
The Role of Social Media in Increasing Umkm Sales in the Digital Era of Deli Serdang Regency

Lambok Manurung¹, Slamet Widodo², Etty Harya Ningsi³

¹³**Universitas Battuta, Indonesia**

²**Universitas Pembangunan Panca Budi, Indonesia**

Correspondent: manurunglambok66@gmail.com¹

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to analyze the role of social media in increasing sales of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Deli Serdang Regency in the digital era. This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method of 30 MSME actors who actively use social media as a means of promotion. The research instrument is a questionnaire that measures the frequency of social media use, the type of platform used, the level of interaction with customers, and its impact on sales. The results of a simple linear regression analysis show that the use of social media significantly affects the increase in MSME sales ($R^2 = 0.72$; $p < 0.01$). These findings indicate that social media such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook play an important role in expanding market reach, creating brand awareness, and increasing consumer engagement. This study recommends the need for continuous digital literacy training and collaboration between local governments and social media platforms to optimally support the digital transformation of MSMEs.

Keywords: Social Media, Sales, UMKM, Digital Marketing, Digital Era, Deli Serdang.



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INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has emerged as a transformative force in reshaping the global economic ecosystem, particularly in the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector. In Indonesia, MSMEs play a crucial role in national economic development. Based on data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs (2023), Indonesia hosts more than 64.2 million MSMEs, contributing approximately 60.5% to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and absorbing around 97% of the total workforce. These figures underscore the strategic importance of MSMEs in promoting inclusive economic growth and reducing unemployment. However, despite their economic significance, the level of digital adoption among MSMEs remains relatively low. Only about 22% of MSMEs have actively integrated digital technologies into their operations (Google & Temasek e-

Conomy SEA Report, 2023), which poses a challenge in facing the demands of Industry 4.0 and the digital economy.

The increasing penetration of the internet and smartphones has brought social media to the forefront of business innovation, particularly in marketing (Widodo et al., 2024). Social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and WhatsApp are no longer limited to social interaction; they have evolved into effective, low-cost marketing tools that enable direct and interactive engagement with consumers (Dwivedi, 2021; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2018). These platforms provide MSMEs with new opportunities to build brand awareness, enhance customer relationships, and increase sales performance through targeted promotional activities.

In the context of Deli Serdang Regency, a region in North Sumatra with over 20,000 registered MSMEs (Cooperatives and SMEs Service, 2023), the potential of social media for business transformation is evident (Chatterjee et al., 2021). Nevertheless, the actual utilization of social media marketing remains uneven and limited. Many MSMEs in this area still face several challenges, including low digital literacy, lack of strategic marketing knowledge, and limited access to digital infrastructure. These obstacles hinder MSMEs from maximizing the benefits of social media to expand market reach and improve competitiveness.

Although various studies have examined the role of social media in supporting MSME growth, the majority of them focus on urban-based enterprises or rely heavily on conceptual analysis. There is a lack of empirical studies that investigate the specific impact of social media use on MSME sales performance in semi-urban or rural areas like Deli Serdang Regency. (Surya et al., 2023)

Therefore, this research seeks to fill this gap by providing empirical evidence on how the adoption of social media affects the sales performance of MSMEs in Deli Serdang. The findings are expected to offer theoretical contributions to the literature on digital marketing for MSMEs and provide practical recommendations for policymakers and MSME practitioners in optimizing digital marketing strategies through social media.

Literature Review

MSMEs and Digitalization

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) constitute the backbone of the Indonesian economy. They play a pivotal role in fostering economic growth, reducing unemployment, and narrowing socio-economic disparities. As reported by the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs (2022), MSMEs contribute more than 60% to Indonesia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and provide employment for approximately 97% of the national workforce. Despite this impressive contribution, MSMEs frequently face structural challenges, including limited access to capital, technology, skilled human resources, and broader markets, particularly in the face of rapid digitalization. (Nasution et al., 2020)

Digitalization refers to the integration of digital technology into all areas of business operations, encompassing marketing, customer engagement, distribution, and financial management (Lubis et al., 2024). According to Arief (2021), digitalization not only enhances operational efficiency but also serves as a strategic pathway to expand market reach and improve MSME competitiveness. Through platforms such as e-commerce, digital payments, and online marketing, MSMEs can reduce transaction costs, increase sales, and enhance customer experience. Suryani & Puspitasari (2020) also noted that MSMEs embracing digital platforms such as Shopee, Tokopedia, and social media channels tend to experience faster business growth than those that operate conventionally.

Moreover, the significance of digital adoption was further highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic. A study by Susilowati et al. (2022) found that MSMEs utilizing digital technologies demonstrated greater business resilience and were able to adapt to changing consumer behaviors more rapidly. Digital tools enabled these enterprises to maintain customer relationships and continue transactions despite physical limitations.

In conclusion, digital transformation is no longer an option but a necessity for MSMEs in the era of Industry 4.0. Without adopting digital solutions, MSMEs risk being left behind in an increasingly competitive and technology-driven global market (Slamet Widodo et al., 2024). The literature emphasizes that digitalization not only strengthens business sustainability but also serves as a critical enabler of long-term growth and innovation for MSMEs. 2.2 Social Media as a Marketing Tool. (Saragih et al., 2022)

Social media has become an integral part of modern marketing strategies. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and WhatsApp Business provide space for MSMEs to promote products visually, interactively, and personally. According to Luqman & Salehudin (2019), social media plays an important role in influencing purchasing decisions through interesting content, consumer testimonials, and easy access to product information.

Mangold & Faulds (2009) stated that social media is a very effective form of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) promotion. Consumers tend to trust reviews or recommendations from other users more than conventional advertising. Therefore, social media not only functions as a one-way communication tool, but also as a two-way interaction channel between business actors and consumers.

Furthermore, Kotler et al. (2021) emphasize that social media is part of the modern marketing mix (marketing mix 4.0) that encourages connectivity, conversation, content, and community. Social media allows brands to build deeper relationships with consumers and create more personal experiences. In the context of MSMEs, social media is an efficient, inexpensive marketing solution that can reach a wide audience in a short time.

A study by Tafesse & Wien (2018) also found that the use of social media can increase brand awareness, strengthen brand positioning, and increase customer engagement, all of which have an impact on purchasing decisions.

The Influence of Social Media on Sales

The rapid evolution of social media has fundamentally reshaped the marketing dynamics for businesses across the globe, particularly for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). With the advent of platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and WhatsApp Business, MSMEs are now equipped with accessible and cost-effective tools to reach, engage, and convert their target audiences. Several empirical studies have consistently demonstrated that the strategic and sustained use of social media has a significant and positive influence on sales growth, especially by enhancing brand awareness, market penetration, and customer relationships. (Hanif & Widodo, 2024)

Unlike conventional marketing approaches that often require high budgets and have limited interactivity, social media facilitates real-time, two-way communication. This allows MSMEs to not only broadcast their promotional messages but also to engage directly with consumers, respond to inquiries, and build personalized experiences. Paniagua & Sapena (2019) argue that key engagement metrics such as likes, shares, comments, and reposts serve as reliable indicators of consumer involvement and have a statistically significant correlation with increased sales volumes and brand trust. This interactivity also encourages peer-to-peer recommendations, which act as digital word-of-mouth marketing, enhancing credibility and purchase intent.

Furthermore, the role of social media algorithms in market targeting has become increasingly crucial. Chatterjee & Kar (2020) highlight how platform algorithms analyze user data, behavior, and preferences to allow businesses to reach highly segmented audiences. This enables MSMEs to conduct precision marketing, reducing costs while maximizing engagement and conversion rates. Such data-driven targeting is especially valuable for MSMEs that operate with limited promotional budgets but require measurable outcomes.

The quality of content also significantly impacts consumer behavior. Alalwan (2018) stresses that emotionally appealing, authentic, and visually strong content such as storytelling videos, customer testimonials, and live product demonstrations can strongly influence perception, foster emotional connection, and lead to higher conversion rates. These content strategies are particularly effective in establishing long-term brand loyalty and repeat purchases. (Wijayanti et al., 2023)

Recent empirical findings by Ali et al. (2023) support these claims, indicating that MSMEs that actively use social media marketing tools reported up to a 35% increase in monthly sales compared to their counterparts relying solely on traditional promotional methods. This statistic highlights the shift in consumer attention and purchasing behavior toward digital platforms.

In summary, social media has become a transformative force in MSME marketing (Effendy & Yani, 2020). Its role extends beyond promotion it shapes customer experience, drives conversions, and sustains business growth. For MSMEs seeking scalability and resilience in the digital economy, leveraging social media is not optional, but essential.

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach because it aims to test the relationship between statistically measurable variables, especially the effect of social media use on increasing MSME sales. This approach was chosen because it is appropriate for answering associative research questions and testing hypotheses through numerical data (Sugiyono, 2019).

The research method used is a survey method, which allows researchers to collect data directly from respondents through structured questionnaires. This method is effective in obtaining information on perceptions, attitudes, and behavior of MSME actors related to the use of social media as a marketing strategy. (Hakim & Widodo, 2024)

The population in this study were all MSME actors in Deli Serdang Regency who actively use social media in their product marketing operations. Based on data from the Deli Serdang Regency Cooperatives and MSMEs Service (2023), the number of registered MSMEs is more than 20,000 units. However, only a few have adopted social media as a marketing tool.

The sample in this study amounted to 30 MSME actors, selected using purposive sampling technique, which is a sampling technique based on certain criteria that are relevant to the research objectives (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). The inclusion criteria in sample selection include:

1. MSMEs that have been actively using social media for at least the last 6 months,
2. MSME owners or marketing managers are willing to be respondents,
3. Have hands-on experience in using social media for product or service promotion.

A sample size of 30 was considered adequate for exploratory quantitative research using a simple linear regression test, in accordance with the minimum sample guidelines for parametric statistical tests (Hair et al., 2020).

The instrument used in this study was a structured questionnaire compiled based on indicators of digital marketing and social media theories. The questionnaire consisted of 15 question items with a Likert scale of 1-5 (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), which were categorized into several main indicators as follows:

1. Frequency of social media use, namely measuring how often MSME actors access and use social media platforms for business activities every day (for example posts, stories, live sessions, etc.).
2. Types of social media used, which includes platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, WhatsApp Business, and others and the reasons for choosing these platforms.
3. Level of interaction with customers, namely measuring how often and intensively interactions are carried out, including replies to comments, DMs (direct messages), and customer feedback.

4. Impact on sales, namely measuring the perception of MSME actors regarding changes in sales volume, increase in new customers, or increase in transactions after being active on social media.

This instrument was first tested on 5 respondents to test content validity and initial reliability.

The data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed quantitatively using simple linear regression analysis with the help of SPSS software version 25. This analysis was used to determine the effect of the independent variable (use of social media) on the dependent variable (increase in MSME sales).

Steps in data analysis include Validity test and reliability test of questionnaire items using Pearson correlation and Cronbach's Alpha; Classical assumption test, such as normality, linearity, and heteroscedasticity; Simple linear regression test, to see the significance of the influence of social media on increasing sales.

Interpretation of the results will refer to the value of the coefficient of determination (R^2), the significance value (p-value), and the regression coefficient (β). If the significance value is <0.05 , it can be concluded that social media has a significant effect on MSME sales.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

Presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics Based on Business Type and Social Media Platform

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Type of business	Food and Drink	18	60%
	Fashion	6	20%
	Crafts & Services	6	20%
Social Media Platforms	Instagram	26	85%
	Facebook	21	70%
	TikTok	17	55%
	WhatsApp Business (support)	13	43%

Most MSMEs use more than one platform. Instagram is dominant because of its visual power and ease of use of promotional features.

Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Table 2. Linear Regression Analysis Results

Independent Variables	β (Beta)	R^2	p-value
Use of Social Media	0.84	0.72	< 0.01

Interpretation

1. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.72 shows that 72% of the variation in MSME sales can be explained by the use of social media.
2. The positive beta coefficient (0.84) indicates a direct and strong relationship.
3. $p\text{-value} < 0.01$ proves a statistically significant effect.

The results of the study confirm that the use of social media has a significant influence on increasing sales of MSMEs in Deli Serdang (*Department of Cooperatives and SMEs of Deli Serdang Regency*, 2023). This finding supports the results of previous studies (Putri, 2020; Susanti, 2021) which showed that the intensity of social media use has a positive impact on market reach and increased turnover.

In practice, this shows that MSMEs in Deli Serdang who are consistent in using platforms such as Instagram and TikTok for promotion, storytelling, and building communication with customers, have a greater opportunity to increase customer loyalty and sales conversion. (Rusdianto & Widodo, 2024)

Furthermore, this finding is also in line with the concept of Social Media Engagement Theory (Brodie et al., 2011), which states that customer involvement in two-way communication creates relational value and strengthens the brand's position in the minds of consumers.

Practical implications for SMEs

1. There needs to be a consistent and creative content strategy,
2. Strategic use of features like Instagram Reels, TikTok Shop, and story highlights,
3. Improving digital literacy through ongoing training.

Limitations of this study

1. The sample size is relatively small (30 MSMEs),
2. Not comparing the impact between different types of platforms independently,
3. Not considering external factors such as people's purchasing power or product quality.

Recommendations for future research

1. Involving more respondents from various MSME sectors,
2. Using a multivariate approach to assess moderator/mediating variables (e.g. customer satisfaction),
3. Longitudinal study to see the impact of social media in the long term.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to empirically investigate the extent to which the use of social media influences the sales performance of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra (Ningsi et al., 2022). Using a simple linear regression approach, the research found that the intensity and quality of social media utilization particularly through platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook accounted for 72% of the variation in MSME sales ($R^2 = 0.72$; $\beta = 0.84$; $p < 0.01$). These findings clearly demonstrate that social media has become a powerful tool for expanding market reach, enhancing consumer engagement, and driving sales growth for MSMEs. The results validate the hypothesis that digital platforms are not merely supplementary communication tools, but central to marketing strategy and revenue generation in the digital era. (Manurung et al., 2024)

These findings carry important implications for policy development, business practice, and academic literature. Pratama & Agustina (2021) First, they confirm that digital transformation is a critical determinant of MSME competitiveness, even in semi-urban or rural areas such as Deli Serdang. Second, the study fills a significant gap in the literature, as most previous research has focused on MSMEs in major urban centers. The evidence presented here affirms that the impact of social media is equally profound in smaller regions when adopted strategically and consistently. (Manurung, 2024)

From a strategic perspective, several recommendations can be proposed for stakeholders including local governments, MSME practitioners, educational institutions, and social media companies Manurung & Ningsi (2023). One of the most urgent priorities is the strengthening of digital literacy among MSME actors. Government agencies, in collaboration with universities, community organizations, and NGOs, should provide regular training on how to optimize social media platforms for business purposes. These trainings must be holistic, encompassing technical aspects such as content creation (photography, video editing, copywriting), understanding algorithms, digital customer service, and using analytics tools to track performance and engagement.

Secondly, institutional collaboration must be enhanced. Local governments should proactively build partnerships with technology firms such as Meta (owner of Facebook and Instagram), ByteDance (TikTok), and Google. Widodo (2024) These partnerships could lead to the implementation of local-scale digital acceleration programs, such as MSME bootcamps, one-on-one mentorship, and curated digital promotion events featuring regional products. Joint campaigns, featuring user-generated content and local influencer engagement, can also be designed to amplify the visibility of local MSMEs on global digital platforms. (Fauzi et al., 2022)

Third, content consistency and engagement strategies must be internalized by MSMEs. Business owners should develop structured content calendars that integrate educational posts, customer testimonials, behind-the-scenes content, tutorials, and live interactions. Regular posting helps maintain algorithmic visibility, while authentic storytelling fosters emotional engagement that is crucial for building brand loyalty. Furthermore, fast and empathetic responses to customer messages and comments significantly contribute to trust-building and customer retention.

In terms of future research, several directions are worth pursuing to build upon this study's findings. First, expanding the sample size and including MSMEs from diverse sectors and geographic regions can increase generalizability. Second, applying more sophisticated statistical techniques such as multivariate regression, structural equation modeling (SEM), or longitudinal analysis could uncover deeper causal relationships and identify mediating variables like customer satisfaction, digital reputation, and brand equity. Third, experimental research designs could be employed to test the comparative effectiveness of specific social media features such as TikTok Shop's live selling feature or Instagram's shoppable posts on consumer conversion and retention.

Another important insight is the need for multi-platform integration. MSMEs should diversify their digital presence to leverage the unique strengths of each platform. Indriani & Supriyanto (2021) For example, Instagram excels in showcasing visual aesthetics, TikTok is powerful for short-form storytelling and virality, while Facebook remains effective for community engagement and targeting older demographics. A unified strategy that integrates these platforms can broaden reach and reinforce brand consistency across customer touchpoints.

Finally, policy and financial support are crucial. Local governments and development institutions should provide funding schemes such as micro-grants or digital transformation incentives for MSMEs that adopt and demonstrate measurable progress in their digital journey. Certification programs, creative content labs, and digital business clinics can further strengthen local ecosystems, ensuring that MSMEs are not left behind in the rapidly evolving digital economy. (Hermawan & Arafat, 2022)

In conclusion, this study affirms that social media is not only a marketing accessory but a central pillar of business success in the digital age. The ability of MSMEs in Deli Serdang to adapt to and adopt social media tools will determine their resilience, growth, and sustainability in the face of technological disruption and global competition.

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