A., & Deni, A. A. (2024) Talib, N. R. A., & Sari, M. N. (2024) Silaban, I. M., Sarif, M. I., Rambe, R., & Sitepu, A. I. (2025) Donoriyanto, D. S., Indiyanto, R., AR, N. R. J., & Syamsiah, Y. A. (2023) Nugroho, T. A., & Azzahra, F. C. (2022) Fantini, E., Sofyan, M., & Suryana, A. (2021)	6
Active interaction with followers	Barokah, I., Sarofi, A., & Deni, A. A. (2024) Talib, N. R. A., & Sari, M. N. (2024) Fantini, E., Sofyan, M., & Suryana, A. (2021)	3
Effective use of platform	Barokah, I., Sarofi, A., & Deni, A. A. (2024) Ainur, D., Yusmanizar, Y., & Sonni, A. F. (2024) Hubner, I. B., Virgiana Wijaya, J., & Dwi Nugraha, K. (2022)	3
Collaboration with influencers and brands	Fauzi N. J. Usman, Maximilian M. J. Kapa, & Yacobus C. W. Siubelan. (2025) Barokah, I., Sarofi, A., & Deni, A. A. (2024) Tatasari, T., Hariputra, F. A., Liemiantoro, K., & Nugroho, D. S. (2025)	3

Based on the data presented above, the following diagram illustrates the frequency of strategies appearing across several pieces of literature:



Fig. 2. Social Media Strategy Distribution Based on Literature

4. Conclusion

The convenience and benefits offered by social media in marketing activities encourage MSMEs to utilize these platforms optimally. Promotional activities may include visual content uploads, short videos following current trends, popular music integration, hashtag usage, live streaming, and collaborations with brands or influencers. By implementing practical and effective social media strategies, MSMEs can strengthen competitiveness, build brand image, enhance customer satisfaction, and ultimately foster customer loyalty.

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